Introduction

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“No one shall be subject to cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment.” This statement of Article 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights is part of what Michael Ignatieff aptly calls “the juridical revolution” in human rights since 1945. Other critical international documents of the revolution include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Geneva Conventions of 1948, the revision of the Geneva Conventions of 1949, and the international convention on asylum of 1951.

Covenants without swords are but words, Thomas Hobbes famously wrote. What kind of revolution is marked by so many words that lack the backing of swords? The International Covenant, unlike the original Universal Declaration, is a legally binding treaty among nations. A Human Rights Committee has the authority to adjudicate violations that are brought before it. The legally binding nature of this and other human rights treaties is another indication of the rights revolution. To say that human rights are legally binding, however, is not to say that there is an authoritative agent with the power to hold sovereign states to the law. For this and many other reasons, the human rights revolution is far from complete, and its ca-
capacity to come closer to realizing its aims is widely questioned, especially outside of now highly organized communities of human rights activists. Moreover, what would count as a successful completion of the human rights revolution is by no means clear, or clearly established in either the theory or the practice of human rights in the international arena.

We therefore begin this book with the most basic set of questions concerning the political morality of human rights. What is the purpose of human rights? What should their content be? When do violations of human rights warrant intervention across national boundaries? Is there a single moral foundation for human rights that spans many cultures, or are there many culturally specific moral foundations, or none? In what sense, if any, are human rights universal? These are among the hard and critical questions raised by the human rights revolution, and addressed by Michael Ignatieff’s two essays in this volume and the commentaries by Anthony Appiah, David Hollinger, Thomas Laqueur, and Diane Orentlicher to which Ignatieff responds. The essays and commentaries were first presented as the 1999–2000 Tanner Lectures on Human Values at Princeton University under the auspices of Princeton’s University Center for Human Values.

If we begin with the most basic question—What is the purpose of human rights?—we will immediately see how hard it is to arrive at a meeting of minds on a single answer. Harder to see, apparently, is how unnecessary it is to insist on a single answer. Human rights can serve multiple purposes, and those purposes can be expressed in many ways, not only across different societies and cultures, but even within them. No major culture is univocal
in its answer to this question. That there can be many good answers to a single question as practically important as the purpose of human rights should not prevent us from offering our own best answer, especially if that answer is one that speaks to many people, as does Ignatieff’s understanding of human rights.

The purpose of human rights, Ignatieff argues, is to protect human agency and therefore to protect human agents against abuse and oppression. Human rights protect the core of negative freedom, freedom from abuse, oppression, and cruelty. This is a starting point for some complex thinking about what the purpose and content of the evolving international human rights regime should be. But even the starting point is more complex—and contestable—than first appearances might suggest. Protecting human agencies, and protecting human agents against abuse and oppression, cannot be identified simply (or solely) with negative liberty, freedom from interference. Nor is the core of human rights constituted only by negative freedoms. The right to subsistence is as necessary for human agency as a right against torture. A right to subsistence is not a negative freedom, as the right against cruel and unusual punishment is. Starving people have no more agency than people subject to cruel and unusual punishment. Including subsistence rights in the human rights regime was also an important part of reaching an international agreement on the nature of human rights.

If an important purpose of human rights is to protect human agency, and the rights that protect human agency are not exclusively negative liberties, it is still the case, as Ignatieff argues, that a human rights regime does not
claim—or realistically aspire—to be morally comprehensive. The enforcement of human rights in the international arena does not guarantee that anyone whose rights are effectively protected will live a wonderful life. Or even a (morally or nonmorally) good life. When human rights are honored and enforced, they are effective instruments to protect individuals from abuse, cruelty, oppression, degradation, and the like. This purpose of human rights—which Ignatieff calls pragmatic, which is not to deny that it is moral in its core purpose of protecting human agency (just as pragmatism is a moral and political philosophy)—can provide a guide to the content of a human rights regime. Human rights institutions and agencies—both governmental and nongovernmental—should not try to proliferate human rights beyond what is necessary to protect persons as purposive agents, or to realize a similarly basic purpose of human rights (such as the dignity of persons, a purpose that Ignatieff rejects and to which I shall return). Proliferation of human rights to include rights that are not clearly necessary to protect the basic agency or needs or dignity of persons cheapens the purpose of human rights and correspondingly weakens the resolve of potential enforcers.

Proliferation of human rights also makes it far more difficult to achieve the broad intercultural assent to rights that an international human rights regime requires to be effective. If human rights are pragmatic political instruments, then human rights regimes should aspire to be effective before they aspire to be more comprehensive in their pronouncements. Human rights should not be conceived as guarantors of social justice, or substitutes for comprehensive conceptions of a good life. Protections
against cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment—all of which are compatible with multiple expressions of the purpose of human rights—are widely viewed as the core of a human rights regime. If protections against cruelty and degradation—freedom from harm and freedom to live a decent life—are not human rights, then one might say that nothing is. And some people, of course, do say that nothing is a human right, but that does not mean that they are right, or even reasonable in claiming that there are no human rights. To believe in human rights does not entail believing that they exist independently of human purpose. Human rights are important instruments for protecting human beings against cruelty, oppression, and degradation. That’s all we need to believe to defend human rights. Many people believe far more about human rights, for example, that there is a divine or natural source of human rights. The human purpose of defending human rights, however, may not differ dramatically, even if the imputed sources do.

But must a human rights regime be restricted (or restrict itself) to protections of negative freedoms alone to be effective, to gain international assent and enforcement, as Ignatieff sometimes suggests? I am doubtful in light of the arguments (including many made by Ignatieff himself), the evidence of the origins of the Universal Declaration, and the apparent need to include rights to subsistence (which are not negative freedoms) to gain international assent to most human rights documents in the global arena. Although rights to subsistence and to basic political freedoms (due process, habeas corpus) are not negative liberties, they too are a necessary part of what it means to treat people as purposive agents, and to
protect them against degrading treatment, of which dire poverty is certainly one form. A human rights regime still needs to avoid overextending itself beyond what are reasonable aspirations. But it also needs to avoid a minimalism so sparing that its enforcement would leave the most vulnerable people without what is (minimally) necessary to protect their ability to live a minimally decent life by any reasonable standards. Starving people are denied their human agency. They are also being denied their dignity, and they are being degraded. They are not being treated as agents with a human life to lead. There are many other ways to describe the gross injustice inflicted upon starving people in today’s world, where there are ways both to prevent starvation and to address it when it occurs. What counts as minimal human rights is bound to be contentious, and broad assent is essential for effective enforcement. But there is good reason to think that an effective human rights regime needs to safeguard subsistence rights as well as a set of negative liberties.

Another reason to wonder whether we should hold human rights regimes to only the most minimalist standards is that problems of agreement, interpretation, and enforcement inhere even in the most minimalist formulations of human rights. “Minimal” is not necessarily synonymous with “maximally consensual” or “easiest to enforce.” It may be easier to enlist agreement on a set of human rights that combine protections of negative freedoms with subsistence, and maybe even other welfare rights, than it is to insist on restricting a human rights regime to negative liberties alone. Ignatieff makes no such insistence, but he often argues or alludes to the idea that hu-
man agency supports only negative liberty. I have argued that human agency itself supports more than negative liberty. But my argument is only one of several that could be cited in defense of subsistence rights (and perhaps also more rights) as part of a human rights regime that is neither minimalist nor maximalist.

Despite the attraction of minimalism, it must be said that what counts as a minimal set of human rights is by no means either obvious or agreed upon by even good-willed people. Even the means of protecting people against “cruel, inhuman, or degrading . . . punishment” is open to reasonable disagreement. When the Taliban stone women to death for adultery, this is about as clear a violation of a human right against cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment as any. But does the United States violate a human right that belongs in the minimal set when its judicial system sentences people to death? Does capital punishment as practiced today in the United States constitute a human rights violation under Article 7? To answer in the affirmative, one need not think that capital punishment is equivalent to the worst atrocities committed by the Taliban. To answer in the negative, one need not approve of capital punishment or even be anything less than an ardent opponent of the practice. This example illustrates the problem of determining how to characterize even a minimal set of human rights. If capital punishment violates a minimal set of human rights, then it cannot be said that the minimal set is uncontroversial, or that it lends itself to effective international enforcement. The U.S. government is famous—or infamous, depending on one’s perspective—for not acknowledging the legitimacy of human rights enforcement
against its own authority on grounds that its authority is rooted in the “consent of the governed” to constitutional democratic sovereignty. The example of capital punishment reveals that the sovereignty of a constitutional democratic regime is no guarantee against tyranny of the majority or minority. (Majorities often do not rule in democracies.) It also remains an open question as to whether more than minimal human rights—an avidly moderate regime of human rights—would fare better or worse by way of international agreement and enforcement.

An equally serious problem for human rights in the international arena—illustrated by the self-exemption of many societies from all or part of the human rights regime—is nationalism. Nationalism is often asserted as a human rights claim on behalf of a self-determining “people.” Ignatieff perceptively argues that nationalism is a double-edged sword. Universalized as a human right, nationalism is conceived as the right of collective self-determination. This raises the question of whether collective self-determination is part of the minimal set of human rights because it is intrinsically valuable (for a self-determining “people”) or because it is an instrument, a means (as human rights should be) for protecting individuals who share a society together against the worst cruelties that politically organized societies can inflict on individuals. The idea that secure states can better guarantee rights than any available alternative is an instrumental defense of collective self-determination, but not a defense of nationalism per se. To defend collective self-determination as a right that is instrumental to protecting individuals against cruelty, one need not believe that every “peo-
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ple” has a right to its own self-determining society, which would permit it to exercise sovereignty over its members.

When a right to collective self-determination is identified with a defense of nationalism, understood as the self-determination of a people, the right loses its clear connection to protection of human agency against cruelty, oppression, and degradation. This is because, as Ignatieff recognizes, “nationalism solves the human rights problems of the victorious national groups while producing new victim groups, whose human rights situation is made worse.” Collective self-determination needs to be distinguished from nationalism for it to qualify as a means of protecting all persons against the worst forms of cruelty and oppression. There is no right to victimize individuals in the name of being a people or nation. Nationalism is the response to one human rights problem and the creation of another because nations assume the authority to victimize individuals under the guise of their right to self-determination.

A human rights regime therefore cannot consistently defend nationalism—or the absolute sovereignty of a people—as what the human right of collective self-determination entails. Collective self-determination as a human right does not carry with it the authority to oppress minorities. Collective self-determination is a human right exercised in groups, which is conditional—as are all such group rights—on the group’s respecting the other rights of individuals. Whenever collective self-determination is confused with national sovereignty in an unqualified sense, it increases the risk of other rights violations; indeed, it sometimes supports other rights violations. Human rights violations cannot be justified—or even con-
doned or excused—in the name of nationalism; human rights violations render nationalistic states “subject to criticism, sanction, and, as a final resort, intervention.” Determining that a nation-state has violated basic human rights, however, does not tell us whether and what kind of criticism, sanction, or intervention is likely to succeed in improving the situation of oppressed individuals, which is, of course, the purpose of human rights as political instruments.

The most controversial—and sometimes the only potentially effective—response to persistent human rights violations by states is intervention. Under what conditions, Ignatieff therefore asks, is intervention justified to reverse human rights abuses within states? Like nationalism, intervention is a double-edged sword. It must be used sparingly lest it become an unintended excuse for human rights violations on the part of intervening states. Yet it must be used when it can be effective to stop (or at least significantly reduce) systematic and pervasive human rights abuses. This standard is far harder to apply than it is to articulate, and it is controversial in both theory and application. “Human rights may be universal, but support for coercive enforcement of their norms will never be universal.” If this is realism, it is no recipe for isolationism. The failure to intervene in Rwanda, for example, where many lives could have been saved, was far from inevitable or justifiable. Such failures have “undermined the credibility of human rights values in zones of danger around the world.”

Arguments about when states should intervene to vindicate human rights are controversial for the obvious reason that so much is at stake in any decision about inter-
vention. But human rights are also highly controversial when what is at stake is in no way obvious. What, pragmatically minded people might ask with some incredulity, is at stake in the equally heated—and quite common—arguments about the metaphysical and moral foundations of human rights? These arguments—for example, about human agency, dignity, and natural law—tend to be quite abstract, and it may therefore be tempting to assume that not much of practical importance is at stake. But such an assumption would be rash. What is at stake in determining the foundations of human rights is often the very legitimacy of human rights talk in the international arena. If human rights necessarily rest on a moral or metaphysical foundation that is not in any meaningful sense universal or publicly defensible in the international arena, if human rights are based on exclusively Eurocentric ideas, as many critics have (quite persistently) claimed, and these Eurocentric ideas are biased against non-Western countries and cultures, then the political legitimacy of human rights talk, human rights covenants, and human rights enforcement is called into question.

“People may not agree why we have rights,” Ignatieff writes, “but they can agree that they need them.” On what is this agreement based? According to Ignatieff, people can agree that we all need human rights because without human rights individuals lack “agency.” I am less sure that people can all agree that we need human rights on the basis of the need for human “agency.” My uncertainty does not stem from disagreeing with Ignatieff that human agency is a strong basis for human rights. I heartily agree and would be happy to defend the claim on
both moral and pragmatic grounds (pragmatic grounds in this realm turn out also to be moral, and not coincidentally so). My disagreement with Ignatieff is over whether a human rights regime rests on a single foundation—the one agreeable to all, or to most people—or on several foundations, no one of which is likely to be agreeable to most people. The several foundations of human rights, taken together, are likely to be agreeable to more people than any single foundation, and no single foundation has a monopoly on reasonable claims to be made in its favor.

There is also reason to doubt that human rights as pragmatic instruments in an international human rights regime can do without foundations altogether. Ignatieff sometimes speaks as if his own candidate for the reason for defending human rights—human agency—is not a foundation but something else, perhaps a more pragmatic idea. But human agency is a kind of foundation for human rights, even if not the kind of foundation that many people may think is philosophically necessary for something as highly valued as a human right. If we have human rights to protect human agency, then we may have an undefeatable reason to defend human rights, and that is all a philosophical foundation needs to be: a reason that is so good it is undefeatable (at least given what we now know). Nor is this reason in the least bit trivial or uncontroversial. To say that human rights are needed for human agency is to say something nontrivial about “why we have rights.” We have rights because we are purposive agents who should be treated as such by our fellow human beings. The idea that we are purposive agents who are self-originating sources of claims is quite controversial. Human rights are more easily defended in
some cultures by claims about human dignity, or the respect owed to human beings, or the equal creation of human beings, than by the notion of human agency as a source of value in the world. (The idea of human agency can support human rights only if human agency itself is thought to be valuable and therefore worth protecting.)

To avoid the kinds of philosophical controversies that rage over what the right foundation is for human rights, Ignatieff wants to forgo foundational arguments rooted in human dignity, natural law, divine creative purpose, and related notions. Human agency, however, is a related notion, and that is part of its strength as a guide to what should count as a human right. If human agency were not related to human dignity, for example, it would be less well suited to supporting the weight of human rights recognition and enforcement. The alternative to eschewing any foundational argument is to encourage human rights regimes to rely on many foundational arguments. The reason Ignatieff wants to avoid foundational arguments is a good one: “A universal regime of human rights protection ought to be compatible with moral pluralism.” It does not follow that a regime of human rights should deny any foundation. Far better—for both moral and pragmatic reasons—that it rely on many foundational arguments. A human rights regime that welcomes an overlapping consensus is more compatible with moral pluralism. It is also more compatible with respect for the many cultural and philosophical traditions that converge in support of a similar set of human rights. This convergence is not complete or perfect, but neither is the convergence on human rights from within a single cultural or philosophical tradition.
To say that a universal regime of human rights should be compatible with moral pluralism is not to say that it must be compatible with every belief system. Human rights cannot be so indiscriminately embracing of every existing belief system, or at least not of every dominant interpretation of every existing belief system. The dominant belief system of the Taliban today denies the human agency of women, and their dignity, and it does so in manifest ways that are irreconcilable with any human rights regime. Perhaps the Taliban can be convinced to give up whatever beliefs they use to rationalize their oppression and abuse of women, but the failure to convince them to change their beliefs surely should not be taken as a challenge to the claim that human rights are universal in a meaningful sense, a sense that is often confused with the idea that human rights are universally accepted (which is clearly not the case). The meaningful sense in which human rights are universal is that they are morally defensible instruments even—or perhaps especially—in the face of oppressors who fail to recognize the human agency or dignity of those whose lives and liberties they are discounting. As Ignatieff puts it: “Rights are universal because they define the universal interests of the powerless.”

What, then, does it mean to say that human rights protection is compatible with moral pluralism? A human rights regime that is compatible with moral pluralism must be consistent with a plurality of comprehensive belief systems. It need not be compatible with all such belief systems, since some fundamentally reject human rights. (As a terrifying example, one need only think of Nazi ideology.) But many belief systems accept the need for
human rights, and the plural sources of support for human rights were in evidence at the origins of the juridical rights revolution. The drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights involved people tied to cultural traditions in North and South America, Europe, Asia, and Africa, and religious traditions including Islam, Judaism, Eastern and Western Christianity, Hinduism, and more. Since the time of the drafting of the first documents, the evidence has only increased on the side of the idea that many cultures can converge in support of human rights.

Why, then, do we pay any heed to the idea that human rights are parochial? Because from the time of the drafting, the evidence has also been overwhelming that many members of these and other cultures and religions adamantly oppose some of the most basic human rights—along with the very idea that human rights are essential for protecting individual agency or human dignity as distinct from the survival of the collectivity. What human rights protection seeks is not the destruction of cultures, as critics too often accuse, but their integration of human rights protection, as critics too often deny is possible. The critics’ prophecy that human rights will destroy their culture can be self-fulfilling—by encouraging resistance against human rights recognition—but it is not inevitable that this resistance result in either the culture’s destruction or the ongoing oppression of powerless people. Oppressed women typically want their rights as individuals to be secured within their own culture, not at the expense of exile from their culture, or the destruction of what they and others take to be valuable about their culture. All cultures that have arisen in the midst of quite perva-
sive human rights violations—as most cultures have—must change in order to honor the most basic human rights of women and vulnerable minorities. When cultures and societies accommodate the human rights of women, they do not cease to exist; they change, often quite dramatically, in ways that are morally and politically significant.

Ignatieff commends the mother document of the human rights revolution, the Universal Declaration, for avoiding contentious religious grounds for human rights and instead offering a secular ground, which is “a pragmatic common denominator designed to make agreement possible across the range of divergent cultural and political viewpoints.” The secular ground that Ignatieff defends is a recognition of the importance of human agency. The grounding of human rights in a defense of human agency is widely acceptable across many cultures. But I have offered some reasons to think that it is not necessary that any single grounding be acceptable to all supporters, whether the grounding be human agency or some other secular or religious conception of what makes human rights important. What a human rights regime relies on, instead, are plural foundations, no one of which needs to be authoritative to all human rights defenders. Plural foundations make a human rights regime more broadly acceptable to people.

Do plural foundations make a human rights regime philosophically or morally incoherent? Not at all. A human rights regime is a political instrument, and as such it should have foundations that suit its purpose. When international groups publicly respect a plurality of grounds, rather than insisting on only one or no ground, human
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rights are publicly defended for a plurality of reasons as a recognized part of what it means for a pluralistic world to support an international human rights regime. If there are many reasonable grounds of human rights, rather than just one (or none), then there is a good reason for political morality to recommend that official international documents eschew any assertion of “the” proper metaphysical foundation of human rights. At the same time, there is also good reason for a human rights regime to welcome a plurality of nonexclusive claims concerning the ways in which human rights can legitimately be grounded, in religious and secular claims of various sorts. Human agency, the dignity of human beings, and equal creation are three of the several foundations that are not mutually exclusive, although advocates of different moral foundations often treat the foundations as more important to honor than the rights themselves. When foundations are treated as more important to honor than the rights themselves, and disagreement about foundations becomes a cause for violating rights, then “idolatry” of abstract ideas, quite apart from the practical consequences of such idolatry, becomes a serious political problem. Having the right foundational faith should not be treated as more important than treating individuals decently by actually honoring their rights.

To respect human agency or dignity, one might argue, entails respecting (even if not accepting) a wide range of reasonable views about the foundations of human rights. After all, free people are likely to disagree more about metaphysical foundations than we do about far more consequential claims, upon which many of our divergent foundational claims (not coincidentally) converge. The
foundations of utilitarianism and deontology are as dramatically different as are the foundations of many religious and secular belief systems. But different foundations need not prevent convergence in defense of a set of basic human rights. This is true even with regard to communitarian philosophies, many of which can and do defend human rights, albeit from a metaphysical perspective that is at odds with liberal individualism. However, communitarian defenses of human rights do not deny the moral worth of individuals; they instead defend a closer constitutive connection between individuals and communities than do many liberals. An absolute and unwavering denial of the moral worth of individuals is incompatible with a defense of human rights. But in most cases where people continue to reasonably disagree, they also profit from deliberative engagement and argument—without fear of persecution—that human rights also make possible.

A defense of human rights as pragmatic instruments raises the question of whether an international human rights regime can do without all moral and metaphysical foundations by defending itself on pragmatic grounds. Ignatieff is tempted to argue that it can and should, while his commentators are dubious about whether it can or should. But does Ignatieff really defend doing without moral and metaphysical foundations? I don’t think so. Ignatieff cites Article 1 of the Universal Declaration as a model of how the human rights regime gets along well without moral and metaphysical justification. But does Article 1 really do without mentioning any moral or metaphysical foundations? Let’s consider what Article 1 declares:
All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

In these two simple sentences, the Declaration does not assert a single foundation for human rights. But neither does it eschew all foundations. Instead, it briefly declares many foundations:

- Free and equal personhood: “All human beings are born free and equal”
- Equal dignity: “free and equal in dignity”
- Equal creation or endowment: “They are endowed with reason and conscience”
- Equal brotherhood: “a spirit of brotherhood”
- Human agency: “endowed with reason and conscience”

Each of these allusions to foundations is also open to multiple interpretations. In keeping with the idea that human rights can be defended on a plurality of grounds, these two sentences point not to a single foundation for human rights but to several.

To say that human rights have foundations, however, is not to say that our attitude toward them, or toward the human beings who are their subjects, should be worshipful, or in any other way reverential, let alone idolatrous. To respect human beings is not to worship them—or to worship human rights in a way that does not permit any compromises in the enforcement of some human rights for the sake of protecting others, or for the sake of the social conditions that are prerequisite to the protection of any human rights. This worry about worshiping human
rights rather than valuing the lives of the people who are supposed to be protected by human rights raises the question of how we can respect our fellow human beings without treating rights with a reverential attitude. “With the idea of rights,” Ignatieff writes, “goes a commitment to respect the reasoned commitments of others and to submit disputes to adjudication.” Ignatieff’s view of human rights as protecting human agency supports this commitment to deliberating about our disagreements.

Ignatieff defends toleration rather than respect as a fundamental commitment of a human rights regime. I am less sure than he that a human rights regime can do without at least a minimal commitment to respect as well. Ignatieff connects his commitment to deliberation about our disagreements to toleration rather than respect: “The fundamental moral commitment entailed by rights is not to respect, and certainly not to worship. It is to deliberation.” I suspect that a willingness to deliberate with people with whom we disagree—as distinct from a willingness simply to let them be—depends on more than toleration only. I suspect that it also depends on our respect for them as agents with whom we can productively engage in argument. To tolerate but not respect others is “to live and let live,” to restrain ourselves from interfering with their freedom to live their own lives as they (and not we) see fit. Toleration prevents us from interfering in other people’s lives as long as they do not harm others. Toleration is a very good thing in human affairs. But it is not the only good thing. And it is not enough in the realm of human rights precisely because we cannot agree once and for all on what a human rights regime should include. We therefore depend for progress
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in the realm of human rights—as in so many other political realms—on deliberation as well as toleration. And to deliberate with other people, we need to do more than tolerate them; we need to engage with them constructively, which is itself a form of respect.

If we all could agree on what counts as not harming others, we might be able to settle for toleration in the sphere of international human rights. We would then not need to deliberate about the content of human rights. But as Ignatieff recognizes, we disagree, and deliberation is a way—a mutually respectful way—of trying to come closer to a reasoned agreement about human rights. Even when people who deliberate do not succeed in reaching agreement, they demonstrate some minimal degree of respect for one another by their efforts at deliberation.

A shared commitment to human rights might require no more than toleration were we already in agreement on the content of human rights. But since moral agents reasonably and passionately disagree, we may try to deliberate with one another in the hope of arriving at a better meeting of the minds and a more mutually justifiable meaning of human rights tomorrow than we have today. Deliberation therefore expresses more than an attitude of tolerance; it requires some minimal respect for people who have different, but reasonably thoughtful, views of human rights. A human rights regime tells us that we must tolerate unreasonable people, as long as they do not threaten to harm others. A commitment to deliberate with people with whom we disagree about human rights—in the hope of finding a better understanding tomorrow than we have today of our shared human rights
regime—expresses respect for them, in the words of Article 1, as “endowed with reason and conscience.” Respect for human dignity, agency, equality and freedom, brotherhood and sisterhood all are implied by Article 1. As it was drafted and has been interpreted since, Article 1 articulates not a single view but many broadly acceptable beginnings to an imperfect rights revolution whose end is not in sight.