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ONE NATION: COSMOPOLITANISM AND THE MAKING OF AMERICAN IDENTITY FROM MADISON TO LINCOLN

by

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

One Nation: Cosmopolitanism and the Making of American Identity from Madison to Lincoln

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My dissertation traces the belief that Americans are united in solidarity primarily in *cosmopolitan* terms—that is, by virtue of their shared humanity. Though scholars rarely identify "shared humanity" as a source of American solidarity, I find that many seminal figures in U.S. history appealed for solidarity on precisely these grounds.

The question of solidarity—the feeling of mutual affinity between members of a community, long recognized as essential to a free society—has always been central to American political discourse. Solidarity seems to require homogeneity, a "shared characteristic" from which it can spring; but because Americans have always been conscious of their diversity, the source of that homogeneity has always been an open question. Recent flaps over "multiculturalism" and immigration are only the newest iterations of a centuries-old debate. Casting the conflict in terms of a question of scope, I identify six competing "circles" of solidarity, ranging from sub-national attachments, which bind us to some but not all Americans, to wide transnational affinities, which bind us to Americans and non-Americans alike. Cosmopolitanism, the widest circle of all, has

long been neglected; but it would have had strong appeal to those who believed, as many did, that Americans were united by little else.

In the second half of the dissertation, I turn my attention to four of the most "supremely American" antebellum political thinkers: James Madison, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Walt Whitman, and Abraham Lincoln. Often characterized as a mere pluralist, Madison in fact was a committed republican who recognized the need for solidarity, but also took seriously the common belief that Americans had only their humanity in common. Madison thus worked to develop sustainable republican institutions for an extremely wide "sphere" of society, repeatedly arguing throughout the Constitutional debates that republicanism grew stronger as the scope of solidarity grew wider. Picking up this thread, Emerson and Whitman developed a cosmopolitan "story of peoplehood," culminating in Whitman's original *Leaves of Grass*, that grounded American unity in an all-encompassing human "Over-Soul." Lincoln, simultaneously, concluded that the cosmopolitan moment implicit in the Declaration of Independence was the proper source of "national" solidarity.

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The origins of this project are rooted in a 2003 seminar on American social movements with Dan Tichenor, Brian Stipelman and Marilyn LaFay. I wound up examining the idea of partisan realignment as the product of successful social movements, concluding (in an argument that ultimately went nowhere) that party realignments occurred only with the emergence of a new issue or sociopolitical trend, to which the dominant party coalition had no response. Later, considering potential dissertation topics, I started thinking about the second question: which "new trend" would be the one to trigger the *next* realignment? Globalization was one possibility: more and more people were talking about it, and it clearly had the potential to spark divisions in the two major party coalitions. But how to translate that into a dissertation that hadn't already been written seventeen times before? I made a list of five possible topics and brought them to Steve Bronner. I can't remember what the first four were, but Steve pointed immediately to the fifth—"internationalism in American political thought," scrawled as an afterthought at the bottom of the page. "That's the one."

In such shadowy moments are nations and dissertations born.

As with nations, however (among other things), a dissertation's origin story is really only the beginning. Nationalists like to pretend that their nation sprang into being organically, full-blown and perfect and mature; the mythical founders inaugurated the mythical golden age, and any movement away from the original position is a step in reverse that must be corrected. (Creationists believe the same thing about the world, which is why creationists and nationalists are so often the same people.) We know better, of course: the origin story is always full of exaggerations and lies, the "mythical founder"

is invariably a minor figure, and the nation never springs into being overnight, but grows and develops over decades and centuries. The same is true of dissertations: I settled on "internationalism in American political thought" three years ago, but I could never have foreseen then what this finished product ("finished" the operative term) would resemble. And I suppose I'm the mythical founder here too, but like all mythical founders I know that this project was really the work of many hands, some far more capable than mine.

So I have to begin by acknowledging my colleagues, with whom I suffered through the last seven years, whose own ideas and obsessions have wormed their way into this final draft—including Brian Stipelman's concern for the preconditions of political action and reform; Marilyn LaFay, Nichole Shippen, and James Mastrangelo's respective studies of personal identity, solidarity, grassroots action, and the forgotten presence of Otherness; Brian Graf's emphasis on the importance of international law; and Helen Delfeld's analysis of the internal and external projection of state legitimacy. I also have to single out Amy Linch, Geoffrey Kurtz, Joshua Beall, and Jennifer Miller, who commented regularly on my work (*usually* without complaint) and who shaped my own intellectual development on a far broader level. In many ways we've been responding to each other all along, and I'm grateful to have had the opportunity to be in such distinguished company.

I'm grateful also to Rutgers University and the department of Political Science in particular, which offered me the financial support and the intellectual resources necessary to complete (or even to conceive of) this project. My three advisors obviously deserve special thanks: Dan Tichenor, who started me on the path in the first place; Steve Bronner, who introduced me to cosmopolitan theory and forced me to realize, years later, that I

still had no idea what it was; and, never least, Gordon Schochet, who had faith in me even when such faith was unwarranted, who pointed me to Thomas Paine, David Hume, the Whig dissenters and the early modern republicans, without whom I would never have made it to Rutgers in the first place. (All is forgiven.) Dennis Bathory also deserves special thanks for his insightful and helpful comments along the way; it was Dennis, most notably, who helped me understand Madison's tenuous relationship with Montesquieu. I must also acknowledge the professors who shaped my intellectual development at Hope College—particularly David Ryden, who introduced me to American political thought, Jack Holmes, who waited patiently while I learned how to conduct research, and William Pannapacker, whose course on Walt Whitman in the spring of 2001 was the true origin of this project.

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of Wilson Carey McWilliams, who passed away in the spring of 2005, as I was just beginning to conceive of my project. It was in Carey's seminar on American political thought that I began to engage the tradition as something more than a passive observer, and my own obsession with the question of solidarity in America derived from Carey, who knew better than anyone just how important that question was. It was only later, when I read *The Idea of Fraternity in America*, that I became aware just how profoundly Carey's thoughts had shaped mine; he rejected the figures I embraced (and vice versa), but somehow he'd gotten me to see the tradition through his eyes. As anyone who knows Rutgers knows, Carey's death left a void that will never be completely filled, and it's one of my greatest disappointments that I never had the chance to work with him directly on this project. I can only hope that

what follows comes close to his standard: he probably would have hated this dissertation, but I hope he would have loved it as well.

Finally: someday I hope to break the old trite habit of thanking the devoted supportive long-suffering Significant Other without whom I would have thoroughly lost my way; but in this case the Significant Other was Lexie Hoerl—who read every chapter six times over, who sat through endless conference panels, who questioned, prodded, and cajoled, who knew the right answers months before I did, who contributed half my bibliography, who pushed republicanism on me for years before I finally took the bait, who stayed up till three in the morning, whose shoes cost three hundred dollars, and who will always know *just slightly* more about Tolkien than me. This project is dedicated to Lexie as well, for all these reasons and too many more. Had we never met, I'm sure I would have finished a dissertation anyway. But it wouldn't have been nearly as good.

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Introduction

Since the publication of Louis Hartz's *The Liberal Tradition in America* in 1955—and arguably since the publication of Charles Beard's *Economic Interpretation of the Constitution* in 1913—the study of American political thought has focused almost exclusively on its relationship to liberal democracy.[1] Even those who offer alternative perspectives—Beard's mid-century critics, for instance, or the proponents of "republican revisionism"—have invariably framed those alternatives in liberal terms: rather than posing entirely new questions, they have simply offered new answers to the old ones. And after almost a century of study, scholars have reached something like a general consensus. We know, for instance, that the American Founders were influenced heavily by "Lockean" liberalism and also by the early-modern iteration of republican theory developed (through Machiavelli) by Montesquieu and the English Whigs. We know, too, that while liberalism and republicanism are certainly not identical, they are definitely very closely related, historically as well as theoretically: scholars long debated whether the Founders were liberal *or* republican; but we now know that they are best understood (like Locke, Montesquieu and the English Whigs) as liberal *and* republican, without contradiction. No one writes about John Witherspoon, the Princeton professor who mentored James Madison and dozens of others, but we know that the emphasis he placed on Scottish Enlightenment thinkers like Adam Smith and David Hume had a profound influence later on the framing of American institutions. In fact, we've known all this for a while: none of these insights are less than twenty years old, and scholars have been

writing obituaries for the liberal/republican debate since the early 1990s. There are still lingering debates, of course: it's still an open question, for instance, whether the Founders' republicanism is best understood as an extension of Roman republicanism or as a uniquely modern "repudiation" of the classical tradition. More and more, though, it is becoming apparent that, as Alan Gibson recently concluded, the study of American political thought requires a new focus, a new frame, and a new set of questions.[2]

This is true not only because existing questions have been largely resolved, but also because our understanding of American political thought beyond those questions remains strangely limited. Because we have focused so exclusively on the "liberal consensus," for instance, we still do not fully understand the nature of American political conflicts—which, precisely *because* Americans of all stripes generally favor liberal principles and institutions, cannot simply be characterized as conflicts between "liberalism and its challengers." Likewise, we have produced mountains of scholarship on the central figures of American liberalism, from Madison to Dewey to Rawls; but we have largely ignored key figures in the American political tradition, from Witherspoon to Noah Webster to Walt Whitman, whose works are not so easily characterized as "liberal" or "anti-liberal"—and, to the extent that their work engages questions outside the scope of liberal theory, we still do not even fully understand Madison or Dewey or Rawls. As a result, as Donald Lutz observed fifteen years ago, the study of American political thought remains largely a fringe discipline: aside from its contribution to liberal theory (which is derivative anyway), scholars often tend to deem it useless and unimportant.[3] Establishing

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[1] Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America* (New York: Harvest, 1955); Beard, *Economic Interpretation of the Constitution* (New York: Macmillan, 1913).
[2] Gibson, *Understanding the Founding: The Crucial Questions* (Lawrence, KS: Kansas, 2007).
[3] Lutz, *A Preface to American Political Theory* (Lawrence, KS: Kansas, 1992).

the importance of American political thought in a larger context, and bringing our own understanding of the tradition to a higher level, requires, again, new questions—questions that liberal theorists do not engage, that liberal theory does not answer.

One such question, conveniently enough, has already risen to the forefront of political scholarship in the aftermath of 1989 and the rise of globalization: the question, that is, of *solidarity* in a post-national age. From the beginning, republican theory has insisted that a free society requires a feeling of solidarity, an emotional bond generated by a shared sense of common identity between members of a political, social, or cultural community. Without this emotional bond, republicans argue, individuals will never develop the civic "virtue" necessary to hold a community together democratically, that is, without resorting to oppression or force. Democracy requires at least a small degree of active participation, after all; and as rational choice scholars have long been aware, the act of voting (let alone costlier acts like attending meetings or protesting or volunteering) is almost never justifiable from a solely self-interested perspective. In the modern age, scholars and political actors alike have traditionally characterized solidarity in national terms: because the nation (or the nation-*state*, more accurately) is the primary unit of political analysis, it has also been (for the most part) the primary object of individual affection. Indeed, after nearly three hundred years of conceiving solidarity in this way, many have come to believe that the primacy of national sentiment is part of the natural order of things—that people are *meant* to privilege their nationality above every other source of personal identity, or that we are meant to care more about "our fellow Americans" than our fellow Bostonians, or our fellow Virginians, or our fellow Christians, or our fellow Westerners. Because of this, however, the emergence of global

and supranational political institutions poses a serious challenge to existing notions of solidarity. Globalization, to be sure, is by no means the End Of The Nation-State, as some initially believed. But global institutions have nevertheless become undeniably more prevalent in the last two decades, and undeniably more powerful besides. For this reason, David Hollinger concludes, "the problem of solidarity is emerging as one of the central challenges of the twenty-first century": institutions of 'global governance' will be present for the foreseeable future, but unless solidarity can be made to extend beyond the nation, it may be difficult, if not impossible, to make those institutions truly democratic.[4] But how far can solidarity be stretched?

Faced with this question, scholars and activists since 1989 have begun to revive the notion of *cosmopolitan* solidarity, or solidarity on the basis of our common humanity. Often reviled as hopelessly elitist, cosmopolitanism—literally, the feeling of 'world-citizenship' or membership in a worldwide human community—nonetheless seems to be an ideal solution to the dilemma of global governance: *if* it is possible to ground a meaningful sense of identity and fellow-feeling on the simple fact of our humanity, then it may yet be possible (if the republicans are right) to remake the emerging 'world state,' as scary as that concept remains, in a democratically accountable fashion. Recent social and political trends, indeed, have already established some of the preconditions for such a universal bond: widespread migration and the Internet, among other things, have de-territorialized the notion of community as never before; and advancements in communication and transportation technology have made it possible (not to mention necessary) for individuals to interact with each other, easily and cheaply, across greater

[4] David Hollinger, *Cosmopolitanism and Solidarity* (Madison, WI: Wisconsin, 2006), ix.

and greater distances. But while the idea of a 'global community' has grown stronger, it has yet to generate the *meaningful* solidarity necessary to sustain democracy on a large scale—and it remains an open question whether it ever can. Critics of the cosmopolitan project often charge, with good reason, that 'humanity' is far too broad and vague a concept ever to serve as a basis for real unity—especially with no excluded 'Other' to unite against. Human beings, the argument goes, have been able to generate strong, "thick" solidarity at the national level, but solidarity beyond that will be stretched too "thin," in Michael Walzer's terms, to support free institutions in the long run.

The stakes are high. If the critics are right to argue that the cosmopolitan project is a pipe dream, then the prospects for global democracy become considerably bleaker. If, on the other hand, we can show that cosmopolitan solidarity is sustainable—or at least *more* sustainable than its critics attest—then it becomes possible, though still difficult, to reconcile the 'new world order,' that old bugbear, with the democratic values we wish to carry over from the modern (Westphalian) age. Global institutions, as Jurgen Habermas observes in *The Postnational Constellation*, pose a serious challenge to democratic principles; but they also provide an opportunity to *extend* those principles as never before—if we are willing, and able, to accept it.[5]

With this in mind, I return to the American political tradition with a new question: how did Americans—"Americans"—deal with the issue of solidarity in the foundational period of U.S. history? The United States, to be sure, is by no means a microcosm of the world, and it would be a grave mistake to argue otherwise: even today, Americans (unlike the world at large) share, for the most part, a common language, a common set of cultural

[5] Habermas, *The Postnational Constellation* (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 2001).

symbols, and a common set of political principles, all of which can (and do) serve as a basis for a common identity. At the same time, however, there are also significant and useful parallels between globalization today and the making of American institutions: the U.S. is not the world, but the American Founding illustrates the possibility of forming supra-national institutions that are nonetheless free and democratically accountable (if a little oligarchic). We don't often view the Founding this way, of course; after over two centuries, it is easy to assume that 'America' has always been a single, distinct nation. But the Founders and Framers worked under a very different set of assumptions: aside from John Jay, who argued in *Federalist 2* that Americans were a "united people" with a common destiny, Federalists and Anti-Federalists alike generally agreed that 'America' was *not* a nation or a united people. Indeed, many Anti-Federalists argued—quite persuasively—that 'America,' an enormous mass of topographically diverse land containing three million people from an incredible variety of ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds (without even counting blacks and Indians[6]), was *far too broad and vague a concept ever to serve as a basis for real unity*. In the end, of course, the Federalists won anyway—if only because it was clear that the thirteen states needed to unite, freely or not, in order to survive. But the solidarity question lingered, long after the Anti-Federalists disappeared: if the republican argument was valid, then the very survival of the American experiment depended on finding (or artificially creating) that common ground that could serve as the basis for a meaningful 'American' identity.

[6] As we will see in Chapter 4, Anti-Federalists counted the American population differently: some counted only whites and numbered the American population at three million; others included slaves and numbered the population at four million. (And some vacillated entirely, characterizing Americans as "three or four millions of people.")

It is this question, perhaps more than any other, that has been at the center of the greatest American political conflicts, from the Constitutional debates to the Civil War to the 'culture wars' of the present day. What is the "common ground" on which the solidarity underlying American democracy is based? Or, to put it another way: *who are we*, and why should it matter? What is it that makes an American a *fellow* American, someone worth sacrificing for, even dying for? Is it the fact that we share a race, a language, a land, a religion, a history, a set of cultural or political institutions? Is it our legal status as citizens, or the territory we inhabit, or the symbols we embrace? Is it, maybe, something even larger? Is it simply the fact that we belong to "Western civilization" (whatever that means), or that we believe in freedom (whatever that means) or democracy (whatever that means)? Is it simply the fact that we're both human beings? Or is that phrase, "fellow American," just a delusion? Do we *really* feel solidarity with "our fellow Americans," or do we just wave the flag around and say we do? Do we feel *enough* solidarity to sustain a democratic community—or would we be better off shifting power to local communities, where our attachments might be thicker? Every one of these arguments has been made at some point in the course of U.S. history; and the ways in which we've chosen to resolve this question (or the ways in which our fearless leaders have resolved it for us) have had a profound impact on American political development. But because the study of American political thought has been primarily concerned with liberal democratic theory, scholars have yet to analyze this crucial aspect of American politics in full. Those who do engage the question tend to emphasize three competing approaches: *universalism*, which extends solidarity to anyone who adheres to a liberal-democratic "creed"; *nationalism*, which identifies "Americans" as a united and distinct

"people" and restricts solidarity to that narrow circle; and *pluralism*, which (based, usually, on a misreading of *Federalist 10*) denies the need for solidarity altogether and characterizes "America" as a disunited hodgepodge of competing factions. But this list has been compiled piecemeal and unsystematically, it is by no means exhaustive, and it is entirely debatable whether 'pluralism'—which doesn't answer the question so much as avoid it—should even be included at all. Students of American political thought generally recognize, if only implicitly, the importance of solidarity; but unless we turn our attention to it directly, our understanding of its place in American thought—indeed, our understanding of American thought itself—will always be lacking.

In particular, scholars to date have failed to consider the influence of the *cosmopolitan* approach, which holds that Americans are united primarily by the fact of their humanity. Cosmopolitanism, of course, is hardly the dominant conception of American identity—there is a reason, after all, why scholars emphasize universalism, nationalism and pluralism. But the argument for *human* solidarity would certainly have been appealing to early Americans, like Madison, who were convinced of the republican need for unity but were equally convinced that *aside* from their humanity, the 'American' people had nothing more in common; and it would have appealed no less strongly to antebellum figures, like Walt Whitman or Abraham Lincoln, who sought to avoid open warfare by reminding Americans what they shared in common at a time when such things were in short supply.

I argue, in short, that the cosmopolitan conception of American identity has been far more central to the tradition of American political thought than typically believed. Indeed, a surprising number of the most central figures in the tradition—men like

Madison, Whitman, Lincoln, and Ralph Waldo Emerson, who are so often identified as "supremely American"—appear to have adopted this approach to American nationality to a much greater degree than scholars currently recognize. Sadly, of course, the promise of cosmopolitan solidarity has gone largely unfulfilled as other approaches have overtaken it: ascriptivists exclude and disenfranchise in the service of ethnic unity; neoliberal nationalists ignore, exploit, or exacerbate humanitarian crises in the name of American interests; and universalists pursue their favored principles without regard for their effect on the actual lives of actual people. But the *presence* of a strong cosmopolitan strain at the heart of American political thought should at least compel us to reconsider the notion that human solidarity is too "thin" or utopian to serve as the basis for anything more than a dream.

In the chapters that follow, I argue, first, that the history of American political thought may be understood in terms of the ongoing conflict over the proper scope of American citizenship and identity—over how wide the circle of American nationality ought to extend. On one level, as Rogers Smith has rightly observed, that conflict arises from competing conceptions of the meaning of "America" itself: those who define "America" in ideological terms (the "land of the free") are generally willing to extend citizenship to anyone who subscribes to the so-called "American Creed," while those who define "America" in ethnocultural terms (as a "melting pot" of European nationalities, for instance) are generally only willing to extend it to those who fit the proper ethnic, religious, or cultural profile.[7] But the question of scope is also a question

[7] Smith, *Civic Ideals* (New Haven, CT: Yale, 1997).

of solidarity. After all, the act of accepting someone as a "fellow citizen" is a costly one: it obliges us to contribute financially, if necessary, for his benefit; it obliges us to give him a degree of control over the selection of our political leaders; and in times of war it even obliges us to sacrifice our lives, if called upon, for his security. Such an act requires a degree of self-sacrifice that is difficult, if not impossible, to justify in purely selfish terms; it makes sense, that is, only if we feel an attachment to the other, a sense that his wellbeing is somehow connected to ours. As a result, the conflict over American identity is also a conflict over the acceptable scope of solidarity—over how far, and on what grounds, the "sphere" of political community can be "extended" before we're no longer willing to sacrifice to that degree.

In Chapter 1, "Liberalism and Solidarity in American Political Thought," I begin by examining the role of solidarity in liberal theory. The predominantly liberal-centric approach to American theory, I argue, largely fails to engage the solidarity question—not because liberalism is dismissive or destructive of solidarity, as its communitarian critics charge, but rather because liberalism tends to *assume* solidarity at the outset. Indeed, not only does liberalism assume solidarity, it also assumes a particular *scope* of solidarity—or, more accurately, it assumes that the scope of solidarity has already been determined prior to the formation of societies and political institutions. In reality, of course, solidarity is far more problematic: boundaries between societies are rarely clear; members are often hard to distinguish from non-members; and there is no guarantee, even when the in- and out-groups are defined, that citizens will feel the *emotional* attachment necessary to generate a public spirit. Solidarity is rarely if ever organic; it must be "imagined," and often imposed. Moreover, in order to be sustainable, the communal

bond must be grounded on something *communal*—something shared in common (or 'imagined' to be shared in common) by all members. Identifying this bond has been one of the central tasks of American political thought from the beginning. *Is* there a common link uniting all Americans—and if so, what is that link?

Answering that question requires us, first, to examine the concept of solidarity itself. The most common objection to the cosmopolitan project—or one of the most common, at least—is that solidarity is simply not flexible enough to sustain it: we invariably feel less attached to those who are distant from us (geographically and biologically); moreover, human beings as a group do not have enough in common (yet) to serve as a foundation for mutual fellow-feeling. Many in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, likewise, made the same argument about Americans. To what extent, then, *can* human solidarity extend? What are the necessary conditions for its development, and what are the constraints beyond which it cannot develop? In Chapter 2, "On the Limits of Human Solidarity," I consider five of the most important conditions and constraints—finding, in each case, that while solidarity is not easy to generate or sustain, it is also considerably more flexible than conventional wisdom gives it credit for being. The most important constraint, of course, is the need for "homogeneity," or at least the perception of homogeneity: we feel attached to each other only if we can find some sort of common ground on which to base our attachment. More importantly, that "common ground" must have "prior merit" in our hearts and minds; it must be something, in other words, that we already perceive as central to personal identity. Even so, however, solidarity is capable of extending across an extremely wide, even universal scope—in contrast to the so-called "particularist thesis" associated with Carl Schmitt and Chantal Mouffe, which holds

(mistakenly, I argue) that solidarity cannot develop unless an Other is identified and excluded. The common image of solidarity as a series of "concentric circles," radiating outward from the center and growing fainter with distance, is also flawed: human beings may *tend* to feel more attached to narrower circles, but this is by no means *necessarily* the case. (Americans, for instance, identify with the nation more strongly than their particular state.) What matters more, as Rogers Smith has recently observed, is the extent to which individuals respond to the "stories of peoplehood" crafted by elites to generate political unity (and justify their own status as authority figures).[8] Many of the greatest conflicts in U.S. history, indeed, have been conflicts between competing "stories," all of which have defined 'America' in an incredible variety of ways, ranging from the narrow to the universal.

In Chapter 3, "Cosmopolitanism and Its Challengers," I finally return to my original question—who are we, and why should it matter—and lay out a comprehensive framework by which we can begin to understand this ongoing conflict. The best existing framework is the one Rogers Smith developed in *Civic Ideals*, which traces three of the most influential "stories of peoplehood" in American history—liberal universalism, ethnocultural "ascriptivism," and civic republicanism, which defines American identity in terms of national symbols and institutions. *Civic Ideals* represents an enormous step forward from previous scholarly analyses, which operated almost exclusively on one of two assumptions: either that Americans feel attached to each other on the basis of shared ideas (the "American creed"), or that Americans feel attached to each other on the basis of that which makes them "exceptional" from other nations. Smith, however, emphasizes

[8] Rogers Smith, *Stories of Peoplehood* (New York: Cambridge, 2003).

the conflict over citizenship law, rather than the underlying scope of solidarity. Recasting the conflict as "a question of scope," I argue, brings a new set of important questions to the foreground. How are we to understand "America," for instance—as a nation, united and distinct; as a part of some larger, trans-national entity (like "Western civilization"); or merely as a disunited space, a sort of political bazaar where self-interested groups and individuals can coexist and compete? From this perspective, even Smith's analysis is incomplete: for one, it does not account for the common eighteenth- and nineteenth-century view that 'America' was a non-entity, too large to be really meaningful; more importantly, it only considers one of many possible ways of understanding 'America' as part of a larger supranational collective (the global "community" of liberal democrats, that is). In Chapter 3, I identify six general theories of American identity, distinguished from each other primarily by their relative scope. American political thinkers, I argue, have explained 'national' solidarity in the following terms:

- **Pluralism**—Following early-modern republicans (Montesquieu, most notably) who insisted that the solidarity necessary to sustain a free republic was unattainable in large, diverse societies, the pluralist tradition favors narrower, more localized attachments (solidarity with local or state communities, e.g., or with a particular interest group) and dismisses "American" identity as artificial and spiritually meaningless. The Anti-Federalists and nineteenth-century secessionists, among others, concluded from this that the United States ought to be divided into several republics;

most pluralists, however, tend to believe that multiple groups can coexist under the same political roof, even without a strong common bond.

- **Ethnic Nationalism**—The "core doctrine of nationalism," as Anthony Smith defines it, holds that "the world is divided into nations, each with its own character, history and destiny"; that every individual is a member of one nation; and that "an individual's primary loyalty must be to her or his nation."[9] American nationalism, by extension, holds that "American" solidarity is grounded in those "shared characteristics" which characterize the American nation—the characteristics by which we can distinguish between "Americans" and "non-Americans," in other words. What are those "shared characteristics," though? That depends on how one defines a "nation," a term that lends itself easily to multiple definitions and meanings. Scholars have found it helpful to distinguish between two (overlapping) types of nationalism, "ethnic" and "civic."[10] Ethnic nationalists (or "ethnoculturalists," as they're sometimes called) define the nation in terms of characteristics 'ascribed' to individuals from birth, such as race or religious heritage, and stand in solidarity with their "fellow Americans" on those grounds. (The old image of the "average American" as a "white Anglo-Saxon Protestant" is an example of ethnic nationalism at work: non-WASPs are more

[9] Anthony Smith, *The Antiquity of Nations* (Malden, MA: Polity, 2004), 245.
[10] Hans Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism* (New York: Macmillan, 1944). Many scholars today avoid this distinction—upon close inspection, it becomes evident that the line between "civic" and "ethnic" nationalism is extremely blurry, if not nonexistent—but the distinction is still politically useful, as self-proclaimed "civic" nationalists often pursue very different policies from their "ethnic" counterparts. See Smith, *The Antiquity of Nations*, 244.

than welcome to live here, of course, but they can never be *true* Americans because they were not born with the right color or the right ancestry.)

- **Civic Nationalism**—Civic nationalism, like ethnic nationalism, holds that we feel attached to each other because we share a common national identity: whatever it is that separates us (U.S.) from other nations and other peoples, that is the source of our mutual solidarity. But while ethnic nationalists argue that we are distinguished by our "ascriptive" characteristics (which only certain people can access), civic nationalists argue that Americans are distinguished by a common 'national' culture, accessible (theoretically) to anyone who desires it. That culture may be reflected in a common language, a common 'national' history (as taught in common schools and "kept alive" in public museums), a common set of political institutions, a common set of cultural symbols and practices—or simply a common *feeling* of national solidarity (a "daily plebiscite," as Ernst Renan called it). Civic nationalism thus offers a slightly wider scope of solidarity: ethnic nationalists attach themselves only to "real" Americans who share a particular ethnocultural background, but civic nationalists attach themselves to anyone, regardless of their 'ascriptive' qualities, who claims American citizenship and participates in the common "American" culture. But there is also, undeniably, an ethnic component to language—not to mention history, political institutions and cultural symbols—which implies that the line between "civic" and "ethnic" nationalism is blurrier than it first appears. (Indeed, all the lines here are

blurry: ethnic nationalists differ from pluralists, for instance, only insofar as ethnic nationalists associate their particular faction with the whole nation.)

- **Culturalism**—The nationalist approach assumes that American democracy rests on a *national* solidarity, grounded in the "shared characteristics" that distinguish Americans from non-Americans. But this does not have to be the case: many of the "shared characteristics" that unite Americans with each other also unite them with non-Americans beyond U.S. borders—and these too could serve as a basis for democratic solidarity. Culturalists, for one—William Connolly calls them "civilizopolists," but I like my word better—believe that "America" is defined primarily by its membership in a larger, trans-national (though not quite universal) cultural sphere.[11] Samuel Huntington's conception of America as part of a North Atlantic "civilization," for instance, is a well-known current example. Historically, the most influential culturalists have been those who defined American identity as part of a larger 'Anglo-American' tradition (who defined 'rights,' for instance, as a distinctly British inheritance). Like ethnic nationalism, culturalism is often *ethno*culturalism, which uses ascriptive ethnic criteria to distinguish one "culture" from another. Unlike ethnic nationalism, though, culturalism explicitly extends its conception of identity *beyond* national boundaries, to include non-Americans (all 'Anglo-Saxons,' for example, or all 'Westerners') as well as Americans.

- **Universalism**—Universalism, the most popular source of American solidarity (at least in public discourse), contends that Americans are united by their common adherence to a set of universal (or universally applicable) *ideas*—most notably the "American creed" of democratic liberalism. (Religion—particularly Protestant Christianity, in the American context—is another important source of universalistic identity.) Like cosmopolitanism (but unlike culturalism), the scope of universalism is at least potentially global: universalists feel attached to fellow-travelers around the world, regardless of territorial distance or cultural divides. Unlike cosmopolitans, however, universalists require 'fellow-travelers' to identify with a particular set of ideas as a precondition for solidarity.

- **Cosmopolitanism—**Often equated with universalism in scholarly literature, cosmopolitanism holds that Americans are united in the most basic way possible—by the simple fact of their common humanity. Because humanity itself is an 'idea,' the line between cosmopolitanism and universalism is blurry—indeed, again, *all* the lines here are somewhat blurry—but cosmopolitanism, more than universalism, also insists on the preservation of cultural diversity (insofar as diversity is a defining characteristic of humanity). Universalists, by contrast, insist upon a single, homogeneous worldview as a precondition for a common identity.

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[11] Connolly, "Speed, Concentric Cultures, and Cosmopolitanism," *Political Theory* 28:5 (October 2000),

All six of these approaches have their defenders, but some are considerably more popular than others: in *Civic Ideals*, for instance, Rogers Smith focuses his attention entirely on liberal universalism and ethnic and civic nationalism. Cosmopolitanism, by contrast, has *never* been influential, at least according to prevailing conventional wisdom: the leading figures of the cosmopolitan tradition, from the Stoics to the *philosophes*, all had a profound effect on the development of American political thought, but scholars have yet to identify a strong American cosmopolitan strain. The remainder of my dissertation attempts to fill this gap. Cosmopolitanism has a far more central place in the American political tradition than scholars typically grant; indeed—and here is my second major contention—we can locate the cosmopolitan conception of American solidarity in many of the most seminal figures in the history of American political thought.

Consequently, I turn in Chapter 4, "James Madison's Cosmopolitan Republic," to the most seminal American theorist of all, the so-called "Father of the Constitution," through whose analysis we understand the nature of American political institutions. Often associated with pluralism for his defense of factional competition in *Federalist 10*, Madison in fact *rejected* mere pluralism, insisting instead—in good republican fashion—that a community could not survive free and independent unless its members felt some attachment to the *whole*. Neither, however, was Madison a nationalist: like most of those who participated in the Constitutional ratification debate (excepting, of course, John Jay), Madison accepted the view (seemingly irrefutable at the time) that 'Americans,' occupying a wide swath of land, embracing an enormous variety of cultural traditions and

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speaking a multitude of tongues, had no more in common than 'Europeans.' Indeed, as Madison himself observed (in direct opposition to the republican tradition), this problem was not unique to America: because diversity is a defining characteristic of the human condition, *any* community, no matter how small, that claims to be 'homogeneous' is ignoring (and, most likely, suppressing) some deep-seated disunity. Faced with this dilemma, Madison reached perhaps the only possible resolution: because 'homogeneity' is always a false claim, true republican unity would have to be grounded on the only thing 'Americans' (or any 'nation,' for that matter) could legitimately claim to share in common. Human unity, for Madison, replaces the (false) notions of limited homogeneity that were being promoted by his Anti-Federalist opponents (not to mention more than a few of his pro-Federalist allies). It is largely for this reason that Madison urges his fellow Founders to "extend the sphere" of republicanism: not only is human unity flexible enough to be stretched across a wide scope; an extended sphere also makes it harder to define the "nation" in terms of one narrow faction (the ethnic nationalist move).

This Madisonian conception of unity-through-diversity reasserts itself even more explicitly in the work of the Transcendentalists of the mid-nineteenth century. In Chapter 5, "Emerson, Whitman, and the 'American' Over-Soul," I examine the writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson, the leading figure of Transcendentalism and arguably the founding father of American national culture. As the American exponent of German Romanticism, the tradition which gave birth to nationalism in Europe, Emerson should by rights be the progenitor of American nationalism as well; remarkably, though, Emerson rejected the narrow scope of national unity in favor of a more cosmopolitan worldview. At the heart of Emerson's philosophy is the idea of the Over-Soul, the ephemeral being in whom all

human beings are united, regardless of cultural or territorial boundaries: we achieve spiritual fulfillment, Emerson argues, to the extent that we are willing to accept and embrace this fundamental unity of all mankind. Consequently, like Madison, Emerson concludes that any claim to 'unity' which is *not* all-encompassing is necessarily imperfect, even false. Political scientists typically associate Emerson with individualism ("self-reliance") or democracy,[12] but his approach to the solidarity question is no less important: while his lesser contemporaries sought to develop a distinct American national culture, Emerson exhorted the "American Scholar" to explore the underlying *unity* behind mankind's division into nations and states.

The political implications of the Over-Soul are not immediately apparent; Emerson, after all, is a notably esoteric writer. Subsequently, however, I turn to the work of Walt Whitman, perhaps Emerson's greatest disciple, who attempted (in vain) to reunite a divided people around their common human unity. *Leaves of Grass*, the first great work of American poetry, had a clear political purpose when Whitman unleashed it in 1855: as the United States hung on the brink of civil war, Whitman sought to ease the growing tension by reminding the American people—North and South alike—of what they shared in common. Like Madison and Emerson, however, Whitman was unwilling to appeal to false or artificial sources of unity—and, like Madison, Whitman accepted the view that Americans shared little in common beyond their own humanity. Consequently, though *Leaves of Grass* is infused with a vehement, almost jingoistic patriotism, Whitman's paean to America celebrates 'our' unity not as Americans, but as *humans*,

[12] Or "democratic individualism," as in George Kateb's reading. Kateb, *Emerson and Self-Reliance* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1995).

united within—and *only* within—the universal Over-Soul (which Whitman, modestly, names after himself).

This same appeal to unity on cosmopolitan (human) grounds reasserts itself even more fully—if inconsistently—in the early speeches and writings of Abraham Lincoln. In Chapter 6, "The Reluctant Universalism of Abraham Lincoln," I trace Lincoln's political evolution in the 1840s and 50s with respect to the question of solidarity. Like Whitman, Lincoln sought to bring together a divided people on common ground; but, like Whitman (and Emerson and Madison before them), Lincoln also had to confront the apparent fact that no such common ground existed. Throughout his early career, Lincoln initially attempted to resolve this dilemma by promoting racial homogenization, the ascriptive separatism of the Free Soil movement and the American Colonization Society; indeed, in many of his early speeches (and some of his later ones), his principal argument against slavery was that it encouraged miscegenation. But Lincoln too, no less than his predecessors, gradually turned to the cosmopolitan value of human equality, embodied in the Declaration of Independence (a far more comprehensible appeal than the hopelessly esoteric 'Over-Soul'), as the most viable source—perhaps the *only* viable source—of American unity.

The cosmopolitan tradition in America does not end here, of course; but if Madison, Emerson, Whitman and Lincoln are as "supremely American" as we so often make them out to be, then the presence of a common cosmopolitan strain in their works and writings should be sufficient to demonstrate the (still largely unrecognized) importance of that tradition in the development of American political thought. Moreover,

cosmopolitanism is only one of many conceptions of American identity, all of which demand further exploration: future studies may also find it worthwhile to reexamine specific political conflicts, from the Founding to the present day, as clashes over competing notions of American 'nationality.' In examining *cosmopolitanism* in America, then, I also demonstrate the possibilities implicit in this *general* approach, sketched in more detail in Chapter 1, to the study of American politics—complementing the traditional liberal-centrism of the post-Hartz age with a new emphasis on identity.

Chapter 1

Liberalism and Solidarity in American Political Thought

The Liberal Consensus in American Scholarship

Historians of American political thought divide generally into two camps: those who contend, with Louis Hartz, that American political discourse is distinguished by a monolithic "liberal consensus," and those who argue that "multiple traditions," not only liberalism, have contributed to the shaping of our collective ideology. The "consensus historians" in the former camp, led by Hartz, Daniel Boorstin, and Richard Hofstadter, dominated American political scholarship in the middle of the twentieth century.[1] In the 1970s and 80s, though, a new generation of scholars, building on the seminal work of Bernard Bailyn, Gordon Wood, and J. G. A. Pocock, began to emphasize *republicanism*, as well as liberalism, as a driving force behind American politics.[2] Even more recently, Rogers Smith, using data derived from citizenship and immigration laws, has concluded that *ascriptivism*, which emphasizes the importance of 'ethnocultural' groups (to which we are "ascribed" from birth), has been an equally important component (if not even more important) of the American political "creed."[3]

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[1] Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America* (New York: Harvest, 1955); Hofstadter, *The American Political Tradition* (New York: Vintage, 1948); Boorstin, *The Genius of American Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1953); see also Eric Foner, "American Freedom in a Global Age," *American Historical Review* 106:1 (February 2001): 1-16.

[2] The three books most often listed as 'seminal' to this tradition are Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 1967); Gordon Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1789* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina, 1969); and J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton, 1975).

[3] Smith, "The 'American Creed' and American Identity: The Limits of Liberal Citizenship in the United States," *Western Political Quarterly* 41 (1988): 225-251; *Civic Ideals* (New Haven, CT: Yale, 1997); and "Beyond Tocqueville, Myrdal, and Hartz: The Multiple Traditions in America," *American Political Science Review* 87:3 (September 1993). This ascriptive or "ethnocultural" tradition in American political development and public philosophy is most commonly associated with Smith, but see also W. E. B. Du

Both the "liberal consensus" and "multiple traditions" schools, however, implicitly share the same basic premise—that liberalism (or, more accurately, liberal democracy) is the best perspective from which to study the history of American political thought. This notion is often credited to Hartz, but its pedigree can be traced back even further still: it was not Hartz, after all, but Charles Beard, half a century earlier, who first asserted that the leading documents of American political and intellectual history should be interpreted in liberal terms. Beard's take on the American tradition, of course, was very different from Hartz's: while the consensus school emphasized our agreement on liberal values, Beard's famous (or infamous) *Economic Interpretation of the Constitution* emphasized the extent to which those values served the particular interests of a particular economic class at the unwilling (or unwitting) expense of everyone else.[4] Even this more cynical analysis, though, suggested what Hofstadter would later conclude explicitly: that, precisely because liberal ideas are at the heart of the Constitution, the study of America's leading political figures should begin with their specific engagement of those ideas. The consensus-based work of Hartz and Hofstadter represented a revolutionary move away from the conflict-based approach of Beard and his followers, but on this point the two camps were in agreement—and because of their enormous combined influence on the

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Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Chicago: A.C. McClurg, 1903); Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* (New York: Harper, 1944); John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (New York: Atheneum, 1963); Jennifer Hochschild, *The New American Dilemma: Liberal Democracy and School Desegregation* (New Haven, CT: Yale, 1984); Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford, 1988); Higham, "Multiculturalism and Universalism: A History and Critique," *American Quarterly* 45 (1993): 195-220; Donald R. Kinder and Lynn M. Sanders, *Divided By Color: Racial Politics and Democratic Ideals* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1996); Charles W. Mills, *The Racial Contract* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell, 1997); Neil Renwick, *America's World Identity: The Politics of Exclusion* (New York: Macmillan, 2000); Deborah J. Schildkraut, *Press One for English: Language Policy, Public Opinion, and American Identity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton, 2005); Carol Horton, *Race and the Making of American Liberalism* (New York: Oxford, 2005); Desmond King, *The Liberty of Strangers: Making the American Nation* (New York: Oxford, 2005);

study of American political thought, the liberal-centric approach they share casts a huge shadow over any and all subsequent scholarship.[5] Consequently, even those who focus their attention on other strains of thought generally begin by defining those strains, not as independent traditions in their own right, but rather as *alternatives to* the liberal tradition, in terms of their specific departure from the central tenets of liberal theory. And even those who dismiss the notion of a monolithic "liberal consensus" rarely question the underlying assumption—still mostly taken for granted—that the liberal-democratic "American creed" should be the starting point for any proper understanding of the American political tradition (or any specific figure within it).

It was not supposed to be this way, of course. Indeed, the revival of republican scholarship in the 1970s was seen as an opportunity to challenge this very approach: as Daniel Rodgers observes, "republican revisionism" was intended to be a third-way alternative to the liberal-centrism of Beard and Hartz, a way to examine American political theory from a new perspective.[6] To be sure, it would have been impossible—or, at least, it would have been a large mistake—to ignore the role of liberalism altogether: there is a reason, after all, why Beardian and Hartzian historians emphasized liberal values so heavily. Thus Gordon Wood, for instance, concluded his classic study of American republicanism, *Creation of the American Republic*, by tying its decline explicitly to the rise of liberalism in the nineteenth century.[7] Wood, however, did not

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and Schildkraut, "Defining American Identity in the Twenty-First Century: How Much 'There' is There?" *Journal of Politics* 69:3 (August 2007): 597-615—to name only a few.

[4] Beard, *Economic Interpretation of the Constitution* (1913).

[5] Daniel T. Rodgers, "Republicanism: the Career of a Concept," *Journal of American History* 79:1 (June 1992): 12-14.

[6] Ibid., 15.

[7] Wood, *Creation of the American Republic*, esp. chapters 12 and 13. Pocock does the same in *Machiavellian Moment*, though—unlike Wood—Pocock insists that the republican tradition remained viable, even dominant, well into the middle of the nineteenth century. Michael Sandel goes even further in

emphasize the obvious implication, that republicanism and liberalism are somehow mutually exclusive: instead, the bulk of his massive study analyzes American republicanism as a wholly independent tradition, perfectly understandable (indeed, best understood) apart from its anti-liberal status. There are, of course, key points where republicans and liberals are directly opposed: republicans, most notably, emphasize the importance of community to a far greater degree—and thus demand, as liberals do not, that citizens must be "virtuous" as well (living stoically, eschewing luxury, and putting the "public good" above private ambitions and interests).[8] But Wood also highlighted ideas and values that republicans shared with liberals: a common affinity with the English Whigs; a general suspicion of concentrated power; a shared commitment to "liberty" (albeit of a different kind); and an insistence on publicly accountable, elected representation.[9] Indeed, as Wood observed, American republicanism did not develop in response to liberalism at all; rather, it developed *alongside* it (or, rather, *prior* to it), influenced less by the modern struggle against capital than by the classical struggle to preserve free institutions against the ambitious machinations of emperors and kings.[10]

Perhaps because 'republican revisionism' was intended as a challenge to the dominant Hartzian school, however, subsequent scholars gradually came to define republicanism exclusively (or at least primarily) as a challenge to the dominant liberal-democratic monopoly. As Daniel Rodgers notes, historians in the 1970s and 80s grew

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Democracy's Discontent (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 1996): the republican tradition, he argues, remained dominant in American political discourse until the middle of the twentieth century. Indeed, Rodgers (1992) notes that most scholars shared this conception: they disagreed on *when* the break occurred, but it was generally agreed—at least in the 1980s—that republicanism 'gave way' to liberalism at some point in the late eighteenth or nineteenth (or twentieth) century. (Joyce Appleby and others, of course, would later point out that this view is oversimplified; see my discussion of the 'republican synthesis' below.)

[8] Wood, *Creation*., chapter 2.

[9] Ibid., esp. chapters 1 and 5.

increasingly willing to characterize republicanism not on its own terms, but simply as a "shorthand" term "for everything liberalism was not"—or, more specifically, simply as a nostalgic, agrarian, Jeffersonian critique of modern capitalistic liberal society.[11] The early revisionists, like Wood, had downplayed this idea of republicanism and liberalism as polar opposites; later republicans like Michael Sandel, however, made it the heart of their arguments.[12] And even the broader "multiple traditions" thesis of Rogers Smith, which moves beyond this narrow dichotomy, simply adds ascriptivism as a third combatant, characterized, like republicanism, as a direct opponent of the liberal worldview.[13] The consequence, to paraphrase J. Judd Owen, is that "multiple traditions" historians *negate* liberalism but remain unable to *transcend* it: rather than offering an alternative to the liberal-centrism of Hartz and Beard, they simply offer a new (conflict-based but essentially class-free) variation on it.[14] Such scholars no longer understand American political thought as exclusively liberal—but they understand it instead, in the words of Alonzo Hamby, exclusively as a conflict between "liberalism and its challengers."[15]

There is, of course, much to be said for the liberal-centric approach, particularly if we accept the common notion that the "American creed" is the source of American

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[10] Ibid., chapter 1. See also M. N. S. Sellers, *American Republicanism: Roman Ideology in the United States Constitution* (New York: NYU, 1994).
[11] Rodgers, "Republicanism: the Career of a Concept," 33.
[12] See my discussion of Sandel below.
[13] As several of Smith's critics noted, the act of defining ethnoculturalism *in opposition* to liberalism has the unintended effect of sanitizing (artificially) the liberal tradition. Jacqueline Stevens, "Beyond Tocqueville—Please!" *American Political Science Review* 89:4 (December 1995), pp. 987-95; Bonnie Honig, *Democracy and the Foreigner* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton, 2003), chapters 1 and 5; Honig, "Another Cosmopolitanism? Law and Politics in the New Europe," in *Another Cosmopolitanism*, ed. Robert Post (New York: Oxford, 2006), 122.
[14] Owen, "Church and State in Stanley Fish's Antiliberalism," *American Political Science Review* 93:4 (December 1999): 913.
[15] Hamby, *Liberalism and Its Challengers: From FDR to Bush* (New York: Oxford, 1992).

national identity—that, as Hofstadter famously wrote, "It has been our fate as a nation not to have ideologies but to be one."[16] Liberalism is undeniably a central feature of American political thought—as evidenced, if nothing else, by its very ability to absorb those historians who attempt to focus their attention elsewhere. What is problematic, however, is an *exclusively* liberal-centric approach, one that compels scholars to restrict their attention to the specific issues and questions emphasized by liberal theory—and neglect the (equally important) issues and questions that liberalism, for whatever reason, often avoids. In this way the "liberal consensus" becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy: we can safely conclude that American political thought revolves around liberal democratic theory, because we miss (or *dis*miss) those elements of American political thought that revolve around anything else.[17]

As a result, students of American political thought have helped to marginalize their own discipline: the fact that scholarship on the leading figures in American intellectual history tends to focus on their place in the liberal-democratic tradition contributes to the general impression that American theory is not worth examining outside that narrow scope. More importantly, it also prevents those who *do* examine it from appreciating its full breadth: James Madison and John Dewey are remembered, but

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[16] Quoted in Seymour Martin Lipset, *American Exceptionalism: A Double-Edged Sword* (New York: Norton, 1996), 18.

[17] Which, in turn, makes it difficult to discuss those shameful non-liberal moments in American history: Americans often resist discussions of the legacy of slavery, for instance, partly (though not entirely) because they—we—view American history in terms of progress *away* from slavery. Slavery by this logic is *anti-American*; thus, by the same logic, the notion that American culture developed around slavery, or that American society and political discourse may still be influenced by its legacy, cannot possibly be true. (The musical "1776" captures this quite effectively: we identify unabashedly with the abolitionist Massachusetts delegation, until South Carolina turns the tables by observing that the North too—and thus, in other words, all of America—was built on the backs of slaves. This, of course, doesn't make the South Carolinians *right*—we still recognize the tragedy of the ending, where Massachusetts compromises on the slavery question—but it does make all of us equally *culpable*. Of course, such a depiction of history,

others—figures like John Witherspoon, the Connecticut Wits, and Noah Webster, whose works do not engage the "American creed" so directly—are largely forgotten.[18] Even worse, such an approach also makes it difficult, if not impossible, to use figures like Madison and Dewey to *challenge* our existing conception (or misconception) of the "American creed." Thus the "creed" too becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, perhaps even more than the "liberal consensus": having concluded that free-market, rights-based democratic liberalism is the defining characteristic of American political thought, we exclude as irrelevant those Americans—and there are surprisingly many—whose work emphasizes other concerns.

Addressing those "other concerns" is the key to broadening our understanding of American theory—particularly now that scholars have begun referring to the old liberal/republican debate in the past tense.[19] This is not to imply that liberalism is unimportant, of course; indeed, it is precisely because liberalism *is* so important that future studies must seek to transcend the standard paradigm. Because the liberal conception of individual freedom remains "the most central idea in American political culture,"[20] it is impossible (or at least disingenuous) to explain away the great conflicts of American history simply as conflicts between 'liberals' and 'anti-liberals.' Liberals (or at

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accurate as it may be, is hard to reconcile with the common view that draws a brightline between liberal and 'ethnocultural' ideologies—as Honig and others observed, in their responses to *Civic Ideals*.)

[18] A JSTOR search for the figures in question (February 21, 2008) reveals, for instance, that political science journals have published at least 564 articles that mention "James Madison" and 294 that mention "John Dewey." By contrast, "John Witherspoon," "Noah Webster," "Connecticut Wits," and the names of two of the more prominent early American nationalist writers, "Timothy Dwight" and "Joel Barlow," appear in a combined total of 55 published political science articles. The omission of Webster, a major figure in the development of American political and literary culture, a prominent Federalist in the ratification debates, and one of the leading theorists of American nationalism, is especially troubling. (Of course, since my current project emphasizes *cosmopolitanism*, rather than nationalism—and since I consciously relate that tradition to the already-recognized 'major' figures in American political thought—I won't be focusing on Webster either.)

least liberal arguments) invariably appear on both sides of every American domestic conflict—as in the Constitutional ratification debate, where Federalists and Anti-Federalists alike expressed a concern for "individual rights";[21] or even in the Civil War, where Southerners often appealed to liberal property rights (among other things) to justify the institution of chattel slavery.[22] Understanding these conflicts (and others) requires an approach that recognizes the liberal monopoly in American discourse, but does not allow that monopoly to determine which questions are (and are not) worth exploring.

Numerous historians of political thought have already begun to engage these questions: among the best of these studies in recent years are W. Carey McWilliams's analysis of the *fraternal* tradition in America; James Morone's examination of *religion* in American politics; and Smith's own *Civic Ideals*, which adopts the 'liberalism and its challengers' typology but uses it to examine the question of national *identity* (which liberal theory is so often accused of avoiding).[23] Even these great works, however, only hint at the possibilities for future analysis. A deeper understanding of the American tradition requires us to pick up these threads and carry them even further—to shift the focus onto a new set of questions, even as we remain aware of the importance of liberal ideas in American political thought.

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[19] See, e.g., Alan Gibson, *Understanding the Founding: The Crucial Questions* (Lawrence, KS: Kansas, 2007).
[20] Eric Foner, "American Freedom in a Global Age," 4.
[21] See, e.g., Herbert Storing, *What the Anti-Federalists were For* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1981), 64; but cf. also Michael Sandel's discussion of the ratification debate in *Democracy's Discontent* (1996).
[22] See, e.g., Gary Gerstle, *American Crucible* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton, 2001); David Ericson, *The Debate over Slavery* (New York: NYU, 2001); and Horton, *Race and the Making of American Liberalism* (2005). The appeal to liberal rights, most notably, was the logic employed by the Supreme Court in its infamous *Dred Scott* decision: the Missouri Compromise was unconstitutional because it violated the property rights of white slave-owners. See Michael Sandel's discussion, again, in *Democracy's Discontent*.

It is for this reason that I take up the question of *solidarity*, the feeling of mutual affinity, shared between members of a community, that motivates individuals to sacrifice their own private interests for the general wellbeing of a larger collective. As I noted in my introduction, the growing power of international governing bodies in recent decades has made this an especially hot topic today in many disciplines; but the question of solidarity has also been central to American political thought from the beginning—particularly during times of domestic conflict, when political and intellectual leaders struggled directly with the need to unite (or reunite) the American public. Indeed—given Wood and Pocock's insight about the importance of republicanism in the eighteenth century—the solidarity question would have been particularly central to the political thought of the American Founders, trying to make a nation almost literally from scratch. Republican theory, after all, emphasizes the importance of civic virtue, the personal attachment of individuals to their community, which is necessary to hold a free society together without resorting to coercion or military force. Moreover—as republicans have observed as far back as Aristotle—the nature of a community is determined in large part by the nature of 'its people,' and thus by the particular source of solidarity that serves to unite them. A 'nation' united around a common ethnicity, for instance, will conduct itself very differently from a 'nation' united by its religion or its land—even if all three adopt the same basic institutional structures. Thus (as Rogers Smith and others have already demonstrated) the question of *identity*, the grounds on which a society chooses to define itself and distinguish members from non-members, is crucial from the outset—

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[23] McWilliams, *The Idea of Fraternity in America* (Berkeley: Univeristy of California, 1973); Morone, *Hellfire Nation* (New Haven, CT: Yale, 2003); Smith, *Civic Ideals* (1997).

even, indeed, in individualistic liberal societies, insofar as citizenship is the primary source of individuals' rights and duties.[24]

As scholars have long recognized, however, liberalism lacks a firm *theory* of identity or solidarity: it offers a comprehensive theory of social organization but generally fails to engage the prior question of how a society is to be constituted or how membership in that society is to be understood.[25] Liberal theorists generally recognize (if only implicitly) the importance of solidarity to a free society, but often fail to recognize that it is problematic, that the need for solidarity generates a number of questions that do not, except in the most ideal and utopian of conditions, have easy or obvious answers. The liberal-centric approach to American political thought, therefore, has largely prevented us from engaging this question directly. The work of Smith, Deborah Schildkraut, and others in this vein has been exceptional but also *exceptional*: because the study of American political thought to date has focused so heavily on other matters, there remains a great deal left to uncover.

Solidarity in the Liberal Tradition

This contention—that liberalism lacks a theory of solidarity—should sound only too familiar: communitarian critics, after all, have been leveling this charge, or something like it, against liberal theory for centuries (particularly with regard to the United States).[26]

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[24] Yael Tamir makes this point specifically with respect to the modern liberal welfare state: without a prior bond of solidarity, she observes, individuals will not consent to the material self-sacrifice necessary to sustain it. Tamir, *Liberal Nationalism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton, 1993), 121.
[25] Ibid., 121.
[26] See, especially, Alistair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame, 1981); Benjamin Barber, *Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age* (Berkeley: University of California, 1984); Michael Sandel, *Democracy's Discontent* (1996); and Anita L. Allen and Milton C. Regan, Jr., eds., *After Democracy's Discontent: Essays on American Politics, Law, and Public Philosophy* (New York: Oxford, 1998).

The typical version of this argument holds that America's 'liberal consensus' destroys the bonds of solidarity on two fronts: its emphasis on the individual leaves America "without a sense of moral community," and the pluralism inherent in the Constitution leaves it "without a sense of national purpose."[27] The consequences of this are familiar too: voter turnout plummets; individuals become less and less likely to participate in civic society; and we become more and more resentful whenever we're asked to sacrifice our own interests for 'the greater good'—even in times of great danger and peril.[28] (Witness the national resistance to a reinstated draft, for instance, after the events of 9/11.[29]) These developments are profoundly troubling for anyone who believes in democracy—and even more troubling for republicans, like Philip Pettit or Michael Sandel, who define "liberty" as *self-government* (or as "non-domination") rather than the mere absence of legal constraints.[30] Even worse, if republican theorists like Pocock are right to assert that individual self-fulfillment is possible "only when the individual acts as a *citizen*," then liberalism, which privileges the individual over the community, inadvertently—but inevitably—makes it impossible for us to fully realize our "capabilities" as dignified human beings.[31] Liberalism fails, in other words, even according to its own standards.

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[27] John Patrick Diggins, *The Lost Soul of American Politics: Virtue, Self-Interest, and the Foundation of Liberalism* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1984), 5-6.

[28] This well-known Tocquevillean argument is most commonly associated with two recent books: Robert Bellah et al., *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (Berkeley: University of California, 1985); and Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000).

[29] Indeed, the only members of Congress who raised the possibility of a reinstated draft were liberal antiwar Democrats—who were attempting to call public attention to the fact that the Iraq war, properly waged, would require great personal sacrifice, on the *assumption* that this would spark widespread resentment and outrage.

[30] Sandel, *Democracy's Discontent* (1996), pp. 4-5; Pettit, *Republicanism: A Theory of Freedom and Government* (New York: Oxford, 1997), and "Reworking Sandel's Republicanism," in *Debating Democracy's Discontent*, eds. Allen and Regan (1998), 48-49.

[31] J. G. A. Pocock, *Politics, Language, and Time* (New York: Atheneum, 1971), 85 (italics mine); quoted in Richard C. Sinopoli, *The Foundations of American Citizenship* (New York: Oxford, 1992), 10. Sinopoli identifies Pocock's view here as "strong republicanism," incompatible with liberal individualism—in

In recent years, this communitarian complaint has been most commonly associated with Sandel—who, in *Democracy's Discontent*, made perhaps the most persuasive case yet for this insidious effect of liberalism on community. Liberal theory, Sandel famously argued, promotes the notion of "the unencumbered self," the idea that individuals are, and ought to be, free from any and all "ascribed" bonds of solidarity, bonds that she does not freely choose for herself.[32] Consequently, the ideal liberal state is merely a "procedural republic," which protects (or attempts to protect) that freedom of choice by refusing to impose a set of values or a uniform conception of the good life.[33] The problem with all this, however, is twofold. First, any republic requires some degree of public commitment and civic engagement, which in turn requires some semblance of unity around a common set of values; the "procedural republic" thus weakens itself by refusing to promote the very values necessary to sustain it.[34] More importantly, the idea of an "unencumbered self" is a myth, thoroughly disconnected from reality: as Sandel observes, every individual has "certain moral and political obligations that we commonly recognize, even prize." Many of these bonds are freely chosen, to be sure, but many others are not: ties to one's family, one's homeland, one's nation, and the like "claim us for reasons unrelated to a choice."[35] These ascribed "obligations of membership" are of great importance to our self-fulfillment as human beings and our conception of ourselves as *selves*—and because liberalism cannot account for them (or rejects them outright), it is

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contrast to "weak" republicanism, which privileges participation but does not link it so directly to individual self-fulfillment. It is this need for self-fulfillment, however, which leads Martha Nussbaum (who pioneered the "capabilities approach" in modern-day philosophy) to include "affiliation" with larger groups on her list of necessary "capabilities" required for a dignified human life. Nussbaum, *Frontiers of Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 2006), 76-77.

[32] Sandel, *Democracy's Discontent*, 13.

[33] Ibid., 24.

[34] Ibid., 24.

[35] Ibid., 13.

incapable of understanding what gives life meaning.[36] Liberalism claims to privilege the individual, Sandel concludes, but the individual it produces is a hollow and empty shell.

Sandel's argument is highly convincing. As several critics observed, however, it was also a bit anachronistic, tied to a particular view of the liberal tradition that, by 1996, had already given way to a newer, more nuanced conception.[37] Indeed, upon closer inspection, this view of liberalism as essentially anti-communitarian is not nearly as persuasive—and not nearly as accurate—as many communitarians (and, for that matter, many liberals) once believed. Historians in the 70s and 80s, like Sandel in *Democracy's Discontent*, often took it for granted that liberalism and community were mutually exclusive adversaries, that republican principles like patriotism and civic virtue were necessarily 'anti-liberal.'[38] Such a view, however, is difficult to reconcile with the liberal tradition itself—which, from its inception, has been historically tied to the nation-state, a particular form of political community. Likewise, such a view also makes it next to impossible to comprehend a number of key figures in the liberal tradition—not least the American Founders, who combined a decidedly liberal defense of a pluralistic "procedural republic" with a republican insistence on the "common good."[39] And though many scholars responded by simply attempting to pigeonhole the data into the existing paradigm—downplaying Locke's influence on the Founders, for instance,[40] or dismissing

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[36] Ibid., 15.
[37] See Richard Rorty, "A Defense of Minimalist Liberalism," and Will Kymlicka, "Liberal Egalitarianism and Civic Republicanism: Friends or Enemies?" in *Debating Democracy's Discontent: Essays on American Politics, Law, and Public Philosophy*, eds. Allen and Regan (1998), 117-30 and 131-48, respectively.
[38] See Rodgers, "Republicanism: Career of a Concept" (1992).
[39] Indeed, as Gordon Wood notes, "liberty" and "public good" were the two most common phrases used in Founding-era American political writing. Wood, *Creation*, 55.
[40] See, e.g., Douglass Adair, *Fame and the Founding Fathers* (New York: Norton, 1974); and Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*.

figures like Jefferson and Madison as theoretically inconsistent—this approach alone is wholly unsatisfactory.

Conventional wisdom aside, then—and notwithstanding the persuasive force of works like Sandel's—scholars in the last two decades have become increasingly aware that liberalism, and the liberal state, are far more conducive to bonds of solidarity (even ascribed, involuntary bonds, for better or worse) than we once believed. We owe this insight largely to two distinct schools of thought that emerged, almost simultaneously, in the middle of the 1980s. The first of these is the "republican synthesis" in American political thought, led by Joyce Appleby, Richard Sinopoli, and Michael Zuckert (among many others), which reconciled the original theory of a dominant liberal consensus in America with the existence, no less undeniable, of a powerful republican strain. American political thought has indeed been characterized by a strange brew of individualism and communitarianism from the start, but this is not simply a matter of theoretical inconsistency: in fact, the synthesizers contended, American liberalism has always been sensitive to the need for "civic virtue," even in (or *especially* in) such a large and pluralistic society.[41] No less important, too, is the extent to which American political

[41] Appleby, *Capitalism and a New Social Order: The Republican Vision of the 1790s* (New York: NYU, 1984); Appleby, *Liberalism and Republicanism in the Historical Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 1992); Sinopoli, *The Foundations of American Citizenship: Liberalism, the Constitution, and Civic Virtue* (1992); Zuckert, *Natural Rights and the New Republicanism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton, 1994); Zuckert, *The Natural Rights Republic* (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame, 1996). See also William Galston, "Defending Liberalism," *American Political Science Review* 76:3 (September 1982): 621-629; Nathan Tarcov, "A 'Non-Lockean' Locke and the Character of Liberalism," in *Liberalism Reconsidered*, eds. Douglas MacLean and Claudia Mills (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1983), 130-140; John Patrick Diggins, *The Lost Soul of American Politics* (1984); Amy Gutmann, "Communitarian Critics of Liberalism," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 14:3 (Summer 1985): 308-322; Thomas Pangle, *The Spirit of Modern Republicanism: The Moral Vision of the American Founders and the Philosophy of John Locke* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1988); Jeffrey Isaac, "Republicanism vs. Liberalism? A Reconsideration," *History of Political Thought* 9 (Summer 1988): 349-77; Stephen Macedo, *Liberal Virtues* (New York: Oxford, 1990); Galston, *Liberal Purposes* (New York: Cambridge, 1991); J. David Greenstone, *The Lincoln Persuasion* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton, 1993); and James Kloppenberg, *The Virtues of Liberalism* (New York: Oxford, 1998). Alan Gibson offers a concise summary of the liberal-republican debate in

theory, incorrigibly individualistic as it is, has been obsessed with the question of *identity*, the need for a feeling of attachment to something greater than the self.[42] It is for this reason, indeed, that the Constitutional debates revolved so tightly around whether "a large federal republic" would be able to "engender citizen affection and allegiance"—not because eighteenth-century Americans were anti-liberal, but because "Both Federalists and Anti-Federalists understood that a liberal polity, like virtually any other, required a 'virtuous' citizenry if it was to endure."[43] Moreover, this liberal concern for community is not limited to the American context alone: despite being commonly associated with selfish "possessive individualism," liberal theory also "incorporates Aristotelian republican values of individual independence and patriotism in its understanding of the good life"—not only in America, but everywhere.[44]

The second group to identify a communitarian strain in liberal theory were the so-called "liberal nationalists," led by Will Kymlicka, David Miller, and Yael Tamir, who defended the liberal project against communitarians while simultaneously assailing 'traditional' liberals (most notably John Rawls) for their failure to recognize the inherent presence of community in their own theory.[45] Communitarians are right, the liberal nationalists conceded, to insist on a "politics of the common good"; liberalism can not

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Understanding the Founding: The Crucial Questions (2007). Gibson distinguishes between this republican (or "neo-Lockean") synthesis, which identifies republicanism as a form of liberalism, and "liberal republicanism," associated primarily with the work of Lance Banning, which maintains the separation between the two schools but notes that eighteenth-century American theory blends them together (132). (Robert Shalhope makes a similar argument in *The Roots of Democracy: American Thought and Culture, 1760-1800* [Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1990].)

[42] Diggins, *The Lost Soul of American Politics*, 6.

[43] Sinopoli, *The Foundations of American Citizenship*, 6.

[44] Isaac, "Republicanism vs. Liberalism? A Reconsideration," 375.

[45] Kymlicka, *Liberalism, Community, and Culture* (New York: Oxford, 1989); Tamir, *Liberal Nationalism* (1993); Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights* (New York: Oxford, 1995); Miller, *On Nationality* (New York: Oxford, 1995); Kymlicka, *Politics in the Vernacular:*

legitimately claim to privilege the individual if it does not respect the social attachments that provide individual lives with meaning and purpose.[46] But respecting the "common good" does not require us to abandon liberalism; it merely asks us to look back to an older nineteenth-century tradition, represented by figures like Mazzini and John Stuart Mill, which championed particular national cultures as necessary for the realization of universal liberal values.[47] Liberalism and communitarianism, then, "can indeed accommodate one another"—even if we concede that Sandel's critique is applicable to Rawls and his theoretical followers, who (ostensibly) downplay the importance of solidarity in liberal polities.[48] But the liberal nationalists went even further: a strong community spirit is not merely *compatible* with liberalism, they argued; it is in fact a *prerequisite*. Whether "implicitly or explicitly," Kymlicka wrote, liberalism "contains a broader account of the relationship between the individual and society—and, in particular, of the individual's membership in a community and a culture."[49] Precisely because membership and belonging *are* of such importance to the self—and, moreover, because the demands of the liberal welfare state require strong civic participation and a sense of the "common good"—liberal theory, from the start, is predicated on a conception of individuals as 'embedded' members of a larger community. This is true even for 'traditional,' seemingly anti-communitarian liberals like Rawls: their attention may be focused on other (procedural) matters, but even they must "notice, and indeed emphasize,

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Nationalism, Multiculturalism and Citizenship (New York: Oxford, 2001). See also Michael Lind, *The Next American Nation* (New York: The Free Press, 1995).

[46] Kymlicka, *Liberalism, Community, and Culture*, 76. See also Tamir, *Liberal Nationalism*, 36.

[47] Kymlicka, *Liberalism, Community, and Culture*, 76; and Tamir, 79.

[48] Tamir, 6. Stephen Tierney, following Charles Taylor and Michael Walzer, distinguishes traditional (Rawlsian) liberalism and liberal nationalism as "Liberalism I" and "Liberalism II," respectively—though liberal nationalists also contend that the line between the two is not as clear as it appears. Tierney, *Constitutional Law and National Pluralism* (New York: Oxford, 2004), 46-7. See also Amy Gutmann, ed., *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton, 1994).

our dependence…on our cultural structure and community."[50] Mazzini, Mill, and their contemporaries were conscious of this dependence to a degree that many others in the liberal tradition were not—but the communitarian moment is unavoidable, even for those extreme individualists (Bernard Mandeville comes to mind) who actively try to avoid it. The primary difference, in short, between 'traditional' liberals and their nationalist counterparts is simply that the former are unaware of their own assumptions.[51]

Thanks in large part to the work of these two schools, it is now possible to conclude that the traditional communitarian complaint is exaggerated, at least in its standard form. Liberal hyper-individualism is not to blame for the national ennui observed by Sandel at the outset of *Democracy's Discontent*—or if it is, the fault lies with the *particular* predominant iteration of liberalism in late twentieth-century America, and not with some inherent flaw of the theory itself.[52] This, indeed, should not be surprising: after all, the subordination of individuals to the community—the demand that the individual must "part with his Freedom" so that the community may survive—has been a central feature of liberal social contract theory from the beginning.[53] Because late twentieth-century liberal theory is so heavily dominated by the specter of Rawls, much of the present-day conversation revolves around his specific analysis—but the need for

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[49] Kymlicka, *Liberalism, Community, and Culture*, 1.
[50] Ibid., 75. See also Tamir, 19, 117.
[51] Numerous scholars have since made this observation against Rawls: see, e.g., Amy Gutmann, "Communitarian Critics of Liberalism"; Charles Taylor, *Philosophical Arguments* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 1995), 184; Richard Rorty, "A Defense of Minimalist Liberalism," 120; Margaret Canovan, "Sleeping Dogs, Prowling Cats and Soaring Doves: Three Paradoxes in the Political Theory of Nationhood," *Political Studies* 49 (2001): 203-215; and Stephen Mulhall and Adam Swift, "Rawls and Communitarianism," in *The Cambridge Companion to Rawls*, ed. Samuel Freeman (New York: Cambridge, 2003), 488-520. (Several of these authors, notably, make this observation in *defense* of Rawls, against Sandel's depiction of him as entirely hostile to community.)
[52] Though see C. B. MacPherson's famous analysis of social-contract theory in *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism* (New York: Oxford, 1962).

community, for a sense of 'belonging' to something larger than the self, runs throughout the liberal canon. Without that feeling of 'belonging,' indeed, the very act of joining the social compact makes no sense: as rational-choice theorists have long observed, considerations of pure self-interest, absent some degree of fellow-feeling, 'sympathy' or togetherness, invariably lead one *not* to participate in community affairs—especially when the decision to participate is a risky or dangerous proposition.[54] Because of this, paradoxically enough, a philosophy like liberalism that privileges the individual must be *especially* concerned with preserving this sense of belonging; without it, a 'liberal society' effectively becomes a contradiction in terms. Consequently, the assumption of community appears even in the work of the most seemingly anti-communitarian theorists—from Adam Smith, whose praise of the "division of labor" in Book I of *The Wealth of Nations* presupposes the mutual cooperation of individuals in an interdependent community, to Milton Friedman, Smith's modern-day heir, whose willingness to allow government to regulate the "neighborhood effects" of contracts implies that there is a "neighborhood" to speak of, and a collective obligation to protect those "compatriots" residing within it.[55] Perhaps the best illustration of all can be found in the work of Mandeville, whose *Fable of the Bees*, castigated for decades for its unapologetic defense of selfish "vice," nevertheless begins by depicting society as a

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[53] John Locke, "Second Treatise of Government," in *Two Treatises of Government*, ed. Peter Laslett (New York: Cambridge, 1988), 350.

[54] Indeed, the decision to form a social contract is an especially risky one—particularly if we accept Thomas Hobbes' version of the story, in which someone must begin the process by laying down his arms in the midst of an open war. For a less abstract illustration, consider the process of democratization, highly tenuous and often violent, in states like Iraq, South Africa, Russia, or Pakistan—or, closer to home, the demands of black Americans for voting rights in the 1950s and 60s (and today), despite the very real threat of reprisal. In each case, a purely selfish calculation would necessarily lead one *not* to vote; the fact that so many *did*, in spite of the inherent risks (and the slim-to-none chance that their vote would actually make a difference), indicates that something beyond mere self-interest was at stake in the calculation.

beehive—which, in terms of the total subordination of individual members to the collective interest, constitutes literally the perfect natural community.[56]

What is missing from all this is not, in short, a respect for the importance of solidarity; indeed, liberal theory is acutely (if sometimes only implicitly) aware of its own heavy dependence on it. Rather, what liberalism lacks is a recognition that this sense of mutual 'belonging' is *problematic*—that solidarity, in other words, is a complex and multifaceted concept in its own right, requiring an independent theory of its own. The liberal tradition, and the social contract tradition in particular, focus primarily on the decision to form a community and the question of how that community is to be organized—what form its institutions ought to take, what ends they ought to pursue, and what powers they ought (and ought not) to be granted. Liberalism, however, too often misses the intermediary question—politically speaking, perhaps the most important of all—of how that community is to be *constituted*. How, in other words, are the boundaries of the community to be drawn? What are to be the criteria for membership in it? How are we to distinguish fellow-citizens from 'outsiders'? And—most importantly—what is to be the basis for that feeling of solidarity that is (we all agree) so necessary for the survival of a community? Why, that is, should I feel obligated to sacrifice my *own* interests as a self-motivated individual so that someone *else* may benefit? The nature (indeed the very survival) of any community depends on how it handles these vital questions—especially if human beings are even half as selfish as the liberal tradition makes them out to be. Most liberal theorists, however, begin by positing a single,

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[55] Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1993); Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2002).

abstract, clearly defined 'people'—as if all of these questions have already been resolved prior to the formation of society.

It is here that the liberal nationalist critique dovetails with the communitarian complaint: both sides, rightly, castigate 'traditional' liberals for their unwillingness to consider what it means "for people to 'belong' to a cultural community."[57] Rawls, again, is the target of much of the criticism, along with contemporaries like Ronald Dworkin: because he "implicitly assumes that the political community is culturally homogeneous," Rawls is unable to resolve—or even to account for—conflicts over boundary lines, membership, or political identity.[58] But the problem here is not intrinsic to Rawls alone: questions of membership are crucial for liberal societies, but as Yael Tamir observes, liberal theorists rarely engage them directly at all.[59] Indeed, we can trace this theoretical gap back literally to liberalism's origins, to the social contracts first developed by Hobbes and Locke. Hobbes notably emphasizes the importance of unity in his ideal state—indeed, as Hobbes repeatedly refers to the community as "one person," the word 'unity' here takes on an almost literal meaning[60]—but when it comes to defining the *scope* of that community and the criteria for membership, Hobbes rarely elaborates beyond a

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[56] Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees*, ed. E. J. Hundert (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997). Mandeville, of course, may have intended this as ironic, but the comparison does allow him to avoid dealing with the potential ramifications of a society without solidarity.
[57] Kymlicka, *Liberalism, Community, and Culture*, 135.
[58] Ibid., 166. Kymlicka concludes (3, 163) that this gap in Rawls' theory prevents him from expressing any concern for minority group rights, or even recognizing that such rights might be necessary in certain circumstances. (Rawls, of course, addressed this question in *The Law of Peoples* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 1999]; most commentators, however, were largely unsatisfied with his analysis there.) See also Taylor (1995) and Canovan (2001), *op. cit*., who share Kymlicka's objection to Rawls.
[59] Tamir, *Liberal Nationalism*, 121.
[60] Hobbes, *Leviathan* (1968), 127, 130, 132, 134; see also his later description of the commonwealth as "this our artificial man" (202). In keeping with this, Hobbes equates the dissolution of a community with a soul departing from a dead body, "the carcase of a man" (246). The famous frontispiece of *Leviathan*—the benevolent king whose body is comprised of the bodies of his subjects—plays directly off this image.

vague characterization of society as a "multitude of men."[61] In good Aristotelian fashion, he does note that a commonwealth should be neither too small nor too large: small states cannot defend themselves, while large states—"a *great* multitude of men"—are too diverse in opinion and interest to ensure mutual cooperation.[62] The implication, of course, is that members must share certain interests or cultural traditions in common; for this reason, Hobbes later insists that the sovereign require subjects to share a variety of social customs, most notably public religious worship.[63] Beyond this, however, Hobbes offers little: aside from the not-too-helpful assertion that a commonwealth should consist of "a multitude" but not "a *great* multitude," Hobbes largely ignores the *problematic* nature of social unity. Indeed, he even identifies the threat of an "invasion of foreigners" as the primary reason for establishing a commonwealth in the first place—thus implying, subtly but clearly (and quite disingenuously), that humanity is already divided into neatly demarcated in- and out-groups in the 'all-against-all' state of nature.[64]

The same charge, likewise, can be made against Locke, whose liberal credentials are even more unassailable. Numerous scholars[65] have already noted Locke's affinity to the republican tradition and his concern for the "Publick Good" in particular: Locke's ideal society (unlike Hobbes's) trusts its citizens with a private sphere, but because

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[61] Ibid., 127.
[62] Ibid., 130 (italics mine).
[63] Ibid., 268. The other primary source of solidarity is the alienation of private property to the community "for the common good" (186-88). Both of these, of course, make Hobbes's place in the liberal tradition a bit tenuous; both, however, follow directly from Hobbes's individualistic, decidedly *liberal* view of human nature.
[64] Ibid., 132. The longer quotation reads: "The only way to erect such a common power, as may be able to defend them from the invasion of foreigners, and the injuries of one another…is, to confer all their power and strength upon one man, or upon one assembly of men." Most interpretations of Hobbes emphasize the extent to which individuals form commonwealths to check *each other*, but here Hobbes identifies "the invasion of foreigners" as the primary fear, even before the threat of domestic conflict.
[65] See, e.g., Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*; Pangle, *The Spirit of Modern Republicanism*; Isaac Kramnick, *Republicanism and Bourgeois Radicalism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell, 1990); Vickie Sullivan,

Locke's individuals are "naturally induced to seek Communion and Fellowship with others," his social compact too unites those individuals together into "one People, one Body Politick," with a unique interest and a 'good' of its own.[66] The promotion of this interest, indeed, is paramount: Locke is known for his defense of *private* property,[67] but even Locke defends the private sphere (and his ideal society allows it) only insofar as it is necessary to promote the *common* good.[68] When it comes to questions of membership, however—how a community is to define itself, how large or small it should be, who should be included and excluded, and on what grounds—Locke is no more forthcoming than Hobbes. In the state of nature, he asserts, all of mankind constitutes a single cosmopolitan global community, "one Society distinct from all other Creatures"—a point he reiterates in his discussion of the law of nature, which establishes the "Foundation" of "mutual Love amongst Men" and obligates individuals "to preserve the rest of Mankind" in addition to their own person.[69] The social compact, however, necessarily divides this global community into multiple "People(s)," with "distinct Territories" and separate

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Machiavelli, Hobbes and the Formation of a Liberal Republicanism in England (New York: Cambridge, 2006).

[66] Locke, "Second Treatise of Government," 268, 278 (quoting "the judicious Hooker"), 325. Locke reiterates this notion of community as a *single* entity, "one Body Politick" rather than a mere "collection of individuals" (as Milton Friedman would later term it—not to mention Trenchard and Gordon in *Cato's Letters*), on several occasions in the "Second Treatise" (277, 331, 332, and 337).

[67] Locke repeatedly asserts, most notably, that the preservation of private property is the "chief end" of civil society: "Second Treatise," 323, 324, 350-51, 355, and 412.

[68] Specifically, Locke argues that private property is necessary to encourage *cultivation*, without which the bounty of the world (which, Locke says on five separate occasions, "God gave…to Men in Common") would go to waste. ("Second Treatise," 286, 288-92, 296.) Consequently, Locke places severe limits on the private sphere: individuals may only claim as much property as they "can make use of to advantage of life before it spoils"; moreover, Locke's individuals, no less than Hobbes's, must "submit" their property—all their property—to the jurisdiction of the whole as a condition of joining the social compact. "Second Treatise," 290, 348.

[69] Ibid., 352, 270-71. Locke implies as much, too, in his famous chapter on property, in which he repeatedly asserts that "God gave the World to Men in Common" (as noted above). For this reason, Locke does not cite the threat of 'foreign' invasion as a reason to form the social compact, as Hobbes does; rather, individuals join the compact in order to avoid *domestic* conflict, a "State of War" with each other rather than outsiders. "Second Treatise," 282.

"Law(s) and Custom(s)."[70] Members of a community remain in a state of nature with non-members;[71] likewise, property no longer belongs "to all Mankind," but to the people of *particular*, bounded communities.[72] Indeed, it is this act of division that makes a people a *people*: the law of nature binds individuals to each other, but Locke never uses the word "People" (or "Body Politick") to describe a community until the social compact has effected this political separation.[73] Beyond asserting that the social compact *creates* divisions, however, Locke offers virtually no explicit discussion of the proper scope of communities, the proper criteria for membership, or the source of social cohesion. On these questions Locke is almost totally silent, even dismissive: "any number" of individuals may join a compact, he states on two occasions, but he refuses to specify any further.[74] Like Hobbes, Locke relies heavily on the spirit of community and the bond of mutual obligation amongst a 'people,' but rarely if ever considers how that bond is to be defined, or established, or maintained.[75] (On the other hand, even this is still a step up from the worst offender of all—Mandeville, who in *Fable of the Bees* simply assumes the question away by disingenuously describing society as a "hive," a perfect community whose borders are clearly demarcated and whose members subjugate themselves entirely before a single collective.)

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[70] Ibid., 325, 299, 315.
[71] Ibid., 277.
[72] Ibid., 292.
[73] Ibid., 325.
[74] Ibid., 325, 331. Indeed, Locke is not always clear even on how 'distinct' the distinct commonwealths are to be. Throughout the *Second Treatise* he repeatedly characterizes individuals as joining "one Community," "one Body Politick," "one People," or "one Society" (277, 325, 332, 337), implying that individuals may join *only* one community at a time—but this is difficult to square with his insistence that individuals submit to the society all possessions "that do not already belong to any other Government" (348). Does this mean that individuals can claim membership in multiple societies at once? This would make Locke's theory more realistic: after all (as discussed in Chapter Two), individuals are defined by our 'multiple identities'; we're rarely if ever loyal to only one thing at a time. But Locke refuses to dig any deeper.

The fact that Hobbes, Locke, and Rawls all suffer from a lack of concern for the problem of solidarity suggests that this theoretical blindness is unique to social contract theory, which is concerned primarily with the formation of institutions, not the drawing of borders (and, by virtue of being abstract, is able to gloss over these other pesky questions).[76] Presumably, the liberal nationalists should be able to avoid this problem; after all, it is precisely on this ground that they distinguish themselves from their more 'traditional' counterparts. As Will Kymlicka rightly observes, the liberal nationalists are able, as traditional liberals often are not, to see through "the myth of the ethnocultural neutrality of the state" and to recognize that questions of nation building are necessarily problematic, offering no clear or objective answers.[77] Even the liberal nationalists, however, have engaged these questions largely on the prior assumption—hence their name—that the borders between states must be drawn along *national* lines, on the basis of *national* solidarity. To be sure, Kymlicka and Tamir observe correctly that modern liberal theory has always taken the nation-state for granted, and thus that its conception of identity, such as it is, has always been national in character.[78] This in itself, however, does not imply that the scope of liberal societies necessarily *must* be national: a liberal community (or, indeed, any community) may just as easily develop around a feeling of solidarity whose scope is wider, or narrower, than the modern nation. "People," writes Stephen Tierney, "are defined, and choose to define themselves, by a range of factors beyond their national identity"; one's nation matters, of course, but so does one's race,

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[75] Brian Barry, "Self-Government Revisited," in *The Nature of Political Theory*, eds. David Miller and Larry Siedentop (New York: Oxford, 1983), 121-154; Tamir, *Liberal Nationalism*, 122.
[76] Kymlicka, *Politics in the Vernacular*, 4; Tamir, *Liberal Nationalism*, 139.
[77] Kymlicka, *Politics in the Vernacular*, 4; see also Kymlicka, *Liberalism, Community, and Culture*, 3; and Tierney, *Constitutional Law and National Pluralism*, 16.
[78] Kymlicka, *Politics in the Vernacular*, 213, 221; Tamir, *Liberal Nationalism*, 117, 121.

gender, religion, political ideas, and a host of other possible sources of identity.[79] Because the liberal nationalists are primarily concerned with explaining the historical role of solidarity in the liberal tradition, however, and understanding the nature of modern-day (Westphalian) liberal states, they too rarely consider the possibility that viable political communities may be built—and, indeed, have been built—on these other grounds. They are aware, of course, that these 'other grounds' exist; indeed Kymlicka's chief objection to traditional liberal theory is its inability to respect, or even to perceive, the reality of "multiple identities" and the existence of other strong bonds of obligation. Because they begin from the assumption of nationality, however—from the assumption, in other words, that the hyphen joining 'nation' and 'state' is an "inevitable" fact of modern human existence[80]—the prior question of the *scope* of political community remains, for the liberal nationalists, a prior question.[81] Even here, among these more self-aware theorists, the liberal tradition "hardly deals with membership": the liberal nationalists are conscious,

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[79] Tierney, *Constitutional Law and National Pluralism*, 65.

[80] Ibid., 55. The full quotation is "Nation-building is an inevitable facet of statehood itself"; the argument would be correct if we replace 'nation' with a more general term ("solidarity-building"?), but the liberal nationalist view here does not account for states whose scope is consciously wider or narrower than a nation. (The European Union is an example—as is, arguably, the United States.) See also Tamir's assertion, in *Liberal Nationalism*, that "Membership in a national culture is part of the essence of being human" (36). Tamir may well be right here—particularly if we define 'nation' in linguistic terms, as Kymlicka does (*Politics in the Vernacular*, 39-40)—but this alone does not imply that the solidarity underlying statehood necessarily *must* be based on that particular form of membership.

[81] Consider, for instance, Tamir's assertion that state boundaries should be drawn along "cultural" lines (*Liberal Nationalism*, 122). Tamir has a point, but 'cultural' lines are not necessarily the same as 'national' lines: as she herself observes, it's also possible to identify sub-national cultures, like the Amish, and transnational cultures, like 'Western civilization.' Why, then, must borders be drawn along *national* lines, specifically? Tamir notes the problem, but punts the question: "There is," she simply concludes, "no satisfactory answer" (68). Later, indeed, Tamir explicitly concedes that privileging the nation is essentially an arbitrary move: "Since liberalism cannot provide a theory of demarcation, it has adopted for this purpose the national ideal of self-determination" (121). But it's an arbitrary move that she is willing to make: "the community-like nature of the nation-state is particularly well suited, and perhaps even necessary, to the notion of the liberal welfare state" (121). Kymlicka, likewise, makes the same move: it's possible to identify subnational or transnational cultures and institutions, but "these have been seen as of secondary importance, supplementing but never challenging or displacing the centrality of national political institutions" (*Politics in the Vernacular*, 221). From this assumption, Kymlicka reaches the nationalist

as ‘traditional’ liberals often are not, of the *need* for a theory of solidarity, but even they cannot provide that theory from within the liberal tradition itself.

This, in short, is what it means to argue that “liberalism lacks a theory of solidarity”—not that liberalism is insensitive to solidarity, as communitarians charge, but rather that liberalism is incapable, in itself, of theorizing the nature of that solidarity (its source, its proper strength, and its proper scope). What this implies, in the American context, is that a proper understanding of our ‘national’ solidarity requires us to transcend the old liberal-centric approach and examine the American political tradition from the perspective of solidarity itself. Such a project, indeed, is urgently necessary—for what *this* implies, in turn, is that our continued affinity to Hartz and Beard (justifiable though it may be) has prevented us from truly understanding “what it means to be American”—a question with profound ramifications for immigration policy, foreign policy, and race relations (among many others), not to mention our own sense of existential meaning.

Conclusion

There is a second, perhaps even more important reason to turn our attention to the question of American solidarity; I mentioned it already in the Introduction, but it is worth repeating here, in the context of Kymlicka’s defense of nationalism. Liberal nationalists often do not justify the assertion that the nation should be our primary source of political attachment: Tamir, for instance, asserts that political boundaries should be drawn along “cultural” lines, but never explains why *national* cultures should be any more important than subnational or transnational cultures (like the Amish, or “Western civilization”).

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conclusion: “it is only within nation-states that there is any realistic hope for implementing liberal-

Kymlicka, on the other hand, does offer a strong defense for nationalism: because "democratic politics is *politics in the vernacular*," because "The average citizen only feels comfortable debating political issues in their own tongue," a truly democratic regime cannot encompass more than one linguistic group at a time.[82] For this reason, Kymlicka suggests, the solidarity underlying the modern liberal state is based on a common *language*—a persuasive view shared, among others, by John Stuart Mill and Michael Lind.[83]

The political implication of this, however, is somewhat troubling—particularly if, as it appears, we are gradually moving into what Jurgen Habermas calls a "postnational constellation," characterized by the rise of transnational political institutions (institutions, that is, which encompass multiple linguistic 'nations').[84] Already, scholars like Habermas are becoming aware of the problems inherent in this historical development: because liberal theory *has* been so deeply wrapped up in the idea of the nation-state, the emergence of these new transnational institutions is forcing us to reexamine the notion of liberal democracy itself. (As Arjun Appadurai famously put it, "We need to think ourselves beyond the nation."[85]) If Kymlicka is right, however, it follows that these new institutions may *never* be made democratic: because they must inevitably privilege a particular linguistic group over others, they are simply too large to generate the common solidarity necessary to sustain public-spiritedness and civic participation. The only hope

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democratic principles" (222).

[82] Kymlicka, *Politics in the Vernacular*, 213. (See the footnote above for a longer discussion of Tamir, as well as Kymlicka.)

[83] Ibid., 1, 312; see also Mill, *Considerations on Representative Government* (London: Parker, Son, and Bourn, 1862), and Lind, *The Next American Nation*.

[84] Habermas, *The Postnational Constellation*.

[85] Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1996), 158.

for generating that solidarity, and making those institutions democratically accountable, would be to impose a single universal language—and as Gayatri Spivak and others would quickly point out, this too is a profoundly undemocratic, even oppressive act.

Understanding the historical development of American solidarity may allow us to test the validity of this conclusion. The argument that American identity is based on a common language is defensible (it dates back, at least, to Noah Webster) but also highly debatable: America, after all, first defined itself in *opposition* to a nation of English-speakers; and the U.S. is one of few nations without an official language. Indeed—though many 'liberal nationalists' assume otherwise—it is even possible to argue (as many have) that 'America' is not a nation at all, but something else, a more pluralistic composite of many nations at once. Kymlicka's interpretation of American national identity is only one of many, and not even the most dominant: even more common is the view that Americans (*all* of us, not only WASPs or English-speakers) unite around a common ideology, a shared set of universal liberal-democratic values. Such a position is far more appealing—but are we simply deluding ourselves? The 'universality' of liberal values is highly questionable, after all; and Michael Lind, moreover, argues that "the very notion of a country being founded on an idea is absurd."[86] Or have Americans really managed to develop a mutual solidarity—and the democratic institutions to match—that encompass multiple linguistic groups, multiple races, multiple ways of life?

I will pick up these questions again in Chapter Three, but there is a prior need that must first be addressed: if we are to refocus our study of American political thought around the problem of solidarity, we must begin by examining solidarity in general—the

[86] Lind, *The Next American Nation*, 4-5.

conditions under which it can develop, its prerequisites, its catalysts, and its constraints. And it is to this question that I now turn.

Chapter 2

On the Limits of Human Solidarity

The years between the Declaration of Independence and the ratification of the Constitution were an especially uncertain and volatile period in American history—surpassed, arguably, only by the Civil War itself. Surrounded on all sides by foreboding physical frontiers and real and perceived human enemies, fiercely suspicious of each other, and increasingly prone to rebellions, riots and mobs, the newly independent states appeared constantly on the verge of collapse. By the summer of 1787, when the Framers gathered in Philadelphia to revise the Articles of Confederation, the experience of the previous decade had made two things eminently clear: first, the thirteen states would not survive in the long term without uniting behind a stronger central government; and second, the American people—fickle and stubborn that they were—would never accept such a government, even at the expense of their own survival, unless they could be persuaded that that government was 'republican' in nature.

Therein lay the rub. It was easy enough to invent institutions that met the standard demand for frequently-elected representation; but it was also a central tenet of eighteenth-century republican theory that a true republic had to be *small*.[1] By definition, a republic was a government that served the interest of the people—the 'public thing,'

[1] As I will elaborate further below, this was not necessarily a central tenet of republican theory in general. At the time of the American Founding, however, republican theory was dominated by Montesquieu, for whom the "small-republic thesis" was central. Jacob Levy, "Beyond Publius: Montesquieu, Liberal Republicanism, and the Small Republic Thesis," *History of Political Thought* 27: 1 (2006): 50-90; David Armitage, "Empire and Liberty: A Republican Dilemma," in *Republicanism: A Shared European Heritage, Volume II: The Values of Republicanism in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Martin van Gelderen and Quentin Skinner (New York: Cambridge, 2002), 28-46.

literally, or the public good (or the "common good," or the "general will").[2] Consequently, a republican government had one prerequisite: there needed to *be* a "common good" for it to serve.[3] Republican institutions were therefore most appropriate for small, homogeneous communities that shared the same climate, the same religion, and the same degree of relative material wealth: there, wrote Montesquieu (the universally acknowledged expert on the matter[4]), "the public good is better felt, better known, lies nearer to each citizen."[5] The larger and more diverse a society is, however, the harder it becomes to discern a single common good: "interests become particularized," competing factions emerge, and even the most well-meaning legislator may find himself forced to choose between the narrow interests of one faction or another.[6] Moreover, republican theory insisted that the survival of a republic depended on the "virtue," or the public spirit,[7] of its citizens: because republican government was essentially in the hands of the people (i.e. the people were ultimately responsible for making and enforcing the laws

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[2] As Gordon Wood observes, "public good" was the second-most common phrase in Revolutionary-era American political writing. Only "liberty" was more common—and even "liberty" was *republican* liberty, defined less in terms of individual "freedom from dependence on the wills of others" than in terms of living in a society that promotes the general will. Wood, *Creation of the American Republic* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina, 1969), 55, 60; C. B. MacPherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism* (New York: Oxford, 1962), 3.

[3] Ibid., p. 58. See also Bill Brugger, *Republican Theory in Political Thought* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), 12.

[4] Though Montesquieu was by no means the *only* influential republican of his day—early Americans were no less enamored with the liberal republicanism of "Cato" and John Locke, and Pocock's *Machiavellian Moment* (1975) demonstrates the extent to which Machiavelli remained a central figure—it was Montesquieu, in the end, who loomed largest over republican discourse in the American Founding era. As Judith Shklar observes, it was Montesquieu who "set the terms in which republicanism was to be discussed" in the eighteenth century—not just in America, but everywhere. Shklar, "Montesquieu and the New Republicanism," in *Machiavelli and Republicanism*, eds. Gisela Bock, Quentin Skinner and Maurizio Viroli (New York: Cambridge, 1986), 263.

[5] Montesquieu, *Spirit of the Laws*, eds. Anne M. Cohler, Basia C. Miller and Harold S. Stone (New York: Cambridge, 1989), 126.

[6] Ibid., 124. Taken to its logical conclusion, the argument here is that a state can become *so* large that the 'common good' actually disappears entirely. Jacob Levy observes that Montesquieu never takes the argument this far; he merely concludes that the 'common good' can become impossible to discern. In real terms, of course, the difference between the two is largely insignificant. Levy, "Beyond Publius."

upon themselves), the whole system hinged on the people's willingness to sacrifice their own "dearest interests" for the greater good of the community.[8] But republicans also shared a deeply pessimistic view of human nature: good institutions had the power to make good people, but the general tendency of human beings was to be selfish and avaricious, to promote their own private interests at others' expense.[9] In small, homogeneous societies, where individuals' private interests are closely related to the "public good," this is not a problem; but as societies grow larger and more diverse, and as the "public good" grows fainter and further removed from the private, individuals become increasingly unwilling to act in the general interest—and increasingly willing to oppose it. "People are like wire," wrote Thomas Gordon (as "Cato"): "The more they are

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[7] Most republicans also insisted that *private* virtue was no less important—individuals must be morally virtuous as well, in order to be good citizens.

[8] Montesquieu, *Spirit of the Laws*, 25; see also Wood, *Creation*, 66.

[9] Wood, *Creation*, 64. On the other hand, Wood also observes (100-03) that Americans were at times extremely *optimistic* about human nature—humanity, that is, in its *natural* state, uncorrupted by institutions. This argument may have been slightly disingenuous—it served primarily as a rejoinder to stuffed-up Europeans who dismissed Americans as intellectual rubes incapable of self-governance—but the inconsistency is also historically appropriate: eighteenth-century republican theorists often equivocated on the extent to which human beings were capable of virtue and the extent to which "good institutions" had the power to instill it in the citizenry. Montesquieu argued, in good Platonic fashion, that republican government could imbue its citizens with the necessary "love of the homeland" (*Spirit of the Laws*, 25) via a system of education and public socialization (an argument also taken up by Rousseau). But "these sorts of institutions" can only be effective in small states, where "all citizens pay a singular attention to each other"; even the best education, Montesquieu concludes, cannot reliably produce an emotional bond between human beings who never encounter each other (ibid., 38). Writing as "Cato," the British republicans Trenchard and Gordon argued that human nature was *so* wretched that *only* good institutions—i.e. institutions which protect public liberty—could conceivably produce virtue: "If therefore we would look for virtue in a nation, we must look for it in the nature of government." Letter 31, "Considerations on the Weakness and Inconsistencies of human Nature," in John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon, *Cato's Letters*, Volume 1 (hereafter Cato I), ed. Ronald Hamowy (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1995), 222. (On the proper nature of institutions, see Letter 65, in Cato I, 450-61.) Given the inescapable selfishness of humankind, however, Cato also admitted that *no* government was good enough to preserve a public spirit when it conflicted with private interests. Letter 106, in John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon, *Cato's Letters*, Volume 2 (hereafter Cato II), ed. Ronald Hamowy (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1995), 747-753. "Publius" equivocated in a similar fashion: while Hamilton argued that a strong central government would promote national sentiment in *Federalist 27*, Madison in *Federalist 10* assumed that factions would continue to think only of themselves. The consensus (if there was one) appears to be, as noted below, that while governments had some power to encourage public virtue, human beings could never be relied upon to serve the greater society unless the public interest coincided sufficiently with their own.

extended, the weaker they become."[10] Oversized states, it was generally assumed, were thus incapable of sustaining free republican governments; if such societies were to remain united at all, it would only be by virtue of despotic force—of which even the vaguest threat was enough to send the American people into armed, violent conniptions.[11]

Fortunately for Americans—who, rightly or not, generally agreed that a united continent would be an 'oversized state'—this was not an entirely inescapable dilemma. Montesquieu had insisted that a republic had to be small—small enough that one could "raise a whole people like a family"—but as far-reaching as his influence was, the small-republic thesis was not as central to the republican tradition writ large.[12] Many of the

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[10] Letter 74, in Cato II, 547. In keeping with conventional wisdom, I am citing "Cato" as an influential figure in the republican tradition of the eighteenth century: *Cato's Letters* was, after all, one of the most widely admired works of political theory among eighteenth-century American republicans. (See M. N. S. Sellers, *American Republicanism: Roman Ideology in the United States Constitution* [New York: NYU, 1994].) It is worth noting, though, that Cato's thought is not exclusively republican—indeed, writing so soon after England's disastrous experiment with 'republicanism' under Cromwell, Trenchard and Gordon generally disavow the classification. More accurately—as recent research has demonstrated—Cato belongs to the tradition of late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century British Whiggism, which combines a republican commitment to virtue, community, and popular rule with the liberal commitment to commerce and individual liberty. I cite Cato here as a republican figure, but Trenchard and Gordon could just as easily be categorized as liberals. The same is true for John Locke, whom—also in keeping with conventional wisdom—I am citing primarily as a liberal. Vickie Sullivan, *Machiavelli, Hobbes, and the Formation of a Liberal Republicanism in England* (New York: Cambridge, 2006); Annie Mitchell, "A Liberal Republican Cato," *American Journal of Political Science* 48:3 (July 2004): 588-603. By extension, because eighteenth-century American political thought was so heavily influenced by the British Whigs, eighteenth-century American republicanism was also, generally, liberal—and eighteenth-century American liberalism was also, generally, republican. See Appleby, *Capitalism and the New Social Order* (New York: NYU, 1984) and *Liberalism and Republicanism in the Historical Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 1992); Zuckert, *Natural Rights and the New Republicanism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton, 1994) and *The Natural Rights Republic* (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame, 1996); and the other 'republican synthesis' works cited in Chapter One.

[11] As Wood observes, the American Revolution was motivated not by the *actual* despotism of the British government—in point of fact, the American colonists were among the freest people in the world—but by the (perceived) *threat* of despotism, combined with the belief that "Liberty, once lost, is scarce ever recovered." "Cato," Letter 99, in Cato II, 712; Wood, *Creation*, ch. 1.

[12] Montesquieu, *Spirit of the Laws*, 38. Indeed, many modern-day republicans argue persuasively that the small-republic thesis was never a major concern for republicans at all. (See Viroli, *For Love of Country: An Essay on Patriotism and Nationalism* [New York: Oxford, 1995]; Pettit, *Republicanism: A Theory of Freedom and Government* [New York: Oxford, 1997].) On the other hand, many within that tradition focused their attention primarily on the smaller city-states of Greece and Italy—and, consequently, were able to take the small state for granted. The more explicit concern with size that we find in Montesquieu (and many Anti-Federalists) follows immediately behind the emergence of larger, more heterogeneous states in the modern world. Even then, however (as noted below), the primary concern was not really *size*,

most influential figures in the tradition believed that it was entirely possible to preserve republican institutions—and the public virtue necessary to sustain them—in a large state; indeed Machiavelli had argued that republics should actively pursue territorial expansion. The small-republic thesis was especially prevalent among those republicans who adopted the Greek *polis* as their model; but many—including most Americans—were more apt to identify Rome, with its far larger population and territory, as the ideal republican society. In the words of M.N.S. Sellers, "American republicanism was Roman republicanism."[13] To be sure, even the Roman republic could serve as a cautionary example of the dangers of over-expansion,[14] but it also served as proof that republican institutions were not entirely incompatible with large societies, provided its people were sufficiently public-spirited. Indeed, even for Montesquieu, size was merely a means to an end: his insistence on smallness derived from his belief that only in a small state, where "all citizens pay a singular attention to each other," would citizens feel an emotional attachment strong enough ("thick" enough) to motivate them to sacrifice their own interests for the wellbeing of others.

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but *homogeneity*: republicans observed that the notion of a 'common good' required the people of a society to share something in *common*.

[13] Sellers, *American Republicanism*, 244. The influence of Roman republicanism on the eighteenth-century American mind is apparent from a multitude of evidence: pseudonymous participants in the Constitutional ratification debate, from "Cato" to "Publius" to "Brutus," almost invariably took the names of Roman republican heroes; early American national art and architecture evinces a clear Roman influence, most notably in the design of the U.S. Capitol; and the education of most of the leading Founders emphasized the Latin classics, a fact reflected in the ubiquitous presence of Latin in American currency, American national symbols, and the official mottoes of national governments, state governments, and institutions of higher learning. Carl J. Richard, *The Founders and the Classics: Greece, Rome, and the American Enlightenment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 1994); Neil Baldwin, *The American Revelation* (New York: St. Martin's, 2005), ch. 3; Gordon Wood, *Creation*, ch. 2; Meyer Reinhold, *Classica Americana: The Greek and Roman Heritage in the United States* (Detroit: Wayne State, 1984); Richard M. Gummere, *The American Colonial Mind and the Classical Tradition* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 1963).

[14] Cf. Levy, "Beyond Publius." It was Montesquieu, in particular, who blamed Rome's collapse into despotism largely on its expanded size, but he was not the only one. Though most eighteenth-century republicans agreed that Rome's decline was a product of decadence, many—including Cato—ascribed that decadence to the opulence generated by its territorial conquests (Letter 18).

The critical precondition of a free society, in short, was not size but *solidarity*.[15] The survival of republican institutions in a united America—institutions, in other words, that were directly accountable to the people and served their interests—hinged on the existence of a common bond, an emotional attachment that could bring four million scattered ex-colonists together as "one united people."[16] From a republican perspective, this was *the* question at the heart of the Constitutional ratification debate: concerns over the specifics of the proposal were well placed, but tyranny was inevitable anyway if the American people did not care enough about each other to hold their leaders accountable to the public interest. "A free government must subsist upon the affections of the people," wrote "Cato"—or, as John Adams famously put it, "Liberty can no more exist without virtue and independence, than the body can live and move without a soul."[17] It was not enough, in other words, for the United States to be a mere *collection* of people, residing in the same contiguous territory and subject to the same central government; it had to be *a people*, a "self-defined community" with an existential sense of mutual belonging. As Gordon Wood observed, "Americans creating a new society could not conceive of the state in any other terms than organic unity."[18]

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[15] It's worth noting that Founding-era Americans generally didn't use the word "solidarity": if anything, they would have used the word "fraternity." W. Carey McWilliams, *The Idea of Fraternity in America* (Berkeley: University of California, 1973); Hauke Brunkhorst, *Solidarity: From Civic Friendship to a Global Legal Community*, trans. Jeffrey Flynn (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1995).

[16] John Jay's phrase, in *Federalist 2*; Edward Millican uses it for the title of his study of Publius's nationalism, *One United People: The* Federalist Papers *and the National Idea* (Lexington, KY: Kentucky, 1990).

[17] "Cato," Letter 133, in Cato II, 921; Adams, "Novanglus, no. III," in *The Revolutionary Writings of John Adams*, ed. C. Bradley Thompson (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2000), 166.

[18] Wood, *Creation*, 59. The phrase "self-defined community" comes from Anthony Smith's definition of a modern "nation": "a named and self-defined community whose members cultivate common myths, memories, symbols and values, possess and disseminate a distinctive public culture, reside in and identify with a historic homeland, and create and disseminate common laws and shared customs." "The Genealogy of Nations," in *When is the Nation?*, eds. Atsuko Ichijo and Gordana Uzelac (New York: Routledge, 2005), 98. Walker Connor points out, however, that this definition fails to "differentiat(e) the nation from other human groupings": nations may be the most prevalent of these groupings in the modern age, but a "self-

Consequently, those who wished to make 'America' something more than a loose confederation had a dual task: not only was it necessary to craft a complex set of legal and political institutions from scratch; it was also necessary to locate—or, failing that, to generate—a viable source of solidarity that could produce a public spirit in the citizenry. Historians who study the Founding typically focus on the institutions, and we shower lavish praise—justifiably so—on those men of genius who somehow managed to craft an almost perfect union, on the first try, in the space of a few short summer months. Building institutions, however, is only half of the story. Still largely unexamined are the ways in which the Founders, and their intellectual successors, sought to tackle the second half of the equation: finding, or creating, a common emotional link to connect millions of diverse, scattered, notoriously individualistic, and often violently divided people in a mutual bond of solidarity. From a republican perspective, the project of nation building fails if either the institutions or the public spirit is weak—and if our current experience with nation building is any indicator, the institutions may well be the easy part.

As noted in Chapter One, the importance of solidarity to the survival of a free community does not escape the liberal tradition, in spite of its reputation for atomism; indeed virtually all of its leading figures, from Hobbes to Locke to Rawls, recognize the need for a sense of fellow-feeling and mutual interdependence among the members of a society. Too often, however, liberal theory tends to assume solidarity as a given: the seminal works of liberalism typically treat society as something akin to a beehive—or *literally* a beehive, in the case of Mandeville—where the boundaries are clearly marked,

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defined community" need not be a *nation*, specifically (a point I will develop further in Chapter Three). Connor, for his part, offers a slightly different definition of the word: a nation is "the largest group that shares a belief in common ancestry." This, Connor points out, would of course exclude Americans, who

the membership is clearly defined, and the loyalty of those members is unquestionable. Herein lies the problem with the liberal-centric approach to American political thought: although it recognizes the importance of solidarity, it fails to recognize that solidarity is a problematic concept, one that must be theorized and dissected in its own right before the tradition as a whole is fully understood. Indeed, the more one examines the question of solidarity, the more difficult and problematic it becomes. A theorist who seeks to comprehend its nature—not to mention a nation-builder who seeks to produce it in an actual body of actual people—must address a multitude of interlocking issues.

Issue 1: Homogeneity

Perhaps the most obvious of these is *homogeneity*: for better or worse, it appears to be impossible to generate a lasting emotional bond between two human beings—let alone millions—without appealing to some shared characteristic, something that all within the circle have in common (or *believe* they have in common).[19] "No two nations," wrote Cato,

> no two bodies of men, or scarce two single men, can long continue in friendship, without having some cement of their union; and where relation, acquaintance, or mutual pleasures are wanting, mutual interests alone can bind it: But when those interests separate, each side must assuredly pursue their own.[20]

From a republican perspective, homogeneity has a dual importance: not only is it a necessary precondition for human solidarity (which is itself a necessary precondition

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pride themselves on *not* sharing a common ancestry. "The Dawning of Nations," in *When is the Nation?*, 40.)

[19] Arash Abizadeh points out, quite rightly, that this common assumption is merely a common assumption: those who make this argument—including myself—rarely even attempt to prove that human solidarity *necessarily* requires a belief in 'common ground.' At the same time, given past experience, it is a difficult argument to challenge—and even Abizadeh does not do so. Abizadeh, "Does Collective Identity

for 'public virtue'); it is also the source of the 'common good,' without which a society cannot hope to remain simultaneously united and free.[21] Consequently, the need for homogeneity was of the utmost importance—and few republicans were willing to take any chances with it. For many in the eighteenth century—for Montesquieu, in particular—the "cement" of union could only be produced through direct personal interaction: human beings (depraved as they were) could not reasonably be expected to care about the needs and interests of distant strangers, even if there *were* "mutual interests" between them. This conception of human nature, however, was far too narrow: indeed—provided they share a mutual attachment to a common source of personal identity—it is even possible for two human beings to feel a strong emotional connection while remaining essentially unaware of each other's existence. "I may not know most of my compatriots," writes Charles Taylor, "and may not particularly want them as friends when I do meet them," but we can perceive each other as compatriots nonetheless, with all the mutual obligations this entails.[22] This sense of community is "imagined," in

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Presuppose an Other? On the Alleged Incoherence of Global Solidarity," *American Political Science Review* 99:1 (February 2005): 45-60.

[20] "Cato," Letter 106, in Cato II, 751.

[21] One may, of course, avoid this problem altogether simply by redefining the word 'republic'—as Madison does in *Federalist 39*, following the earlier work of Harrington and Hume (and Montesquieu, to a point)—as a political *structure* (representative government) rather than a political *outcome* (the will of the people). See Levy, "Beyond Publius," and the introduction to David Wootton, ed. *Republicanism, Liberty, and Commercial Society, 1645-1776* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford, 1984). Our concern, however, is with the outcome: this project, after all, is motivated in part by the desire for institutions of transnational or global governance that serve the interest of those they govern, rather than a tiny economic or political elite. This of course requires there to *be* a definable "interest"—a discernible sense, that is, of a 'common good.' Moreover, focusing on the outcome is historically appropriate as well: American political and cultural leaders remained highly concerned about the need for a united "national character" even after Constitutional ratification (or, indeed, *especially* after Constitutional ratification)—indicating that the commitment to the 'common good' never wavered entirely. Andrew Robertson, "'Look on This Picture…And on This!' Nationalism, Localism, and Partisan Images of Otherness in the United States, 1787-1820," *American Historical Review* 106: 4 (October 2001): 1268; J. Merton England, "The Democratic Faith in American Schoolbooks, 1783-1860," *American Quarterly* 15:2 (Summer 1965): 191-199.

[22] Taylor, *Philosophical Arguments* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 1995), 184.

Benedict Anderson's famous phrasing,[23] but the solidarity it generates is very real. Working-class Americans, for instance, can feel emotionally connected to 'fellow Americans' who perish in Iraq, 'fellow workers' striking in a Russian coal mine, or simply 'fellow human beings' who fall victim to the conflict in Darfur: direct personal interaction may strengthen the bond, but it is by no means necessary. Remarkably, we need not even know any names.

This fungibility makes the task considerably easier for nation builders: homogeneity may be a prerequisite for solidarity, but human beings are not particularly picky. The word 'homogeneity' invariably conjures up depressing Orwellian images of forced conformity, cultural imperialism, intellectual decay, Levittown, McWorld, Mayberry and Stepford;[24] but human beings generally do not require that much 'common ground' as a precondition for fellow-feeling. 'Common ground' and cultural diversity can coexist quite peacefully; indeed, as Kwame Anthony Appiah's writings on "cultural contamination" eloquently demonstrate, common ground and diversity can even reinforce each other.[25] With enough creativity, one can generally identify a wide variety of shared characteristics for even the most diverse of populations. Indeed, as civic republicans observe (and as Hamilton contended, in *Federalist 27*), solidarity often coalesces *after* the formation of political institutions as well, as newly-declared citizens unite around a common rule of law. The only serious qualification is sustainability: even the fiercest emotional attachments will dissipate if the underlying basis for them fades away (as in

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[23] Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (New York: Verso, 1991), 6. Anderson, of course, is speaking specifically about *national* communities, but the word "imagined" could be applied equally to religious communities, racial communities, the human community, and any other concept or social institution that generates a sense of 'community' between people who never actually meet.

[24] For my part, the word 'homogeneity' makes me think of milk—which makes me think of cows—which makes me think of Kansas. QED.

the aftermath of the American Revolution, when national sentiment collapsed soon after the departure of the British army).[26] But the need for homogeneity can still pose a real challenge to the prospects for republican government in large, diverse states: the larger a society grows, the harder it becomes to identify any characteristic capable of generating 'public virtue.' Indeed, during the ratification debates, even the most vocal Federalists fretted that American unity was sorely lacking: Madison, most notably, declared that "unity" in even the smallest society was merely oppression in disguise,[27] while Hamilton and Noah Webster both confessed that an American "national character" would have to be generated *after* the consolidation of institutions (a risky proposition, at best).[28] Proponents of transnational democracy face a similar problem today: as William Connolly observes, recent political and social developments have brought individuals together from widely diverse backgrounds—but this has also made us increasingly aware of our vast differences, which may make it *more* difficult, not less, to generate solidarity across cultures.[29]

Moreover, it is not enough merely to identify an objective source of homogeneity: it must also be a *meaningful* one, capable of generating an emotional connection strong

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[25] Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (New York: Norton, 2006).
[26] Patrick Henry's Revolution-era speeches, for instance—"I am not a Virginian, but an American"—have earned him a lasting reputation as America's greatest patriot; but he was very much a Virginian again, and an extremely vocal Anti-Federalist besides, within half a decade after the end of the war. (Consequently, the curriculum of Patrick Henry College in northern Virginia—which celebrates the Constitution, in good patriotic fashion, as a bastion of states' rights—is ironic on several levels.)
[27] Madison implied as much in *Federalist 10*, but he stated the point straight out in a private letter to Thomas Jefferson written just before the composition of the famous paper. See Bernard Bailyn, ed. *The Debate on the Constitution, Part One* (New York: Library of America, 1993, hereafter Debate I), 199-200; I will discuss this in more detail in Chapter Four.
[28] See Hamilton, *Federalist 27*; and Webster, "A Citizen of America," in Debate I, 145-6.
[29] Connolly, "Speed, Concentric Cultures, and Cosmopolitanism," *Political Theory* 28:5 (Fall 2000): 596-618. See also Kevin Robins, "Tradition and Translation: National Culture in its Global Context," in Corner and Harvey, *Enterprise and Heritage: Crosscurrents of National Politics*, eds. John Corner and Sylvia Harvey (New York: Routledge, 1991), 21-44; and Doreen Massey and Pat Jess, eds., *A Place in the World? Culture, Places and Globalization* (New York: Oxford, 1995).

enough to spur individuals to sacrifice for the wellbeing of their compatriots (not to mention accept them as compatriots in the first place). The distinction between 'meaningful' and 'non-meaningful' is often seemingly arbitrary: in theory, eye color and skin color could both serve as a basis for solidarity, but only one has done so on a regular basis. Compounding this, the distinction between 'meaningful' and 'non-meaningful' is also often unclear: Americans generally reject the notion that a 'real' American must be white,[30] but we also know that whiteness has been far more central to our shared conception of American identity than most of us would care to admit (even to ourselves).[31] Ultimately, though, what makes a source of homogeneity 'meaningful' is not some objective, measurable quality, but rather its *prior merit*, the extent to which it can be related to traditions and symbols and historical experiences toward which individuals already feel a strong personal attachment. It is for this reason that nationalism so often appeals to historic heroes or popular preexisting folk legends: solidarity reproduces itself by connecting 'the community' to ideas, rituals, events and stories that already hold sway over the people. Indeed, this connection need not even be objective or measurable: what is important is not homogeneity really, but rather the mutual *perception* of homogeneity among a group of individuals. There is no such thing as a 'pure' ethnic culture, for instance—all cultures adopt and adapt traditions from

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[30] Deborah J. Schildkraut, "Defining American Identity in the Twenty-First Century: How Much 'There' is There?" *Journal of Politics* 69:3 (Aug. 2007): 602. In the survey Schildkraut cites, only ten percent of respondents identified whiteness as an important characteristic of American identity; by contrast, over ninety percent identified, among others, the values of "hard work" and "respecting other people's cultural differences." (This becomes less heartening when one reflects that 10 percent of Americans equates to thirty million people.)

[31] Rogers M. Smith, *Civic Ideals* (New Haven, CT: Yale, 1997) Michael Lind, who (following Noah Webster) promotes a linguistic conception of American identity, bluntly observes that, while Americans invariably cite *ideas* as the most important characteristic of Americanism, "changing your mind does not change your nationality"—and non-Americans who embrace liberal democratic ideas don't suddenly

outside sources—but countless mass movements have nonetheless arisen from the demand for (and the belief in) a mythical 'ethnic purity.'[32] It is even possible—fortunately for the American Founders—to generate strong feelings of historical national unity when the 'nation' in question has never been historically united.[33] As Ernst Renan observed, a shared act of "forgetting" is essential for any nation: a people must remember the historical ties (real or imagined) that bring them together, but they also must *forget* the embarrassing historical wedges that drive them apart.[34]

The implication of this is threefold. On the one hand, the fact that homogeneity need only be perceived means that solidarity, in theory, can develop among any body of people, no matter how diverse or disconnected they are in fact. This opens up a wide range of options for aspiring nation builders: it is not necessary to appeal solely to a narrow set of objective "shared characteristics" or historical experiences if one can weave a compelling "story of peoplehood" (to use Rogers Smith's apt phrase) around an *imaginary* myth of unity.[35] On the other hand, because these 'imaginary myths' necessarily appeal to characteristics that are not shared universally by a people, they also necessarily serve to exclude—to define national identity, that is, according to the symbols, traditions, and experiences of a majority (or a powerful elite) at the expense of a subjugated, disenfranchised, and forgotten minority.[36] The popular conception of

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become citizens by doing so. Lind, *Hamilton's Republic: Readings in the American Democratic Nationalist Tradition* (New York: The Free Press, 1997), 39.

[32] Neil Renwick, *America's World Identity: The Politics of Exclusion* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 7 (quoting Edward Said).

[33] Germany is another example: Siegfried and Brunhilde were widely accepted as 'national' heroes despite the fact that, for all practical purposes, a unified German 'nation' was a nineteenth-century invention.

[34] Renan, "What is a nation?" in *Nation and Narration*, ed. Homi K. Bhabha (New York: Routledge, 1990), 11.

[35] Rogers Smith, *Stories of Peoplehood* (New York: Cambridge, 2003).

[36] Though, as Thurman Arnold observed in *The Folklore of Capitalism* (New Haven, CT: Yale, 1936), the act of using a symbol to exclude a group is often historically contingent: because the content of the symbol

America as a "Christian nation," for instance, effectively denies American identity to Jews, Muslims, Hindus, atheists, and agnostics—not to mention Deists, Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, Catholics, Quakers, and a host of other persecuted and once-persecuted branches of Christianity. This exclusion was precisely the danger that worried James Madison: because human beings, he wrote to Jefferson, are inescapably diverse, *any* appeal to 'unity' is necessarily imaginary, a mere excuse for oppression and majority tyranny.[37] At the same time, the need for homogeneity as a necessary foundation of free government means that nation builders (like Madison) must appeal to these 'imaginary myths' nonetheless—unless, that is, they can identify an *actual* source of homogeneity, one that is truly all-encompassing while simultaneously meeting the criterion of being existentially 'meaningful.'[38]

Moreover, the fact that meaningful homogeneity requires 'prior merit' means that aspiring nation builders also face a difficult Catch-22: it is virtually impossible to

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itself is neutral, it may be co-opted by excluded groups, or historically reinterpreted and redefined to include them. New stories, in other words, don't always require new symbols. Likewise, *competing* stories—like the six I describe in Chapter Three—often appeal to the same symbols and traditions, even if the stories themselves are mutually exclusive. See Robertson, "Look on This Picture…And on This!" (2001). As we'll see, this often makes it difficult to tell the stories apart—even (as with Lincoln, in Chapter Six) in the writings and speeches of individual figures.

[37] Madison, *op cit*.

[38] And as some scholars have argued, those two criteria—existential meaning and all-inclusiveness—are mutually exclusive. See the discussions of "scope" and "pluralism" below.

I will discuss this further in Chapter Three, but it's worth noting here that this sentence hints at the well-dissected distinction between so-called 'civic' and 'ethnic' forms of nationalism. 'Civic' nationalism (also known as 'Western' nationalism, commonly associated with the U.S., Britain, and sometimes France) attempts to produce national sentiment around criteria that are at least potentially all-inclusive—love of common institutions, for instance (what Maurizio Viroli terms "republican patriotism"), or a liberal constitution (Habermas's "constitutional patriotism"), or a common language (the "liberal nationalism" of Will Kymlicka or Michael Lind). 'Ethnic' nationalism (also known as ethnoculturalism or 'Eastern' nationalism), by contrast, defines national identity around 'ascriptive' criteria that are accessible only to a select few: national origin, for instance, or race, or religious background. Many recent scholars have argued that the distinction is bogus: the idea of an "actual" or "truly all-encompassing" source of homogeneity is appealing, they contend, but also hopelessly utopian—and even those who *claim* to promote an 'all-inclusive' nationalism are engaging in subtle acts of exclusion. Anthony Smith, for one, asserts that one cannot "sanitize nationalism" by separating the civic from the ethnic, because even civic

produce solidarity in a people if that solidarity is not already there, at least in latent form. It is for this reason that the cosmopolitan project, for instance, has so often been derided as 'bloodless': from a purely rational perspective, all human beings are united by the fact of their common humanity, but it remains difficult to relate this shared characteristic to the common symbols and traditions that form the basis of real personal identities. "Reason without tradition," writes Hilary Putnam, "is empty": unless it can be tied to preexisting historical symbols and traditions, merely pointing out our common humanity and our mutual interests will not produce universal solidarity alone.[39] Cosmopolitans, nationalists, and anyone seeking to generate solidarity in a hitherto undefined 'people' face the same constraint: unless they can relate the collective body to symbols and figures that already connect with individuals, the project is doomed to failure. As we will see, the leading figures in the American political tradition took this mission very seriously—particularly in times of transformation and domestic crisis, when the fragile 'nation' was most in danger of disintegrating.

Issue 2: Elite and Popular Will

Implicit in all of this is a second key issue: the fact that the perception of homogeneity often trumps the reality, that the distinction between 'meaningful' and 'non-meaningful' shared characteristics is often arbitrary, and that the boundaries between groups are often blurry (contrary to Mandeville's world of beehives) indicates that

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nationalism invariably appeals to a *particular* "place, time, community and destiny." More on this, however, in Chapter Three. Anthony Smith, *The Antiquity of Nations* (Malden, MA: Polity, 2004), 243-44.

[39] Putnam, "Must We Choose Between Patriotism and Universal Reason?" in Martha Nussbaum, *For Love of Country?* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996), 94. Robert Pinsky makes a similar argument in the same volume, comparing the cosmopolitan project to the attempt to create a 'universal language' (Esperanto) and

solidarity is often a product of elite action, not merely an organic or natural process.[40] If the distinctions between groups are not obvious, then we must be *taught* to recognize them—which implies, in turn, that solidarity is produced by the teacher, either unwittingly or (more likely) as a conscious act of political will. This does not mean that solidarity can *never* produce itself organically, of course: familial relationships do not need to be taught, nor (for better or worse) does the natural affinity we feel to those who look like us or speak our language. Moreover, as Rogers Smith points out, solidarity always contains a voluntaristic element, even when artificially generated by elites: because no leader is strong enough to "hold a whole community together by force alone," he must rely on "persuasive stories," as well as "coercive force," to convince 'the people' to go along.[41] This should be evident, indeed, from the above discussion of 'prior merit': the fact that a 'story of peoplehood' must appeal to ideas and symbols that already resonate with individuals serves as a powerful check on the ability of elites simply to impose political unity on an unwitting populace. But those "persuasive stories" still must initially be transmitted to a people from outside sources:[42] Americans gladly accept, for instance, that the boundary between the U.S. and Canada is more important, in an existential sense, than that between Maryland and Delaware or between North and South America; but the belief in the importance of that particular boundary—which, after all, is

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explicitly rejecting Nussbaum's particular brand of cosmopolitanism as "bloodless." "Eros against Esperanto," in Nussbaum, *For Love of Country?* (1996), 89.

[40] See Rogers Smith, "'The Mission to Promote Liberty Around the World': American Civic Identity, Divine Duties, and Universal Rights" (paper presented at the annual conference of the American Political Science Association, Chicago, 2004).

[41] Ibid., p. 5. See also Smith, *Stories of Peoplehood*.

[42] In *Civic Ideals* (37-39), Smith elaborates on how organic and artificial (elite-produced) solidarity can reinforce each other: leaders can strengthen their own claims to power by appealing to the pre-existing, sometimes latent loyalties (ethnic and otherwise) of their constituents.

just an imaginary line across a northern plain—first had to be instilled in us by others.[43] National identity in particular is often produced, at least in part, by acts of conscious (elite) will—notably in Germany, where a small group of intellectuals created a unified culture from the myths and legends of the *Volk*;[44] but also in America, where a long line of intellectuals, from the Connecticut Wits to the artists of the "American Renaissance," consciously sought (with varying degrees of success[45]) to generate a distinct national voice free from European influence.[46] To a very real extent, the importance of elite agency poses a direct challenge to the whole notion of solidarity—which, after all, justifies itself as a fundamentally democratic concept, a way to marginalize the elite and reground the life force of a state in the "daily plebiscite" of its people.[47] At the same time, the fact that solidarity can be artificially manufactured (under certain circumstances) also expands the realm of possibility. Critics of cosmopolitanism, for

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[43] In contrast to some proponents of 'liberal nationalism'—notably Yael Tamir, who asserts that "Membership in a national culture is part of the essence of being human." Tamir later concedes that there is "no satisfactory" explanation for the relative importance of *national* communities over other political or cultural communities; indeed, the fact that the line between Maryland and Delaware *was* once of critical (and existential) importance indicates that the hierarchy is by no means natural. Tamir, *Liberal Nationalism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton, 1993), 36. 68.

[44] See Jurgen Habermas, *The Postnational Constellation* (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 2001).

[45] Jonathan Messerli notes that the earliest attempts at a distinct American high culture—Joel Barlow's epic *Columbiad* is a classic example—were invariably hopelessly derivative imitations of British art and poetry. The American Renaissance artists—Hawthorne, Melville, Whitman, and their contemporaries—were far more successful at creating a distinct 'American' voice; ironically, their intellectual father, Emerson, was not nearly as concerned with creating a 'national character' as the Wits had been (see Chapter Five). Messerli, "The Columbian Complex: The Impulse to National Consolidation," *History of Education Quarterly* 7:4 (Winter 1967): 417-31.

[46] And British influence in particular: as T. H. Breen notes, American national identity (naturally enough) initially developed primarily in opposition to the British. "Ideology and Nationalism on the Eve of the American Revolution: Revisions Once More in Need of Revising," *Journal of American History* 84 (1997): 13-39. (On the other hand, many Americans also did precisely the opposite—appealing to a united Anglo-American heritage as the *foundation* of national solidarity. See below.)

[47] Ernst Renan, "What is a nation?" in *Nation and Narration*, ed. Bhabha, p. 19. See also Craig Calhoun, "The Class Consciousness of Frequent Travelers: Towards a Critique of Actually Existing Cosmopolitanism," in *Conceiving Cosmopolitanism: Theory, Context, and Practice*, eds. Steven Vertovec and Robin Cohen (New York: Oxford, 2002), 86-109; Calhoun argues that, although the cosmopolitan project is desirable in the abstract, it also tends to be elitist (91)—while nationalism, in spite of its flaws, at

instance, often charge that "Humanity at large…is too abstract to be a strong focus for the affections,"[48] but that observation may very well apply only to societies where a cosmopolitan sensibility is not actively promoted.[49]

Issue 3: Scope

The third issue underlying the solidarity question is that of scope, or size: because the line between 'members' and 'non-members' is so often arbitrary, it is often possible for community builders to consciously consider how large the community should be—how many people, or how much territory, it should claim as its own.[50] From a republican

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least has the virtue of being essentially democratic (96). The above analysis, in contrast, seems to indicate that nationalism is elitist too, at least to a very significant degree.

[48] Michael McConnell, "Don't Neglect the Little Platoons," in Nussbaum, *For Love of Country?*, 81. McConnell, indeed, observes that our current society barely even promotes a *national* sensibility (78).

[49] And where the general public is unreceptive to it. Rogers Smith correctly notes that solidarity requires both sides of the equation: elite leadership and public receptiveness. It is this latter half that troubles many liberals—liberal nationalists like Will Kymlicka, or 'trans-nationalists' like Bruce Robbins—who view global human solidarity as desirable in the abstract but fear that it will never sufficiently inspire the general public, no matter how eloquently the appeal is made. Hauke Brunkhorst argues, however, that the current wave of globalization and the increasing power of global political-legal institutions—or, at the very least, the *perception* of their increasing power—is laying the foundation for cosmopolitan human solidarity (based, for Brunkhorst, on a "patriotism of human rights"). Brunkhorst, *Solidarity: From Civic Friendship to a Global Legal Community* (1995). The current wave of research on cosmopolitan theory—the fact that there *is* one, I mean—seems to confirm that people are becoming more receptive to transnational conceptions of solidarity. At the same time, it is also clear that globalization is making people more receptive to nativism, "illiberal" nationalism, and religious fundamentalism—the concern for cultural 'purity,' that is, against the 'contamination' brought by outsiders. Elite leaders could lead the public in either direction; but if the above analysis is right, then either direction is at least plausible.

[50] This is even true of ostensibly 'objective' sources of solidarity. Race, for instance, has been a source of solidarity for centuries—but how are we to determine who is 'white,' and who is 'black'? For many years, the U.S. government adopted the so-called "one-drop rule" as its official policy: "one drop" of African blood was enough to qualify an individual as 'black,' regardless of actual skin color, and only *pure* whiteness was sufficient to qualify one as 'white.' The "one-drop rule" is based on objective, measurable criteria; but the underlying assumption—that 'whiteness' and 'blackness' should be defined in *this* particular way, as opposed to any other—is entirely baseless and arbitrary. On the other hand, the reverse is also true: it is no less baseless and arbitrary to *reject* the one-drop rule and define 'white' and 'black' in some other way. The ongoing debate over the category of 'personhood,' which informs the animal rights debate and the abortion debate (among others), faces the same problem: even after we agree that 'persons' are endowed with a specific set of rights, we still must decide what constitutes a 'person' and what does not. There are objective criteria to which we can appeal, of course—we could argue, for instance, that all *Homo sapiens* are 'persons,' and all other species are not—but even this depends on the arbitrary presumption that the distinction between *Homo sapiens* and non-*Homo sapiens* is meaningful. Likewise, one may argue that a person becomes a person at birth, at conception, at viability, or at some other point in

perspective, the question of size is critical: a community that is too small to defend itself or subsist on its own becomes dependent on (and thus enslaved to) its larger, more prosperous neighbors;[51] but a community that is too large and expansive to command the love of its people is doomed either to disintegrate or to fall under tyranny. This latter point, it must be noted, is distinct from—and much more troubling than—the earlier argument that oversized states are too diverse to sustain a notion of the 'common good.' That argument, as demonstrated above, is easy enough to overcome: one can identify a set of common characteristics and interests for any body of people, no matter how large. (At the very least, every human society is composed of *humans*—a point, I will argue, upon which many significant American thinkers have relied.) Here, though, the problem is *size itself*: because it is so difficult for individuals to feel any kind of emotional connection to distant strangers or distant governments, oversized states may be unsustainable even when its members *do* share interests in common.[52] Americans in 1776 shared a great deal in common with the British—they were subject to the same laws, practiced essentially the same religious and social rituals, embraced many of the

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her physical development, but none of these distinctions is any more 'correct' than the others. (Indeed, all of those common arguments depend on the *prior* assumption that 'personhood' is a function of one's *physical* development—which is itself an arbitrary assertion.) There is, in the end, no right answer: even if we agree that race or personhood *should* serve as a source of solidarity, the line between 'white' and 'black' or 'person' and 'non-person' is necessarily an arbitrary one, drawn by political elites and validated by the general (voting) public. See David Hollinger, *Cosmopolitanism and Solidarity: Studies in Ethnoracial, Religious, and Professional Affiliation in the United States* (Madison: Wisconsin, 2006), ch. 1.

[51] This is Machiavelli's point, of course, most famously. As Philip Pettit notes, it is "slavery," rather than "restraint," which is the most direct opposite of the republican notion of liberty as "non-domination." Pettit, *Republicanism: A Theory of Freedom and Government*, 32. Consequently, from the republican perspective, the position of dependence and subordination that results from living in an undersized state is to be avoided at all costs.

[52] Montesquieu, for instance, makes the case for the small state in two separate places in *Spirit of the Laws*. It is in Book VIII where he makes the argument from homogeneity, observing that "the public good is better felt, better known" in a smaller state. The argument for the small state in Book IV, however, appeals to size alone: here, he argues that love of country is only possible in a society small enough for all people to "pay a singular attention to each other." I've argued above that this *particular* size-based constraint is too narrow; but this does not necessarily invalidate *every* argument against large states.

same cultural symbols, accepted the same political ideals, spoke (for the most part) the same language, and even generally still *thought* of themselves as British[53]—but in spite of all this, the rebelling colonists could not escape the feeling that, as John Adams famously put it, there was simply "something unnatural and odious in a government 1000 leagues off."[54] It may well be possible for human beings to feel "solidarity among strangers,"[55] but this will inevitably be weaker (or "thinner") than the solidarity we feel toward those who are closer to us—our family, or our friends, or our fellow townsfolk. And if that solidarity becomes *too* thin, it may also become impossible to sustain institutions that depend on public participation.[56]

The notion of identity as a widening set of "concentric circles," beginning with the self and radiating outward, is a common metaphor for the problem of scope—so common, indeed, that many take its truth for granted. The concentric-circle thesis begins with the observation that human beings do not merely identify with *one* group or personal

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[53] To an extent. Gordon Wood notes that many of the American revolutionaries saw themselves not as rebelling *against* the British constitution, but as the last *defenders* of that constitution against the creeping decay of political and moral corruption. At the same time, Wood also points out that the well-known demand for separate representation in Parliament was predicated on the assumption that Americans were separate people (or *a* separate people) who required their own distinct representatives to speak for their own distinct interests. Wood, *Creation*, chs. 1 and 5.

[54] Letter to Abigail Adams, May 17, 1776. In *The Portable John Adams*, ed. John Patrick Diggins (New York: Penguin, 2004), 155.

[55] Brunkhorst's point, in *Solidarity* (1995).

[56] This argument too is leveled regularly against the cosmopolitan project: Ben Barber, for one, opines against the "thinness of cosmopolitanism," which "offers little or nothing for the human psyche to fasten on." Conceivably, though, one could make the same argument, at least in theory, against *any* higher-order collective: certainly Anti-Federalists made precisely the same charge against a unified American government; and even a patriotic republican like 'Cato" occasionally conceded (as noted above) that most individuals—selfish as they are—are hard-pressed to love any society, large or small, that doesn't serve their own *private* interests (an argument one can trace back, at least, to Hobbes). Barber, "Constitutional Faith," in Nussbaum, *For Love of Country?* (1996), 33.

characteristic; rather, our personal self-conception is a far more complex blend of "plural loyalties."[57] "The first one encircles the self," writes Martha Nussbaum,

> the next takes in the immediate family, then follows the extended family, then, in order, neighbors or local groups, fellow city-dwellers, and fellow countrymen—and we can easily add to this list groupings based on ethnic, linguistic, historical, professional, gender, or sexual identities.[58]

The concentric-circle thesis has been a defining characteristic of the cosmopolitan project from the beginning: Nussbaum, indeed, traces the idea back to the Stoics, the original cosmopolitans themselves.[59] It serves a twofold purpose: first, the fact that our identities are invariably 'plural' composites from multiple sources poses a serious challenge to those—nationalists, racists, and a host of others—who essentialize a particular source of identity to the exclusion of all others; second, it enables the cosmopolitan project—so often dismissed as esoteric, elitist or "rootless"—to reconcile itself with the fact that human beings can feel 'thick' attachments to their families, their local communities, and their nations, as well as the human race. (It reminds cosmopolitans, in other words, not to essentialize 'humanity' to the exclusion of everything else.[60]) But the logic of the concentric-circle thesis also leads in a decidedly

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[57] See, e.g., Mitchell Cohen, "Rooted Cosmopolitanism," *Dissent*, Fall 1992, 481; Hollinger, *Cosmopolitanism and Solidarity*, xvii; David Held, "Principles of Cosmopolitan Order," in *The Political Philosophy of Cosmopolitanism*, eds. Gillian Brock and Harry Brighouse (New York: Cambridge, 2005), 18; Steven Vertovec and Robin Cohen, "Introduction: Conceiving Cosmopolitanism," in *Conceiving Cosmopolitanism: Theory, Context, and Practice*, eds. Vertovec and Cohen (New York: Oxford, 2002), 4; Stuart Hall, "Political Belonging in a World of Multiple Identities," in Vertovec and Cohen (2002), 25-31; Ulrich Beck, "Sociology in the Second Age of Modernity," in Vertovec and Cohen (2002), 75.
[58] Nussbaum, "Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism," in Nussbaum, *For Love of Country?* (2002), 9.
[59] Ibid., 7-9.
[60] This is the insight offered by "rooted cosmopolitanism," which came into vogue after the publication of Mitchell Cohen's article of the same name in 1992. "Rooted cosmopolitanism" represents an attempt to reconcile the sudden spike of interest in the cosmopolitan project after 1989—when the collapse of the Soviet Union and the promise of a global free market made it possible to conceive an all-encompassing 'new world order'—with the recent insights of postmodern theory, which emphasizes the constructedness of "grand narratives" and consequently views all universal projects (like cosmopolitanism) with great suspicion. 'Rooted' cosmopolitans contend, in essence, that a general concern for humanity does not require cultural homogenization, nor does it require individuals to abandon their more particular local ties;

anti-cosmopolitan direction: if we think of circles of identity as "radiating outward" from the self, as I just described, it stands to reason that those circles grow fainter and weaker as they expand—like sound waves, or the ripples caused by a rock splashing into water.[61] 'Humanity' may indeed represent a source of personal identity, but—if we take the concentric-circle thesis to its logical conclusion—it is unlikely to serve as an *important* source. At some point, the 'circle' will become too large, too wide, and thus too thin to support the public virtue necessary to sustain free, republican institutions.[62]

But how large is 'too' large, and how small is 'too' small? How wide, in other words, may the circle of community extend before it becomes too "thin" to sustain a public spirit? This distinction too is largely arbitrary; at the very least, it depends on a multitude of historical contingencies, many of which only become clear in hindsight (if indeed they ever become clear at all). Recently, William Connolly has argued (echoing David Held and others) that the "compression of distance" brought by advances in communication and transportation technology has made postnational solidarity[63]

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indeed, as Kwame Anthony Appiah argues, a decent respect for those local attachments may be *conducive* to a greater respect for humanity at large. Appiah, however, rarely goes out of his way to define himself as a 'rooted' cosmopolitan specifically, arguing instead—as Nussbaum does, implicitly, in *For Love of Country?*—that 'rootedness' has been part and parcel of the cosmopolitan project all along, contrary to the disingenuous mischaracterizations of its critics. Steven Vertovec and Robin Cohen state it right out: "In fact," they observe, "this view of cosmopolitanism is an age-old one," dating back as far as the ancient Greeks. "Introduction: Conceiving Cosmopolitanism," in *Conceiving Cosmopolitanism* (2002), 12. (Indeed, one may argue that adding the word 'rooted' to save the cosmopolitan project may have the opposite effect—since it accepts, uncritically, the old [and false] complaint that cosmopolitanism proper is 'rootless' or 'bloodless.')

[61] Emerson calls upon this metaphor in particular in his famous essay "Circles."

[62] Particularly if—as William Connolly notes in his critique of the concentric-circles thesis—diversity and difference become more prominent as the circle expands. Recognizing (as noted above) that this poses a serious challenge to lasting solidarity, Connolly suggests we scrap the old conception of 'concentric circles' altogether and search for common bonds that cut *across* the 'circles.' Connolly, "Speed, Concentric Cultures, and Cosmopolitanism," *op. cit*.

[63] Though not necessarily *cosmopolitan* solidarity, in the traditional (Kantian) sense of the word. For Connolly, the "compression of distance" makes it imperative, and possible, to conceive of a practical cosmopolitan project, but it also makes us more aware of the lack of a universal morality—which, at least for Kant, was the basis of cosmopolitanism in the first place.

increasingly conceivable, even necessary: indeed, Connolly argues, this "compression" has made the nation-state *so* small, in real terms, that it is "no longer large enough to secure…political unity."[64] Individuals, in other words, become more likely to attach themselves to larger, more 'universal' notions of identity when they encounter a wider scope of culture and human activity.[65] ("How are you going to keep them down on the farm," as the song goes, "after they've seen Paree?") The unspoken corollary, of course, is that some "compression of distance" is necessary for individuals to feel solidarity beyond their traditional circles—that individuals will happily remain 'down on the farm,' that is, *until* they see Paree. But this only returns us to the original question: how much "compression" do individuals need? There may be no objective answer. The argument against 'oversized states' could, conceivably, be used against *any* centralized government, no matter how distant. There is no obvious reason—as Anti-Federalists repeatedly observed during the Constitutional ratification debates—why being governed from Washington or New York should be any less "odious" than being governed from London: Washington, after all, is a distant city too, and its halls of power too are filled with strangers.[66] Some of the more extreme Anti-Federalists even argued that the individual *states* were growing too large: far from being satisfied with maintaining the existing political structure, these men suggested dividing the larger states into smaller pieces, to decentralize American government even further.[67]

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[64] Connolly, "Speed, Concentric Cultures, and Cosmopolitanism," 604, 603.
[65] Benedict Anderson makes a similar argument: nationalism became a viable political movement with the emergence of a national print media—which not only exposed individuals to "a wider scope of culture and human activity," but also, in many cases, *limited* that scope to the boundaries of the linguistic nation.
[66] See "Federal Farmer" II, in Debate I, 255-57; and "Agrippa" IV, in Debate I, 450.
[67] See "Cato" III, in Debate I, 216. (The Anti-Federalist "Cato" is not the same as Trenchard and Gordon's "Cato," though they adopted the same pseudonym.)

Underlying all of this is the logic of the "concentric circles" argument, which—despite its cosmopolitan aspirations—strongly implies that individuals necessarily attach themselves most firmly to smaller local groups, groups that do not 'radiate' far from the self. Solidarity is strongest at the local level, the argument runs, and solidarity is a necessary precondition of free republican institutions; thus we must decentralize government as far as possible, in order to preserve the advantages of popular sovereignty. Such was the logic of the Anti-Federalists in the late eighteenth century and many states'-rightists in the nineteenth (those motivated by sincere republican principles, at least, rather than sheer racism or mere self-interest); such too is the logic employed by many opponents of 'global governance' today—who oppose globalization in any form on the assumption that global institutions (the odious "world state") cannot be anything but tyrannical.[68] But while the logic of the concentric-circles argument is so often postulated as fact, there is ample evidence to indicate that its initial premise, at least, is significantly flawed: for many individuals, larger and broader attachments are far more important, far more meaningful, than smaller and narrower ones. Americans, after all, often feel a far stronger attachment to America than to their states, their cities, or their neighborhoods;[69] likewise, Christians and Muslims often identify most strongly with their respective faiths, attaching themselves, in the process, to a truly global community (the *Umma* or the *Civitas Dei*) that numbers in the billions. Circles in nature grow fainter as they widen,

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[68] Robert Keohane, for one—though Keohane of course is not an extreme anti-globalist—suggests that embracing global governance without a prior foundation of "universally accepted values and institutions"—which is unattainable in such a diverse world—is akin to entering a "suicide pact." "Global Governance and Democratic Accountability," in *Taming Globalization: Frontiers of Governance*, eds. David Held and Mathias Koenig-Archibugi (Malden, MA: Polity, 2003), 133. See also Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, introduction to *Governance in a Globalizing World*, eds. Joseph S. Nye and John D. Donahue (Washington, DC: Brookings, 2001), 1-44.

but this is not necessarily true for human beings: indeed the widest human circles often inspire the greatest sacrifices. No less a defender of the small state than Montesquieu made the point most eloquently:

> If I knew something useful to me, but prejudicial to my family, I would reject it from my mind. If I knew something useful to my family, but not to my country, I would try to forget it. If I knew something useful to my country, but prejudicial to Europe, or useful to Europe and prejudicial to the human race, I would regard it as criminal.[70]

This is not to argue that the concentric-circles argument is invalid, of course: certainly it is true that many, even most, human beings are more inclined to define their personal identities on the basis of smaller, closer attachments. Likewise, Connolly (who, it should be noted, actually rejects the concentric-circle metaphor) is equally right to observe that the "compression of distance" makes a wider scope of solidarity considerably more plausible than it would be otherwise. Moreover, as Nussbaum and others would quickly point out, the concentric-circles argument rarely if ever asserts directly that individuals *must* feel stronger attachments to narrower groups—this is merely the (misleading) image it often produces.[71] What is invalid, however, is the notion that scope or size can serve as an objective, absolute constraint on the possibility of human solidarity (and, by extension, popular government). The question of scope is a serious concern, particularly if we accept the central tenets of republican theory: centuries of human experience have taught us, after all, that it is certainly more difficult, though

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[69] As Michael Billig points out in his work on 'banal nationalism,' the very fact that Americans refer to themselves as "Americans," rather than "Virginians" or "Anglo-Americans" or "Westerners," is significant in its own right. See Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1995).
[70] Montesquieu, *Cahiers*, ed. Bernard Grasset (Paris: Grasset, 1941), 9; quoted by George R. Healy in his introduction to Montesquieu, *The Persian Letters*, trans. Healy (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1999), xviii-xix.
[71] In his response to Nussbaum's "Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism," for instance, Michael Walzer notes "how odd it is" that the *outermost* circle should be the strongest source of personal identity. "Spheres of Affection," in Nussbaum, *For Love of Country?* (1996), 126.

not impossible, to generate lasting solidarity around a broad or vague sense of unity. What is ultimately important, however—as noted above—is not the size of a community, but rather the strength of its "story of peoplehood," its ability to instill in its members a common feeling of belonging to "one united people," no matter how large or diverse. It may of course be easier to persuade individuals to feel attached to smaller groups and local communities; but this does not make a wider scope of solidarity inconceivable. Human beings are not compelled or required to attach themselves to small, highly exclusive groups: we are capable, to a very real extent, of choosing the group(s) to which our loyalty belongs.[72] The only real qualification is that this 'choice' is a *social* choice, influenced and constrained by the choices of others (elites in particular); for better or worse, we do not—we *can* not—make it in a vacuum.

There is, however, one possible absolute constraint on the scope of solidarity that must be considered—the commonly accepted 'particularist thesis,' which holds that universal human solidarity is unattainable in practice because solidarity requires an Other, an excluded "them" against whom we can define "us." "Collective identities," the argument goes, "can only be established on the mode of an us/them,"[73] for a variety of compelling reasons. The first, following Hegel, is that self-recognition is impossible unless we are first recognized by an Other who stands outside ourselves; Charles Taylor, in this fashion, characterizes the human mind as inherently "dialogic," developing itself necessarily in *dialogue* with outside forces.[74] The second, along similar lines, is that the

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[72] Indeed, as Drucilla Cornell contends, this choice is not only a capability but a fundamental right. Cornell, *The Imaginary Domain* (New York: Routledge, 1995).
[73] Chantal Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox* (New York: Verso, 2000), 13.
[74] Arash Abizadeh, "Does Collective Identity Presuppose an Other?", 48. See Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition," in Gutmann, ed., *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton, 1994), 33.

very notion of citizenship in and allegiance to a 'community' presupposes the existence of *other* communities to which we do *not* belong and toward which we do *not* pledge allegiance. The special duties I owe to my fellow Americans, by this logic, are meaningful only because I do not owe the same to non-Americans; likewise, the rights and privileges to which I am entitled as a citizen are meaningful only because there are other individuals who are not entitled to the same rights. "Loyalty," writes David Miller, "means favouring the interests of members of the group at the expense of outsiders in certain circumstances. That is what loyalty means: talk of impersonal loyalty, or loyalty to the human race as a whole, is meaningless."[75] Likewise, Hannah Arendt argues that "A citizen is by definition a citizen among citizens of a country among countries," concluding that eliminating the distinctions between countries "would be the end of all citizenship."[76] Finally—and perhaps most importantly—the particularist thesis holds that solidarity cannot be wholly universal because human beings simply do not think in universal terms. "Our common humanity will never make us members of a single *universal* tribe," writes Michael Walzer, because "The crucial commonality of the human race is *particularism*."[77] Similarly, Richard Rorty asserts that "To be a person is to speak a *particular* language, one which enables us to discuss particular beliefs and desires with

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[75] David Miller, *Market, State, and Community: Theoretical Foundations of Market Socialism* (New York: Oxford, 1989), 239; quoted in Abizadeh, 48.
[76] Arendt, *Men in Dark Times* (San Diego: Harvest Books, 1970), 81-2. See also Anthony Smith, "Towards a Global Culture?" *Theory, Culture & Society* 7:2 (June 1990): 171-91.
[77] Walzer, "The New Tribalism: Notes on a Difficult Problem," *Dissent*, Spring 1992, 171; quoted in Abizadeh, 45.

particular sorts of people."[78] And for Maurizio Viroli, even love "is necessarily particular: it is always love of particular persons, objects, or places."[79]

The particularist thesis is highly persuasive; indeed, Arash Abizadeh observes that many take it entirely for granted.[80] As with the concentric-circle thesis, however, its ubiquitous acceptance masks a number of serious flaws. Abizadeh's objection is that the premise of the particularist thesis—that "collective identity…is inherently particular"[81]—is false, or at least unjustified: Hegel and Taylor may be right to assert that *individual* identity must shape itself in "dialogue" with an Other, but this in no way implies that *collective* identity must shape itself in the same way.[82] Even if we reject Abizadeh and accept the premise, however, the conclusion—that "a global human identity…is impossible"[83]—does not necessarily follow from it. The particularist thesis, after all, relies partly on the Saussurean approach to linguistics, which holds that concepts are meaningful only insofar as they are defined in opposition to others—but by the same logic, the concept of "humanity" is coherent and understandable precisely because it is *not* a universal, because there *are* things, ideas, and concepts against which we can define it. The particularist objection to universal human solidarity works if we assume that

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[78] Quoted in Norman Geras, *Solidarity in the Conversation of Humankind: The Ungroundable Liberalism of Richard Rorty* (New York: Verso, 1995), 61.
[79] Viroli, *For Love of Country*, 58. Viroli does not, however, directly engage the universal (or ostensibly universal) conceptions of human love that *do* exist—most notably the Christian conceptions of *caritas* and *agape*, which explicitly extend 'love' beyond friends and family to include strangers and even enemies.
[80] Abizadeh, 45. Still others defend the particularist thesis with a fourth argument: universal human solidarity is impossible because the human race is simply too diverse (or because the concept of 'the human race' is simply too abstract). This, however, is an empirical rather than a theoretical argument; it does not assert that human solidarity is *necessarily* unattainable, but simply that "the human race" does not *currently* meet the preconditions for sustainable 'thick' solidarity. (This objection, in other words, could be overcome if the "distance" between human beings were sufficiently "compressed" or if global culture was sufficiently homogeneous; the three arguments I consider here, however, cannot be overcome in this manner.) Consequently, I address this objection elsewhere.
[81] Ibid., 47.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Ibid.

human beings are the only things in the known universe; but insofar as this is not the case, it is easy to reconcile 'universal' solidarity with the fact that identity must be specific and particular. "Loyalty" and "love" may well be necessarily particular, as Miller and Viroli contend, but it is still conceivable that one may love mankind, or pledge allegiance to the human race: we need only love *that which is human*, as opposed to that which is not.[84] Such an argument may sound facetious or superficial, but it does not have to be: I contend in Chapter Five, for instance, that Walt Whitman's call for American unity in *Leaves of Grass* is grounded on precisely this logic. (Whether Whitman himself was facetious or superficial is entirely up for debate.) In any event, the most glaring flaw with the belief that humans are incapable of a 'thick' universal attachment is, quite simply, the fact that it's been done before: as Abizadeh, Martha Nussbaum, and others observe, history is replete with individuals acting, sacrificing, and even dying, simply out of love for their 'fellow man.'[85] The fact that such a commitment is directed toward *all* human beings does not make it any less substantive or any less meaningful; indeed the very idea of 'human rights,' which has generated a great deal of substantive, meaningful political action in the last three centuries, is founded on precisely this commitment.[86] The near-universal acceptance of the particularist thesis certainly

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[84] Some, e.g. Chantal Mouffe and Carl Schmitt, argue further that the Other against whom we define ourselves must be an antagonist or an enemy. As Abizadeh points out, however (51), it is not necessary to adopt such a Manichean worldview. (It is worth noting, though, that the notion of 'conquering nature' was implicit in the humanism of the Enlightenment. For better or worse, antagonists need not be *human* antagonists.)

[85] Ibid., 49; Nussbaum, "Reply," in *For Love of Country?* (1996), 131. Elaine Scarry qualifies Nussbaum's point here in an important way: we *can* feel a universal human solidarity, but because "we have trouble believing in the reality of other persons," such solidarity will be unsustainable without a legal institutional framework to *compel* us to believe. Scarry, "The Difficulty of Imagining Other People," in Nussbaum, *For Love of Country?*, 102.

[86] Nor, as Appiah points out in *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*, does it preclude the possibility of 'special' duties owed specifically to family members, friends, neighbors or countrymen. See also Amartya Sen, "Humanity and Citizenship," in Nussbaum, *For Love of Country?*

speaks to its strength: it is difficult, after all, to sustain long-term bonds of solidarity on any scale, let alone a universal one; and history is no less replete with individuals who have pursued the narrow interests of their own group at the *expense* of their fellow man. Even this, though, does not serve as an objective or absolute constraint on the potential of human solidarity: size matters, to be sure, but not nearly as much as the "story."

The need for solidarity, of course, is not the only limit on the proper size of a community or a state. There are other practical concerns as well: the size of states, after all, is historically determined, contingent on the current realities of the moment. New advancements in transportation, communication, or military technology, new social movements and new political developments, all have the power to reshape the globe in hitherto unforeseen ways, to render the preexisting geopolitical system obsolete. Republican political theorists faced precisely this dilemma in the eighteenth century: many who followed Montesquieu embraced the Greek *polis* as their model society, but the consolidation of states and the emergence of imperial superpowers made that sort of community unsustainable in the modern age. This, in the end, was probably the argument that won the day for the Federalists in 1787: the fact that the individual states were too small trumped the fear that the new 'empire' would be too large. Scholars today, like David Held or Arjun Appadurai, who argue that "we need to think beyond the nation,"[87] make a similar argument: for better or worse, global governance (or at least

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[87] Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: Minnesota, 1996), 158. See also Held, *Democracy and the Global Order: From the Modern State to Cosmopolitan Governance* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford, 1995); Held and McGrew, *Globalization/Anti-Globalization* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2002); Held et al., *Global Transformations: Politics, Economics and Culture* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford, 1999); Held, "Law of States, Law of Peoples: Three Models of Sovereignty," *Legal Theory* 8:1 (March 2002): 1-44; Robert Keohane, *After Hegemony* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton, 1984); Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, *Transnational Relations and World Politics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 1972); Richard N. Cooper, *Economic Policy in an Interdependent World* (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1986); and E. H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis 1919-1939* (New York: Harper, 1939).

transnational governance) is necessary in a world threatened by international terrorism, global climate change, and the specter of nuclear conflict, marked by the rapid movement of people and goods and ideas across borders, and linked together by a global economic market. The nation-state is not going away, of course,[88] but the possibility—indeed the reality—of global governance is nevertheless quite genuine. At the same time, oversized states face their own logistical problems: not only is it more difficult to maintain a common bond of solidarity in a large state, it is also more difficult simply to maintain order—and, as states grow larger and more diverse, it becomes increasingly likely that the 'order' they *do* maintain will be the preferred order of a particular elite, enforced at the expense of the powerless masses.[89] It is partly for this reason that "liberal nationalists," from Herder and Fichte to Mill and Mazzini to Habermas and Yael Tamir,

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[88] Though many argued that it was, in the chaotic immediate aftermath of 1989. For a more sober view, see Michael Mann, "Has Globalization Ended the Rise and Rise of the Nation-State?" *Review of International Political Economy* 4:3 (September 1997): 472-496; John B. Thompson, *Ideology and Modern Culture* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford, 1990) and *The Media and Modernity* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford, 1995); Tamar Liebes and Elihu Katz, *The Export of Meaning* (Malden, MA: Polity, 1993); and Nathan Glazer, "Limits of Loyalty," in Nussbaum, *For Love of Country?* (1996).

[89] This, of course, is one of the most common complaints against existing institutions of global governance; cf. Thomas Pogge, ed., *Global Justice* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2001), and Caroline Thomas, *Global Governance, Development and Human Security* (Ann Arbor, MI: Michigan, 2000), who argue that globalization—which often claims to be the best vehicle for improving the quality of life in impoverished regions (witness Robert McNamara's defense of the World Bank in Errol Morris's *The Fog of War*)—is actually to blame for the rise of global poverty. Held and McGrew, *Globalization/Anti-Globalization* (2002), add that globalization today is "driven by companies, not countries" (70) and fails to consider the interests of the general public. Institutional cosmopolitans (like Held) often join in the criticism, but the same complaint is also often leveled against the cosmopolitan project—which, in its most common form, also relies on the idea of a universal worldview. As Judith Butler observes, however, "the meaning of 'the universal' proves to be culturally variable," expressing itself differently in different cultures; consequently—as numerous postmodern theorists have persuasively demonstrated—the attempt to articulate a universal worldview that applies equally across cultures often (if not necessarily invariably) leads to the imposition of a *particular* conception of the 'universal' by one culture onto another. Butler, "Universality in Culture," in Nussbaum, *For Love of Country?* (1996), 45; cf. also Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), and David Miller and Michael Walzer, eds., *Pluralism, Justice, and Equality* (New York: Oxford, 1995), who reject the notion of a universal law of justice; James Clifford and George E. Marcus, *Writing Culture* (Berkeley: University of California, 1986), who observe the inescapable Otherness of cultures; Bruce Robbins and Pheng Cheah, eds., *Cosmopolitics* (Minneapolis: Minnesota, 1998), who argue that cosmopolitanism itself is culturally specific; and Gayatri Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, eds. Cary Nelson and Lawrence

have defended the limited, exclusive nation-state structure—not in spite of their 'love of mankind,' but precisely *because* of it. In this, the liberal nationalists are echoing none other than Montesquieu—who rejected as "criminal" anything that would benefit his own people at the expense of mankind, but nevertheless maintained that human beings inhabit "a planet so large that different peoples are necessary."[90] The above discussion, however, indicates strongly that solidarity, at least, is flexible enough to encompass a united community of any size, no matter how small or large: solidarity may be more plausible at the local level, but there is no reason to accept the common assumption that human nature somehow precludes the possibility of large-scale attachments. Supersized institutions may be undesirable or unsustainable for many reasons, but the impossibility of solidarity is not one of them.

Issue 4: Pluralism

I have already mentioned the notion of 'plural loyalties' in the above discussion of scope, but it deserves separate elaboration: a proper theory of solidarity must recognize that individuals never identify with a single group, but rather claim a complex set of often-conflicting "multiple identities," the relative weight of which varies according to immediate circumstances. In the modern (Westphalian) age, dominated as it is by a geopolitical structure that privileges the nation-state, individuals are typically identified primarily by (and conceive of themselves primarily according to) their respective nationalities; from a political perspective, the fact that I am a U.S. citizen is more 'meaningful,' in real terms, than the fact that I was born in Michigan, the fact that I reside

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Grossberg (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois, 1988), 271-316, who notes the extent to which powerful

in the Western Hemisphere, or the fact that I am a mainline Protestant (among other things). Indeed, even in the emerging post-Westphalian order of 'global governance' and transnational institutions, national identity remains fundamentally important: as David Held and Anthony McGrew observe, most of us still take the nation "as given and practically natural."[91] For this reason, a number of well-meaning scholars willingly (if sometimes begrudgingly) defend the nationalist tradition in spite of its exclusivistic or 'illiberal' tendencies: because "Membership in a national culture is part of the essence of being human," a political theory that actually respects the individual (i.e. a *liberal* political theory) must be willing to accept the importance of national identity.[92] Awareness of "multiple identities," however, reminds us that nationality is by no means the *only* source of our personal self-image, nor—even given the supremacy of the nation-state system—is it necessarily the most important. Identity defies reduction to a sole category or a single source: scholars often make the mistake of privileging one source and neglecting the rest, but this rarely if ever corresponds to the actual identities of actual individuals. One's personal self-conception is almost invariably a unique blend (or practically unique) of an enormous variety of distinct 'identities.' Americans almost never conceive of themselves merely in national terms: we also conceive of ourselves in terms of our respective states, cities, neighborhoods, families and circles of friends, occupations, classes, religious beliefs, political views, races, genders, sexual orientations, ancestries, body types and hobbies—for starters. Moreover, individuals often claim 'plural loyalties' within a single category as well. Within American politics, the most

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cultures impose their language (and, consequently, their own particular worldview) on 'subaltern' cultures.
[90] Montesquieu, *Spirit of the Laws*, 7.
[91] Held and McGrew, *Globalization/Anti-Globalization*, 28.
[92] Yael Tamir, *Liberal Nationalism*, 36.

well-known variant of this is the hyphenated “Irish-American” or “Italian-American” (to take only two common examples), who feels loyal to two nations at once; one may also literally claim dual citizenship in separate countries—an increasingly common phenomenon in an age of free markets, open borders, increased migration, free intercontinental communication, and easy travel from one corner of the globe to another. Likewise, individuals born into ‘mixed’ families may identify with multiple racial or religious backgrounds; individuals currently residing in state A may identify no less with their birth state B; and upwardly (or downwardly) mobile individuals may continue to think of themselves in terms of their economic ‘roots.’

Underlying all of this is the problem of *asymmetry*: the fact that there are so many possible sources of personal identity effectively guarantees that what is vitally important to one person will be thoroughly irrelevant to another. Many white Americans, for instance, are extremely conscious of their racial identity; many others are hardly conscious of it at all (and still others are unaware of just how conscious they are). Compounding this, our self-image, or our personal identity, does not necessarily cohere with our public image, or the identity ascribed onto us by our community. Members of marginalized minority groups, for instance, often find it difficult to be recognized as anything other than a representative of that group—a dilemma explored in such disparate works as Ellison’s *Invisible Man*, John Howard Griffin’s *Black Like Me*, Susan Faludi’s *The Naked Citadel*, and a bevy of films and television shows ranging from *Hairspray* to *North Country* to *Little People, Big World*.[93] Asymmetry, consequently, often arises between majority and minority groups in a particular category: individuals often identify

(and are identified) most strongly with those 'distinctive' characteristics that serve to set them apart from their neighbors. Barack Obama, for instance, is *black*, not *Christian*; Mitt Romney is *Mormon*, not *white*; Barney Frank is *gay* rather than *Jewish*; but Joseph Lieberman is *Jewish* rather than *straight*. As a result, the identities we ascribe to ourselves and others vary at different times, depending on our immediate surroundings: white Americans often become more race-conscious when traveling in Harlem; mainline Protestants become more faith-conscious when traveling in India (or, for that matter, rural Mississippi); and middle class suburbanites become more class-conscious when driving through gated communities or slums. We are conscious of Hillary Clinton's gender, and not John McCain's, because we view them as members of an otherwise all-male collective; the situation would be reversed, however, if we lifted them from the set of presidential candidates and placed them among, say, the student body at a women's college. (And Mitt Romney would be 'the white guy' in a room full of black Mormons.) The external ascription of identity need not correspond to our own self-image—this, after all, is precisely the source of conflict in *Invisible Man* or *North Country*—but society's view of us often has a profound effect on how we view ourselves. More importantly, it also places important constraints on how we *can* view ourselves: David Hollinger observes, for instance, that Alex Haley was of mixed-race parentage, but Americans would not have taken him seriously had he written *Roots* about his Irish ancestry.[94]

For a theory of solidarity, this has several important implications. First, the fact that we tend to identify most strongly with our 'distinctive' characteristics returns us to the 'particularist thesis' discussed in the previous section—the notion that we can only

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[93] This is equally problematic in reverse, when well-meaning individuals consciously "look past" those

feel bonds of solidarity with a *part* of the whole, not with the whole itself. What is implied here, indeed, is an even stronger variant on that thesis: it is not particularity generally, but rather one's status as a (marginalized) minority, that is especially favorable to solidarity. Scholars often assert that collective identity requires an excluded Other—an "us/them," as Chantal Mouffe describes it—but collective identity may also benefit from a feeling of *being* that excluded Other, standing against a "them" who is larger, more powerful (or at least equally powerful), and decidedly antagonistic. Fortunately, we need not leap from this to the extreme and dangerous conclusion, defended most famously by Carl Schmitt, that the "them" necessarily *must* be antagonistic; but it is certainly true—and a brief scan of American history bears this out—that group solidarity typically strengthens during times of conflict, in the face of an avowed enemy.[95]

Second: the recent wave of republican and nationalist theory in American political thought developed partly in response to the popularity of "multiculturalism" and interest-group liberalism, which (it was feared) posed a threat to national unity (and thus civic virtue) by promoting separate cultural traditions and narrow factional interests. Such fears may be justified, at least in theory, if we assume that solidarity requires a sense of homogeneity: citizens, after all, cannot be expected to hold their leaders accountable to the general interest if they are concerned primarily with the narrow interest of their 'culture' or their interest group. To the extent that we define ourselves (not to mention

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characteristics that *are* meaningful to us ("I don't think of you as black," e.g.).

[94] Hollinger, *Postethnic America* (New York: Basic Books, 1995).

[95] Americans in the nineteenth century defined themselves partly in opposition to the corrupt, decadent specter of European cultural influence; likewise, American identity in the twentieth century was largely a function of one's opposition to the Soviet Union (invariably described as more powerful and more imperialistic than it really was). Today, of course—after a brief flirtation with China in the nineties—Americans define themselves partly in opposition to the threat of radical Islamism (supported, of course, by France, Germany, and the rest of the America-hating world).

each other) in terms of our minority status, however, multiculturalism, or cultural pluralism, may also be unavoidable—not just in America, but (as Madison recognized) in any group of three or more people.[96] 'Unity,' by this logic, is always artificially imposed—no matter how objective or real it seems—upon an "irredeemably plural modern space."[97] "Multiculturalism," after all, is a new word but not a new trend. Conservative nationalists and radical critics argue otherwise, but America has never been culturally homogeneous; indeed, thanks to the interstate highway system and the rapid spread of national retail chains (a McDonald's and a Wal-Mart at every exit, right next to the Comfort Inn), American society is arguably *more* homogeneous today than ever before. Nevertheless, the apparent inevitability of multiculturalism—the extent to which we define ourselves in opposition to the whole, in terms of our distinctive traits—poses a serious challenge to the very notion of solidarity itself, which demands allegiance to the whole on the basis of shared characteristics.

For better or worse, of course, all of this is based on an exaggerated fear: it is certainly true that we often define each other as minorities, but this does not always translate (indeed it rarely translates) into a spirited defense of separate cultures. Cultural assimilation, numerous studies have found, is proceeding just as rapidly today as it ever has: we do often like to think of ourselves as persecuted outsiders, but the desire to 'blend in' with the mainstream is equally strong.[98] (Indeed, if anything, Americans may err too far in the opposite direction—requiring new arrivals to assimilate *entirely* into a

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[96] Because there are no minorities in a group of only two.
[97] Homi Bhabha, "DissemiNation: time, narrative, and the margins of the modern nation," in *Nation and Narration*, ed. Bhabha (New York: Routledge, 1990), 300.
[98] Alejandro Portes and Rubén G. Rumbaut, *Legacies: The Story of the Immigrant Second Generation* (Berkeley: University of California, 2001); Deborah Schildkraut, *Press One for English: Language Policy, Public Opinion, and American Identity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton, 2005).

preexisting, preestablished 'American' culture, rather than allowing them to mix their own cultural practices into the larger 'melting pot.') Even if we accept the fear, however, and proceed from the assumption that pluralism is inevitable, this still does not entirely preclude the possibility of a shared American identity, or even a shared human identity. "The whole," after all, need not refer only to the United States: a common national sentiment, in this case, simply requires that we conceive of "the whole" on a higher order and think of our nation, and our fellow Americans, as distinctive (that is, *exceptional*)[99] within a larger global 'collective' of nations.[100] Likewise, a common human identity requires only that we conceive of humanity as distinctive within an even larger 'whole' of species and beings—"that which is human," again, "as opposed to that which is not."

Third: the importance of externally ascribed identity reinforces the power of external agency, noted above, in the creation of a larger collective unity. Individuals do not, can not, decide in a vacuum where their identities and their loyalties lie: to a very real degree, our decision is a social decision, heavily influenced by the actions of elite leaders and the community (or communities) in which we live. In the earlier discussion of agency, I emphasized the importance of elite behavior; the evidence here, however,

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[99] Though cf. Carl Degler, who argues that the notion of a "national character" does not necessarily entail 'exceptionalism' or a sense of being 'distinctive' from all other nations. Indeed, as I show in Chapter Three, many conceptions of American 'national' character actually begin by situating 'America' as part of a larger collective that encompasses several nations: the culturalist conception of national identity, most notably, identifies 'America' as part of a larger (Anglo-American, Pan-American, Western, etc.) cultural sphere. Even here, though, there is an underlying sense of distinctiveness or exceptionalism: America *itself* may not be distinct, but it is part of a cultural sphere that is. Degler, "In Pursuit of an American History," *American Historical Review* 92: 1 (February 1987): 4.

[100] Michael Kammen points out that this is not exclusive to America alone: the notion of exceptionalism is implicit in every version of nationalism. Likewise, the exceptionalist argument is not exclusive to nationalism either: if we accept the particularist thesis that *any* form of solidarity requires a sense of being a separate part of a larger whole, than all solidarity must begin with the notion that "we" are somehow exceptional or different from those Others around us. (This does not necessarily imply that we are *superior* to those around us—though of course that corollary often follows.) Kammen, "The Problem of American Exceptionalism: A Reconsideration," *American Quarterly* 45:1 (March 1993): 1-43; see also my comment on Degler in the above footnote.

points to the importance of the general public, perhaps even more than elites, in the shaping of one's personal self-image.

Finally: the fact that individuals attach themselves more or less strongly to an enormous variety of identities, rejecting some that others embrace and embracing some that others reject, suggests that a *single* "story of peoplehood" will not suffice to generate a truly collective identity. If nationalism (or any form of collective identity, for that matter) is to avoid the familiar charge of exclusivism, in other words, it must cast an extremely wide net—or, more accurately, several nets at once. Defining American national identity on the basis of whiteness, for instance, will not appeal to those for whom race lacks prior merit as a meaningful category; likewise, even the common and inspiring notion of Americanism as an "idea" has little allure for those who are uninterested in politics. As Rogers Smith and Deborah Schildkraut (among others) have already demonstrated, it is possible to define "American identity" on a variety of different, even contradictory grounds. Certainly, some of these grounds are far more inclusive (and far more morally justifiable) than others; to the extent that solidarity requires a large number of diverse people to unite around a single concept, though, each one of those different conceptions—and more—may well be equally necessary.[101]

[101] On the other hand, as David Hollinger observes, the fact that our personal self-conceptions are shaped in part by external pressures makes this a two-way street: multiple "stories of peoplehood" may be necessary to unite a large population around a single concept, but societies also compel individuals to conform their own identities to the dominant stories. "Not enough Americans," he points out, "are now, or ever have been, as free as they should be to decide how much or how little emphasis to place on their communities of descent": we may not *want* to care, that is, about our race or our ethnicity; but the fact that ethnoculturalism has been a defining characteristic of American national identity forces us to do so. Hollinger, "National Solidarity at the End of the Twentieth Century: Reflections on the United States and Liberal Nationalism," *Journal of American History* 84: 2 (September 1997): 560.

Issue 5: Thickness

The final issue, and perhaps the most important, has been implicit in all the others: the bond of solidarity that unites a community must be *thick* enough to impel its members to commit themselves to it, to participate in it, and to sacrifice their own interests to it (when necessary). Solidarity, after all, is not only an emotional connection, but also a motivation to action—and it is that action, not just the feeling of sympathy, which holds a community together.

Not everyone, however, believes that a 'thick' solidarity is preferable to a 'thin' one: liberal theorists, in particular, worry that 'thick' social bonds require individuals to compromise themselves before the whole. Liberal theory, as I noted in Chapter One, requires a degree of solidarity; but traditional liberals are also notoriously uncomfortable with the notion of collective identity, which privileges the community over the autonomy of the individual. Indeed, those liberals who defend collective identity necessarily rely on individual autonomy—arguing either (from Hobbes) that an artificial community is necessary to preserve and promote the private interests of private men, or (from Locke) that individuals seek personal self-fulfillment through natural and voluntary attachments to larger collectives. In either case, the community is a positive good not for its own sake, but only insofar as it promotes the material or spiritual interests of the individuals who comprise it. Even "Cato," often classified as a communitarian, defends the community on precisely these grounds: "government," he asserts, "is only the union of many individuals for their common defence," and "publick happiness" is "nothing else but the magistrate's protecting of private men in their property."[102] For his part, Cato

[102] "Cato," Letter 87, in Cato II, 626; and Letter 58, in Cato I, 399.

cannot conceive of a circumstance where private interests legitimately may clash with the public: after all, he contends, the people "have no interest, but the general interest"; and (echoing Montesquieu) he rejects as a "dreadful spirit" anyone "who can put a private appetite in balance against the universal good of his country, and of mankind."[103] More skeptical liberals, however, and those who were not so heavily influenced by republicanism, saw otherwise: in fact, the "general will" of the community conflicts with the private wills of individuals on a fairly regular basis. For republicans like Rousseau, who define 'liberty' in terms of virtue, this is not a problem: those with conflicting interests can simply be "forced to be free." For liberals, however, this solution is intolerable: to subordinate oneself to a hostile collective (even voluntarily) is to alienate oneself from one's own "human essence," the "freedom from dependence on the wills of others."[104]

Liberal theory, consequently, is far more likely to promote a *thin* bond of solidarity, one that allows a private space for free individuals (and minority groups) to pursue their own interests while sustaining the institutions necessary to protect that pursuit and the collective identity necessary for personal self-fulfillment. Because some minimal state apparatus is necessary for the protection of individual rights, because a stronger state is necessary for the provision of social care demanded by modern welfare-state liberals, and because a notion of social belonging is essential to individual self-fulfillment,[105] a liberal state may promote (indeed it is obligated to promote) a limited

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[103] "Cato," Letter 24, in Cato I, 175; and Letter 33, in Cato I, 237.
[104] C. B. MacPherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism* (1962), 3.
[105] Tamir, *Liberal Nationalism*, 117-18.

communal bond among its members.[106] Even this, however, is "far from trivial"—particularly if we accept Homi Bhabha's observation that nations exist within "irredeemably plural" spaces, which suggests that even this limited homogeneity has to be imposed upon individuals.[107] For this reason, "liberal culturalists"[108] insist that the social bond that unites a community be as thin and as weak (and thus as non-intrusive) as possible. Will Kymlicka, for instance, argues that a liberal state may legitimately protect a national culture and language; but it may not *impose* a national identity on unwilling individuals; nor may it *restrict* identity to members of specific ethnocultural groups; nor may it prohibit other cultural and linguistic groups from entering the public square.[109] The key, in other words, is *choice*: liberal culturalists concede that solidarity (and thus homogeneity) is critical for the survival of a community, but they also insist that individuals be allowed to choose the community (or communities) to which they will belong.[110] Likewise, individuals must also be allowed to *withdraw* from the communities to which they were ascribed from birth—an option that is often unavailable, or carries severe penalties, in tight-knit, 'thick' societies.[111]

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[106] Specifically, Will Kymlicka contends, a state may promote a national culture and a national language. Kymlicka, *Politics in the Vernacular: Nationalism, Multiculturalism and Citizenship* (New York: Oxford, 2001), 39-40.
[107] Ibid., 25; and Bhabha, "DissemiNation," in *Nation and Narration*, 300.
[108] Kymlicka's phrase, which includes not only liberal nationalists, but liberal multiculturalists as well. I use the phrase here to encompass all those who try to reconcile liberal theory with a feeling of collective belonging (national or otherwise). *Politics in the Vernacular*, 42.
[109] Ibid., 39-40.
[110] To the greatest possible extent, at least: as Yael Tamir notes, the fact that individuals are "rooted in society"—born and raised, that is, in specific cultural (and economic) locations—does place some constraints on our ability to cherry-pick our preferred communities. Tamir, *Liberal Nationalism*, 18-19.
[111] The importance of the right of withdrawal may be demonstrated by contrasting two familiar American examples: Amish communities, which explicitly allow each member to withdraw at a certain age; and the fundamentalist Mormon community of Colorado City, Arizona, which severely *punishes* any member who attempts to leave and ostracizes any member who succeeds. Even further out on the spectrum are communities like Jonestown, which punished the attempt to withdraw with death.

To the extent that American political thought is predominantly liberal—if we agree, in other words, with Louis Hartz—all of this implies that American national solidarity is likely to be relatively 'thin' as well. A number of scholars, to be sure, have noted that Americans tend to be considerably more openly nationalistic (or 'patriotic,' if we prefer that word) than members of other nations; Michael Billig's work on "banal nationalism," most notably, highlights the extent to which Americans reproduce patriotic symbols without conscious thought.[112] At the same time, merely reproducing patriotic symbols is not the same as actively sacrificing for the national interest: it costs nothing to wave a flag or sing the national anthem, but Americans often resist strongly when we are asked to make sacrifices that carry actual costs—volunteering for military service, for instance, or reinstating the draft, or paying higher taxes, or even voting on a rainy day. The reality of this has not been lost on a variety of cultural critics, on the left and right, who castigate Americans for their lack of public-spiritedness. On the other hand, the thinness of national solidarity (such as it is) has enabled Americans to establish a very wide zone of privacy and private rights (which has its own set of pros and cons). In addition, the fact that the U.S. has managed to hold together in spite of (or because of) its size and its thinness appears to support those who argue that solidarity need not be limited to a tiny group of people. Indeed—if we do accept the "concentric circles" metaphor, which implies that solidarity grows thinner as the circle expands—the apparent thinness of American solidarity also supports those (discussed further in Chapter Three) who contend that American national identity is defined, at least in part, in extremely broad, even supra-national terms.

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[112] Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (1995), *op. cit.*

Following this logic, however, places us on a difficult tightrope: a thin conception of solidarity has its advantages, but too much thinness leaves a community vulnerable to declining participation, factionalism, rampant individualism, and social withdrawal—the very things, in short, that republican theory warns us against.[113] Aspiring nation builders, consequently, must be wary of both sides: the solidarity that grounds a free society must be 'thick' enough to keep its members committed to the general interest and the well-being of their compatriots, but also 'thin' enough (if we accept the liberal argument) to accommodate a (limited) sphere of privacy.

Conclusion

So what does all of this teach us about *American* solidarity?

First: perhaps more than anything else, the evidence presented here indicates that solidarity is a highly flexible concept, far more flexible than scholars tend to give it credit for being. The common argument that solidarity requires cultural homogeneity, for instance, is correct—to a point—but often highly exaggerated: for one thing, only the *perception* of homogeneity is necessary, not homogeneity itself; for another, human beings generally don't require that much 'common ground' in order to feel sympathy for each other. (Sometimes, indeed, it's enough for two people simply to recognize each other's common humanity.) Likewise, we've seen several variations on the argument that solidarity must be severely limited in scope—Montesquieu's contention that people must interact with each other directly, for instance, or the "particularist thesis" that solidarity requires somebody to exclude, or the "concentric circles" metaphor, which

implies that solidarity gets weaker as more people are included. But none of these arguments hold up under scrutiny: Montesquieu was simply wrong about direct interaction; the "concentric circles" metaphor is misleading; and even if we accept the particularist thesis, this does not preclude the possibility of universal human solidarity (provided we can distinguish 'humans' from 'non-humans'). There are, of course, a number of very important preconditions for solidarity: a group of people need not be homogeneous, but they should at least *believe* they share something in common—and that "something" must be something *important*, something with prior merit in the hearts and minds of individuals. Moreover—though nationalists argue otherwise—solidarity is rarely if ever organic: it is very difficult to sustain a "story of peoplehood" unless that story is actively promoted and propagated by elites. There is, too, some merit to the argument that solidarity tends to grow weaker as the community 'circle' grows wider and more diverse (though this is at best a *tendency*). Within these relatively weak constraints, however, the potential for human solidarity is wide open: provided they can locate a source (any source) of common identity, any body of people, no matter how large or small, can become, in Anthony Smith's words, a "self-defined community."

What this implies is that American solidarity too is far more flexible than scholars (and political actors) often make it out to be. In many respects, the United States is a very heterogeneous country—its people, three hundred million strong, hail from every conceivable corner of the globe, and its territory, fourth largest in the world, encompasses everything from mountains to prairies to oceans-white-with-foam—but it is also possible, in spite of all this, to identify a long list of shared characteristics as well. Louis Hartz, for

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[113] Michael Sandel's *Democracy's Discontent* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 1996), Alisdair MacIntyre's

instance, points to a 'consensus' around a liberal ideology; Maurizio Viroli identifies a patriotic attachment to common national institutions; Will Kymlicka and Michael Lind emphasize the importance of a common language; Samuel Huntington highlights our Western cultural heritage—and this is only the beginning. Some of these homogeneities are only 'imagined,' of course, and several of them directly contradict each other; but all of them, and more, have formed the basis of a unifying American "story of peoplehood," disseminated by elites and embraced by a large number of people. Indeed—if we accept Homi Bhabha's observation that we live in "irredeemably plural spaces," surrounded by different people who care about different things at different times—it follows that there is no single American "story of peoplehood," but several, competing and cooperating with each other in the same political space. (We all love our country, in other words, but we love it for very different—even mutually exclusive—reasons.) We know this much already, of course: this was Rogers Smith's insight in *Civic Ideals*, supported by a great deal of subsequent research. The evidence here, however, indicates that the "multiple traditions" thesis, so far, has only scratched the surface: Smith and others have emphasized a few of the most common "stories"; but if the concept of solidarity is as flexible as it appears—and if American society is as "irredeemably plural" as Bhabha asserts—then we should be able to identify many more as well, each with its own degree of influence in American political discourse.

The next step, then, is to develop a more comprehensive and systematic list of the various competing conceptions of 'American' identity; and this is where I turn in Chapter Three. Specifically—if the scope of solidarity is as limitless as it appears here—we

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After Virtue (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame, 1981), and Robert Putnam's *Bowling Alone* (New York: Simon

should be able to identify ways in which Americans have developed "stories of peoplehood," not only in *national* terms, but also in terms of membership in larger, transnational communities or smaller subnational groups. (After all, as Walker Connor points out, a "self-defined community" does not have to be a *nation*, in the usual sense of the word.) Scholars in the "multiple traditions" school have already begun this process, emphasizing the importance of liberal universalism, in addition to civic and ethnocultural nationalism, in the development of American 'national' identity. The evidence here, however, indicates that Americans can also conceive of themselves, at least in theory, as united on purely *human* grounds as well, even beyond the mere attachment to a particular set of political beliefs and ideals. Indeed—if American solidarity is as 'thin' as many observers believe—it stands to reason (assuming we accept that flawed old metaphor) that the 'circle' of American identity would be extremely wide.

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and Schuster, 2000) are only a few prominent examples; see my discussion in Chapter One.

Chapter 3

Cosmopolitanism and Its Challengers

My discussion of solidarity thus far has been largely general and abstract. In Chapter 1, I argued, contrary to many communitarians, that liberal theory is aware of the importance of solidarity, but is often incapable of recognizing its problematic nature. The common liberal-centric approach to the study of American political thought, therefore, inhibits our ability to fully comprehend American solidarity (if, indeed, such a thing even exists). In order to understand solidarity, we must engage it directly by reexamining American history, not as a conflict between "liberalism and its challengers," but rather as a conflict between competing conceptions of American identity. I started this process in Chapter 2 by examining the concept of solidarity in the abstract, attempting to describe both the conditions under which it can develop and the necessary preconditions without which it *cannot* develop. Human solidarity, I argued, is a remarkably flexible thing: it's commonly believed that "thick" interpersonal bonds can develop only in narrow circles, but under the right circumstances, a "feeling of mutual affinity" can develop among any body of individuals, no matter how large. The only apparent prerequisite is *homogeneity*: communal attachments will not form without a mutual perception of common interests or shared characteristics—and those characteristics must have "prior merit," which is to say they must already play a significant role in shaping our own personal identities. Without this mutual perception, communal attachments become impossible—but on the other hand, communities united by several "shared characteristics" at once can develop several different, even mutually

exclusive, conceptions of identity and membership simultaneously. The conflict between these different "stories of peoplehood" can shape the political discourse of a community in profound ways, as different political leaders appeal to different stories (each with its own set of Usses and Thems) in order to establish and maintain their position of power.

So what, then, after all this, does it mean to be an American? What, in other words, is the "shared characteristic" that unites the American people in mutual affinity and promotes self-sacrifice for the greater good? *Is* there one? On its face, this seems to be an easy question. Americans are heavily invested in their sense of national identity, as any casual observer of U.S. politics will attest; Michael Billig, for one, notes in his work on "banal nationalism" that Americans are especially given to public displays of patriotism, to an even greater degree than we consciously realize.[1] But there doesn't seem to be a clear answer to the question—indeed, upon closer inspection, there doesn't seem to be an answer at all. There are, today, over three hundred million 'Americans,' a staggering number; and because there are so many of us—and because we're also extremely conscious of our vast *diversity*—it seems that, aside from our legal status as citizens, we don't share anything in common that could serve as a basis for solidarity. The standard tropes of national identity—a common culture, language, homeland, or ancestry—have always seemed exclusionary and narrow in America, a society that prides itself on being a pluralistic "nation of immigrants" with no common ancestry or culture. But if solidarity requires a meaningful source of homogeneity, then it's not enough to rely on pluralism alone: American society is undeniably diverse, and always will be, but the demands of republican government require us to locate some underlying *common*

[1] Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1995).

ground that can transcend that diversity. These, in essence, were the terms of the "multiculturalism" debate that flared up in the early 1990s: advocates of multiculturalism argued, correctly, that the traditional "stories" of American peoplehood—which invariably emphasized "Western civilization," the English language, and the historical exploits of white Anglo-Saxon men—had a tendency to exclude whole swaths of people who rightly deserved to be called "Americans," while their opponents responded, not without reason, that it would be impossible to preserve American unity any other way. And it was not only then that Americans have had to face this question directly: indeed, this dilemma—the undeniable need for unity against the inescapable fact of diversity—has been at the center of American political discourse from the beginning. To be sure, this "vertigo of identity" (as Bernard-Henri Lévy calls it) is not "exceptional" to the U.S. alone: as Will Kymlicka and others have pointedly noted (following James Madison), diversity is inescapable in every society. Defining a nation is never easy: nationalist rhetoric to the contrary, there's no such thing as a "pure" nation-state. (Indeed, as Madison rightly observed, there's no such thing as a "pure" community of *any* size.) And if anything, the fact that political rhetoric in the U.S. is so deeply wrapped up in this question reflects well on Americans generally: it means, at least, that we are conscious of our diversity and that we are trying, to an extent, to account for it in our public philosophy. But none of this makes the question any easier—and if solidarity is as necessary to a free society as I've argued, then overcoming our collective "vertigo" becomes an even more imperative task.[2]

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[2] Lévy, *American Vertigo* (New York: Random House, 2006). By this logic, the 'vertigo' identified by Lévy is at least partly responsible for the general "discontent" observed by Michael Sandel—which, in turn, results in the decline in democratic and civic participation noted by Putnam and others. All of this, of

The easy answer here is that "America" constitutes an organic nation—that Americans, in other words, are a "band of brethren," somehow naturally inclined to feel an affinity for each other. This was John Jay's argument, most notably, in *Federalist 2*. But Jay is the exception, not the rule: in fact most of his fellow Founders, Federalist and Anti-Federalist alike, generally agreed that the formation of the United States would be a *conscious human act*—not simply a matter of natural destiny made manifest.[3] This, after all, is supposed to be the very thing that sets us apart from other Western nations: the origins of England or France are lost to history, but we can pinpoint the exact moment, literally to the hour, that Americans became "one united people."[4] What this means, however, is that the American republic is necessarily an *artificial* creation: the U.S. did not come together organically, but only because of the specific actions of specific individuals, who could just as easily have made other decisions and done other things.[5] And what this means, in turn, is that American national solidarity is artificial too: we've lived with 'America' for so long that we take it for granted; but there's no obvious reason why I, writing this in central New Jersey, should be *naturally* inclined to feel an affinity for someone in, say, southern California, three thousand miles away. (Indeed, if distance

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course, can be traced back to Tocqueville, who famously feared that rising individualism would culminate in a permanent state of "soft despotism."

[3] Indeed, Michael Walzer argues that this awareness is precisely what distinguishes Americans from other nations: "America has no singular national destiny," he argues, "and to be an 'American' is, finally, to know that and to be more or less content with it." Walzer, *What It Means to Be an American* (New York: Marsilio, 1992), 49.

[4] In other words—if we accept this line of reasoning—America is distinguished, in Ernest Gellner's famous terminology, by having a "navel," a clear historical origin. (Other nations may have navels too, but they're generally more difficult to locate.) Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell, 1983); *Nationalism* (New York: NYU, 1997).

[5] Case in point: the U.S. and Canada are divided not because Americans and Canadians are naturally distinct, but largely because the Canadian provinces simply elected not to join the Continental Congress or to declare independence with it in 1776. Had they done so, the "United States" today would be a very different entity, with very different borders—and nationalists who defend this notion of organic peoplehood would blithely be arguing that solidarity between Tennesseeans and Manitobans is part of the natural order of things.

is any indicator, I should actually be inclined to feel a stronger bond with Nova Scotians.) The affinity we do share—if, indeed, there is one—is a product, not of destiny, but of history. The idea that is America is not a fixed or permanent thing: it has evolved and transformed over many years, not from consensus but from ongoing conflict.[6] Understanding it, then, requires a "fundamentally historical account" of American identity, one that understands America "as something that exists because it has been constructed and maintained through time by the political actions of human beings."[7]

The process of developing such an account begins by identifying the competing players, the different "shared characteristics" that have served as the basis for a story of American peoplehood. Two of these players, indeed, have already presented themselves in our discussion thus far. The first, following the logic of cultural pluralism, holds that Americans are united by their very diversity, by their unique status as an immigrant nation or a multicultural "salad bowl." (Or, more accurately, Americans are distinguished not by their diversity—every nation is diverse, after all—but by their *awareness* of it, and by the extent to which they have made it part and parcel of their national identity.) The second, following the logic of civic republicanism, holds that Americans are united by

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[6] I mentioned earlier in this paragraph that the American nation is distinguished by having a clear moment of origin—that we can pinpoint, "literally to the hour," the moment when 'America' came into being. Even this, however, is subject to debate: do we point to the signing of the Declaration of Independence in July of 1776—or twelve years later, when the ninth state ratified the Constitution? Benjamin Rush proclaimed that "We are now a nation!" in 1776, upon declaring independence from Britain; James Wilson declared "'Tis done! We have become a nation!" in 1788, when the Constitution officially took effect. It's also possible to point to other "exact moments"—the "discovery" of America by Columbus in 1492, the establishment of Jamestown in 1607 or Plymouth in 1620, the formation of the First Continental Congress (the first truly "national" political institution) in 1774, the British surrender at Yorktown in 1783, the end of the Civil War in 1865, or the end of Reconstruction in 1876, to name a few. The difference makes a difference: the "exact moment" we choose reflects on our underlying definition of American nationhood, and thus affects whom we choose to include and exclude from the "American" political community. Merle Curti, *The Roots of American Loyalty* (New York: Columbia, 1946), 21, 28.

[7] Rogers Smith, *Stories of Peoplehood* (New York: Cambridge, 2003), 187. I'm misquoting Smith slightly: his call is not for a single "fundamentally historical account," but rather for "fundamentally historical accounts," in the plural.

the very thing, officially speaking, that makes them "Americans": their legal status as U.S. citizens, that is, and the privileges they share in a particular legal and political order.[8] Cultural pluralism typically traces its origins to James Madison, who argued in *Federalist 10* (ostensibly, at least) that republican communities should be as diverse and disunited as possible; civic republicanism, likewise, can trace itself back to Publius's other half, Alexander Hamilton, who argued in *Federalist 27* that the Constitution would generate new bonds of solidarity around the new, stronger national government. It's also possible to combine both approaches, as Michael Walzer does: "The United States," he argues, "is a political nation of cultural nationalities," united politically by common legal institutions and socially by a shared commitment (such as it is) to cultural diversity.[9]

But these are by no means the *only* possible sources of American identity; nor, for that matter, are they even necessarily the most popular ones. It is easy to say—as nine out of ten Americans did, in a recent survey—that "respecting other people's cultural differences" is a vital component of American identity; but this pluralist conception of America often gives way to very different views during debates over immigration or language policy.[10] Likewise, we replicate our civic patriotism in many of our cultural

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[8] Maurizio Viroli's theory of "republican patriotism," grounded on an attachment to "the common liberty of a particular people" and the particular institutions that sustain it, follows in this vein. Viroli, *For Love of Country: An Essay on Patriotism and Nationalism* (New York: Oxford, 1995), 12, 170-71. See also Patrice Higonnet, *Attendant Cruelties: Nation and Nationalism in American History* (New York: Other Press, 2007), who identifies republican patriotism as the ideal sense of unity toward which Americans should (but don't always) strive.

[9] Walzer, *What It Means to Be an American*, 9; see also Viroli, *For Love of Country*, 178-79; and Horace Kallen, *Culture and Democracy in the United States* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1924). In *What It Means*, Walzer is largely echoing Kallen, who coined the phrase "cultural pluralism" in the early twentieth century against the "one hundred percent Americanism" of Teddy Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, and other so-called "assimilationists."

[10] Deborah Schildkraut, "Defining American Identity in the Twenty-First Century: How Much 'There' is There?" *Journal of Politics* 69:3 (August 2007): 602. See also Rogers Smith, *Civic Ideals* (New Haven: Yale, 1997); Ronald Schmidt, Sr., *Language Policy and Identity Politics in the United States* (Philadelphia: Temple, 2000); Schildkraut, *Press One for English: Language Policy, Public Opinion, and American Identity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton, 2005).

symbols and rituals, from the Pledge of Allegiance to the national anthem—but it's also hard to imagine Americans joining hands around their love of the federal government. (Indeed, if anything, Americans are equally distinguished by their libertarian *opposition* to government.[11]) Moreover, even the most cursory search of the literature on American identity reveals that Americans have united around an enormous variety of real and imagined "shared characteristics," of which national institutions and "unity in diversity" are only two. Americans are a very diverse people, to be sure, but there are many reasons why the New Jerseyan and the Californian might feel a common bond: they are both human beings, for starters, and they probably speak (essentially) the same language; they are certainly both citizens of the same nation-state, bound and protected by the laws of the same central government; they may belong to the same race, gender, economic class, or ethnic nationality; they may share a common sexual orientation; they may share a common religion or political ideology; they may participate in the same cultural activities, watch the same movies or TV shows, listen to the same music, wear the same clothes, or celebrate the same holidays with the same rituals; they may belong to the same civic organizations; they may share common personal experiences or feel connected to a common historical past; or they may feel a common attachment to a common territory—provided, of course, they could both be convinced that New Jersey and California are part of a single "common territory." All of these and more could serve (and have served) as the basis for a 'story' of American identity.

But which of these (allegedly) shared characteristics actually generates *national* solidarity in the hearts and minds of individual Americans? Simply asserting that all

Americans have something in common is not enough, even when it happens to be true: the vast majority of U.S. citizens are monotheists, for instance, but (as any American Muslim will attest) this has not generated much in the way of solidarity. Likewise, we know from our earlier discussion of pluralism that different people often attach themselves to the same thing for entirely different, even mutually exclusive reasons: Americans are a very patriotic people, but we reach that patriotism from many different paths. Moreover—the multiculturalists' argument again—none of these "shared characteristics" are really shared by *all* Americans, which means that each one can also be used to exclude various groups and individuals, groups and individuals who, by all rights, should be considered "Americans" as well. As a result, American political discourse has always been dominated by a cacophony of competing narratives, all fighting for space in the public square. What this implies, in turn, is that there is no 'right' answer to the original question, no objective line between Us and Them: if Americans *have* reached a consensus around a single characteristic, it is only because one voice has managed, over the course of history, to emerge from the cacophony. Nor is there an "end of history," at least not yet: the dominant "story of peoplehood" today may be marginal, or even taboo, a century from now.[12] This is the rationale behind Smith's call for "fundamentally historical accounts" of peoplehood, not only in America but

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[11] As Gordon Wood observed, in *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina, 1969), the transition from republican to liberal institutions in the 1780s—culminating, of course, in the Constitution itself—was motivated in large part by this growing mistrust.

[12] Stephen A. Douglas discovered this, to his chagrin, during his 1858 Senate campaign against Abraham Lincoln. Responding to Lincoln's discussion of the Declaration of Independence, Douglas contended that the "inalienable rights" described by Jefferson existed only within the British political tradition and applied only to "all men" of British descent. (Doubtless this was how many Founding-era Americans understood the phrase as well.) Douglas, however, had to correct himself when he came under heavy fire from voters who were white but not Anglo-Saxon: the rights of the Declaration, he later said, applied across the board to all those of European descent. It was only later that this (slightly) wider scope gave way to *Frederick*

everywhere: understanding national identity requires us to examine how that identity has developed, not organically, but from an ongoing, and unresolved, historical conflict.

Smith's charge leaves us with two important questions, one empirical and one normative. I've already posed the empirical question: how are we to understand the historical development of American "national" solidarity? How do we distinguish the various "stories of peoplehood" that have competed for space in the American psyche; and how do we begin to understand the history of that conflict? In order to answer that question, we need a way to make sense of the cacophony, a clear and comprehensive framework that we can use to compare the "multiple traditions" of American solidarity. In the remainder of this chapter, after examining the frameworks that scholars have already developed, I conclude that the question of American solidarity is best understood as a question of *scope*, a conflict between competing "concentric circles." We can identify dozens, even hundreds, of "shared characteristics" that could serve as the basis for solidarity among Americans; the key question, however, is *who* will be included in the "circle," and who will be left out. How wide, in other words—to paraphrase James Madison—ought the sphere of solidarity to extend? How wide *can* it extend before it grows too weak, too "thin," to be sustainable? I identify six different competing "circles" of American solidarity, ranging from the subnational (based on local "shared characteristics" that do not extend to the whole nation) to the transnational (based on characteristics that we share, not only with our "fellow Americans," but also with non-Americans). The solidarity conflict in American political discourse, I argue, can best be understood as a conflict between these six competing spheres.

Douglass's interpretation, which took Jefferson at his word and applied the Declaration to "all men"

Once we have identified the competing "traditions" of American solidarity, it becomes possible to answer the normative question: how can we resolve the dilemma I observed at the outset of this chapter, the need for unity against the fact of diversity? Is such a resolution even possible? Conventional wisdom suggests that it's not: because unity and diversity are necessarily at odds with each other, we need to privilege one at the expense of the other. By this logic, the best we can do is to foster a "tolerant" sort of unity: every community will necessarily exclude some of its members as outsiders, but we can develop "stories of peoplehood" that respect their right to exist in peace. But is such a pessimistic conclusion warranted? Rogers Smith has suggested a better answer: we can maintain unity *and* diversity by leaving the public square open to multiple stories, each of which appeal to different groups of people but generate an attachment to the same larger community. Even this approach, however, will not necessarily generate much solidarity among Americans themselves, given that we so often define each other out of our respective "stories." I suggest a second possibility: we may be able to overcome the dilemma of unity and diversity by appealing to *cosmopolitan* (human) solidarity, the widest of the six circles (and the only one that can encompass all Americans), as the basis for American unity. Establishing the viability of that approach—an approach that most scholars tend to regard with skepticism—will be my primary task for the remainder of this dissertation.

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generally (or "all men and women," as the Seneca Falls Convention revised it). See Chapter 6.

Existing Approaches

Thus far, I've implied that the solidarity question, vital as it is, has been largely overlooked by scholars of American political thought. This, of course, is something of an overstatement. The liberal-centrism of the discipline has prevented us from exploring this question with the fullness it deserves, but historians and scholars are nevertheless aware that the question exists, that it is important, and that it has been present in many, if not all, of the great works of American theory. Indeed the earliest histories of the United States, monumental nineteenth-century classics by seminal figures like Mercy Otis Warren and George Bancroft, were especially concerned with solidarity: Warren and Bancroft, both nationalists themselves, wrote them expressly to generate national feeling around a glorious (if mythical) common past. Of course, because Warren and Bancroft were concerned primarily with producing solidarity, not explaining it, those early studies devoted more attention to American unity and consensus, rather than conflict. In the middle of the twentieth century, however, a new generation of historians took the next step: works like Merle Curti's *The Roots of American Loyalty* and Hans Kohn's *American Nationalism*, among many others, explored for the first time the historical development of competing notions of American solidarity. The tradition they founded has remained strong ever since—particularly in the last two decades, as the multiculturalism debate sparked a new flurry of intellectual hand-wringing over what, if anything, could serve to bring Americans together as "one united people."[13] In the process, historians and other political elites have developed at least three well-known narratives by which we have understood the conflict over solidarity.

State, Nation, Empire

The first of these narratives—probably the most familiar to American readers—holds that national solidarity is not a source of conflict, but a resolution. By this logic, the conflict over solidarity is a simple one, with two clear sides and a single underlying question: is "America" a united nation, or merely a loose confederation of states? Are there "shared characteristics" capable of uniting us in solidarity with our fellow Americans, or must our "thick" attachments extend only to our fellow Virginians, New Yorkers, Californians? Additionally, if it is possible to feel solidarity with all Americans, is that solidarity based on some "exceptional" quality unique to Americans alone—or is it based on a common attachment to the British empire, an attachment which joins us in solidarity with all British subjects? The three are not mutually exclusive, of course—after all, as we've seen, the human psyche is defined by its "multiple identities"—and Americans before 1776 generally felt attached to colony, continent, and crown all at once.[14] But which of these attachments took precedence over the others? Figures on both sides of the state/nation divide were "nationalists," properly so called, but America was not necessarily their nation: state supremacists instead viewed the U.S. as a multinational "empire," and pledged allegiance accordingly.[15] Robert E. Lee, returning home to assume command of the Confederate army, summed it up best: "With all my devotion to the Union, I have not been able to make up my mind to raise my hand against

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[13] See, e.g., Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., *The Disuniting of America* (New York: Norton, 1992).
[14] Patrice Higonnet, *Attendant Cruelties*, 27-28; Smith, *Civic Ideals*, 71. Merle Curti, indeed, argues persuasively that these three sentiments actually reinforced each other in the years prior to the Revolution. Curti, *The Roots of American Loyalty*, 12-13, 47-48.

my relatives, my children, my home."[16] "My home," as far as Lee was concerned, could only mean Virginia: the very idea that America could be "home" doesn't seem to have occurred to him. The difference was vital: from the Revolution to the ratification debate to the nullification crises of 1798 and 1830 to the Civil War itself, the great struggles of early American history invariably pitted interest against interest, loyalty against loyalty, and "home" against "home."

To the extent that we understand early American history in terms of a conflict between state, national, and imperial loyalties, however, we also tend to neglect any internal divisions within those three categories, treating them instead as wholly united forces. We know, of course, that the early "nationalists"[17] attempted to define (or generate) American unity in a variety of ways: John Jay developed a sense of organic peoplehood; Hamilton and Washington championed common institutions; Warren and Bancroft imagined a common glorious past; Noah Webster attempted to create a distinct, standardized American language; and Henry Clay (with his protégé, Abraham Lincoln) promoted an interdependent national economy. As far as we're concerned, though, all of these served the same single purpose—to bind Americans more and more closely to each other as a single people, and to distinguish them more and more clearly from other peoples. It is for this reason alone that "nationalism" appears to be a solution rather than a problem: if all that matters is whether we conceive of ourselves first as Americans or as Virginians, then for all practical purposes the question has been resolved. It is still

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[15] "Empire," incidentally, was Alexander Hamilton's word: he used it to describe the U.S. at the outset of *Federalist 1*.
[16] Quoted in Michael Sandel, *Democracy's Discontent* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 1996), 15.
[17] Here, I'm using "nationalism" to refer to the belief that Americans constitute a single people and that, consequently, their self-government requires strong unifying central (and sovereign) political institutions. The word carries multiple meanings and connotations, however; I'll discuss these later in the chapter.

debatable, of course, just *when* national identity triumphed over sub- and trans-national identities;[18] indeed, the extent of the scholarly disagreement here is almost comical: some[19] take it for granted that Americans viewed themselves as "one united people" at the time of the Founding—didn't John Jay say so, after all?[20]—while others[21] take it

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[18] As Russel Blaine Nye noted, "It is manifestly impossible to point to a particular year in American history and say, 'Here American nationalism began.'" Nye, *The Cultural Life of the New Nation, 1776-1830* (New York: HarperCollins, 1960), 37.

[19] Walker Connor writes of the Founding era that "The political elite of the period did not believe that they were leading an ethnically heterogeneous people. …the prevalent elite-held and mass-held self-perception of the American people was that of an ethnically homogeneous people of British descent." Connor, *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton, 1994), 200. Bill Brugger agrees that "in America, there was a wide consensus on the existence of a pre-revolutionary people"—following Bernard Bailyn, who asserted that "By 1776…Americans had come to think of themselves as in a special category." Brugger, *Republican Theory in Political Thought* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), 87; Bailyn, *Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 1967), 20. Robert Dahl doesn't go back quite that far, but he does assert that—thanks to their obvious "social, ethnic, and economic homogeneity"—Americans after the Revolution "seemed to feel themselves more and more to be a distinct people, a unique people." Dahl, *Pluralist Democracy in the United States: Conflict and Consent* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1967), 73. Ronald Schmidt, Sr., agrees: "At least since the war for independence…there has been near unanimity among U.S. political elites—and among foreign commentators on the United States as well—that there is a distinctively *American* national identity," though "the substantive content of what exactly constitutes the American national identity has been contested throughout our history." Schmidt, *Language Policy and Identity Politics in the United States*, 84; see also Will Kymlicka, *Politics in the Vernacular: Nationalism, Multiculturalism and Citizenship* (New York: Oxford, 2001), 93-100. Edmund Morgan takes this argument a step further: "Nationalism," he contends, "was the strongest force binding Americans of the Revolutionary generation together. …Devotion to the nation…made possible the creation of a new and greater framework in 1787 when the old one proved unsatisfactory." Quoted in Higonnet, *Attendant Cruelties*, 57. Patrice Higonnet offers a more qualified view: there was an *emerging* sense of national peoplehood in the eighteenth century, but not yet a wide consensus. Higonnet, *Attendant Cruelties*, 20, 29, 42; see also Robert Dahl, *Pluralist Democracy in the United States*, 71; and Wilbur Zelinsky, *Nation into State: The Shifting Symbolic Foundations of American Nationalism* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina, 1988), 229. Other scholars go even further, identifying a nascent sense of national peoplehood as early as the *seventeenth* century. Benjamin T. Spencer, *The Quest for Nationality: An American Literary Campaign* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse, 1957), 1.

[20] Walker Connor (cited above) cites *Federalist 2* and the Declaration of Independence—and nothing else—to support his contention that Founding-era Americans viewed themselves as an "ethnically homogeneous people." This at least puts Connor one up on other noteworthy scholars, who cite Jay—and Jay alone—to support a blanket assertion that Founding-era Americans universally thought of themselves as an organic band of brethren. See, e.g., Walzer, *What It Means to Be an American*, 53-54; and Kymlicka, *Politics in the Vernacular*, 97. John Higham recognizes that other views existed but concludes, with no supporting evidence, that Jay's view of Americans as a band of brethren "probably commanded wider assent" among eighteenth-century Americans than Crevecoeur's more cosmopolitan view. Higham, *Send These To Me: Immigrants in Urban America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1984), 3.

[21] Donald H. Meyer contends that "When the Americans declared their independence from England, they possessed little that drew them together into a common culture." Meyer, *The Democratic Enlightenment* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1976), 125. William R. Everdell writes that "No country, with the possible exception of Switzerland, has ever been more fragmented than the United States of America was in the eighteenth century." Everdell, *The End of Kings: A History of Republics and Republicans* (Chicago:

equally for granted that Americans had no conception whatsoever of their national unity until long after. In either case, though, after the Civil War it was no longer tenable to identify oneself as a Virginian first and an American second. Patrick Henry's "not a Virginian, but an American" was revolutionary in 1776; it would have been controversial in 1862; but today such a statement would be ridiculous. We know it already.

The conflict between state and nation, however, was never the whole story. It was not enough simply to declare oneself "an American," standing in solidarity with "fellow Americans": because America was not an organic community with clear boundary lines—because it had to be "imagined," artificially, by the words and deeds of specific individuals—it was up to individuals too to determine who was, and who was not, a "fellow American."[22] By lumping all "nationalists" and "Unionists" together in a single category, the state/nation narrative fails to recognize the extent to which those "nationalists" developed, not one, but many mutually exclusive stories of American peoplehood in the years and decades prior to the Civil War. The scope of nationality, indeed, was an especially urgent question in the early years of U.S. history, when American political and cultural institutions were still very much in the embryonic stage:

University of Chicago, 1983), 155. John G. Gunnell agrees: "While it was assumed that a republican or democratic regime required an identifiable and autonomous people, it was at the same time difficult, after the Revolution, to specify any such entity in the American polity. …One thing that the Federalists and Anti-Federalists had in common was the worry that there was not, as such, an American people." Gunnell, *Imagining the American Polity: Political Science and the Discourse of Democracy* (University Park, PA: Penn State, 2004), 15-16. Alan Gibson concurs: "the Founders did not conceive of the United States as an organic moral community bound by a common conception of justice and good." Gibson, *Understanding the Founding: The Crucial Questions* (Lawrence, KS: Kansas, 2007), 151. It's certainly true, of course, that Americans experienced a sudden surge of patriotic sentiment in the years around the Revolution—as evidenced by Patrick Henry's famous "not a Virginian, but an American" speech, as well as Thomas Paine's assertion, in *The American Crisis*, that "Our great title is AMERICANS—our inferior one varies with the place." The apparent evaporation of that sentiment in the 1780s, however—George Washington, for one, saw "one head gradually turning into thirteen"—indicates to many, like Merle Curti, that the Revolution-era nationalist surge was merely a temporary "burst of rhetoric," driven more by anti-British sentiment than by any real national feeling. Curti, *The Roots of American Loyalty*, 15, 26, 23.

whichever notion of American peoplehood triumphed then would shape political discourse for decades to come. The conflict between self-proclaimed American patriots, consequently, was often just as bitter, and no less central, than the conflict between Unionists and state supremacists. Those who embraced Crevecoeur's famous description of "the American, this new man" as a unique blend of European ethnicities[23] clashed with the nativists and Know-Nothings who rose to prominence on a wave of anti-Irish (and anti-Catholic) sentiment in the 1830s and 40s, not to mention non-Europeans like Frederick Douglass[24] who insisted, a century before Langston Hughes, that "I, too, am American." Likewise, those who believed that 'real' Americans had to be Anglo-Saxons of British descent contended with Anglophobes who rejected all things British as "snooty, effeminate, (and) arrogant."[25] Those who celebrated America as an "asylum for the oppressed in every part of the earth," as one Revolution-era writer did,[26] advanced their vision against those who understood solidarity to arise from a specific set of common cultural practices (which immigrants and refugees don't share).[27] The Southern writer who identified the Appalachian range as a source of spiritual unity[28] stood opposed to John Quincy Adams, who considered it "a settled geographical element" that the U.S.

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[22] It is partly for this reason, indeed, that Curti dismisses the burst of patriotism at the time of the Revolution as "an abstraction." *Roots of American Loyalty*, 21.
[23] Crevecoeur is the standard representative of this proto-melting pot theory, but he was not alone: DeWitt Clinton, for one, argued in the early nineteenth century that "The extraordinary characters which the United States have produced may be, in some measure, ascribed to the mixed blood of so many nations flowing in our veins." Quoted in Curti, *Roots of American Loyalty*, 71.
[24] "Non-European," that is, by virtue of being only partly European. As David Hollinger rightly observes with respect to Alex Haley, the one-drop rule still affects the way we classify individuals today, even though we claim to have rejected it.
[25] Walter A. McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State* (New York: Mariner, 1997), 54.
[26] The author was George Duffield, writing in 1783. McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State*, 17.
[27] Curti ascribes the latter view to Washington, Adams, and Jefferson, among others. Curti, *Roots of American Loyalty*, 69.
[28] Curti, *Roots of American Loyalty*, 43; the writer was Francis D. Quask.

should encompass all of North America[29]; in between were men like Thomas Hart Benton, the nineteenth-century Senator who famously declared the Rockies to be America's natural limit.[30] Still others rejected this all-too-European approach to solidarity on territorial grounds, appealing instead to the Declaration of Independence—but did the Declaration establish rights for "all men and women," as the Seneca Falls Convention insisted, or merely men of British descent, as Stephen Douglas believed? The difference made a difference: one's view of American solidarity determined, in large part, where one stood on questions of federalism, immigration, territorial expansion, foreign affairs, Indian affairs, church/state relations, and—above all—slavery.[31] Indeed—just as many eighteenth-century Revolutionaries saw themselves as British loyalists, fighting to save Britain from the usurping machinations of Parliament and King[32]—many nineteenth-century secessionists (including Calhoun) were nationalists at bottom, defending their own vision of the American 'common good' against the competing visions of Lincoln or Douglass.[33]

To the extent that we accept the narrative of antebellum history as a simple conflict between state and nation, though, we risk bracketing the question of national solidarity until the post-Civil War era, and ignoring its development in these formative early years. Indeed, those scholars who do examine competing conceptions of American identity typically focus exclusively on the postwar period from 1865 to 1920—the age of

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[29] Quoted in McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State*, 82.
[30] McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State*, 85. Benton (speaking in 1825) wasn't the only one: others, like the mid-century commentator George Perkins Marsh, contended that any land beyond the Rockies belonged "by geographical predestination to the Orient." Curti, *Roots of American Loyalty*, 45.
[31] Deborah J. Schildkraut, *Press One for English*, 27.
[32] See Gordon Wood, *Creation of the American Republic*. Thomas Jefferson, notably, wrote—two months after Bunker Hill—that he was still "looking with fondness towards a reconciliation with Great Britain" (on American terms, of course). Quoted in Curti, *Roots of American Loyalty*, 13.
[33] Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Genius of American Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1953), 122.

Reconstruction, of Negro citizenship and women's suffrage, of Jim Crow and the Ku Klux Klan, of Ellis Island, of the Statue of Liberty, of the Chinese Exclusion Act, of Wounded Knee, of the Spanish-American War, of imperialism, of the closed frontier, of the "melting pot," of cultural pluralism, of "100 percent Americanism," of the League of Nations and the Fourteen Points, and—just for good measure—of practically every John Wayne film ever made.[34] That period has provided scholars with a great deal of insight, but it's necessary too to move beyond this oversimplified narrative of early American history—to understand not just how 'nationalists' won the battle over Loyalists and state supremacists, but also how they fought the battle with each other.

"American Exceptionalism": Civic and Ethnic Nationalism

The underlying assumption of the state/nation/empire narrative is that "national" solidarity—the affinity we feel with "our fellow Americans"—is somehow distinct from, and opposed to, our sub-national (state) and transnational (empire) attachments. The implication, by extension, is that national solidarity must be grounded on that which makes Americans "exceptional"—on characteristics, in other words, that are shared by Americans alone. Consequently, scholars who do examine national solidarity in the antebellum era tend to be concerned with locating the source of "American exceptionalism"—that elusive (and possibly non-existent) quality that distinguishes the American character from that of other nations.[35]

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[34] See, especially, the seminal works of John Higham, including *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism 1860-1925* (New York: Atheneum, 1963); *Send These To Me* (1984); and *Hanging Together: Unity and Diversity in American Culture*, ed. Carl J. Guarneri (New Haven, CT: Yale, 2001).
[35] Michael Kammen defines exceptionalism as "the notion that the United States has had a unique destiny or history, or more modestly, a history with highly distinctive features or an unusual trajectory." Kammen,

Exceptionalism is often associated with a feeling of superiority: the qualities that distinguish America from other nations—whatever they are—are also the qualities that make America great.[36] Exceptionalism, however, is only an argument for national distinctiveness, not necessarily greatness: the two often go hand in hand, but one does not have to entail the other.[37] (Louis Hartz, for instance, was harshly critical of America's 'exceptional' attachment to liberal ideology.[38]) And the same is true of solidarity: we know from our earlier discussion that solidarity requires (or seems to require) an Other against which we can distinguish ourselves; but it does not require us to believe that "we" are somehow superior, or that "they" are somehow inferior.[39] Individuals, indeed, often

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"The Problem of American Exceptionalism: A Reconsideration," *American Quarterly* 45:1 (March 1993): 6. I'm using the "more modest" definition, as I explain in the following paragraph.

[36] See Curti, *Roots of American Loyalty*, 33-41. A number of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century commentators, for instance, argued not only that the American landscape and climate was distinct from Europe's, but also that that distinctiveness made it better. "What are called mountains in Europe, are hills in America," declared one; "rivers are reduced to brooks; trees to bushes; and lakes to ponds!" Quoted in ibid., 33. Others argued that America's distinct climate produced a taller, stronger, superior human stock than Europe's—in contrast to many Europeans, who believed that the harsh American climate produced weaker, smaller human beings (ibid., 66). Still others contended that America was superior merely because it was physically removed from Europe by the Atlantic: "See this glad world remote from every foe," wrote Timothy Dwight in "Greenfield Hill," "From Europe's mischiefs, and from Europe's woe." Quoted in ibid., 49.

[37] Paul C. Nagel draws an important distinction between "nationalism" and "nationality": nationalism, as Nagel uses the word, refers to a sense of national superiority, while nationality—the more important and fundamental concept—considers what it means to be a 'nation' in the first place. Early Americans didn't have to believe that their nation was *superior* in order to generate the solidarity necessary for republican government (though of course many did); they only had to develop an understanding of what made the American character *distinct*. Nagel, *This Sacred Trust: American Nationality 1798-1898* (New York: Oxford, 1971), xii, 16-17. (Nagel's definition of 'nationalism' is not a typical one; see the footnote below.)

[38] The same is true for modern-day commentators who note, among other things, that Americans are distinguished by their materialism, their lack of religion, their overabundance of religion, their energy consumption, the prevalence of guns, the per capita prison population, their aversion to multilingual education, the growing rich-poor gap, and so on. It's negative exceptionalism, but it's exceptionalism nonetheless—and even this can be a source of solidarity too. (Americans traveling overseas, for instance, often find themselves growing defensive when being upbraided by Europeans for policies with which they themselves disagree; consider, e.g., the discussion of Vietnam in Bertolucci's *The Dreamers*.)

[39] This is true, most notably, for the doctrine of nationalism. The "core doctrine" of nationalism, as defined by Anthony Smith, contains six principles: "1) The world is divided into nations, each with its own character, history and destiny. 2) The nation is the source of all political power. 3) An individual's primary loyalty must be to her or his nation. 4) To be free, individuals must realize themselves in the nation. 5) All nations must have maximum autonomy and self-expression. 6) A world of peace and justice requires free nations." None of these principles implies any belief in the innate superiority of one's own nation; indeed, each of them emphasizes something quite different—namely, the *equality* of nations, which justifies the

feel emotionally connected to their families, communities, and nations even as they recognize that the family is dysfunctional, or that the community is a one-horse backwater, or that the nation is materialistic and arrogant. What matters, in the end, is not strength or greatness, but simply *belonging*—the extent to which I can identify with a particular group of people, on the basis of characteristics that I share (or believe I share) *with them* but not with others.[40] "My country, right or wrong," in other words: the fact that we possess the distinguishing marks of 'an American' means that we can't escape that sentiment, even if (as well we should) we disagree with it. The implication is that American exceptionalism—the existence, in other words, of a distinct 'American' character—must also be the source of American solidarity. This was, indeed, the implicit assumption of many eighteenth-and nineteenth-century American republicans, like Washington and Webster, who worried that it would be impossible to generate a national spirit without a national character on which to base it.

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claim of each individual nation to autonomy. Smith, *The Antiquity of Nations* (Malden, MA: Polity, 2004), 245; see also Elie Kedourie, *Nationalism* (New York: Praeger, 1961), 9; Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 1; Smith, *National Identity* (Reno: University of Nevada, 1991), 51; Walker Connor, *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding*, xi; Smith, *Chosen Peoples* (New York: Oxford, 2003), 24-25; Anthony Marx, *Faith in Nation* (New York: Oxford, 2003), 6; Paul Lawrence, *Nationalism: History and Theory* (New York: Longman, 2005), 3; and John Breuilly, "Dating the Nation," in *When is the Nation?*, eds. Atsuko Ichijo and Gordana Uzelac (New York: Routledge, 2005), 17. All of these scholars agree—while disagreeing strongly on other details—that nationalism is a doctrine of autonomy, not superiority.

[40] It is the *belief*, more than the reality, that matters most. There's always a bit of arrogance attached to exceptionalism, this belief that "we" share in something no one else can access; and almost invariably, the deeper we dig, the more we come to realize that we are neither unique nor alone. Americans, as I'll note below, often pride themselves on their unique status as a "melting pot" of ethnicities, or on the fact that American unity—seemingly in contrast to that of all other nations—is ideological rather than ethnic, founded on a common attachment to liberal ideas. Neither of these, however, are really unique to America: after all, every nation is a bit of a melting pot, though ethnic nationalists argue otherwise; and republican theorists have long insisted, quite rightly, that *no* free society can long endure without some degree of unity around shared ideas. What's important, however, isn't whether Americans *are* exceptional, but whether we believe we are. This was Ernst Renan's point, anticipating Benedict Anderson: solidarity is not a tangible physical thing, but a spiritual "daily plebiscite."

Consequently, the republican "search for the public"[41] has led numerous scholars to try to identify that distinct character, the defining characteristic (if there is one) of American nationality. What is that characteristic? No one agrees. Indeed, many have noted that for every observer who identifies one thing as "the" American character, there is another who identifies its exact opposite: Americans are greedy and giving, lazy and hardworking, tolerant and racist, religious and secular, Anglo-Saxon and multicultural, and so on.[42] A few possibilities stand out: Seymour Martin Lipset and Gary Marks point to America's apparent lack of social classes;[43] Frederick Jackson Turner famously argued that Americans were shaped by the Western frontier;[44] and others identify a combination of "Old World influences and New World conditions" as the source of American distinctiveness.[45] Even more commonly accepted than these is the liberal-consensus tradition—the one Rogers Smith associated with Hartz, Tocqueville, and Gunnar Myrdal—which holds that Americans are distinguished by their shared ideas, by an "American Creed" of individual freedom, equality, and political (though not economic) democracy.[46] And while Americans often think of their country as "the land of the free," we've also identified it as a multi-ethnic "nation of immigrants," ever since Crevecoeur

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[41] John Gunnell, *Imagining the American Polity: Political Science and the Discourse of Democracy*, 15.
[42] See, e.g., Lee Coleman, "What Is American?" in *The Character of Americans*, ed. Michael McGiffert (Homewood, IL: Dorsey Press, 1964), 21-30; Seymour Martin Lipset, *The First New Nation* (New York: Norton, 1973); and John Higham, *Send These To Me: Immigrants in Urban America*, 192.
[43] Lipset and Marks, *It Didn't Happen Here: Why Socialism Failed in the United States* (New York: Norton, 2000).
[44] Turner, *The Significance of the Frontier in American History*, ed. Harold P. Simonson (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1963).
[45] Arthur Schlesinger, Sr., "What Then Is the American, This New Man?" in *The Character of Americans*, ed. McGiffert, p. 104; cf. also Schlesinger's unfortunately titled posthumous work, *The Birth of the Nation: A Portrait of the American People on the Eve of Independence* (New York: Knopf, 1968). McGiffert's volume is worth noting; it effectively summarizes most of the leading theories of a 'distinct American character' in the mid-twentieth century—though as John Higham notes, the discussion largely ended shortly thereafter, at least for several decades, as scholars became increasingly aware of the inexorable pluralism of American society. Higham, *Hanging Together: Unity and Diversity in American Culture*, 23.

first defined "the American" as a "strange mixture of blood, which you will find in no other country."[47] Even within this "incorporationist" tradition,[48] there is a great deal of debate: some contend that America's "exceptionalism" rests on an equal and reciprocal mixture of all cultures; others contend that America possesses a single unique culture, into which all new arrivals must assimilate; and still others hold that America's uniqueness derives from its identity as a bastion of "cultural pluralism," a space where multiple cultures can coexist *without* blending.[49] All of these veins share the underlying assumption that the source of America's exceptionality, whatever it is, is also the source of American solidarity. Just what that source is, however, is entirely in question—and with dozens of possible contenders, it can be difficult to make sense of the debate.

One common way of doing so—following the work of Hans Kohn, the founding father of nationalism studies—is to conceive of the solidarity conflict as a struggle between two competing notions of the unique American character, one "ethnic" and the other "civic."[50] Ethnic nationalism (or "ethnocultural Americanism," more accurately)

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[46] Smith, "Beyond Tocqueville, Myrdal, and Hartz: The Multiple Traditions in America." *American Political Science Review* 87:3 (September 1993): 552-53.

[47] Crevecoeur, "What is an American," in *Letters from an American Farmer*, ed. Albert E. Stone (New York: Penguin, 1987), 43. As Nathan Glazer observes, Crevecoeur's version of the melting pot was extremely narrow: the ethnicities he included—English, Scottish, Irish, French, Dutch, German, and Swedish (ibid., 41)—were all Northern European. Southern Europeans—let alone non-Europeans—were excluded as a matter of course. Glazer, "Is Assimilation Dead?" in *Multiculturalism and American Democracy*, eds. Arthur M. Melzer, Jerry Weinberger, and M. Richard Zinman (Lawrence, KS: Kansas, 1998), 16-17. See my discussion of Crevecoeur below.

[48] "Incorporationist" is Deborah Schildkraut's word; see Schildkraut, *Press One for English*, 6; and "Defining American Identity in the Twenty-First Century." I'll say more on Schildkraut's highly developed version of "multiple traditions" theory below.

[49] Indeed Crevecoeur too was something of a cultural pluralist: his famous "What Is An American" essay celebrated not only the mixing of northern European cultures, but also the extent to which they coexisted peacefully without mixing.

[50] I am conflating the words "nationalism" and "exceptionalism" here because, as I am using them in this section, both words connote the notion that one's "people" are distinct from other individuals and peoples on the basis of characteristics—civic or ethnic (or "ethnocultural," rather)—that they alone share. On the civic/ethnic divide, see Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism* (New York: Macmillan, 1944), and *American Nationalism* (New York: Macmillan, 1957); as well as Anthony Smith, *National Identity*, 11; John Higham, *Hanging Together*, 23-24; Andrew Vincent, *Nationalism and Particularity* (New York: Cambridge, 2002),

defines the American character—and thus national solidarity—on the basis of involuntary blood ties, a particular ethnic and cultural heritage that is ascribed irrevocably onto certain individuals (and denied to others) from birth. (Crevecoeur's definition of "the American" as a "strange mixture" of northern European nationalities—and *only* northern European nationalities—is one example.) Civic nationalism, by contrast, holds that America's "exceptional" character is based on voluntary traits that anyone can theoretically access: shared historical memories and cultural symbols, a common language, a common ideology, or a shared attachment to civic institutions. (Or, as one group of scholars recently put it, "An American…is not defined by race, religion, or ethnicity, but by faith in freedom, loyalty to democratic ideals, and fidelity to the U.S. Constitution."[51]) There is room, of course, for debate and dissension within those two broad categories, but the difference between civic and ethnic nationalism as a foundation for solidarity is (seemingly) enormous. For one thing, those who feel solidarity on the

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ch. 3. Kohn originally referred to civic nationalism as "Western," associating it primarily with Britain, France and the U.S., and ethnic nationalism (associated primarily with Germany) as "Eastern." Obviously, though, not all American nationalists are "Western" nationalists: we often think of ourselves as civic "patriots," united by symbols and ideas rather than blood (and as Michael Billig notes, Americans generally refject the word "nationalism," largely because we associate it with its nastier ethnic connotation); but there is a long and undeniable history of ethnic nationalism in the U.S. as well, a steady stream of self-proclaimed patriots who insist that "real" Americans must be Anglo-Saxon or white. Scholars today who examine the civic/ethnic distinction therefore generally avoid Kohn's misleading East/West terminology. See Michael Lind, *Hamilton's Republic: Readings in the American Democratic Nationalist Tradition* (New York: The Free Press, 1997), 42; Anthony Marx, *Faith in Nation*, 114; Rogers M. Smith, *Stories of Peoplehood*, 76; and Anthony Smith, *The Antiquity of Nations*, 242—though as I note below, Lind, Marx and the Smiths have problems with the civic/ethnic distinction too. On the distinction between "nationalism" and "patriotism," see Curti, *Roots of American Loyalty*, vii; Thomas Pangle, *The Spirit of Modern Republicanism* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1988), 278-79; Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, 55-56; Maurizio Viroli, *For Love of Country: An Essay on Patriotism and Nationalism*, 12; and Patrice Higonnet, *Attendant Cruelties*, xxxii-iii. These authors tend to define "patriotism" as the Good version of national solidarity (i.e. tolerant, inclusive, critical, anti-imperialistic) and "nationalism" as the Bad version (intolerant, exclusionary, blindly loyal, imperialistic)—though of course this distinction is lost in popular discourse, if it's even worth making at all. (George Kateb, for one, argues that the distinction is bogus; see his discussion in *Patriotism and Other Mistakes* [New Haven, CT: Yale, 2006], 7-9.)

[51] Peter Gibbon and Jerry Martin, "E Pluribus Unum: The Bradley Project on America's National Identity," The Bradley Project, 2008, http://www.bradleyproject.org/EPUReportFinal.pdf. George W. Bush made

basis of shared "civic" attachments tend to adopt very different positions from their "ethnic" counterparts on questions of immigration, citizenship, and minority rights.[52] Perhaps even more importantly, civic nationalism seems to be the only form of national sentiment that is compatible with liberalism, which insists that membership in a community be voluntary rather than imposed.[53] One could argue, by extension, that the conflict between these two conceptions of solidarity is a struggle for the survival of the liberal values that Americans universally (claim to) cherish. The U.S. can reconcile its vast diversity with the need for communal ties, as Michael Walzer argues, only insofar as "our allegiance is to the republic," rather than our ethnic kin.[54]

There are two problems, however, with this narrative of the solidarity conflict as a struggle between competing "exceptionalisms." The first, as many have noted, is that the line between "civic" and "ethnic" is nowhere near as clear as we like to think it is. As Anthony Smith observes, civic nationalism is an attempt to "sanitize" nationalism, to reconcile the (seemingly unavoidable) need for particular bonds with the liberal desire for universal rights and voluntary associations. But—because nationalism is exclusionary by definition, because even civic nationalism must appeal to a particular "place, time, community and destiny"—the attempt necessarily fails: even the most seemingly

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essentially the same argument in his first inaugural address; see Rogers Smith's discussion in *Stories of Peoplehood*, 187-88.

[52] See, e.g., Rogers Smith's extended discussion of the conflict between "ascriptive Americanists" and "civic republicans" on the question of citizenship policy in *Civic Ideals*.

[53] Thus liberal nationalists, who assert that nations are prerequisites for individual self-fulfillment and the actualization of liberal values like human rights, typically conceive of nationalism in this way. See, e.g., Kymlicka, *Politics in the Vernacular*; Yael Tamir, *Liberal Nationalism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton, 1993); and David Miller, *On Nationality* (New York: Oxford, 1995), as well as nineteenth-century liberals like Mill, Mazzini and Renan. Michael Lind, by contrast, is a rare exception—a liberal nationalist who pointedly observes that nationalism necessarily has an involuntary ethnic component. See Lind, *Hamilton's Republic*.

inclusive appeals for solidarity on "civic" grounds rest on "elements of ethnic order."[55] Anthony Marx, for one, argues convincingly that the apparent inclusiveness of Britain and France was only made possible by an earlier process of "selective exclusion"—forgotten, of course, in the official history books—in which various outsider groups were violently forced out of the community.[56] The same, arguably, is true of the U.S. as well: the image of America as a multi-ethnic "melting pot," for instance, became popular only after (and *immediately* after) all Native Americans had been settled in reservations and Chinese immigration had been legally prohibited.[57] Indeed, most American national symbols and stories serve as unifying forces (and therefore as sources of solidarity) only if we conveniently forget some group or other.[58] Turner's frontier thesis, for instance, rests on the (completely false) assumption that the "frontier" was wild, untamed, uncultivated, devoid of human life; it works, that is, only if we start from the belief that Native Americans never existed (or that they themselves were wild, untamed,

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[54] Walzer, *What It Means to Be an American*, 82. See also William Galston, "Political Economy and the Politics of Virtue: U.S. Public Philosophy at Century's End," in *Debating Democracy's Discontent*, eds. Anita L. Allen and Milton C. Regan (New York: Oxford, 1998), 75.

[55] Anthony Smith, *The Antiquity of Nations*, 243-44; Rogers Smith, *Stories of Peoplehood*, 76 (quoting Dominique Schnapper). See also Rogers Smith's discussion in chapter 1 of *Civic Ideals*, in which he observes that "the relative egalitarianism that prevailed among white men" in early America "was surrounded by an array of fixed, ascriptive hierarchies, all largely unchallenged by the leading American revolutionaries" (17).

[56] Marx, *Faith in Nation*. "Selective exclusion" is also an echo of Ernst Renan, who argued that national unity required not only a "daily plebiscite," but also a common act of "forgetting." Occasionally, though, the process of selective exclusion becomes a matter of public record: in France, for instance, the recent film *Indigènes* raised awareness of the nation's debt to Algerian soldiers who'd been denied benefits and pensions for decades following World War II. In the midst of the ensuing controversy, then-president Jacques Chirac noted—demonstrating the power of selective exclusion—that he'd simply never been aware that Algerians had even fought.

[57] The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 was the first law in U.S. history that officially restricted immigration on grounds of national origin; the Indian Wars ended with the Wounded Knee massacre in 1891; and Israel Zangwill wrote his play "The Melting-Pot," which popularized the term, in 1908. Will Kymlicka also observes, in this vein, that the U.S. made it a conscious (though unwritten) policy to grant statehood to new territories only after Anglo settlers had formed a majority. Kymlicka, *Politics in the Vernacular*, 97.

[58] Rogers Smith and Patrice Higonnet make this point with specific regard to the Declaration of Independence, which relies on subtle assumptions about ethnicity even as it asserts a doctrine of universal human rights. Smith, *Stories of Peoplehood*, 94; Higonnet, *Attendant Cruelties*, xxxvii.

uncultivated, and inhuman). Likewise, the nation-of-immigrants story rests on the (completely false) assumption that everyone's ancestors arrived in America in roughly the same way—voluntarily, that is, as a matter of free choice and personal initiative. It cannot account for Native Americans, whose immigrant ancestors are lost to history, or African-Americans, most of whose ancestors arrived quite involuntarily; and its attempts to do so ("Well, your ancestors were immigrants too") reek of phoniness.[59] For this reason, many scholars argue persuasively that the line between 'good' and 'bad' nationalism is merely a figment of our imaginations: Umut Özkirimli describes the distinction as "bogus," and Michael Lind concludes that it exists "only in the minds of professors."[60] It is also for this reason, as John Higham notes, that American scholars largely stopped searching for a "distinct American character" in the 1960s, at the height of the civil rights movement; the question only surfaced again two decades later, as part of the reaction against "multiculturalism."[61]

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[59] Though Michael Walzer tries: "The experience of leaving a homeland and coming to this new place," he writes, is an almost universal 'American' experience." *What It Means to Be an American*, 17.

James Oliver Robertson's *American Myth, American Reality* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1980) serves as a useful example. In the style of Ernst Renan, Robertson defines America as "a memory" (3) whose unity is based on a set of shared myths. "They make us Americans," he writes, "these myths, able to identify one another because important elements in the identity of each of us are the same, and able, by the same tokens, to distinguish ourselves from the rest of humanity" (18). On the same page, almost in the same breath, Robertson recognizes that "not all Americans participate in the same myths. And not all use the same myth in the same way." Blacks, for instance, generally avoid the old story of George Washington (slaveholder) and the cherry tree. *But that's not important*: "those myths are American. They are available to Americans. Their existence and their availability are what make us, *all* of us, Americans" (18). Here, very explicitly, the exceptionalist logic works only by ignoring the extent to which "shared characteristics" aren't shared by everyone. (How Robertson is able to conclude that blacks as a group don't like the cherry tree story is unclear—it's entirely possible that he underestimated its popularity—but the point remains: Robertson insists on the myth as a source of unity *even while conceding* [rightly or wrongly] that it's not a source of unity at all.)

[60] Özkirimli, *Contemporary Debates on Nationalism: A Critical Engagement* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 28; Lind, *Hamilton's Republic*, 42; see also Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, 55-56; and George Kateb, *Patriotism and Other Mistakes*, 9.

[61] Higham, *Hanging Together: Unity and Diversity in American Culture*, *op. cit.*

The second problem with the exceptionalist narrative, even more importantly, is that it rests on an unsupported assumption—namely, that American solidarity necessarily *must* rest on the "exceptional" features unique to American society, whatever they are. This is a perfectly valid assumption to make, of course; and it may well be correct, even if the civic/ethnic distinction turns out to be unworkable. "Exceptionalism," however, is an attempt to understand not what brings us together, but what sets us apart; to leap from one to the other is necessarily to make a leap of faith.[62] Even if we believe that we *are* somehow united and distinct, the solidarity we feel with each other does not necessarily have to rest on our distinguishing characteristics. Linguistic nationalists like Lind and Kymlicka, for instance, argue persuasively that solidarity derives from a common language—and the current popularity of English-only laws seems to bear them out—but the English language is hardly unique to Americans.[63] Nor, for that matter, is the "Atlantic civilization" at the heart of Samuel Huntington's recent treatise on nationality, or the "British culture" at the heart of Russell Kirk's.[64] Those who call for unity against a common enemy, like the Soviet Union or Al-Qaeda, presumably stand in solidarity with all their allies, Americans or otherwise (the "free world" or the "coalition of the willing"). And if our solidarity is grounded on shared ideas—as we so often say it is—then it, too, seemingly must extend not only to our fellow freedom-loving Americans, but to all those,

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[62] Carl Degler, "In Pursuit of an American History," *American Historical Review* 92:1 (Feb. 1987), 8-12.
[63] It *would* have been, if early nationalists like Noah Webster had succeeded in developing a truly unique American language, distinct from English and standardized to eliminate regional dialects. Aside from a few innovations, though—new words like *lengthy*, *belittle*, *demoralize*, *Congressional*, and the verb *to firm*; new spellings for words like *colour*, *theatre*, *publick*, *defence*, and *travelled*; and colloquialisms developed by black and Creole communities, among others—American English is still unmistakably an *English* language. David Simpson, *The Politics of American English, 1776-1850* (New York: Oxford, 1986), 59-65. (Simpson, it's worth noting, reaches the opposite conclusion, emphasizing that American English was nevertheless "recognizably its own" by the mid-nineteenth century. Ibid., 3.)

here and everywhere, who are committed to "the universalist ideals of Americanism."[65] Like the state/nation/empire narrative, then, the story of competing "exceptionalisms" is still far too narrow to capture the full extent of the conflict over American solidarity. A full account of that conflict must incorporate other sources of solidarity as well, particularly those "shared characteristics" which unite us with non-Americans as well as Americans. Focusing solely on "what makes us American" only scratches the surface.

"Multiple Traditions"

Indeed, that last conception—solidarity on the basis of a shared ideology—is still the most common one of all: since the beginning, Americans of all stripes have embraced the notion that they are united in solidarity by a shared commitment to the liberal value of universal human freedom. It was this commitment, Louis Hartz argued, that made Americans exceptional, following Hofstadter's famous observation that it was America's destiny "not to have ideologies but to be one." Taken to its logical conclusion, this implies that the solidarity on which American democracy rests must be grounded, not on some ethnic blood tie or a shared attachment to civic institutions, but simply to a common love of freedom. Philip Gleason, describing American identity for the *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*, put it best:

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[64] Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996) and *Who Are We?* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2004); Kirk, *America's British Culture* (Piscataway, NJ: Transaction, 1992).

[65] Philip Gleason, "American Identity and Americanization," in *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*, ed. Stephan Thernstrom (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 1980), 56. As I'll note below, though, the ideological basis of American solidarity can lead in multiple directions: it can lead us to feel solidarity for all those who share the same ideas, as Gleason contends, or it can lead us to the "republican patriotism" Viroli promotes—a particular attachment to the government that is especially committed to realizing those ideas in practice. Or, even more broadly, it can lead us to feel solidarity for all human beings, regardless of their particular beliefs, insofar as liberalism (ideally) promotes an equal respect for the decency of all individuals.

> To be or to become an American, a person did not have to be of any particular national, linguistic, religious, or ethnic background. All he had to do was to commit himself to the political ideology centered on the abstract ideals of liberty, equality, and republicanism. Thus the universalist ideological character of American nationality meant that it was open to anyone who willed to become an American.[66]

To be sure—as Gleason immediately noted, and as any serious observer of American politics must concede—there has also always been a strong ethnocultural component to American solidarity as well. For better or worse, Americans (like all humans) do feel some attachment to the characteristics—race, gender, and the like—that were ascribed to us from birth; and as Rogers Smith has observed, this has manifested itself officially in U.S. citizenship policy (among other places) throughout American history.[67] Likewise, we also insist on some degree of civic knowledge as well: one is not "really" American, in other words, unless one has lived in the country for a certain time; nor can one be a true American citizen without some knowledge of the nation's history, symbols, institutions and myths. Democratic participation is an equally important component of unity: "real" citizenship implies a willingness to pay one's taxes, obey the laws, vote in elections, keep up with local and national affairs, and—if necessary—defend the nation in wartime. (And all of this, of course, requires some level of fluency in English.) Indeed, as republicans like Pocock have contended, individual freedom may actually require some degree of participation in civic affairs. According to the standard narrative, though, all of this is secondary: what really matters is the extent to which one embraces the liberal idea, the love of liberty that defines the national character and unites all Americans—real Americans, that is—together. By this logic, ethnoculturalism—

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[66] Ibid., 32.
[67] Smith, "The 'American Creed' and American Identity: The Limits of Liberal Citizenship in the United States." *Western Political Quarterly* 41:2 (June 1988): 225-251; Smith, *Civic Ideals*.

solidarity on the basis of race, gender, or ethnic heritage—is a fundamentally un-American anomaly, destined to fade away as the idea of universal freedom manifests itself more and more fully in American political society. And by extension, the solidarity conflict, such as it is, is really only temporary: once we're all sufficiently enlightened, it simply won't be an issue anymore.[68]

But this is far too optimistic. As Smith demonstrated in his classic study of American citizenship laws, ethnoculturalism never faded or disappeared: blacks, for instance, gained and lost their citizenship rights throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; and (as we've already noted) ethnic restrictions on immigration only became more common after the Civil War. Even now, decades after Jim Crow and the Chinese Exclusion Act, American patriotism remains 'colored' by ethnicity: today's immigration debate often starts from the assumption that all illegal immigrants are Latinos (or, worse, that all Latinos are illegal immigrants); and current debates over foreign policy often rest on the assumption that *Arab*, *Middle Eastern*, *Islamic*, *terrorist*, and *anti-American* are all synonymous with each other. We've known about this all along, of course—but we've also managed to content ourselves with the belief that this ethnocultural tradition has always been "secondary" or anomalous, that "real" American solidarity is grounded on a shared attachment to individual freedom.[69] Smith's research, however, reveals something quite different: rather than one being "secondary" to the other, both traditions have coexisted on roughly equal terms throughout U.S. history, competing with each other in

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[68] Milton Friedman, among many others, made this point explicitly in *Capitalism and Freedom* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2002): racism exists in America, he argued, only to the extent that liberal (capitalist) ideology has not yet been fully accepted by Americans or integrated into American political society.

[69] Smith refers to this belief as the "Tocquevillean thesis," associated primarily with Tocqueville, Hartz, and the mid-twentieth century analyst Gunnar Myrdal—all of whom (especially Myrdal) consciously noted

an ongoing, neverending conflict. Indeed, as Deborah Schildkraut notes in her work on identity in public opinion, Americans often accept both conceptions in their own minds simultaneously—even while recognizing that liberalism and ethnoculturalism seem to contradict each other.

Nor are liberalism and ethnoculturalism the only two competitors: civic republicanism, the shared attachment to common institutions and cultural traditions, appears to be a third, equally viable source of solidarity. As we saw in Chapter 1, Gordon Wood's generation long ago dispelled the old belief that republicanism was ever "secondary" to the idea of liberty; indeed, the Founding generation was particularly committed to producing solidarity around a common "love of the republic." And while many of Wood's contemporaries concluded that civic republicanism fell by the wayside sometime in the nineteenth century, later historians have identified an active republican tradition in American politics to this day. Schildkraut, in fact, locates it in current public opinion: we believe that a 'real' American must feel a strong sense of civic patriotism—an emotional attachment to the republic, the land, the symbols and the people—as well as a strong attachment to liberal democracy.[70] None of this should be a surprise: after all, as we've just seen, scholars of nationalism since Kohn have described the U.S. as a *civic* nation, first and foremost. That too was incorrect, as we saw—civic and ethnic nationalism actually overlap each other, and neither one can legitimately claim to be the 'right' conception of American identity. But the work of these scholars, along with

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the presence of racism and ethnocentrism (and, to a lesser extent, sexism) in American society, but concluded nevertheless that American solidarity was primarily ideological in nature.

[70] Interestingly, though, it's only the feeling we care about: Schildkraut's research indicates that Americans insist that 'real' Americans must love their country, but we don't place as much importance on actual participation in government or civic affairs. (This explains why Americans wear their patriotism so

Smith and Schildkraut, clearly demonstrates that civic republicanism is equally influential, at least, as a source of American solidarity.[71]

This, in a nutshell, is the logic at the heart of "multiple traditions" theory, as Smith and Schildkraut (among others) have developed it in the last two decades. Rather than identifying one single 'correct' source of solidarity, these scholars characterize the solidarity conflict as a permanent war between competing sources, with no right answer and no clear resolution. As Schildkraut concludes, "there is no single American identity, but rather multiple American identities"—though some may be more morally justifiable than others.[72] Indeed, the conflict rages within individual Americans as well, not only in public discourse: individuals feel solidarity with their fellow Americans on civic, ethnocultural, and ideological grounds all at once, depending on circumstance.[73] Consequently, Smith observes, the most successful politicians have been those who have managed to triangulate between all three.[74] As before, though, the difference still matters in the end: those who ultimately emphasize solidarity on ideological grounds will be inclined to extend the benefits of citizenship to all those, regardless of ethnicity, who share their beliefs, while those who emphasize solidarity on ethnic grounds—Americans as white Anglo-Saxons, for instance—will extend the benefits of citizenship only to individuals who meet those narrow criteria.

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prominently on their sleeves—the "banal nationalism" Michael Billig describes—while simultaneously opposing the draft, complaining about taxes, rarely voting, and bowling alone.)

[71] To those three—liberalism, civic republicanism, and ethnoculturalism—Schildkraut adds a fourth: "incorporationism," a variant of liberalism (albeit with subtle ethnic undertones) which grounds solidarity on America's "immigrant legacy" and its unique ability to balance "unity and diversity." "Defining American Identity in the Twenty-First Century," 604, 600.

[72] Schildkraut, *Press One for English*, 198.

[73] Ibid., 58.

[74] Smith, *Civic Ideals*, 39.

To the extent that it understands the nature of the solidarity conflict in American political discourse, “multiple traditions” theory is easily the best and most sophisticated approach of the four we’ve examined—though we often miss one of its most important theoretical contributions. Smith and Schildkraut both framed their analysis as a response to the “Tocquevillean” liberal-consensus theory with which we began in Chapter 1, emphasizing civic republicanism and ethnoculturalism to challenge the assertion that American solidarity is purely ideological. The literature we’ve examined in this section, however, has emphasized civic and ethnic nationalism for years—even (in Michael Lind’s words) to the point of dismissing the notion of ideological solidarity as “absurd.” Likewise, those who identify both civic and ethnic nationalism in American political thought are already well aware that the solidarity conflict is a permanent one with no ‘right’ answer or teleological endpoint. That tradition suffers, however—as I argued above—from its unjustified (and often unspoken) assumption that American solidarity must rest on whatever makes it unique or ‘exceptional.’ But this is by no means necessarily true—and it is that awareness, as much as anything else, that represents Smith and Schildkraut’s great insight. Not only do they remind liberal-consensus scholars of the presence of other traditions; they also reassert the possibility—dismissed by nationalist scholars, but pretty universally embraced by average Americans—that the solidarity underlying American democracy is a solidarity that (potentially, at least) extends to non-Americans as well. That insight, of course, isn’t new either—Philip Gleason said it at the beginning of this section, and we can trace it back through Hartz and Hofstadter as well (not to mention Myrdal and Tocqueville). What Smith and Schildkraut offer is the only approach to date that recognizes the three traditions (or four)

as equal adversaries, rather than embracing one and dismissing the others as "anomalous" or "absurd"—and it is this, more than anything, that makes the "multiple traditions" approach superior to the other narratives.

There is still one important problem, however, with the multiple-traditions approach, one that even its strongest critics have not quite fully understood. Recognizing this problem (which is not unique to Smith and Schildkraut), and recasting the theory to address it, will take up the remainder of my discussion here.

A Question of Scope

Perhaps the most famous and widely quoted definition of 'politics' was offered by Harold Lasswell: politics, to put it neatly, is ultimately a matter of "who gets what, when, and how."[75] Often we think of those questions, *who*, *what*, *when*, *how*, as equally basic and equally important—questions that any good scholar must answer, upon which all our knowledge depends. Lasswell's definition implies, however, that these questions are not equal at all: there is, instead, a single basic question of political analysis, one question on which all the others rest—not *what*, or *where*, or *when*, or *why*, but *who*. And indeed, on the subjects of membership, belonging, and solidarity, *who* is perhaps the only vital question. The benefits of citizenship, the whats and whens, are varying and debatable—and as we've seen, individuals can feel solidarity with the same people for entirely different reasons, entirely different *whys*. But what matters most of all is the *who*—the extent or the scope of solidarity, the line that we draw between members and non-members, and the degree to which a society defines itself in highly inclusive, or highly

[75] Lasswell, *Politics: Who Gets What, When, How* (New York: Whittlesey House, 1935).

exclusive, terms. The act of extending membership to another, after all, is a profound act, one which requires a great deal of personal sacrifice—a willingness to pay taxes for the other's benefit, for instance, or a willingness to risk one's own life in war for the other's defense. Solidarity has powerful consequences—it is not something we tend to take lightly—and we resist greatly when we're asked to sacrifice for those with whom we feel no bond, even more when we're asked to sacrifice for those we consider enemies. The great conflicts over identity and citizenship in American politics, therefore, have always been waged over questions of scope: how far, in other words, should the benefits of American identity extend? Should they extend only to Anglo-Saxons or whites of European descent, or should they also extend to blacks, Asians, Native Americans? Should they extend only to those who know the nation's history and feel attached to its institutions and symbols—a primary component of the citizenship test—or should they also extend to those who feel no attachment whatsoever to those institutions? (Must one be required to sign loyalty oaths, for instance, to participate in government or civic society? Must one "love America or leave it"?) If solidarity is as important to a free society as I've argued here, then the "multiple traditions" in American politics—whatever they are—are traditions whose differences revolve, specifically, around these questions.

This is the underlying insight—albeit an unspoken and often unrecognized one—behind the work of many of Smith's recent critics, who castigate his thesis for its overly favorable treatment of liberal theory. The most common critique of multiple-traditions theory asserts that Smith is trying to 'sanitize' the liberal tradition by treating liberalism and ethnoculturalism as mutually exclusive adversaries—by assuming, in other words, that a real liberal couldn't possibly be racist or ethnocentric. But as observers like Gary

Gerstle, Bonnie Honig, and Carol A. Horton have pointedly noted, liberalism and ethnoculturalism aren't as directly opposed as they seem: invariably, the most pervasive 'ethnocultural' arguments in American history have come from *within* the liberal tradition, not from outside it.[76] Worse, liberal ideas have actually been used, repeatedly and successfully, to justify a variety of seemingly 'anti-liberal' beliefs: slaveholders, for instance, defended their position by appealing to liberal property rights; their descendants used the same liberal values to justify "separate but equal" institutions and Jim Crow laws; and laissez-faire Social Darwinists often insisted that the "innate superiority" of whites explained (and legitimized) any persistent racial inequalities.[77] Consequently—so goes the argument—it's misleading to argue that liberalism and ethnoculturalism are really separate, distinct, "multiple" traditions. Liberalism can be racist; racism can be liberal; and often—rather than pulling against each other, as Smith assumes they do—the two sides can actually reinforce each other, given the right circumstances.

All of that is absolutely correct, of course, and Gerstle, Honig, and Horton (among many others) have the historical data to back it up. But it doesn't quite speak to Smith's own analysis: liberalism certainly *can* reinforce ethnocultural hierarchies, but it's also possible to trace a tradition of American liberalism (as Smith does) that consciously

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[76] This is especially true if we accept the Hartzian liberal-consensus theory: if every American is a liberal at bottom, then any American political movement—even if it seems anti-liberal on its face—must necessarily have underlying liberal roots. (This isn't Hartz's argument, of course—as Smith notes, the Hartzian response to racism is to dismiss it as an anomaly—but it is the logical consequence of the Hartzian thesis.)

[77] Gary Gerstle, *American Crucible* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton, 2001); David Ericson, *The Debate over Slavery* (New York: NYU, 2005); Carol A. Horton, *Race and the Making of American Liberalism* (New York: Oxford, 2005) ("innate superiority" quoted on 12); Jennifer Hochschild, *The New American Dilemma: Liberal Democracy and School Desegregation* (New Haven, CT: Yale, 1984); Donald R. Kinder and Lynn M. Sanders, *Divided By Color: Racial Politics and Democratic Ideals* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1996); Bonnie Honig, *Democracy and the Foreigner* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton, 2001), chs. 1 and 5; and Honig, "Another Cosmopolitanism? Law and Politics in the New Europe," in *Another Cosmopolitanism*, ed. Robert Post (New York: Oxford, 2006), 102-27. See also Schildkraut, *Press One for English*, 57-61.

opposes any "ethnocultural" race- or gender-based restrictions on American citizenship. Smith does not simply assume that liberalism and ethnoculturalism oppose each other; he develops a very complex historical argument, with a mountain of supporting evidence. Consequently, while Smith's critics offer a very important insight, their analysis rarely directly challenges the multiple-traditions narrative. Rather, it leaves us with two parallel narratives, equally persuasive and seemingly irreconcilable—one (Smith's) which identifies a liberal tradition that generally avoids defining 'American' identity in narrow racial or ethnic terms, and another (theirs) which identifies a tradition that perpetuates, and even consciously promotes, those terms. How is this possible?

It is possible—and here is the problem with Smith's thesis, the argument at which I think his critics are hinting—because the multiple-traditions framework, as Smith and Schildkraut have developed it to date, is grounded on a fundamental category mistake. Liberal theory, as we saw in Chapter 1, is acutely aware of the importance of solidarity for its own survival (even if liberal theor*ists* are not); and we already know that the liberal idea of freedom has been a powerful source of solidarity in American society. But while the source matters a great deal, the solidarity question in America has always been, first and foremost, a question of *scope*—and when it comes to that question (as we also saw in Chapter 1), liberalism is simply not a useful category. This is why Smith and his critics can trace such seemingly irreconcilable narratives of American liberalism: because liberalism has no specific conception of the proper scope of a society, different thinkers—starting from the same liberal perspective—can theorize that scope in very different ways. The "tradition" Smith and Schildkraut are tracing, for instance, is not liberalism but liberal *universalism*—which holds that our attachment to liberal ideas

should lead us to stand in solidarity with all those, Americans or otherwise, who share those ideas. (This is also Philip Gleason's understanding of American identity: all one has to do to become an American is "commit…to the political ideology.") But liberals do not have to be universalists. Liberalism can also lead to a *cosmopolitan* attachment to all human beings, regardless of whether they "commit to the ideology" or not, insofar as liberal theory directs us to respect the dignity and worth of every individual equally. Liberalism can also lead to *civic nationalism*, a special affinity for the U.S. as the particular republic that is most dedicated to promoting the liberal worldview around the globe. (It can also lead us to nationalism if we believe, as liberal nationalists have argued since Montesquieu, that the division of humankind into nations is a necessary precondition for freedom.) And, too, it can lead us to *ethnocultural* solidarity with Anglo-Saxon whites if we associate liberalism with the British tradition,[78] or if we conceive of life and liberty as "the rights of Englishmen" (as many nineteenth-century Americans did) rather than universal human rights. More disturbingly, liberals can also be ethnoculturalists if they believe (as many have) that only white people, or only men, are capable of rational thought, the source of human dignity and freedom.[79] Liberal theory, for better or worse, is theoretically compatible with all these conceptions of solidarity, though we may like to think otherwise. It does not close any doors.[80]

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[78] Jennifer Hochschild contends, following this, that ethnoculturalism is a necessary outgrowth of liberalism: because liberalism is specifically a product of the Anglo-American tradition (or Western Europe, more generally), then to promote liberal values is necessarily to promote a particular ethnic culture. Hochschild, *The New American Dilemma*.

[79] The common term for this is "symbolic racism"—which embraces liberal values on face, but believes simultaneously that certain races are incapable of living up to them. Kinder and Sanders, *Divided By Color: Racial Politics and Democratic Ideals*.

[80] The same, incidentally, is true of another source of solidarity Smith considers: solidarity on the basis of one's religion, namely Christianity. Smith classes this form of solidarity as 'ethnocultural," and certainly it can be: "I stand in solidarity with all 'real' Americans, but 'real' Americans must be Protestant." But it can also take a civic republican form as well: I stand with all Americans, regardless of creed, because I am

For this reason, it is a mistake to identify "liberalism" as a separate category, as the multiple-traditions thesis does. To understand the conflict over solidarity in America—which has always been a conflict over scope, the one question for which liberal theory has no response—we must begin, first, by recognizing the extent to which the conflict occurs both within liberalism and beyond it. In the end, the multiple-traditions thesis is essentially correct: Americans do, in fact, feel solidarity on multiple levels simultaneously; and we feel attached to "our fellow Americans" on several different grounds—even contradictory grounds—at once. More importantly, multiple-traditions scholars like Smith and Schildkraut recognize, as the exceptionalists do not, that 'American' solidarity need not stop at the water's edge. The solidarity on which American democracy rests may well be a solidarity that extends to non-Americans as well; indeed, the vast majority of Americans already accept the liberal-universalist conception of America as "an idea," or Gleason's view that America embraces all those who "commit to the ideology." (It can also reach from the outside in—as on September 12, 2001, when *Le Monde* declared, "We are all Americans now."[81]) To understand all this completely, however, scholars must avoid the common trap of reading American political history as a conflict between "liberalism and its challengers"—a trap that even Smith and Schildkraut fall into. Rather, the struggle in question here is better understood as a conflict between *cosmopolitanism* and its challengers—a conflict, in other words, between competing concentric circles.

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attached to the American republic, which I identify as a "Christian nation." Or it can take on what I will call a 'culturalist' form—I stand with all Americans because America is part of Western civilization, which is fundamentally Christian in nature. Or it can take on a universalist form—as a Christian, I stand with all those, Americans, Westerners, or otherwise, who share my Christianity. Or, finally, it can take on a cosmopolitan form—my Christianity directs me to love all human beings, regardless of nation or creed.

[81] *En français*, of course: "Nous sommes tous Américains maintenant."

Cosmopolitanism and Its Challengers

What are those concentric circles, then? How have Americans understood the scope of their 'national' solidarity?

The first approach we considered in this chapter—understanding solidarity as a conflict between "state, nation, and empire"—effectively captures the three most basic circles: solidarity, putting it simply, can be *sub-national* (solidarity not with the entire nation, but with a particular group or faction within it), *national* (solidarity with the nation as a whole), or *trans-national* (solidarity with a larger sphere, of which the nation is only a part).[82] The problem with that approach, however, is that it fails to recognize any differentiation *within* those three circles: it fails to recognize, for instance, that different 'nationalists' can define 'the nation' in different ways, including and excluding different groups of people. The second approach, the approach from American exceptionalism, addresses that issue directly by distinguishing between "civic" and "ethnic" nationalism, between "cultural pluralism" and melting-pot "assimilationism," and between literally dozens, perhaps hundreds, of different conceptions of the "distinct American character." As we saw, though, the exceptionalist approach assumes that American solidarity must be a *national* solidarity, one that includes only 'Americans' and stops at the national border. Most Americans, by contrast, seem to believe (rightly or wrongly) that the solidarity underlying their republic is a *trans*-national solidarity, one that (theoretically) extends to non-Americans as well. Trans-national solidarity, indeed,

[82] As I'm defining it, "national" solidarity is a solidarity that includes both all Americans and only Americans: it claims, at least, to be all-encompassing within U.S. borders, but stops entirely at the edge of 'American' soil. "Sub-national" solidarity, therefore, is a solidarity that consciously includes only certain Americans, and "trans-national" solidarity extends to non-Americans as well as Americans.

may be the only scope capable of uniting all Americans—particularly if we accept Walker Connor's argument (echoed by many other prominent scholars) that America isn't really a 'nation' at all.

The final approach, the multiple-traditions thesis of Smith and Schildkraut, is concerned primarily with the source of solidarity, not the scope. Once we reconfigure Smith's categories around the scope question, however—changing "liberalism" to "liberal universalism," for one—it becomes apparent that Smith and Schildkraut's understanding of the scope of solidarity is actually highly sophisticated, far more so than any of the other approaches we've considered. Not only do Smith and Schildkraut distinguish between civic and ethnic nationalism (or "civic republicanism" and "ethnocultural Americanism"); they also identify liberal universalism ("liberalism") as an important source of transnational solidarity, solidarity that reaches beyond borders to incorporate freedom-lovers everywhere. But even this analysis remains incomplete—if only because Smith and Schildkraut both mistakenly assume that all liberals must be universalists. As with nationalism, there are important distinctions to be made within transnationalism as well: universalism, solidarity on the basis of shared ideas, is not the only possible form of trans-national affinity. Nor, for that matter, are all universalists necessarily liberals: Christianity, too, has been a powerful source of universalistic solidarity in American politics as well.

The table below summarizes the approaches that we've considered thus far.

APPROACH	COMPETING CONCEPTIONS	RELATION TO SCOPE
State/Nation/Empire	State supremacy, nationalism, British loyalism (sub-national, national, trans-national)	Primarily concerned with scope, but highly oversimplified ('nationalism' as a single entity, e.g.)
American Exceptionalism	Civic versus ethnic nationalism; "melting pot" versus "cultural pluralism," etc.	Very limited—some differentiation between civic and ethnic nationalism, but generally assumes *national* solidarity
"Multiple Traditions"	Liberal universalism, civic republicanism, ethnocultural Americanism	Primarily concerned with the *source* of solidarity, but still offers a sophisticated understanding of scope (including both national and trans-national levels)

Few, if any, of those who examine the solidarity conflict directly have identified more than three distinct conceptions of American unity—but this, as Smith admits, is an "oversimplification." To be sure, it may be a "useful" oversimplification—as Smith also contends—if it allows us to emphasize the most important and historically influential conceptions without wasting time on the less essential ones.[83] But if, in the process, we ignore a tradition that has been central—as I hope to show in the remaining chapters—then such an oversimplification isn't useful at all; if anything, it's counterproductive. Moreover, we may be better able to understand the conceptions we do emphasize—"liberal universalism," for example—if we begin by distinguishing them more explicitly from what they're not. For these reasons, at least, it's worthwhile first to step back and examine the picture of American solidarity from a wider and broader view.

[83] Rogers Smith, "The 'American Creed' and American Identity," 228.

From that broader perspective, it is possible to identify at least six concentric circles, six distinct (though occasionally overlapping) degrees of American solidarity, incorporating all three basic (sub-national, national, and trans-national) scopes. Five of these have already been identified, more or less, by one or more of the existing approaches we've considered in this chapter; only one of them—the last, and largest—has been entirely neglected. These, in essence, are the six chief adversaries in the conflict over solidarity in American politics, the conflict that rests at the center of most, if not all, of the greatest domestic struggles in U.S. history.

Pluralism

The first distinct tradition—call it "pluralism," for want of a better word—holds that 'America' is simply too large or too diverse to be a meaningful source of personal identity.[84] The U.S. stretches across six time zones, encompassing virtually every conceivable climate and terrain; its people represent literally every nation in the world, practicing every imaginable religion and speaking an incredible variety of languages. "Americans," in other words, have absolutely nothing in common with each other—or, to be more precise, what little we do share in common is hardly enough to generate any sort of viable solidarity. And this, indeed, has always been the case—or, at least, it's always been our perception. Scholars today can identify a great deal of cultural and religious unity in the Founding era, for instance; but Crevecoeur's writings and the Constitutional

[84] I say "for want of a better word" because "pluralism," as I'm defining it here, does not include many figures commonly referred to as pluralists. Among these (as I discuss below) are "incorporationist" cultural pluralists like Walzer, who hold that America's size and diversity is precisely what makes it a meaningful source of personal identity—that we can achieve an all-inclusive American solidarity, grounded on its unique "unity in diversity." Also not included in this category are anti-republican 'pluralists' who

debates indicate that Americans at the time (excepting Jay, of course) viewed themselves as a fundamentally heterogeneous people, with little or nothing in common. Because of this, pluralists argue, a truly all-encompassing 'American' solidarity is impossible—and anything that tries to pass itself off as such (as Madison noted) is really just the particular solidarity of a particular faction, trying to force its own particular interests on others. The attempt to achieve American unity, consequently, is a pipe dream, and dangerous besides: because solidarity must be limited in scope, it is only really attainable at the *sub-national* level, among local communities, states, or particular factions or cultural groups. This implies, in turn, that American democracy is only sustainable if it's highly decentralized, if these local communities and groups are granted a high degree of political-legal autonomy. If solidarity among Americans is not possible, then an all-encompassing 'American' state is destined (as the Anti-Federalists argued) to devolve into tyranny.

Scholars often identify Madison as the seminal figure of the pluralist tradition: his defense of factions run amok in *Federalist 10* appears to be predicated on the view that real American unity is unattainable. As I show in Chapter 4, this is a mistake: numerous historians, indeed, have already noted that this reading of *Federalist 10* is impossible to reconcile with Madison's simultaneous commitment to a strong national government and his republican belief that a united nation requires a common national character. Rather, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century pluralists tended pretty universally to be Anti-Federalists and state-supremacists, opposed to strong central institutions precisely because it would be impossible to generate the pan-'American' solidarity necessary to make those institutions free. Twentieth-century pluralists are generally more resigned to

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reject solidarity altogether as an irrational and therefore dangerous passion. John Gunnell, *Imagining the*

the hegemony of national institutions, but still insist on a degree of autonomy for local communities—or, more commonly, for particular factions or groups. Pluralists therefore stand opposed to all forms of "melting-pot" assimiliationism—English-only laws, for instance, or the use of public schools to promote a single (invariably European) culture—because, they argue, the "melting pot" is ultimately a myth, an excuse to favor one powerful group at the expense of others. Or, as Desmond King concludes (following the groundbreaking research of Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan), the common image of America's national character "always overemphasizes or inflates America's assimilationist side at the expense of camouflaging its group diversity, a diversity that, despite the presumptions of one-nation historians, will always remain."[85]

Consequently, we typically associate pluralism today with "multiculturalism" (or "cultural pluralism," as Horace Kallen put it almost a century ago). It's worth noting, though, that not all "multiculturalists" are pluralists in this sense of the word: many, perhaps even most, celebrate cultural diversity not because an all-inclusive American solidarity is unattainable, but rather because our diversity is what *makes* it attainable. Critics of cultural pluralism in the 1990s often argued that multiculturalists disparaged the idea of national unity, but many, following figures like Emerson and Crevecoeur, actually saw multiculturalism as "a necessary condition of American nationhood."[86] This "incorporationist" tradition is best understood not as pluralism but as a form of civic nationalism: though it strongly opposes the civic republican belief that Americans are "sutured by shared loyalty to the polity," it shares with civic republicans the belief that

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[85] King, *The Liberty of Strangers: Making the American Nation* (New York: Oxford, 2005), 18-19; Glazer and Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot* (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1963). See also Glazer, *We Are All Multiculturalists Now* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 1997).

American institutions are grounded on an all-inclusive national unity—albeit a "unity in diversity."[87] As a scope of solidarity, pluralism is a narrower concept: from a purely republican perspective, indeed, the pluralist tradition is effectively incompatible with support for 'American' central institutions. To the extent that we take those institutions for granted, therefore, this tradition is largely absent from present-day political discourse—notwithstanding the warnings of conservative critics.

Ethnic and Civic Nationalism

The next two circles, ethnic (or "ethnocultural") and civic nationalism, represent the two basic variations on American *national* solidarity—solidarity, that is, that binds us to all of "our fellow Americans" but does not extend to non-Americans.

The argument for national solidarity begins, first, by defining 'America' as a *nation*, "a named and self-defined community whose members cultivate common myths, memories, symbols and values, possess and disseminate a distinctive public culture, reside in and identify with a historic homeland, and create and disseminate common laws and shared customs."[88] National solidarity, then, is a solidarity grounded on the nation's distinguishing (or "exceptional") characteristics—the "common myths and memories," the "distinctive public culture," the "historic homeland," and the "common laws and customs" that unite all the members of the nation while simultaneously separating them from non-members. Ethnocultural and civic nationalists—in spite of their other differences—both emphasize this national scope of solidarity: the "public spirit" on

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[86] King, *The Liberty of Strangers*, 10.
[87] Ibid., 5.

which American institutions depend is a spirit that embraces all Americans but stops at the U.S. border. The two traditions disagree, however, on just who qualifies (or who can qualify) as a member of the American 'nation'—or, more precisely, they disagree on just which "myths and memories" actually serve as the basis of American unity.

Ethnocultural nationalism (or ascriptive Americanism, as Rogers Smith renames it in *Civic Ideals*) insists that Americans must possess certain personal characteristics that are 'ascribed' to them from birth: a 'real' American must be white, for instance, or have European ancestry, or at least be born on American soil.[89] Nationalism holds, as pluralism does not, that Americans do share important characteristics in common that can serve as a basis for solidarity—but for ethnocultural Americanists, those characteristics are *ascriptive* traits, accessible only to certain people and entirely inaccessible to others (including many U.S. residents).[90] The scope of American solidarity is limited, in other words, not only by territorial boundaries but also by ethnocultural divisions: I stand with all "my fellow Americans," to be sure, but only insofar as I define 'real' Americans as those who share my skin color, ancestry, birthplace, gender, or culture (which is partly determined by my birthplace, ancestry, and skin color). Crevecoeur made this argument, in spite of his pluralist aspirations: Americans, he asserted, were a blend of multiple European nationalities; but those nationalities had to be "European," first and foremost. John Jay, likewise, asserted in that oft-quoted passage in *Federalist 2* that Americans

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[88] This is Anthony Smith's definition of "nation"; other scholars (notably Walker Connor) offer different definitions, but for my discussion here I'll rely on Smith's. Smith, "The Genealogy of Nations," in *When is the Nation?*, eds. Atsuko Ichijo and Gordana Uzelac (New York: Routledge, 2005), 98.
[89] Schildkraut, "Defining American Identity," 602.
[90] By extension, ethnocultural Americanism differs from pluralism only insofar as it defines national identity in terms of those ascriptive traits. Pluralists also often emphasize solidarity on ethnocultural grounds (the Black Power movement would be one example), but pluralists do not equate a particular group or faction with the American nation; rather, pluralists contend that the "American nation" is a fiction.

were "one united people" insofar as they were "descended from the same ancestors" (among other things).[91]

Civic nationalism, by contrast, expands the scope of solidarity to include (ostensibly) all Americans, regardless of their 'ascribed' birth characteristics. Civic nationalists believe, no less than ethnoculturalists, that the solidarity felt between Americans rests on "shared characteristics" that are unique to Americans alone. The civic tradition, however, emphasizes characteristics that are (theoretically) accessible to all: living in the U.S., possessing citizenship and participating in national institutions and rituals, speaking English, being active in one's community, simply "feeling American" or feeling attached to "the polity," or sharing the pluralistic experience of living in and among a widely diverse body of people.[92] This was Hamilton's argument, for instance, in *Federalist 27*: Americans, he contended, would grow attached to each other through common institutions. Liberal nationalists like Lind and Kymlicka belong to the civic tradition too, as do cultural pluralists like Kallen and Walzer, who assert that Americans are a people united "in diversity." "Theoretically" is the key word, of course: as we've already noted, nationalist scholars generally agree that there is invariably an ethnocultural component to "civic" nationalism as well. This was Frederick Douglass's point in "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July," as well as Walt Whitman's, a few years later, in his poem "A Boston Ballad": the civic rituals that bind Americans to "the polity" invariably

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[91] Rogers Smith, "The 'American Creed' and American Identity," 232-36.

[92] Schildkraut, "Defining American Identity," 602. Schildkraut distinguishes between two different varieties of civic nationalism: one (less important, she finds) that defines American identity in terms of actual participation in society and government, and another (more important) that defines it in terms of the simple feeling of belonging to that society. There is also "incorporationism," the tradition that begins by defining Americans as uniquely diverse and asserts that national solidarity is based either on assimilation or on "unity in diversity." All three, however, can be classified as civic nationalism, as all three emphasize a feeling of solidarity with "all Americans" regardless of ascriptive traits.

privilege certain groups (inadvertently or not) while excluding others. The same is true, likewise, for English-only laws and other assimilationist policies: at its best, assimilationism insists that anyone can be 'incorporated' into the American polity;[93] but it nevertheless defines that polity as fundamentally Anglo-Saxon in nature. The difference between these two scopes, however, is still significant in real terms: Kallen, after all, developed his cultural pluralism largely in response to ethnocultural Americanists like Teddy Roosevelt, who warned that 'real' Americans were committing "race suicide" by not reproducing as rapidly as 'other' ethnic groups.

Culturalism and Universalism

The final three circles—culturalism, universalism, and cosmopolitanism, respectively—are *transnational* in scope: each leads individuals to feel a sense of unity not merely with their fellow citizens, but with an even larger human community, one that transcends the nation or incorporates it as part of a larger whole.

The first of these traditions has gone by many names—Bruce Robbins calls it simply "trans-nationalism" (or "actually existing cosmopolitanism"), and William Connolly calls it "civilizopolism."[94] Until that catches on, call it *culturalism*: an ethnocultural solidarity that extends beyond the nation across a transnational—but not quite universal—cultural sphere. The most pervasive culturalist tradition in the U.S., for instance, conceives of American society not as unique or exceptional, but as essentially

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[93] As opposed to assimilationism at its worst, which holds that certain ethnocultural groups—blacks, Asians, and Native Americans, most commonly—are by nature incapable of being assimilated into American society (and therefore must be removed from that society, or else face eradication).

[94] Robbins, "Introduction Part I: Actually Existing Cosmopolitanism," in Pheng Cheah and Bruce Robbins, eds., *Cosmopolitics* (Minneapolis: Minnesota, 1998), 1-3; Connolly, "Speed, Concentric Cultures, and Cosmopolitanism," *Political Theory* 28:5 (October 2000): 603.

British, part of a larger 'Anglo-American' tradition. Eighteenth-century Americans, as we've already seen, thought of themselves primarily as British subjects up to (and even beyond) the revolution, and many of their nineteenth-century forebears agreed: even at the height of Anglophobia, culturalists like William Cullen Bryant argued forcefully that America was, "as far as literature was concerned, English."[95] Later culturalists insisted, against the liberalism of Jefferson, that "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" were uniquely "the rights of Englishmen," derived from the common-law tradition—and thus applicable only to Anglo-Saxons—rather than universal natural law. Today, Anglo-American culturalism is less pervasive, though Russell Kirk recently observed that American language, legal and political institutions, and social mores all still derive from "that English-speaking culture."[96] Culturalists today, instead, are more apt to emphasize, with Samuel Huntington, the extent to which America belongs to an even larger sphere—a "civilization," usually described either as "Atlantic" or "Western," which shapes American culture and life. It's worth noting, too, that American culturalism does not have to emphasize the European connection: there is also a tradition of pan-American culturalism, less pervasive, which emphasizes America's *separation* from Europe and the shared colonial experience of all North and South American states. Culturalists of all stripes, however, share the view that Americans are united not by their unique or distinct characteristics, but by belonging to something larger, a particular culture or 'civilization' of which America is but a part. Connolly, indeed, argues in his discussion of "concentric circles" that new technologies and historical developments may well make culturalism ("civilizopolism") the smallest sustainable scope of political unity—though Robbins

[95] Quoted in Hans Kohn, *American Nationalism*, 51.

contends, in direct contrast, that culturalism ("actually existing cosmopolitanism") is actually the *largest* sustainable scope of human solidarity.

Wider still, however, is *universalism*, the solidarity we feel with those, regardless of national or cultural identity, who share our most deeply cherished ideas and values. Ideas and ideologies are at least theoretically universalizable: they must originate from a particular territory and culture, of course, but they are also (theoretically) capable of crossing territorial or cultural lines. Universalist solidarity, by extension, is theoretically limitless in scope, to a degree that pluralism, nationalism, and culturalism are not: it extends to anyone who "commits to the ideology" (paraphrasing Gleason, again), regardless of language, location, or any other 'ascriptive' trait. "Theoretically," as before, is the key word: as postmodern scholars have long recognized (and as Jennifer Hochschild observes, with particular respect to liberalism), every set of ideas or values is predicated, at least in part, on the particular culture and linguistic tradition from with it originates—which means, in turn, that no "creed" is truly universalizable, though we often assume otherwise.[97] Nevertheless, the universalist tradition still offers a wider potential scope than the other traditions we've examined so far: despite their very real limitations, ideologies and creeds are nonetheless among the few characteristics capable of uniting human beings across cultural lines at all.

The most common variety of universalism in America, of course, is liberal universalism, the third of the three "multiple traditions" identified by Smith and Schildkraut, which holds that American solidarity rests on a common attachment to the liberal "creed" identified by Gunnar Myrdal, Louis Hartz, Samuel Huntington, and

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[96] Kirk, *America's British Culture*, 9-11.

countless others.[98] It's not the *only* variety, of course: Americans have also felt attached to "fellow Americans" insofar as they share a common religion (usually Protestant Christianity), a common affinity for the principle of democracy,[99] or a common respect for capitalist economics, among others. Liberal universalism, though, is the conception most often identified by Americans as the 'correct' scope of national unity: Americans are united not by their particular territory or culture, nor by a shared "loyalty to the polity," but by a common liberal "creed" which is (theoretically, again) accessible to anyone.[100] Indeed, because universalism is ostensibly unconcerned with national boundaries, liberal universalists often feel a deeper solidarity with non-Americans who share their creed—anticommunist freedom fighters, for instance—than with 'fellow Americans' who don't; it is for this reason that many Americans see no contradiction in condemning U.S. citizens as "un-American." To the extent that we feel solidarity on ideological grounds, it does not matter whether our fellows possess the distinguishing marks of an "American"; what matters instead is the degree to which we all feel the same loyalty to the same set of political beliefs and cultural values.

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[97] Hochschild, *The New American Dilemma*. Bruce Robbins, among many others, makes the same argument against cosmopolitanism.
[98] Myrdal, *An American Dilemma* (New York: Harper, 1944); Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America* (New York: Harvest Books, 1955); Huntington, *American Politics: The Promise of Disharmony* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 1981).
[99] Amy Gutmann makes this argument in response to Martha Nussbaum: solidarity on the basis of a common allegiance to democracy is superior, not only to the nationalist solidarity on the basis of "exceptional" shared characteristics, but also to the cosmopolitan solidarity Nussbaum promotes, which rests on a common humanity. Gutmann, "Democratic Citizenship," in Nussbaum, *For Love of Country?* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996), 66-71.
[100] See Myrdal, *An American Dilemma*; Huntington, *American Politics: The Promise of Disharmony*.

Cosmopolitanism

The final circle of transnational solidarity, and the widest, is *cosmopolitanism*, the solidarity we feel with all human beings, regardless of nation, culture, or creed, simply on the basis of our common humanity.

In present-day political discourse, the word "cosmopolitanism" carries multiple definitions. Literally a "cosmo-politan" is a "world citizen," a meaningless category in a world without a global state;[101] and thus the meaning of "cosmopolitanism" is subject to a wide range of conflicting interpretations. For Jeremy Waldron, "cosmopolitanism" refers to the recognition of "multiple identities" in the individual psyche, none of which take absolute precedence over any other; for Martha Nussbaum, by contrast, a "cosmopolitan" is one who defines herself "above all" as a human being, and who prioritizes her duties and obligations as a human before her duties and obligations as a member of a particular nation.[102] And while Nussbaum's definition downplays the boundaries between nations (which are artificial anyway), George Kateb's definition places them front and center: cosmopolitanism, he contends, is best understood as the "love of many countries besides one's own."[103]

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[101] As Michael Walzer correctly notes: "I am not a citizen of the world…I am not even aware that there is a world such that one could be a citizen of it." Walzer, "Spheres of Affection," in Nussbaum, *For Love of Country?*, 125.

[102] Waldron, "What is Cosmopolitan?" *Journal of Political Philosophy* 8:2 (2000): 227-243; Nussbaum, *For Love of Country?*, 3-6. See Seyla Benhabib's discussion in Benhabib, *Another Cosmopolitanism*, ed. Robert Post (New York: Oxford, 2006), 17-18. On cosmopolitanism defined as "multiple identities" (or "multiple solidarities," or "plural loyalties"), see Mitchell Cohen, "Rooted Cosmopolitanism," *Dissent*, Fall 1992, 478-83; Steven Vertovec and Robin Cohen, eds., *Conceiving Cosmopolitanism: Theory, Context, and Practice* (New York: Oxford, 2002), 4; David A. Hollinger, *Cosmopolitanism and Solidarity: Studies in Ethnoracial, Religious, and Professional Affiliation in the United States* (Madison: Wisconsin, 2006), xvii.

[103] Kateb, *Patriotism and Other Mistakes*, 15. For other definitions, see Thomas Pogge, "Cosmopolitanism and Sovereignty," *Ethics* 103 (1992): 48-75 (cosmopolitanism distinguished by "impartiality" and "inclusiveness"); and Pratap Mehta, "Cosmopolitanism and the Circle of Reason," *Political Theory* 28:5 (October 2000): 619-639 (cosmopolitanism as "a suspicion of closed horizons").

Out of this chaos, scholars have largely agreed on three broad definitions of the term. Cosmopolitanism, first, can refer to a particular *lifestyle*, a feeling of "belonging to all parts of the world," unrestricted by national boundaries or one's own cultural heritage, and a willingness (and an ability) to "move about in the world" without being "rooted" to a particular place.[104] This is perhaps the oldest definition of the term: the first self-proclaimed "cosmopolitans," the Athenians Diogenes and Zeno, were *metics*, resident foreigners who identified themselves as "citizens of the world" largely because their outsider status kept them from becoming citizens of Athens. As Bruce Robbins observes, though, this definition of cosmopolitanism as a jetsetting lifestyle—"the old 'free-floating intellectual'"—is also an old stereotype, often exploited by critics of cosmopolitan theory to associate it with elitist, condescending, prissy "cosmocrats"—or "cosmo-prats," as one has called them.[105] Scholars thus generally avoid this definition, with its McWorld connotations, and define cosmopolitanism instead in *institutional* (or *political-legal*) terms, as the demand for a democratic global legal order founded on the political equality of every human individual.[106] (Or, in other words, a democratic "world state.") But this too is an old bugbear—Danilo Zolo characterizes it as "an inherently hegemonic and

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[104] Bruce Robbins, *Secular Vocations: Intellectuals, Professionalism, Culture* (New York: Verso, 1993), 182-84.

[105] Ibid., 183; and see also Timothy Brennan, "Cosmopolitanism and Internationalism," in *Debating Cosmopolitics*, ed. Daniele Archibugi (New York: Verso, 2003), 42; and Craig Calhoun, "The Class Consciousness of Frequent Travellers: Towards a Critique of Actually Existing Cosmopolitanism," in ibid., 86-116. On "cosmocrats," see John Micklethwait and Adrian Wooldridge, *A Future Perfect: The Challenge and Hidden Promise of Globalization* (New York: Random House, 2000); on "cosmo-prats," see Helen Kirwan-Taylor, "The Cosmocrats," *Harpers and Queen*, October 2000, 188-91.

[106] Patrick Hayden, *Cosmopolitan Global Politics* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004); see also Thomas Pogge, "Cosmopolitanism and Sovereignty," 48-75; David Held, *Democracy and the Global Order* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford, 1995) and *Models of Democracy* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford, 1996); Daniele Archibugi, "Cosmopolitical Democracy," in *Debating Cosmopolitics*, ed. Daniele Archibugi (New York: Verso, 2003), 1-15. Elaine Scarry argues, in response to Martha Nussbaum, that the promotion of cosmopolitanism as a moral code—the third definition of the term—requires an institutional structure on which to ground it; Scarry, "The Difficulty of Imagining Other People," in Nussbaum, *For Love of Country?*, 98-110. (Nussbaum agrees, to an extent; see her "Reply" in ibid., 139.)

violent undertaking"[107]—and many self-proclaimed cosmopolitans reject the "world state" as vehemently as any nationalist. (Martha Nussbaum, in particular, contends that "any world state is *ipso facto* tyrannical."[108]) Scholars in this vein offer a third definition, perhaps the most common of all: cosmopolitanism, they argue, is best understood in *moral* or *ethical* terms, as a sense of belonging to a universal "community" of human beings, and by extension a sense of personal obligation to one's "fellow man."[109] Cosmopolitanism "starts," as Anthony Appiah eloquently puts it, "with what is human in humanity": we can reach across cultural, territorial, and even creedal lines to form bonds with other individuals—at least, again, in theory—by appealing to the shared experience of being human in a human world. Appiah captures the sentiment succinctly: "My people—human beings—made the Great Wall of China, the Chrysler Building, the Sistine Chapel…that potential is also in me."[110] Cosmopolitanism in this sense, indeed, is virtually a universal sensibility: not many individuals think of themselves as human

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[107] Zolo, *Cosmopolis: Prospects for World Government* (Malden, MA: Polity, 1997), 15. Zolo does not necessarily agree with this characterization—it's posed as a question, not a statement of fact—but the question is a valid one precisely because so many people *do* accept this (once republican, now postmodern) characterization of cosmopolitan institutions as "inherently hegemonic and violent." See also Peter Gowan, "The New Liberal Cosmopolitanism," in *Debating Cosmopolitics*, ed. Archibugi, 50-66.
[108] Nussbaum, *Frontiers of Justice: Disability, Nationality, Species Membership* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 2006), 314. See also Amy Gutmann, "Democratic Citizenship," in Nussbaum, *For Love of Country?*: "a world polity," she concludes there, "could only exist in tyrannical form" (68).
[109] Pogge, "Cosmopolitanism and Sovereignty"; Nussbaum, *For Love of Country?*; Stephen Eric Bronner, *Reclaiming the Enlightenment: Toward a Politics of Radical Engagement* (New York: Columbia, 2004); Hayden, *Cosmopolitan Global Politics*; Gillian Brock and Harry Brighouse, eds., *The Political Philosophy of Cosmopolitanism* (New York: Cambridge, 2005); Kwame Anthony Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (New York: Norton, 2006). Others who define "cosmopolitanism" in both moral and institutional terms include Brian Barry, "International Society from a Cosmopolitan Perspective," in *International Society: Diverse Ethical Perspectives*, eds. David R. Mapel and Terry Nardin (Princeton, NJ: Princeton, 1998), 145-63; and Charles Beitz, "Cosmopolitan Liberalism and the States System," in *Political Restructuring in Europe*, ed. Chris Brown (New York: Routledge, 1994), 123-136.
[110] Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism*, 134-35.

beings "above all," as Martha Nussbaum wants us to do; but virtually every human being shares Appiah's affinity for his "fellow man," at least to an extent.[111]

The final "circle" of American solidarity derives from this universal human affinity: the spiritual bond we share with our "fellow Americans," the argument goes, rests largely on our common humanity. The argument that Americans are united in this fashion seems to be a hard one to make, at least on face: nationalist conceptions of America's "distinct character" seem to carry more weight in everyday political discourse, as does the universalist view that Americans are united by a common Christian faith or liberal ideology. Consequently, few scholars of American identity have directly considered the extent to which American political thinkers have appealed to this wide circle of unity.[112] At the same time, Americans also conceive of their society as highly, even uniquely diverse—which implies, in turn, that a circle of solidarity would need to be extremely wide (if not universally wide) in order to encompass them all. For this reason, a surprising number of major figures in American history have appealed to this "shared characteristic"—certainly not unique to Americans, but shared by them nonetheless—as the source (or at least a significant source) of "national" solidarity.

Conclusion: Reconciling Unity and Diversity

The chief advantage of cosmopolitan solidarity, at least in theory, is its ability to reconcile the dilemma with which we started—namely, the inescapable presence of

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[111] Brock and Brighouse draw a distinction between "strong" cosmopolitanism—the act of prioritizing one's human identity and subordinating narrower attachments and interests to global or universal principles—and "weak" cosmopolitanism, the mere recognition that one *has* a moral obligation to one's fellow man. Few people, they conclude, are "strong" cosmopolitans; but virtually everyone is a "weak" cosmopolitan. Brock and Brighouse, *The Political Philosophy of Cosmopolitanism*, 3.

[112] One exception is Benjamin R. Barber, "Constitutional Faith," in Nussbaum, *For Love of Country?*, 31.

diversity in societies that require a sense of homogeneity to remain both united and free. Cosmopolitanism satisfies the need for homogeneity by appealing to the most basic and fundamental "shared characteristic" of all—and by doing so, it is able to accommodate a wide range of diverse cultural practices and beliefs within that underlying unity. Indeed, as Anthony Appiah points out, a proper cosmopolitan sensibility requires us to *promote* that wide range of practices and beliefs: diversity, after all, is one of humanity's defining characteristics, which means a decent respect for humanity requires a decent respect for that diversity as well. Cultural imperialism and religious fundamentalism emphasize the universal scope of humanity too (as do other, "nicer" versions of universalist solidarity); what makes cosmopolitanism distinct, however, is its recognition and appreciation of our legitimate differences. Scholars and commentators often criticize the cosmopolitan project for promoting imperialism or cultural homogenization (albeit "with a human face"); but as Appiah rightly observes, cosmopolitanism ceases to be cosmopolitan the moment it starts demanding universal adherence to a particular set of ideas or cultural practices. "Cosmopolitans," he concludes, "think that there are many values worth living by and that you cannot live by all of them. So we hope and expect that different people and different societies will embody different values."[113] To be sure—as Appiah immediately points out—cosmopolitanism is itself a universal "idea": it respects and appreciates a diverse range of beliefs and practices *so long as* those beliefs and practices respect the equal moral worth of the individual and respect the right of each individual to make their own life choices (even if they happen to be poor ones).[114] "Everybody

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[113] Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism*, 144.

[114] Patrick Hayden identifies three basic tenets of the cosmopolitan ethic: *individualism*, *generality*, and *universality*. That is, cosmopolitanism insists that every *individual*, on a *general* (global) scale, is *universally* morally equal to every other individual. Hayden, *Cosmopolitan Global Politics*, 3-11.

matters: that is our central idea. And it sharply limits the scope of our tolerance." The values cosmopolitanism respects must therefore be "values *worth* living by": it has no truck, for instance, for the sort of fundamentalist universalism that embraces anyone who agrees and kills anyone who doesn't.[115] In this sense, cosmopolitanism too is a form of universalism—humanity is an "idea" too, after all—and as we will see in subsequent chapters, the leading figures of America's cosmopolitan tradition all walked a difficult tightrope between embracing *all* human beings as equals and denouncing those who rejected that fundamental equality in extreme and violent ways. To the extent that cosmopolitan solidarity recognizes, accepts, and promotes diversity within these wide parameters, though (an act beyond mere toleration), it nevertheless offers a way—perhaps, in theory, the best of all possible ways—to overcome the unity/diversity dilemma that plagues republican theory.

The disadvantage of cosmopolitan solidarity, however, is its (apparent) impracticality: as its critics have long argued, cosmopolitanism in practice is often "bloodless,"[116] nice enough in theory but seemingly incapable of generating the "thick" attachments necessary for republican government. Or as Michael McConnell puts it: "Humanity at large—what we share with other humans as rational beings—is too abstract to be a strong focus for the affections."[117] Popular as it is, this argument against cosmopolitanism is not as ironclad as it may appear: most of the critics who make this argument rely primarily on the "particularist thesis" we dispelled in Chapter 2, or on the misleading image of personal identity as a series of "concentric circles" that grow fainter

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[115] Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism*, 144-45.
[116] See, e.g., Robert Pinsky, "Eros against Esperanto," in Nussbaum, *For Love of Country?*, 89.
[117] McConnell, "Don't Neglect the Little Platoons," in Nussbaum, *For Love of Country?*, 81.

and weaker as they radiate further from the self.[118] Moreover, there is more than enough historical evidence to indicate that cosmopolitan solidarity is quite capable of generating personal attachments "thick" enough to motivate profound acts of individual sacrifice, given the right circumstances.[119] Nevertheless, this argument against human solidarity still has a significant influence on conventional wisdom, so much so that many scholars (including some self-proclaimed cosmopolitans, like Bruce Robbins) take it for granted that the cosmopolitan project is a utopian pipe dream, "too weak a force to generate sufficient solidarity."[120]

Consequently, those who confront the unity/diversity dilemma tend to conclude, pessimistically, that the two sides cannot really be reconciled: all we can do is privilege one, while paying lip service to the other and trying to account for it as best we can. Occasionally, this manifests itself in a defense of diversity for its own sake, the stereotypical "multiculturalist" argument that democratic states should promote social diversity and carve out autonomous space for minority groups and cultures, even at the expense of a larger unity. More commonly, though, scholars in this vein make the opposite argument: the fact that a democratic community requires a unifying "story of peoplehood" means, no matter how hard we try to avoid it, that every democracy will necessarily exclude as "outsiders" a large number of people who reside within the community, are governed and constrained by its laws and regulations, and therefore

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[118] Michael Walzer, in particular, relies on this image in his reply to Nussbaum; see Walzer, "Spheres of Affection," in Nussbaum, *For Love of Country?*, 126. (Nussbaum, for her part, uses the same concentric-circles image to *defend* the cosmopolitan project.)

[119] Martha Nussbaum, for instance, points to the "avenue of trees" in Jerusalem, honoring over a thousand "righteous *goyim*" who risked their lives, for no personal gain, to shelter Jews in the midst of the Holocaust. Nussbaum, *For Love of Country?*, 131-32.

[120] Robbins, "Introduction Part I: Actually Existing Cosmopolitanism," in *Cosmopolitics*, eds. Cheah and Robbins (1998).

rightfully deserve to have a voice in determining its official policies and practices. The best that we can do, then, is to try to "render tribalism safe" by fostering *good* stories, stories that exclude certain individuals as outsiders but nevertheless respect their right to exist and coexist in peace.[121] This is the motivation behind the work of Margaret Canovan, Michael Walzer, Will Kymlicka, David Miller, Bonnie Honig, and Charles Taylor, to name only a few: *assuming* that every community will identify "outsiders" in their midst, these scholars and others seek ways of promoting tolerance and coexistence (though not necessarily *inclusion*).[122]

Before we conclude that an all-inclusive sense of peoplehood is unattainable, though, it is at least worth exploring other options. One, suggested by Rogers Smith in *Stories of Peoplehood*, is to embrace not one single all-encompassing story, but a variety of competing stories, each of which could be used as a source of solidarity. In this way, Smith asserts, the exclusionary tendencies of one story may be checked by pitting it against others: if one conception of American peoplehood leaves you out, another will bring you in.[123] Different individuals, in short, can "love America" for different reasons: because it's a "Christian nation," because of its commitment to the twin ideals of freedom and democracy, because it's full of people who look and think and speak like them, or

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[121] Benjamin R. Barber, ""Constitutional Faith," in Nussbaum, *For Love of Country?*, 36.

[122] See, e.g., Walzer, "Notes on the New Tribalism," in *Political Restructuring in Europe*, ed. Chris Brown (New York: Routledge, 1994), 187-200; Miller, *On Nationality* (1995) and *Citizenship and National Identity* (Malden, MA: Polity, 2000); Canovan, *Nationhood and Political Theory* (Northfield, MA: Edward Elgar, 1996); Taylor, "Why Democracy Needs Patriotism," in Nussbaum, *For Love of Country?*, 119-21; Taylor, "Democratic Exclusion (and its Remedies?)," in *Citizenship, Diversity, and Pluralism*, eds. Alan C. Cairns et al. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's, 1999), 265-287; Taylor, "A Tension in Modern Democracy," in *Democracy and Vision*, eds. Aryeh Botwinick and William E. Connolly (Princeton, NJ: Princeton, 2001), 79-98; Jurgen Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms* (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1996); Habermas, *The Inclusion of the Other*, eds. Ciaran P. Cronin and Pablo De Greiff (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1998); Bonnie Honig, *Democracy and the Foreigner*; Alain-G. Gagnon and James Tully, eds., *Multinational Democracies* (New York: Cambridge, 2001); and Alain-G. Gagnon, Montserrat Guibernau and François Rocher, eds., *The Conditions of Diversity in Multinational Democracies* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's, 2003).

because they're attached to 'national' symbols and traditions. Each of these stories excludes *somebody*, of course; but few of us are excluded by them *all*—and for this reason, Smith concludes, it may also be possible to unite Americans, diverse as they are, through these interlocking stories. Smith's approach thus offers a way to avoid the pessimistic assumptions underlying liberal nationalism: rather than merely seeking "tolerance" for outsiders, he suggests, the promotion of interlocking, conflicting stories provides a way to incorporate them fully as part of the democratic "people" and extend the scope of "national" solidarity to include them. But even this framework, superior as it is to the liberal nationalist approach, is problematic for two reasons. First, the limitlessness of human diversity cannot be underestimated: any conception of peoplehood—even a compound one, as Smith proposes here—will necessarily result in some unfair exclusion if it does incorporate the cosmopolitan appeal for human solidarity, at least to some degree. (Atheistic radicals with dark skin or foreign accents, for instance, have rarely fared well in America, with or without legal citizenship.) Second, and more importantly, the interlocking-stories approach is only capable of generating a common allegiance to common institutions; to the extent that we define each other as "outsiders" in the "stories of peoplehood" we choose to embrace, however, it is less capable of generating a unifying solidarity between Americans themselves. The resulting "unity" is weak at best—sufficient to keep institutions afloat, but insufficient to pull *individuals* together in time of need.[124]

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[123] Smith, *Stories of Peoplehood*, 157-59.

[124] The national response to Hurricane Katrina is the most notable recent example: the extreme generosity displayed by *some* individuals toward "their fellow Americans" allows us to overlook the extreme callousness of others—not simply the government, but individuals themselves—not to mention the current lack of concern with regard to the ongoing recovery. The poor black Southerners who were

The appeal to cosmopolitan (human) solidarity as the source of fellow-feeling between Americans, then, offers an ideal way of overcoming the unity/diversity dilemma—provided, of course, it can be made workable in practice. Therein lies the rub: it's clear enough that cosmopolitanism *can* be a source of "thick" solidarity; but as its critics rightly observe, it rarely *is*. In order to promote a cosmopolitan sensibility, Martha Nussbaum advocates a system of "cosmopolitan education" designed to promote a deeper recognition of one's *human* identity and one's place in the larger human community—an identity and a place, she argues, that ought to take precedence over our national identities and our place in our respective national communities.[125] As many of her interlocutors point out, though, such a system will not work in a vacuum: cosmopolitanism may be eminently rational, but as Hilary Putnam observes, "reason without tradition is empty."[126] This is particularly the case for Americans, who are, if anything, "exceptionally" attached to their national identity: the cosmopolitan project will never have much appeal in the U.S. if it is phrased, as Nussbaum phrases it, in direct opposition to nationality. We know from Chapter 2, after all, that solidarity requires a connection to a source of personal identity with prior merit in individual hearts and minds; in the American case, this means that *any* scope of solidarity must be compatible with the national symbols, figures, and institutions that Americans so fervently embrace. It is partly for this reason, too, that I turn my attention in the next three chapters to the most "supremely American" figures in U.S. history: the success of the cosmopolitan project—necessary, arguably, to

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disproportionately affected by the storm, after all, rarely figure into our narrower "stories" of American peoplehood.

[125] Nussbaum, *For Love of Country?*, 6.

[126] Putnam, "Must We Choose between Patriotism and Universal Reason?" in ibid., 94.

overcome the unity/diversity dilemma—depends on our ability to relate it to existing symbols and myths.

Chapter 4

James Madison's Cosmopolitan Republic

Presumably, a study of cosmopolitanism in American political thought should begin with the two Toms—Paine, the humanistic revolutionary who declared that "The cause of America is in a great measure the cause of all mankind," and Jefferson, the jetsetting ambassador who justified rebellion not only because the British government had "destroyed the lives of *our* people," but also because it had "waged cruel war against human nature itself."[1] Indeed, with the exception of Ben Franklin, few Americans are as commonly associated with the eighteenth-century cosmopolitan tradition (or the Enlightenment, more generally) as Paine and Jefferson.[2] With regard to the specific question I'm considering here, however—the scope of solidarity that underlies American republican institutions—the two Toms do not fit so neatly into the 'cosmopolitan' profile. Like many of their contemporaries (including Montesquieu, as we've seen), Jefferson and Paine tended to adopt a nationalistic approach to the cosmopolitan project, promoting national self-determination as a necessary precondition for the general good of mankind. Likewise, as both *Common Sense* and Jefferson's Declaration were written in defense of separation rather than union, Paine and Jefferson both emphasized the exclusivity, rather than the universality, of America's "peoplehood," arguing that, in spite of appearances, Americans were *not* united with their British counterparts. Jefferson, in fact, made this

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[1] Paine, *Common Sense* (Mineola, NY: Dover, 1997), 2; Jefferson, "The Declaration of Independence," in *The Portable Thomas Jefferson*, ed. Merrill D. Peterson (New York: Penguin, 1975), 238 (italics added). Jefferson's accusation of "war against human nature" comes from the famous lost passage on slavery, which his colleagues excised from the final draft.

his first argument in the Declaration: before diving into his eloquent discourse on human rights, Jefferson opens by postulating, quickly and subtly, that Americans constitute "one people," and Englishmen "another."[3] Paine, too, denied the existence of any real feeling of "attachment" across the Atlantic: not only did Americans have separate interests and different enemies, he argued, the simple fact of their geographic separation from England made it clear that their unity "was never the design of Heaven."[4] Indeed, since America and Britain in 1776 still shared "common myths, memories, symbols and values"—not to mention a common language, religion, and (arguably) ancestry—one could argue that Paine and Jefferson's conception of American solidarity is not even 'national,' but something narrower still.[5] Paine and Jefferson were willing to concede, if only for the sake of argument,[6] that Americans and Englishmen together constituted a 'nation' as we understand the word today; but both also explicitly rejected the idea that a common

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[2] In *The Cosmopolitan Ideal in Enlightenment Thought* (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame, 1977), Thomas Schlereth emphasizes Franklin, along with Voltaire and David Hume, as a defining figure of eighteenth-century cosmopolitanism.

[3] "When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another…" Jefferson, "Declaration," 235. Jefferson makes another subtle argument here, namely that the "bands" that had hitherto connected America and Britain were merely "political," nothing more. Paine makes a similar argument in *Common Sense*; see below. Jefferson concludes this opening sentence by asserting, further, that national self-determination is in fact a natural God-given right: "…and to assume among the powers of the earth the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation."

[4] Paine, *Common Sense*, 19, 22. Paine continued, in characteristically melodramatic fashion: "Every thing that is right or natural pleads for separation. The blood of the slain, the weeping voice of nature cries, 'TIS TIME TO PART." Ibid., 22.

[5] Anthony Smith's full definition of "nation" is as follows: "a named and self-defined community whose members cultivate common myths, memories, symbols and values, possess and disseminate a distinctive public culture, reside in and identify with a historic homeland, and create and disseminate common laws and shared customs." Smith, "The Genealogy of Nations," in *When is the Nation?*, eds. Atsuko Ichijo and Gordana Uzelac (New York: Routledge, 2005), 98. Aside from a common land of residence, Americans and Englishmen in 1776 together met all the criteria for a common nationality (at least according to Smith's definition).

[6] Paine, explicitly, accepted it *only* for the sake of argument; he also observed, correctly, that the idea of all Americans being British by descent was ridiculous even in 1776. "Not one third of the inhabitants, even of this province, are of English descent. Wherefore I reprobate the phrase of parent or mother country applied to England only, as being false, selfish, narrow and ungenerous." Rather, he concluded (anticipating

'nationality' ("consanguinity," Jefferson called it) was a sufficient basis for republican affection.[7] To be sure, both *Common Sense* and the Declaration reflected the cosmopolitan sensibilities of their authors as well; Jefferson's insistence on *human* equality and *human* rights, in particular (as opposed to the rights of British subjects), would become an important source of cosmopolitan solidarity in subsequent decades.[8] But the solidarity Paine and Jefferson promote most heavily in their most famous works is hardly all-inclusive or cosmopolitan, despite their reputations; given the immediate circumstances, it simply would not have been politically useful to make such an appeal.

Americans in 1787, however, faced the opposite problem. While Paine and Jefferson had to justify a separation of two peoples who still thought of themselves as one,[9] the defenders of the Constitution had to justify a *consolidation* of thirteen peoples

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Crevecoeur's American Farmer), "Europe, and not England, is the parent country of America." *Common Sense*, 20-21.

[7] "But admitting, that we are all of British descent, what does it amount to?" Paine asks. "Nothing. Britain, being now an open enemy, extinguishes every other name and title." In characteristic fashion, he then turns the blood-tie argument into a reductio ad absurdum: "The first king of England, of the present line (William the Conqueror) was a Frenchman, and half the Peers of England are descendants from the same country; wherefore, by the same method of reasoning, England ought to be governed by France." *Common Sense*, 21. In the Declaration, likewise, Jefferson reluctantly notes that "the ties of our common kindred" have not been sufficient to promote cross-Atlantic solidarity: "manly spirit," he concludes, "bids us to renounce forever these unfeeling brethren. We must endeavor to forget our former love for them, and hold them as we hold the rest of mankind, enemies in war, in peace friends." Though Congress excised part of this discussion from the final draft—including the description of Englishmen as "unfeeling brethren"—the Declaration as published still recognizes the "consanguinity" of America and Britain while nevertheless lumping Englishmen, in terms of Americans' affection, together with "the rest of mankind." "Declaration of Independence," 239-40.

[8] See Chapter Six. On the Declaration's lack of clarity with regard to American peoplehood, see Kathleen O. Potter, The Federalist's *Vision of Popular Sovereignty in the New American Republic* (El Paso, TX: LFB, 2002), 23. John Patrick Diggins, by contrast, argues that the Declaration unequivocally asserts that "America constituted 'one people' acting together." Diggins, *The Lost Soul of American Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1984), 56.

[9] To an extent. As numerous scholars have already observed, there was already a growing sense of distinct American 'peoplehood' by 1776; Russel Blaine Nye, for one, traces this sense of distinct nationality back to the seventeenth century. Nye, *The Cultural Life of the New Nation, 1776-1830* (New York: HarperCollins, 1960), 37. At the same time, as I noted in previous chapters, it's also possible to dismiss this pre-Revolutionary nationalism, as Merle Curti does, as "a burst of rhetoric" with no truth behind it. Curti, *Roots of American Loyalty* (New York: Columbia, 1946), 15. Even after the beginning of what would become the war for independence, many prominent Americans—including many who later became ardent revolutionaries—still proclaimed loyalty to their British "brethren." "Are we not one nation and one

who, despite their common revolutionary history, largely viewed themselves as distinct.[10] Scholars today, looking back, find it easy to identify the cultural norms and political principles that eighteenth-century Americans shared in common; some even conclude, not without reason, that the U.S. in the late eighteenth century was among the most homogeneous societies on earth.[11] But the Americans themselves, faced with the prospect of a permanent centralized Union, didn't see it that way. Instead, the Constitutional ratification debate is marked by a prevailing assumption—taken for granted by many participants—that 'Americans' were *not* a single homogeneous people, that they shared little to nothing in common, and that any pan-'American' political union would be hard pressed to find, let alone promote, any sort of "common" public good.[12] "The sense and views of 3 or 4 millions of people," wrote one group of Anti-Federalists, "diffused over so extensive a territory comprising such various climates, products, habits, interests, and opinions, cannot be collected in so small a body."[13] To be sure, this sort of argument was more characteristic of Anti-Federalist reasoning; supporters of the Constitution, by contrast, were more likely to argue that there was, in fact, a single

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people?" wrote Francis Hopkinson. "We in America are in all respects Englishmen, notwithstanding that the Atlantic rolls her waves between us and the throne to which we all owe our allegiance." Thomas Jefferson agreed, at least for a while: even after the battle of Bunker Hill, he wrote that he was "looking with fondness towards a reconciliation with Great Britain." Quoted in ibid., 13. This sense of one-ness with Britain had to be overcome in order to generate support for the Revolution. On the other hand, from a republican perspective, the Revolution would become almost a foregone conclusion once Americans were convinced of their separateness. (This, as Gordon Wood observes, was the impetus behind Americans' objection to their lack of representation in Parliament: if Americans and Englishmen were truly 'one,' then Americans would not have *needed* separate representatives. Wood, *Creation of the American Republic* [Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina, 1969], 178.)

[10] Or a deeper consolidation, more accurately: as Lance Banning observes, few if any Americans supported an actual consolidation of the states into one undivided entity; and while the Constitution provided for a stronger central government, it by no means eviscerated the authority of the individual states. Banning, *The Sacred Fire of Liberty: James Madison and the Founding of the Federal Republic* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell, 1995), 227-28.

[11] See footnote 18 in Chapter 3.

[12] See Herbert Storing, *What the Anti-Federalists Were* For (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1981).

distinct 'American' people, united by any one of a number of shared characteristics.[14] John Jay did so, most famously, in *Federalist 2*. As I noted earlier, though, this was the exception, not the rule: Jay aside, many of the Constitution's most prominent defenders began, no less than the Anti-Federalists, with the assumption that—aside from the accident of living on the same continent—'Americans' had nothing in common beyond their humanity. Some, of course, like James Wilson and James Madison, attempted to turn this diversity into a positive: like Crevecoeur's American Farmer (not to mention David Hume), Wilson and Madison both asserted that a "diversity of interests," properly channeled, would actually be conducive to liberty and security.[15] But the demands of republicanism could not be ignored: though Gordon Wood argued that American republicanism was already on the wane by 1787, Madison recognized even then that Americans, 'heterogeneous' as they were, would never accept a government that did not

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[13] "Dissent of the Minority of the Pennsylvania Convention," in Bernard Bailyn, ed., *The Debate on the Constitution, Part One* (New York: Library of America, 1993; hereafter Debate I), 542.

[14] An odd exception—apparently singular—is an exchange between James Wilson and the Anti-Federalist Arthur Lee, writing as "Cincinnatus." Wilson, in an oft-quoted speech at the Pennsylvania State House (so oft-quoted, in fact, that at the time it was more influential than the *Federalist*), asserted explicitly that the U.S. would be a heterogeneous society: "For my part, my admiration can only be equalled by my astonishment, in beholding so perfect a system, formed from such heterogeneous materials." This, in itself, was not an uncommon argument—many pro-Federalists made assertions along these lines—but what was uncommon was Cincinnatus's response, which, counterintuitively for an Anti-Federalist, insisted on the *homogeneity* of the American people: "I shall ask you what union in the world is so similar in their laws, commerce, habits, population and extent? Is there such difference between Rhode-Island and Virginia, as between Holland and Overyssel; between Massachusetts and Georgia, as between Berne and Switzs? Do not the several states harmonize in trial by jury of the vicinage; taxation by representation; habeas corpus; religious toleration; freedom of the press; separation of the legislative, executive and judicial functions. Are these not the great principles on which every constitution is founded? In these the laws and habits of the several states are uniform." Several Federalists appealed to the essential homogeneity of the thirteen states; but few other *Anti*-Federalists did the same. "James Wilson's Speech at a Public Meeting," in Debate I, 66; "Cincinnatus" V, in Debate I, 117.

[15] On Hume's influence, see Douglas Adair, *Fame and the Founding Fathers* (New York: Norton, 1974); Neil Riemer, *James Madison: Creating the American Constitution* (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 1986). Thomas Pangle—not alone—describes Hume as "arguably the principle source for much of the new Publius's political science." Pangle, "The *Federalist Papers*' Vision of Civic Health and the Tradition out of which That Vision Emerges," *Western Political Quarterly* 39: 4 (December 1986): 590.

adhere to republican principles.[16] Simply redefining the concept of republican government, as Madison did in *Federalist 39*, would not suffice.[17] The Constitution's defenders also had to show, first, that the American people as a whole shared important interests in common, a "public good" that the new government could promote; and second, that "America," large as it was, could still generate a feeling of attachment, a "public spirit" or "virtue" strong enough to impel individuals to sacrifice their own interests for the greater good. This, perhaps more than anything else, was *the* issue at stake in 1787: the battle over the Constitution certainly revolved around competing visions of American society (commercial-liberal versus agrarian-republican); but it revolved too, no less urgently, around this second question. *Would there be solidarity among Americans*, solidarity strong enough to motivate the active participation necessary to preserve a free and united republic? Those who supported a strong Union had to show that there would—and those who conceded the presence of great diversity (like Madison and Wilson) had the doubly difficult task of showing that a diverse populace could feel anything for each other at all. The idea of cosmopolitan solidarity as the basis for republican institutions, then, would have had an appeal in 1787 that it would not have had in 1776. It is for this reason that I begin my discussion of American cosmopolitanism not

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[16] Wood, *Creation*, ch. 13; Madison, *Federalist 39*, in Isaac Kramnick, ed., *The Federalist Papers* (New York: Penguin, 1987), 254. (All subsequent citations from the *Federalist* are taken from Kramnick and cited by page number.)

[17] Madison's "redefinition" in *Federalist 39* isn't really a redefinition, but a shift in emphasis: "we may define a republic to be, or at least may bestow that name on, a government which derives all its powers directly or indirectly from the great body of the people; and is administered by persons holding their offices during pleasure, for a limited period, or during good behaviour." *Federalist 39*, 255. Madison here drops the requisite that a republic must promote a "public good" in favor of a procedural definition of a republic as a representative democracy. Madison himself, however, maintained that those requisites are necessary: in later writings, he emphasizes the importance of "virtue" and the promotion of a "public good" to a true republic. The fact that he doesn't emphasize them here, however, or in his other contributions to the *Federalist Papers* (especially *Federalist 10*, which seems to promote the *absence* of a public good) have

with Jefferson, but with Madison, the "Father of the Constitution" and the central figure of the ratification debate.

Likewise, because the question of solidarity was so central to the ratification debate, a proper understanding of Madison's contribution to that debate must begin with his approach to that question. Students of the American Founding tend to characterize Madison either as an early nationalist or, more commonly, as a liberal pluralist with a Hobbesian suspicion of human nature, concerned not with promoting public virtue but with creating a space for the pursuit of naked *self*-interest. Neither depiction is wholly accurate, however: *Federalist 10* and *39* aside, Madison was acutely conscious of the need for virtue in a free republic; and he was equally conscious of the difficulty of sustaining such virtue in a society as large, and arguably *trans*-national, as the United States. It was that difficulty, more than anything else, around which Madison's political thought revolved. To the extent that he took seriously the Anti-Federalist charge that 'Americans' had little in common beyond their humanity, Madison devoted himself to exploring the possibility of creating and sustaining a *cosmopolitan republic*, theoretically limitless in scope and grounded on a (potentially) universal circle of human solidarity. This, I argue, was Madison's great contribution to republican theory: republicans hitherto had assumed that a 'cosmopolitan republic' was an oxymoron, but Madison contended that there were circumstances under which it was possible to generate an all-inclusive solidarity 'thick' enough to sustain republican institutions. It is that solidarity, by extension, that underlies his understanding of the institutions he helped create in 1787.

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led many commentators to conclude (mistakenly) that Madison wasn't concerned with virtue at all.

"Americans" as a Cosmopolitan People

Americans in 1787 faced a simple but seemingly intractable dilemma. On the one hand, the events of the previous decade had made it evident to "all sides," as John Hancock put it in the Massachusetts ratifying convention, that "a general system of government is indispensably necessary to save our country from ruin."[18] Few, if any, seriously endorsed a totally consolidated 'national' government or argued that the states should be annihilated altogether;[19] but it was generally agreed by 1787 that the existing central government was too weak to preserve order or guarantee the security of the states. Madison, for his part, was one of the first to recognize this weakness; as early as 1781, he wrote to Jefferson that the "shameful deficiency" of the states (then, with regard to their willingness to contribute to the ongoing war effort) made a stronger central government

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Banning, *The Sacred Fire of Liberty*, 7.

[18] Hancock, "Final Observations," in Debate I, 941.

[19] See Footnote 10 above. Whether or not the Constitution represented a "consolidation" rather than a "confederation" was a subject of great import during the ratification debate, precisely because all participants generally agreed that a "consolidation" was to be avoided. It is for this reason that many Anti-Federalists objected so strongly to the phrase "We the people" (as opposed to "We the states") in the Preamble; as William Findley pointed out in the Pennsylvania Convention, "We the people" implies that the government is a "compact" between individuals, rather than a "confederation" of independent states. It is for this reason too that most of the Constitution's leading supporters—though they're often characterized as "nationalists"—went to great lengths to deny the charge of "consolidation." Madison, of course, insisted famously that the Constitution created a government that was "neither wholly *national* nor wholly *federal*." Likewise, James Wilson, who led the charge for ratification in Pennsylvania, opened the PA convention by admitting that "consolidation" was undesirable, and consequently had to spend a great deal of time refuting Findley. See James Wilson's Opening Address, in Debate I, 798; Findley's refutation, ibid., 818-19; Wilson's rejoinder, ibid., 820-28; and Madison, *Federalist 39*, 259. See also, among others, "Federal Farmer," Letter I, in Debate I, 245; "Brutus" V, ibid., 499; "Agrippa" VI, ibid., 518; "Dissent of the Minority of the Pennsylvania Convention" (including Findley), ibid., 537; "Brutus" VI, ibid., 613; Patrick Henry's opening speech at the Virginia ratifying convention, in Bernard Bailyn, ed., *The Debate on the Constitution, Part Two* (New York: Library of America, 1993; hereafter Debate II), 596; and Timothy Pickering's "Refutation of the 'Federal Farmer,'" in Debate I, 292. Pickering's refutation is especially worth noting: "'tis admitted by all," he concedes, that consolidation is "a form of government unsafe for a country so extensive as ours," but he also argues that the Anti-Federalists' objection to consolidation is a red herring, with nothing to do with the Constitution itself. "I shall not spend your time in descanting on one entire government for the United States, which would abolish all the state governments: for as such a government is not in contemplation, we have nothing to do with it." Ibid., 292.

necessary.[20] Separately, Madison observed later, the individual states were incapable of regulating trade and commerce, forming treaties or fighting wars; only a central government, "otherwise constituted" to be stronger than the existing Congress, could conceivably establish the necessary "harmony in the measures of the states."[21] A few Anti-Federalists resisted this conclusion, of course: several proposed dividing the U.S. into three separate regional confederations, while others contended, in keeping with Montesquieu's small-republic thesis, that even the individual states were becoming too large.[22] In the end, however, the practical need for a stronger consolidated union (or a semi-consolidated one, at least) was irresistible. The *need* for a strong central government outweighed the *possibility* that such a government would turn out to be despotic; it was for this reason, perhaps more than anything else, that the Constitution's defenders were able to secure ratification over the Anti-Federalists' objections in 1788.[23] In any event, those defenders insisted, the Anti-Federalist fears were unfounded: so long

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[20] Madison, Letter to Thomas Jefferson (April l6, 1781), in *Writings*, ed Jack N. Rakove (New York: Library of America, 1999), 13.

[21] Madison, Letter to James Monroe (August 4, 1785), in *Writings*, 37. Irving Brant concludes from this and other concurrent speeches and writings that Madison in the early 1780s was already a leading advocate of "national supremacy," but Lance Banning observes that Madison—then, at least—was still primarily a "defender of Virginia's special interests." Brant, *James Madison: The Nationalist, 1780-1787* (Indianapolis: Bobbs Merrill, 1948), 418, quoted in Banning, *The Sacred Fire of Liberty*, 13-14; and Banning, *Sacred Fire*, 14. More on Madison's nationalism—or the lack thereof—below.

[22] The Anti-Federalist "Cato" wrote, for instance, that "The extent of many of the states in the Union, is at this time, almost too great for the superintendence of a republican form of government, and must one day or other, revolve into more vigorous ones, or by separation be reduced into smaller, and more useful, as well as moderate ones." "Cato" III, in Debate I, 216. "Centinel," another Anti-Federalist, agreed: "Do we not already see that the inhabitants in a number of larger states, who are remote from the seat of government, are loudly complaining of the inconveniencies and disadvantages they are subjected to on this account, and that, to enjoy the comforts of local government, they are separating into smaller divisions." "Centinel" I, in Debate I, 59.

[23] No more blatantly than in New York—where Melancton Smith, the leader of the Anti-Federalist charge there, threw his support to the pro-Federalists once it became clear that the Constitution would be ratified with or without New York's vote. Though most of the Anti-Federalists' objections were never definitively refuted—indeed many of them turned out, in retrospect, to be right—the danger of being excluded from the Union was far more serious and immediate. As Nathan Dane put it in a letter to Smith, "we have no reason to suppose that (New York) has a wish to Stand alone." Debate II, 845. In Smith's final speech to the

as the people were virtuous and vigorously public-spirited, the Union had nothing to fear from would-be despots.[24]

But while Americans in 1787 generally agreed that a stronger central government was practically necessary, they also agreed that any government, large or small, had to be republican in nature in order to be acceptable. "It is evident," Madison proclaimed (echoing the general consensus), "that no other form would be reconcileable (sic) with the genius of the people of America; with the fundamental principles of the revolution; or with that honorable determination, which animates every votary of freedom, to rest all our political experiments on the capacity of mankind for self-government."[25] Just what this meant, of course, was subject to debate: as numerous scholars have noted, the idea of republicanism was in transition in the late eighteenth century, and Madison's reworking of the term in *Federalist 14* and *39* only added to the confusion.[26] (John Adams, indeed, noted later that "republicanism" was next to impossible to define.[27]) At the very least, though, it was fairly well accepted that a "republic" was a popular government, in which laws were made and enforced by representatives selected by (and periodically

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convention, consequently, he equated the lack of a Union with being "dispersed like sheep on a mountain." Debate II, 853.

[24] This was Dane's argument to Smith: "tho the system may be abused by bad men, ought we not to recollect that the road to lasting fame in this Country has generally been Justice, and Integrity, prudence and moderation, political information and industry & that there is more than an equal chance that this will continue to be the case?" In Debate II, 850.

[25] Madison, *Federalist 39*, 254. "Brutus," the Anti-Federalist to whom Madison may have been most directly responding, agreed: "It is here taken for granted," he wrote in his first letter, "that all agree in this, that whatever government we adopt, it ought to be a free one; that it should be so framed as to secure the liberty of the citizens of America, and such an one as to admit of a full, fair, and equal representation of the people." "Brutus" I, in Debate I, 170.

[26] See, e.g., Gordon Wood, *Creation of the American Republic*; Robert E. Shalhope, *The Roots of Democracy: American Thought and Culture, 1760-1800* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1990); and Paul Rahe, *Republics Ancient and Modern* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina, 1992).

[27] "A Republican government is a government of more than one," Adams famously wrote, but the term was too flexible to be pinned down any further. "The Word Republic has been used, it is true, by learned men, to signify every actual and every possible government among men,—that of Constantinople as well as that

accountable to) the people, according to the principle of majority rule.[28] But it was not simply "the majority" that republican institutions were intended or designed to serve: as Madison famously pointed out in *Federalist 10*, the prospect of "majority tyranny"—a majority promoting its own narrow interests at the expense of fellow citizens—was just as real, and just as destructive of true republicanism, as any other form of tyranny.[29] Rather, the purpose of the republican form was to promote the general interest of the community at large—the "public good," the "common good," or the "general will."[30] Majority rule was not an end in itself, but only an (imperfect) means to that larger purpose.[31] "Public good," of course, is a vague and sketchy term, capable of being defined in wildly different ways, and a good deal of the ratification debate revolved around competing conceptions of the common interest.[32] What was beyond question,

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of Geneva." Letter to Mercy Warren, July 20, 1807, in Charles F. Adams, ed., *Correspondence Between John Adams and Mercy Warren* (New York: Arno Press, 1972), 353.

[28] This is Madison's minimalistic definition—'mere republicanism,' as it were—developed in *Federalist 14* and *39*; see also "Brutus" I, in Debate I, 170-71. On the definition of 'republicanism,' both generally and with regard to eighteenth-century American thought, see Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 1967); Wood, *Creation*; Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton, 1975); M.N.S. Sellers, *American Republicanism: Roman Ideology in the United States Constitution* (New York: NYU, 1994), esp. chapter 5; Maurizio Viroli, *For Love of Country: An Essay on Patriotism and Nationalism* (New York: Oxford, 1995); Lance Banning, *The Sacred Fire of Liberty*, esp. chapter 3; and Philip Pettit, *Republicanism* (New York: Oxford, 1997).

[29] Madison, *Federalist 10*, 122-28.

[30] See, e.g., "The Impartial Examiner" I, an Anti-Federalist writer who took it as "a true maxim" that legislators "ought to observe two essential rules; first in having no other view than the general good of all without any regard to private interest; and secondly, to take equal care of the whole body of the community, so as not to favor one part more than another." In Debate II, 251.

[31] It is for this reason that many Southerners, like George Mason, objected to the Constitution on the grounds that Southern interests would be overwhelmed in Congress by a (self-interested) Northern majority. "By requiring *only a majority* to make all commercial and navigation laws," Mason wrote, "the five southern States (whose produce and circumstances are totally different from that of the eight northern and eastern States) will be ruined." Mason, "Objections to the Constitution," in Debate I, 348. (Italics added.)

[32] Summing up the debate, Alan Gibson contends that "Most of the Founders seem to have understood the public good or the common interest as the collective articulation of self-interest rightly understood"—the promotion, in other words, of interests that all individuals shared in common. Gibson, *Understanding the Founding: The Crucial Questions* (Lawrence, KS: Kansas, 2007), 151. How those interests were to be defined, though, was a matter of great dispute. "Centinel," for instance, defined the "common good" partly in terms of material equality: "A republican, or free government, can only exist…where property is pretty equally divided." "Centinel" I, in Debate I, 56; see also "A Citizen of America" (Noah Webster), in

however, was the fact that there had to *be* a public good, a common interest linking the people together; without it, republican government would be impossible. Moreover, and more importantly, a republic would not survive unless "the people" were virtuous enough to set their own interests aside and work for the general interest of the community—an act which, many noted, ran directly counter to human nature.[33] It was largely for this reason, indeed, that Anti-Federalists insisted that a republic be small: unless "the people" lived in close proximity to each other, they would never develop the mutual attachment necessary for a commitment to the public good; nor, for that matter, would they develop the common interests necessary for there to be a "public good" at all. Size, however, was not really the issue—as Madison and others rightly observed, the principle of representation made it possible to expand the scope of republican government; and as more than a few pro-Federalists pointed out, Rome and Carthage had been extended

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Debate I, 158. James Wilson, by contrast, defines it in terms of popular sovereignty itself: "when we take an extensive and accurate view of the streams of power that appear through this great and comprehensive plan…we shall be able to trace them all to one great and noble source, THE PEOPLE." Wilson, Opening Address, in Debate I, 803. Hugh Williamson, speaking in support of the Constitution near the end of the ratification debate, defined it in terms of the survival of the Union: "We have a common interest, for we are embarked in the same vessel." In Debate II, 235. And Patrick Henry, in the Virginia convention, defined it in terms of natural rights: "At present we have our liberties and privileges in our own hands. Let us not relinquish them. Let us not adopt this system till we see them secured." Reply to Randolph, in Debate II, 624.

[33] See Wilson's speech at the Pennsylvania State House, in Debate I, 68; "Brutus" I, in Debate I, 170; and "A Citizen of America" (Webster), in Debate I, 158, all of whom assert that 'virtuous,' self-effacing behavior is contrary to basic human nature. (Madison, of course, makes a similar argument in *Federalist 10* and *51*.) The importance of virtue in eighteenth-century American political thought is well-documented: see Bailyn, *Ideological Origins*; Wood, *Creation*; Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*; Alisdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame, 1981); John Patrick Diggins, *The Lost Soul of American Politics*; and Michael Sandel, *Democracy's Discontent* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 1996), for starters. Virtually every significant American political thinker in the late eighteenth century reflected on the importance of a virtuous public: John Adams, for one, described public virtue as "the only foundation of republics"; and George Washington wrote to Lafayette that "the general government…can never be in danger of degenerating into a monarchy, an Oligarchy, an Aristocracy, or any other despotic or oppressive form; so long as there shall remain any virtue in the body of the People." Adams, Letter to Mercy Warren, April 10, 1776, in *Warren-Adams Letters: Being chiefly a correspondence among John Adams, Samuel Adams, and James Warren, Volume 1: 1743-1777* (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1917), 222; Washington, letter to the Marquis de Lafayette, in Debate II, 179. Though Madison is often characterized

republics as well.[34] Rather, the need was for a sense of common 'peoplehood,' grounded on shared interests that were capable of motivating people to work actively for the general welfare.

Therein, however, lay the crux of the dilemma: for while Americans generally recognized the need for a strong continental Union and the simultaneous need for "common interests" that could generate republican virtue, they also recognized (or believed, at least) that "Americans" had little to nothing in common. In contrast to the emerging nationalisms of late eighteenth-century Europe—and, remarkably, in apparent defiance of their own republicanism—the earliest attempts to define the American 'national' character almost invariably emphasized the *lack* of a common language, a common land, a common religious heritage, or a common ethnicity.[35] "Whoever traverses the continent," wrote Crevecoeur (among the first to analyze the American

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as a mere liberal pluralist, he too agreed that public virtue was a necessary precondition for republican government. See my discussion below.

[34] Writing on the same day that Madison published *Federalist 14* (November 30, 1787), the pro-Federalist "Americanus" agreed that Montesquieu's insistence on the small republic was based on an essentially democratic (i.e. direct-democratic) conception of republican government; "the immense advantages of a representative legislature," however, are sufficient to overcome the Montesquieuian objection. "Americanus" III, in Debate I, 438-39; see also "A Citizen of Philadelphia," in Debate I, 187. "Brutus," however, insisted that even the Roman republic was "of small extent," and that the republic collapsed as a direct consequence of territorial expansion. "Brutus" I, in Debate I, 171.

[35] Jefferson's "consanguinity," of course, is an exception. Another exception that's worth noting is "Brother Jonathan," an early personification of the 'typical' American that became common in popular culture and literature. Typically characterized as an affable, uneducated, 'rough' country bumpkin whose lack of manners masked a deeper intelligence, Brother Jonathan was usually shown outwitting the arrogant, condescending, snobbish urbanites he constantly ran across (in plays like Royall Tyler's "The Contrast," for instance, or in more recent incarnations like *The Andy Griffith Show*). Implicit in "Brother Jonathan" (as well as "Yankee Doodle," the subject of the famous patriotic jingle) was the assumption that Americans *did* share a common character—not necessarily a common ethnic or religious heritage, but certainly a common worldview and a common set of customs and mannerisms. Because such a view is necessarily exclusivistic, however—limiting membership in the "American" community to those who share certain habits and ideas—it's no surprise that "Brother Jonathan" gradually developed more and more into a symbol of racism, bigotry, and backwardness as the American community expanded (and became more diverse than even Crevecoeur imagined) in the nineteenth century. The more progressive elements of nineteenth-century American political thought—the figures we tend to embrace today—almost invariably rejected the conception of America as a land of Brother Jonathans in favor of a more inclusive,

character), "must easily observe those strong differences, which will grow more evident in time. The inhabitants of Canada, Massachusetts, the middle provinces, the southern ones will be as different as their climates; their only points of unity will be those of religion and language"[36]—and even there, Crevecoeur notes, Americans are equally marked by religious and linguistic diversity, rather than homogeneity.[37] Crevecoeur was certainly not alone in his diagnosis: republican theory, after all, ascribed enormous importance to the effect of climate on the character of a community; and even in 1787, the U.S. encompassed such a wide range of climates that it was difficult, from a republican perspective, not to reach the same conclusion.[38] Many, of course, followed Crevecoeur in arguing that America's diversity was to be celebrated rather than feared: James Wilson, for one, asserted that

> when we reflect how various are the laws, commerce, habits, population, and extent of the confederated states, this evidence of mutual concession and

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Crevecoeurian (or Wilsonian or Madisonian) view. See Winifred Morgan, *An American Icon: Brother Jonathan and American Identity* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware, 1988).

[36] J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer*, ed. Albert E. Stone (New York: Penguin, 1987), 73.

[37] With respect to language, Crevecoeur contradicts himself directly, asserting later that one may "travel through whole counties"—in Pennsylvania, at least—"where not a word of English is spoken." With respect to religion, Crevecoeur appears to be making the familiar argument that Americans are united "in diversity": when different sects and denominations live in close proximity to each other—and particularly when they mix and intermingle with each other—"their zeal will cool for want of fuel, and will be extinguished in a little time. Then, the Americans become as to religion what they are as to country, allied to all. In them the name of Englishman, Frenchman, and European is lost, and in like manner, the strict modes of Christianity as practised in Europe are lost also." As with his famous characterization of "the American, this new man" as a melting-pot hybrid of nationalities, Crevecoeur's cosmopolitanism has its limits: the mixture that comprises "the American" is a mixture of *Christian* denominations and *European* (specifically northern European) ethnicities. Non-Christians and non-Europeans need not apply. (Indeed, given his later attacks on the Irish—"they love to drink and to quarrel; they are litigious and soon take to the gun"—it's hardly clear that he would even embrace all Christians and Europeans.) Crevecoeur and his contemporary readers, though, would (generally) not have noticed this theoretical blindness; the idea here is to emphasize, not the separateness or the particularity of the category "American," but rather its *diversity*—and, by extension, its (theoretical) all-inclusiveness. "A traveller in Europe becomes a stranger as soon as he quits his own kingdom; but it is otherwise here. We know, properly speaking, no strangers; his is every person's country; the variety of our soils, situations, climates, governments, and produce hath something which must please everybody." Ibid., 84, 74, 69, 85, 80.

[38] See Jefferson's extended discussion of climate, vegetation and terrain, e.g., in *Notes on the State of Virginia* (in *The Portable Thomas Jefferson*, 47-128).

> accommodation ought rather to command a generous applause, than to excite jealousy and reproach. For my part, my admiration can only be equalled by my astonishment, in beholding so perfect a system, formed from such heterogeneous materials.[39]

But Wilson's "astonishment" only underscored the problem: because human solidarity depends on finding common ground, it would be difficult, even impossible, to generate any lasting public virtue in the American people if their "laws, commerce, habits, population, and extent" were as "various" as Wilson conceded. In republicanism, Americans had embraced a philosophy that required a degree of social homogeneity; but conventional wisdom held, rightly or wrongly, that the defining characteristic of 'America' was difference. To the extent that one accepted this common view—as many did—it was inconceivable that the entire continent could unite on republican terms; it was "astonishing" enough, indeed, that a tiny group of fifty-five Americans (give or take) had been able to reach a consensus on a simple frame.

Americans, in short, agreed on the need for a more consolidated union (if not a fully consolidated one), as well as the importance of making such a union republican in nature; but America's vast diversity, coupled with the (perceived) lack of shared interests, made a republican union seemingly unattainable. Faced with this dilemma, Americans appeared to have only two options: they could redouble their efforts to identify a source of common ground, or they could conclude, pessimistically, that a united 'American' republic was doomed to failure.[40] Anti-Federalists, naturally, took the latter approach.[41]

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[39] Wilson, Speech at the Pennsylvania State House, in Debate I, 66.

[40] There was, of course, a third possibility: accept the Constitution out of necessity, in spite of the risk of despotism. This more Hobbesian argument was obviously unpopular, but a few Americans made it: in the Virginia ratifying convention, for instance, Edmund Randolph indicated (infuriating Patrick Henry in the process) that "I will assent to the lopping of (my arm) before I assent to the dissolution of the Union." In Debate II, 600. Likewise, Oliver Ellsworth (writing as "A Landholder") conceded that the Constitution

"In a republic," wrote "Brutus" (using language that many of his fellow Antis would echo), "the manners, sentiments, and interests of the people should be similar"; consequently, a single republican government could never be stretched to cover the entire American landscape. "The United States," after all,

> includes a variety of climates. The productions of the different parts of the union are very variant, and their interests, of consequence, diverse. Their manners and habits differ as much as their climates and productions; and their sentiments are by no means coincident. The laws and customs of the several states are, in many respects, very diverse, and in some opposite; each would be in favor of its own interests and customs, and, of consequence, a legislature, formed of representatives from the respective parts, would not only be too numerous to act with any care or decision, but would be composed of heterogenous (sic) and discordant principles, as would constantly be contending with each other.[42]

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was "a creation of power; but power when necessary for our good is as much to be desired as the food we eat or the air we breathe." "A Landholder" III, in Debate I, 330.

[41] It is worth emphasizing, as Herbert Storing notes, that Anti-Federalists did not wish to dissolve the Union entirely. Insofar as the central government could never be made truly republican, though, they wanted to keep it as small and as weak as possible—with sovereignty, the people's loyalty, and individuals' primary political identity vested in the states. Storing, *What the Anti-Federalists Were FOR*, chapter 4. It is also worth noting the contribution of "Philadelphiensis," who—contrary to the general thrust of the ratification debate—actually argued that Americans already were united in solidarity: "No people in the world have more of the genuine *amor patriae*, than the citizens of the United States; that noble ambition, that laudable love for the dignity and the character of his country, is so implanted in the breast of an American, that he is willing…to expend his blood to support that government that should establish the national respectability of his country." Few, excepting perhaps John Jay, went as far in praising the patriotism of the American people. Philadelphiensis is unique among them, however, in that he *opposed* the Constitution: "this *Colossus of despotism*," he argued, would destroy that affinity. "Philadelphiensis" IV, in Debate I, 495.

[42] "Brutus" I, in Debate I, 172. We can trace this argument through many the leading Anti-Federalist works—from the published dissent of the Antis in the Pennsylvania ratifying convention ("the sense and views of 3 or 4 millions of people diffused over so extensive a territory comprising such various climates, products, habits, interests, and opinions, cannot be collected in so small a body") to the well-known letters of the Federal Farmer ("a few reflections must evince, that one government and general legislation alone never can extend equal benefits to all parts of the United States: Different laws, customs, and opinions exist in the different states, which by a uniform system of laws would be unreasonably invaded"). "Dissent of the Minority in the Pennsylvania Convention," in Debate I, 542; "Letters from the 'Federal Farmer' to 'The Republican'" I, in Debate I, 253. (See also Letter III, in Debate I, 261, in which the Federal Farmer elaborates on the differences between "Eastern, Middle, and Southern States.")

"Cato," another leading Anti-Federalist, gave this argument an interesting pro-Northern spin in his third letter: "The people, who may compose this national legislature from the southern states, in which, from the mildness of the climate, the fertility of the soil, and the value of its productions, wealth is rapidly acquired, and where the same causes naturally lead to luxury, dissipation, and a passion for aristocratic distinctions; where slavery is encouraged, and liberty of course, less respected, and protected; who know not what it is to acquire property by their own toil, nor to œconomize with the savings of industry—will these men therefore be as tenacious of the liberties and interests of the more northern states, where freedom, independence, industry, equality, and frugality, are natural to the climate and soil, as men who are your own citizens, legislating in your own state, under your inspection, and whose manners, and fortunes, bear a more equal resemblance to your own?" "Cato" III, in Debate I, 217.

Moreover, Brutus continued, even leaving aside the vast differences in climate and "productions" that defined the 'national' landscape, the American people were simply too numerous: with "near three millions of souls" already, and potentially "much more than ten times that number" in the future (an understatement!), the very idea that Americans could share anything in common was laughable.[43]

Defenders of the Constitution—some of them, at least—dismissed the Anti-Federalists' fears outright, likening them to "children making bubbles with a pipe" and insisting that Americans shared a great deal in common that could serve as a source of solidarity.[44] David Ramsay, leading the pro-ratification charge in South Carolina, adopted John Jay's characterization of Americans as an organic "band of brethren"; likewise, one respondent to the Federal Farmer concluded, "Only bear always in your mind, sir, that the inhabitants of the United States are but *one people, one nation*, and all fears and jealousies about the annihilation of State governments will vanish."[45] To be sure, there was a good deal of truth behind such assertions: Americans in 1787, after all, shared a common language (notwithstanding Crevecoeur's Pennsylvania Germans); a common North American territory, isolated and distinct from Europe; a common set of political principles and social customs, inherited from Britain; and a common Christian heritage, among other things. Moreover, given that Americans in 1787 were still predominantly republican (or thought of themselves as such), it stood to reason that the

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[43] "Brutus" I, in Debate I, 170; see also "Cato" III, in Debate I, 214, and "The Federal Farmer" I, in Debate I, 253-54. Presumably, it's worth noting, Brutus is excluding slaves from his estimate of the U.S. population; otherwise the figure would have been "near four millions of souls." The Pennsylvania dissenters equivocated, dismissing the possibility of achieving harmony in "the sense and views of 3 or 4 millions of people." See above footnote.

[44] The phrase is somewhat out of context: Robert Livingston used it in the New York ratifying convention to dismiss Melancton Smith's concern about the federal tax power. In Debate II, 837.

people would accept the Constitution, or any strong central government, only if they could be persuaded that they shared a common bond with their "fellow Americans." Remarkably, though, *only a few pro-Federalists ever made this argument*: even at the end of the ratification debate, when "consolidation" seemed all but certain, appeals like Jay's and Ramsay's were surprisingly rare. Rather—notwithstanding the very real sources of homogeneity to which they could have appealed—Americans on both sides of the ratification debate shared the general perception (reinforced, again, by republicanism's preoccupation with climate) that "Americans" were an inescapably diverse body of individuals, no more a "united people" than "Europeans" or "Asians." The Constitution's leading defenders—Wilson, most notably, in his State House speech—were therefore more apt to appeal to the advantages of "heterogeneity" and gloss over the republican dilemma altogether. Likewise, those who still recognized the importance of a common bond or a mutual feeling of attachment found themselves reduced to hoping that Americans would develop one in the future. Alexander Hamilton, for one, asserted that as the central government grows stronger and more intimately involved with individual lives, "the greater will be the probability that it will conciliate the respect and attachment of the community"; Noah Webster, too, argued that a "national character" would only develop when "the states resign to one *supreme head* the exclusive power" of general governance.[46]

The fact that pro- and anti-Federalists alike agreed on the fundamentally heterogeneous character of the American "people" has not been examined in much scholarly detail; but it is, nevertheless, a central and recurring theme of the ratification

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[45] Pickering, "Refutation of the 'Federal Farmer,'" in Debate I, 301; Ramsay, "'Civis' to the Citizens of

debate. Moreover—as the pro-Federalists recognized—it is not so easy to dismiss as some mere observational error: the common tropes of 'national' identity simply could not unite "Americans" as they united "Frenchmen," or "Englishmen," or "Germans." America in 1787 was a Protestant nation, for instance, but Protestantism in the eighteenth century was still too broad a category to generate any real solidarity; Madison, after all, had risen to prominence in Virginia largely by promoting a religious-freedom bill designed primarily to prevent Protestants from oppressing each other. Likewise, Americans were aware that they shared a wide variety of inherited customs and political principles; but they were equally aware, if not more so, of the differences that had already arisen between them in their application. "I confess," wrote the Federal Farmer, "I never thought the people of these states differed essentially in these respects"; but the fact that the Convention had not been able to agree on a set of basic rights served (for him, at least) as proof that "we proceed to consolidate the states on no solid basis whatever."[47] Nor could Americans really unite around a common language: even if they disregarded the pesky fact that not all of them spoke English, it would still have been difficult to generate solidarity around the language of the empire against which they'd just rebelled. (Even Webster, who became the champion of linguistic nationalism in later years, did not make such an argument in the ratification debate.) And while Jay and others appealed to the homeland as a unifying force, the American continent was still far too large to generate any kind of affinity—particularly in the eighteenth century, when travel was

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South Carolina," in Debate II, 153; and "Oration at Charleston, South Carolina," in Debate II, 508.
[46] Hamilton, *Federalist 27*, in Debate I, 593; "A Citizen of America," in Debate I, 145-46.
[47] "Federal Farmer" II, in Debate I, 256. The republican belief that a community's surrounding environment and culture determined the proper form and scope of its laws also prevented solidarity from developing on these grounds: "It is impossible," wrote the Anti-Federalist "Agrippa," "for one code of laws to suit Georgia and Massachusetts." "Agrippa" IV, in Debate I, 449.

perilous and unimaginably slow. "I think it one of the greatest benefits in a good government," wrote the Federal Farmer, "that each citizen should find a court of justice within a reasonable distance, perhaps, within a day's travel of his home." For Americans today, of course, this limit is meaningless—"a day's travel" can take us halfway around the world and back again—but the Farmer of 1787 could not accept a country so large that the average citizen would have to travel "150 to 200 miles" to reach the Supreme Court.[48] Understood from this perspective, Jay's argument for solidarity on the basis of a common national homeland is akin to arguing, today, for solidarity on the basis of a common world.

Indeed, at least one Anti-Federalist, "Cato," characterized the idea of national solidarity in precisely these terms. "It may be suggested," he began, in answer to the Anti-Federalist objections, "that whoever is a citizen of one state, is a citizen of each, and that therefore he will be as interested in the happiness and interest of all, as the one he is delegated from." But such an argument runs counter to the basic nature of human solidarity: anyone who "has attended to the history of mankind, and the principles which bind them together as parents, citizens, or men, will readily perceive" that such a view is "fallacious." Rather, he continued—adopting a familiar version of the concentric-circle thesis we considered in Chapter Two—human solidarity is "like a pebble cast on the calm surface of a river, the circles begin in the center, and are small, active, and forcible, but as they depart from that point, they lose their force, and vanish into calmness." And

[48] "Federal Farmer" II, in Debate I, 255; see also "Agrippa," who argued in his fourth letter that "The idea of an uncompounded republick, on an average, one thousand miles in length, and eight hundred in breadth…is in itself an absurdity, and contrary to the whole experience of mankind." "Agrippa" IV, in Debate I, 450.

because 'Americans' shared so little in common, the very idea of 'national' solidarity was no more plausible than a universal human affinity.

> The strongest principle of union resides within our domestic walls. The ties of the parent exceed that of any other; as we depart from home, the next general principle of union is amongst citizens of the same state, where acquaintance, habits, and fortunes, nourish affection, and attachment; enlarge the circle still further, &, as citizens of different states, though we acknowledge the same national denomination, we lose the ties of acquaintance, habits, and fortunes, and thus, by degrees, we lessen in our attachments, till, at length, we no more than acknowledge a sameness of species.[49]

Of course, few other participants in the ratification debate (if any) made this connection as explicitly as Cato. At the same time, the vast majority, Federalist and Anti-Federalist alike, seem to have accepted his basic premise—that the American people, lacking "ties of acquaintance, habits, and fortunes," had nothing more in common with each other than their humanity. And this, in turn, should have compelled them to take seriously Cato's warning—using language that would become quite familiar later—that a united American republic would "in its exercise, emphatically be, like a house divided against itself."[50]

The challenge facing the Constitution's republican defenders, then, was a colossal one. In order to show that a united American state could operate as a republic—that it could generate enough passion in the people to motivate them to act, against their own immediate interest, to compel their leaders to promote a "common good"—they needed to show, first, that it was even possible to generate solidarity among "a people" that shared nothing more in common than their humanity; and second, that such a people would have some discernible "good" in common. Cato, of course, concluded that the

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[49] "Cato" III, in Debate I, 217-18.
[50] Ibid., 215.

task was impossible: "Is it therefore," he asked, "from certainty like this, reasonable to believe, that inhabitants of Georgia, or New-Hampshire, will have the same obligations towards you as your own, and preside over your lives, liberties, and property, with the same care and attachment? Intuitive reason, answers in the negative."[51] Many of his pro-Federalist adversaries appear to have agreed. Rather than taking up Cato's challenge, one by one the Constitution's leading defenders copped out: John Jay contented himself with paeans to organic unity that few took seriously; Hamilton and Webster (as well as George Washington) prayed for unity in the future; and James Wilson disingenuously slipped vague references to "the people" into speeches that otherwise described Americans as "heterogeneous."[52] It was left to Madison, then, to develop a workable theory for a cosmopolitan republic; and it was this task that occupied the bulk of his speeches and writings in the Constitutional era.[53]

Neither "Nationalist" nor "Pluralist," but Cosmopolitan

Students of eighteenth-century American political thought have long recognized the cosmopolitan moment implicit in the pro-Federalist defense of the Constitution, and

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[51] Ibid., 218.

[52] On Wilson's conception of the "American people," see James Read, *Power versus Liberty: Madison, Hamilton, Wilson and Jefferson* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia, 2000). A conception of "the people" as single and united, Read observes, is necessarily implicit in Wilson's appeal to popular sovereignty (17-18, 105)—but Wilson rarely if ever explains the nature of that unity. M.N.S. Sellers concludes from this that Wilson defended the Constitution only insofar as he believed it established a confederacy. Sellers, *American Republicanism*, 174.

[53] It is worth noting that Cato's third letter was published in the *New York Journal* on October 25, 1787; Madison's first contribution to the *Federalist Papers* appeared in early November, very shortly thereafter. Madison, then, may well have had Cato III in mind, as well as Brutus I (published in the *Journal* on October 18), when he sat down to write *Federalist 10*. See Emery G. Lee, "Representation, Virtue, and Political Jealousy in the Brutus-Publius Dialogue," *Journal of Politics* 59: 4 (November 1997): 1073-1095, for a persuasive argument that *Federalist 10* was written, at least in part, as a response to Brutus I.

Madison's own political thought in particular.[54] Gordon Wood characterizes the ratification debate in part as a struggle between Anti-Federalist "localism" and pro-Federalist "cosmopolitanism"; more narrowly, John Samples describes Madison as "a citizen of the world and a student of all of human history."[55] Madison, indeed, could hardly have helped himself in this regard: as the star pupil of John Witherspoon, who introduced the Scottish Enlightenment to American education, he would naturally have developed an affinity for the Enlightenment's cosmopolitan sensibility—as well as its theory of world history (which both he and Hamilton exploited in the *Federalist*) as the universal (and universally applicable) expression of human nature.[56] This background, and this sensibility, reflected itself in Madison's practical politics as well, particularly at the pivotal moment of 1787. As Rogers Smith notes, Madison in Philadelphia led the charge (unsuccessfully) against Gouverneur Morris's attempt to impose a citizenship requirement for high office (the better to exclude "those Citizens of the World" who had

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[54] Indeed, to the extent that scholars define "cosmopolitanism" as a lifestyle rather than a worldview, students of the Founding—those influenced by Charles Beard, in particular—have actually overemphasized its importance. Robert Shalhope, for one, describes Madison partly in terms of his "cosmopolitanism," but he defines the term economically: a "cosmopolitan" was a wealthy "merchant, trader, lawyer, (or) commercial farmer" who lived along the Atlantic coast and had a more extensive view of the world than the "localists" of the American interior. In keeping with the common anti-cosmopolitan stereotype, Shalhope characterizes these "cosmopolitans" largely as anti-democratic elitists. Shalhope, *The Roots of Democracy*, 94, 102. (Alan Gibson adopts the same conception of cosmopolitanism in his introduction to *Understanding the Founding*.) Ironically, Madison really was not a cosmopolitan in this sense: not only did he rarely travel outside the U.S., his speeches and writings belie a far greater appreciation for the "localists" of the interior than this characterization of him gives him credit for having. As Lance Banning points out, Madison recognized the importance of the American West as part of "a larger vision that associated the Confederation's western growth with nothing less than the emergence of a common nationality for the United States." He expressed this vision, specifically, in a 1785 letter to Lafayette which emphasizes the "consanguinity" (that word again) of the eastern planters and merchants with the Americans of the rugged interior—far from the anti-democratic elitist regional snobbery ascribed to him by this conception of "cosmopolitanism." Though Madison would later downplay this nationalistic view of American unity in favor of one that emphasizes a deeper heterogeneity, his commitment to the interior never really faded. Madison, Letter to Lafayette, in *Writings*, 25; Banning, *Sacred Fire of Liberty*, 58.

[55] Wood, *Creation*, 511; Samples, *James Madison and the Future of Limited Government* (Washington, DC: Cato Institute, 2002), 6.

[56] On Madison's education, see Ralph Ketcham, *James Madison* (New York: Macmillan, 1971).

no local affinities).[57] Such a policy was entirely in line with Madison's commitment—another product of his Enlightenment influence—to "the claims of justice" and "the rights of humanity," not to mention his conception of America, and his home state in particular, as "an Asylum to the persecuted and oppressed of every Nation and Religion."[58] It was consistent, too, with his belief that the compound republic, the political unification of heterogeneous factions across a wide geographic sphere, was not only the key to American unity, but also the key to "universal peace" and the restoration of human unity. "In cases where it may be doubtful on which side justice lies," he contended in *Federalist 43*,

> what better umpires could be desired by two violent factions, flying to arms and tearing a State to pieces, than the representatives of confederate States, not heated by the local flame? To the impartiality of judges, they would unite the affection of friends. Happy would it be if such a remedy for its infirmities could be enjoyed by all free governments; if a project equally effectual could be established for the universal peace of mankind![59]

John Tomasi concludes from this (rightly, I believe) that Madison in 1787 understood the Union partly as a means of establishing "governance beyond the nation state"—a way to unite individuals who shared little in common, or even viewed each other as adversaries, without resorting to Hobbesian force. Madison's generation did not

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[57] Smith, *Civic Ideals* (New Haven, CT: Yale, 1997), 128-29.
[58] *Federalist 43*, 286; "Memorial and Remonstrance Against Religious Assessments," in *Writings*, 33.
[59] *Federalist 43*, 283; he would make a similar argument again in "Universal Peace," published in Philip Freneau's *National Gazette* in 1792. *Writings*, 505-08. Madison's argument here is most commonly associated with Kant's "Perpetual Peace," but it was a popular one among leading American intellectuals as well, even before the publication of that essay. Benjamin Franklin, notably, was so impressed by an essay entitled *A Project of Universal and Perpetual Peace*, written by an unknown and relatively uneducated man named Pierre-André Gargaz, that he had the essay printed and distributed for free from his own private press. The essay, which proposes a UN-style "perpetual Congress" of all states (with representatives appointed by their respective monarchs), is dedicated—in a nice sentence that sums up both the utopian universalism of the age and the limits of which it was hopelessly unaware—"To every Individual who is truly the friend of the whole human race and thoroughly zealous for the glory and the happiness of all the Sovereigns and Nations of Europe." Gargaz, *A Project of Universal and Perpetual Peace* (New York: G. S. Eddy, 1922), 9.

use the modern-day phrase "nation-state," of course, but Tomasi's point is still apt: Madison explicitly viewed his institutional scheme as a way to unite several 'nations' (as we understand the word today) into one political-legal entity, while simultaneously maintaining the *egalitarian* democratic accountability—government "of, by, and for the people," without giving special access to one particular faction—that republican theory demanded.[60]

With respect to the nature of American 'peoplehood,' however, scholars generally do not regard Madison as a cosmopolitan—that is, as someone who grounded American solidarity in a common human unity. Rather, they interpret him either as a "nationalist" who saw the American people as united and distinct, or as a hyper-liberal "pluralist" who denied that there could be an American 'people' but argued, *contra* the Anti-Federalists, that republicanism didn't require one (or was better off without one). Madison has been pigeonholed into these two categories partly as a result of the liberal-centric approach to American political thought: since liberalism tends either to assume *national* unity or to

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[60] Tomasi, "Governance Beyond the Nation-State: James Madison on Foreign Policy and 'Universal Peace,' in *James Madison and the Future of Limited Government*, ed. John Samples (Washington, DC: Cato Institute, 2002), 213-228. See also Carl Van Doren, *The Great Rehearsal* (New York: The Viking Press, 1948), which draws an explicit parallel between the Constitution and the UN charter and characterizes the success of 1787 as a model for global unification. Tomasi, "Governance," 217.

The importance of egalitarian accountability, incidentally, cannot be understated: the Constitution meets the conditions of republican government not only because it provides for popular control of the three branches of government (albeit to varying degrees), but also because—theoretically, at least—every faction and state possesses an equal portion of that control (albeit by varying definitions of 'equality'). European empires, of course, had already united multiple nations together under the same political institutions; from a republican perspective, however, those empires suffered not only from a lack of democratic accountability but also from the degree to which they favored particular nations over others. (The Hapsburg empire, e.g., generally privileged the Austrian interest over that of other national entities; the same was true—for that matter, the same *is* true—of the Russian empire.) This, indeed, was one of the Anti-Federalists' chief concerns, and one of the primary reasons for their obsession with size: states that were closer to the seat of government, they feared, would have far more of a voice in its affairs than states that were further removed. Madison, incidentally, shared these fears, as evidenced by his assertion in *Federalist 14* that the proper size of a republic was limited by "that distance from the center which will barely allow the representatives of the people to meet as often as may be necessary for the administration of public affairs" (142). Later, he objected strongly to the (unsuccessful) efforts of Northern representatives to move the national capital to Pennsylvania for precisely this reason. Banning, *Sacred Fire of Liberty*, 304-05.

deny the need for 'unity' at all,[61] Madison's readers often conclude that he must have adopted one approach or the other. As John Gunnell puts it, there were only "two answers" available to the dilemma of 1787: either "there is, at least latently or potentially, an American people," or "a people as such, that is, an actual community as traditionally conceived, is not necessary."[62] As scholars have long recognized, though, Madison does not fit neatly into either category. Many, of course, have concluded from this that Madison was inconsistent or disingenuous—or, more cleverly, that he was a "complex" nationalist who held that "Nationhood need not be all-or-nothing but can exist in varying degrees."[63] A fuller understanding of Madison's conception of American 'peoplehood,' however, requires us to transcend this false dichotomy—to recognize that Madison was neither nationalistic nor pluralistic, but something else entirely.

The common reading of Madison as pluralist is motivated primarily by the heavy emphasis (some say overemphasis) scholars tend to place on *Federalist 10*[64]—which, far

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[61] See my discussion in Chapter 1.

[62] Gunnell, *Imagining the American Polity: Political Science and the Discourse of Democracy* (University Park, PA: Penn State, 2004), 15.

[63] James H. Read, *Power versus Liberty*, 45. Less clever, I think, is the reverse conclusion—that Madison was a pluralist who insisted that government should promote a public good. See, e.g., Dwight Kiel, "The Founders, Woodrow Wilson, and the Public Good," in *The Federalists, the Antifederalists, and the American Political Tradition*, eds. Wilson Carey McWilliams and Michael T. Gibbons (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1992), 93. Such a conclusion is problematic because it skirts the basic issue—namely, the difficulty of promoting a "public good" in a republic, which depends on the willingness of individuals to participate (i.e. to reject the selfish inclination to free-ride), if individuals lack a sense of attachment or duty to the state or their fellow citizens. See Keith Dougherty, "Madison's Theory of Public Goods," in *James Madison: The Theory and Practice of Republican Government*, ed. Samuel Kernell (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford, 2003), 41. One way around this, of course, is to define "public good" in terms of the (equal) protection of *individual* rights; see Tom G. Palmer, "Madison and Multiculturalism: Group Representation, Group Rights, and Constitutionalism," in *James Madison and the Future of Limited Government*, ed. John Samples (Washington, DC: Cato Institute, 2002), 72-73. Such a move, however, overtly rejects the (nationalistic) conception of a collective sentiment—and thus abandons (for better or worse) the attempt to reconcile pluralism with nationalism.

[64] The heavy focus on *Fed 10* originates with Charles Beard. Interestingly, historians of American political thought prior to Beard typically characterized Madison as a lesser thinker—partly because the half-century before 1910 was the high point of American nationalism, and Madison's thought was not compatible with the zeitgeist. (Partly too, though, because many of his better contributions to the *Federalist* had been mistakenly ascribed to Hamilton.) Iain McLean, "Before and After Publius: The Sources and Influence of

from appealing to a common national sentiment, appears to assume that such a sentiment is incompatible with human nature. The scourge of "popular governments," Madison asserts at the outset of that essay, is the inescapable presence of "factions," groups of selfish individuals "united and actuated" to promote a common "passion or interest" whose realization would violate the "rights of other citizens" or the "permanent and aggregate interests of the community."[65] Factions are inescapable in part because diversity is inescapable: even in the tiniest, seemingly most homogeneous communities, different individuals will have different material interests, different opinions on public questions, and therefore different "sentiments and views." Compounding this is the natural human inclination to selfishness: the "connection" between our "reason" and our "self-love" (as anyone with a passing interest in American politics already knows) leads us inexorably to conclude that the 'right' course of action is the one that coheres with our own prior interests and opinions. Not only are we selfish, in other words; we act selfishly even when we try to be objective and other-regarding. Our "passions" have such a profound effect on our rational faculty that we are incapable of seeing how our actions violate the rights of others or the good of all.[66] "The latent causes of faction," Madison concludes, "are thus sown in the nature of man": human reason is so deeply wrapped up in self-promotion that we act selfishly, at others' expense, even when we try to avoid doing so.[67] Trying to eradicate faction, consequently, is a quixotic quest: the only way to achieve the ends of republican government is through "controlling its *effects*."[68]

Madison's Political Thought," in *James Madison: The Theory and Practice of Republican Government*, ed. Samuel Kernell (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford, 2003), 27-28.
[65] *Federalist 10*, 122-23.
[66] Ibid., 123-24.
[67] Ibid., 124.
[68] Ibid., 125.

Assuming that individuals will act selfishly (or from a false 'sympathy,' which amounts to the same thing), Madison contends that the extended republic is best equipped to realize (or approximate) the "public good," if only because a single faction in a large and heterogeneous society will never attain the majority necessary to implement its "sinister views."[69] In this way, he asserts, the Constitution provides a "republican remedy"—that is, a majoritarian remedy—"for the diseases most incident to republican government."[70] In so doing, however, Madison appears to abandon the idea that free communities require a sense of peoplehood or a mutual affinity; indeed, if anything, he dismisses these as dangerous illusions, arguing instead that the Constitution works only because it creates a republic so large that solidarity is impossible. For this reason, John Patrick Diggins concludes, Madison's political theory is best understood as a Lockean "liberal pluralism" that renders "inessential" the values of "participation and patriotism" and consciously leaves America "without a sense of national purpose."[71] Numerous scholars agree, based largely on this reading of *Federalist 10*; indeed, in many cases, they assert Madison's "liberal pluralism" as an established fact.[72]

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[69] Ibid., 125. Following C. B. MacPherson, who characterizes Madison's institutional scheme in *Fed 10* as a "pluralist elitist equilibrium model," Richard K. Matthews notes that, while Madison never abandons the belief that there *is* such a thing as a "common good," he never argues that factional competition will produce anything more than "equilibrium"—an approximation of the common good, but not (necessarily) the thing itself. Matthews, *If Men Were Angels: James Madison and the Heartless Empire of Reason* (Lawrence, KS: Kansas, 1995), 85; MacPherson, *Life and Times of Liberal Democracy* (New York: Oxford, 1979), 77.
[70] Ibid., 128.
[71] Diggins, *The Lost Soul of American Politics*, 5, 65.
[72] This, at the height of the liberal-republican conflict in the 1970s and 80s, generated a debate over whether Madison's "Lockean liberalism"—postulated as a given—represented a "rejection of republicanism," as J. G. A. Pocock believed, or merely a rejection of *classical* republicanism, as Thomas Pangle asserted. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, 522; Thomas Pangle, "The *Federalist Papers'* Vision of Civic Health and the Tradition Out of Which That Vision Emerges," 592. See also Wood, *Creation*; Paul F. Bourke, "The Pluralist Reading of James Madison's Tenth *Federalist*," *Perspectives in American History* 9 (1975): 271-299; James Conniff, "The Enlightenment and American Political Thought: A Study of the Origins of Madison's Federalist Number Ten," *Political Theory* 8:3 (August 1980): 381-402; David F. Epstein, *The Political Theory of* The Federalist (Chicago: University of Chicago1984); John

Upon closer inspection, however, it becomes evident that Madison is actually acutely aware of the need for a "communion of interests and sympathy of sentiments" bonding a people together as a *people* and generating a sense of public duty in their leaders.[73] To be sure, Madison never abandoned the suspicion of human nature he expressed in *Federalist 10*, nor did he waver far from his defense of the heterogeneous republic as a solution to the problem of faction (if not faction itself).[74] But nor did Madison abandon his republican roots: not only did he maintain (even in *Federalist 10*[75]) that a common "public good" exists in even the largest political societies; he also insisted, throughout his career, that the survival of a true republic depends on the "virtue" of its people—and, by extension, the sense of attachment they feel to their community

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Zvesper, "The Madisonian Systems," *Western Political Quarterly* 37 (1984): 236-256; Pangle, *The Spirit of Modern Republicanism* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1988); and Paul Rahe, *Republics Ancient and Modern*, for varying takes on this question—all of which assume, to varying degrees, that Madison's approach is essentially pluralistic in nature. More recent historians—now that the "republican synthesis" view has become increasingly accepted—now assert that Madison's pluralism (which they still take for granted) is compatible with republicanism; see Bill Brugger, *Republican Theory in Political Thought* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), 91.

[73] *Federalist 57*, 345.

[74] Madison's suspicion of human nature reasserts itself again, even more famously, in his discussion of checks and balances in *Federalist 51*: "If men were angels, no government would be necessary," etc. (319). The extended republic was even more of a stock argument: as early as 1785, in the midst of his fight against the establishment of a state church in Virginia, Madison was extolling the virtues of diversity and heterogeneity. To his fellow Virginians he contrasted the "moderation and harmony" produced by religious diversity to the "torrents of blood" produced by establishment in Europe; to Lafayette, simultaneously, he argued that the "chances of a dangerous union" of states would be lowered by admitting more states to the Union. "Memorial and Remonstrance Against Religious Assessments," in *Writings*, 34; letter to Lafayette, ibid., 27. By 1787 the extended republic had become almost a mantra: he defended it explicitly in the Philadelphia Convention, in a piece entitled "Vices of the Political System of the United States," and—most notably—in a private letter to Jefferson in October, in which he expanded on the inevitability of heterogeneity and concluded that the extended sphere was "the only policy, by which a republic can be administered on just principles." Letter to Jefferson, in ibid., 151; speech on factions, ibid., 92-93; "Vices of the Political System," ibid., 76-80.

[75] Madison contends in *Fed 10* that factions are evil not because they destroy the "public good," but because they *prevent* it from being realized.

and to each other.[76] "I go on this great republican principle," he declared in the Virginia ratifying convention,

> that the people will have virtue and intelligence to select men of virtue and wisdom. Is there no virtue among us? If there be not, we are in a wretched situation. No theoretical checks—no form of government will render us secure. To suppose that any form of government will secure liberty or happiness without any virtue in the people, is a chimerical idea.[77]

Even the pessimistic Madison of *Federalist 10*, indeed, recognizes the importance of public virtue and maintains that human nature—selfish as it often is—is by no means incompatible with it.[78] The chief advantage of the extended republic, after all, is not its propensity for frustrating the formation of majority factions, but rather its propensity for producing "enlightened statesmen"—individuals intelligent enough to discern the true "public good" and virtuous enough to pursue it.[79] As Madison makes clear, though, the

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[76] See David J. Siemers, *Ratifying the Republic: Antifederalists and Federalists in Constitutional Time* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford, 1986), 98, 110. Siemers emphasizes the fact that Madison still assumes the existence of a "common good," even in *Federalist 10*, even while recognizing the "lack of connectedness between groups" (98).

[77] Speech on the Judicial Power, in *Writings*, 398.

[78] Morton White, *Philosophy*, The Federalist, *and the Constitution* (New York: Oxford, 1987), 99-100; Richard Sinopoli, *The Foundations of American Citizenship* (New York: Oxford, 1992), 20.

[79] This is first on his list of the advantages of an extended republic; the fact that heterogeneity prevents the formation of majority factions is second. *Federalist 10*, 124-27; Banning, *The Sacred Fire of Liberty*, 209-16. Madison's concept of the "enlightened statesman" in *Fed 10* relies heavily on virtue: what makes a statesman "enlightened," after all, is his willingness to set aside his own material interests (which, as representatives are not "philosopher kings," he will necessarily possess) and promote the common interest (truly discerned) of the community at large. Selfish drives—ambition, power, "fame," and the like—may well motivate individuals to pursue public lives, but self-interest alone will not produce an enlightened statesman: he must also feel an "intimate sympathy" with the community, a feeling beyond mere selfishness that impels him expressly to promote the common good. After all—as republican theory had recognized since its beginnings—a sufficiently skilled manipulator, a Callicles, will have little difficulty persuading a body politic that his selfish goals ("what's good for General Motors…") are their common needs ("…is what's good for America"). The extended republic is a necessary check, but not a sufficient one, on that scary possibility. A second necessary check is a healthy public spirit among the representatives—which, in turn, requires a healthy (if less developed) public spirit among those who elect them in the first place. *Federalist 49*, 314. (A third check, incidentally, rests in the size of the representative body: make the legislature too large, Madison argues in *Federalist 55*, and even a room full of Socratii would turn quickly into a "mob.") See Banning, *Jefferson and Madison* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1995), 64-73; Emery G. Lee, "Representation, Virtue, and Political Jealousy," 1074, 1082; Gary Rosen, *American Compact: James Madison and the Problem of Founding* (Lawrence, KS: Kansas, 1999), 84-85; Brugger, *Republican Theory in Political Thought*. For an alternate view, see Wood, *Creation*, 475; W. Carey McWilliams, *The Idea of Fraternity in America* (Berkeley: University of

elevation of "enlightened statesmen" requires not only a proper institutional structure, but also—for both rulers and ruled—a mutual sense of peoplehood and an "intimate sympathy" with the community.[80] Far from dismissing solidarity as unattainable or unnecessary, Madison's republican vision hinges on it: "Every man who loves peace," he declares, "every man who loves his country, every man who loves liberty ought to have it ever before his eyes that he may cherish in his heart a due attachment to the Union of America and be able to set a due value on the means of preserving it."[81]

With this in mind, a large number of scholars have tossed aside the common reading of Madison's institutional scheme; instead, following Irving Brant's monumental six-volume study, they have reinterpreted the "Father of the Constitution" as the "Father of Modern Nationalism."[82] By this reasoning, Madison's lifelong commitment to "nation building," especially in the years leading up to 1787, led him necessarily to develop a conception of an American national "people," united among themselves and somehow distinct in character from other nations and peoples.[83] Indeed, because it had been so "difficult, after the Revolution, to specify any such entity in the American polity," Madison (and Hamilton and Jay) were compelled to "invent" an American nation from

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California, 1973), 188-93; and Abraham Kupersmith, "Montesquieu and the Ideological Strain in Antifederalist Thought," in *The Federalists, the Antifederalists, and the American Political Tradition*, eds. Wilson Carey McWilliams and Michael T. Gibbons (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1992), 53. McWilliams, in particular, argues that the *Federalist* relies on "fraternal" imagery, but because "fraternity" is necessarily limited to one's intimate relations, the idea of a large-scale *national* fraternity is difficult, if not impossible, to sustain. Attempting to implement such a concept would lead, at best, to a weak 'solidarity' that was little more than an outgrowth of self-interest; at worst it would (as, indeed, it did) lead to open war.

[80] *Federalist 52*, 323-24. Harvey Mansfield comments, in line with Madison's position here, that "the Constitution uses virtue, relies on it, and attempts to call it forth both from the people at large and from the more virtuous among the people." Mansfield, "Social Science and the Constitution," in *Confronting the Constitution*, ed. Allan Bloom (Washington, DC: AEI, 1990), 413. (See also the above footnote.)

[81] *Federalist 41*, 269.

[82] Neil Riemer, *James Madison: Creating the American Constitution*, 78; Brant, *James Madison* (Indianapolis: Bobbs Merrill, 1941-1961). The other seminal Madison biography, Ralph Ketcham's *James Madison: A Biography*, also reads Madison (partly) in this light.

[83] Ketcham, *James Madison*, 91.

scratch.[84] This, more than anything else, was the *Federalist*'s contribution to the ratification debate: a unifying conception of American peoplehood that would enable the Constitution's defenders to justify a united continental "empire" in republican terms. Many scholars who call Madison a "nationalist," to be sure, are cheating, using the word to characterize his defense of stronger central ("national") institutions and skirting the pesky question of solidarity by relying implicitly—but without support—on its modern-day connotation as a particular source of 'peoplehood.'[85] But it is possible too to identify an "essentially nationalistic viewpoint" in Madison's appeal for solidarity, in the *Federalist* and elsewhere.[86] As early as 1785, the young Madison, like many in his

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[84] Gunnell, *Imagining the American Polity*, 16; Edmund Morgan, *Inventing the People: The Rise of Popular Sovereignty in England and America* (New York: Norton, 1988); Lacy K. Ford, "Inventing the Concurrent Majority: Madison, Calhoun, and the Problem of Majoritarianism in American Political Thought," *Journal of Southern History* 60: 1 (February 1994): 33.

[85] Scholars who make this move—ascribing "nationalism" to Madison by virtue of his support for stronger central institutions—include Neil Riemer, *James Madison: Creating the American Constitution*; Lance Banning, *The Sacred Fire of Liberty*, 165; Garrett Ward Sheldon, *The Political Philosophy of James Madison* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 2001), 39; Iain McLean, "Before and After Publius: The Sources and Influence of Madison's Political Thought," 24; and David Brian Robertson, "Constituting a National Interest: Madison against the States' Autonomy," in *James Madison: The Theory and Practice of Republican Government*, ed. Samuel Kernell (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford, 2003), 184-85—though Banning, at least, is explicit about the particular connotation of 'nationalism' he is employing, and concludes elsewhere that Madison was "simply not a nationalist" in other respects (14). Riemer, in particular, goes overboard, repeatedly associating Madison with "sweeping nationalism" (57, 58) and "strong nationalism" (62, 66, 72, 89, 103) before finally dubbing him (as noted above) the "Father of Modern Nationalism" (78). In fairness, though, Riemer offers further support for his more 'sweeping' claims—most notably Madison's famous appeal to "kindred blood" in *Federalist 14*, which is undeniably nationalist (in the modern sense) in nature and scope.

[86] Edward Millican, *One United People: The* Federalist Papers *and the National Idea* (Lexington, KY: Kentucky, 1990), 1. For purposes of the following discussion, I adopt Anthony Smith's definition of "national identity": "The maintenance and continual reinterpretation of the pattern of values, symbols, memories, myths and traditions that form the distinctive heritage of the nation, and the identification of individuals with that heritage and its pattern." A "nation," recall, is "a named and self-defined community whose members cultivate common myths, memories, symbols and values, possess and disseminate a distinctive public culture, reside in and identify with a historic homeland, and create and disseminate common laws and shared customs." Smith, *Chosen Peoples* (New York: Oxford, 2003), 24-25; "The Genealogy of Nations," 98. To argue that Madison is a "nationalist," by these definitions, is to argue that Madison conceives of 'America' in terms of myths, memories, symbols, values, laws, customs, culture, and territory that are "common" in themselves—shared, that is, by all—and simultaneously distinct from the myths, memories, symbols, etc., of other 'nations.'

generation,[87] had a fairly well developed sense of American nationality: he conceived of his fellow Americans, he wrote to Lafayette, as "bone of (his) bones, and flesh of (his) flesh," bound (in contrast to Europeans) by a "confederal band" and by "ties of friendship, of marriage and consanguinity."[88] Madison would employ the same language again, more famously, in *Federalist 14*, the conclusion of which reveals the "Father of Modern Nationalism" at his most (literally) sanguine:

> Hearken not to the unnatural voice which tells you that the people of America, knit together as they are by so many cords of affection, can no longer live together as members of the same family; can no longer continue the mutual guardians of their mutual happiness; can no longer be fellow-citizens of one great, respectable, and flourishing empire. …Shut your hearts against the poison which it conveys; the kindred blood which flows in the veins of American citizens, the mingled blood which they have shed in defense of their sacred rights, consecrate their Union and excite horror at the idea of their becoming aliens, rivals, enemies.[89]

Here, Madison appeals to a sense of American peoplehood grounded in a common *national* history, the Revolutionary "spirit of '76" shared exclusively by the citizens of the thirteen rebel colonies. At the conclusion of *Federalist 43*, Madison recalls the image one more time: the thirteen states will always be linked, he contends, not only by their "common interest" and the universal "rights of humanity," but also by a common historical memory, "the remembrance of the endearing scenes which are past."[90] In these two passages, Madison offers a very specific conception of American national

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[87] Ketcham, *James Madison*, 133-34.
[88] Letter to Lafayette, in *Writings*, 25. Lance Banning concludes from this that Madison "associated the Confederation's western growth with nothing less than the emergence of a common nationality for the United States." Banning, *The Sacred Fire of Liberty*, 58. (Banning, however, is somewhat inconsistent on this question: his overall conclusion is that Madison conceived of Americans not as a "single people" but as a collection of peoples in a "federation of republics." See my discussion below.)
[89] *Federalist 14*, 144.
[90] *Federalist 43*, 286. See Riemer, *James Madison: Creating the American Constitution*, who also emphasizes these two passages from *14* and *43*. Martin Diamond goes further: in *Federalist 43*, he argues (as well as *53* and *56*), Madison relies on the assumption that American culture and society will become increasingly homogeneous once the states establish a stronger political union. Diamond, *As Far as Republican Principles Will Admit* (Washington, DC: AEI, 1992), 133.

unity—one that contends that there is something shared by the American people (and only by the American people) which makes their identity as 'Americans' meaningful. That 'something,' Edmund Morgan concludes, "was the strongest force binding Americans of the Revolutionary generation together," and the only thing that enabled Americans to come together to create the "new and greater framework" of 1787 "when the old one proved unsatisfactory."[91]

Aside from those two brief passages in *Federalist 14* and *43*, however, Madison never again appeals to the American people as a "nation" in this modern sense, joined emotionally by a common set of "myths, memories, symbols and values" that set them apart from the rest of the world.[92] As John Gunnell observes, Madison's 'nationalism' was "more a symbol than a reality," ultimately "devoid of any substantive meaning"; the *Federalist* may well have had to "invent a people," but it was not a *national* people Madison was particularly concerned with inventing.[93] Nor is there any indication that the extended republic he describes in *Federalist 10* is in any way incapable of extending beyond those who share a common historical memory. The "practicable sphere" Madison describes in *Federalist 51*—the "mean extent" beyond which republican government is unsustainable—is limited only by the degree to which a "sympathy of sentiments," national or otherwise, could be guaranteed between rulers and ruled.[94] As we have already seen, though, the Founding generation as a whole "did not conceive of

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[91] Quoted in Patrice Higonnet, *Attendant Cruelties: Nation and Nationalism in American History* (New York: Other Press, 2007), 57.
[92] One very brief exception comes in *Federalist 62* and *63*, where Madison argues that the Senate, being a "select and stable" institution, supplies a "due sense of national character," without which "a republic must suffer." Even here, though, Madison does not specify what 'nationality' means: the Senate provides a unifying sense of commonality, but this could easily transcend 'national' bounds in the modern sense of the word. *Federalist 62*, 366; *Federalist 63*, 369.
[93] Gunnell, *Imagining the American Polity*, 36, 38.
[94] *Federalist 51*, 322; letter to Jefferson, in *Writings*, 151-52; *Federalist 57*, 345.

the United States as an organic moral community,"[95] and Madison was no exception: he certainly believed that republican government required a "public spirit" generated by a common feeling of peoplehood, but he also never wavered from his conviction that heterogeneity, the lack of commonality, was an unavoidable characteristic of human nature and human society. The very idea of a single, "homogeneous" American people, as he wrote to Jefferson, was "fictitious": indeed, one cannot assume homogeneity in any society of three or more.[96] To be sure—as scholars have noted since Charles Beard—Madison tended to conceive of "heterogeneity" primarily in economic, material terms.[97] As Madison knew from the debate on religious freedom, however, it was not only "interests," but also "feelings," "opinions," and "passions," that divided "a people" amongst each other.[98] The "spirit of '76" was theoretically capable of providing the unity republicanism demanded—but it could never guarantee it, not even among Americans who experienced the Revolution firsthand.[99] Moreover, the Anti-Federalists had a point: the United States from an eighteenth-century perspective was "a behemoth: fully ten

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[95] Alan Gibson, *Understanding the Founding*, 151.

[96] Presumably one cannot assume homogeneity in a nation of two, either, but the problem of majority tyranny, with which Madison was especially concerned, arises only in communities of three or more. Letter to Jefferson, in *Writings*, 150; see also Gordon Wood, *Creation*, 502. Madison, it is worth noting, made this point in the Philadelphia convention with specific regard to Americans: though he supported an even stronger central government than the one the Convention agreed upon, he nevertheless observed that "We cannot however be regarded even at this time, as one homogeneous mass, in which every thing that affects a part will affect in the same manner the whole." Speech in the Federal Convention on the Senate, in *Writings*, p. 111; see Nathan Tarcov, "The Social Theory of the Founders," in *Confronting the Constitution*, ed. Allan Bloom (Washington, DC: AEI, 1990), 178-79.

[97] See his discussion of heterogeneity in the letter to Jefferson, in *Writings*, 150; and *Federalist 10*, 124. Beard, *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution* (New York: Macmillan, 1913); Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2003); for an alternate view, see Banning, *The Sacred Fire of Liberty*, 205.

[98] Letter to Jefferson, in *Writings*, 150-51; *Federalist 10*, 124. On the influence of the debate over religious liberty in Virginia, see Banning, *The Sacred Fire of Liberty*, 130.

[99] Particularly considering John Adams's famous observation that Americans were by no means united in their experience of the Revolution, and equally divided in their opinions toward it.

times larger than any federation that had been tried in previous history."[100] The very idea that Americans could be united by anything short of the broadest possible attachments was difficult to comprehend. Consequently, as Lance Banning asserts, though Madison was occasionally "eloquent about the bonds that made Americans a single people," he could never "achieve a resolution of the interlocking questions concerning sovereignty by conceiving of it as vested in a single American people."[101] Instead, Madison conceived of American peoplehood (and, by extension, the proper structure of American government) in two ways, "federal" in one sense and "national"—but never really quite "national"—in another.[102] On the one hand, Madison viewed Americans not as a single people, but as a "federation" of several "peoples"—"knit together" by narrower geographic bonds, as well as affections generated by common "interests" and "passions"—who shared a divided sovereignty.[103] On the other, Madison also recognized the need for a unifying sense of peoplehood that could serve as a basis for common republican institutions. But the inescapable heterogeneity of human society meant that this sense of "national" peoplehood ultimately had to rest on peoplehood itself—the only source of unity and "sympathy," Madison knew, that Americans (or any body of people) could take for granted. It is for this reason that Madison in the Philadelphia convention emphasized natural *human* rights and universal principles of justice, "more perhaps than anything else," as the unifying "public good" that necessitated a unifying 'national' government.[104]

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[100] John Tomasi, "Governance Beyond the Nation State," 218-19.
[101] Banning, *The Sacred Fire of Liberty*, 44, 443.
[102] *Federalist 39*, 259.
[103] *Federalist 10*, 124; Banning, *The Sacred Fire of Liberty*, 118, 443.
[104] Madison, Speech in the Federal Convention on Factions, in *Writings*, 92; and Banning, *The Sacred Fire of Liberty*, 114. Banning correctly adds that Madison also conceived of the "public good" in terms of the

Madison, in short, ultimately accepts (if only for the sake of argument) the Anti-Federalist proposition that the 'American' people share nothing in common but their humanity.[105] But while "Cato" saw this as definitive proof that the Union could never be republican, Madison responded that humanity alone—a "public good" defined in terms of universal justice and human rights—could generate a unifying "sympathy of sentiments" strong enough to motivate both rulers and ruled to work actively for the general interest. Scholars often conclude that Madison's institutional scheme attempted to establish "popular sovereignty without a people"; more accurately, though, he simply substituted a universal, *cosmopolitan* conception of "peoplehood"—and, by extension, solidarity—for the traditional republican insistence that solidarity cannot extend beyond a severely limited scope. Madison, to put it another way, played Martha Nussbaum to Cato's Michael Walzer—championing an extended sphere of human solidarity, in defiance of the concentric-circle logic Cato employed to deny that such a thing was feasible.[106] It is this insight, perhaps more than anything else, that constitutes Madison's contribution to republican theory; and it is here that his conception of 'American' identity begins.

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economic stability and security of Americans exclusively; but Madison in the convention made it a point to emphasize universal justice as especially important. In *Federalist 43* he defines the common good in four ways: in terms of the "claims of justice," the "rights of humanity," the "common interest" of the states, and the "remembrance of endearing scenes" which connect Americans spiritually (286). In 1789, Madison proposed a Constitutional amendment which would have made the *universal* purpose of 'national' government much more explicit—a "declaration" that "government is instituted, and ought to be exercised for the benefit of the people; which consists in the enjoyment of life and liberty, with the right of acquiring and using property, and generally of pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety." In *Writings*, 441. As Lance Banning observes, this amendment would have resolved any confusion about the relationship between the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence by writing the universal rights to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" directly into the Constitution—and explicitly defining the "public good" in terms of universal human rights. Banning, *The Sacred Fire of Liberty*, 288.

[105] Whether he believed this to be true or not is debatable: *Federalist 10* and his prior letter to Jefferson indicate that he did; *Federalist 14* and his prior letter to Lafayette indicate that he did not. For my purposes here, though, this question is immaterial: what matters, ultimately, is Madison's belief that cosmopolitan solidarity *could* serve as a basis for republican government, and the extent to which his conception of American institutions relies on that scope of unity.

Conclusion

There is a serious problem, of course, with interpreting Madison—or any eighteenth-century American theorist—in cosmopolitan terms. While Madison may very well have intended to develop a universal or theoretically limitless conception of American identity, that conception would have rested implicitly on the subtle (even unrealized) exclusion of women, Native Americans and blacks. Rogers Smith observes that there was very little overt "ascriptive mythologizing of American identity" in the Philadelphia convention or the *Federalist Papers*, but there was nevertheless an unspoken assumption that citizenship would, and should, be limited to propertied white men. With regard to individuals who did not fit those criteria, "the framers sought compromise via silence and ambiguity": the convention delegates generally agreed that slavery was immoral, for instance, but they were nonetheless willing to preserve it in order to placate (white voters in) the Southern states.[107] Madison, indeed, made this point explicitly in the Virginia ratifying convention, in response to George Mason: "The Southern States would not have entered into the Union of America, without the temporary permission of (the slave) trade. And if they were excluded from the Union, the consequences might be dreadful to them and to us."[108] It was Madison, too, who stuck up for the infamous "three-fifths" clause in the *Federalist Papers*—the "compromising expedient of the Constitution," he wrote in *Federalist 54*, "which regards the *slave* as divested of two

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[106] I am thinking here of Nussbaum and Walzer's exchange in Nussbaum, *For Love of Country?* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996).
[107] Smith, *Civic Ideals*, 122, 116, 133.
[108] Debate on the Slave-Trade Clause, in Debate II, 707. Madison went on to observe, in one of his more embarrassing moments, that the Constitution's protection of the slave trade was justifiable insofar as it

fifths of the *man*."[109] Neither Jefferson nor Madison, Lance Banning observes, "could commit himself wholeheartedly" to the cause of racial equality implicit in the idea of natural rights, "because they both believed that as a consequence of slavery and of color, neither blacks nor whites could ever hold for one another the fraternal feelings necessary for a viable republic." For this reason, Madison even in his most cosmopolitan moments would never fully embrace a truly all-encompassing conception of American identity.[110] What Madison does provide, however, are the means by which American identity *could* be understood in cosmopolitan terms, and an institutional framework by which a body of people linked only by their humanity could nevertheless unite under reliably republican political institutions. Thomas Jefferson, notwithstanding his own flaws, saw Madison's scheme for what it was: even as he described Americans as "brethren" with "one heart and one mind," he asserted that "the extent to which the federative principle may operate effectively" was theoretically limitless.[111] John Tomasi agrees: "people who care most about liberty in our world today," he concludes from Madison's theory, "should be not only for the minimal state, but also for the biggest state of all."[112]

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allowed Congress to prohibit it in the future;, whereas "Under the articles of Confederation, it might be continued forever." Ibid., 707.

[109] *Federalist 54*, 333. Madison is clearly uncomfortable with the argument he's making here: not only does he characterize it as "a little strained" (an understatement), he refuses even to allow the imaginary Publius to take credit for it. Instead, he places the whole argument—six long paragraphs—in quotation marks, and ascribes it to "one of our Southern brethren." *Federalist 54*, 332-34. Lest this be taken as evidence of Madison's progressivism on the issue, the argument he poses as a counterpoint is not that slaves are fully human and deserve to be treated as such, but rather that slaves, being "considered as property, not as persons," ought not to be counted at all. Ibid., p. 331. See William Lee Miller's discussion of *Federalist 54* in Chapter 12 of *The Business of May Next: James Madison and the Founding* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia, 1992).

[110] Banning, *Jefferson and Madison*, 90.

[111] Jefferson, "First Inaugural Address," in *The Portable Thomas Jefferson*, 291; "Second Inaugural Address," in ibid., 318. See Peter Onuf, *Jefferson's Empire: The Language of American Nationhood* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia, 2000).

[112] Tomasi, "Governance Beyond the Nation State," 226.

But while Madison, committed as he was to the republican tradition, recognized the need for solidarity, his own writings and speeches of the Founding period were more concerned with establishing effective institutions than with generating a proper sentiment in the people. The *Federalist Papers* may be an intelligent commentary on government, but it offers a limited discussion of mutual human "affection," an inescapably necessary component of popular institutions; as John Patrick Diggins rightly argues, the *Federalist* leaves one "without a sense of national purpose."[113] It was left to future commentators, then, to develop a conception of peoplehood capable of uniting Americans spiritually as well as politically. Most of those who took up the challenge, in the first decades of U.S. history, tended to describe 'Americans' as a homogeneous nation in the modern sense, rather than the cosmopolitan people Madison seems to have assumed in his Founding-era writings.[114] But the cosmopolitan conception of American identity would assert itself again, at the peak of the so-called "age of nationalism," in the Transcendentalist writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Walt Whitman—who would craft a decidedly cosmopolitan "story of peoplehood" to complement Madison's institutional scheme.

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[113] Diggins, *The Lost Soul of American Politics*, 5; see also McWilliams, *The Idea of Fraternity in America*, ch. 8.
[114] Robert Dahl, *Pluralist Democracy in the United States* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1967), 73.

Chapter 5

Emerson, Whitman, and the 'American' Over-Soul

At the outset of the twentieth century, surprisingly few Americans recognized Ralph Waldo Emerson as an emblematic figure, or even a particularly important one, in the history of American political philosophy. Emerson's star had waned; even worse, the America he loved, the Jeffersonian republic of self-sufficient yeoman farmers on which he based his philosophical visions, had vanished, usurped by rampant urbanization and the unstoppable progress of the industrial machine. Emerson, and the literary giants like Walt Whitman who followed so closely in his footsteps, were the remnants of a bygone age, irredeemable idealists hopelessly out of touch with the modern world. Some of the more astute American scholars knew better, of course—John Dewey, most notably, criticized the "one-sidedness and exaggeration" with which his contemporaries denigrated Emerson's philosophical legacy. Most American cultural critics, though, regarded Emerson and his fellow Transcendentalists as "high-minded weathercocks" whose philosophy had long ceased to be a "living option" (if, indeed, it ever was).[1]

All of that changed, fortunately, with the publication of F.O. Matthiessen's monumental *American Renaissance* in 1941. Matthiessen was by no means alone in resurrecting the Emersonian tradition; the Transcendentalists' historical reputation had been steadily growing since hitting its nadir at the turn of the century. Nevertheless,

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[1] John Dewey, "Emerson—The Philosopher of Democracy," *International Journal of Ethics*, 13: 4 (July 1903): 408; Charles Capper, "'A Little Beyond': The Problem of the Transcendentalist Movement in American History," *The Journal of American History*, 85: 2 (September 1998): 510, 507. (Capper is quoting Van Wyck Brooks, *America's Coming-of-Age* [New York: B. W. Huebsch, 1915] and William James, *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy* [London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1897], respectively.)

American Renaissance, which emphasized Emerson's legacy to the exclusion of all other competing traditions, marked a turning point in our understanding of American literary history. Before Matthiessen, the seminal figures in American literature were Longfellow, Whittier, and Lowell; after Matthiessen, these writers dropped from the canon altogether. Emerson, Hawthorne, Melville and Whitman became—in retrospect—the defining figures of nineteenth-century America, so much so that today's leading historians take it for granted.[2] Judith Shklar characterizes Emerson as "the quintessential American scholar," while an otherwise critical W. Carey McWilliams describes Walt Whitman as the "supremely American poet."[3]

But to the extent that we interpret American political thought—especially nineteenth-century American political thought—entirely in terms of the liberal democratic tradition, this classification places serious limits (thanks partly, again, to Matthiessen) on how Emerson and Whitman are read and understood. To understand the Emersonians as the defining figures of nineteenth-century America, then, is necessarily to understand them, often exclusively, in liberal democratic terms. Consequently, the best recent scholarship on Emerson and Whitman emphasizes their roles as "democratic individualists"—to the exclusion, in most cases, of other characteristics, characteristics which are no less central to their respective works. This is true not only with respect to historical and literary scholarship, but also (indeed, particularly) with respect to political theory, where our understanding of the Emersonians still lags behind our understanding

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[2] Capper, "'A Little Beyond,'" 521-523; F.O. Matthiessen, *American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Thoreau* (New York: Oxford, 1941); Eric Cheyfitz, "Matthiessen's American Renaissance: Circumscribing the Revolution," *American Quarterly*, 41: 2 (June 1989): 342.
[3] Judith Shklar, "Redeeming American Political Theory," *American Political Science Review* 85: 1 (March 1991): 10; W. Carey McWilliams, *The Idea of Fraternity in America* (Berkeley: University of California, 1973).

of the Founders. Judith Shklar's work on Emerson, for instance, emphasizes the friction between the democratic and aristocratic tendencies in his thought—the extent to which he struggled to reconcile the Great Man with "the democratic faith." More recently, Thomas Augst has analyzed Emerson as a means of reconciling democracy with philosophy more generally.[4] And George Kateb, perhaps the leading Emerson authority among active political theorists, has emphasized "democratic individualism" as the defining feature of Emerson's philosophy.[5] The work of Shklar, Augst, and Kateb represents an invaluable contribution to Emerson scholarship, a category otherwise dominated (for better or worse) by historians and literary critics. All, however, situate their discussions entirely within the bounds of liberal democratic theory. Outside that narrow scope, Emerson has been largely ignored: despite the breadth of his philosophy, political theorists have pigeonholed him into a single category. Beyond this, Emerson is entirely neglected: we neither respect nor disrespect him, because it never crosses our minds to consider him.

Walt Whitman—perhaps Emerson's greatest disciple—has suffered a similar fate, though Whitman, even more than Emerson, consciously makes himself impossible to categorize. Infusing every line of *Leaves of Grass* with deliberate twists and self-contradictions, he presents himself as simultaneously the poet of lonely individualism and the poet of close personal affection; an elitist aesthete and a rugged man of the people; a jingoistic patriot and a cosmopolitan visionary; a radical libertarian and a radical egalitarian; a traditionalist and a revolutionary; an idealist and a materialist; an urban New Englander and a Western pioneer; a Northerner and a Southerner; a man and a

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[4] Ibid. 10; Shklar, "Emerson and the Inhibitions of Democracy," *Political Theory* 18: 4 (November 1990): 601-614; Thomas Augst, "Composing the Moral Senses: Emerson and the Politics of Character in Nineteenth-Century America," *Political Theory*, 27: 1 (February 1999): 85-120.
[5] George Kateb, *Emerson and Self-Reliance* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1995).

woman; an American and a "kosmos." To describe him as simply a democrat—to describe him as simply anything—is necessarily to miss the point.

> Do I contradict myself?
> Very well then….I contradict myself,
> I am large….I contain multitudes.[6]

Even here, though, political theorists rarely consider Whitman outside the narrow scope of democratic theory. In fairness, this narrow approach to Whitman is not entirely without merit; after all, Whitman often described himself first and foremost as a democrat ("For you these from me, O Democracy…for you I am trilling these songs"[7]). As with Emerson, though, scholars hitherto have sought to understand Whitman *entirely* in these terms—an approach that renders us unable, as I have contended, to fully comprehend his larger place in American political thought (and political thought in general).

This does not mean, fortunately, that scholars have entirely neglected the relationship of the 'American Renaissance' to the question of American solidarity. However, because the nineteenth century was the age of Romantic nationalism as well as the age of democracy, such scholars have argued primarily that the 'American Renaissance' was an essentially nationalistic cultural movement—that Emerson was concerned primarily with declaring cultural independence from Europe (the purpose often ascribed to his famous "American Scholar" essay), and that Whitman's poetry was marked (or marred) by a persistent, incessant jingoism. Kateb, for instance—also the preeminent Whitman scholar among political theorists—has characterized Whitman as a

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[6] Walt Whitman, *Poetry and Prose* (hereafter PP), ed. Justin Kaplan (New York: Library of America, 1996), 87. I quote every poem as it appeared in the original 1855 edition of *Leaves of Grass*; if the poem did not appear in the 1855 edition, I quote it as it appears in the 'deathbed' edition of 1891. (This is the most commonly cited version of *Leaves of Grass*; Whitman himself declared it to be the 'definitive' version. Whitman scholars, however, generally agree that the 1855 version is far superior in quality.)
[7] Ibid., 272.

nationalist as well as a democrat (the worse, Kateb argues, for democracy), and Kenneth Cmiel emphasized Whitman's Websterian desire (never realized) to create a uniquely American language, distinct from British English. Samuel Beer, in contrast, emphasizes Whitman's universality, as does McWilliams; responding directly to Kateb, Beer argues that Whitman (in true Emersonian fashion) finds unity in diversity itself.[8] But Beer and McWilliams are exceptions: for the most part, the scholarly literature on Emerson and Whitman (Whitman in particular) defines them primarily as cultural and political nationalists—when, indeed, it considers their relationship to the solidarity question at all.

The purpose of this chapter, by contrast, is to suggest that the Emersonians—or, more specifically, Emerson and Whitman—are best understood not as nationalists with respect to American solidarity, but rather as cosmopolitans. More accurately, Emerson and Whitman identified cosmopolitan solidarity—the affinity for all human beings, on the basis of shared humanity—as the particular solidarity that could best serve to bond Americans to each other in a united republican community. That Emerson was a *moral* cosmopolitan is generally accepted: this is, after all, the man who famously declared that "There is one mind common to all individual men," regardless of race or place, at the outset of his *Essays*. On Whitman there is considerably more debate: McWilliams criticizes him for being *too* universalistic, while Kateb and Cmiel emphasize his more exclusive, jingoistic tendencies. As with Emerson, though, Whitman's universalism—or

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[8] George Kateb, "Democratic Individuality and the Claims of Politics," *Political Theory* 12: 3 (August 1984): 331-360; Kateb, "Walt Whitman and the Culture of Democracy," *Political Theory* 18: 4 (November 1990): 545-571; Kenneth Cmiel, "'A Broad Fluid Language of Democracy': Discovering the American Idiom," *The Journal of American History* 79: 3 (December 1992): 932; Samuel H. Beer, "Liberty and Union: Walt Whitman's Idea of the Nation," *Political Theory* 12: 3 (August 1984): 361-386. Cf. also Albert Haworth Jones, "The Search for a Usable American Past in the New Deal Era," *American Quarterly* 23: 5 (December 1971): 710-724; Jones observes that an entire generation of New Deal-era intellectuals identified Whitman as one of the "highest incarnations" of the American spirit—in part because of his

at least his universalistic ambitions—are not in question. Remarkably, though—largely for the reasons I describe above—students of Emerson and Whitman have rarely emphasized their cosmopolitan tendencies as the fundamental element in their writings. Reading the "American Renaissance" through a specifically cosmopolitan lens, however, illuminates not only the particular philosophies of Emerson and Whitman, but also the extent to which the cosmopolitan vision is central—no less central, in fact, than liberalism or democracy—to the American ethos and the formation of the American mind.

The Nationalist Impulse

That Emerson and Whitman were possessed of a cosmopolitan sensibility is by no means self-evident or intuitive. Both were relatively provincial men, American through and through: far from being "rootless" or "at home everywhere," Emerson is inescapably the philosopher of rural New England, while Whitman, despite his universal pretensions, is irrevocably connected to New York. Though both wrote favorably about traveling, neither man enjoyed straying far from home: Emerson traveled more extensively than Whitman, but his 'travel' writings were more apt to focus on his long country walks. The cosmopolitan sensibility is often equated with city life, but—notwithstanding Whitman's stirring tributes to Manhattan—both men (particularly Emerson) were more enamored of the countryside. Cosmopolitanism, likewise, is often (though mistakenly) considered the property of elite classes, but Whitman and Emerson, egalitarian democrats that they were, generally preferred the common folk (the "roughs," in Whitman's terms).[9] Most

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commitment to democracy, but also because of his rugged individualism (an ideal he *embodied*—in contrast to the elite Emerson, who *expressed* the same ideal but never *practiced* it).

[9] Though Emerson himself, of course, was no 'rough' (and, as Judith Shklar points out, not entirely egalitarian either), his ideal Jeffersonian farmer was characterized, in part, by his rough edges, his

importantly, though, Emerson and Whitman wrote for a society that was still unsure of its identity—a prepubescent American 'nation' in desperate need of a unifying character. This desperation was far greater in Whitman's time, of course, when the American Union was actively coming apart; but as we have seen, Americans have always been conscious of their diversity and aware of the potential dangers this presented. The need for a source of *national* unity, even an artificial one, was far more pressing to nineteenth-century Americans than the need (if there even *was* a need) for some esoteric connection to humanity-as-a-whole.

In the end, it had been Hamilton's argument, not Madison's, that won the day in 1787: though most elites accepted the Anti-Federalists' contention that Americans lacked any real affinity for each other, they built "national" institutions anyway on the expectation—or, rather, the hope—that the necessary solidarity would follow. And indeed it did—but only to an extent. The 1790s witnessed a veritable explosion of patriotic rituals, festivals and celebrations as Americans came together—sort of—to celebrate their independence, their defiance of the mighty British Empire, and the way in which they'd managed to "become a nation" in the face of overwhelming odds. The decade ended, fittingly enough, with the first great piece of American mythmaking—the (mostly fictional) biography of George Washington by "Parson" Mason Weems, which transformed the real-life Washington into a superhuman Founder, an American Lycurgus.

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refreshing freedom from the trappings of 'civilized' urban snobbery. Whitman, in contrast to Emerson, consciously presented himself as such a figure, introducing himself in "Song of Myself" as "Walt Whitman, one of the roughs, a kosmos." Whitman (unlike Emerson) also used *visual* devices to promote his image: the frontispiece of the 1855 *Leaves of Grass* featured a carefully designed picture of an unshaven Whitman ("Washes and razors for foofoos"), dressed in workman's clothes, staring disinterestedly at the reader with one hand on his hips. The 1855 version of *Leaves* was published anonymously (though Whitman identified himself by name in "Song of Myself"), thus presenting the reader with the notion that *Leaves of Grass* was the product of Everyman, the 'common sense' (to paraphrase Thomas Paine) of every American working man (and woman).

But the early years of U.S. history were also a time of great division and conflict: by 1820, in particular, it was abundantly clear that the splitting of factions along sectional lines posed a grave threat to the Union's future. Compounding this was the rapid emergence of diametrically opposed political parties in the immediate aftermath of ratification, a development that led even Washington to question the viability of the American experiment.[10] Scholars often characterize the growth of parties as a perversion of Madison's original vision, but the rise of Hamiltonian and Jeffersonian factions was a clear indication that the new institutions would not unite the nation as automatically as Hamilton believed they would. Madison, it turned out, had been right all along: American political discourse would proceed not on the basis of consensus, but conflict—not in terms of national unity and shared interests, but in terms of competition between warring interest groups and sectional factions. Hartz, Hofstadter, and others would eventually identify the shared values that formed the basis of political discourse, but this understanding was not available to the participants themselves. The 'revolution of 1800,' the peaceful transfer of power from party to party, reassured many Americans that the Union was stronger and more stable than it might have seemed. But this did not resolve the underlying paradox. Both republicanism and the new Romanticism insisted on the need for homogeneity; without it, a people would never develop a unified national character. But the United States, a nation founded on the republican notions of shared values and a common good, was seemingly defined by its *lack* of a common interest and governed by institutions that depended on conflict and competition for their very success. For the old guard, the American patriots who still felt the "spirit of '76," this was a

seriously troubling development—and by 1837, with the experience of the secession crisis of 1813 and the nullification crises of 1798 and 1832 still fresh in Americans' minds, it was becoming increasingly clear to many that "the first new nation" had survived fifty years largely on luck. Madison had correctly predicted that factional conflict would not rip America apart immediately; but unless the nation could find a common unifying bond, it was only a matter of time.

Consequently, Emerson's America was gripped by a nationwide identity crisis. By 1830, American intellectuals were largely united in their belief that America needed a national culture, not only to generate the unified national character Americans so sorely needed—nationalism, after all, was the dominant sentiment of the time—but also to free the American people from the cultural sovereignty of Europe.[11] For Emerson, inspired as he was by European Romanticism, this would have been an especially trenchant argument: Romanticism, after all, emphasized the autonomy of the individual will—and to the extent that one's individual identity was connected with one's nation (as the Romantics contended), this meant that individual freedom was impossible without national cultural autonomy. "The American Scholar," Emerson's 1837 challenge to the emerging intellectual elite, has always been interpreted in this context: Oliver Wendell Holmes, most famously, described it as a "second Declaration of Independence," perhaps even more important than the first. Whitman's contention, following Webster, that

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[10] Andrew Robertson, "'Look on This Picture…And on This!' Nationalism, Localism, and Partisan Images of Otherness in the United States, 1787-1820," *American Historical Review* 106: 4 (October 2001): 1263-1280.

[11] A sovereignty that made many British observers as gleeful as it made Americans nervous. As Sydney Smith put it in 1820: "In the four quarters of the globe, who reads an American book? Or goes to an American play? Or looks at an American picture or statue?" Hans Kohn, *American Nationalism* (New York: Macmillan, 1957), 52. For American observers, this was cause for great alarm—particularly given the Romantic insistence that a nation be *autonomous*—that it be free, in other words, to express its *own*

Americans needed their own unique national language belongs to this line of reasoning as well.

Thus for Emerson and Whitman, the nationalist impulse was not merely a matter of contingent need. The elements of Romanticism that so inspired Emerson—the search for an authentic identity, the vital importance of nature and history, the autonomy ("self-reliance") of the individual will—were the very elements that gave rise to nationalist sentiment in Europe in the nineteenth century.[12] To the extent that one's identity was wrapped up with one's nation—as Herder and Fichte, among many others, claimed—the demand for individual autonomy became a demand for national self-determination. Unlike the German nationalists, Emerson and Whitman emphasized individual "self-reliance" over national sovereignty; nevertheless, the bond between individual and national identity would have been evident to both men. That Emerson chose *Nature* as the subject of his first book is telling: to emphasize Nature as the source of identity is to argue that one's individual identity is inescapably bound to one's neighbors, the united community of individuals who live on, and derive their identities from, the same land. Emerson likewise recognized the importance of History, the topic with which he began his famous first series of *Essays*; as with Nature, the argument that our identities are shaped by our historical past leads to the logical conclusion that our identities as individuals are deeply connected to our respective nations.[13]

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soul. The extent to which Americans remained culturally dependent on England was the extent to which they remained under England's tyrannical claw.

[12] Anthony Smith, *The Antiquity of Nations* (Malden, MA: Polity, 2004), 246-249.

[13] Whitman, no less than Emerson, appreciated the importance of Nature and History as well, as we will see. In "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," perhaps his greatest poem, he makes the connection between national history and individual identity explicitly; staring at the Manhattan skyline, his speaker feels a sudden and deep connection with his fellow countrymen—those who share with him in the experience of staring at the Manhattan skyline. For Whitman this unifying experience transcends time itself: he becomes an integral part of a long historical stream, connecting him equally with past, present, and future.

The logical consequence of all this should be clear: given their inclinations and historical influences, we should expect the work of Emerson and Whitman to be *extremely* nationalistic, to reflect a virtual obsession with national autonomy, national history, the national landscape, and national myths.[14] That it does not—that Whitman and Emerson both find mere nationality inadequate and insist, in all their greatest works, on transcending national boundaries—is truly remarkable. Hans Kohn's classic study of *American Nationalism* finds no room for Emerson—who, given his place in history and his unparalleled affinity for Romanticism, should have been the greatest nationalist of them all. "Emerson and the transcendentalists were deeply influenced by German romantic thought," Kohn observes, but "they rejected their veneration of the nation and the nation-state." Emerson himself wrote that nationalistic fervor was "silly."[15] If these two "supremely American" writers, working at a time of great national crisis, in an intellectual context that heavily emphasized the importance of national solidarity, nonetheless became something more than mere nationalists, the reasons—and the extent to which this reflects on the development of "American" identity in the nineteenth century—are worth exploring further.

The Cosmopolitan Impulse

Ironically enough, it may have been the Romantic tradition itself that spurred Emerson and Whitman to develop their cosmopolitan sensibilities. While American

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[14] George Kateb does, at least, read Whitman in this manner: praising him for his universalistic tendencies, Kateb is sharply critical of what he perceives to be a strong nationalistic, even jingoistic, streak in Whitman's poetry and prose. There is certainly an element of truth in this critique—particularly for Whitman, whose prose preface to *Leaves of Grass* celebrates the American common man with no less fervor than Herder's celebration of the German *volk*. Indeed Whitman cites Herder favorably—not in the preface to *Leaves*, but in a later prose piece, "A Backward Glance O'er Travel'd Roads."

intellectuals (in Emerson's time, if not Whitman's) generally agreed that America needed a national culture, most also agreed that the new nation (or 'nation') was far too diverse to develop a unified national culture organically. European Romantics, like the Grimm brothers or the editors (not the authors) of the *Elder Edda* and the *Kalevala*, could appeal to existing folk traditions for their national culture; American intellectuals, on the other hand, had no such tradition to mine. (Native American folk traditions, of course, were out of the question.) If America was to develop a national culture, they concluded, it would have to be done, not from the ground up, but from the top down: American intellectuals would have to *create* a national identity, as an act of conscious will. To be sure, this is the case everywhere, not merely in America: as we observed in Chapter 2, the creation of a national identity is always an artificial product of partisan intellectuals. American nationalists, however, could not fully disguise their act of creation as an act of discovery: the success of Weems' Washington biography notwithstanding, too many Americans believed that there was no latent national identity waiting to be uncovered by some national anthropologist. Romantic philosophy, however, had always insisted on authenticity: it was not enough that a people possess a common identity; it had to be an *authentic* identity, reflective of the true nature of "the people." Artificially created identities, myths cooked up in candlelit studies by effete book-learned intellectuals, would not suffice: if Americans were to share a common character, it would have to be grounded in authentic reality and based on qualities Americans shared in common. What did Americans share in common? Therein, again, lay the rub. The constitutional ratification debate had proceeded on the shared assumption—and the ongoing conflicts of

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[15] Hans Kohn, *American Nationalism*, 59-61.

the subsequent decades had only confirmed—that America lacked the territorial, political, religious, linguistic, or cultural homogeneity necessary to unite them as a nation in the traditional sense. Likewise, the jeers of cultural critics like Sydney Smith indicated that Americans lacked a "distinct national character" as well. If Emerson and Whitman were to identify the authentic bonds that brought Americans together under the same banner, then, they needed to look beyond the mere nation, to appeal to something higher, more idealistic, and more abstract.

They needed, in short, to appeal to something like the *human*—the broadest category of all, but perhaps the only category that could legitimately, authentically, encompass all Americans. The cosmopolitan idea begins with a decent respect for the equal moral worth of each individual; a sense of universal human solidarity, not in spite of diversity but as a direct consequence of it; and a willingness to engage with other peoples and cultures, in the spirit of mutual reciprocity. All of these values, as it happens, appear prominently in the most significant works of Emerson and Whitman's respective corpora; and a proper understanding of them begins, I contend, by reading them through this lens.

Nature

Emerson, as noted above, chose Nature as the subject of his first published work—an explicit homage to the Romantics, who viewed Nature as the wellspring of authentic identity. Nature is no less important for Emerson himself; thus he is troubled by the willingness of the present age to understand nature only through the eyes of its ancestors. "Why should not we also enjoy an original relation to the universe? …The sun

shines to-day also."[16] If our identities are wrapped up in our experience of Nature, then our unwillingness to see Nature for ourselves constitutes an utter abdication of the spirit. Rather than expressing our own authentic wills (the precondition of 'self-reliance'), we subject ourselves slavishly to the wills of others. To properly understand Nature, then, is the very meaning and purpose of life itself. "There are new lands, new men, new thoughts. Let us demand our own works and laws and worship."[17]

What does it mean, then, to "see Nature"? For the German Romantics, the encounter with Nature was a visceral encounter with one's immediate surroundings—a deep emotional connection with one's homeland, not with Nature as an abstract totality. For Emerson, in contrast, Nature is incomprehensible apart from the totality: it is by definition transcendent, incapable of being limited or restricted by artificial boundaries. "Miller owns the field, Locke that, and Manning the woodland beyond. But none of them owns the landscape." To understand Nature fully, it is not sufficient merely to observe: one must also "integrate all the parts" and recognize its essential unity, its wholeness.[18] With the Romantics, Emerson holds that a true encounter with Nature is necessarily visceral—to 'see' Nature, one must be exhilarated by it—but for Emerson this exhilaration must be universal. "Not the sun or the summer alone, but every hour and season yields its tribute of delight; for every hour and change corresponds to and authorizes a different state of the mind, from breathless noon to grimmest midnight."[19]

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[16] Emerson, "Nature," in *The Essential Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (hereafter EW), ed. Brooks Atkinson (New York: Modern Library, 2000), 3.
[17] Ibid, 3.
[18] Ibid., 5. Science is insufficient, Emerson contends, for this reason: it seeks to comprehend the whole of Nature, but only to *observe* and *classify* it, nothing more. The increasingly specific classification of different natural forms is a necessary step to a complete understanding of Nature; to fully comprehend it, however, requires one to apprehend its *unity* as well—a task that requires the mind of "the poet." For this reason, Emerson concludes, "few adult persons can see nature." Ibid., 5.
[19] Ibid., 6.

The encounter with Nature is a simultaneous encounter with the whole universe, comprehended all at once; it is an encounter, in short, with the divine—and thus, Emerson concludes, the exhilaration we feel cannot be limited to specific aspects or forms, but must extend itself equally to the whole. If Nature is divine, then each of its manifestations represents a form of the divine—and the "bare common" or the dingiest "snow puddles" are no less a manifestation of God than the loveliest mountain view.

> For although the works of nature are innumerable and all different, the result or the expression of them all is similar and single. Nature is a sea of forms radically alike and even unique. A leaf, a sunbeam, a landscape, the ocean, make an analogous impression on the mind. What is common to them all—that perfectness and harmony, is beauty. The standard of beauty is the entire circuit of natural forms—the totality of nature; which the Italians expressed by defining beauty "il piu nell' uno." Nothing is quite beautiful alone; nothing but is beautiful in the whole. A single object is only so far beautiful as it suggests this universal grace.[20]

Nature thus sketches a philosophy that has at its core the cosmopolitan notion of unity and diversity as a symbiotic pair, rather than polar opposites. The recognition of variety and diversity—the "perception of differences," as Emerson characterizes it—is critical; it allows us to see the world for the great spectrum that it is, rather than some Manichean battleground between good and evil.[21]

> The wise man shows his wisdom in separation, in gradation, and his scale of creatures and of merits is as wide as nature. The foolish have no range in their scale, but suppose every man is as every other man. What is not good they call the worst, and what is not hateful, they call the best.[22]

But the encounter with Nature also forces us to recognize the underlying unity of all things: their connection to "spiritual nature,"[23] their equal share in beauty,[24] and the

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[20] Ibid., 12-13.
[21] Ibid., 20.
[22] Ibid., 20.
[23] Ibid., 21.
[24] Ibid., 12-13.

degree to which each forms an equal part of the "Universal Being."[25] "Herein is especially apprehended the unity of Nature—the unity in variety—which meets us everywhere."[26] Here too Emerson emphasizes the equality, the mutuality, and the reciprocity with which each thing-in-the-world relates to every other. In direct contrast to the nationalist worldview, Emerson concludes that there can be no fundamental or inviolable distinctions between things: nationalism cannot possibly be an 'authentic' source of solidarity, in short, because the "Universal Being" encompasses all. To 'see Nature,' Emerson contends, is thus to apprehend this essential fact of the universe.

> Standing on the bare ground—my head bathed by the blithe air and uplifted into infinite space—all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eyeball; I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or parcel of God. The name of the nearest friend sounds then foreign and accidental: to be brothers, to be acquaintances, master or servant, is then a trifle and a disturbance.[27]

Here we see not merely a cosmopolitan vision, but the cosmopolitan vision at its most extreme: the apprehension of the totality leads Emerson to the recognition that his particular circumstances are mere contingencies. This is true not only of Nature, but of the human community as well: Emerson begins his essay by drawing a distinction between Man and Nature (characterizing nature, in his introduction, as the "NOT ME"[28]), but ultimately concludes that this dualism is incorrect. Humanity is no less a part of Nature than anything else; thus each human being constitutes, no less than anyone else, a piece of that universal spirit that Emerson will later term the "Over-Soul." Emerson's friends and neighbors and countrymen have no special place in the "Universal Being"; they are not especially privileged, but share in the overall unity equally with foreigners

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[25] Ibid., 6.
[26] Ibid., 22.
[27] Ibid., 6.

and total strangers.[29] Emerson thus turns Joseph de Maistre on his head: *man* exists, but Englishmen and Frenchmen—and, presumably, Americans—do not. National identities, from this perspective, are nothing more than meaningless accidents of history.

The quest for an 'authentic identity,' then, must lead us beyond the mere nation to something more transcendent. "The highest reason," he observes, "is always the truest."[30] Emphasizing the minute differences between human beings—and using those differences to segregate men into competing national groups—is missing the point. Emerson ends *Nature* with a critique of science, which ignores the essential unity of nature in favor of increasingly specific classifications. But his conclusion applies equally well to his more nationalistic contemporaries, who sought to invent a means of distinguishing Americans (artificially, no less) from the rest of humanity. Many of those nationalists, indeed, attempted to draw that distinction through Nature itself, to identify a "superior and unique" American character that springs from the peculiar "vastness" and "variety" of the American land.[31] Some (like Jefferson in *Notes on the State of Virginia*) went even further, ascribing unique identities to different states and localities based on differences in climate and terrain. But such an approach, Emerson argued, betrays an ignorance of Nature—and thus (returning to his first point) represents an abdication of the soul. "The reason why the world lacks unity, and lies broken and in heaps," Emerson concludes, "is because man is disunited with himself."[32] Nature—which in the Romantics' hands becomes the source of national solidarity—is for Emerson the source of human solidarity.

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[28] Ibid., 4.
[29] This is the form of cosmopolitanism that is so often referred to as "bloodless" or overly abstract: the absolutely 'rootless' version that ascribes no special place to one's friends or family or countrymen.
[30] Ibid., 34.
[31] Merle Curti, *The Roots of American Loyalty* (New York: Columbia, 1946), 33; see ibid., 33-45, for further development of this point.

Recognizing the "unity in variety" of Nature allows us to appreciate the same in Man—and to resist those, like Emerson's nationalist contemporaries, who deny that unity with artificial distinctions.

History

The German Romantics identified Nature as the primary source of national character, but it was not the only one: national identity also derives from a proper sense of one's history. The earliest nationalists, no less than today's, grounded solidarity on appeals to a "golden age," a period in the distant past when the nation flourished and the greatness of its people was unchallenged. American nationalists, Anthony Smith observes, identify the "golden age" with the Founding, the simultaneous convergence of literally dozens of courageous Great Men, working together as Americans to achieve a seemingly impossible task. At the same time, America's commitment to democratic values necessarily makes the "great man" a difficult concept to process: thus for Americans the appeal to history is equally apt to take the form of an interest in genealogy, an obsession with tracing one's "roots." For Whitman, in "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," the connection with history is not an affinity with past greatness, but merely a subjective feeling of connectedness with past, present and future:

> It avails not, time nor place—distance avails not,
> I am with you, you men and women of a generation, or ever so many generations hence,
> Just as you feel when you look on the river and sky, so I felt,
> Just as any of you is one of a living crowd, I was one of a crowd,
> Just as you are refresh'd by the gladness of the river and the bright flow, I was refresh'd,
> Just as you stand and lean on the rail, yet hurry with the swift current, I

[32] Ibid., 38.

stood yet was hurried,
Just as you look on the numberless masts of ships and the thick-stemm'd
pipes of steamboats, I look'd.[33]

Here, though, the Romantic celebration of the particular history of a particular people disappears: the solidarity Whitman feels is based on shared experience, but the experiences he describes are far more general. Whitman's is not an affinity for national history, but for human history; it is the human experience, unlimited by time and space, that connects Whitman's speaker to his fellow man.[34]

Emerson places "History" at the head of his first volume of *Essays*—an indication that, like the Romantics (and, later, Whitman), he fully appreciates its importance to the human experience. As with Whitman, however, Emerson makes it clear from the outset that his subject is not the particular history of nations and peoples, but human history writ large: "There is one mind common to all individual men," and all the events of history are various expressions of that one mind.[35] History, indeed, cannot truthfully be divided into particular national strains, as the nationalist worldview holds—because "each individual man is one more incarnation" of the Over-Soul, the "universal mind."[36] The

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[33] Whitman, PP, 308-09.

[34] It is arguable, indeed, that Whitman carries this line of reasoning too far: W. Carey McWilliams harshly criticizes Whitman for being too universal, too abstract. Solidarity is meaningful, McWilliams contends, only when it is particular and close; Whitman's attempt to describe a universal solidarity necessarily leads to a "shabby" vision of human cohesion. McWilliams, *The Idea of Fraternity in America*.

[35] Emerson, EW, 113.

[36] Ibid., 114.The word "mind" is deliberate: Emerson contends, following the Enlightenment *philosophes*, that human beings are united by a universal reason. "He that is once admitted to the right of reason is made a freeman of the whole estate….Who hath access to this universal mind is a party to all that is or can be done, for this is the only and sovereign agent." As I noted in Chapter 3, following the insight of scholars like Jennifer Hochschild, this qualifier—the Over-Soul unites only those humans with the faculty of reason—opens the door to racist or ethnocentric reinterpretations of human solidarity: Whitman, in particular, was fascinated by phrenology, the then-popular pseudo-science which held that the shape of one's head determined the nature of one's mind (and generally proceeded from the assumption that non-whites were incapable, or at least less capable, of rational thought). Such an interpretation, aside from being false, runs counter to the cosmopolitan belief in the equal moral worth of every individual—and both Emerson and Whitman, irrespective of their particular beliefs, pointedly include non-whites in the universal mind. (In several passages in *Leaves of Grass*, for instance, Whitman places the slave and the slaveholder

history of France, or Russia, or Persia, is my history too, no less than the history of America, because all four are elements in the larger human picture. "Man is explicable by nothing less than all his history," Emerson says in the opening pages. "A man is the whole encyclopaedia of facts…and Egypt, Greece, Rome, Gaul, Britain, America, lie folded already in the first man."[37]

Emphasizing the particular history of a single nation is thus misguided, because "It is the universal nature which gives worth to particular men and things."[38] While there are an "infinite variety" of individual forms—people, nations, things—every form shares a fundamental unity in the "universal being," the "Over-Soul," the "universal mind."

> Genius detects through the fly, through the caterpillar, through the grub, through the egg, the constant individual; through countless individuals the fixed species; through many species the genus; through all genera the steadfast type; through all the kingdoms of organized life the eternal unity….There is, at the surface, infinite variety of things; at the centre there is simplicity of cause.[39]

This is not to say, of course, that particularity is worthless: Emerson is idealistic to a fault, but he's not so idealistic as to severe himself entirely from reality. Throughout "History," Emerson recognizes that individuals are shaped by their immediate surroundings as well as by their connection to the universal. Even grand developments in human history can be explained partly by specific historical or geographical

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side by side—a disturbing move in its own right, insofar as it seems to allow the slaveholder to escape moral accountability, but a necessary one nonetheless if Whitman is to be true to his vision of *human* solidarity. If Anthony Appiah can take pride in the Great Wall of China because "that potential is also in me," then—as Hannah Arendt pointedly observed, with respect to the Nazi genocide—the potential for slavery "is also in me" as well. Cosmopolitanism is not entirely a happy philosophy, at least not if it's done right.)

[37] Ibid., 113. Anthony Appiah strikes a similar tone when describing his own experience of human solidarity: "My people—human beings—made the Great Wall of China, the Chrysler Building, the Sistine Chapel: these things were made by creatures like me, through the exercise of skill and imagination. I do not have these skills, and my imagination spins different dreams. Nevertheless, that potential is also in me." Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (New York: Norton, 2006), 135.

[38] Emerson, EW, 114.

[39] Ibid., 118.

circumstances: primitive cultures were typically nomadic, for example, because changing seasons necessitated migration. At the same time, Emerson argues (though somewhat unconvincingly) that even this is best explained by the general "love of adventure" shared (to varying degrees) by all human beings and cultures.[40] Likewise, our love of ancient and exotic stuff—the Greek, the Egyptian, the Persian—results from our fundamental connection to it.

> What is the foundation of that interest all men feel in Greek history, letters, art and poetry, in all its periods from the Heroic or Homeric age down to the domestic life of the Athenians and Spartans, four or five centuries later? What but this, that every man passes personally through a Grecian period….Our admiration of the antique is not admiration of the old, but of the natural….The Greek had, it seems, the same fellow-beings as I.[41]

Of course—as Emerson himself begins to concede at the end of "History"—this is overstating things a bit. The ancient and the exotic may tap into some of our more basic human emotions and experiences, but our love of the old and foreign is almost always outweighed by our love of the current and present, which speak to our experiences on an even more visceral level. The particular circumstances of particular places and times are no less important to the development of human history than shared universal experience. "A man is a bundle of relations," Emerson concludes, "a knot of roots, whose flower and fruitage is the world….He cannot live without a world. Put Napoleon in an island prison, let his faculties find no men to act on, no Alps to climb, no stake to play for, and he would beat the air, and appear stupid."[42] Erring too far in the direction of the universal, in other words (as McWilliams observes, in his critique of Whitman), risks separating the individual from real, tangible, lived experience: Emerson skirts the line—and often skips

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[40] Ibid., 122.
[41] Ibid., 123-24.
[42] Ibid., 129.

across it—but he is aware, at least in this passage, that the line exists. As he observes at the end of *Nature*, this abstract idealism is "a useful introductory hypothesis,"[43] but not sufficient to capture the world as it is. Nevertheless "it is the universal nature which gives worth to particular men and things."[44] In true cosmopolitan fashion, Emerson recognizes the importance of particularistic affinities, but simultaneously posits, and privileges, an underlying unity that (here, at least) takes precedence over narrower bonds. Apprehending that unity, reminding individuals of their connection to mankind as a whole, is the task of the Poet and the Scholar—specifically, Emerson will argue in another famous piece, the task of the *American* scholar.

"The American Scholar" begins with a familiar fable: "that the gods, in the beginning, divided Man into men, that he might be more helpful to himself."[45] In the process, however, and over time, humanity has lost sight of its original unity; we have become alienated, that is, from ourselves. The individual scholar is "Man Thinking," but he does not recognize himself as such; he recognizes himself as a mere scholar, nothing more.[46] The task, then—a task that only the Poet, or the Scholar, can fulfill—is to restore the original unity of humanity, to reconnect humanity with itself.[47] The duty of the Scholar is to be "the world's heart," to "see through its pretension" and its false surfaces, and to apprehend its deeper unity. "In going down into the secrets of his own mind," Emerson says of the Scholar, "he has descended into the secrets of *all* minds."[48] The

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[43] Ibid., 32.
[44] Ibid., 114.
[45] Ibid., 43.
[46] Ibid., 44.
[47] Note the affinity between Emerson's project here and the project of European philosophers in the nineteenth century, particularly Marx: to restore the unity of subject and object, which eighteenth-century rationalism had broken.
[48] Ibid., 53-54.

scholar who understands himself properly as "Man Thinking," Emerson concludes, restores the connection between the individual and the whole.

Nature, Emerson contends in that essay, aids the scholar in this mission; but the act of restoration, the act of reconnecting the individual and the whole, is by nature an act of conscious will—and thus is only achievable through the scholar's active work. "Man has been wronged," Emerson says, but not by Nature or God—"he has wronged himself" by allowing himself to be fractured and forgetting, in the process, that "it is one soul which animates all men."[49] It is up to Man, then, to right his own wrong.

> Is it not the chief disgrace in the world, not to be an unit; not to be reckoned one character; not to yield that peculiar fruit which each man was created to bear, but to be reckoned in the gross, in the hundred, or the thousand, of the party, the section, to which we belong; and our opinion predicted geographically, as the north, or the south? Not so, brothers and friends—please God, ours shall not be so.[50]

This then is the task of the American scholar—not to drive a cultural wedge between Americans and Europeans, as the nationalists would have him do, but rather to *reconnect* Americans and Europeans, as well as Africans, Asians, and all human beings everywhere. If this is uniquely the mission of the *American* scholar, it is not because Americans are naturally superior to or distinct from Europeans, but merely because of an accident of history: because America has no cultural heritage of its own, Americans are uncorrupted—or less corrupted—by centuries of built-up tradition. Americans are less 'civilized,' closer to Nature, and thus closer in proximity to the "Divine Soul" (located in Nature itself) "which also inspires all men."[51]

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[49] Ibid., 55-56.
[50] Ibid., 59.
[51] Ibid., 53. Emerson's cosmopolitanism, then, is not 'cosmopolitan' in the sense of being *urban* or 'civilized.' This is a common misconception: cosmopolitan theory throughout history, dating back even to

The standard interpretation of the "American Scholar" essay, consequently, is seriously flawed: Emerson's challenge to the American scholar is not to "declare independence" from Europe, but rather to reconnect *with* Europe, to overcome the fragmentation that defines a humanity artificially divided into separate, segregated "nations." Indeed, Emerson offers little indication that this mission is uniquely suited to the "American" scholar at all; for all the nationalistic fervor generated by its title, Emerson only refers to "Americans" four times in the entire essay (twice at the very end). His real project, as always, is more fundamentally cosmopolitan: the goal is not the independence of America, but the restoration of the unity of Man.[52]

As Emerson notes at the outset of *Nature*, this requires the mind of a Poet—someone who is capable of seeing through the apparent cleavages that divide human beings and apprehending the totality, who is capable of giving life and voice to the "Over-Soul." This, of course, is the challenge taken up by Walt Whitman in 1855; *Leaves of Grass* represents his attempt to reunite Americans at a time of great divisiveness—not by appealing to particular characteristics or to the standard trappings of nationalism, but rather by appealing to a common humanity, the one thing, as Emerson and Madison before him concluded, that Americans truly share in common.

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the Stoics, has been far more connected to the countryside than is typically believed—a point Emerson makes explicitly in *Nature*.

[52] Doing so, ironically enough, requires a respect for the individual, "the new importance given to the single person," which by emphasizing the *equality* of all human beings "tends to true union as well as greatness." Ibid., 58. The importance of individualism to the cosmopolitan sensibility—counterintuitive as it may be—has been emphasized by a number of recent cosmopolitan scholars. See Patrick Hayden, *Cosmopolitan Global Politics* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), e.g.

Leaves of Grass

The idea of the Over-Soul—the "universal mind" in whom all human thoughts, feelings, and passions are contained—is by no means original to Whitman or the Emersonians, but the concept became absolutely central to the Transcendental worldview that Emerson and his contemporaries espoused (and which Whitman personified so vividly in his poetry).

Even the seemingly most opposite people, Emerson came to believe—men and women, black and white, rich and poor, 'civilized' and 'savage'—are ultimately brought together by "that Unity, that Over-soul, within which every man's particular being is contained and made one with all other."[53] The Over-Soul transcends all the artificial trappings of human civilization; it is neither timebound nor restricted in movement; it understands all languages; it bursts through fences and borders and boundaries. Universality is its defining characteristic. It is also the source, Emerson contended, of all human truth; from this he famously urged Americans to be more "self-reliant," to ignore the push of society and listen to their own inner voice. (Whitman, for his part, was a bit more clear-eyed: speaking as the Over-Soul in "Song of Myself," he admits to being "the poet of wickedness also," as well as the poet of Truth.[54])

Numerous scholars (notably McWilliams, among political theorists) have already recognized the importance of the Over-Soul in Whitman's poetry. But few, if any, recognize just how pivotal the Over-Soul is to *Leaves of Grass*—particularly the original 1855 edition of *Leaves*, before changing times and political circumstances (not to

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[53] Emerson, EW, 237. Unfortunately—though they at least recognize a deeper spiritual connection between the two—both Emerson and Whitman do employ the civilized/savage dichotomy that was so common in the nineteenth century.

mention his own acceptance into the cultural mainstream) transformed Whitman's original themes and aims. Later editions—especially the "deathbed" edition of 1891, the bulky 'definitive' edition that today's readers are most likely to encounter—had no apparent purpose or narrative structure; but in 1855—when Whitman was still aware of his original aim—the Over-Soul takes center stage. Walt Whitman the poet provides us with a brief prose introduction; but "Walt Whitman" the Over-Soul—vividly personified and endowed with the "breath of life"—is the central narrator of the 1855 *Leaves* and the speaker in most of the poems.

Leaves of Grass consists of twelve poems in addition to Whitman's prose Preface, which describes the nature and purpose of the "greatest poet" (and characterizes America itself as "essentially the greatest poem"). Ostensibly just a collection of poems, *Leaves* actually follows a deceptively straightforward narrative structure. After the Preface comes the masterpiece, the epic "Song of Myself," which serves as both a long introduction and the true heart of the story.[55] "Song of Myself" is the definitive autobiography of the Over-Soul (which Whitman modestly names after himself), the one poem in *Leaves* that depicts the Over-Soul in its full and complete manifestation, in all its many facets; it is here that the character and nature of the Over-Soul becomes clear, and it is here that Whitman most overtly identifies it as the source of American unity.

The next block of six poems—"A Song For Occupations," "To Think of Time," "Sleepers," "I Sing the Body Electric," "Faces," and "Song of the Answerer"—explores this unity in its various manifestations. Each poem here takes as its theme some thing

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[54] Whitman, PP, 48. It's for this reason—as noted earlier—that Whitman's Over-Soul claims solidarity with the slaveholder as well as the slave.

that all Americans—and consequently all human beings—share in common: the need to work; the passage of time; the experience of sleep and the inevitability of death; the contours and features of the human body; the contours and features of the human face; and, finally, a connection to the Over-Soul itself (the "Answerer"). The subsequent block of two poems—"Europe, the 72d and 73d Years of These States" and "A Boston Ballad"—lament the fact that both Europe and America, in the wake of the failed 1848 revolutions and growing sectional unrest, seem to have lost their way; but the following poem, "There Was a Child Went Forth," expresses a continued (and perpetual) hope for the future.[56] Finally, Whitman the poet returns as the speaker in two concluding poems, "Who Learns My Lesson Complete?" and the climactic, cathartic "Great Are the Myths," a triumphal (triumphalist?) paean to Justice, Truth, and humanity.

It is in "Song of Myself," though, that Whitman reveals the full incarnation of the Over-Soul; thus it is here that America's 'national' character, as Whitman develops it, becomes most apparent. Whitman declares in his prose Preface that a great poem, a truly "American" poem, "is for ages and ages in common and for all degrees and complexions and all departments and sects and for a woman as much as a man and a man as much as a woman"; and in "Song of Myself" he immediately sets himself to the task of writing such a poem.[57] The Over-Soul announces itself almost at the very outset—indeed its presence becomes evident in the first three lines:

I celebrate myself,

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[55] "Song of Myself" was untitled in the 1855 edition, as were all the other poems; Whitman did not add titles until later editions. "Song of Myself," interestingly, did not carry that title until 1881; Whitman's original title for the poem was simply "Walt Whitman," then "Walt Whitman, An American."
[56] "A Boston Ballad"—lest we be misled by Whitman's affinity for the slaveholder in "Song of Myself"—is an explicitly anti-slavery poem: Whitman's speaker, observing a patriotic parade shortly after the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law, reflects that the real guest of honor is King George III.
[57] Whitman, PP, 24.

And what I assume you shall assume,
For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you.[58]

But the true nature of the Over-Soul emerges only later, and gradually, as Whitman's omniscient, immortal speaker slowly tells his story:

I am not an earth nor an adjunct of an earth,
I am the mate and companion of people, all just as immortal and fathomless as myself;
They do not know how immortal, but I know.

Every kind for itself and its own....for me mine male and female,
For me all that have been boys and that love women,
For me the man that is proud and feels how it stings to be slighted,
For me the sweetheart and the old maid….for me mothers and the mothers of mothers,
For me lips that have smiled, eyes that have shed tears,
For me children and the begetters of children.[59]

This "universal being" possesses all the characteristics of all human beings, as it must: it is both rich and poor, old and young, male and female (and attracted to males and females, as we see in several passages); it is of all races, places, ages and times; it worships all faiths; and—most importantly for Whitman's purposes—it is Northern as well as Southern, from the East as well as the West.

I am of old and of young, of the foolish as much as the wise,
Regardless of others, ever regardful of others,
Maternal as well as paternal, a child as well as a man,
Stuffed with the stuff that is coarse, and stuffed with the stuff that is fine,
One of the great nation, the nation of many nations—the smallest the same and the largest the same,
A southerner soon as a northerner, a planter nonchalant and hospitable,
A Yankee bound my own way….ready for trade….my joints the limberest joints on earth and the sternest joints on earth,

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[58] Ibid., 27.

[59] Ibid., 33. It's worth noting that several scholars have correctly pointed out the implied sexism in this and other passages—most notably in "I Sing the Body Electric," where, as here, the male is celebrated for itself, while the female is celebrated only for her maternal qualities. Still others have criticized Whitman for his even more common fits of racism—as is briefly apparent towards the end of the following passage. For this reason I have tried to distinguish between Whitman the poet and "Walt Whitman" the Over-Soul and narrator, whose identity negates racism and sexism by its very nature.

A Kentuckian walking the vale of the Elkhorn in my deerskin leggings,
A boatman over the lakes or bays or along coasts…a Hoosier, a Badger, a Buckeye,
A Louisianan or Georgian, a poke-easy from sandhills and pines,
At home on Canadian snowshoes or up in the bush, or with fisherman off Newfoundland,
At home in the fleet of iceboats, sailing with the rest and tacking,
At home on the hills of Vermont or in the woods of Maine or the Texan ranch,
Comrade of Californians….comrade of free northwesterners, loving their big proportions,
Comrade of raftsmen and coalmen—comrade of all who shake hands and welcome to drink and meat;
A learner with the simplest, a teacher of the thoughtfulest,
A novice beginning experient of myriads of seasons,
Of every hue and trade and rank, of every caste and religion,
Not merely of the New World but of Africa Europe or Asia….a wandering savage,
A farmer, mechanic, or artist….a gentleman, sailor, lover or quaker,
A prisoner, fancy-man, rowdy, lawyer, physician or priest.[60]

The political consequences of this are clear. The Over-Soul, in whom every human being shares an equal part, necessarily leads Whitman (as it led Emerson) to a fundamental belief in human equality and the inherent worth of all human beings, of all races, nationalities, and genders. "Do you not see," Whitman implores in "Body Electric," "that these are exactly the same to all in all nations and times all over the earth?"[61] The equal connection of each with all necessarily means that no one man (or woman) has any greater worth than any other, politically or otherwise: each human being shares equally in the same human spirit, is subject to the same ravages of time, the same basic physical strengths and limitations, and the same inevitable experience of death.

Slowmoving and black lines go ceaselessly over the earth,
Northerner goes carried and southerner goes carried….and they on the Atlantic side and they on the Pacific, and they between, and all

[60] Ibid., 42-43. Note the phrase "nation of many nations" buried in the middle of this place catalog: the phrase was originally coined by John L. O'Sullivan, who also coined the phrase "manifest destiny." Whitman worked for O'Sullivan's *Democratic Review* in the 1840s.
[61] Ibid., 124.

through the Mississippi country….and all over the earth.[62]

This belief in equality leads Whitman to embrace the common people, the masses—who as a class are naturally larger, earthier, and more diverse than the elite, and thus more closely approximate the true complete nature of the human spirit. "(T)he genius of the United States," Whitman avers in the Preface, "is not best or most in its executives or legislatures…but always most in the common people."[63] And not only the common people—Whitman's all-inclusive Over-Soul also embraces those classes, those peoples, which American society (then and now) considers untouchable: Indians, slaves, the dead and dying, even the hardiest criminals.

> Not a mutineer walks handcuffed to the jail, but I am handcuffed to him
> and walk by his side,
> I am less the jolly one there, and more the silent one with sweat on my
> twitching lips.
>
> Not a youngster is tried for larceny, but I go up too and am tried and
> sentenced.
>
> Not a cholera patient lies at the last gasp, but I also lie at the last gasp,
> My face is ash-colored, my sinews gnarl….away from me people retreat.[64]

This passage serves as a stark reminder of the unlimited universality of the Over-Soul—a universality that stretches across time and space, across national boundaries, even—as here—beyond cultural norms and mores. The Over-Soul cannot be contained by racial categories or class distinctions or artificial national boundaries; it is transcendent by nature; it is everywhere. Thus for Whitman, who defines "America" in terms of the Over-Soul, this means—for better or worse—that America is everywhere, too.

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[62] Ibid., 104. (The poem is "To Think of Time.")
[63] Ibid., 5-6.
[64] Ibid., 70.

This is the grass that grows wherever the land is and the water is,
This is the common air that bathes the globe.[65]

As a result, *Leaves of Grass*, that stirring tribute to the "American" spirit, is almost utterly devoid of anything unique to the specific territory or the specific people of the United States (if such a thing can even be identified). Whitman, the great cataloger, structures *Leaves* as a grand catalog of all the things that unite human beings—"A Song for Occupations" sends everyone to work, "To Think of Time" observes the passage of years, "The Sleepers" sees everyone off to their beds and deathbeds—but conspicuously avoids appealing to those things, like land or ethnicity, which serve to "unite" only a few, U.S. citizens or otherwise, to the exclusion of others. On the rare occasions when Whitman does appeal to these things, he does so in universal terms—almost despite himself, as if trying, and failing, to contain the uncontainable Over-Soul.

Unscrew the locks from their doors!
Unscrew the doors themselves from their jambs![66]

In "Song of Myself," his great, all-encompassing, sixty-page portrait of the American landscape, Whitman refers to the American landscape itself—the land—only twice. In both instances, the speaker catalogs a list of states and places with which it identifies—North, South, East and West alike, of course—and in both instances, the speaker ends by leaving "American" soil, breaking out of those artificial boundaries, because in the end it cannot be so restrained.

I troop forth replenished with supreme power, one of an average unending procession,
We walk the roads of Ohio and Massachusetts and Virginia and Wisconsin and New York and New Orleans and Texas and Montreal and San Francisco and Charleston and Savannah and Mexico,

[65] Ibid., 43.
[66] Ibid., 50.

> Inland and by the seacoast and boundary lines….and we pass the boundary lines.[67]

The Over-Soul cannot be caged within a predetermined national border; and yet it is the Over-Soul that forms the basis of American identity—because for Whitman, American unity can only be a product of this universal connection between all human beings. The Over-Soul breaks out of the artificial bounds that comprise the United States, but it remains ever attached to the human universe. If John Locke believed that "In the beginning, all the world was America," Whitman will turn this statement on its head—America, he contends, is all the world.

This is the source of Whitman's patriotic fervor, the nationalism that annoys Kateb; but it is (at least in 1855) a *cosmopolitan* patriotism, universal (and—critically important—reciprocal) by its nature. Nowhere is this clearer than in the prose Preface, where Whitman turns to his American readers and speaks directly to them, making his case for national unity. Whitman is far more America-centric here, much more 'patriotic' in the traditional sense; his place catalogs do not break beyond U.S. borders here as they do in "Song of Myself" and "The Sleepers" and "Song of the Answerer." "The United States themselves," he says at the outset, "are essentially the greatest poem"; speaking as a uniquely American poet, he accepts the value of other countries and continents, but only "as contributions," not as equal players.[68] Yet even here, Whitman insists on defining America entirely in cosmopolitan terms. America is not contained by the

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[67] Ibid., 71. Note the inclusion of Montreal and Mexico in the catalog. The other catalog of places is quoted above: "I am of old and young, of the foolish as much as the wise…A Yankee bound my own way…a Kentuckian walking the vale of the Elkhorn…a Hoosier, a Badger, a Buckeye…At home on the hills of Vermont or the woods of Maine or the Texas ranch…Not merely of the New World but of Africa Europe or Asia." (See footnote 58.) This passage, with its cosmopolitan climax, is itself the climax of a long catalog of occupations, in which a few states and places (Michigan, Missouri, the great Southern rivers) are also mentioned by name.

imaginary lines enclosing the United States or by the finite qualities of the specific people who happen to reside within them: for Whitman, 'America' is—and 'Americans' are united by—a world spirit. "Here is not merely a nation," he declares, "but a teeming nation of nations"[69]—a line he will repeat in several poems, including the concluding poem of *Leaves*, "Great Are the Myths":

> Great is the greatest nation….the nation of clusters of equal nations.[70]

The United States is "the greatest poem," but what is a great poem? "A great poem is for ages and ages in common," Whitman says, "and for all degrees and complexions and all departments and sects and for a woman as much as a man and a man as much as a woman."[71] The greatness of America is not contained in its boundaries, or in its people; rather, the greatness of America is its universal nature—a unique quality, to which no other 'nation' can lay claim (to which America can lay claim, indeed, only because it is *not* a nation).[72]

Conclusion

It is no surprise, in the end, that American intellectuals at the dawn of the twentieth century had turned away from Ralph Waldo Emerson. It was, after all, the age

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[68] Ibid., 5, 7.
[69] Ibid., 5.
[70] Ibid., 143.
[71] Ibid., 24.
[72] Later in his career—as he grew more explicitly nationalistic—Whitman gradually came to believe that there is, in fact, something special about America (and Americans) in particular. In his millennial 1871 poem "Passage to India," Whitman asserted that a "true son of God" would eventually manifest himself on earth and reunite humankind as one: "Nature and Man shall be disjoin'd and diffused no more,/The true son of God shall absolutely fuse them." Ibid., 535. In another poem, fittingly titled "Song of the Universal," Whitman asserted explicitly that this "true son of God" would be a product of America—or, more accurately, would be America itself: "And thou America,/For the scheme's culmination, its thought and its reality,/For these (not for thyself) thou hast arrived." Ibid., 370-71. But this came later: Whitman may well have believed this all along—his conception of America as world-spirit, destined to "enfold the world," is

of nationalism and the age of imperial dominion—and Emerson's more cosmopolitan vision, with its rejection of nationalism and its affinity for all human beings, was less than welcome in the current political climate. Walt Whitman, on the other hand, was enjoying a wave of popularity: influenced by O'Sullivan as well as Emerson, his cosmopolitanism was always tempered by an O'Sullivan-esque nationalism (something that Emerson—for all the talk about the "American Scholar"—never shared). And as numerous scholars have already observed, Whitman's universalistic commitment to the democratic idea made his poetry useful to those Wilsonian universalists then calling on America to "make the world safe for democracy."[73]

But even Whitman—in spite of his rugged tone, and in spite of his personal aspirations—never really had much influence on American political discourse. Whitman was an artist, not an activist, and a Transcendentalist besides: he achieved some notoriety, certainly, with "O Captain My Captain," his sappy eulogy for Lincoln, but the 1855 *Leaves*, his grand vision of American unity, was completely ignored. The same is true for Emerson as well—though he, at least, knew it. In both *Nature* and "History," Emerson concedes that the Idealistic philosophy is too abstract, too disconnected from material reality, to be useful in the practice of everyday life. But Emerson nevertheless insists upon privileging the Idealistic sensibility throughout his writings—because

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very much in the vein of O'Sullivan, with whom Whitman worked in the 1840s—but the 1855 *Leaves* never makes this universalistic leap overtly, even in the jingoistic Preface. Ibid., 1048.

[73] Such an interpretation of Whitman misses an important point, however: the imperialistic attempt to remake the world in America's image is universalistic but *not* cosmopolitan. The cosmopolitan sensibility, personified in Whitman's Over-Soul, includes a respect for *difference* and *diversity* that is invariably lacking from the imperialists' agenda; moreover, while imperialism (political or otherwise) promotes interaction between cultures, it lacks, by definition, a sense of *reciprocity*. The difference between imperialism and the "cultural contamination" championed by K. Anthony Appiah lies in this distinction: the cosmopolitan interacts with other cultures on a level playing field, while imperialists seek to impose their culture, in an entirely one-sided manner, on an often-unwilling people.

"Mind," as he contends in "The Transcendentalist," "is the only reality."[74] The unfortunate effect is that Emerson's work is often too elitist, too hopelessly esoteric, to connect with the average reader. Soaring phrases like "I become a transparent eyeball; I am nothing; I see all" look fine on paper but do not relate to the realities of everyday human existence. Consequently, Emerson's cosmopolitan vision also strikes a tenuous balance between realism and hopeless romanticism: arguing, as he does in *Nature*, that "the name of the nearest friend sounds foreign or accidental" opens Emerson to the standard criticism, echoed by anti-cosmopolitans[75] since the days of the Stoics, that cosmopolitanism is bloodless, 'rootless,' and far too abstract to be *practical* in any meaningful way.

Perhaps, as W. Carey McWilliams contends, the problem lies with the very notion of 'universal brotherhood' itself: the idea of 'fraternity,' after all, carries with it the notion of being a *special* bond between individuals, a bond that brings two individuals, not only close, but clos*er*. If this is true, then the "universal brotherhood" of Emerson and Whitman is by definition a hopelessly impractical oxymoron—in McWilliams's words, a "shabby vision." At the same time, to reject this vision of universal human 'fraternity' is to return to the same old dilemma at the heart of American political theory: the solidarity necessary to sustain republican institutions may be unattainable in America if the *human* scope is really too wide to be meaningful. Or, more accurately, American institutions can only be 'free'—that is, republican—if we exclude enormous numbers of people from our conception of "what it means to be an American." Such exclusion is acceptable in an ideal homogeneous society—the perfect beehive assumed by social

[74] Emerson, EW, 83.

contract theorists, where active exclusion was never necessary—but in the U.S., diverse as it is, exclusion is always necessarily active, meaningful, and cataclysmic. Worse, it is also physical: the forced resettlement of Native Americans onto reservations, culminating in the infamous "Trail of Tears," was motivated partly by the well-meaning belief that it would be unfair *to them* to force Them to live in a society—Ours—into which they could never hope to assimilate. Such an act, brutal and deadly as it is, is nevertheless necessary to maintain a united society if humanity is an insufficient source of unity. The only other solution is division: if the U.S. is too large to remain simultaneously united and free, then—as many Anti-Federalists suggested in the ratification debate—it must be divided into several pieces, each one an independent homogeneous republic. Unionists who rejected that approach had to theorize a different solution to the dilemma: what is the common bond that unites Americans together? If Whitman was right, then nothing short of humanity itself could unite all Americans as one—but Whitman's approach was too esoteric, too idealistic, and frankly too artsy-fartsy to have any real political impact. It therefore became the task of Whitman's hero, Abraham Lincoln, to make his vision a practical and meaningful one—though Lincoln himself was skeptical of its practicality.

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[75] Not to mention self-aware cosmopolitans like Anthony Appiah.

Chapter 6

The Reluctant Universalism of Abraham Lincoln

The list of great American cosmopolitans doesn't usually include Abraham Lincoln. Nor, for that matter, does "cosmopolitan" come to mind when we think of Lincoln's defining traits. Americans, Michael Lind notes, have typically characterized Lincoln in one of three ways: either as the "Great Emancipator," the mythical American Moses who single-handedly ended slavery; or as the "Great Commoner," the log-cabin boy who rose to the highest office in the land; or as the "Savior of the Union," who brought a divided nation together (with 39 percent of the vote). To this Lind adds a fourth: the "Great Democrat," who defended the principle of liberal democracy against apologists for slavery in the South.[1] ("Liberalism," that is, against "its challengers"—nasty ideological Others who aren't even really 'American.') As Lind rightly observes, though, none of these titles are entirely appropriate: the "Great Emancipator" was a white supremacist who resisted emancipation for years; the "Great Commoner" was a self-described "Henry Clay Whig" who opposed Jacksonian populism throughout his early career; and the "Savior of the Union" explicitly recognized, in the First Inaugural Address, the right of states to secede.[2] Even Lind's preferred title, the "Great Democrat," doesn't entirely apply: Lincoln rose to national prominence, after all, by *opposing* Stephen Douglas's democratic-to-a-fault appeal to "popular sovereignty" on the slavery question. There's more to Lincoln, in other words, than meets the eye.

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[1] Michael Lind, *What Lincoln Believed* (New York: Anchor, 2004), 18-19, 26.
[2] Ibid. See especially Ch. 1.

With regard to American identity, we typically operate on the assumption that Lincoln was a good, "Western," civic nationalist: his life's work, after all, was in defense of the Union, the central institutions that civic nationalists revere. Digging deeper, we find that Lincoln was also an economic nationalist in the style of Clay, promoting his "American System" of internal development and protectionist tariffs; indeed Lincoln's commitment to "internal improvements" was the dominant theme of his early career. And as civic and ethnic nationalism so often merge, it is no surprise that Lincoln too was devoted to the racist cause of ethnic purification—supporting Indian removal policy, opposing slavery partly on the grounds that it led to "miscegenation," and opposing slavery in the new Western territories largely because it would enable the new settlers to exclude blacks altogether. ("We want them for the homes of free white people," he said, echoing a common Free-Soiler sentiment.) Indeed, if Lincoln had had his way, he would have reserved all of America for free white people as well—liberating the slaves and shipping them en masse to Liberia, in accordance with the wishes of the American Colonization Society (of which Clay had been a founding member). Either way, as the story goes, Lincoln was a nationalist through and through, and the man himself would likely have agreed. To be in the right, he argued in 1854, is to be "national and nothing less than national. …To desert such ground, because of any company, is to be less than a whig—less than a man—less than an American."[3]

And yet this study of cosmopolitanism as a principle of American identity would be incomplete without an examination of Lincoln; indeed, I'm ending my survey with him precisely because he may be the most important American cosmopolitan of all. That

Lincoln had a cosmopolitan streak, in spite of his racism and his nationalism, is readily apparent from his works and writings, though it's rarely emphasized. He was, after all, first and foremost a defender of the Union, the cosmopolitan republic Madison had built threescore and several years prior; and his rise to prominence came from his defense of Jefferson's declaration of universal human equality against pro-slavery advocates (and apologists like Douglas) who attacked Jefferson for that very cosmopolitanism. This is the Lincoln we like, the mythical king who sits in perpetuity on a stone throne at the National Mall. What makes Lincoln especially important to the cosmopolitan tradition, however, is his confrontation with a crucial and troubling question, one that Madison avoided and Whitman, naively, never considered: namely, the question of how *humanity*, wide and abstract as it is, can ever be a practical foundation for republican virtue. Or, more to the point: how does a 'cosmopolitan republic' deal with the inevitable presence of non-cosmopolitans, who simply don't feel the necessary solidarity?

That question has plagued the cosmopolitan project literally from the beginning: it is why critics so often dismiss the whole tradition as utopian or hopelessly abstract. It is a question with no easy answer: because not everyone is inclined to feel much affinity for humankind at large, it is difficult to sustain a republic that depends on cosmopolitan solidarity; indeed, intelligent scholars have contended that cosmopolitan solidarity is not even possible at all. On the other hand—as the figures we've examined have all observed, in their own respective ways—there may be no other alternative to humanity as a focus of public virtue in a society so large that humanity is the only common bond. To the extent that we characterize American society in this way—as, again, each of the figures we've

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[3] Embarrassingly, though, he uttered those eloquent words in defense of the Fugitive Slave Act. Lincoln,

examined thus far have done—then the very survival of the Union depends on our ability to reach a workable resolution.

It is for this reason that a study of cosmopolitan republicanism in early America must end with Lincoln, who, more than anyone, is responsible for having preserved the Union in the face of its greatest immediate threat. It is also for this reason—following through on my earlier argument in Chapter One—that a proper study of Lincoln's political thought must emphasize his approach to solidarity, the underlying question behind every major American domestic conflict. Consequently, I focus here on Lincoln's political thought as it developed in the 1850s—as, gradually, he came to the realization that the Union's future rested on a potentially catastrophic answer to an inescapable dilemma. That answer—that, in short, there is simply no place for non-cosmopolitans in a cosmopolitan republic, *whatever that requires*—nearly cost Lincoln his career: Stephen Douglas all but labeled him a traitor and ripped him, quite rightly, for fomenting conflict and "disunion." Indeed Lincoln himself spent half a decade trying to avoid the logical consequences of his own position—insisting that there was still hope for unity even in the midst of secession, and resisting emancipation until 1863 (and capitulating then only as a political gesture). Worse, from a theoretical perspective, such a move is also profoundly anti-cosmopolitan: it restricts membership in the American community to those who are willing—and able—to accept a particular "creed" and to act accordingly. It is a universalist move, in other words, one that defines 'America' in terms of a particular ideology and excludes those nasty Others who espouse Other ideologies. In spite of its disturbing implications, however, Lincoln's answer may well be necessary: it is, after all,

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"Speech on the Kansas-Nebraska Act at Peoria, Illinois." In Lincoln, *Speeches and Writings, 1832-1858,*

the same answer Locke gave to the problem of intolerance in his *Letter on Toleration*, and the same answer 'liberal' governments reached, throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with respect to anti-liberal parties.

In the following chapter, I examine this troubling (but arguably necessary) view as it took shape in Lincoln's early political thought, particularly as he developed it in response to Douglas in 1858. Before doing so, however, we must first return, briefly, to Whitman—whose response to the sectional crisis was virtually identical to Lincoln's, but whose approach was, in the end, an utter failure. To understand why Lincoln's solution was necessary, we must first understand what went wrong with Whitman's alternative.

The Trouble with Whitman

At the end of Chapter Five, I argued that Whitman was hampered by his esoteric Emersonianism, which turned off many contemporary readers (not to mention many readers today) and obscured whatever political message he may have had. As it happened, though, Whitman's eccentric idealism was the least of his worries. When *Leaves of Grass* hit streets in 1855, it was a resounding commercial and critical failure—not for its Emersonian flights of fancy, but rather for its 'vulgarity,' its lack of poetic structure and the frankness with which it explored the human male and female bodies. ("The depth of his indecencies will be the grave of his fame," wrote one anonymous reviewer, "or ought to be if all proper feeling is not extinct."[4])

But there was a deeper problem, too, with Whitman's study of American identity. If *Leaves of Grass* has a political thesis, it is that Americans are united primarily by the

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ed. Don E. Fehrenbacher (New York: Library of America, 1989; hereafter SW), 331, 326-327.

human condition, the experience of inhabiting a human body and possessing a human mind; indeed "the United States themselves are essentially the greatest poem"[5] precisely because Americans are united by nothing else. Moreover, this human condition extends equally "among black folks as among white": Whitman, throughout *Leaves*, consciously (if imperfectly) includes blacks, Native Americans, Asians, women, and a host of other ethnocultural minorities in his grand catalog of human experience.[6] The central purpose of *Leaves*, consequently, is not so much to celebrate American unity-in-humanity as simply to observe it: Whitman's speaker, the Over-Soul, is very much in love with humankind, but even he is concerned primarily with *establishing* the universal connection, not crowing about how wonderful it is. To crow would be redundant: throughout *Leaves of Grass*, Whitman assumes that the sense of wonder he seeks to generate will follow naturally from the connection itself. Nowhere is this more apparent than in Whitman's famous catalogs, the distinguishing feature of his poetry—pages-long lists of people and places, recorded, journalistically, without embellishment or comment. Here, notwithstanding his reputation, Whitman is actually a master of understatement: the catalogs provoke a powerful emotional response in readers, though the poet himself provides no obvious emotional cues. Such cues are, after all, unnecessary: if the logic of *Leaves* is sound, then Whitman needs only to remind Americans (or convince them) of their essential human unity. The rest will take care of itself.

As a means of uniting Americans, however, Whitman's approach rests on two very basic assumptions, neither of which is sustainable on close inspection. It assumes,

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[4] Anonymous, "Review of Leaves of Grass (1855)." *The Critic* 15 (1 April 1856): 170-1. http://www.whitmanarchive.org/criticism/reviews/leaves1855/anc.00024.html.
[5] Whitman, "Preface" to *Leaves of Grass*. In Whitman, *Poetry and Prose*, ed. Justin Kaplan (New York: Library of America, 1996, hereafter PP), 5.

first, that all Americans, Northerners and Southerners alike, are endowed with a preexisting (if latent) cosmopolitan sensibility, a feeling of affinity for one's fellow man that motivates us, under certain circumstances, to sacrifice our own personal interest for the larger human good. Or, more accurately, it assumes that sensibility in human nature itself: once I become conscious of the fellow humanity in my fellow man, I will naturally, perhaps even instinctively, feel a sense of attachment to them (if only to a limited degree). Whitman's catalogs, after all, rely on that instinctive sense to generate the desired emotional response in readers; without it, they may as well be grocery lists. ("Lack one lacks both."[7]) Studies of the mind since Whitman have confirmed, indeed, that human beings appear to possess this natural human affinity: we have the capacity, to be sure, for an almost unbounded cruelty—as Dostoevsky, Whitman's contemporary, observed so eloquently in *The Brothers Karamazov*—but we're also apparently hardwired to feel empathy for other human beings as well, even if we share nothing else in common but our humanity. The "particularist thesis," popular as it is, is an unwarranted exaggeration: solidarity, as we saw in Chapter Two, simply does not require an excluded Other (though the presence of such an Other may reinforce it). At the same time, though, the very popularity of the particularist thesis implies that the particularists have a point: the little empathy we feel for our fellow man is not sufficient, in many cases, to motivate us to act—and it's even less sufficient as a basis for republican "public virtue." The widest circle of solidarity is not necessarily the thinnest, as the concentric-circle image implies; but it's equally naïve to assume, as Whitman appears to do, that the cosmopolitan sensibility is strong enough in *all* people to motivate the self-sacrifice necessary for

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[6] Whitman, "Song of Myself," in PP, 31.

republican citizenship. (Michael Walzer is incorrect, in other words, to conclude that the widest circle *cannot* be "thick," but he has very good reasons for leaping to that conclusion.) Different people attach themselves to different things at different times to different degrees—and many individuals, perhaps even the vast majority, are simply not cosmopolitans to the degree that Whitman's scheme requires. We have seen how numerous prominent elites appealed to human solidarity as a basis for American political unity; but it is no less clear that not many Americans shared their vision. Those who believed that 'Americans' had only their humanity in common had two options: some, like Madison, Emerson and Whitman, appealed to humanity as a basis for solidarity; most, though, rejected human solidarity (or never considered it) and concluded instead that an 'American' union was simply too large to last. These were the individuals who threatened the Union's future in the 1850s—and Whitman's eloquent call for unity, powerful as it was, had nothing to say to them. It was, in W. Carey McWilliams's words, "a shabby dream," too large and abstract to persuade the very people it was trying to address.[8] Small wonder, then, that students who encounter Whitman for the first time are so often turned off by the catalogs: they're dry, long, and tedious, after all, unless the reader shares the sensibility the poet takes for granted.

Whitman's second assumption, corollary to the first, is that America's disunion results from a failure either to recognize common humanity ("the common air that bathes the globe") or to recognize its importance as a source of unity.[9] The same, indeed, could also be said of slavery: the act of enslaving another, or even simply tacitly supporting those who do, is justifiable only if we begin from the (false) assumption that the slave is

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[7] Ibid., 29.

somehow inhuman. Recognizing the slave's humanity necessarily makes the institution of slavery morally untenable: to the extent that we're endowed with the cosmopolitan sensibility Whitman assumes, it is impossible (or at least hypocritical) to defend slavery as a positive good while simultaneously conceding the personhood of the enslaved. It is for this reason that Whitman goes out of his way to lump the slave and the slaveholder together in his catalog of Americans: by establishing their equality as humans, he asserts, he is simultaneously establishing the inescapable injustice of slavery. Scholars today criticize Whitman for his affinity to the slaveholder, but the affinity is precisely the point: because slave and slaveholder are both equally human, and because 'the human' is a meaningful category capable of generating real feelings of attachment and solidarity, any attempt to exclude one or the other from the human category (as slavery does) is unjust as well as false. ("In all people I see myself, none more and not one a barleycorn less."[10]) By this logic, the case for abolition is a simple one: once pro-slavery advocates are made aware that "there is humanity in the negro" (Lincoln's words, in 1854), their innate cosmopolitan sensibilities will take care of the rest. The case for American unity is equally simple: Northerners and Southerners can coexist peacefully under the same institutional umbrella if they can recall what they share in common—in Whitman's contention, a common attachment to that universal Over-Soul who is "a southerner soon as a northerner."[11]

The problem, however—as Lincoln realized, perhaps inadvertently—is that the logic of slavery and disunion ran deeper than Whitman's logic assumes. To be sure, the

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[8] McWilliams, *The Idea of Fraternity in America* (Berkeley: University of California, 1973), 421.
[9] Whitman, "Song of Myself," in PP, 43.
[10] Ibid., 45.
[11] Ibid., 42.

vast majority of pro-slavery advocates (not to mention many of their opponents) denied the humanity of the slave and defended the ownership of blacks as akin to the ownership of cattle. But as Lincoln observed—here, in a reputation-making 1854 speech on the Kansas-Nebraska Act—Southern (and Northern) defenders of slavery already recognized that humanity, if only implicitly:

> But while you thus require me to deny the humanity of the negro, I wish to ask whether you of the south yourselves, have ever been willing to do as much? It is kindly provided that of all those who come into the world, only a small percentage are natural tyrants. That percentage is no larger in the slave States than in the free. The great majority, south as well as north, have human sympathies, of which they can no more divest themselves than they can of their sensibility to physical pain. These sympathies in the bosoms of the southern people, manifest in many ways, their sense of the wrong of slavery, and their consciousness that, after all, there is humanity in the negro.

Lincoln continues, with increasingly specific details:

> And yet again; there are in the United States…433,643 free blacks. …How comes this vast amount of property to be running about without owners? We do not see free horses or free cattle running at large. How is this? All these free blacks are the descendants of slaves, or have been slaves themselves, and they would be slaves now, but for SOMETHING which has operated on their white owners, inducing them, at vast pecuniary sacrifices, to liberate them. What is that SOMETHING? Is there any mistaking it? In all these cases it is your sense of justice, and human sympathy, continually telling you, that the poor negro has some natural right to himself…And now, why will you ask us to deny the humanity of the slave? and estimate him only as the equal of the hog? Why ask us to do what you will not do yourselves?[12]

On the surface, Lincoln's argument here is identical to Whitman's in 1855: slavery may be overcome by appealing to the cosmopolitan sensibility that is already latent in the all-too-human minds of slaveholders and their deluded defenders. Implicit in this passage, however, is the subtle realization that Whitman's solution—bringing people together by observing their shared humanity—simply would not work, because it was already in

[12] Lincoln, "Speech on the Kansas-Nebraska Act at Peoria, Illinois." SW, 326-327.

place: the defenders of slavery already *did* recognize the humanity of "the poor negro," no less than Lincoln himself. What was missing, then, was not an awareness of the common humanity of slave and slaveholder; what was missing was a sense that that humanity was politically meaningful, that it compelled or obligated individuals to sacrifice their own interests and desires for the greater good. What was missing, in other words, was the cosmopolitan sensibility itself. Whitman and Lincoln's cosmopolitan argument for abolition[13]—not to mention the larger argument for American unity—was unworkable because it assumed an emotional attachment that simply wasn't there. Slavery and disunion could not be overcome simply by appealing to the latent human affinities of slaveholders and secessionists: for most of them, those affinities were not strong enough to motivate any tangible political action.

Hence the great difficulty, the one that has haunted cosmopolitans from the start: how is it possible to ground collective action on cosmopolitan (human) solidarity in a world of individuals who feel only a tenuous connection to their "fellow man"? A connection so tenuous, indeed, that it's apparently compatible with slavery? Many in the cosmopolitan tradition have simply given up out of despair: Montesquieu, for instance, asserted that it would be "criminal" to put one's own narrow interests ahead of the good of mankind—but believed, nonetheless, that human beings inhabit "a world so large that separate peoples are necessary." Liberal nationalists like Herder, Fichte, Mill and Mazzini agreed. In Mill's words:

> If it be said that so broadly marked a distinction between what is due to a fellow countryman and what is due merely to a human creature, is more worthy of savages than of civilized beings…no one holds that opinion more strongly than myself. But this object, one of the worthiest to which human endeavour can be

[13] Gradual abolition, that is, particularly in Lincoln's case.

> directed, can never, in the present state of civilization, be promoted by keeping different nationalities of anything like equivalent strength, under the same government.[14]

Others, in the classical republican vein, have argued that education is the answer: following Plato and Rousseau, cosmopolitans like Anthony Appiah and Martha Nussbaum believe that the human mind is sufficiently malleable that it can (and should) be trained to feel an attachment for humanity at large. More commonly, scholars like David Held have argued—as Hamilton and Henry Clay once argued, with respect to American unity—that the increasing ease of travel and communication, the development of strong international political-legal institutions, and the rise of the global market with its accompanying economic interdependence will draw individuals together, in affinity as well as proximity. Lincoln, notably, belonged to this tradition too, at least with regard to America: as a disciple of Henry Clay, he spent much of his early career promoting Clay's "American System" of economic nationalization, partly out of a conviction that a national economy would strengthen bonds of political union. But none of these approaches entirely resolve the issue: education alone, as Madison realized, is not enough to make an ideal citizen in a republic of any size; and the shrinking of the world in our own time has not led to the collapse of nationalism or narrow ethnic affinities. (Indeed, if anything, it appears to have made those affinities even stronger, though in the long term this may only be a temporary backlash.) Proper education and new geopolitical circumstances can, and do, extend the cosmopolitan sensibility across a wider scope of individuals, but the question remains: how can a cosmopolitan republic accommodate non-cosmopolitans, who feel no such attachment?

The easy answer is simply to admit defeat—to conclude that a cosmopolitan republic is ultimately unsustainable and seek an alternative approach. Most nineteenth-century Americans, consequently, sought to ground 'American' unity on some other, narrower shared characteristic, something capable of generating the solidarity that human unity seemingly could not. Even Whitman followed this path: his revision of *Leaves* in 1860, almost literally on the eve of the Civil War, was much more overtly nationalistic, appealing merely to a narrow *American* unity. If Madison was right, however, then that path is a dead end too: if shared humanity is insufficient as a basis for political unity, then the Union is fundamentally doomed (or, at best, destined to collapse into tyranny). Preserving the Union, the avowed task of Whitman and Lincoln, thus required a direct confrontation with this question. And as Whitman's solution was untenable, it was left to Lincoln, a more astute political thinker, to answer for posterity.

Seeking the Minimum Consensus

Lincoln offered that answer—or, at least, the start of one—on June 16, 1858. Rising before a packed house of Illinois Republicans at the outset of his Senate campaign, Lincoln opened with a now-famous declaration, almost Goldwaterian in its audacity:

> 'A house divided against itself cannot stand.' I believe this government cannot endure, permanently half *slave* and half *free*. I do not expect the Union to be *dissolved*—I do not expect the house to *fall*—but I *do* expect it will cease to be divided. It will become *all* one thing, or *all* the other.[15]

To the extent that we remember Lincoln as the "Savior of the Union," who brought together a bitterly divided people, the "House Divided" speech is an essential component

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[14] Mill, *Considerations on Representative Government* (London: Parker, Son, and Bourn, 1862), ch. 16. Quoted in Omar Dahbour and Micheline R. Ishay, eds., *The Nationalism Reader* (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 1995), 100.

of his political legacy—a powerful celebration of consensus and unity, in the face of faction and dissent. To read the "House Divided" in this way, however, is to miss the point entirely. Lincoln, after all, had always modeled himself after Henry Clay, the "Great Compromiser" who had devoted his own political life to mediating between warring factions and resolving tense conflicts over contentious issues. "That truly national man," Lincoln had called him after his death: a bearer of consensus who had dedicated his career to keeping the Union at peace with itself.[16] But the unity Lincoln envisioned in the "House Divided" was a unity of a very different kind: instead of proposing a solution that could accommodate both sides, Lincoln asserted here that the survival of the Union depended on one side annihilating the other. This was not, he said, a call for immediate abolition or civil war (though Douglas argued otherwise); rather, Lincoln's preferred strategy was gradual, squeezing the South between a free North and a free West until slavery died out on its own accord.[17] Whether this happened in eight years or eighty, though, the upshot was the same: Clay had worked, in good Madisonian fashion, to bring together every conceivable faction under the same political blanket; but here, Lincoln argued, such an approach was destined to fail. In so arguing, Lincoln effectively joined the Supreme Court—albeit on the opposite side—in repudiating the Missouri Compromise that his idol had struggled so mightily to forge.

The "House Divided," in short, was not a celebration of national unity, but a warning: the Union cannot be maintained through compromise alone, Lincoln contends,

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[15] Lincoln, "'House Divided' Speech at Springfield, Illinois," SW, 426.
[16] Lincoln, "Eulogy on Henry Clay at Springfield, Illinois," SW, 270.
[17] A week after the "House Divided" speech, Lincoln clarified himself in this regard: "I believe," he wrote, "that whenever the effort to spread slavery into the new teritories (sic)…and into the free states themselves…shall be fairly headed off, the institution will then be in course of ultimate extinction; and by the language I used I meant only this." Letter to John L. Scripps, SW, 435.

but only through the elimination—the annihilation—of a particular ideology and socioeconomic system. It was not a message Lincoln wanted to send: not only did it risk political suicide—Douglas exploited his opponent's "revolutionary and destructive" speech to great advantage during the campaign—it also set him against Clay, who had always opposed this sort of Manichean politics.[18] Even more importantly, Lincoln's conclusion here represented a significant capitulation. The Madisonian institutional framework embodied in the Constitution seems to rest, after all, on the notion that a house divided *can* stand—that, in fact, a house cannot stand unless it's divided. This was Douglas's observation, made repeatedly, in the 1858 debates:

> Washington, Jefferson, Franklin, Madison, Hamilton, Jay, and the great men of that day, made this Government divided into free States and slave States, and left each State perfectly free to do as it pleased on the subject of slavery. …Why can (our government) not exist on the same principles on which our fathers made it? …They knew when they framed the Constitution that in a country as wide and broad as this, with such a variety of climate, production and interest, the people necessarily required different laws and institutions in different localities. …I assert that uniformity in the local laws and institutions of the different States is neither possible nor desirable.[19]

This is a familiar argument—Madison as pluralist—and Lincoln, dedicated as he was to the preservation of Madison's union, had no interest in adopting the "treasonable and disunion" position of rejecting the foundation of the whole institutional system.[20] "I insist upon this Government being placed where our fathers originally placed it," he maintained;[21] and though he made an effort later to reconcile abolitionism with the "Framers' intent,"[22] Lincoln attempted to maintain that pluralist structure even in the

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[18] Douglas, "First Lincoln-Douglas Debate, Ottawa, Illinois," SW, 502.
[19] Ibid., 503.
[20] Lincoln, "Speech at Springfield, Illinois," SW, 462.
[21] Lincoln, "Third Lincoln-Douglas Debate, Jonesboro, Illinois," SW, 604.
[22] See, e.g., Lincoln, "Address at Cooper Institute, New York City," in Lincoln, *Speeches and Writings, 1859-1865*, ed. Don E. Fehrenbacher (New York: Library of America, 1989; hereafter SW 2).

midst of the Civil War. "I have no purpose," he insisted in the First Inaugural Address, "…to interfere with the institution of slavery in the States where it exists."[23]

To the extent that we accept the popular notion of Madison as nothing more than an interest-group pluralist, Douglas's argument here is hard (though not impossible) to challenge.[24] In reality, though, Lincoln's turn in the "House Divided" did not set him against Madison at all; if anything, it brought the two men more in line with each other. Madison, as I argued in Chapter 4, faced precisely the same dilemma that confronted Lincoln in the "House Divided." As a republican, he recognized the need for social homogeneity, for some 'shared characteristic' that could motivate citizens to feel a sense of attachment to the community and to each other. Without that common bond, the republican 'house' would fall: if it did not disintegrate altogether, it would 'stand' only by virtue of tyrannical force and violence. At the same time, Madison also recognized that social diversity is an inevitable fact of human society—which means, in turn, that establishing unity and homogeneity is itself an act of tyranny: because the notion of 'organic' unity is a myth, any community that *is* homogeneous has made itself so by some prior (or ongoing) act of exclusion and oppression. Social consensus, therefore, is for Madison (and Lincoln) a necessary evil—oppressive and tyrannical by nature, but

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[23] Lincoln, "First Inaugural Address," SW 2, 215.

[24] It is not impossible to challenge because interest-group pluralism insists that every faction be given an equal (or proportionate) voice in political discourse; slavery, of course, violates that principle by denying blacks not only a place at the table, but also the education and the resources necessary to claim it. It is hard to challenge, however, because interest-group pluralism is concerned primarily with preventing a single faction from claiming majority status or consolidating enough power to assert its will at the expense of all the others. It is less concerned with—and thus less able to confront—the opposite problem, a situation in which all the others ally to keep a single faction (paraphrasing Derrick Bell) "at the bottom of the well." See Bell, *Faces at the Bottom of the Well* (New York: Harper, 1992), and John Hart Ely, *Democracy and Distrust* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 1980).

also a necessary precondition for 'free' republican government.[25] In theory, then, the freest possible community is the community that rests on the minimum possible consensus. For Madison (as, later, for Whitman) that minimum consensus is humanity itself: with the proper institutional structure, a republic could theoretically grow to incorporate all human beings—to "enfold the world," in Whitman's terms—without the tyrannical oppression so commonly associated with the dreaded "world state." (In fact, by Madison's logic, a "world state," properly constituted, would actually be the *least* tyrannical government.[26]) Lincoln, in the "House Divided" and throughout the 1850s, essentially accepts Madison's argument—as evidenced, if by nothing else, by the extent to which he strove, as president, to avoid enforcing ideological consensus on Southern dissenters. What the "House Divided" represents, however, is Lincoln's realization—the qualification he offers to Madison's theoretical scheme—that humanity alone may not be a sufficient foundation for republican 'virtue.' His contention here dates back to his accidental insight, noted above, in his 1854 speech on the Kansas-Nebraska Act—that Southern slaveholders were able to defend the 'peculiar institution' even while recognizing the humanity of the slaves. To the extent that this is possible, then the "minimum consensus" must be, for better or worse, narrower than Madison (and Emerson and Whitman) contended: human unity must be reinforced by something more specific.

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[25] More specifically, Madison views consensus as a positive good—he's not a pluralist—insofar as it is a necessary precondition for republican government. To the extent that "consensus" is always or almost always artificial, however, Madison also views it as at least a potential evil.

[26] Again, I should be more precise: Madison believed that the scope of society should be as wide as possible, provided it remain within "a practicable sphere" (his words, in *Federalist 51*). The limits of a "practicable sphere," for Madison, are twofold: a society cannot be so large that representatives cannot travel between the capital and their district (*Federalist 14*); and it cannot be so large (*Federalist 51*) that representatives become effectively unaccountable to their constituents or ignorant of their interests.

What is that "something"? That question would occupy the great majority of Lincoln's significant speeches and writings throughout the 1850s—culminating in, but certainly not limited to, the "House Divided."

Abraham Lincoln, American

Given Rogers Smith's dictum that political elites will appeal simultaneously to multiple "stories of peoplehood" to expand their base of support, it's no surprise that Lincoln's conception of "what it means to be an American" shifted throughout his career. Often, indeed, he juggles several different, mutually exclusive positions in the same breath—openly mocking those who falsely interpreted Jefferson's Declaration to read that "all men are created equal except negroes," for instance, while simultaneously insisting (apparently to great applause) that

> I am not, nor ever have been in favor of bringing about in any way the social and political equality of the white and black races…I am not nor ever have been in favor of making voters or jurors of negroes, nor of qualifying them to hold office, nor to intermarry with white people; and I will say in addition to this that there is a physical difference between the white and black races which I believe will for ever forbid the two races living together on terms of social and political equality. And inasmuch as they cannot so live, while they do remain together there must be the position of superior and inferior, and I as much as any other man am in favor of having the superior position assigned to the white race.[27]

This is not to say, however, that Lincoln's conception of American identity was entirely arbitrary. In spite of his self-contradictions, it's possible to identify four particular

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Neither of these limits is absolute, however: both can be easily resolved with sufficient developments in transportation and communication technology.

[27] Lincoln, "Speech at Springfield, Illinois," SW, 477; "Fourth Lincoln-Douglas Debate, Charleston, Illinois," SW, 636. (The fourth L/D debate took place on September 18, 1858, just two months after Lincoln's Springfield speech—July 17—in which he mocked Douglas's misreading of Jefferson.) It's worth noting that Lincoln here seems to be working from the assumption that white supremacy is not a natural thing, but rather something that is arbitrarily "assigned" in society. Another accidental insight, perhaps—in other passages he takes it for granted that "the white race" is naturally supreme.

approaches to the question of American solidarity to which Lincoln appealed, in roughly chronological order, in his early works and writings. I'll discuss his cosmopolitan universalism—the conception implicit in the "House Divided"—in a later section. First, though, let's examine the other three.

Romantic Nationalism. In his earliest significant speech, the Lyceum Address of 1838, Lincoln opened with a decidedly Romantic celebration of American nationality. "In the great journal of things happening under the sun," he began,

> we, the American people, find our account running…We find ourselves in the peaceful possession, of the fairest portion of the earth, as regards extent of territory, fertility of soil, and salubrity of climate. We find ourselves under the government of a system of political institutions, conducing more essentially to the ends of civil and religious liberty, than any of which the history of former times tells us. …We toiled not in the acquirement or establishment of them—they are a legacy bequeathed us, by a *once* hardy, brave and patriotic, but *now* lamented and departed race of ancestors. …This task of gratitude to our fathers, justice to ourselves, duty to posterity, and love for our species in general, all imperatively require us faithfully to perform.[28]

In this short passage, Lincoln appeals simultaneously to two of the defining characteristics of Romantic nationalism: *nature*, a particular "territory, soil, and climate" that gives the nation its distinct and authentic identity; and *history*, the process by which that identity took shape through the conscious acts of heroic national "fathers." Emerson, of course, had appealed to the same two characteristics. Unlike Emerson, though—for whom nature and history both lead to an appreciation for the *universal*—Lincoln here limits his celebration of nature and history to a specifically *national* scope. Later in the address, he appeals to a third key component of Romantic nationalism: *autonomy*, the extent to which the nation is able to protect its 'purity' from pernicious outside influence. "Shall we expect some transatlantic military giant, to step the Ocean, and crush us at a

blow? Never! All the armies of Europe, Asia and Africa combined…could not by force, take a drink from the Ohio, or make a track on the Blue Ridge, in a trial of a thousand years."[29]

Had he proceeded in this vein, Lincoln would have found himself in good company: it was the age of Romantic nationalism, after all, and many, even most, of Lincoln's contemporaries accepted this conception of American identity whole hog. It was precisely at this time, for instance, that the *Democratic Review*, John O'Sullivan's nationalist rag, was at the height of its popularity; and as Walter McDougall notes, Americans at the time were almost unanimously committed to this notion of national autonomy or freedom from European influence.[30] After the Lyceum Address, though, Lincoln largely dropped this Romantic approach to nationality: like any good politician, he referred to "our fathers" as model Americans throughout his career, but only rarely did he again appeal to "the fairest portion of the land" as a source of national unity.[31] Indeed, the young Lincoln only returned to this unmitigated Romanticism on one more occasion,

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[28] Lincoln, "Address to the Young Men's Lyceum of Springfield, Illinois," SW, 28.

[29] Ibid., 28-29; note also the reference to the "love of our species in general" as a justification for *national* solidarity—an extension of Mill's liberal nationalism, as quoted above. Anthony Smith identifies seven basic components of Romantic nationalism: Identity and Authenticity, the unique, distinctive "national character" of a people; Nature and History, the sources of that character; Autonomy, the nation's ability to maintain its character without "external interference"; and Unity and Fraternity, necessary for the tangible expression of the "national will." Lincoln appeals to all seven here: America's distinct nature and history gives it its own authentic identity; its isolation enables it to remain essentially autonomous; and it is the "task" of its people to transmit that identity "to the latest generation that fate shall permit the world to know." Ibid., 28; Smith, *The Antiquity of Nations* (Malden, MA: Polity, 2004), 246-49.

[30] Indeed, George Tucker—quoted by McDougall—identifies this commitment to autonomy as the "test of orthodoxy to American patriots" in the mid-nineteenth century. McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State: The American Encounter with the World Since 1776* (New York: Mariner, 1997), 49-50. On the *Democratic Review*, see, e.g., Hans Kohn, *American Nationalism* (New York: Macmillan, 1957), 61-62.

[31] During his presidency, Lincoln made the nationalist argument somewhat more frequently—as in the Gettysburg Address, perhaps most famously, in which he refers to the battlefield itself as hallowed ground. Before his presidency, however, appeals like this are practically nonexistent. The most prominent exception is an unpublished, unfinished fragment on Niagara Falls that Lincoln wrote sometime around the fall of 1848, in which he ascribes the "mysterious power" of the falls to the fact that it "calls up the indefinite past": "When Columbus first sought this continent—when Christ suffered on the cross…nay,

in an 1839 speech on Martin Van Buren's economic program. Closing with a sudden burst of eloquence, Lincoln declared, in true republican fashion:

> If ever I feel the soul within me elevate and expand to those dimensions not wholly unworthy of its Almighty Architect, it is when I contemplate the cause of my country, deserted by all the world beside, and I standing up boldly and alone and hurling defiance at her victorious oppressors. Here, without contemplating consequences, before High Heaven, and in the face of the world, I swear eternal fidelity to the just cause, as I deem it, of the land of my life, my liberty and my love. …Let none faulter (sic), who thinks he is right, and we may succeed. But, if after all, we shall fail, be it so. We still shall have the proud consolation of saying to our consciences, and to the departed shade of our country's freedom, that the cause approved of in our judgment, and adored of our hearts, in disaster, in chains, in torture, in death, we NEVER faultered (sic) in defending.[32]

Here, too, Lincoln couples the republican theme of standing for a lost cause with all the standard tropes of Romantic nationalism—appealing to national unity around an authentic identity grounded in nature, "the land of my life." For the next two decades, though, this would not be a central theme of Lincoln's conception of 'national' unity. Instead, the young Lincoln—a protégé, as always, of Henry Clay—took a more practical approach, promoting Clay's "American System" of internal improvements, protectionist tariffs, and industrialization as a means to unity through economic interdependence.[33] That system, in turn, reinforced a larger, essentially Hamiltonian view which identified American unity with a common attachment to civic institutions.

The "American System." Realizing the American System in practice was the preeminent aim of Lincoln's early career. As a lawyer, he devoted much of his energy to representing corporations—primarily railroad corporations—that were dedicated to the

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even, when Adam first came from the hand of his Maker—then as now, Niagara was roaring here." "Fragment on Niagara Falls," SW, 222-23.

[32] Lincoln, "Speech on the Sub-Treasury at Springfield, Illinois," SW, 65.

[33] Michael Lind notes that Clay initially conceived of his "American System" as a *Pan*-American system, linking the entire Western Hemisphere. Lind, *What Lincoln Believed*, 82.

economic development of the American interior;[34] and in keeping with "the principles of true republicanism," he made internal improvement the defining theme of his earliest political campaigns.[35]

Lincoln's early speeches and writings on the "American System" did not connect Clay's economic scheme explicitly to the republican cause of national unity. During his brief stint in the House of Representatives (1847-49), however, he began to make the argument more overtly:

> Nothing is so *local* as to not be of some *general* benefit. Take, for instance, the Illinois and Michigan canal. Considered apart from it's (sic) effects, it is perfectly local. Every inch of it is within the state of Illinois. …In a very few days (after its opening) we were all gratified to learn, among other things, that sugar had been carried from New-Orleans through this canal to Buffalo in New-York. …(T)he result is, that the New Orleans merchant sold his sugar a little *dearer*; and the people of Buffalo sweetened their coffee a little *cheaper*, than before—a benefit resulting *from* the canal, not to Illinois where the canal *is*, but to Louisiana and New-York where it is *not*.[36]

Even here, the point—that development promotes interdependence, which in turn produces a stronger bond of unity and solidarity among a people—is really only implied; indeed, Lincoln's speech here was directed primarily at individuals who refused to pay for developments in other states precisely because they felt no such common bond.

This decidedly Hamiltonian conception of civic nationalism emerges more clearly, though, in the Lyceum Address (subtitled "The Perpetuation of Our Political Institutions"), which asserts explicitly that Americans are united by the complex set of

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[34] Ibid., 96-97.
[35] Lincoln, "To the People of Sangamo County," SW, 1. This letter—Lincoln's first significant public writing, published in 1832—is almost exclusively devoted to the subject of internal development. (He might have diversified a bit more: he finished eighth out of thirteen candidates.)
[36] Lincoln, "Speech in the U.S. House of Representatives on Internal Improvements," SW, 191.

political and economic institutions that constitute the central government.[37] There, Lincoln warned that "mob law," as an expression of general disregard for the legal process, destroys "the *attachment* of the People" to their institutions, which in turn is "the strongest bulwark of any Government…particularly of those constituted like ours."[38] Democratic, self-governing communities—"those constituted like ours"—depend, Lincoln argued, on a sense of loyalty (reflected in obedience) to the state. Americans, he asserted in a famous passage, have made the Framers' democratic experiment "successful" precisely because of their civic attachments: "I know the American people are *much* attached to their Government;—I know they would suffer *much* for its sake;—I know they would endure evils long and patiently, before they would ever think of exchanging it."[39] Preserving that loyalty, Lincoln concluded, is the key to preserving the Union—and a stronger Union, by extension, will generate a stronger loyalty.

> Let reverence for the laws, be breathed by every American mother, to the lisping babe, that prattles on her lap—let it be taught in schools, in seminaries, and in colleges;—let it be written in Primmers (sic), spelling books, and in Almanacs;—let it be preached from the pulpit, proclaimed in legislative halls, and enforced in courts of justice. And in short, let it become the *political religion* of the nation; and let the old and the young, the rich and the poor, the grave and the gay, of all sexes and tongues, and colors and conditions, sacrifice unceasingly upon its altars.[40]

Reinforcing that "religion" requires not only the civic education Lincoln describes in the Lyceum Address, but also the stronger material bond generated by a unifying economic system. Because the establishment of that system was Clay's mission, it is he, more than

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[37] This is also Michael Lind's argument: Lincoln is best understood as a Hamiltonian, in spite of his Jeffersonian reputation. Lind, *What Lincoln Believed*, 30-32.
[38] Lincoln, "Address to the Young Men's Lyceum of Springfield, Illinois," SW, 31. (Lincoln's crusade against "mobocracy" is also at the center of the plot of the Henry Fonda film *Young Mr. Lincoln*—demonstrating that it's also central to Lincoln's popular image.)
[39] Ibid., 34, 32.
[40] Ibid., 32-33.

anyone else, who is most responsible for the "perpetuation of our political institutions"—a point Lincoln makes explicitly at the outset of his 1852 eulogy for Clay, which ties his idol's life directly to the U.S. itself.

> The infant nation, and the infant child began the race of life together. For three quarters of a century they have travelled hand in hand. They have been companions ever. The nation has passed its perils, and is free, prosperous, and powerful. The child has reached his manhood, his middle age, his old age, and is dead. In all that has concerned the nation the man ever sympathised; and now the nation mourns for the man.[41]

Clay is worth celebrating and emulating, Lincoln argues here, partly for his "deep devotion to the cause of human liberty," but primarily for his status as "that truly national man" who "knew no North, no South, no East, no West, but only the Union, which held them all in its sacred circle."[42] It is for this reason that Lincoln, in his Kansas-Nebraska speech, identifies the 'right' course of action with whatever is necessary to "perpetuate" those institutions: without them, the solidarity on which the American "experiment" hinges will be lost. I mentioned this passage above, but it's worth quoting in full:

> Some men, mostly whigs, who condemn the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, nevertheless hesitate to go for its restoration, lest they be thrown in company with the abolitionists. Will they allow me as an old whig to tell them good humoredly, that I think this is very silly? Stand with anybody that stands RIGHT. Stand with him while he is right and PART with him when he goes wrong. Stand WITH the abolitionist in restoring the Missouri Compromise; and stand AGAINST him when he attempts to repeal the fugitive slave law. In the latter case you stand with the southern disunionist. What of that? you are still right. In both cases you are right. In both cases you oppose the dangerous extremes. In both you stand on middle ground and hold the ship level and steady. In both you are national and nothing less than national. This is good old whig ground. To desert such ground, because of any company, is to be less than a whig—less than a man—less than an American.[43]

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[41] Lincoln, "Eulogy on Henry Clay at Springfield, Illinois," SW, 259. (Lincoln here is playing off the fact that Clay was born in 1776.)
[42] Ibid., 264, 270, 260. (In the last, Lincoln is quoting an obituary written by an otherwise anti-Clay newspaper.)
[43] See footnote 3.

The obvious problem with Lincoln's civic and economic nationalism, of course, is that it compels him to endorse the institution of slavery, at least for the foreseeable future. Abolitionism in the 1840s and 50s was a "disunionist" movement, and everybody knew it: its realization in practice would have led to the Union's demise, a consequence the abolitionists were more than willing to accept. Frederick Douglass dismissed the Fourth of July as a sham holiday; William Lloyd Garrison set fire to the Constitution in his public speeches. To the extent that those institutions, symbols and documents were necessary to generate the solidarity on which American democracy rested, Lincoln as a defender of democracy—Lind's "Great Democrat"—had to condemn abolitionism on principle. "Much as I hate slavery," he said in 1854 (and repeated throughout the decade), "I would consent to the extension of it rather than see the Union dissolved, just as I would consent to any GREAT evil, to avoid a GREATER one."[44] He borrowed that position, indeed, from Clay, who opposed slavery on principle (Lincoln claimed) despite being himself a slaveholder—a lifestyle Lincoln pretty clearly endorsed, in opposition to the radicalism of the abolitionists.

> He did not perceive, that on a question of human right, the negroes were to be excepted from the human race. And yet Mr. Clay was the owner of slaves. Cast into life where slavery was already widely spread and deeply seated, he did not perceive, as I think no wise man has perceived, how it could be at *once* eradicated, without producing a greater evil…Those who would shiver into fragments the Union of these States; tear to tatters its now venerated constitution; and even burn the last copy of the Bible, rather than slavery should continue a single hour…have received, and are receiving their just execration; and the name, and opinions, and influence of Mr. Clay, are fully, and, as I trust, effectually and enduringly, arrayed against them.[45]

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[44] Lincoln, "Speech on the Kansas-Nebraska Act at Peoria, Illinois," SW, 333.
[45] Lincoln, "Eulogy on Henry Clay at Springfield Illinois," SW, 269.

Civic nationalism almost invariably has an ethnic component, and Lincoln's was no exception. Despite his stirring appeal for unity "of all sexes and tongues, and colors and conditions" in the Lyceum Address, his willingness to accept slavery as a condition for that unity indicates that Lincoln was primarily concerned with solidarity among *white* Americans. If the "preservation of our political institutions" required the continued exclusion, enslavement and subjugation of blacks, so be it.

To the extent that we conceive of Lincoln solely in these civic nationalist terms—as the "Savior of the Union," devoted to "our political institutions" above all else—we can hardly fit him into any sort of cosmopolitan tradition. What marks Lincoln's political development in the 1850s, however, is the gradual realization that civic nationalism of this sort was simply not sufficient to generate the unifying American solidarity necessary to overcome the growing sectional crisis. The Hamiltonian in him recognized, rightly, that common institutions (political, cultural, and economic) do generate a mutual affinity between the individuals they encompass; indeed, up to the end, Lincoln never wavered from the belief that such affinity would be impossible to generate without them. But the irresolvable nature of the slavery conflict—the degree to which slavery broke down whatever bonds of solidarity may have existed between Northerners and Southerners, even limited to whites alone—made it clear that institutions alone were not enough. That realization came rapidly: less than a year after his Kansas-Nebraska address—and barely three years after his eulogy for Clay—Lincoln was writing of "the signal failure of Henry Clay" and declaring, in a sudden fit of pessimism, that "there is no peaceful extinction of slavery in prospect for us."[46] Regenerating bonds of solidarity among Americans

[46] Lincoln, Letter to George Robertson, August 15, 1855. SW, 359.

required something more than a mere commitment to national institutions; it also required some means of reaching consensus on the slavery question—the promotion of which, both Lincoln and Douglas well knew, would push those institutions (at least) to the brink of collapse. Thus it was Douglas, not Lincoln, who defended civic nationalism (white-based, of course) in the 1858 campaign:

> why cannot this Union exist forever divided into free and slave States as our fathers made it? It can thus exist if each State will carry out the principles upon which our institutions were founded, to wit: the right of each State to do as it pleases, without meddling with its neighbors. Just act upon that great principle, and this Union will not only live forever, but it will extend and expand until it covers the whole continent, and make this confederacy one grand ocean-bound republic.[47]

But Lincoln, by then, knew better.

> The great variety of the local institutions in the States, springing from differences in the soil, differences in the face of the country, and in the climate, are bonds of Union. They do not make "a house divided against itself," but they make a house united. …But can this question of slavery be considered as among *these* varieties in the institutions of the country? I leave it to you to say whether, in the history of our government, this institution of slavery has not always failed to be a bond of union, and, on the contrary, been an apple of discord and element of division in the house. …I believe we shall not have peace upon the question until the opponents of slavery arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction; or, on the other hand, that its advocates will push it forward until it shall become alike lawful in all the States…North as well as South.[48]

Realizing that "peace" required not only "the perpetuation of political institutions," but also some way of resolving the slavery question, either through ideological consensus—America as "nationless idea-state"[49]—or through consensus of a different kind. Gradually, Lincoln came to the conclusion that American unity had to be ideological in nature. In many of his speeches and writings in the 1850s, however, Lincoln also

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[47] Douglas, "Third Lincoln-Douglas Debate, Jonesboro, Illinois," SW, 600.
[48] Lincoln, "First Lincoln-Douglas Debate, Ottawa, Illinois," SW, 513-14.
[49] Lind, *The Next American Nation* (New York: The Free Press, 1995).

considered an alternative approach: namely, the possibility that the slavery crisis could be resolved through a policy of racial separation and forced homogenization—by making America, quite literally, a country for whites only.

Race. Even as Lincoln was developing his argument for universal human equality from the Declaration of Independence, he simultaneously, and consistently, agreed with Douglas that America was at bottom an ethnocultural nation, whose continued solidarity depended on racial homogenization. Initially, this concern for racial purity led Lincoln, as it led Clay, to support (across party lines) the Jacksonian policy of Indian removal.[50] By 1858, however, Lincoln, like his rival Douglas, was far more concerned with preserving racial purity (such as it was) against the "threat" posed by the presence of blacks, both slave and free. For this reason, Lincoln in the Douglas debates effectively endorsed the Supreme Court's assertion, in *Dred Scott*, that blacks by virtue of their blackness could not (or, at least, should not) obtain the privileges of full membership in the American community. "I am not, nor ever have been in favor of making voters or jurors of negroes," he declared at the outset of the fourth debate,

> nor of qualifying them to hold office, nor to intermarry with white people; and I will say in addition to this that there is a physical difference between the white and black races which I believe will for ever forbid the two races living together on terms of social and political equality. …I will add to this that I have never seen to my knowledge a man, woman or child who was in favor of producing a perfect equality, social and political, between negroes and white men.[51]

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[50] Lind, *What Lincoln Believed*, 73. Lincoln went on the public record about Indian removal policy only once in his early career, and then only to discuss a controversy over its cost: "Mr. Douglass says that the removal of the Indians to the country west of the Mississippi created much of the expenditure of 1838. I have examined the public documents…and find that less was paid for the removal of Indians in that than in some former years." Lincoln, "Speech on the Sub-Treasury at Springfield, Illinois," SW, 60. The whole debate took for granted that Indian removal was good and sensible policy in and of itself.

[51] Lincoln, "Fourth Lincoln-Douglas Debate, Charleston, Illinois," SW, 636-37.

Here, Lincoln is making two separate arguments. First, against his own defense of the Declaration of Independence, he asserts a primitive theory of racial inequality: whites are naturally superior to blacks, he argues (again, to great applause), by virtue of their whiteness. Second, he asserts the familiar ethnoculturalist view that the solidarity underlying American institutions is a racial solidarity: Americans (white, by definition) sacrifice for the common interest out of a felt affinity for their fellow whites. Here, perhaps, was the answer to Lincoln's dilemma, a way to reconcile North and South: civic institutions alone could not generate the necessary solidarity, but they could be reinforced by reminding Northerners and Southerners of their common racial bond. Accomplishing this, however, required not only that American citizenship be defined on ethnocultural grounds: as Rogers Smith has observed, after all, that policy was already in place, reinforced by the Supreme Court in *Dred Scott*.[52] It also required something more drastic: an active policy of national ethnic purification, physically separating whites from blacks (and Indians) and, to the greatest extent possible, shipping all the non-whites out of 'American' territory. Such a policy, indeed, was necessary not only to regenerate American solidarity; it was necessary also—given Lincoln's belief in the natural inequality of the races—for the "perpetuation of our political institutions," which, being republican in nature, assume the political equality of all participants.

Rarely do we associate any of this tripe with Lincoln. Throughout the 1850s, though, and even into his presidency, it was one of the central components of his political thinking, a driving force behind many, if not all, of the positions he took on significant

[52] Lincoln disagreed with the *Dred Scott* decision, of course, as he made clear in his well-known speech against it. But he did not disagree with the Court on these grounds: as he and Douglas both made clear in the Fourth Debate, both men agreed that blacks ought not to be made citizens, though they also agreed—against the Court—that citizenship policy was best left to the states. Ibid., 675.

public issues. Lincoln rose to prominence initially as a Free-Soiler, opposed to slavery's extension to the territories—but (like most Free-Soilers, in fact) Lincoln was less concerned with keeping the territories *free* than he was with keeping them *white*. "We want them for the homes of free white people," he said in his Kansas-Nebraska speech. "This they cannot be, to any considerable extent, if slavery shall be planted within them. Slave states are places for poor white people to remove FROM, not to remove TO."[53] Indeed, Lincoln opposed slavery not merely because it denied the essential humanity of a whole race, but also because it led to "miscegenation" and other undesirable forms of racial mixing—a prospect which "horrified" the Lincoln of 1857.

> There is a natural disgust in the minds of nearly all white people, to the idea of an indiscriminate amalgamation of the white and black races; and…Judge Douglas is especially horrified at the thought of the mixing blood by the white and black races: agreed for once—a thousand times agreed. There are white men enough to marry all the white women, and black men enough to marry all the black women; and so let them be married. On this point we fully agree with the Judge; and when he shall show that his policy is better adapted to prevent amalgamation than ours we shall drop ours, and adopt his.

Lincoln—here, in his speech against the *Dred Scott* ruling—went into great detail:

> Let us see. In 1850 there were in the United States, 405,751, mulattoes (sic). Very few of these are the offspring of whites and *free* blacks; nearly all have sprung from black *slaves* and white masters. A separation of the races is the only perfect preventive of amalgamation but as an immediate separation is impossible the next best thing is to *keep* them apart *where* they are not already together. If white and black people never get together in Kansas, they will never mix blood in Kansas. That is at least one self-evident truth. …In 1850 there were in the free states, 56,649 mulattoes; but for the most part they were not born there—they came from the slave States, ready made up. In the same year the slave States had 348,874 mulattoes all of home production. …In New Hampshire, the State which goes farthest towards equality between the races, there are just 184 Mulattoes while there are in Virginia—how many do you think? 79,775, being 23,126 more than in all the free States together.

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[53] Lincoln, "Speech on the Kansas-Nebraska Act at Peoria, Illinois," SW, 331. Lincoln reiterated the point four years later, in an 1858 "Speech at Chicago, Illinois": "The Judge (Douglas) regales us with the terrible enormities that take place by the mixture of races; that the inferior race bears the superior down. Why, Judge, if we do not let them get together in the Territories they won't mix there." SW, 455.

> These statistics show that slavery is the greatest source of amalgamation…Yet Judge Douglas dreads the slightest restraints on the spread of slavery, and the slightest human recognition of the negro, as tending horribly to amalgamation.[54]

Consequently, Lincoln desired not only the eventual abolition of slavery, but also "the separation of the races" more generally—preserving 'America for Americans' (whites, in other words) and expelling non-whites from U.S. soil altogether.[55] "My first impulse," he concluded in 1854, "would be to free all the slaves, and send them to Liberia,—to their own native land."[56] Lincoln inherited his support for "colonization" from Henry Clay, who'd been a founding member of the American Colonization Society in 1816; indeed he concluded his eulogy for Clay in 1852 with a stirring tribute to that very organization. "This suggestion of the possible redemption of the African race and African continent, was made twenty-five years ago. …May it indeed be realized!"[57] Lincoln (who, James D. Lockett notes, became "probably the most ardent and eloquent spokesman for the cause") frequently dressed his support for colonization with such imagery, appealing simultaneously to the Christian notion of redemption and the liberal idea of individual freedom.[58] Underlying this, though, was always a belief that "the races" were better off apart—as he made clear to a delegation of free black leaders in 1862, attempting (successfully, as it happened) to rally their support for the project:

> You and we are different races. We have between us a broader difference than exists between almost any other two races. Whether it is right or wrong I need not discuss, but this physical difference is a great disadvantage to us both, as I

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[54] Lincoln, "Speech on the Dred Scott Decision at Springfield, Illinois," SW, 397, 400-01.
[55] Ibid., 402.
[56] Lincoln, "Speech on the Kansas-Nebraska Act at Peoria, Illinois," SW, 316. It doesn't seem to have occurred to Lincoln that most slaves by then were American-born, or that those who had been transported from Africa probably had not come from Liberia.
[57] Lincoln, "Eulogy on Henry Clay at Springfield, Illinois," SW, 271.
[58] James D. Lockett, "Abraham Lincoln and Colonization: An Episode That Ends in Tragedy at L'Ile à Vache, Haiti, 1863-1864," *Journal of Black Studies* 21:4 (June 1991): 430.

> think your race suffer very greatly, many of them by living among us, while ours suffer from your presence. In a word we suffer on each side. …It is better for us both, therefore, to be separated.[59]

Implicit in all of this—his support for a free West, for gradual abolition, and for eventual colonization—is the assumption that the line between "us" and "them" is a racial (ethnocultural) line, that the solidarity on which American republican institutions are founded rests on a common ethnic heritage, and thus that the preservation of that heritage is the key to the "perpetuation of our institutions."

Ethnocultural Americanism, however, was not Lincoln's only approach to the solidarity question; indeed it's not even the approach we typically ascribe to him. In the end, moreover, it is not the approach he adopted: though it offered a way to overcome the weakness of civic nationalism, which couldn't generate the necessary solidarity on its own, it quickly became apparent that ethnoculturalism was unworkable too. Though Lincoln continued to push for colonization throughout the 1850s and 60s, he also realized very early on that the American Colonization Society was promoting an "impossible" project: absolute racial separation, for better or worse, was a pipe dream.[60] Institutions founded on ethnocultural solidarity, therefore, would necessarily be unfairly exclusionary and oppressive in practice—a point he made repeatedly in response to Stephen Douglas's assertion that the Declaration of Independence referred only to "British subjects":

> Now, I ask you in all soberness, if all these things…do not tend to rub out the sentiment of liberty in the country, and to transform this Government into a government of some other form. …What are these arguments? They are the arguments that kings have made for enslaving the people in all ages of the world. …Turn in whatever way you will—whether it come from the mouth of a King, an excuse for enslaving the people of his country, or from the mouth of men of one race as a reason for enslaving the men of another race, it is all the same old

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[59] Lincoln, "Address on Colonization to a Committee of Colored Men, Washington, D.C.," SW 2, 353-54. See also Lockett, "Abraham Lincoln and Colonization," 434-35.
[60] Lincoln, "Speech on the Kansas-Nebraska Act at Peoria, Illinois," SW, 316.

> serpent…I should like to know if taking this old Declaration of Independence…and making exceptions to it where will it stop. If one man says it does not mean a negro, why not another say it does not mean some other man? If that declaration is not the truth, let us get the Statute book, in which we find it and tear it out![61]

Lincoln's point here hints at a second, even more important problem with ethnocultural solidarity as a basis for American institutions: Douglas's contention that "this country was made on the white basis…for the benefit of white men and their posterity for ever" simply does not correspond, and never has corresponded, to the common conception of 'America' as a political entity.[62] "We run our memory back over the pages of history," Lincoln argued in 1858,

> …and we fix upon something that happened away back…We find a race of men living in that day whom we claim as our fathers and grandfathers; they were iron men, they fought for the principle that they were contending for; and we understood that by what they then did it has followed that the degree of prosperity that we now enjoy has come to us. …But after we have done all this we have not yet reached the whole. There is something else connected with it. We have besides these men…perhaps half our people who are not descendants at all of these men[63]…If they look back through this history to trace their connection with those days by blood, they find they have none, they cannot carry themselves back into that glorious epoch and make themselves feel that they are part of us, but when they look through that old Declaration of Independence they find that those old men say that "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal," and then they feel that that moral sentiment taught in that day evidences their relation to those men…and that they have a right to claim it as though they were blood of the blood, and flesh of the flesh of the men who wrote that Declaration…and so they are.[64]

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[61] Lincoln, "Speech at Chicago, Illinois," SW, 456-57.

[62] Douglas, "First Lincoln-Douglas Debate, Ottawa, Illinois," SW, 504. The first Douglas debate took place on August 21, 1858, a month and ten days after Lincoln's Chicago speech; in the interim, Douglas had modified his interpretation of the Declaration to include all *white* men ("men of European birth and descent"), as opposed to merely those of British descent. Ibid., 504. Lincoln mocked Douglas for this flip-flop in many of his stock speeches; cf. Lincoln, "Speech at Springfield, Illinois," SW, 477.

[63] Because he is speaking in response to Douglas's earlier (British-only) interpretation of the Declaration, Lincoln's referring strictly to Europeans here, of "German, Irish, French and Scandinavian" rather than British descent. In subsequent paragraphs, however (already cited above), Lincoln extends this further to include non-whites as well—a move Douglas was never willing to make.

[64] Lincoln, "Speech at Chicago, Illinois," SW, 455-56.

To argue otherwise, as Douglas had done (not to mention Lincoln himself), required a radical (and ultimately unsustainable) reinterpretation of the historical documents, images and symbols that formed the basis of 'American' identity. Such a reinterpretation, Lincoln argued in his better moments, would transform American institutions in such a way as to make them almost unrecognizable. "The fourth of July has not quite dwindled away," he wrote to George Robertson in 1855 (echoing Whitman's "A Boston Ballad," published the same year, and Frederick Douglass's own Fourth of July sermon); "it is still a great day—*for burning fire-crackers!!!*"[65]

It is for this reason that Lincoln, in the end, turned to an alternative conception of American solidarity, grounded not on ethnocultural homogeneity or (solely) on common civic institutions, but rather on the cosmopolitan principle of shared humanity—a humanity, as he asserted in the Lyceum Address, that could unite "the old and the young, the rich and the poor, the grave and the gay, of all sexes and tongues, and colors and conditions." But—because shared humanity alone was apparently not sufficient, in 1858, to save the Union—Lincoln's cosmopolitanism, unlike Madison's, Emerson's and Whitman's, would have to be cosmopolitanism with a twist.

Cosmopolitan Consensus

Lincoln's cosmopolitan sensibility is evident from his earliest public speeches—not only the Lyceum Address, which defends liberal nationalism out of "love for our

[65] Lincoln, Letter to George Robertson, SW, 359.

species in general,"[66] but also his 1852 Clay eulogy, which celebrates Clay not only as a "national man" but also (indeed, primarily) as a cosmopolitan liberal:

> Mr. Clay's predominant sentiment, from first to last, was a deep devotion to the cause of human liberty—a strong sympathy with the oppressed every where, and an ardent wish for their elevation. With him, this was a primary and all controlling passion. Subsidiary to this was the conduct of his whole life. He loved his country partly because it was his own country, but mostly because it was a free country; and he burned with a zeal for its advancement, prosperity and glory, because he saw in such, the advancement, prosperity and glory, of human liberty, human right and human nature. He desired the prosperity of his countrymen partly because they were his countrymen, but chiefly to show the world that freemen could be prosperous.[67]

Of course, it's one thing to feel an attachment to humanity at large; it's quite another to argue that this attachment should be the basis for *national* solidarity, the fellow-feeling on which republican institutions depend. Clay, the civic nationalist par excellence, certainly would not have made that leap; nor, for that matter, would the liberal nationalists—Montesquieu, Herder, Mill, and the like—that Lincoln is echoing in these early addresses. Lincoln's conception of American identity, consequently, remained predominantly ethnocultural well into the 1850s: in his Kansas-Nebraska speech, for instance, he identified solidarity with the "spirit of mutual concession"—mutual among whites, that is—that produced the Constitution and the Missouri Compromise, both of which 'saved the Union' by tolerating slavery.[68] By 1858, however, he knew that this was insufficient. Between Kansas-Nebraska and the "House Divided," Lincoln came to

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[66] Lincoln, "Address to the Young Men's Lyceum of Springfield, Illinois," *op. cit.*
[67] Lincoln, "Eulogy on Henry Clay at Springfield, Illinois," SW, 264-65. Later in the eulogy—ironically, just before his apology for Clay's status as a slaveholder—Lincoln offers specifics: "Mr. Clay's efforts in behalf of the South Americans, and afterwards, in behalf of the Greeks, in the times of their respective struggles for civil liberty…(corroborate) what I have said was his ruling passion—a love of liberty and right, unselfishly, and for their own sakes." Ibid., 268.
[68] Ibid., 335.

the conclusion that America was not an ethnocultural nation, but an ideological one; its unity depended not on racial homogeneity, but on a shared cosmopolitan sensibility.

As early as 1854, Lincoln recognized that "the only one thing which ever endangers the Union"[69] was not ethnocultural diversity (the presence of "them" in "our" midst), but diversity of *opinion* on the question of slavery. Resolving that question, and eradicating that diversity, was the only way to preserve the Union in the long term.

> I leave it to you to say whether, in the history of our government, this institution of slavery has not always failed to be a bond of union, and, on the contrary, been an apple of discord and an element of division in the house. …I ask you to consider whether, so long as the moral constitution of men's minds shall continue to be the same…(that institution) will not continue an element of division? …If so, then I have a right to say that in regard to this question, the Union is a house divided against itself…[70]

Like Madison before him, Lincoln (even into his presidency) was reluctant to impose a particular set of principles on a society; as a disciple of Clay, the "Great Compromiser," he had devoted himself to maintaining peace without imposing such rigid consensus. But the collapse of American solidarity in the 1850s, Lincoln contended, resulted from a profound and fundamental ideological disagreement; Americans would again feel a mutual affinity only when that disagreement was resolved. There were only two viable options: the U.S. had to "become *all* one thing, or *all* the other."[71]

> I believe we shall not have peace upon the question until the opponents of slavery arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction; or, on the other hand, that its advocates will push it forward until it shall become alike lawful in all the States, old as well as new, North as well as South.[72]

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[69] Ibid., 333.
[70] Lincoln, "First Lincoln-Douglas Debate, Ottawa, Illinois," 514.
[71] Lincoln, "'House Divided' Speech at Springfield, Illinois," SW, 426.
[72] Lincoln, "First Lincoln-Douglas Debate, Ottawa, Illinois," SW, 514.

And for Lincoln, of course, only the former was acceptable: not only was slavery a great moral evil, it also violated the intent of the Founders, the "spirit of seventy-six" embodied in the Declaration of Independence.[73] Indeed Lincoln (a bit naively) insisted repeatedly that Americans until 1854 had always opposed the long-term extension of slavery: the Union had survived for eight decades "because, during all that time, until the introduction of the Nebraska Bill, the public mind did rest…in the belief that slavery was in course of ultimate extinction."[74] Consequently, though Lincoln rejected calls for immediate emancipation (fearing that it would do more harm than good), he maintained that the "ultimate extinction" of slavery—a phrase he repeated on numerous occasions—was the only way to preserve the Union "where our fathers originally placed it."[75]

> Our republican robe is soiled, and trailed in the dust. Let us repurify it. Let us turn and wash it white, in the spirit, if not the blood, of the Revolution. …Let us re-adopt the Declaration of Independence, and with it, the practices, and policy, which harmonize with it. Let north and south—let all Americans—let all lovers of liberty everywhere—join in the great and good work. If we do this, we shall not only have saved the Union; but we shall have so saved it, as to make, and to keep it, forever worthy of the saving. We shall have so saved it, that the succeeding millions of free happy people, the world over, shall rise up, and call us blessed, to the latest generations.[76]

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[73] Lincoln, "Speech on the Kansas-Nebraska Act at Peoria, Illinois," SW, 339; "Address at Cooper Institute, New York City," SW 2, 111-30.

[74] The Constitution and the Missouri Compromise were acceptable, consequently, only because they both operated in this vein. Both, Lincoln repeatedly asserted, essentially adopted a policy of containment with regard to slavery, accepting it (for the time being) as a necessary evil but containing it within the Southern states—where, Lincoln believed, it would have died "a natural death" if left alone. Lincoln, "Speech at Chicago, Illinois," SW, 447-48 (and see also the following footnote).

[75] Lincoln, "Third Lincoln-Douglas Debate, Jonesboro, Illinois," SW, 604. Lincoln asserted the "injustice" of slavery throughout his career, from his early days in the Illinois state legislature; Lincoln, "Protest in the Illinois Legislature on Slavery," SW, 18. It was not until 1845, though, that he made the argument for containment explicitly: "I hold it to be a paramount duty of us in the free states, due to the Union of the states, and perhaps to liberty itself (paradox though it may seem) to let the slavery of the other states alone; while, on the other hand, I hold it to be equally clear, that we should never knowingly lend ourselves directly or indirectly, to prevent that slavery from dying a natural death—to find new places for it to live in, when it can no longer exist in the old." Lincoln, letter to Williamson Durley, SW, 112.

[76] Lincoln, "Speech on the Kansas-Nebraska Act at Peoria, Illinois," SW, 339-40.

Restoring American solidarity thus required not just consensus, but a *particular* consensus—a common commitment, that is, to slavery's "ultimate extinction." That commitment, in turn, proceeded from two preconditions: first, an awareness of the personhood of the slave; and second, a cosmopolitan respect for the equal dignity of all human beings. It is for this reason that Lincoln, beginning with the Kansas-Nebraska address, appealed so heavily to Jefferson's argument for human equality—the "'central idea' in our political public opinion"—at the heart of the Declaration of Independence.[77] Jefferson, a slaveholder himself, may not have met the first condition; but nowhere was the idea of human equality—the "charter," Lincoln argued, "of our liberties"—better expressed than in the Declaration's famous opening passage.[78]

Initially, Lincoln believed that slavery persisted only because its defenders lacked that first condition, recognition of the humanity of the slave. Americans, Lincoln thought in 1854, already shared the necessary cosmopolitan sensibility; indeed, like Whitman, he believed that that sensibility was innate in human nature itself.

> Repeal the Missouri compromise—repeal all compromises—repeal the declaration of independence—repeal all past history, you still can not repeal human nature. It still will be the abundance of man's heart, that slavery extension is wrong; and out of the abundance of his heart, his mouth will continue to speak.[79]

Slavery could be justified, then, only by denying the humanity of the slave; it was "perfectly logical," in short, only "if there is no difference between hogs and negroes."[80] By extension, Douglas's support for a policy like Kansas-Nebraska, which promotes "the

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[77] Lincoln, "Portion of Speech at Republican Banquet in Chicago, Illinois," SW, 385.
[78] Lincoln, "Speech at Chicago, Illinois," SW, 457.
[79] Lincoln, "Speech on the Kansas-Nebraska Act at Peoria, Illinois," SW, 334. (Note the equivocation, though: "slavery *extension*" is wrong, not slavery itself. Ever the politician, Lincoln still did not want to ally himself too closely with the Abolitionists.)
[80] Ibid., 326.

perpetuity and nationalization of slavery" by extending it into new territories, proves of itself "that the Judge has no very vivid impression that the negro is a human."[81] To restore the national consensus, then, Lincoln needed only to persuade his opponents of the "humanity of the negro"—a fact, indeed, that most pro-slavery thinkers already implicitly accepted. Their preexisting "sense of justice, and human sympathy"—their "ancient faith" as Americans, as Lincoln put it—would take care of the rest.[82]

> If the negro is a *man*, why then my ancient faith teaches me that 'all men are created equal;' and that there can be no moral right in connection with one man's making a slave of another. …What I do say is, that no man is good enough to govern another man, *without that other's consent*. I say this is the leading principle—the sheet anchor of American republicanism. Our Declaration of Independence says…(that) the just powers of governments are derived from the consent of the governed. …Allow ALL the governed an equal voice in the government, and that, and only that is self-government.[83]

Lincoln thus attaches himself directly to the cosmopolitan vision of American nationality: the "ancient faith" on which American unity rests is shared innately, not only by U.S. citizens exclusively, but by all human beings together. Like Madison, Emerson and Whitman before him, Lincoln in these passages offers a conception of solidarity that (in theory) embraces all human beings equally, on the basis of a common human nature.

> Let past differences, as nothing be; and with steady eye on the real issue, let us reinaugurate the good old "central ideas" of the Republic. We *can* do it. The human heart *is* with us—God is with us. We shall again be able not to declare, that "all States as States, are equal," nor yet that "all citizens as citizens are equal," but to renew the broader, better declaration, including both these and much more, that "all *men* are created equal."[84]

As we have seen, though, and as Lincoln's own analysis indicated, this view of human nature was far too optimistic: many Americans, in fact, defended slavery as a

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[81] Lincoln, "First Lincoln-Douglas Debate, Ottawa, Illinois," SW, 514; "Speech on the Kansas-Nebraska Act at Peoria, Illinois," SW, 346.
[82] Ibid., 326-27.
[83] Ibid., 328.

"sacred right" even while conceding the personhood of the slaves.[85] The cosmopolitan tradition we have been tracing rests on the assumption that a cosmopolitan sensibility is implicit in humanity itself—that, in other words, all individuals are capable of feeling an affinity for others solely on the basis of their common humanity. But as Lincoln realized, however, and as so many critics of cosmopolitanism have observed, humanity isn't so trustworthy: slavery persisted not only because Americans failed to recognize the humanity of the slave, but also, and perhaps primarily, because many Americans simply didn't care. What was missing, in short, was not a recognition of humanity; what was missing was a recognition that humanity mattered.

> In (the time of the Revolution), our Declaration of Independence was held sacred by all, and thought to include all; but now, to aid in making the bondage of the negro universal and eternal, it is assailed, and sneered at, and construed, and hawked at, and torn, till, if its framers could rise from their graves, they could not at all recognize it.[86]

At the same time, though, it was difficult, if not impossible, for Lincoln to conceive of any other shared characteristic capable of generating the solidarity necessary for the preservation of the Union; as we've seen, all his other alternatives failed as well, for their own respective reasons. Moreover, and more importantly, Lincoln grew increasingly insistent, as the decade progressed, in his view that the cosmopolitan principle of human equality in the Declaration was the "central idea" on which American institutions rested. The question facing Lincoln in 1858, then, was how to preserve a Union founded on human solidarity, when human solidarity alone was not strong enough to save it.

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[84] Lincoln, "Portion of Speech at Republican Banquet in Chicago, Illinois," SW, 386.
[85] Lincoln, "Speech on the Kansas-Nebraska Act at Peoria, Illinois," SW, 338.
[86] Lincoln, "Speech on the Dred Scott Decision at Springfield, Illinois," SW, 396. Pro-slavery thinkers who denounced the Declaration as "a self-evident lie," indeed, did so precisely *because* they recognized the humanity of the slave; otherwise, it would hardly have been necessary to deny the notion of human equality. Lincoln, "Speech on the Kansas-Nebraska Act at Peoria, Illinois," SW, 339.

Lincoln's solution, implicit in the "House Divided," was to relocate American solidarity not in humanity, but in the cosmopolitan project itself: the Union would survive, he concluded, only as long as all Americans embraced the principle of universal human equality espoused in the Declaration of Independence.

> I have only to say, let us discard all this quibbling about this man and the other man—this race and that race and the other race being inferior, and therefore they must be placed in an inferior position—discarding our standard that we have left us. Let us discard all these things, and unite as one people throughout this land, until we shall once more stand up declaring that all men are created equal.[87]

Like the other figures we've considered, Lincoln (in his best moments) understood American solidarity as proceeding from a cosmopolitan attachment to humanity at large; but that attachment alone, in 1858, was not sufficient. Rather, the solidarity underlying American institutions had to be a *universalistic*, ideological solidarity, connecting only those who felt the same universal human affinity. For Transcendentalists, of course (and, implicitly, for Madison too), this affinity was a defining characteristic of human nature; indeed, Madison could reconcile his republicanism with a theoretically universal state only to the extent that he could take human solidarity for granted. Lincoln, by contrast, recognized more explicitly that many human beings—those, for instance, who denounced the Declaration of Independence as "a self-evident lie"—simply felt no such affinity. What was "self-evident" to Jefferson, as Peter Parish observes, Lincoln had to understand merely as a "proposition," as "something that has to be demonstrated and proved" precisely because it could not be taken for granted.[88] And to the extent that that affinity was the basis for republican government in America, Lincoln in the "House Divided" concluded that the Union would survive only if such individuals were assimilated—or,

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[87] Lincoln, "Speech at Chicago, Illinois," SW, 458.

failing that, excluded outright. If Madison, Emerson and Whitman had understood "my fellow Americans" to mean "my fellow humans," Lincoln understood it here as "my fellow cosmopolitans."

> So I say in relation to the principle that all men are created equal, let it be as nearly reached as we can. If we cannot give freedom to every creature, let us do nothing that will impose slavery upon any other creature. …Let us then turn this government back into the channel in which the framers of the Constitution originally placed it. Let us stand firmly by each other. …I leave you, hoping that the lamp of liberty will burn in your bosoms until there shall no longer be a doubt that all men are created free and equal.[89]

Conclusion

Lincoln's cosmopolitanism, consequently, is of a very different breed from the cosmopolitanism inherent in the works of Madison and the Transcendentalists: rather than grounding American solidarity in humanity generally, Lincoln concludes—in speeches like the "House Divided," at least—that the Union depends on an *ideological* solidarity linking all those who adhere to the cosmopolitan principles in Jefferson's Declaration. Taken to its logical conclusion, such a position prevents Lincoln from accepting Madison's optimistic (though potentially imperialistic) opinion that American-style institutions could conceivably encompass all individuals, regardless of race or creed: for Lincoln, American institutions could be all-inclusive, but only insofar as all individuals shared the Jeffersonian "creed" of universal human equality. In spite of this difference, though, the Lincoln of the "House Divided" is still very strongly connected with the Jeffersonian/Madisonian tradition (or "the Jeffersonian, Washingtonian, and Madisonian fashion," as he called it in the Douglas debates).[90] Lincoln, as I noted at the

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[88] Peter J. Parish, *The North and the Nation in the Era of the Civil War*, eds. Adam I. P. Smith and Susan-Mary Grant (New York: Fordham, 2003), 214.
[89] Lincoln, "Speech at Chicago, Illinois," SW, 458.
[90] Lincoln, "First Lincoln-Douglas Debate, Ottawa, Illinois," SW, 516.

outset, is rarely understood as a cosmopolitan thinker, but the description is (at least at certain moments) nonetheless appropriate.

Unfortunately, to the extent that scholars tend to read American political thought entirely in terms of the liberal (liberal democratic) tradition, Lincoln's appeal to the Declaration has often been understood entirely in liberal, rather than cosmopolitan, terms. Richard Current, for instance, writes that "In his view, an American is a citizen who, regardless of his or her ancestry, believes in the democratic principles on which the republic was founded."[91] Michael Lind, likewise, concludes even more forcefully that "Lincoln was a democrat because he was a liberal. He valued democracy and equality because they protect and promote liberal individualism."[92] To the extent that American political discourse *is* defined by a "liberal consensus," however, it follows that Lincoln's appeal to the Declaration was directed not at anti-liberals (like, say, George Fitzhugh) but at figures like Douglas, who used (among other things) a decidedly liberal conception of property rights to justify the individual "right" to own slaves.[93] Indeed, Lincoln's own liberal faith made him reluctant to challenge that "right": "I am not aware that *any one* is bidding you to yield" it, he wrote to Joshua Speed in 1855;

> very certainly *I* am not. I leave that matter entirely to yourself. I also acknowledge *your* rights and *my* obligations, under the constitution, in regard to your slaves. I confess I hate to see the poor creatures hunted down, and caught, and carried back to their stripes, and unrewarded toils; but I bite my lip and keep quiet.[94]

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[91] Richard N. Current, "What Is an American? Abraham Lincoln and 'Multiculturalism'." In *Lincoln's American Dream: Clashing Political Perspectives*, eds. Kenneth L. Deutsch and Joseph R. Fornieri (Dulles, VA: Potomac Books, 2005), 463.
[92] Lind, *What Lincoln Believed*, 281.
[93] See, e.g., Douglas, "Third Lincoln-Douglas Debate, Jonesboro, Illinois," SW, 634.
[94] Lincoln, letter to Joshua F. Speed, SW, 360.

What made the Declaration a powerful argument against slavery, then, was not its liberal moment but its cosmopolitan moment: though Lincoln the liberal and Lincoln the civic nationalist were unwilling to risk dissolving the Union by 'violating' the rights of whites, Lincoln the cosmopolitan recognized that the fact of universal human equality made slavery ultimately indefensible. "As a nation," he famously concluded in the same letter,

> we began by declaring that '*all men are created equal*.' We now practically read it 'all men are created equal, *except negroes*.' When the Know-Nothings get control, it will read 'all mean are created equal, except negroes, *and foreigners, and catholics*.' When it comes to this I should prefer emigrating to some country where they make no pretence of loving liberty—to Russia, for instance, where despotism can be taken pure, and without the base alloy of hypocracy (sic).[95]

In the end, of course, Lincoln accepted the familiar view of America as a "nationless idea-state" whose unity depends on a common ideological "creed." As we have seen here, however, that "creed" was for Lincoln neither liberal nor democratic, but cosmopolitan. To be sure, Lincoln also embraced the principles of liberal democracy, but these were ultimately secondary—at least as far as the survival of the Union was concerned—to the need for a common consensus, not merely on the virtue of liberty but on the universality of liberty "not alone to the people of this country, but…to the world for all future time."[96] Cosmopolitanism, in short—if we're to believe Lincoln, at least—is at least as central to the "American Creed" as the standard tropes of liberalism and

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[95] Ibid., 363.
[96] Lincoln, "Speech at Independence Hall, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania," SW 2, 213; and see the introduction to Kenneth L. Deutsch and Joseph R. Fornieri, eds., *Lincoln's American Dream: Clashing Political Perspectives* (Dulles, VA: Potomac Books, 2005), 4-8.

democracy. It is for this reason, after all, that the cosmopolitan sensibility emerges so often in the defining works of early American political thought.

Conclusion

These are the thoughts of all men in all ages and lands, they are not original with me…

-Walt Whitman

Americans in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries faced a profound and troubling paradox. On the one hand, they recognized the need for a firm political Union—even the Anti-Federalists and all but the most ardent secessionists too—and they insisted that such a Union needed to be republican in nature, "of, by, and for the people." (That, after all, had been the whole point of the Revolution in the first place.) On the other, they also knew that "government by the people" could not survive just anywhere: at the very least, it required *a people* that could govern and a common good that they (or it) could serve. There needed to be unity, in other words, and not just any unity would do: it had to be a *meaningful* unity, spiritually powerful enough to motivate individuals to forgo their own inherent selfishness (the inclination to be free-riders) and work actively for a larger common purpose. Trouble was, it seemed—particularly in the 1780s and the 1850s, when bitterness and conflict was the order of the day—that the American "people" had nothing in common, nothing at least that could serve as a source of real solidarity. As early as 1782—when the American population was as small and as homogeneous as it ever would be—observers like Crevecoeur were already commenting that America's defining characteristic was its limitless diversity. And while diversity was all very well and good—Crevecoeur was making a compliment, after all—Americans also knew that diversity alone would not suffice. The republican experiment would fail, they knew, if

they could not locate a source—a meaningful source—of homogeneity. It was that need, above everything else, that drove "supremely American" figures like Madison, Emerson, Whitman and Lincoln to develop their respective thoughts on solidarity, cosmopolitan and otherwise. And they were not alone: indeed virtually all of the most significant American political debates and writings, in this foundational period and beyond, were written and waged in large part with this question, this paradox, in mind.

Nor, for that matter, is it the case—in fact it's the height of arrogance to assume, as we often do—that this question is unique to America alone. Madison's point about the illusion of homogeneity is applicable not just to the U.S. but to any community, no matter how large: nationalists may disagree, but the fact is that *every* "culture" is multicultural, every "nation-state" is multinational, and any claim of "homogeneity" is either a delusion or a lie. Never has this been more clear than today: on the one hand, increased global migration has made societies more diverse than ever before; on the other, the recent insights of postmodern and postcolonial studies have made us more aware of the diversity that always existed, diversity we used to ignore.[1] At the same time, we also live in an age of rapid democratization, an age where the values of self-governance and autonomy have achieved worldwide acceptance—Francis Fukuyama got that part right—and more and more individuals are demanding democratic governments, governments "of the people," which act on *their* behalf and bend to *their* will. But even democratic governments can only bend to one will at a time—and without a single "story of peoplehood" to unite them

[1] Martin Shaw characterizes the "sense of transformation" at the end of the twentieth century in terms of three narratives: postmodernism, globalization, and the emergence of a "post-Cold War world." Each of these narratives, he observes, challenges existing "certainties," worldviews and institutional structures, either by replacing them with new "certainties" or (in the case of postmodernism) by challenging the very concept of "certainty" itself. Shaw, *Theory of the Global State: Globality as an Unfinished Revolution* (New York: Cambridge, 2000), 2-4.

all behind one common homogeneous will, the democratic project will collapse. All over the world, then, and on every scale, the paradox arises: without a sense of "unity and homogeneity," a society can never be really democratic; but the inescapable diversity of human society appears to make such a thing impossible.[2]

Pessimistic as it sounds, the fact that the paradox arises "on every scale" may actually be cause for optimism. As many scholars have noted, the rapid emergence of transnational and multinational political institutions in recent years poses a serious challenge to the future of democracy. For centuries, the sense of collective identity required for democratic institutions has been provided primarily by the nation; to preserve democracy on the transnational level, however, "we need to think ourselves beyond the nation," to reconceive collective identity in larger, more abstract terms. Some observers have concluded from this that transnational or cosmopolitan democracy is a pipe dream—that human solidarity is simply not flexible enough to extend beyond the nation. Transnational solidarity becomes much more feasible, though, when we consider that nations too suffer from the same problem of diversity: if *they* were able to establish lasting democratic institutions, we can conclude, then it should be possible to overcome the "democratic deficit" on the global level as well. It is for this reason, indeed, that Jurgen Habermas (to name only one) sees the emerging "postnational constellation" not as a threat to the future of democracy, but as a challenge and an opportunity to extend it to new territories and heights.[3] Reaching that conclusion, however, requires us first to

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[2] Charles Taylor, Foreword to *Multinational Democracies*, eds. Alain-G. Gagnon and James Tully (New York: Cambridge, 2001), p. xiii. This point has been made by numerous scholars, of course, but Taylor's short piece here sums up the argument nicely.
[3] Habermas, *The Postnational Constellation* (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 2001).

examine how nation-builders resolved the paradox of democratic diversity; and it is for this reason too that it is worth examining the development of American solidarity.

Faced with the paradox I've described—faced with any paradox, really—there are four basic ways to respond. The first of these is simply to ignore the problem and hope it resolves itself—to crow about the virtues of Democracy without considering the necessary preconditions for its success. But this is not a viable long-term strategy; and at its worst, it leads to the formation of unsustainable democratic institutions in an attempt to unite a body of individuals that do not, and may not ever, see themselves as a single "people." (See: Iraq.) A better option, the pluralist option, is to embrace the problem—to accept the lack of unity in society, but argue that unity is unnecessary for democracy (or even counterproductive, as Walter Lippmann contended in *The Phantom Public*). There is some merit in this line of reasoning: after all, the problem with homogeneity is that it tends to be exclusionary, to promote "democracies" that succeed only insofar as they stand on the backs of those who are forced to the outside. Real democracy, by contrast, is all-inclusive—it treats everyone within its jurisdiction as an equal partner with an equal voice—and thus it cannot legitimately impose additional criteria for membership on those who are subject to its authority. Democracies become undemocratic, in other words, when they demand that citizens assimilate to a certain set of cultural norms, norms which necessarily privilege particular individuals and relegate others—Others—to the fringes. The popular image of America as a "melting pot" has been heavily criticized for precisely this reason: rather than encouraging all Americans to "contaminate" each other equally, assimilationists instead privilege a particular (Anglo-

Saxon) culture and demand that everyone *else* conform to it.[4] ("Why do *those people* cling to those bizarre rituals and traditions? They should become real Americans. Like me.") Pluralists, on the other hand, insist that all cultural traditions be protected and preserved, out of respect for America's diversity—the only way, they argue, to preserve real democracy, as opposed to authoritarianism in disguise.[5] But as pluralism's critics have repeatedly observed, this only reinforces the original paradox: it may well be true that democracy must respect diversity, but it is equally true that democracy will not survive without solidarity, which in turn requires a degree of homogeneity. And if that homogeneity must always be artificially *imposed*—as Madison implied—then the prospects for sustainable democracy become even more dire.

A third option, then, and perhaps the most common of all, is denial. All this talk of diversity and democracy makes for an interesting academic debate, the argument goes, but the paradox I've described does not apply in practice because we *are* homogeneous

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[4] The same was true of "one-hundred-percent Americanists" like Teddy Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, who argued that "hyphenation"—thinking of oneself as "Irish-American," "Asian-American," and the like—was a threat to national unity. As Randolph Bourne pointed out, though, the phrase "English-American" really didn't exist, because "American" was always defined in terms of English ethnicity—so to demand that people become "one hundred percent American" was to demand that people conform to English attitudes and English culture. People who already were English, of course, had no such burden.

[5] The literature on the debate between assimilationism and pluralism is immense; it spiked, especially, in the early 1990s, in response to the rise of "multiculturalism" and the immediate reaction against it. More recently, see Michael Walzer, *What It Means to Be an American* (New York: Marsilio, 1992); David Hollinger, *Postethnic America: Beyond Multiculturalism* (New York: Basic, 1995); Nathan Glazer, *We Are All Multiculturalists Now* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 1997); Wendy F. Katkin, Ned Landsman, and Andrea Tyree, eds., *Beyond Pluralism: The Conception of Groups and Group Identities in America* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois, 1998); Arthur M. Melzer, Jerry Weinberger, and M. Richard Zinman, eds., *Multiculturalism and American Democracy* (Lawrence, KS: Kansas, 1998); Neil Renwick, *America's World Identity: The Politics of Exclusion* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000); Ronald Schmidt, Sr., *Language Policy and Identity Politics in the United States* (Philadelphia: Temple, 2000); John Higham, *Hanging Together: Unity and Diversity in American Culture*, ed. Carl J. Guarneri (New Haven, CT: Yale, 2001); Desmond King, *The Liberty of Strangers: Making the American Nation* (New York: Oxford, 2005); Deborah J. Schildkraut, *Press One for English: Language Policy, Public Opinion, and American Identity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton, 2005).

and united—and "what unites us is far greater than what divides us."[6] For Americans, of course, "what unites us" is usually either a common "creed" of freedom and democracy; an "exceptional" national character marked by voluntarism and hard work; a shared national history with identifiable heroes and villains; or a common set of political symbols and institutions, with the Constitution at the center. Homogeneity on these grounds—"faith in freedom, loyalty to democratic ideals, and fidelity to the U.S. Constitution"—can, if properly nurtured, generate all the solidarity we need.[7] This line of reasoning can become dangerous, of course, when it crosses over into rejection—rejecting diversity aggressively, that is, and imposing homogeneity through exclusion, intimidation, or outright violence. But the argument from denial is not necessarily dangerous in and of itself, as some scholars have argued:[8] indeed, anyone who fully appreciates the need for solidarity in a democracy should *want* to deny the paradox I've laid out here. It is for just this reason, after all, that the great crises of early American history—the birth pangs of the 1780s and 90s, and the civil strife of the 1850s and 60s—were invariably followed by long periods of hyper-nationalism, when scholars went out of their way to reaffirm the idea of "America" as a united "organic whole."[9] Moreover,

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[6] Peter Gibbon and Jerry Martin, "E Pluribus Unum: The Bradley Project on America's National Identity," The Bradley Project, 2008, http://www.bradleyproject.org/EPUReportFinal.pdf.
[7] Ibid.
[8] See, e.g., George Kateb, *Patriotism and Other Mistakes* (New Haven, CT: Yale, 2006).
[9] In the words of J. Arthur Partridge, writing in the immediate aftermath of the Civil War. He concludes that "UNIVERSALITY and ONENESS are written on the Geography of America"—*North* America, that is, from Canada to Panama—"by the hand of God." Partridge, *The Making of the American Nation; Or, The Rise and Decline of Oligarchy in the West* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1866), 4-5, 143. See also Merle Curti, *The Roots of American Loyalty* (New York: Columbia, 1946); Hans Kohn, *American Nationalism* (New York: Macmillan, 1957); John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (New York: Atheneum, 1963); Robert Dahl, *Pluralist Democracy in the United States: Conflict and Consent* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1967), 71-73; Donald Simpson, *The Politics of American English, 1776-1850* (New York: Oxford, 1986); Walter McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State* (New York: Mariner, 1997); Patrice Higonnet, *Attendant Cruelties: Nation and Nationalism in American History* (New York: Other Press, 2007). The leading works of nationalist literature in the decades after the Founding include Mason Weems' biography (or "biography," more accurately) of

the argument from denial also has some merit. As I noted at the start of Chapter 3, the American people do seem to have many things in common with each other, in spite of their vast diversity: at the very least, every American citizen is an *American citizen*, and that alone can serve as the basis for "thick" solidarity. As a result, discussions of American identity usually adopt this approach, denying the paradox and affirming the essential homogeneity of the "American" people. Given the demands of human solidarity, this appears—at first glance—to be the only approach that allows us to preserve democracy in the long term.

The problem with denial, however, is that it's too easy and too neat. If Madison is right, then the paradox I've described will always be present, in America no less than anywhere else; and denying the fact doesn't make it go away. There is a dark historical underbelly to even the nicest, most inclusive "stories of peoplehood," and we know it. In America we venerate the two great founding documents, the Declaration and the Constitution; but we also know that they both compromised on slavery, defined blacks as "three-fifths of a man," and characterized Native Americans as inhuman "savages." In many respects, we *still* think of Native Americans as inhuman—it's the only way we can hang on to the old symbol of the West as a wild, untamed and "empty" land. We can appeal to other symbols, of course, and identify citizenship as a source of solidarity; but as Rogers Smith so conclusively demonstrated in *Civic Ideals*, even citizenship has been defined (at least in part) in "ethnocultural" terms, from the earliest years of U.S. history. This is true not only with respect to citizenship law, but also with respect to public opinion, where American identity—even after the Fourteenth Amendment—was very

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Washington; the national histories of Mercy Otis Warren and George Bancroft; the self-styled national

often defined in opposition to blacks. Indeed, as many historians have observed, new immigrant groups in the early 1900s were accepted and "mainstreamed" into American society partly by virtue of their whiteness (or, more accurately, their not-being-black). Of course, Americans are more apt to define their identity in ideological terms—the "creed" of democracy and individual freedom—but even this has its dark side: once we define the nation in terms of "an ideal,"[10] it becomes possible (even necessary) to treat anyone who thinks differently, who fails to conform to the norm, literally as an "un-American" traitor. (This becomes especially ironic when we consider that the ideal in question is the belief that people should be free to think for themselves!) The standard reaction to all of this—from the deniers, at least—is to dismiss it: it's undeniable, of course, that each of these points is historically true, and "it is fine" if we occasionally mention them here or there,[11] but the need for unity requires us, in general, to sweep them under the rug.[12] This is the shared act of "forgetting" that Ernst Renan identified as the key to nationhood, and it's part of every national "story," not just our own. It's justifiable, though, only if those old exclusions are merely historical relics—only if they're no longer important, only if they no longer matter. But this is false. They are still important, and they do still matter: the moment we identify those old stories and symbols as the source of "peoplehood" is the moment we perpetuate the old exclusions on which they rest—the implicit assumption that, while anyone can be an American, some will always be more American than others. To argue otherwise, as many do, is both irresponsible and lazy.

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epics "Greenfield Hill" and "Columbiad," written by Timothy Dwight and Joel Barlow, respectively; and—perhaps most importantly of all—Noah Webster's dictionary of distinctly American English.

[10] Gibbon and Martin, "E Pluribus Unum."

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid.

But—here is a point that scholars often miss—the deniers are right, nevertheless. It's easy to leap from here to the postmodern conclusion that we don't *need* solidarity—and, to be sure, the stories we've developed have exclusionary tendencies that should not be ignored—but such a conclusion, given what we know about democracy, is just as irresponsible and no less lazy.[13] Once again, we're back to the original paradox: democracy requires us to feel united with each other; but every story we tell, it seems, serves only to divide. How can we reconcile the need for homogeneity with the inescapable fact of diversity? The pluralist approach ("multiculturalism," we now call it) fails to the extent that it ignores the first half of the paradox, the fundamental need for unity. But the nationalist approach ("assimilationism") fails too, for the opposite reason: in the process of denouncing pluralists for fomenting cultural divisions, nationalists gloss over the fact that "Americans" are in fact culturally divided, always have been, and always will be. It's easy to overlook this, of course, during periods of domestic tranquility, when individuals coexist peacefully with each other. During the crisis periods of the late eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries, however—when the divisions and differences in American society were most prominent, and common ground was hard to find—American elites had no such luxury. It is for this reason that so many writers in these periods avoided the nationalist image of Americans as an organic band of brethren. They were aware, of course, of the need for homogeneity in a united community, but they were no less aware of the fact—as "Cato" wrote in his attack on the Constitution—that "Americans" had little in common beyond their mere humanity.

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[13] See Rogers Smith, *Stories of Peoplehood* (New York: Cambridge, 2003), esp. 149-50.

What I am suggesting, in short, is that the "supremely American" figures I have examined here took a fourth approach—rarely considered—to the fundamental paradox of republican democracy, one of direct *confrontation*. Rather than ignoring the problem or denying one of the premises, Madison, Emerson, Whitman and Lincoln accepted—if only for the sake of argument—the contention that "Americans" shared only their humanity in common and attempted, from that starting point, to develop a conception of "peoplehood" that could sustain a republican community anyway. For Madison, that confrontation took on an institutional form: in his Convention-era writings and speeches, Madison consciously worked to develop a *cosmopolitan republic*, an institutional scheme that would enable even an infinitely diverse, infinitely large "people" to coexist under the same political roof. Decades later, Emerson and Whitman would reinforce this in their development of American culture: writing in the midst of the age of nationalism and heavily influenced by it, Emerson nevertheless insisted that narrow attachments were ultimately artificial, secondary to the *general* unity of human beings in the universal "Over-Soul." If "America" was unique or "distinct" in any way, he argued, it was only insofar as its people, unconstrained by long-entrenched 'national' institutions, were in a better position to give that unity the priority it deserved and the voice it needed. Providing that voice—and breathing life into the cosmopolitan "story of peoplehood"—became Whitman's task in *Leaves of Grass*. On the eve of the greatest civil conflict in U.S. history, Whitman sought to reunite a divided nation by reminding "Americans" of the humanity—the human mind, the human soul, the human body, and the human course of life—they shared with each other in common. Whitman failed, at least initially, to grab the public's attention; but Abraham Lincoln succeeded—and while Lincoln never

quite abandoned the belief that American unity would require some degree of racial homogenization (hence his support for the American Colonization Society), he concluded too, no less than Whitman, that Americans would also have to unite around the things that *all* human beings shared in common. Whitman, of course, would emphasize the physical characteristics of humanity, while Lincoln emphasized the Declaration's notion of universal human rights; both men, however, reached essentially the same conclusion with regard to the source—and, by extension, the scope—of American solidarity. In all four cases, indeed, the confrontation with the republican paradox took a similar form. Seeking a way to resolve the paradox rather than merely avoid it—a way to find "unity in diversity"—Madison, Emerson, Whitman and Lincoln each concluded, in their own ways (and sometimes reluctantly), that *cosmopolitan* solidarity was the answer. The "stories of peoplehood" they developed, as well as the institutions they shaped, were thus designed in part to generate a solidarity that could be "extended" to that universal degree. And while they themselves failed, badly, to live up to their own standard—with the exception of Emerson, each one was more than willing to perpetuate the genocidal institution of slavery in order to "save the Union"—the framework they left us was flexible enough to overcome their own extreme personal flaws.

"The time for cosmopolitics is now," Bruce Robbins wrote a decade ago, at the height of what was, in retrospect, a vastly more innocent time.[14] Today, though Robbins's words still ring true, the challenges and obstacles facing the cosmopolitan project are far more apparent. Militarized religious fundamentalists have grown stronger

and more influential; right-wing nationalist parties have been increasingly accepted into the political mainstream; the post-1989 Balkanization of the global map continues apace, with no sign of slowing; and proposals for cosmopolitan institutions invariably meet with scorn and resistance, when they're proposed at all. At the same time, the need for cosmopolitan institutions and values is greater than ever: advances in communication and transportation technology, the gradual emergence of a global free market, and the resulting spike in international migration have forced people to be more aware of each other's presence, willingly or otherwise. More importantly, the last ten years have witnessed an explosion of truly global issues—international humanitarian crises, climate change, nuclear proliferation, and the specter of terrorism, to name only a few—issues that require multilateral cooperation, issues that will never be resolved without the willingness of some to sacrifice their own personal (or even national) interests for the greater human good. Worse, the international institutions that have already emerged to address these issues tend to be undemocratic, run by unelected officials who are unaccountable to the people whose lives they affect and unconcerned about their interests and needs. Scholars today routinely speak of a "democratic deficit" in global politics, a stark gap between the presence of democracy at the national level and the near-total absence of democracy at the transnational level.[15] Some conclude from this, not entirely without reason, that democracy "beyond the nation" is impossible; we should therefore resist the spread of "global governance," they argue, and redouble our efforts to preserve national sovereignty and national identity. But the institutions of global governance don't seem to be going away—nor, for that matter, are the global issues and crises that

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[14] Robbins, "Introduction Part I: Actually Existing Cosmopolitanism," in *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and*

made those institutions necessary in the first place. And if we're going to be stuck with a "world state," even a limited one—best to admit it, not ignore it—it behooves us to figure out some way of making that state democratic, concerned with our interests and responsive to our voice. And if, as I've argued in this dissertation, the survival of democracy requires a sense of solidarity which in turn rests on "shared characteristics" to which a people can appeal, then the cosmopolitan project—solidarity on the basis of a common humanity—may well be our only hope.

Individuals, however, will not adopt a cosmopolitan sensibility simply because it happens to be practical. Practicality certainly helps, of course, as Madison observed in *Federalist 10*: because our passions are shaped in part by our interests, our inclination to cosmopolitanism will grow stronger as we feel ourselves growing closer to "our fellow man" and becoming more aware of common goals. As I argued in Chapter 2, though, a "story of peoplehood," no matter how connected it is to material interests, will never take root unless it has *prior merit*, a tangible connection to "stories" that already resonate with individuals as a source of personal identity. Or, as Rogers Smith put it: "a successful politics of people-making must necessarily begin by drawing on and adapting the existing array of affiliations, interests and ideologies in particular locales to build support for what is always a partly old, partly new vision of political community."[16] This does not mean, of course, that the cosmopolitan project is entirely unfeasible; indeed Smith agrees that the emergence of global or species-wide issues has made the cosmopolitan "story" increasingly practical.[17] It does mean, however, that the cosmopolitan project will only

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Feeling Beyond the Nation, eds. Pheng Cheah and Bruce Robbins (Minneapolis: Minnesota, 1998), 10.
[15] Patrick Hayden, *Cosmopolitan Global Politics* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), p. 25.
[16] Smith, *Stories of Peoplehood*, 176.
[17] Ibid., 165-68.

resonate with Americans—whose cooperation is absolutely essential for its success—to the extent that it can be related to the popular "story" of American *national* peoplehood. Because Americans are among the most openly patriotic people in the world—as Michael Billig and countless others have already noted[18]—Smith concludes, rightly, that "any politics of peoplehood, either within or without current US borders, is (un)likely to get far in transforming the world for the better if it simply takes the form of an assault on or dismissal of American national identity."[19]

Too often, the cosmopolitan project is seen as just such a dismissal. At the end of the eighteenth century, when American institutions were first taking shape, the ideas of nationalism and cosmopolitanism were typically understood as allies, standing together against the corrupt, undemocratic, and obsolete institutions that had ruled Europe and its colonies for centuries. It's only natural, then, that the "story" of American peoplehood would have had an affinity with the cosmopolitan project: indeed, even documents like the Declaration of Independence, which identify "Americans" as a unique and distinct "people," are clearly indebted to the idea of a universal human solidarity. Today, however, there is a general perception—general not only among average citizens, but also among intellectual elites—that nationalism and cosmopolitanism, American identity and human identity, are somehow at odds with each other. One group of prominent scholars, indeed, has recently asserted that the very notion of "global citizenship" is itself a threat to national unity: there is a "trade-off" between one and the other, they argue, and a commitment to national identity requires us to reject "the misleading idea" of

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[18] See, once again, Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1995).
[19] Smith, *Stories of Peoplehood*, 177. (The original quotation reads "I therefore doubt that any politics of peoplehood…is likely to get far…")

cosmopolitanism.[20] Scholars of American political thought are in position to challenge this perception; but many, instead, reproduce and entrench it—either by avoiding the question of solidarity altogether, or by assuming that "national" solidarity must be grounded on characteristics which are "exceptional" to Americans alone. Defenders of cosmopolitanism, too, unwittingly perpetuate this false perception: most, to be sure, describe themselves as "rooted cosmopolitans" who celebrate their local bonds along with their human identity; but even the simple act of adding the modifier "rooted" gives off the impression that cosmopolitanism *proper* is dismissive of local ties or actively opposed to them. It is largely for this reason that Americans today are skeptical of the cosmopolitan project: committed as they are—as we are—to our identity as Americans, we are naturally suspicious of anything that appears to "contradict" or threaten it.[21]

It is for this reason especially that my project is an important one: the success of the cosmopolitan project, and by extension the success of democracy at the global level, depends on our ability to recognize the cosmopolitan moment in the American "story of peoplehood." On some level, indeed—though scholars rarely emphasize it—we've been aware of that moment all along. The confrontation with unity and diversity is not unique to the U.S., by any means—this cannot be stressed enough—but Americans have always been acutely aware that their identity as "a people" depends on their ability to reconcile the two. The national motto, after all, is *E Pluribus Unum*, "from many, one"; and as Michael Walzer wrote in the midst of the last great national identity crisis, "the conflict

[20] Gibbon and Martin, "E Pluribus Unum." Gibbon and Martin's report summarizes the conclusions of the Bradley Project on America's National Identity; it includes contributions from dozens of prominent scholars, including William Galston, Walter McDougall and Gordon Wood (among many others).
[21] Ibid.

between the one and the many" has always been "a pervasive feature of American life."[22] Too often, we assume that the conflict between One and Many can only be resolved in favor of one or the other: nationalists pay lip service to diversity, and pluralists celebrate the virtues of unity, but both then pursue policies that actively destroy them. Implicit in *E Pluribus Unum*, however, is the belief—a profoundly cosmopolitan belief—that One and Many, properly understood, can actually reinforce each other. It should come as no surprise, then, that so many leading political figures defined 'nationality' in cosmopolitan terms: Americans have always understood themselves in this way, at least in part. I have singled out Madison, Emerson, Whitman and Lincoln in this dissertation, in other words, but they are hardly outliers: indeed, it is partly their willingness to embrace the humanitarian moment in national solidarity that made them "supremely American" figures in the first place. Emphasizing this characteristic in their works and writings is essential to recovering a fuller sense of the solidarity conflict at the center of American political discourse. But it is equally necessary, too, in order to overcome the (apparent) conflict between our patriotism—strong as ever—and the obligations we owe to people (and peoples) beyond our borders.

[22] Walzer, *What It Means to Be an American*, 31.

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2003-2005	Teaching Assistant, Department of Political Science, Rutgers University Fall 2003, Spring 2004: Law and Politics Fall 2004, Spring 2005: Nature of Politics
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PUBLICATIONS

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