**THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF AMERICANISM:
THE ORIGINS AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF
AMERICAN POLITICAL CULTURE**

by

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A thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Political Science

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ABSTRACT

This work considers American political culture conceptually and historically. It argues for the careful application of cultural concepts to ideational phenomena. It maintains that political culture is a matrix of symbolic forms, primarily comprised of ideology, religion, and myth. Thus, a sophisticated apprehension of political culture cannot be sustained by survey research and statistical analysis. Instead, we must delve into deeper channels of thought. After explaining this need within the context of American studies, this essay first undertakes the definition of political culture and its primary aspects. Then these concepts are applied to American political culture through three surveys of early American history--one for each of ideology, religion, and myth. Thus, a compelling use of the concept of political culture is demonstrated. In this demonstration, American political culture reveals itself to be dominated by liberal ideology. American religion is found to support that ideology and shape its reception in crucial ways, first through Protestant Christianity and then through an emerging American civil religion. Mythic images and sentiments underlie these more elaborate symbolic forms of thought, giving them substantial support at the level of political action. Manifestations of apparent ideological diversity in America are found to involve, instead, expressions of cultural diversity, religious or mythic. It is argued that these exist within an overall framework of support for the dominant liberal ideology. Thus, it is argued, American political culture involves a liberal consensus that is more complex than previously maintained.

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for George

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Introductory Essay: Articulating the Inarticulate Premise of Conformity

"At the bottom of the American experience of freedom, there has always lain the inarticulate premise of conformity."
(Louis Hartz, The Liberal Tradition in America)

This work examines the state of political culture as a concept in current American political studies. It asserts the necessity for a re-definition of American political culture. Ideology, religion, and myth are seen as the key components of political culture. Attention must be paid to the interaction of the contents of these symbolic forms, and especially to the mutual improvement association in which they have evolved in America. America is asserted to express a dominant liberal consensus, guided by liberalism as an ideology, supported by American religions as expressed through the American Civil Religion, and embraced mythically through fundamental feelings derived from narratives, symbols, and from political action, feelings about the political landscape. Previous proponents of the idea of an American liberal consensus are examined, as are some of their critics, in hopes of determining the shortcomings of early attempts at defining American political culture, as well as determining directions signalled for further examination. This essay, then, attempts to demonstrate the potential for reconsidering and reviving earlier American studies, and for building upon their implications. This potential exists largely because of incomplete theoretical foundations in the previous work that have left it open to criticism. That criticism is itself limited and faulty because of its own ignorance of these foundations. In response, the "consensus school" approach to American thought will be mined for new shafts, using new equipment--a more complete and rigorous matrix of symbolic forms that is political culture. The appropriate response to

critiques of the liberal consensus theory, then, is more theory.

America's liberal consensus is broader than even its proponents claimed in their examinations of ideology. This work's larger cultural matrix absorbs and accounts for critics and opponents of consensus interpretations of American culture and, thus, reveals a more elastic, more vibrant, and more diffuse liberalism than previously imagined. It is asserted that the apparent diversity and "multiple traditions" seen in American society by some historians and philosophers, such as Rogers Smith, Judith Shklar, Joyce Appleby, or John Pocock, lend themselves to re-interpretation through this new liberal cultural matrix. This demonstrates American diversity to be diversity of expression, a diversity of form, rather than of content. As well, America's failure to live up to any promises of liberalism, America's failure to live up to its ideals, does not deny her cultural standing as liberal, does not dismiss her endeavour as something other than a peculiar liberalism. Assertions that there exists a counter ideology, American republicanism, will be seen as prescriptions arising from within the liberal horizon, dismissing their qualification of American consensus. Finally, it will be proposed that this re-fabricated matrix of political culture can prove useful for concrete policy analysis, that it can be applied as a tool of political science for understanding contemporary American political institutions, behaviour, and process.

In asserting that intentions behind government actions are as germane as are the actions themselves to public policy analysis, a recent political science text proclaims that "policy analysis without awareness of ethical and ideological perspectives is lame." Unfortunately, the bulk of this same text resembles numerous other texts on American

government in its stress on government actions as concrete 'outputs' only. Symbolic outputs are largely ignored and ideological perspectives are typically, however poorly, mapped from within the American ideological perspective. Thus, "conservatism and liberalism" are said to "have dominated policy-making and evaluation in America." The American right and left are labelled "conservative" and "liberal" respectively, despite the authors' implicit acknowledgement of American conservatism as a form of liberalism.¹ True enough, American politics are dominated by these two alternatives, left and right. However, these alternatives are only slight variants of one ideology--liberalism.

This lack of "awareness of ideological perspectives" leads to narrow discussion and poor analysis of public policy. For instance, the above text discusses American attitudes and policies toward the "free market" as motivated by alternate conservative or liberal approaches. Roughly, one perspective is said to favour the free market while the other favours government intervention that the authors maintain will "help make the market truly free."² That the free market is a given value of America's narrow ideological heritage, how this is so, and what this idea means, remains an unexamined inheritance not only of American national identity, but of these authors as well. Typical of the main stream of American political science, American values are reflected, rather than delineated, dissected, and accounted for, by such social 'science.' That apparently illiberal policy pursues liberal ends--the market is "forced to be free"--and that the practical

¹Clarke E. Cochran et al., American Public Policy: An Introduction, 4th ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), pp.1-3, 15.

²Ibid., p.26.

nonsense of an American free market is nevertheless a rhetorical truth of America's ideational realm, remains an unexamined infection, carried in this case by professors of American political science.

One of the better texts on American government argues that the American Constitution is "an inspired, if not divine work, expressing timeless principles of democratic government," having been founded by "god-like men,"¹ demonstrating the blend of mythos and religiosity that simmers with liberal ideology in the cultural stew known as "Americanism." Thus, even American 'scientists' generally fail to escape their own immersion in the "unreflective background to our political discourse and pursuits" that some would elevate to the stature of "public philosophy."² Walter Lippmann's outlines of the shadows in this background are explicit. His description of the ancient, mythic covenant with God in the wilderness forms a substantial vehicle, an ark if you will, for liberalism's central notion of contractual government. Religion delivers this idea of social contract readily, as a given premise, to modern ideology in its inception as liberalism, along with several other crucial fundamentals. As carriers of these articles of faith, myth and religion support political ideology throughout "the great tradition of the public philosophy," according to Lippmann.³ Liberal tenets are imbued with an aura of sanctity and timelessness through their continuity with and inheritance of religious and

¹Theodore J. Lowi and Benjamin Ginsberg, American Government: Freedom and Power, 2nd ed. (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1992), pp.31, 65.

²Michael J. Sandel, Democracy's Discontent: America in Search of a Public Philosophy (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press, 1996), p.4.

³Walter Lippmann, Essays in The Public Philosophy (New York: Mentor, 1955), pp.127-138.

mythic symbols, an inheritance that signals the accomplishment of supportive sanctions for ideological world-building endeavours in modern politics.

Others believe this stamp of approval to be exclusively American, marking a chosenness upon particular ideological accomplishments. Thus, expressions of liberal beliefs in the development of American nationhood become particular revelations of America's god-given cultural birthright. Once removed from their original context, these truths become singular testaments to the proximity of their carriers to their newly perceived source--God or nature. In this way, faithful enunciators of now "self-evident truths" become marked by their own virtue, their lack of contamination by 'ideological' doctrine. This more exclusive 'discovery' of liberal beliefs now become divine truths is accomplished in a sort of innocence that qualifies the discoverers, sets them apart as a peculiar people. In this way, the development of American liberalism as a special inheritance is neatly congruous with religious traditions in America that foster a political sense of mission. All of this is underpinned by a mythic apprehension of the new world in American consciousness. Daniel Boorstin refers to this conglomeration of symbolic representations simply as "GIVENNESS," a peculiarly American inheritance--from the soil, from nature, and from God--of revolutionary pragmatism, without ideas, "without dogma."¹ Both the structure and the content of the ideological, mythological, and religious matrix that forms political culture generally, and American political culture specifically, remain unexamined, typical of most crippled American political analysis.

¹Daniel J. Boorstin, The Genius of American Politics (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1966; rpt. New American Library, 1985).

Inspired by Ernst Cassirer, Willard Mullins has discussed the matrix of symbolic forms that generally constitute political culture. These key forms are philosophy, religion, myth, and ideology. Insisting upon careful use of concepts by political scientists, Mullins delineates ideology specifically and cues further delineations of the remaining concepts.¹ In subsequent work on myth as a symbolic form of political culture, Mullins joins Cassirer in distinguishing myth from religion and outlining their relationship to each other, as well as to history and to political culture.² Following their examples, I previously have outlined religion as a symbolic form, discussed its relationship to the other forms, and demonstrated their interaction theoretically--culminating in the elevation of "civil religion" to a distinct symbolic form of political culture. By applying this form to analyses of American political culture, and specifically to American political rhetoric, I have demonstrated the practical significance as a concept of what began as a general notion of Rousseau, and was revived as an emotional appeal in the specifically American civil religion of Robert Bellah.³ However, the practical application of this entire symbolic matrix to American political culture, the demonstration of its forms' historical and political interaction and, thus, the definition of American political culture remain

¹Willard A. Mullins, "On the Concept of Ideology in Political Science," The American Political Science Review 66:2 (June, 1972): 498-510; idem, "Ideology and Political Culture," in Ideology, Philosophy and Politics, ed. Anthony Parel (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier Univ. Press, 1983), pp.111-136.

²Willard A. Mullins, "On Political Myth, Archaic and Modern," unpublished essay; Ernst Cassirer, Language and Myth, trans. Susanne K. Langer (New York: Dover, 1953; First published by Harper & Bros., 1946).

³Brent Gilchrist, The American Civil Religion in Cultural and Historical Perspectives, M.A. Thesis, Carleton Univ., 1996.

unfinished. The work at hand strives towards such a completion by tracing the origins and development of this matrix in the formative early and middle years of American history.

Others have applied these forms to American data, but have done so individually, largely ignoring or mistreating the substance and/or content of the other forms. For instance, Richard Slotkin has been definitive in his explications of mythology in America, but only to the point that mythology borders on some of the other symbolic forms, mostly striking up against ideology. The interaction between American myth and ideology is only touched upon by Slotkin, and then his grasp of ideology as a concept is poor, thus weakening even his limited analysis of the larger cultural and specifically political workings of myth.¹

The connections of myth to ideology are crucial, particularly for liberal democracies. According to Sheldon Wolin, political ideology is a uniquely modern degradation of political philosophy, "suited to the appetite and organizational needs of political mass movements." Its objects are belief and conviction, rather than knowledge and wisdom. The reality of opposing tendencies inherent in liberalism--liberty and equality--must be obscured by feelings arising from other forms of symbolism outside the ideology, namely myth and religion.² The reality of substantial inequality in America is mollified by a

¹Richard Slotkin, Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860 (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan Univ. Press, 1973); idem, Fatal Environment: The Myth of the Frontier in the Age of Industrialization 1800-1890 (New York: Harper Perennial, 1985); idem, Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America (New York: Harper Perennial, 1992).

²Sheldon S. Wolin, Politics and Vision: Continuity and Innovation in Western Political Thought (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1960), pp.194, 233, 286-351.

mythic blend of individualism and civic nationalism that is embraced by even the most unembraceable of Americans, shoring up their support for an ideology that, on its own, dismisses them as waste. American myth, then, is properly understood in relation to other symbolic forms of political culture, particularly in relation to ideology.

Louis Hartz has been influential in his application of the concept of ideology, specifically the ideology of liberalism, to analyses of American political culture. Hartz agrees that most interpretations of Americanism fail to explain but, rather, reflect it. "The traditional interpretations of American history," Hartz asserts, do not uncover nor do they illuminate "the nature of America ...because they are projections rather than analyses" of American liberal ideology.¹

In his own interpretation, Hartz focuses for the most part on this single factor--liberal ideology--to illuminate America's historical development and politics. This is, in part, correct. However, what Hartz delineates as American liberalism, as ideology alone, is in fact a matrix of ideology, religion, and myth. Hartz deals explicitly only with ideology, touching upon American religiosity and mythos in ways that demonstrate his awareness of something important and telling in them, yet revealing his inadequate grasp of the concepts involved. Thus, although he obliquely refers to these symbolic forms, Hartz leaves out their content, two-thirds of the raw data involved in the larger implications of his thesis. Significantly, he also fails to demonstrate just how the content of these forms is self-reinforcing as a complete culture, how American political culture

¹Louis Hartz, "United States History in a New Perspective," in The Founding of New Societies: Studies in the History of the United States, Latin America, South Africa, Canada, and Australia, ed. Louis Hartz (New York: Harvest, 1964), p.69.

involves an in-bred cross-pollination and mutual self-fertilization through its own structure, how as a self-isolating fragment American political culture has been an orphaned babe suckling at its own breast.¹

Hartz's acute awareness of American ideology often seems balanced by his own lack of self-consciousness about American myth and religiosity. For instance, while 'de-bunking' some American mythology, Hartz still asserts that "early American history contains a number of miracles, duly celebrated in the national legend."² Hartz, then, does not go so far as an outright disenchantment of the American schema. Instead, he is somewhat akin to Richard Hofstadter in his de-bunking of myths about American political leaders. Hofstadter has been seen as a 'good' revisionist, as he is thought to de-mythologize "without the bloodthirsty zeal we have come to associate with 'revisionist' history."³ The sacralizing of American history and political thought has led to pharisaic orthodoxy and the denunciation of "new history" as revisionist apostasy. Unlike apostates, Hofstadter's revision re-shapes images of political leaders to harmonize them with another contemporaneous and orthodox revision, that of the re-mythification of America's "common man." Thus, his de-bunking re-stabilizes, rather than undermines, American political mythology and its supports for American liberal democracy.

Hartz's many references to "Algerism" and the Horatio Alger myth demonstrate

¹Louis Hartz, The Liberal Tradition in America: An Interpretation of American Political Thought Since the Revolution (New York: Harvest, 1955; rpt.1983).

²Hartz, The Founding of New Societies, p.72.

³David Greenberg, "Richard Hofstadter's Tradition," The Atlantic Monthly (Nov., 1998), pp.132-137.

his own ignorance of the progress of American mythology. Hartz correctly asserts the dominant ideology's need during the later years of the nineteenth century for adjustment to America's mythic individualism and that need's fulfilment through the Alger revision--the opportunity for upward mobility provided by nature in a once open frontier is replaced with the opportunity provided by another equally beneficent American patron. This need results from the lack of alternatives to the liberal consensus, the need to include everyone in the American Dream--"the Alger mechanism of enchanting the American democrat" is class domination, American style. However, Hartz does not understand just how this is so, as he does not understand even the Alger myth, let alone its mythic interaction with liberal ideology in the face of changing American realities, although he clearly asserts its significance.¹

The Alger myth re-works mythic American individualism in a way that preserves faith in the efficacy of the individual and in the progress or worth of the individual according to merit or virtue, despite the changing reality of an American environment that is increasingly hostile to individualism. Preventing the closing of the American mind with the closing of the American frontier, Alger's stories replace with patronage the now closed opportunities of nature and the increasingly absent providence of a departing God. Successful and powerful capitalists, patron saints of American liberalism, lend a helping hand to low, but worthy heroes, "according to the moral deserts of the individual." Those who struggle for inclusion in the liberal dream profess equality of opportunity through a social mobility that "is not exactly rugged individualism," but that orders ambition in

¹Hartz, The Liberal Tradition in America, pp.20, 62-63, 203-255.

an "acceptance of subordination" that lowers expectations and demands;

the promise of America had been the promise of a chance to try, without any other restraints than those of skill and "character." But that success story had been played out on a natural frontier, where society's restrictions had not yet arrived, and only natural forces stood between the individual and his achievement.¹

Hartz's critique of liberalism would be more potent, here, with a correct understanding of the workings of political culture.

At any rate, the main thrusts of American critics such as Hartz and Hofstadter are deflected by the momentum and resilience of the political culture, its ability to absorb and temper. In the end, even trenchant criticism only serves to sustain the dominant ethos, as it provides some appearance of American self-consciousness and public responsibility. Such criticism is misunderstood by most and often misrepresented or inverted by others to reinforce an orthodox veil of legitimacy, a veil that it is meant to rend.²

Furthermore, even in his treatment of ideology, Hartz strains at times to fit all phenomena into his framework of liberalism, struggling because the phenomena in question are not properly ideological and, therefore, are not an easy fit. If, however, this American liberalism is examined as a larger cultural matrix, as a system of mutually supporting manifestations of ideology, civil religion, religion, and myth, then the general thrust of Hartz's argument is valid--American politics are overwhelmingly dominated by a peculiar form of liberalism. Willard Mullins points to this need for "a more muscular

¹Slotkin, Fatal Environment, p.307.

²Christopher Lasch, The Agony of the American Left (New York: Vintage, 1969), pp.27-29.

conceptual scheme" than used by Hartz, one that would correct Hartz's ignorance of "the problem of how ideology relates conceptually to political culture." Mullins argues that the apprehension of American ideology would be enhanced and informed by an account of the interaction of ideology with the other symbolic forms that constitute political culture.¹ Not only would this provide the opportunity for a more practical and, thus, more thorough understanding of political culture, it also would enhance the conceptual understanding and explanation of American liberalism.

Hartz's argument anticipates such a re-definition of American liberalism, in that he repeatedly insists that American liberalism is not liberalism per se, but is a degradation and a corruption of original liberalism; "America is the bizarre fulfilment of liberalism."² Hartz argues that Americans have "an absolute and irrational attachment" to this ideology, involving pious protestations against minor deviations. Here, the term "secular religiosity" is supposed to explain "the blending of norm and fact."³ Revealed is Hartz's sense of the important relationships between the forms of political culture, but also an indication of his tendency to try to collapse all of their content into ideology. These descriptions capture some of what is going on in political culture, but they lack explanation and, thus, misrepresent.

The irrationality that Hartz notes points not to ideology, but to myth and religion that support it. "Secular religiosity" also points away from ideology, to religion and civil

¹Willard Mullins, "Ideology and Political Culture," p.117.

²Hartz, The Liberal Tradition in America, p.308.

³Ibid., pp.6, 25.

religion. That such non-rational and semi-rational forms of symbolic representation have been allied with liberal ideology, supposed to be a rational construction in opposition to such allies, drives home one of Hartz's major points--that American liberalism is peculiar, a corruption with a life of its own. This is lost on most of Hartz's readers, because of his unfortunate failure to distinguish concepts effectively. Instead, Hartz is taken to be arguing that every phenomenon in the dominant American political culture is ideological and prototypically liberal. Such is not the case. It is true, however, that there is a dominant political culture, and that it is overwhelmed by a peculiarly American liberal ideology that is supported and intensified by equally peculiar American religiosity and mythology. Together, these concepts account for an irresistible thrust in American political culture that shapes, constrains and, more or less, determines American politics.

Hartz is not alone in asserting the dominance of liberalism in American political thought. Thomas Pangle has noted the overwhelming influence of Locke upon American thought as a key to understanding, both in its direct and indirect absorption by Americans.¹ In fact, liberal ideas, particularly Locke's, are said to have gone practically unchallenged, encountering "very little opposition or even alternative."² Such statements

¹Thomas L.Pangle,The Spirit of Modern Republicanism: The Moral Vision of the American Founders and the Philosophy of Locke (Chicago: Univ.of Chicago Press,1988); idem, "The Philosophic Understandings of Human Nature Informing the Constitution," in Confronting the Constitution: The Challenge To Locke, Montesquieu, Jefferson, and the Federalists from Utilitarianism, Historicism, Marxism, Freudianism, Pragmatism, Existentialism,....,ed.Allan Bloom (Washington,D.C.:AEI Press, 1990).

²J.R. Pole, The Foundations of America: Equality, Status, and Power in Thomas Jefferson's Virginia, Essays from Colonial Williamsburg series (Williamsburg, Va.: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1986), p.15.

have been grouped with Hartz's analysis, as have those by unreflective exemplars of Americanism such as Daniel Boorstin. Bolstered by the universally revered exposé of American democracy by Alexis de Tocqueville, this grouping has been referred to as the "liberal consensus school" of American thought or history. Tocqueville's analysis of the tyranny of the majority and of the stifling pressures of popular opinion in America has been a particularly substantial support to Hartz's thesis and its effects.¹ Like Hartz, however, scholars of the consensus school generally have failed to apprehend the concepts and their relationships involved in American political culture. This has led to analyses that have moments of penetrating clarity that struggle against an overall incoherence and confusion.

Typical of these, however superior his work is to most, Seymour Martin Lipset un-selfconsciously conflates the substance of cultural concepts into an "Americanism" that, more or less, agrees with Hartz's appraisal. Lipset argues that the liberal consensus in America involves public pressures for conformity that Tocqueville pointed to as an inherent democratic problem. One of the explicitly political ramifications that Lipset points to is the lack of policy choice that leads to a politics of candidate selection, popularity contests, rather than policy selection.² Daniel Boorstin celebrates these constraints as themselves the framework and the product of some sort of "natural

¹See Rogers M. Smith, Civic Ideals: Conflicting Visions of Citizenship in U.S. History (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1997), pp.1-30.

²Seymour Martin Lipset, Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics (New York: Doubleday, 1960; Anchor Books ed. 1963), p.448; idem, American Exceptionalism: A Double-Edged Sword (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1996).

selection" of political ideas; American history involves then "a process of elimination which has disposed of irrelevant ideas." Ideas, like people, prove successful in America by a "process of absorption and loss of identity." Thus, Boorstin argues that, in America,

bliss ...is attained by a complete adaptation to the environment which involves seizing the opportunities which it offers, by "fitting in." The objective is an almost mystic and naively sensed accord with everything about one. The oblivion of Nirvana and the oblivion of success have much in common. In both, the individual transcends his own personality to become part of what surrounds him.¹

Conformance with the "GIVEN" is approval in America.

Sheldon Wolin maintains that this tendency to conformity is a distinct problem of liberalism proper, that social norms are "internalized and, as such, operate as the individual's conscience. Conscience thus becomes social rather than individual." Rather than consensus, Adam Smith had sought a "concord of affection," an emotional longing and appeal for investment by others in an individual's actions, simultaneously giving social approval and significance. Practically, however, this tends towards individual conformity and social consensus, according to the effects of Locke's "law of opinion or reputation." This remains obscured by liberalism's "blindness to social coercions." However, Wolin continues, these pressures prevail so that in liberalism's struggle of freedom against authority, the seat of authority and conformity becomes social, rather than political.² If Hartz and Tocqueville are correct, in America there is a confusion of social and political pressures and coercion to conform. We should not be surprised, then,

¹Daniel J. Boorstin, America and The Image of Europe: Reflections on American Thought (New York: Meridian, 1960; rpt. 1969), pp.59-60.

²Wolin, Politics and Vision, pp.343-351.

in noting that the subtitle of Lowi and Ginsberg's American Government: Freedom and Power captures the entire theme of that text and the fundamental context and problem of American politics as the authors see it. That the American Constitution providentially 'solves' the problem is a peculiar feature of American liberalism, and of American political science. This 'miracle' arises in part from the embalming of the Founding Fathers "with a scriptural authority that borders on religious dogma" given by America's civil religion.¹ Thus, Constitutional scholars and particularly historians become 'high priests' in America, speaking in reverent tones and writing "commentaries" on Constitutional and foundational history akin to commentaries on the Gospels. While political scientists choose to focus on "checks and balances," making a fetish of the mechanics of the Constitution and American government, Louis Hartz sees the radical importance of the cultural constitution of America--the liberal consensus is a crucial requisite of American politics in light of the Constitution's essentially "stonewall" nature that limits political possibilities to those that enjoy wide support. American consensus is a "hidden and happy accident (that) has lain at the bottom of the American constitutional experience."²

While Lipset's "exceptionalism" has undergone serious criticism, Michael Kammen supports his recent revival of this interpretation of American history. Against the general disapproval of the idea by most American historians, Kammen, himself a historian, argues that social science, exemplified by Lipset's work, is better able to deal with the data at

¹Leonard Kriegel, "The Origins of the American Revolution," in Essential Works of the Founding Fathers, ed. Leonard Kriegel (New York: Bantam Books, 1964), p.1.

²Hartz, The Liberal Tradition in America, pp.85-86.

hand. Indeed, Kammen finds that persistent social science has been convincing in demonstrating that such a doctrine as Americanism does prevail, and that it pre-empts the growth of other doctrines and sets America apart from the world.¹

Although exceptionalism is not coterminous with the liberal consensus idea, the two are related in such a way as to have caused the rejection of arguments forwarded by consensus proponents out of hand with past rejections of exceptionalism. Unfortunately, the revival of the consensus idea has not been attached to the recent rescue of exceptionalism. A major reason for this is the general conflation of symbolic forms by those within the consensus school, notably by Hartz and Lipset as indicated above. This conflation has left the argument open to rebuttal by multiple forms of data that do not fit neatly into the category of "liberal ideology." Such data give the appearance of diversity in America, and seem to falsify Hartz's thesis.

Again, however, this is misleading, since a re-working of Hartz's thesis should account for these conflicting data through the larger matrix of political culture, a matrix that Hartz only hinted at. Such an account demonstrates that liberalism has been more incipient, virulent, and widespread in America than even Hartz supposed. It reveals the interaction and conformity of the content of American myth and religion with ideology in America, demonstrating that all major sources of ideational diversity in America, even those of critics, political alternatives, and intellectual opponents, are constrained by the evolution of American liberalism, often intrinsically so. As well, any real alternatives that

¹Michael Kammen, "The Problem of American Exceptionalism: A Reconsideration," in Kammen, In The Past Lane: Historical Perspectives on American Culture (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1997), pp.169-198.

may begin to arise are co-opted or disposed of as irrelevant in America's "process of elimination," *cum* Boorstin. This is what this work will demonstrate. The re-working and refined conceptual application of political culture to American data demonstrates the value of a liberal consensus interpretation of America for political science. The revised interpretation is applied through historical examples to demonstrate its use and validity for understanding American politics and American political rhetoric, the context and "background" of policy and government.

Michael Kammen has begun some of this work by attempting to restore the idea of consensus to respectability amongst analysts. In doing so, Kammen has asserted that most rejections of the idea of liberal consensus are not so much descriptive as they are prescriptive rejections of 'liberalism' by American 'conservatives,' not so much rebuttals of fact as they are struggles for change by reactionaries.¹ We must remember here, however, that these species--American liberal and American conservative--are two slight variants of one creature in evolution, and not distinct alternatives. Both belong to American liberalism.

Rogers Smith's Civic Ideals is representative of two major sources of objection to the existence of a liberal consensus in America: first, assertions of the existence of a gap between liberal ideals and actual conditions in America, a "reality gap," and second, assertions of real cultural diversity in America that can be harnessed conceptually within the realm of "ideological" belief. In forwarding the first, Smith argues that the gap between America's real conditions and the professed ideals claimed for it by the

¹Ibid., p.180, for instance.

consensus school demonstrates that liberalism is neither universal nor compelling in American political culture. The evolution of American citizenship reveals a persistent exclusiveness that is attached to the political franchise, one that is supposed to be in major opposition to the tenets of liberalism. Thus, Smith argues, America has not been liberal.¹

However, Smith ignores the exclusiveness that has been inherent in liberalism from its inception, and that is even said to characterize the progress of the ideology until recently.² Elsewhere, Smith notes that America's Founders participated in an exclusive liberalism, one that included only a minority of American inhabitants within its ideological boundaries. This sort of selective enjoyment of liberal rights is not liberal at all, Smith argues.³ Rather than acknowledge such exclusion as integral to liberalism, or for that matter any other ideology that must establish ideal boundaries for qualifying conversion and belonging, Smith chooses to assert that even America's Founders must be disqualified as liberal thinkers. In fact, Smith reaches back to Locke and liberalism's earliest ideologues to argue that even they, due to prejudices held and discriminations exercised that run counter to Smith's own views of liberal ideals, even they must be disqualified as liberal thinkers per se. We are left wondering if there exists any liberal creature. Ideological contradictions within liberal thinkers and liberal structures account

¹Smith, Civic Ideals, pp.1-12.

²Wolin, Politics and Vision, pp.343-351; David Held, Models of Democracy (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1987).

³Rogers M. Smith, "Beyond Tocqueville, Myrdal, and Hartz: The Multiple Traditions in America," American Political Science Review 87:3 (Sept. 1993), p.549.

for non-liberal ideals and actions that are at least equal in importance to liberal manifestations in Anglo-American history, according to Smith. The subsequent gap between real conditions arising from non-liberal tendencies and ideal expectations of liberalism are then accounted for and justified by competing "ideologies." Thus, the reality gap is closely aligned with assertions of diversity in America.¹

As Waller Newell notes, however, the problem of America's reality gap is nothing new to political science--Karl Marx dealt with it explicitly, noting the difference between liberal ideals and American reality, without undermining the idea of an American liberalism.² Adam Smith wrote of "systems [of] prescriptive or normative standards against which people are judged but which they often violate in practice."³ Furthermore, Kant dealt with this type of problem at length, demonstrating that it is enough that universal ideals be espoused and pursued to assert their practical reality.⁴ At any rate, the reality gap between American practice and liberal 'theory' does nothing to diminish the rhetorical currency in America of liberal ideals.⁵ As well, such a gap should be expected to exist if Hartz's fragment thesis is valid--C.B. Macpherson maintains that the penetration

¹Ibid., pp.549-556.

²W.R. Newell, "Reflections on Marxism and America," in Confronting the Constitution, ed. Allan Bloom, pp.341-342.

³Gertrude Himmelfarb, One Nation, Two Cultures (New York: Vintage Books, 2001), p.4.

⁴Immanuel Kant, "On the Common Saying: 'This May be True in Theory, but it does not Apply in Practice'," in Kant's Political Writings, ed. Hans Reiss, trans. H.B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1970; 2nd enlarged ed. 1991), pp.61-92.

⁵Pole, The Foundations of America, p.15.

of Locke's liberalism by bourgeois English assumptions not only makes it ideological, but that it engenders it with this reality gap, that this ideology offers "little in the way of either equality or liberty to the majority of Englishmen."¹ As an ideological fragment, America should be expected to carry this reality gap in its subsequent experience. Again, the need for myth and religion to 'include' those otherwise excluded from America's mainstream of thought seems more than relevant. The exclusiveness of original liberalism should be a prevalent feature of its fragment, then, and much of its history might be dominated by problems associated with this reality gap. In fact, Samuel Huntington entirely accounts for the cycles of American political history by relating them to the existence of this reality gap, not as a source of diversity and real conflict, but as a nagging sliver that prompts various reactions--periods of reform to remove, of tolerance to soothe, or of denial to ignore it, or more dangerously periods of self-celebration to stanch its infection--a creedal conflict of ideology, religion, and myth arises not from diversity in America, but from the overwhelming consensus and adherence to American liberal values.²

Again, this first objection to the idea of a liberal consensus in America, the existence of a reality gap, is closely related to the second, the assertion of extant American diversity. Here too, Rogers Smith points to diverse groups that along the way

¹Judith N. Shklar, "Introduction," in Political Theory and Ideology, ed. Judith N. Shklar (New York: Macmillan, 1966), p.9; C.B. Macpherson, "The Social Bearings of Locke's Political Theory, in Political Theory and Ideology, ed. Shklar, pp.66-79.

²Samuel P. Huntington, American Politics: The Promise of Disharmony (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1981).

have been left out of the American dream, not only to point out the reality gap--Americanism is not really universal and therefore not liberal in Smith's eyes--but also to demonstrate a real pluralism--if there are many groups that are left out, it is because they are different. America is not a consensus as Smith sees it.¹

In direct opposition to Hartz and Tocqueville *et al.*, Smith forwards a "multiple traditions" approach to American history. However, Smith sees such creatures as abolitionism and, later, feminism as being "rival civic ideologies," rather than as policy issues within the larger, over-arching liberal ideology. Instead, I argue, these should be seen as attempts to narrow the reality gap and expand the liberal franchise. These are movements within liberalism, rather than any alternate ideologies. Furthermore, where Smith sees mixtures of diverse ideologies--religious, mythic, ideological expressions--we should see, rather, different symbolic forms at work. How their content interacts with American liberalism is the question at hand, but the appearance of phenomena as different forms does not, in itself, mean diversity of culture, but only diversity of expression of culture, perhaps of one overwhelmingly dominant culture.²

Here the problem of indefinite concepts is crucial. Smith argues convincingly that myth, religion, and even rational thought are used around the boundaries of American liberalism, both to create and to justify exclusion from the liberal garden. Racial myths, scientific theories, and religious prejudice work to support the prevailing liberal structures and ethos in America, by controlling people that are feared and by accounting for those

¹Smith, *Civic Ideals*, *passim*.

²*Ibid.*, pp.1-12.

that are excluded. For the most part, Smith is correct. He is wrong, however, to imply that absolutely no exclusion is possible by purely liberal means--liberalism posits its own virtues and accompanying qualifications for inclusion as citizens and for respect. Liberalism is perfectly capable of its own discrimination and prejudice. In America, however, that discrimination has been supported by religious arguments and mythic images, akin to those of Smith's lament. The conceptual problem here is that Smith labels all structures of thought as ideology. Thus, any diversity of thought becomes "ideological" diversity and American liberalism becomes just one among many ideological variants. While Smith is correct that these symbolic forms are properly constituents of American political culture, he is incorrect in his assertion that they are "ideologies" and, thus, he misapprehends American culture. Rather than seeing these different ideas as ideological competitors, we should see diverse structures of thought at work--religion and myth--interplaying with the ideological structure that is wholly liberal. Non-liberal expressions that support or that challenge American liberalism are not ideological and thus do not qualify American ideology. Neither do inequality and political exclusion in actual America deny the ideological reality of liberalism. This is the reality of a structure of thought, not a concrete reality, but one that influences actual politics and defines political expectations, including Smith's own expectations of actual equality and liberty. Smith's lament of unactualized liberalism only works to display his own liberal expectations.¹

Smith appears to have a naive notion of liberalism, that it is some heavenly city

¹Ibid., p.554-556.

of true and substantial equality and universal inclusion. Smith agrees that among those included, among some "ruling class" of citizens, American identity has been ideological, that it has been homogenously liberal, that the liberal ideology has been supported by religion and myth, and that key movements in American history have been largely complaints aimed at the 'broken promise' of American liberalism, rather than being ideological alternatives. Smith's diverse groups, then, are merely the disenfranchised seeking their part of the American dream. This exclusion is accounted for by Hartz, and by the original liberal fragment.¹ Furthermore, the exclusions are justified by liberal doctrine, differences of wealth and power signifying differences of merit and virtue according to Lockean principles.

Whereas Rogers Smith sees diversity in a greater America, other analysts suppose great diversity to exist within the more exclusive dominant political culture. Judith Shklar, for example, maintains that significant diversity is evident in American political thought from the Founding. Shklar asserts the existence of three models of American thought, based upon the thought of three Founders--Jefferson, Madison, and Hamilton. These are, however, merely three models or approaches of political science, rather than evidence of any substantially different American ideologies. Certainly, they offer no evidence of actual American diversity. Shklar's method is faulty here, as she draws inferences from these approaches to try to shore up her assertions of actual historical heterogeneity. In fact, whatever their individual descriptive or scientific values, each can be seen as

¹Ibid., pp.13-39; Hartz, The Founding of New Societies, pp.16-19.

prescriptively liberal.¹ They serve, rather, to shore up Shklar's own observations elsewhere, that

for someone who lives in this society and thinks about it *as an insider*, the tensions and differences among groups and individuals are bound to seem far more significant. Political generalizations are less significant to the local critic than, for instance, the conflict between the impulse to reform and self-satisfaction among their fellow citizens (emphasis added).²

Thus, Shklar's assertions of diversity, along with those of Rogers Smith, also would seem to fit into Huntington's cyclical theory of consensual politics. These are, again, politics about means to liberal ends. The ends themselves are "GIVEN."

One major argument against a liberal definition of American political culture has been drawn from the historical experience of America's South and its past institution of slavery. On this point, Hartz might be accused of straining too far to incorporate phenomena that just do not fit into the notion of a liberal consensus. Hartz dismisses such problems as "liabilities of any large generalization, danger points but not insuperable barriers." In fact, however, Hartz ultimately uses the American Civil War to demonstrate "not the weakness of the American liberal idea but its strength, its vitality, and its utter dominion over the American mind," since the South was, after all, cured of its temporary irrationality.³ Hartz recognizes the roles of religion and myth in shoring up supposed

¹Judith N. Shklar, "Redeeming American Political Theory," in Shklar, Redeeming American Political Thought, ed. Stanley Hoffmann and Dennis F. Thompson (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1998), pp.94-98; reprinted from American Political Science Review 85:1 (March, 1991).

²Judith N. Shklar, "An Education for America: Tocqueville, Hawthorne, Emerson," in Shklar, Redeeming American Political Thought, p.70.

³Hartz, The Liberal Tradition in America, pp.4, 177.

changes away from liberalism, however temporary, in antebellum Southern ideology. However, he fails to extend this type of analysis to his broader examination of American history. To Hartz, compared with liberal America, the antebellum South suddenly appears illiberal and irrational in its retreat into religious rhetoric and mythic imagery to withstand the onslaught of abolitionism and the associated economic domination by Northern interests. However, we should see the rest of antebellum America as equally religious and mythic, from its Puritan origins, through its Providential Revolution, right up to the reform impulses of the Jacksonian era--especially including abolition and its religious and mythic imposition by the North upon the South--and beyond. Contrary to Hartz's assessment, this religiosity does not undermine the liberal idea in America, nor in the South. It remains an impressive feature of the American landscape; its banner still waves.¹

The South cannot be seen as deviant merely because of its heightened mythic enthusiasm leading up to the war. If a case is to be made for American diversity here, it must either rest upon diverse foundations--an untenable exclusion of key liberal Southern founders from the American enterprise, not to mention the South entirely, at least until after the Civil War--or the case must be made upon slavery, as a proof of the existence of some 'foreign' ideology. This, recently, has been the case that is made. Again, Rogers Smith here relies heavily upon the chains of Southern slavery to delineate an American political exclusiveness that is supposed to disprove American liberalism.² As well, Judith Shklar points to a diversity that involves more than the reality gap here.

¹Ibid., pp.145-177.

²Smith, Civic Ideals, pp.20-28.

She maintains that a serious and definitive "ideological struggle...had raged for decades before the first shot was fired" in the Civil War. This indicates an essential and longstanding Southern ideological difference from liberal America. Shklar maintains that the South could not withstand the advances of Northern, Yankee liberalism--which does point to liberal conformity in America at least since the Civil War, undermining her assertions elsewhere of a persistent and contemporary American diversity.

However, the existence of slavery itself is not enough even to assert that some essential ideological difference ever existed in the South, is not enough to assert that we cannot view the South as a liberal project. After all, chattel slavery involved arguments of Lockean property rights. These arguments about the definition of property and, more importantly, of man remained irresolute in Southern politics that upheld social arrangements according to the content of liberal ideology. The right itself to property and its protection went unchallenged. Thus America's liberal consensus had to refer to myth and religion to enunciate the issue of conflict, to infect the ideology with variance and with passion. Thus, settling the conflict became a religious matter and its decision became violent with zeal--in a land that claims never to have had religious warfare. Nevertheless, the entire scenario was played out in the context of a liberal, Protestant sectarian, mythically revolutionary America--on both sides.¹

Shklar has pointed to America's original Puritan governments as "democracy that was both exclusive and authoritarian," democratic in form and in name, despite social and

¹See James Oakes, Slavery and Freedom: An Interpretation of the Old South (New York: W.W. Norton, 1990).

economic relations that might have excluded and oppressed "otherness" as unsuitable for citizenship. This seems to allow for recognition of the South as a "democracy." Yet Shklar insists elsewhere that originally "this country had embarked upon two experiments simultaneously: one in democracy, the other in tyranny." She refuses to allow for undemocratic features to exist within social or economic relations of any so-called democracy.¹ However, American slavery arose with rising capitalism and market demands, a perversion and side-effect of liberal ideology leading to some illiberal ends within its own project.² As well, the South suddenly becomes "tyrannical," for Shklar here, rather than "republican" as she maintains for the South's self-perception. This raises the problem of just what was eradicated in the Civil War, and by what. Furthermore, Shklar elsewhere denounces the first centuries of the entire American enterprise: "Until the Civil War amendments America was neither a liberal nor a democratic country, whatever its citizens might have believed." While this does seem to confirm Lowi and Ginsberg's affirmations about essential similarities of North and South--they maintain that differences surrounding slavery were matters of property value, differences of interest rather than of moral value³--an apparent laxity here about political concepts might leave us unable to apply them at all to the "real world." Surely, the currency of political ideals has some value; political rhetoric and national self-conception must provide some insights

¹Judith N. Shklar, "The Boundaries of Democracy," in Shklar, Redeeming American Political Thought, pp.128-129; Shklar, "Redeeming American Political Theory," in Ibid., p.92.

²Bernard Bailyn, The Peopling of British North America: An Introduction (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986), pp.28-29; Also see Oakes, Slavery and Freedom.

³Lowi and Ginsberg, American Government, pp.44-45.

and benchmarks. Perhaps Shklar ignores her own "boundaries of democracy," the self-defining limits of political definition established by governments and societies.¹

Furthermore, despite her own assertions of actual Southern "tyranny," even Shklar maintains that Southern slavery did not preclude "republicanism" as the South's antebellum political self-conception.² This points, in a curious way, to a supposed original liberal-republican dichotomy that has found its way into American political thought in contemporary debates. These are not, however, competing ideologies. Rather than being ideological, American republicanism is a procedural matter, involving particular emphases upon institutional mechanisms, political responsibility, and civic community as avenues of legitimacy and of realization--security--for essentially liberal goals and values, especially those surrounding property. For republicans, representative government provides for the exclusivity of graduated enfranchisement and political participation. Education provides for virtuous citizenship--the 'moral' self-limiting responsibility that recognizes liberal rights regardless of inconvenience to self--as well as the hope for real enjoyment of the fruits of liberalism. Community forms the bulwark, providing layers of socialization and buffering that keep democracy safe, that keep democratic pressures from infringing upon liberal rights. Republicanism is, essentially, a throwback historically to the transformative cusp between "protective" and "developmental" models of democracy, a reversion to the original American liberal fragment. Invoked purposefully by its advocates, it is an elite expression of liberalism.

¹Shklar, "The Boundaries of Democracy," pp.127-145.

²Shklar, "Redeeming American Political Theory," pp.102-103.

This final argument for supposed ideological diversity in America, that of some original republicanism moving in tandem with American liberalism, seems dead in its tracks. As noted above, Shklar points to the death of supposed republicanism with the Civil War. Elsewhere, Alan Brinkley also points to the Civil War as the end of American diversity and as the proof of "the survival of a national community," as the moment of the American Union.¹ Thus, consensus at least since the end of the Civil War is conceded and contemporary republicanism becomes little more than another form of American "restorationism."

While some republican advocates argue that liberalism came to prevail over American political culture shortly after the Revolution, most assert the Civil War to be the crucial turning point of American history to liberal dominance since. This work demonstrates a continuity of growth and elaboration of liberal doctrine throughout early American history and into the Civil War. Rather than an innovation, that war represents the capstone of previous liberal development, a powerful demonstration of America's inability to contain extreme policy deviations precisely because of its already accomplished ideological consensus. As the North pursued an actualization of liberal ideals politically, the South, while remaining ideologically liberal, was forced into new symbolizations in the realms of religion and myth in order to defend its policy of chattel slavery. No longer readily supporting the dominant liberal ideology, Southern religion and myth began to present a different cultural structure in the American polity--a structure

¹Alan Brinkley, "Liberty and Community," in New Federalist Papers: Essays in Defense of the Constitution, ed. Alan Brinkley et al. (New York: W.W.Norton & Co., 1997), p.97.

that was intolerable within the American consensus. However, as the policy of slavery was defeated by warfare, its supporting cultural symbols quickly dissipated into the prevailing Americanism. The continued liberalism of Southern ideology now required religion and myth to 'snap back' into line as supporters of perpetual American ideals. That they did so is evidence of the relatively shallow absorption of distinctly 'Southern' ideals that underscored the policy of slavery. Upon the abandonment of that policy, distinct symbols associated with that policy also were abandoned, revealing the unifying American symbols as dominant once again throughout the nation--American liberalism once again claimed the support of religion and mythology everywhere, enabling the rehabilitation and restoration of the South within the United States. The policy dispute between North and South and its associated religious and mythic cultural deviations that erupted into civil warfare never involved departures from American liberal ideology. The development of American liberalism has not wavered from its inception.

Nevertheless, the idea of some original republicanism persists in contemporary American thought, as a supposed antibody to American liberalism. The idea should be seen as just that--a prescriptive attempt by ideologues to "restore" something nebulous to the body politic. Michael Sandel allows that American thought has been dominated by a liberal consensus--Republicans and Democrats are all liberals, he insists--but maintains that this did not go unchallenged until the New Deal and the postwar era; an original republicanism is supposed to have kept the American ship of state on course until recently.¹ This is a strain of typical American restorationism, a renewal jeremiad, as

¹Sandel, Democracy's Discontent, pp.4-7.

Sandel calls for the revival of supposed original impulses.

Against the grain of his textual assertions, Bernard Bailyn's work has been co-opted by advocates of this republicanism as proof of its originality. However, Bailyn insists that the diverse forms of rhetoric invoked in the Revolutionary era--religious, Roman, classical, republican--are not descriptive of the content, logic, reason, or source, of Revolutionary political beliefs. Instead, rationalism proves both source and substance of American dogma, with liberty as the common ideal throughout the Revolutionary era. Bailyn points to liberalism as the substantive American ideology.¹

In fact, what advocates of republicanism seek to restore is merely a version, or stage, of liberalism. These republicans have not granted liberalism a wide enough girth, or perhaps have dissociated themselves in their own minds from so-called liberalism in an attempt to purify their doctrine from the late perceived corruptions of the New Deal, the Great Society, "special interests," and "entitlements." At any rate, American republicans are liberals distinguished by minutiae. Sandel's republicanism involves participation and responsibility in a community that favours civic virtues, as opposed to some imagined liberal value-free community. Sandel defends the exclusiveness that is implied by republican citizenship, that is implied by necessary civic virtues, as requisite for republican ends. These ends, however, appear to be liberal rights--life, liberty, and especially property. In fact, this is a defence of a former historical stage or position of American liberalism, and a call for civic education to prepare citizens for a more

¹Bernard Bailyn, The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution, Enlarged ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1967; rpt. 1992).

exclusive, and elusive, franchise. American republicanism is an avenue back to a more exclusive liberalism, sought by "republican" liberals who do not trust the Constitution or the electoral process to function as they were designed, to distance democratic impulses from the national government. This is a renewed, inverted form of anti-federalism.¹

As the boundaries between American religion, ideology and myth have become increasingly blurred in America, that is to say, as the sources of their content have become less obvious and the content has become increasingly "given," the influence of religion particularly is felt to have lessened. There is some fear of immorality, of ideology cut loose from religious and mythic content. This is coupled with a fear of "the masses" as this loosened ideology seems to include and console them less and less. Public education, once the preferred road to good citizenship, is no longer trusted to accomplish its mission. It has been cut loose from its anchor, church religion, and increasingly given over to the more immanent civil religion. Individualist mythologies of social progress, including the Alger adjustments, seem to have given way to an urban wilderness myth of raw individualism. The language of "rights" is said to have displaced common sense, in an encroachment by democracy--the great unwashed--upon the accomplishments of some rarer ideological species, some original, authentic liberal democratic forefathers who, by virtue of their virtue, are supposed to be "republican." Government in America has been usurped by "special interests," it is argued, for the purpose of extending rights, "entitlements," rather than serving its original and limited purpose as protector of property rights. The Constitution fails to keep democratic impulses impotent, it is feared. In fact,

¹Sandel, Democracy's Discontent, pp.317-351.

'republicans' suppose that those forces are empowered through the Constitution's corruption by amendments and Supreme Court decisions.¹ Unable to feel their exertion of influence upon this democratic thrust directly through churches and civic associations, republicans call out for a renewal of civic virtue, of traditional restraints felt upon liberalism through religion and myth. Of course, as American liberals, they lack self-consciousness of the persistent and subtler workings of myth and religion; the movement of American spirit is lost on these faithless. Thus, they seek explicit, organized, and visible influence upon American culture through 'ancient' means--churches, "local" government, and civic leaders.

Joyce Appleby points to a republican call for revival based upon "discoveries" of republicanism in early American history. The use of republicanism is advocated explicitly as an "intellectual resource rather than a compelling representation of reality." This is prescription, rather than description, the promotion of republican 'ideology' as response to a supposed spiritual crisis, the recapturing of some past sense of virtue and civic solidarity. Appleby maintains that liberalism and republicanism exist as two distinct ideological alternatives, promoting one against the other. Appleby's consolidation of work by several thinkers on the validity of a 'republican' Founding only goes to serve the ends of this group of orthodox revisionists--the lament for a golden age of civic virtue and supposed original Americanism, and the attempt to turn this lament against so-called

¹For recent examples and expressions of these fears, see Jean Bethke Elshtain, Democracy on Trial, The Massey Lecture Series (Concord, Ont.: Anansi, 1993); Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., The Disuniting of America: Reflections on a Multicultural Society (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1991; rpt.1993); Robert Hughes, Culture of Complaint: The Fraying of America (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1993).

liberalism to denounce it, not only as a social construction, that is as mere ideology, but also as unoriginal, not the "real McCoy". On both counts, liberalism is rendered illegitimate for Americans. As "ideology," used pejoratively by republicans, and as not the original Founding moment of America, so-called liberalism must give way to republicanism.¹

However, Harvey Mansfield exposes such politics with the affirmation that American republicanism is a process, a means to an end, and that liberalism defines its ends. American republicanism consists essentially of representative democracy and limited government upheld by civic education and the notion of a liberal social contract, with government guided by the preservation of liberal values. Government exists to secure liberal rights as defined by the American Declaration of Independence, and is aided by religion in shoring up these rights, whose existence is felt intuitively as transmitted by myth prior to their rational explication.² This, in a nutshell, describes the workings of American political culture, and Locke is close at hand here. The American Constitution, Mansfield insists, involves the blending of a republican tradition with liberal ideology. Republican government and its pursuant virtue serve liberal ends in an American Founding that is based upon liberalism, valuing liberty over virtue. This is the so-called "republican genius" of the Constitution, a procedural feature that, again, is typically

¹Joyce Appleby, "Republicanism and Ideology," American Quarterly 37:4 (Fall, 1985), pp.461-473.

²Harvey Mansfield, "Thomas Jefferson," in American Political Thought: The Philosophic Dimension of American Statesmanship, ed. Morton J. Frisch and Richard G. Stevens (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), pp.25-37.

stressed in American political science, over and above political culture--the thick brambles beneath.¹ American republicanism is original liberalism, a fragment renewal.

It seems, then, that the notion of a liberal consensus in American thought may have suffered a premature departure from political science analyses. With a proper understanding of political culture and its internal workings, the revival and completion of Hartz's thesis might reveal more about the course of American government and politics than has heretofore been noticed. It should also account for this contemporary debate within American liberalism itself, between republicanism and liberalism, perhaps revealing avenues of resolution through the interaction of the content of symbolic forms, that is through the application of mythic, religious, and ideological understandings to the issues of dissonance. It would be well to understand these features of American political thought and analysis.

It is maintained, then, that critics of the idea of a liberal consensus have only criticized the limited nature of its earlier assertions. Incomplete apprehensions of the nature of political culture have left much data, much apparent diversity, out of the mix. It has been suggested how these data might be absorbed by a more complete matrix of symbolic forms, by a fuller apprehension of political culture. As well, it has been demonstrated that this absorption might be done without sacrificing detail, without generalizing data. In fact, more detail, more insight and understanding should be rendered, as the significance of any particular phenomenon and its relationship to other

¹Harvey Mansfield, "Social Science and the Constitution," in Confronting the Constitution, ed. Allan Bloom, pp.413-416.

cultural phenomena are determined. Apparent contradictions and matters previously settled, however unsatisfactorily, as paradoxical should be opened to our understanding and resolution. Political culture should prove itself conceptually, a useful tool for scientific analysis, and American political culture should prove itself formally an American liberalism.

The more complete rendering of political culture and of American political culture that follows articulates what Hartz called "the inarticulate premise of conformity" in America. Following the conceptual work of gathering them together in chapter one, the elements of that conformity are laid out individually, in chapters two to four. A strictly chronological rendering of the origins and progress of American political culture might tempt the reader to confuse the symbolic forms, as do typical accounts of American history--ideology, religion, and myth tend to coalesce into one "ideology." Therefore, I have presented below three chronologies of cultural and historical development--one for each of these important forms of thought. Each is a distinct history, yet each points to the others for context and dynamic shaping of symbols and events. Thus, each can be read in isolation as a relatively complete account of the development of each symbolic form. However, the reader also is invited to cross through the chapters to situate the ongoing development of each symbolic form in relation to the others. To facilitate this cross-reading, chapters have been divided into sections and sub-sections that are chronologically and developmentally related, more or less, to the same sections in each chapter. Thus, different readings of this history can deliver distinct accounts of one or the other form of thought, preventing confusion and clarifying one's apprehension of that

particular set of symbols. Or, readings crossing through the chapters can deliver a more complete portrait of political culture generally through different chronological periods and crucial moments of historical development. The reader is invited to participate, then, in the amalgamation of American phenomena into a complex and compelling matrix of symbols and symbolic forms.

Below, Chapter One outlines the distinctions between the symbolic forms that constitute political culture--ideology, religion, and myth. Their coalescence into a symbolic matrix is demonstrated to be the proper and useful conceptualization of political culture. With this theoretical construction, Part Two embarks upon three tours of early American history--Chapter Two follows the origins of liberalism as an ideology, from its British roots into the American fragment. The chapter asserts the dominance of liberalism in American history as a fluid medium of understanding for its participants, and also of shaping events through its prescriptive character as people strove to make their actual world harmonious with the ways that they imagined it to be. Chapter Three then traces American religiosity and its influence through the same developmental periods of American history, demonstrating the crucial supporting role played by Protestant Christianity to liberal ideology. Chapter Four presents an account of myths that posits American mythology as the sentimental apprehension of reality. This provides for an 'instinctive' Americanism that underscores religious and ideological symbolizations. Mythologies render a 'social instinct' within individuals in a given society, cuing in them behaviours and expectations in unreflective ways. Thus, American mythologies are said to bind together the nation beneath the political surface of policy and events. Yet, the

substance of that social unity shapes reactions to movements on the political surface, and provides for interjections into those politics to conform them to deeply rooted sentiment. In the United States, myth always has been surfacing in American life, always has been vibrantly political.

This work concludes that the application of this matrix of political culture provides for the collection of diverse phenomena into a conceptual understanding of American life that preserves the distinct and diverse expressions of individual symbols and symbolic forms, yet that provides them with context and explanation. "Americanism" becomes a useful term, a description of a political culture *en tout*. Yet violence is not done to essential distinctions of elements within that culture--religion remains religion and not ideology, for example. "Ideology" is enhanced as a conceptual tool for political scientists by its rigorous and limited application to strictly ideological phenomena. Such an application demonstrates America to be ideologically liberal as an element within the political culture of Americanism. Apparent 'ideological' diversities are demonstrated to be not ideologies, but religious and mythic expressions within that culture. Thus, these are given new standing as symbolic satellites to liberalism, not antithetical but tangential modifiers and adjustments to American liberalism, alternate descriptions leading us into American life, but not actual ideologies leading us astray. Much of this 'diversity' constitutes expressions of attempts by Americans through different forms to bring their environment into harmony with their political ideals--to make America live up to her promise, the promise of her liberal ideology. Such "conflict within consensus" has become a central feature of American politics from its inception--"The chief challenge

to Puritanism in America was that it found fewer opponents than it had in England....in New England the Puritans heard mainly the carping of their own dissidents."¹ Thus, 'diversity' in America signals diversity of policy, different attempts by Americans to arrive at liberal ends, ends that are given by the origins and early development of American political culture.

¹Andrew Delbanco, The Puritan Ordeal (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1989), p.39. The expression "conflict within consensus" is borrowed from Samuel Huntington's American Politics.

Chapter One: The Conceptual Matrix of Political Culture

"Change the culture, then we will change the laws"

(President William Jefferson Clinton after the Littleton, Co. school shootings, lamenting the limitations placed upon his gun control proposals by America's political culture, April 27, 1999).

i. Political Culture:

In a recent article, Robert Bellah posed the question, "is there a common American culture?"¹ In responding to this persistent problem of American studies, Bellah argued that apparent cultural diversity in the United States is subject to the unifying force of America's "common language and symbols." As a measure of the potency of this force at a most obvious level, Bellah asserts the assimilating power of the English language as it works upon second and third generation Americans of immigrant descent: "The cultural power of American English is overwhelming, and no language, except under the most unusual circumstances, has ever been able to withstand it." Ninety percent of second-generation American-Hispanic children are fluently English, while only fifty percent of the next generation can speak Spanish. By the fourth generation the original language of immigrant ancestors is entirely lost. Bellah reports that "when third generation Asian-Americans come to college, they have to learn Chinese or Japanese in language classes just like anyone else--they don't bring those languages with them." Through education, television, and popular culture, language serves the channelling of diversity into one

¹Robert N. Bellah, "Is There a Common American Culture?" Journal of the American Academy of Religion 66:3 (Fall, 1998): 613-625.

powerful and monolithic culture.¹ Even prophets of doom that warn against ethnic division in America readily acknowledge in their jeremiads, not only that assimilation has been propitious American policy in the past, but that it continues unabated into the present: "My impression is that the historic forces driving toward 'one people' have not lost their power. For most Americans this is still what the republic is all about."² Cultural or political groups in the United States, apparently representing cultural diversity, are merely mechanisms, tools for expressing, demanding, or asserting political rights. What is more, Bellah notes, these rights are individual rights. "Remarkably thin" veils of cultural difference are stretched thinner, transparently revealing the common, unifying symbolic invocations beneath.³ Unfettered by pretence, these symbols are more powerful, if more subtle, disclosures of the unifying force of America's political culture. Even before original languages are lost, newcomers to America become subscribers to her principles, adherents to her ways, and asserters of her virtues. Thus, in the rhetoric of primary communication through language, but more importantly in a broader communication of ideas through symbols, political cultures are fabricated.

The conceptual framework around "political culture" is a relatively recent endeavour within political science, one that is incomplete as evidenced by this work at hand. Yet, contrary to Lewis Austin's assertion that "in the history of political thought and experiment, the idea of political culture is one of the youngest modes of

¹Ibid., pp.613-615.

²Schlesinger, The Disuniting of America, pp.14-23.

³Bellah, "Is There a Common American Culture?"p.621.

understanding,"¹ the 'stuff' of political culture has provided insight and understanding throughout the history of the western tradition. The assumption that "any political system, good or bad, was the direct product of the beliefs held by its members" is directly connected to Plato's "deep conviction that a city of reason ruled by philosophy would be the salvation, not only of philosophers and philosophy, but of all its members."² Along with reason's political potential, Plato's genuine concern for the nature of myth and the content of myths reveals his assurance of the political roles of feeling and belief.³ Knowledge of these remains cogent to the proper study of politics. Human understanding of the natural world bears a distant influence upon the political when compared with our apprehension of the ideal, a world of our own making, at least in the immediate sense--placed within nature, man may be said to participate in the making of the ideal, man is a conduit or 'instrument' through which nature manifests itself. Thus, different appearances of the ideal may be revelations, even to 'scientists'. Certainly, Aristotle's recognition of one of the key virtues of political studies involves the wise association of types of political regimes with types of peoples and their particular expressions of mind. In this sense, 'political culture' lies at the very origins of political science.⁴ In modern times, Alexis de Tocqueville spoke of the "prejudices, the habits, the ruling passions, and,

¹Lewis Austin, Saints and Samurai: The Political Culture of the American and Japanese Elites (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1975), p.2.

²Wolin, Politics and Vision, p.37.

³For example, see The Republic of Plato, ed. and trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1991).

⁴See Aristotle, The Politics, ed. and rev. Trevor J. Saunders, trans. T.A. Sinclair (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1981).

in short, of all that constitutes what is called the national character," in relation to American government and political institutions as part of his classic study.¹ It seems, then, that "the idea of political culture" has been one of our oldest modes of understanding, a useful and revealing idea or approach to politics. Yet, perhaps precisely because of its antiquity, political culture has lacked conceptual clarity, has lacked the systematic rigour upon which rests modern science.

This imprecision translates into loose descriptions of American political culture as a "complex and amorphous amalgam of goals and values" without system, "reflected in the fact that no theory exists for ordering these values in relation to one another."² This absence of theory is not a feature of American culture, but rather of the science that studies it. Dominated by Americans, this science has been unwilling or unable to come to terms with the ideal elements of America's culture, to recognize human participation in the creation of its revelation, its 'truth'. This has to do with the relationship of political culture and political legitimacy, the ways in which a state's institutions and actions may or may not be founded upon the ideas and values of its people's culture³--the consonance of a people's institutions, actions, and beliefs, along with their appearance as "given" truths, as in the United States, provides for a political legitimacy whose foundations American political scientists traditionally have been loathe to expose for fear of laying

¹Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America abridged, ed. Richard D. Heffner (New York: Mentor, 1956; rpt. 1984), p.39.

²Huntington, American Politics, pp.15-16.

³James L. Nolan Jr., The Therapeutic State: Justifying Government at Century's End (New York: New York Univ. Press, 1998), p.26.

them waste.

Societies strive for self-justification through cultural expressions. Those that are successful, those that lend legitimacy to socially relevant action, are spun out over generations. Properly constituted, a theory of political culture should reveal just how the elements of political culture operate and how they are related. In unravelling "the skein of tropes" that "European-Americans wove around the part of the Americas which became the United States,"¹ a theory of political culture must also recognize the nature of the yarn that is spun, the patterns of their blend, as well as the participation of the weavers. This is necessarily an historical as well as a conceptual endeavour. To state this more conceptually, such a theory must recognize the nature of the elements of political culture, how they interact or are blended together--universally and/or particularly--and the effect of interaction by successive generations of human beings with these elements and the pattern of their blend--the effect upon interacting humans as well as the effect upon these elements and upon their blend.

By approaching culture in this way, as a historically developing account of human interaction with and upon language and symbols, the potential to misappropriate or overstate a causal effect for culture upon action is mitigated. Rather than a direct cause of any particular action, political culture becomes a context that influences and constrains action, and that can provide for a rendering of accounts. This, for the political scientist, is invaluable--political culture provides a context for reasoned description of events and

¹Daniel T. Rogers, "Exceptionalism," in Imagined Histories: American Historians Interpret the Past, ed. Anthony Milho and Gordon S. Wood (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1998), p.22.

actions.¹ This is understanding. Such study is useful for political scientists because of the connection that exists between actions and beliefs, because of their influence upon each other in a dialectical relationship.²

Jon Pammett and Michael Whittington demonstrate some problems associated with other loose definitions of political culture, such as "the aggregate of the political attitudes of the individuals in a society."³ This definition again points to the complex nature of political culture--here "aggregate," above "amalgam," direct attention to the composites of culture for a more precise definition. One way of further defining these composites is to expand "attitudes" into "attitudes, orientations, values, beliefs, emotions, images," in an understanding of political culture that strives to encompass the supersensible.⁴ However, as Pammett and Whittington assert, the problem of "the intensity of attitudes" typically is neglected by such definition, as the types of attitudes, orientations, values, and beliefs are ignored, as are their effects upon one another, how they may bolster or moderate one another's intensity.⁵ In the United States, for instance, ideological commitment is intensified and bolstered by supporting religious and mythic symbols that sacralize and eternalize particular ideological beliefs--the "sacred cause of liberty" in the

¹Stephen Welch, The Concept of Political Culture (New York: St.Martin's Press, 1993), pp.104-105.

²John H. Pammett and Michael S. Whittington, "Introduction: Political Culture and Political Socialization," in Foundations of Political Culture: Political Socialization in Canada, ed. Pammett and Whittington (Toronto: Macmillan, 1976), p.2.

³Ibid., p.1

⁴Ibid., p.2.

⁵Ibid., p.11.

American Revolution is a crucial, formative example.¹ Thus, a theory of political culture must necessarily categorize types of values, beliefs, emotions, and images, and account for their interaction. If it is to account for differences in intensity and flavour, a theory of political culture must categorize types of thought.

In their classic text on political culture, The Civic Culture, Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba initially define political culture as "specifically political orientations--attitudes toward the political system and its various parts, and attitudes towards the role of the self in the system."² Moving from this general statement, Almond and Verba assert that any particular "political culture of a nation is the particular distribution of patterns of orientation toward political objects among the members of the nation."³ Recognizing, however, that these initial definitions lack the conceptual detail necessary to move them from description to theory, Almond and Verba attempt to categorize their "attitudes and orientations." These become cognitive, or ways of knowing; affective, or ways of feeling; and evaluative, or judgements and opinions: "When we speak of the political culture of a society, we refer to the political system as internalized in the cognitions, feelings, and evaluations of its population."⁴ Here we have some definition of "attitudes and orientations," according to their function or operation within individuals.

¹Nathan O. Hatch, The Sacred Cause of Liberty: Republican Thought and the Millennium in Revolutionary New England (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1977).

²Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba, The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1963), p.13.

³Ibid., pp.14-15.

⁴Ibid., pp.14-15.

Willard Mullins argues that a problem exists with such definition, however, in its psychological dependence upon personally internalized beliefs. This tends to remove objective elements from consideration, ignoring institutions, documents, and historical data as elements of culture. Focusing upon individual psyches ignores the sources, origins, and texture of its content. It renders an ahistorical approach to political culture as a static collection of individual moods or opinions at any given time.¹ Even ignoring the historical development of knowledge and ideas and their interaction as culture, on its own terms such a definition becomes unworkable in its dependence upon individual responsiveness to scientific study. Mullins argues that its reliance upon survey interviews renders "isolated responses to questionnaire items while neglecting the 'dialectical,' 'holistic' aspects of various political outlooks as they develop historically."² Whittington emphasizes the problem of deciphering out of survey responses a society's shared values and the emotional and intellectual context of a given person: "The problem with values is that they are often so fundamental that we do not recognize them and consequently may have difficulty articulating them. Accordingly it may be difficult to study values through survey techniques." Thus, Whittington turns to institutions as more accurate or revealing reflections of political culture.³ This involves an interpretive approach, drawing out of a people's institutions and history the details of a culture, an examination of their

¹Willard A. Mullins, "Ideology and Political Culture," pp.113-116.

²Ibid., p.115.

³Whittington, "Political Culture: Attitudes and Values as the Determinants of Politics," in Approaches to Canadian Politics, ed. John H. Redekop. 2nd ed. (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall), p.136.

political institutions, symbols, and rhetoric over long periods of time. It involves description as evidence of "variable and cumulatively learned patterns of orientations to action in societies." With this description is the "claim that something underlies surface appearances, and therefore it is theory."¹

With this, there remains still the need for system to characterize the elements of political culture. The weaknesses that Mullins asserts are associated with Almond and Verba's psychological approach may be secondary to the weakness of their categorization of thought. "Cognition," "feelings," and "evaluations" may not be entirely different from "attitudes," "values," "beliefs" and "emotions." These still designate a broad approach to the supersensible, one that relies so much upon particular description--of this or that type of cognition or feeling--that the concept dissolves into particular description. According to Ellis and Coyle, "a theory of culture must identify common sociocultural dimensions and types." While this points us in the right direction, unfortunately these students of political culture pursue a "grid/group analysis" involving individualist/communitarian orientations, an approach that relies upon human behaviour for its cultural categories, rather than upon human thought.² While behaviour obviously is relevant in deciphering underlying thought, it is a categorization of thought that is required if we are to theorize about the relationship of thought to behaviour. For this, Ernst Cassirer provides the

¹Harry Eckstein, "Social Science as Cultural Science, Rational Choice as Metaphysics," in Culture Matters: Essays in Honor of Aaron Wildavsky, ed. Richard J. Ellis and Michael Thompson (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997), p.26.

²R.J.Ellis and D.J.Coyle, "Introduction," in Politics, Policy and Culture, ed. Ellis and Coyle Political Culture Series, Aaron Wildavsky series editor (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), p.2.

framework.

Cassirer's neo-Kantian categorization of human thought into archetypal symbolic forms provides a template for a theory of political culture. Following Cassirer's rendition of symbolic forms, Mullins asserts that culture does not consist of particular fragmented beliefs, but rather consists of beliefs as structured and preserved through time. Symbolic forms, the forms together constituting human culture, sustain this preservation. Political culture generally consists of all of the forms, as any one form may render content that impinges upon politics, and consists of any specific content of the forms as it becomes politically relevant. Mullins argues that the symbolic forms that consistently generate symbols of political significance are myth, religion, ideology, science, and philosophy. These, then, are the general categories of political culture.¹ Of these forms, philosophy and science tend to be relatively elite and serve contemplative functions. Thus, historically the "active elements of political culture" are myth and ideology for Mullins.² Although much of Cassirer's work revolves around religion and its development, neither Mullins nor Cassirer has developed religion as a key symbolic form of political culture. Religion should be seen as a third form that generates symbols of political relevance. It has active potential and shows a distinctive mode of political intercourse with the other key forms, ideology and myth. As well, civil religion can be distinguished from religion proper as a symbolic form and is politically relevant, particularly evident in America.³

¹Mullins, "Ideology and Political Culture," pp.111-136.

²Ibid., p.131.

³Brent Gilchrist, The American Civil Religion in Cultural and Historical Perspectives, passim.

Thus, practically, political culture consists of ideology, myth, religion, and civil religion.

With these categories of thought, ways of knowing and feeling are differentiated, as are methods of evaluating and responding to events. Examination and description of the interaction and influence of types of thought are enabled. In short, this definition of political culture provides for a reasoned, textured analysis and description of the aspects of human thought that lie behind political action, beliefs, and institutions. It reveals and accounts for the general dispositions and predispositions to certain action, the orientations that, revealed in patterns, we commonly refer to as political culture.¹ Culture has been described as a sort of filter that is embraced early, by individuals or by societies, a filter through which experience then flows back and forth, changing both filter and receiver over time.² This categorical approach to political culture as ideology, myth, religion, and civil religion provides for proper accounting of the nature of that filter, of how different experience is shaped as it is perceived through religious or ideological biases, or felt through mythic participation, as well as providing for accounts of the changes in texture to the filter as myth becomes religion, or as religion gives way to ideology as the dominant system through which the world is conceived.

As filters or screens, political cultures define contexts, eliminate various political alternatives, and shape political expectations.³ A definition of political culture according

¹Eckstein, "Social Science as Cultural Science, Rational Choice as Metaphysics," p.23.

²Charles Lockhart, "Political Culture and Political Change," in Culture Matters, ed. Ellis and Thompson, pp.91-93.

³Walter A. Rosenbaum, Political Culture (New York: Praeger, 1975), pp.121-128.

to its categories lends itself to understanding political contexts and their intensity, as well as what types of alternatives may be eliminated and why--why socialism is pre-empted by the pre-dominance of a liberalism that is supported by Christianity and popular mythology in the United States, for instance. It also helps us to understand the avenues through which ideas may gain political relevance--how this or that religious idea or mythic sentiment may become ideologically and politically relevant.

Daniel Levin argues that this distinction of cultural categories by their content is a feature of "modernism." According to Levin, "post-modernism" recognizes that the content of cultural categories is all mixed up, that the categories are not distinct and, therefore, are mere conceits. He approvingly points to the use of images as having moved beyond categorical analyses and into a new awareness of complexity within the unity of the image.¹ This approach moves us backwards, away from any theory of culture--evidenced by Levin's equation of the Constitution of the United States with the definition of American political culture. Using a convenient symbol to unify the different aspects of American politics, Levin's approach obliterates much and, implying that the particular definition of each culture can be made according to this or that particular symbol, eliminates the possibility of any theory of culture, thus effectively destroying political culture as a concept. This post-modernist approach to culture as an undifferentiated polyglot also ignores the fact that the categories of symbolic forms always have enjoyed shared content. Theory is always neater than the "real world" in its distinctions and

¹Daniel Lessard Levin, Representing Popular Sovereignty: The Constitution in American Political Culture (Albany: State Univ. of New York Press, 1999), pp.1-2.

conceptualizations of phenomena. In theory, concepts are discrete. However, in the "real world" we must recognize that these fine lines become blurred, thus the appearance of culture as a mishmash. The same symbols often are shared within myth, religion, and ideology, thereby reinforcing themselves and accounting for their intensity within any particular culture. Nevertheless, distinctions can be made as these are separated out for study, distinctions in theory. Myth as a symbolic form always has involved images, but in less defined and elaborative ways than have religion and ideology. "Post-modernists" are only now coming to an awareness of the power of images to harness ideas in unified ways, and are now turning to images because of their endurance against modern expectations that reason would displace entirely the non-rational elements of human thought. Modern science and rationality have not eliminated religion and myth from political culture. This only serves to demonstrate the potency of a theory that categorizes these forms and explains their relationships as sequentially developing aspects of thought that may displace one another for dominance in any particular culture, but that are permanent features of human thought that do not destroy one another, but that may or may not be mutually supportive. Always, they are interactive.

ii. Myth:

In the popular imagination, myth often is stigmatized as falsehood. While this misconception is bolstered by such pillars of rationalistic analysis as Herbert Spencer and Max Muller, Ernst Cassirer's more sympathetic delineation of the concept dismisses their rationalistic approach as "the logical result of that naive realism which regards the reality

of objects as something directly and unequivocally given, literally something tangible."¹ For Cassirer, rather than a misapprehension of reality, myth participates in the very genesis of human consciousness and world-building as social reality. Myth is the initial element in the creation of human being, a creature of mankind's own progressive capacity for symbolization.² At the foundation of human sensibility itself, and therefore also at the ground of rational procedure, lies the primordial mythic matrix.

Society emerges with myth out of common experiences that find their first meanings and utterances as metaphor. These symbolic embodiments of original truths are rooted in a consensus of common sense.³ Mythic symbols are immediate condensations of experience, reflecting "not the objective character of *things*, but the forms of human practices," or human participation with the cosmos (emphasis original).⁴ Such participation involves an integration of reality that establishes continuity between man and his environment as one whole. Through mythic metaphor man reshapes his environment, makes experience understandable, and creates a human world.⁵

Myth is a direct and unreflective symbolic concentration of experience, an imagistic fusion of experience and emotion into a collective self-representation in this

¹Ernst Cassirer, Language and Myth, p.6.

²Ibid., pp.9-16. Also see John D. Schaeffer, Sensus Communis: Vico, Rhetoric, and the Limits of Relativism (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1990), pp.7-9.

³Schaeffer, Sensus Communis, pp.4-5.

⁴Cassirer, Language and Myth, pp.33,41.

⁵Schaeffer, Sensus Communis, pp.6-7.

human world.¹ Myth lays the foundations for 'higher' symbolic forms that articulate and define themselves in a progressive devolution of human thought--religion and philosophy develop out of the original mythic matrix as increasingly theoretical, abstract and diffuse expressions of human being.² Original mythic social constructions persist as underlying truths that support, shape and constrain their subsequent intellectual superstructures.³ In a sense, myth transforms knowledge into power by sentimentally prescribing action and "defining and limiting possibilities for human response to the universe."⁴ Myth operates somewhat as an embedded social 'instinct.' More immediately, however, myth transforms power into knowledge in "an attempt to remake in language what has been made in fact in human culture."⁵ In this way, myth transfigures reality into social meaning. Concrete experience is preserved as it takes on a social reality that is filled, eventually, with moral and spiritual meaning that can motivate individuals and societies⁶--Custer's last stand, the

¹Mullins, "Ideology and Political Culture," pp.123-125; Cassirer, Language and Myth, p.57; Henry Nash Smith, Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1950; rpt. 1976), p.xi.

²Cassirer, Language and Myth, pp.90-91.

³Ernst Cassirer, The Myth of the State, (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1946), pp. 277-296; Also see Peter Behrenberg, "Three Explorations of the Relation between Politics and Myth: Vico, Cassirer, and Blumenberg," New Vico Studies 9 (1991), p.17.

⁴Richard Slotkin, Regeneration Through Violence, p.7.

⁵Donald Phillip Verene, "Imaginative Universals and Narrative Truths," New Vico Studies 6 (1988), p.14.

⁶Christopher F. Mooney, Religion and the American Dream: The Search for Freedom Under God (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1977), p.24; Robert N. Bellah, The Broken Covenant: American Civil Religion in Time of Trial (New York: Seabury Press, 1975), p.3.

Alamo, the Spirit of '76, all are invocations of meaning drawn from action in this way. The given truths that make, shape, and sustain a culture reflect man's original creative powers. Mythic man is a spontaneous creator, not a mere recipient, of these truths.

Original creative powers are vitally embodied in symbolic truths, so that man's continued participation in the mythic involves their recovery. The unifying nature of mythic symbolization obliterates distinctions, such that participants are united in experience; to do the same is to be the same¹--building a society under prophetic leadership in a new world renders colonists a "New Israel," and the slaughter of native Americans becomes "the Conquest of Canaan."² The mythic perception of experience constrains its meaning, conforming all like participants to potent symbols that imagistically unify them in defiance of time and space. As Slotkin asserts,

the sources of myth-making lie in our capacity to make and use metaphors, by which we attempt to interpret a new and surprising experience or phenomenon by noting its resemblance to some remembered thing or happening. If the metaphor proves apt, we will be inclined to treat the new phenomenon as a recurrence of the old.³

History is annulled as time is collapsed or transcended in a recovery of perpetually contemporary origins of human being and social meaning: "The mythic outlook ignores the distinction between the time of the beginning and the time of the present, for it is the

¹Cassirer, Language and Myth, pp.91-92, 40-41.

²Drinnon, Facing West, p.66; Ernest Lee Tuveson, Redeemer Nation: The Idea of America's Millennial Role (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1968; rpt. Midway, 1980), pp.106-107; Bellah, The Broken Covenant, pp.6-8, 13-15; Richard T. Hughes, "Recovering First Times: The Logic of Primitivism in American Life, in Religion and the Life of the Nation: American Recoveries, ed. Rowland A. Sherril (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1990), pp.193-218.

³Richard Slotkin, Gunfighter Nation, p.6.

same time: continuous, undifferentiated, a beginning that is always happening."¹ George Washington becomes a "Moses" and the thirteen colonies become the thirteen tribes of Israel in the American Revolution.² Fidelity to their cause thus becomes righteousness, while opposition or even deliberation and neutrality become apostasy. Renewal purifies the given social world, cleansing it of the corruptions of intervening history and restoring its meaning in defiance of anterior developments and the devolution of thought that clouds original culture over generations.

This destruction of history by "an *eternal present*, which is indefinitely recoverable" as a regeneration of culture through such returns to the powers of original times,³ is one way in which myth is differentiated from ideology--ideology situates events within linear history in a rational explication of this place at this moment. Myth's ahistorical perspective, moreover, is joined by a primarily emotional, rather than rational or logical, 'structure' that also sets myth apart as a symbolic form. The cognitive and evaluative elements of myth are not logically expressed but are intuitive, emotional responses cued by immediate imagistic identification with mythic content. Myth and mythic man--giver and recipient--speak heart to heart. Thus, the prescriptive potency of myth for action is immediate and emotional, coeval with original experience embodied in the mythic symbolization and released upon later reception--one only has to "remember

¹Mullins, "On Political Myth, Archaic and Modern," p.4; Slotkin, Fatal Environment, p.24; Richard T. Hughes, "Recovering First Times," p.200.

²Robert P. Hay, "George Washington: American Moses," American Quarterly 21:4 (1969): 780-791.

³Mircea Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Harper & Row, 1957; rpt. 1961), pp.88, 81-85.

the Alamo," not explain it. Meaning and action are unified in myth, such that reception and response denote action unmediated by rational thought. Mythic action, if "programmed," is not done so consciously and logically, but involves instead an immediate evocation of feeling and participation that are joined in the symbolic reality. While all symbolic forms imply action, myth is action. Its prescriptions are intrinsic and metaphoric, its action scarcely removable from its principle or thought. Myth is a unified whole that is permeated by belief and action throughout. Its action is its belief, its message. As such, myth forms a kind of fluid substance that washes through the veils drawn between action and belief, unifying two worlds. This means that action joins thought as the proper study of political culture, not merely action as an indicator of implicit beliefs, but action as a proper symbolic embodiment of human thought.

We might define myth, then, as the immediate, unreflective, and simple symbolic embodiment of a common emotional response to experience, an embodiment that carries, hence evokes, that emotional response, binding together its respondents in a community of feeling that integrates this community while constricting its consciousness in conformity with the original symbolic embodiment.

While mythic evocations bring original experience to the surface of social consciousness, renewing, re-integrating and solidifying the sociality of a given community, the existence of surrounding symbolic forms colours the reception of surfacing myths, such that the original myth is changed, "updated" so-to-speak, each time it is evoked. For practical purposes, then, we might alter the constricting clause of the above definition of myth to read: "while constricting its consciousness in conformity to

the original symbolic embodiment *and* its reception or evocation." The vital myth is always a renewed myth.

Mythic symbols are communicated as images, either told as narrative or painted by words as fixed images of the mind that imply narratives once or yet to be told--"cowboys," "The West," or "Manifest Destiny," for example. These are images of social import, created perhaps by individuals at times, but gaining stature as myth through collective effort, invocation, and reception. "Myths are stories, and inevitably the central myths of a society will tend to refer to those issues that concern society most deeply, and most persistently over time."¹ Bringing several myths together, "a mythology is a complex of narratives that dramatizes the world vision and historical sense of a people or culture, reducing centuries of experience into a constellation of compelling metaphors."² Often, myth involves the invocation of only fragments of images, involving a way of thinking, speaking, and reacting, more than a full-fledged rendition of a mythology:

Myth-narratives reflect and articulate the unconscious assumptions, the habits of thought, feeling and vision, which inform the "mind" of a culture. They draw on the content of individual and collective experience, on the deep structures of human psychology and the particularities of human history, establishing connections between the individual and the archetypal, the singular and the universal. Myth-narratives rarely occur in pure form, but rather are contained, perhaps hidden, in "ordinary" cultural phenomena like literary or journalistic narratives, or in the stories people tell of themselves and the life around them--just as an individual psychological history is contained in the "narrative" of the dream and of the therapeutic confession. Myth is archetypal, and refers human

¹Slotkin, The Fatal Environment, p.23.

²Slotkin, Regeneration Through Violence, p.6.

consciousness to the universal, to the extent that there are universalities in the human condition and our consciousness of that condition.¹

As an aspect of political culture, myth bolsters the beliefs that are the content of other symbolic forms, particularly religion and ideology; "Myth does not argue its ideology, it exemplifies it. It projects models of good or heroic behaviour that reinforce the values of ideology, and affirm as good the distribution of authority and power that ideology rationalizes."² The images projected by myths constrain social behaviour by emotional persuasion, and by what they leave out;

The moral and political imperatives implicit in the myths are given as if they were the only possible choices for moral and intelligent beings; and similarly, the set of choices confronted are limited to a few traditional "either/or" decisions. When we play the Cowboy and Indian game only two or three human roles exist--aggressor, victim, avenger--and there are few options for moral choice: A man's got to do what a man's got to do.³

As the belief content of different symbolic forms coalesces into a mutually or self-supporting "culture," mythic beliefs become the assumptions and social realities, the "given" upon which more complex symbolic forms build programs of action. American myth is so successfully entrenched, so potent, that it has made much of American ideology and religion virtually invisible in the common mind, absorbing it into the mythic given. Whether in the "American Way of Life" or in Boorstin's "GIVENNESS," history and myth, religion and ideology, are obliterated as categories of thought, brought into one

¹Richard Slotkin, "Dreams and Genocide: The American Myth of Regeneration Through Violence," Journal of Popular Culture 5:1 (Summer 1971): 38-39.

²Slotkin, Fatal Environment, p.19.

³Ibid., p.19.

given truth in the American mind.¹ "In the end," says Slotkin,

myths become part of the language, as a deeply encoded set of metaphors that may contain all of the "lessons" we have learned from our history, and all of the essential elements of our world view. Myth exists for us as a set of keywords which refer us to our traditions, and (as Martin Green says) transmit "coded message[s] from the culture as a whole to its individual members." And although these signals are brief, they are packed with information--for example: the Captain was taking his company out of Song Be for a Search and Destroy mission against the VC--one hundred infantrymen in full pack, with rifles, heavy automatics, and a helicopter gunship flying hover-cover--and he said to the reporter, "Come on...we'll take you out to play Cowboys and Indians."²

iii. Religion:

The rise of additional symbolic forms that impinge upon the reception of mythic symbolizations--the progressively articulated devolution of thought--is a consequence of the ultimate failure of myth to integrate total experience and constrict all of human being within immediate sensibilities. Inevitably, things must be explained. The sacred aspect of myth, the awe and fear inspired by the powers felt in mythic being, devolves into an increasing personification and deification of the natural world. This abstraction ruptures man's world, positing a transcendent realm that increasingly requires a specialized and discursively articulated communication of its meaning. Religion arises as a symbolic form to repair this rupture in man's sacred world, to explain the now divine ultimate reality and

¹Boorstin, The Genius of American Politics, passim.

²Slotkin, Fatal Environment, p.16.

bring all back into one in a new, semi-rational explication of the cosmos.¹ With the evolutionary transition from myth to religion, "man's symbolic power ventures beyond all the limits of his finite existence"--a new heavenly world is created. In turn, the meaning of immediate experience is negated by the new prophetic promise of a future that actualizes the transcendent ideal, implying "a new and great act of integration; it marks a decisive phase in man's ethical and religious life."² Knowledge that can no longer be mythically infused is now explained in an increasingly elaborate system that removes the sacred from immediate daily experience and common knowledge. Myth remains as an unseen social fabric underlying the elevating structure of meaning that communicates ultimate reality from above the world, rather than from within where myth lies. Society becomes mundane, immediately detached from the sacred yet bound to it in a relationship of mutual definition and purpose--heaven and earth begin to fulfil one another. History begins.

As a symbolic representation of ultimate reality,³ religion's self-perception increasingly involves the displacement of myth from the rendition of 'truth'. Religion aspires to encompass a totality of truth and to embrace all of human experience. This leads, again, to the possible confusion of formal symbolic content, and of the forms

¹Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge (New York: Doubleday, 1966; rpt. Anchor Books, 1967), pp.111-112; Cassirer, Language and Myth, pp.17-23, 62-83.

²Ernst Cassirer, An Essay on Man: An Introduction to a Philosophy of Human Culture (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1944; rpt. New York: Bantam, 1970), pp.60, 96.

³James G. Moseley, A Cultural History of Religion in America (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1981), p.161.

themselves. From within, religion embraces everything, at least ultimately, so that everything relates to religion; "religion is the audacious attempt to conceive of the entire universe as being humanly significant."¹ As scientific observers, we impose limits upon the religious to preserve the integrity of symbolic forms and discrete human experience, and to understand their interaction and social meaning. This imposition is so successful in the modern world that it has penetrated the content of modern religion. As all moderns have become "scientific" observers, willing to dissect truth and to accord each expertise its own dominion of reality, so modern religiosity is entirely corrupted with the acceptance of alternate truths. It is a modern presentiment that expects and prefers diversity where once unity prevailed. The quest for singularity, particularly the singularity of truth, "seems to prevail in the classical and medieval worlds, and is not seriously questioned until, say, the sixteenth century."² In religion, the pursuit of unity in faith took the lives of heretics and unbelievers as carriers of "a poison more dangerous to the health of society than even hypocrisy or dissimulation, which at least do not openly attack the true doctrine. Only truth matters: to die in a false cause is wicked or pitiable."³ True religion is singular and totalistic in its embrace of reality, admitting no formal rivals. Any particular religion that is truly or purely religious will admit no formal rivals to the truth--

¹Peter L. Berger, The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1967; rpt. Anchor Books, 1990), p.28; Richard P. McBrien, Caesar's Coin: Religion and Politics in America (New York: Macmillan, 1987), p.8.

²Isaiah Berlin, "The Apotheosis of the Romantic Will: The Revolt against the Myth of an Ideal World," in The Proper Study of Mankind: An Anthology of Essays, ed. Henry Hardy and Roger Hausheer (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998), pp.553-554.

³Ibid., p.554.

no philosophy, ideology, nor myth. Nor will it admit any other religion, church, or sect to its feast of righteous authenticity. "Here, then, there is no common ground between views that prevailed even as late as the sixteenth or seventeenth century and modern liberal attitudes."¹ Visible pluralism in modern religiosity is a corruption of religion, rendering religion *qua* religion alien to current observers and therefore elusive as a concept.

If, as Carl Jung asserts, religion is one of the "most universal activities of the human mind,"² then scientists anxious to bolster their own preferred symbolic form to primacy based upon its own limited premises, as theologians previously had assaulted myth, cannot displace it from claims to truth. Jung emphatically denounces such work as bad science, as an artificial exclusion of religion from truth claims about human reality according to a philosophical prejudice that is empirically inadmissible.³ To him, religion is part of the structure of man. Regardless of any professed beliefs to the contrary, even of apparent atheism, man is religious.⁴ Jung asserts that religion has more value "from the standpoint of psychological truth" than does science and scientific theory. The abstraction and exclusively rational approach of the latter renders them incomplete and ill equipped to grasp "an irrational fact, such as the psyche."⁵ Since the human psyche

¹Ibid., p.554.

²Carl Jung, Psychology and Religion (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1938; rpt. 1966), p.1.

³Ibid., p.112.

⁴Ibid., pp.102-103.

⁵Ibid., p.56.

is not "a merely personal affair," but the vehicle of tremendous "instinctive forces" that are unleashed in the social world, religion--the revelation of those forces from their repository in the psychic unconscious--is of vital concern to social and political science.¹

Jung's notion of the unconscious mind attempts to explain the original relationship of myth and religion, and leads to an experiential delineation of religion as a concept. In this account, the unconscious is a storehouse of public images and thoughts, of common reactions to experience that are formed in the structural make-up of the human psyche. This is to say that the unconscious is the resting place of human myth making, the potentiality of symbolization according to archetypal patterns. Social being dwells within personal being as patterns in the unconscious. This collection of patterns, or the content of the unconscious, is triggered into consciousness by certain cues. Responsively, the unconscious surfaces as intuitive, instinctive reactions to experience, reactions that are shaped and constricted by that same unconscious content. Myth surfaces. These reactions are responses in judgement and feeling that are immediate and intuitive, "hunches" that naturally arise and carry our social being.² They are mythic eruptions.

Such emergence of the unconscious into conscious being is termed religious experience by Jung. Religion is the revelation of the unconscious to the conscious, or ongoing participation in myth making and myth renewal. The sentimental evocation of the mythic mind becomes religious feeling; the awe and fear of mythic perception

¹Ibid., pp.16, 52.

²Ibid., p.46. Also see Carl Jung, "Approaching the Unconscious," in Man and his Symbols, ed. Carl Jung (London: Aldus Books, 1964; rpt. London: Pan Books, 1978), pp.20-25, 49-50, 57-58.

becomes reverence for that which inspires it, the sacred.¹ Jung, then, co-mingles religion and myth, denying religion formal integrity of its own. Religion is the experience of myth, the active communication of mythic knowledge, or presentations of the sacred. Religion becomes a kind of all-encompassing mythic experience, a master myth that aligns and communicates lesser myths into one, much as Hannah Arendt's master ideology focuses ideas into a singular view.² Jung's approach does point to the origins of religion in sacred mythic experience, with the mythic asserting its continued psychic relevance despite religion's subsequent devolution as a form. It does not, however, delineate religion as a symbolic form. Nor does it help to explain religion's unique structure, content, and impingement upon social and political worlds. Jung preserves the original religious moment as true religion, denouncing rather than delineating all subsequent theoretical devolution of the concept.³

Participation in the mythic, the revelation of the unconscious to the conscious, may continue as the vitality of religion. However, this renewal of original religious experience does not account for the theoretical apparatus of formal religion that distinguishes it from myth. As a symbolic form, religion involves more than Jung's "momentary" experience. Cassirer traces an evolution of increasingly discursive and

¹Berger, The Sacred Canopy, pp.25-26.

²Arendt draws diverse experience into "ideology" as singular controlling ideas, such as racism or materialism, which then become controlling or master "ideologies, that is, systems based upon a single opinion ...isms which to the satisfaction of their adherents can explain everything and every occurrence by deducing it from a single premise." See Hannah Arendt, The Origins of Totalitarianism (Cleveland: Meridian, 1967; First published 1951), pp.159, 468.

³Jung, Psychology and Religion, pp.52, 63, 6.

finally theoretical religious thought, from scattered "momentary gods" (Jung's religious experience), to a unified Divinity that embraces all in system and ultimately even becomes abstract beyond language.¹ This "theoretical systematization" forms theology out of mythology--theology according to Berger and Luckmann is a systematized and theoretical mythology that moves man out of the mythic and into the religious proper.² However, this implies an evolution within myth's formal structure, so that religion remains myth, albeit elaborated myth. This view blurs the distinction between mythic and theoretical thought that, according to Cassirer, sets myth apart from its symbolic outgrowths--all is myth, more or less, for Berger and Luckmann.

Émile Durkheim's functional definition of religion is one step removed from Jung's, describing religion according to its social effect engendered by its commonality of experience. While Durkheim implies the departure of religion away from myth and into a transcendence that requires religion to relate men to sacred beings, this distinction is not explicit. Religion is defined as a system of sacred beliefs and practices uniting believers into a moral community: "Religious representations are collective representations which express collective realities."³ Again, the distinction from myth is not clear, nor, if we are tempted to accept broad definitions of "sacred" as potentially

¹Cassirer, Language and Myth, pp.62-83.

²Berger and Luckmann, The Social Construction of Reality, pp.111-112.

³Émile Durkheim, as quoted in W. Lloyd Warner, "An American Sacred Ceremony," in American Civil Religion, ed. Russell E. Richey and Donald G. Jones (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), p.108, and as referred to in Gail Gehrig, American Civil Religion: An Assessment (Storrs, Conn.: Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, 1979), p.32. Also see Patrick H. McNamara, Religion American Style (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), pp.3-5.

having to do with any view of ultimate reality, does this definition differentiate religion from science or ideology. With this, we are once again in a world where everything might be religious. Such is the view of the United States Supreme Court--the Court recognizes as "religious belief" various traditions that lack explicit belief in God, as well as recognizing "secular humanism" and even individual expressions of conscience as "religion" for the sake of First Amendment protections.¹ Patrick McNamara asserts that, despite Durkheim's stress on the distinction between sacred and profane, this approach can absorb substitutions of reverence for sacredness, making "natural" world-views properly religious. Accordingly, McNamara contributes to the blurring of religion and ideology by noting Communist reverence for its doctrine and its "prophets"--Lenin, Mao, Castro, Ché Guevara, Ho Chi Minh--and the "religious" devoutness with which ritual celebrations--May 1, the anniversary of the Revolution--are observed.² Thus, communism becomes a new religion.

As Martin Marty insists, not everything is religious: "If everything is religious nothing is religious."³ Marty affirms religion's concern with ultimate things and points to the language of myth and symbol that joins with ceremony and ritual to reinforce some "metaphysical or quasi-metaphysical sanctions, compelling some sort of socialization, and exacting some sort of behavioral consequences." Marty dismisses the need for a reference to deity as a western prejudice, pointing to "numerous world religions" that lack such

¹McBrien, Caesar's Coin, pp.9-10.

²McNamara, Religion American Style, pp.4-5.

³Martin E. Marty, "Two Kinds of Two Kinds of Civil Religion," in American Civil Religion, ed. Richey and Jones, p.139.

reference.¹ This definition might encompass Jon Butler's definition of religion as a belief in and resort to superhuman powers or beings that determine natural and human events.² This would admit astrology, magic, and numerous kindred beliefs to the realm of the religious and, while acknowledging close original links between these and myth and religion, again undo religion as a conceptually distinct form. As any system of ultimate beliefs becomes religion in Marty's approach, so any or all symbolic forms become religion.

These inclusive approaches point to phenomena that appear to be "like" religion, that lend themselves to a religious label by their functional or behavioral qualities. They do not constitute religion proper, however, as they ignore the origins of the form in its departure from myth through the increasing deification of mythology and its gradual contextual unification and personification as a transcendent god. Other observed phenomena might constitute late stages of rupturing mythology, or early stages of religious evolution; but without a god, and a personal monotheistic god at that, they do not constitute religion in its highest form of devolution. The fully developed symbolic form that we call religion must have a personal god, absolutely transcendent and singular. All else that we call religious might be that, religious--of a religious quality--but might just as well be described as mythic, having a mythic quality, or if having leapfrogged

¹Ibid., pp.139-140.

²Jon Butler, Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1990; rpt. 1992), p.3.

religion to a godless ideology, ideological. Without God there is no religion.¹

Jon Butler is correct to emphasize that, "above all," religion explains.² In explaining the extraordinary as acts of God, religion repairs the rupture of the mythic world, restoring its lost integrity. Unable to account for all experience in immediate metaphor, myth spins out into an extended metaphor that is increasingly elaborate and that alters its own nature into religion. By embracing theoretical communication, this metaphor becomes religion, rather than remaining myth. It loses its immediate, concentrated and emotive quality in its acquisition of conviction through explanation. Religion becomes an argument about original senses, about religious experience and mythic foundations. It becomes an argument about the meaning of man, society and, even, the political. The argument is always about the original, but always in light of the transcendent. If it is religion, God rules.

I would define religion, then, as an elaborate symbolic system that explains ultimate reality in terms of a transcendent god, placing all of the mundane within its purveyance, prescribing personal and social behaviour according to that explanation, most

¹Steven M. Cahn argues that religion without god exists and can be observed as 'natural' religions that "perform rituals, utter prayers, accept metaphysical beliefs and commit themselves to moral principles without believing in supernaturalism." Cahn's argument, however, attributes these, as religious performances, to essentially non-religious behaviours that are likened to the authentically religious--any ritual becomes religious ritual, meditation becomes prayer, philosophy is religion, and morality, while not relying upon the existence of god, is possible only within a religious context. Cahn opens religion to include any beliefs or behaviours that might be likened to religion. Without a god, however, such phenomena cannot be ultimately distinguished as religion; putting on the king's cloak does not deliver one a kingdom. See Steven M. Cahn, Philosophical Explorations: Freedom, God, and Goodness (Buffalo: Prometheus, 1989), pp.64-68.

²Butler, Awash in a Sea of Faith, p.9.

often directing that behaviour toward some transcendent end. It uses both mythic and systematic thought to convince by its completeness, and especially uses myth to revivify itself both personally and socially. Religion explains the religious experience.

The explanation of reality that is rendered by religion's symbolic system includes accounts of man's proper relationship to things of this world. Aspects of human being are explained, roles are defined, and social lives are circumscribed, more or less, by religious teachings. Political life is situated, in varying degrees of detail, within a grand scheme. The structures of traditional society are explained and justified first in religious terms, with duty as the operative principle impinging upon social behaviour. Religious and political authority are intermingled, as in the political theology of Richard Hooker, the author of the last great work of English traditionalism.¹ Such political theology involves the filtering through religious thought of political philosophy as it is communicated into public spheres--a retrograde reworking of philosophic ideas necessary to their reception by traditional societies. Political philosophy gradually gained measures of independence from religious corruption after the recovery of Aristotle, through such thinkers as Thomas Aquinas and John Calvin.² However, even with such increasingly rational approaches,

¹Richard Hooker, Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity, ed. Arthur Stephen McGrade (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1989); also see Wolin, Politics and Vision, pp.195-196.

²Wolin, Politics and Vision, pp.132-137, 165-194; Charles Homer Haskins, The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1927), pp.278-367; The Political Ideas of St. Thomas Aquinas, ed. Dino Bigongiari (New York: The Free Press, 1997); J. T. McNeill, History and Character of Calvinism (Oxford, 1954); Etienne Gilson, Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1938).

religion remained fundamental to political authority and communication. Philosophy remained an elite symbolic form, a status continued and reinforced by early modern thinkers. Machiavelli and Hobbes both refused to "water down" philosophy, refused to lower philosophical thought to practical political arguments of mass consumption. They refused to invent ideology, speaking instead to their peers.¹ Eventually, however, this new form of thought developed around the political communication of philosophical ideas--ideas that were routed first through religion.

iv. Ideology:

Historically, the gradual emergence of an increasingly 'secular' politics out of European religious traditions was accompanied by the growth of an equally secular conceptual framework that explained and justified this modern transformation of power. Traditional religious symbols and ideas were transposed into the language of a new political realm that increasingly was loosed from its original constraints. This new language of transposed symbols secured legitimacy for modern politics. As covenant became compact and duty became right, philosophic arguments became practical, ideological, as they coalesced around these developments, accounting for them and furthering their progressive independence. Thus, an account of the rise of civil society out of the state of nature is rendered in parallel with the development of an actual political society breaking free of its original religious community. This, roughly speaking, involves the rise of ideology. The religious community becomes part of liberalism's natural

¹Wolin, Politics and Vision, p.194.

background to modern political society in this new account, part of a supposed pre-political society out of which flows the capacity for making a civil society as well as the capacity for an independent account of that society. Thus, the Mayflower Compact is possible because "the religious community is prior to the body politic, both temporally and metaphysically, and, on the whole, it is their existence as a church or congregation that enables the colonists to constitute a civil body politic."¹ Just as "the competence of the Pilgrims to covenant and combine themselves into a civil body politic derives from the community of experience and commitment which had already constituted them a religious body,"² so does the competence of the new language of ideology derive from its ability to render an account of this very transition of political life, its ability to explain and justify the modern world.

As the first modern political ideology, liberalism involves an account of its own movement of political life away from its traditional moorings. The same forces that nurtured the crisis answered the crisis of legitimacy that persisted through the seventeenth-century decline of traditional authority; a modernizing, secularizing, liberalizing "supernatural rationalism" claimed that reason was sufficient to establish the bases of political authority.³ C. B. Macpherson asserts that the individualist orientations of the Protestant Reformation are key to our understanding of this declining traditional

¹Maureen Henry, The Intoxication of Power: An Analysis of Civil Religion in Relation to Ideology (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing, 1979), pp.28-30.

²Ibid., p.29.

³Michael Kammen, People of Paradox: An Inquiry into the Origins of American Civilization (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1980), pp.36, 176.

authority. As the increasing primacy of the individual before God loosed moral actors from hierarchical and institutional impositions of organized religion, a new individualism erupted. Hastening this conversion, Locke provided a political justification, not only for these newly unindentured servants but also for the new society within which they found themselves. As "propertied" men, each being an 'owner' of one's self and one's labour--the source of property rights for Locke--individuals now found themselves to be both agents and objects of exchange in a society that increasingly resembles a marketplace. Locke endows this new society with a natural antiquity and with natural rights as the supposed pre-political condition of mankind. Politics then becomes the guardian enterprise for this independently viable social and economic life. Thus, for American federalists and anti-federalists alike, the United States before the Constitution appears "very little better than a state of nature" and the social contract represents the only legitimate foundation of government.¹ Liberalism becomes the political justification and source of legitimacy for an original society made new, a society whose existence, if not its security, is distinct from government.² With this, liberalism becomes its own engine of change and the

¹Noah Webster, "A Citizen of America," Oct.17, 1787, in The Debate on the Constitution, 2 vols., ed. Bernard Bailyn (New York: Library of America, 1993), 1:154; Alexander Hamilton, "'Publius', The Federalist I," in The Debate on the Constitution, ed. Bailyn, 1:219-223; Richard Henry Lee, "Letters from the 'Federal Farmer' to 'The Republican'--Letter II," Oct.9, 1787, in The Debate on the Constitution, ed. Bailyn, 1:256.

²Locke, Second Treatise of Government, chs.1-5, 7-9; C.B. Macpherson, The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1962), pp.194-262; David E. Ingersoll and Richard K. Matthews, The Philosophic Roots of Modern Ideology: Liberalism, Communism, Fascism, Islamism, 2nd ed. (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1991), p.35.

agency of a new, earthly salvation--individual rights, society and its economics are all secured by liberalism, a particular ideologically driven system of politics and associated thought. Through its collection of popular and practical, as well as philosophic and rational arguments, ideas are "cobbled together" into an appealing and comfortable fit.¹ Liberal ideology takes on an attraction that moves its adherents and their society away from traditional constraints and into "liberty." This is the measure of success for any ideology, its ability to convert and move people--not the ability to achieve its goals, but to be taken up as the language of political policy where religion and traditional discourse are moved from public dominance. Popular persuasiveness, rather than any measure "of either accuracy or logical coherence," gauges ideological success.² By this measure, liberalism is tremendously successful as an ideology, the only horse out of the gate in the United States, and John Locke is a most talented cobbler.

Liberalism, then, provides itself an archetype for modern political ideology. As the shifting ground from religious to secular argument, from theological to rational pseudo-scientific explanation, liberalism represents the transition from political primacy of one form of thought to that of another, from religious to ideological dominance. With this change, particular religious symbols are rationalized, renewed and re-invigorated politically:

The use of symbols in psychology, sociology and metaphysics, in ethics, politics and religion, is inescapable. Without symbols no thought. Yet

¹Michael S. Whittington and Richard J. Van Loon, Canadian Government and Politics: Institutions and Processes (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1996), p.93.

²Ingersoll and Matthews, The Philosophic Roots of Modern Ideology, p.8.

these symbols never have a simple origin; they are changed and recast as we proceed from one sphere to another and back again. Perhaps it is a consequence of this process that there is similarity among the symbols used in the various spheres of understanding and of action but never a one to one correspondence.¹

Since ideology presupposes a cultural context for its content and purpose, in this case the rise of liberalism presupposing a society that it aims to preserve and justify politically, it is wrong to assert, as many do, that ideology necessarily is antagonistic towards a key element of that society, religion. Other analysts incorrectly assert particular religions to be distinct ideologies, and thus handily provide themselves with ideological competitors to liberalism in the United States as evidence of American diversity. In this way, Leonard Williams asserts that Christianity is an ideology that signals a division in American political culture, as a competitor against liberalism.² This demonstrates the need for conceptual definition, but also for an understanding of origins and relationships between these forms. Christianity is not an ideology, nor is liberalism a religion. They represent distinct forms of thought that, superficially, may be 'used' at times against one another in the political realm, but are fundamentally complementary to one another in human intellectual development. Yes, liberal ideology rises with the displacement of Christian religion from political dominance in Anglo-American politics, but it does so as a preservationist force in the face of an onslaught by raw science and intemperate philosophy. Yes, the displacement of the Church from political dominance may be helped

¹Richard Niebuhr, "The Idea of Covenant and American Democracy," Church History 23 (1954): 129.

²Leonard Williams, American Liberalism and Ideological Change (Dekalb: Northern Illinois Univ. Press, 1997), pp.10, 15.

along by the development of ideology. However, liberalism preserves, if transforms, Christian notions, symbols, and values. Ideology as a form, then, archetypically allies itself with religion, growing out of and complementing its social origins. This can be explicit, as in the case of liberalism especially in the United States, or implicit, as in the case of Marxism even though it appears openly hostile to any religion. The difference between these may parallel the difference between reformation and revolution. We should note, however, that the liberal reformation constitutes the beginnings of modern ideology and more readily typifies ideology as a symbolic form, while Marxist revolution is a late development that may represent its extreme limits. Diverse forms of thought enable diverse expressions of the same and do not necessarily signal actual cultural diversity.

It is this rise of ideology out of a religious background, and especially the preservation of transformed religious symbols within particular ideologies, that has lent to confused understandings of ideology as a new or "secular" religion. However,

an ideology is not a religion, although there do appear to be points of resemblance. A religion is a system of faith, worship, and conduct, centred on the unseen world, the sacred and the divine. Ideologies are directed towards an explanation of human history and the human predicament in categories considered to be essentially rational. Both, of course, look beyond theory to action. Both religion and ideology demand 'commitment'....At the beginning of the modern world, religion began to take on a different form, to become closer to what we now call ideology.¹

The origins of modern ideology as a secular substitute for a withering religious hold on the western mind often are frozen in time within conceptual frameworks, so that this

¹Maurice Cranston, "Introduction," Ideology and Politics, ed. Maurice Cranston and Peter Mair (Florence: European Univ. Institute, 1980), p.viii.

moment becomes functionally definitive for ideology.¹ In these cases, ideology becomes nothing more than a device for political legitimacy, as does religion by implication. Instead, ideology and religion first should be identified as cultural forms and only then studied in terms of their political functions.² No doubt, the rise of ideology did respond to a western crisis at the so-called collapse of religion by providing a new account of the political. However, ideology is not so grand as to replace religion in rendering human understanding of "ultimate reality," contrary to sacralizing assertions by some that Locke's contributions are more theological than political, assertions that would raise "self-evident truths" to the stature of Divine revelations.³

The development of liberal ideology is somewhat constrained and shaped by its adoption and use of Christian symbols⁴. But this use is to a new and different purpose whose orientation is in this world, not the next. This must be recognized in conceptual distinctions between these forms. Diverse cultural phenomena are distorted when conceptually squeezed into one symbolic form, as Thomas Pangle maintains Hartz has done by gathering American religion and ideology into one embrace as liberalism.⁵ Hartz

¹Ibid., p.ix.

²Mullins, "On the Concept of Ideology in Political Science," p.502.

³Ellis Sandoz, A Government of Laws: Political Theory, Religion, and the American Founding (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1990) pp.51-52; Huyler, Locke in America, passim.

⁴Ruth Bloch, "Religion and Ideological Change in the American Revolution," in Religion and American Politics: From the Colonial Period to the 1980s, ed. Mark A. Noll (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1990), pp.48-49.

⁵Pangle, The Spirit of Modern Republicanism, p.27.

is not guilty of this conflation, however--generally he ignores religion. Still, Lipset and others do collapse all into one, obfuscating much by their confusion of symbolic forms. The confusion arises because of the continued interaction, the sharing of symbols and the mutual support that religion and ideology afford one another in America, their persistent affectation in concourse with one another despite their conceptual distinction, not because of it. The point of interaction and continuity between the new form of ideology and its religious progenitor, not yet deceased, is that of the political legitimacy provided by liberalism to an increasingly rational and secular society. This is also the precise point of their distinction. Whereas religion served, and still does to a great extent in the United States, the purposes of social stability and political legitimacy, this is not its primary purpose or focus. Ideology, on the other hand, lowers its eyes from the heavens to gaze upon this world and is, perhaps, deliberately constructed to serve these specific purposes, to improve or even perfect life here and now. Religion endeavours to explain things of this world, but in relation to another, invisible world. This world is viewed always in terms of the other. Alternately, ideology is rooted firmly in this world. It is the only world in question for ideology. The modern political world becomes a self-accounting and self-fulfilling project through ideology.

The rational systematizing of economic and social life involved with modernization and especially with the Industrial Revolution required political accommodations. A concomitant rationalizing of political life was necessary to provide it legitimacy through convincing explanation and appeal; "as rationalism developed and science seemed to contradict certain basic tenets of the Church, people began to rely on

science for solutions to their difficulties."¹ In politics this involved pseudo-science, or ideology. In religion, the Protestant Reformation represents efforts to adapt to and absorb these changes. Such efforts especially are obvious in periods of religious "enlightenment" or Awakenings. However, these efforts were not entirely successful. The Reformation was not able to make religion rational enough to retain the whole of modernity within its purview. Religion could not become something wholly other. In America, a combination of civic republicanism, Lockean liberalism, and Protestant Christianity are said to have satisfied modern demands of legitimacy for the state.² It should be noted, however, that a most effective source of political legitimacy historically--religion--is able to persist as such in America only because American Christianity has absorbed back into itself the language and symbolism of Lockean liberalism through several periods of "awakening" and religious revival.³ This transforming renewal of religion through the re-absorption of its ideological offspring only serves to further the confusion of symbols and symbolic forms in American cultural analysis--the language of political science remains inescapably littered with religious idioms such as the "secular epiphany" meant to describe the relatively sudden self-awareness of modern rationality;⁴ "divinely inspired god-like men" to denote the Founders at the moment of social contract;⁵ or simply "GIVENNESS" to

¹Leon P. Baradat, Political Ideologies: Their Origins and Impact, 6th ed. (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 1997), pp.1-6.

²Nolan, The Therapeutic State, pp.27-28.

³Ibid., pp.34-35.

⁴Baradat, Political Ideologies, p.2.

⁵Lowi and Ginsberg, American Government, pp.39, 61.

describe all of American political culture as a Divine inheritance.¹ Of course the persistent use of "secular religion" to describe ideology not only exemplifies this, but is the problem at hand.

The definition of ideology, then, often is distorted by its relationship with religion. Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann define ideology as the attachment of any particular definition of reality to a concrete power interest. They do so because they are inclined to think of modern Christianity as an ideology. Medieval Christianity, they argue, constituted an entire world view that was more or less universally accepted. It was not an ideology, they argue, since it was not attached to any particular interest within that world. However, modern Christianity has lost its claim to universal recognition and thus represents the outlook of only one group. As this group puts Christian thought to political use it becomes an ideology, according to Berger and Luckmann.² Thus, ideology becomes any political argument, and religion shifts its form according to its use rather than maintaining conceptual integrity according to its content and formal symbolism. Rather than becoming ideology, we should see such political use of religion and religious doctrine as playing a supporting role to ideological thinking, allying itself to a particular ideology and infusing it with fervour and zeal. This alliance of formal content that Berger and Luckmann see should not be construed as fusing that content and certainly not as fusing the forms of thought themselves. This is to confuse them. Religion cannot 'become' ideology.

¹Boorstin, The Genius of American Politics, passim.

²Berger and Luckmann, The Social Construction of Reality, pp.123-124.

The nature of ideology adds to this confusion as well since, like religion, ideology involves belief and faith on the part of its adherents. An ideology is a belief system, involving sets of ideas that explain the world, particularly the political environment, and that justifies responses to it, specifically political action. Like religion, ideologies answer questions and propose conduct, relieving believers from the pains of ambiguity.¹ The system involved in ideology often is loosely gathered, an aggregate or conglomeration of political, social, and economic ideas and values. These are directed strategically towards action, objectives around which a political program congeals. Preferred political outcomes are identified or implied, as are the means to approach them. Unlike religion, however, ideology primarily involves rational explications of its ideas.²

Ideology provides form to more or less coherent bodies of beliefs, values, and ideas, as they are brought into patterns of understanding about events and behaviour. These patterns are explained rationally, as are actions that bring individuals into harmony with those patterns or that help individuals effectively alter them.³ As these patterns involve interpretation of social and political worlds, so too do the responsive actions and programs become social and political. Successful ideologies move many people, gain many adherents, so that segments of populations may be categorized according to ideological belief, as liberal or Marxist and so on. Again unlike religion, however, this

¹Christopher G. Flood, Political Myth: A Theoretical Introduction (New York: Garland Publishing, 1996), pp.13-14, 19.

²Ibid., pp.13-14; Arne Naess, "Ideology and Rationality," in Ideology and Politics, ed. Maurice Cranston and Peter Mair (Florence: European Univ. Institute, 1980), p.133.

³Lance Banning, as quoted in Stephen Welch, The Concept of Political Culture, pp.107-108.

categorizing is often arbitrary and approximate, since people rarely join an ideology. While ideology as a concept provides form to their beliefs, there is no church that provides identifying boundaries to groups of believers. There are few formal groupings of ideological adherents. Still, everyone participates, if not in an ideology entirely, then certainly in ideological beliefs, in adopting parts of an ideology; "Wherever there is political life in a modern society, there is political ideology."¹

Just as the 'collection' of people into an ideology does not involve formal initiation and group identification, so too the collection and systematization of values and beliefs into an ideology does not connote philosophical rigour. Ideological thinking rarely involves formal theory.² Ideas may be systematized, more or less, by a theorist such as Locke or Marx, or by detached groups of theorists such as have contributed to liberalism or socialism.³ However, these theorists must make their arguments practical, accessible to large groups of 'common' people, if they are to have political influence. It is precisely at this point of turning that philosophic ideas become ideological.

With the broadening of political participation engendered by the individualism of modern rationality and the Protestant Reformation, mass publics are created in modern political societies. These citizens must find their bearings through ideological cues given by political and intellectual leaders; "mass publics are linked to ideology through

¹Flood, Political Myth, pp.17-18.

²Welch, The Concept of Political Culture, pp.107-108.

³Flood, Political Myth, pp.13-14.

ideological carriers--political elites."¹ Language structures are created, at least in part, by "elite pronouncements" that lend understanding to the world. "Politics does not begin with mass emotion or policy preferences but with conceptual structures into which people receive information and transform it into a world view from which action or inaction proceeds."² According to Alexander Hamilton, The Federalist Papers constitute a self-conscious effort on the part of its authors to participate in precisely this process of ideological communication and world-making--in the face of resistance by selfish interests and passions, mankind's ability to enter into a social contract is to be tested, they say, and as political power properly is based upon conviction rather than upon "fire and sword," according to Hamilton, so Publius must convince his readers in practical and theoretical terms through eighty-five numbers.³ Ultimately, these terms cue Americans across continents and subsequent centuries, forming constantly debated but never questioned assumptions within American liberal ideology. Thus, the need to convince mass publics, the pressure applied to political orders by the 'common man' *en masse*, results in a debased language of political philosophy, according to Sheldon Wolin. Ideology is a species of political philosophy, he argues, "suited to the appetite and organizational needs of political mass movements." With this, "political ideas come to be something to be believed rather than known; political philosophy ceases to be philosophy and becomes

¹Ibid., p.18.

²Murray Edelman, Politics as Symbolic Action (Chicago: Markham, 1971).

³Alexander Hamilton, "Publius: The Federalist I," in The Debate on the Constitution, ed. Bailyn, 1:219-223.

popular literature; for belief, unlike knowledge, thrives on a common mentality."¹

With its descent of 'philosophy' to the masses, ideology might be said to bridge a gap between modernity's declining religious thought and the rising rational scientific thought that so aggravates that deterioration. Kenneth Burke maintains that ideology's philosophic vocabulary carries traditional 'truths' into modern rational thought.² In this way, mythic and religious ideas become ideological doctrines, taking the form of theoretical knowledge and, thus, gaining legitimacy in modern politics. However, these doctrines do not have the substance of philosophic knowledge: "Ideologies are doctrines to which we can adhere. They are not, properly speaking, theories. We may believe in them; but we are not informed by them."³ Leo Strauss argues that the development of liberal doctrine typifies this. Locke's disingenuous hi-jacking of traditional thinkers and ideas, including his abuse of Biblical scripture, plays upon opinion and prejudice to enlist his readers. Strauss insists that Locke's thought contains so many inconsistencies that we must see his intention is to convince us towards agreement to some political end, rather than to describe a truth. In his Second Treatise, "it is less Locke the philosopher than Locke the Englishman who addresses not philosophers, but Englishmen." The argument is not philosophical, but ideological.⁴

¹Wolin, Politics and Vision, p.194.

²Mullins, "On the Concept of Ideology in Political Science," p.506; see Kenneth Burke, "Ideology and Myth," Accent 7 (Summer 1947):195-205.

³D. J. Manning, "The Place of Ideology in Political Life," in The Form of Ideology, ed. D. J. Manning (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1980), p.86.

⁴Leo Strauss, Natural Right and History (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1953; rpt. 1965), pp.165, 206-207, 211, 218-222.

Politically, the conviction curried by ideological thought may seem preferable to any knowledge gained by pure philosophy. In an attempt to revivify a political culture that he fears is fragmented and stagnant, Richard Rorty has made an impassioned plea to Americans, particularly to American intellectuals:

You cannot urge national political renewal on the basis of descriptions of fact. You have to describe the country in terms of what you passionately hope it will become, as well as in terms of what you know it to be now. You have to be loyal to a dream country rather than to the one to which you wake up every morning. Unless such loyalty exists, the ideal has no chance of becoming actual.¹

One might be reminded of President Reagan's "dream country," his "city on a hill" whose realization he said had concerned him all his political life and finally had been accomplished in time for his farewell address from a White House that in reality constitutes a benevolent security area in the midst of desperate poverty--a big house on the plantation.² Of such is the ideological thinking that accomplishes the conviction that Rorty asks his fellows to pursue, to leave behind the stasis and impotence that knowledge and science render, and instead pursue hope and belief for their potential to enable action.³ "Put a moratorium on theory," he implores, and instead pursue "the country of Lincoln"⁴--built upon the ideals of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution,

¹Richard Rorty, Achieving Our Country: Leftist Thought in Twentieth-Century America, The William E. Massey Sr. Lectures in the History of American Civilization 1997 (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1998; rpt. 1999), p.101.

²"Text of President's Farewell Address to the American People," New York Times, January 12, 1989.

³Rorty, Achieving Our Country, pp.101, 106-107.

⁴Ibid., pp.91-92.

not to mention its bloody amendment by civil war. Facts are surrendered to the hopes and dreams of "self-evident truths." This is the stuff of American ideology.

American ideology readily responds to Rorty's jeremiad, to his worries and to his invocation of an earlier columnist's harmonious lament, "the twilight of common dreams."¹ Citizens of the United States always have needed to be bound together in conformity through ideology. This is central among the bases of American nationality.² American ideology has been tremendously successful, enjoying a most effective rate of conversion while its principles require relatively little coercive enforcement.³ Bellah and Schlesinger have assured us that this success continues. In contrast, so-called "totalitarian" regimes require much force and terror along with intense indoctrination to ensure their stability, displays of power that compensate for the lack of cohesion and commitment inspired by their own, lesser ideologies. Over the objections of Hannah Arendt, "totalitarianism" properly might be called extreme or despotic authoritarianism. Ideological conversion is far from complete in such polities. Their ideologies' relative lack of success keeps their politics from being 'total'. Government violence testifies to this.⁴ In comparison, American liberalism is far more successful, inspiring a conviction

¹Todd Gitlin, The Twilight of Common Dreams: Why America is Wracked by Culture Wars (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1995).

²Yehoshua Arieli, Individualism and Nationalism in American Ideology (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1964), pp.20-21.

³Shadia B. Drury, Leo Strauss and the American Right (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), p.5.

⁴Hannah Arendt, The Origins of Totalitarianism, 2nd ed. (New York: Meridian, 1958).

through which American politics are able to approximate 'total' saturation points more closely. Although American socialization verges at times upon the point of indoctrination, American liberalism remains more supple, its ideological dogma is more diffusely interspersed with religious and mythic imageries, than purer appearances of ideology in the less complex "totalitarian" regimes. When combined with mythic and religious allies, American liberalism seems irresistible.

Successful ideologies convert masses of people by communicating practical ideas that respond to felt needs. These ideas are delivered in more or less rational discourse in which they are presented as popular appeals to common 'facts'. The arguments become assumptions, unexamined notions and expectations that subsequently are drawn upon and invoked to move "the people." In this way, "formal discourse becomes politically powerful when it becomes ideology, ...when it mobilizes a general mood."¹ It is through this gathering together of ideas, sentiments, and predispositions into patterns of thought accounting for their political environment that the American Revolution was triggered. It is through our understanding of American ideological argument that this insurrection can be explained. The Revolution

...is explicable only in terms of that elaborate pattern of middle-level beliefs and ideas that formed for these colonial Britishers the map of social and political reality--a map, originally formed within early seventeenth-century English libertarianism, ...and diffused by an intricate

¹L.T. Hobhouse, Liberalism (Oxford, 1911; rpt. 1963), p.30; Bernard Bailyn, "The Central Themes of the American Revolution," in Essays on the American Revolution, ed. Stephen G. Kurtz and James H. Hutson (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1973), pp.10-11.

of cultural dissemination throughout the political culture of the American colonies.¹

These terms "are resolvable into the concept of 'ideology,' which draws formal discourse into those maps of problematic social reality, those shifting patterns of values, attitudes, hopes, fears, and opinions through which people perceive the world and by which they are led to impose themselves upon it."²

Ideology, then, reduces reality to easily comprehended terms and suggests responses to it. Issues are brought into focus and political action is guided, as complex situations are reduced to simplified alternatives, or often to a single course of action obviously demanded by "self-evident truths." As information is filtered through ideological persuasion, important details are selected and the rest retires to the background.³ A set of standards is provided to help adherents evaluate political action and circumstance. Pageantry exists in the vision of a better society that is constructed with mass participation coloured by values that are absorbed through immersion in ideological elements. What should be done for a society to approach the ideal is given in "a practical political theory" that becomes an important variable in explaining political conflict, consensus, and cohesion, but that is the decisive variable in explaining mass mobilization and manipulation.⁴

Modern political action comes to be justified in terms of ideologies. Action is not

¹Bailyn, "The Central Themes of the American Revolution," p.10.

²Ibid., p.11.

³Mullins, "On the Concept of Ideology in Political Science," pp.503, 507.

⁴Williams, American Liberalism and Ideological Change, pp.15, 28.

"spelled out" by ideological doctrine so much as explained and legitimized, or condemned, according to its adherence or nonadherence to generally held political beliefs. Ideology forms a portion of these beliefs. Through ideological indoctrination or political acculturation, these beliefs are recognized as reasons for embracing particular courses of action or inaction.¹ By incorporating symbols and language that bear degrees of legitimacy with mass publics--by renewing religious ideas or invoking matters of 'common sense,' for instance--ideology in turn claims legitimacy for itself in the public realm. As well as influencing action, ideological speech legitimizes or undermines political authority, according to its conception of some political ideal or moral right.² We are returned, then, to ideology's point of contact with and departure from religion, that of political legitimacy. While this is not the only function of ideology, it is an important facet of its development as a thought form. Amongst all other forms of symbolic thought, only ideology has an exclusively political history and purpose. Explaining modern social and political worlds and their relationship, lending legitimacy to particular institutions as well as actions, and directing the political organization of modern mankind, all fall within the scope of ideological thinking. These are its exclusive concerns. Ideology is the modern 'rational' way that individuals--a modern conception--relate to their political institutions and to each other.³ It is one way that political interaction is understood and

¹Michael J. Oakeshott, "Preface," in The Form of Ideology, ed. Manning, pp.vii-viii.

²Felix Oppenheim, "Ideology and Objectivity," in Ideology and Politics, ed. Cranston and Mair, p.143.

³D. J. Manning and T. J. Robinson, The Place of Ideology in Political Life (London: Croom Helm, 1985).

underlying convictions are justified.

Ideology is made necessary and possible by a modern 'secular' world of politics in which the individual exists and acts as a given political category. Thus, "Cato" declares the political fallout of the Reformation: "in principles of *politics*, as well as in religious faith, every man ought to think for himself" (emphasis original).¹ With this, individuals must be brought into modern political systems, must be convinced of their political beliefs. This is the point of Noah Webster's call for deliberation upon the Constitution. Every citizen is expected to become a political scientist, of a sort, since

it is not only the *right*, but the indispensable *duty* of every citizen to examine the principles of it, to compare them with the principles of other governments, with a constant eye to our particular situation and circumstances, and thus endeavour to foresee the future operations of our own system, and its effects upon human happiness (emphasis original).²

Evaluations of present and future conditions are to be mingled with expectations for future progress by American citizens guided in their considerations. This can only be accomplished by a popular language of politics, for "the education of the common people" as Jefferson put it.³ As individuals exist in modern mass societies, a form of modern mass communication--ideology--must accomplish this debased rhetoric of conviction.

It should be apparent, then, that the casual use of the term "ideology" to denote

¹"Cato I," (New York Journal, Sept. 27, 1787), in The Debate on the Constitution, ed. Bailyn, I: 33.

²Noah Webster, "A Citizen of America," (Philadelphia, Oct.17, 1787), in Ibid., pp.129-130.

³"Thomas Jefferson Replies to Madison," (Paris, Dec.20, 1787), in Ibid., p.213.

'bad' thought, or even its slightly more sophisticated use in indicating biased thought as opposed to pragmatic considerations of 'truth,' are indeed misuse.¹ They are attempts to further debase a form of thought, the content of which already is debased. Such attempts are themselves ideological, pseudo-rationalistic arguments combined with emotional appeals to 'common sense' in order to discredit the 'bad' thought in question. Ideology thus gets debased from a symbolic form to a pejorative invective. This may be accomplished with more subtlety, as in Brzezinski and Huntington's use of "ideology" to describe Soviet thought in contrast to "American political beliefs." Even while claiming to discredit the pejorative use of "ideology" by Americans, Brzezinski and Huntington themselves consistently refer to "the Soviet ideology and the American political beliefs" and provide differing accounts of their political influence, the one being a structured system that limits policy options, defines priorities, and shapes methods for handling political problems, while the other is a looser gathering of ideas that work merely to condition styles of political leadership.² Betty Burch's rejection of Talcott Parson's broad definition of ideology as "a general system of beliefs held in common by the members of a collectivity" is equally pejorative, rooted in a defence of her preferred ideology as truth. Burch rejects Parson's definition as too broad, not because it brings ideology to encompass too much cultural phenomena and too many forms of thought, but because it

¹See James Ceasar, Reconstructing America: The Symbol of America in Modern Thought (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1997), passim, for examples of the first; for the slightly more sophisticated, see Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., The Cycles of American History (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1986), pp.51-68 passim.

²Zbigniew Brzezinski and Samuel P. Huntington, Political Power: U.S.A / U.S.S.R. (New York: Viking, 1965), pp.17, 23-24, 56.

is inclusive of too many forms of government; "According to this general definition, democratic as well as authoritarian systems would have a set of ideological beliefs." Burch goes on to criticize Parson's definition by approaching definitions of ideology that apply to authoritarian and totalitarian regimes exclusively, further exemplified by her selection of readings on ideology.¹ By rejecting such bad uses of "ideology" as bad thought, by recognizing instead its general pervasion of the modern political world, ideology gains universal stature as a form of human thought.²

Another broad definition of ideology, Lipset's all inclusive use of ideology to refer to any "ism," amounts to a blending of all cultural content into one category, replacing the matrix of political culture with a mere member. Lipset is wrong in asserting that Americanism is "an ism or ideology in the same way that communism or fascism or liberalism are isms."³ "Americanism" attempts to embrace too much under the umbrella of ideology. Americanism constitutes a political culture, not an ideology, a culture that includes ideological, religious, civil religious, and mythic elements within it. Communism, fascism, and liberalism are mere ideologies, members lacking the complexity of larger political cultures. National Socialism may be seen as a political culture, but this is to distinguish it from fascism proper and to recognize its religious and mythic elements, to recognize it as something more than ideology alone.

¹Betty Brand Burch, "Ideology," in Dictatorship and Totalitarianism: Selected Readings, ed. Burch (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand, 1964), pp.88-92 and selected readings pp.89-124.

²Willard A. Mullins, "Truth and Ideology: Reflections on Mannheim's Paradox," History and Theory 18:2 (1979): 152-153.

³Lipset, American Exceptionalism, p.16.

Just as Lipset is wrong to collapse all forms of thought into "ideology," so it is wrong to collapse ideology into other forms of thought. As Lawrence Fuchs lumps ideology, religion, and myth together into America's founding "myth," into a "mythic view" of the founding culture, the violence he does to the integrity of these forms of thought mystifies more than it enlightens. Fuchs asserts that this founding "myth" is an ideological rationalization, but myth is not ideology, nor is it rational. Myths are not arguments. Myth and ideology are confused here. Lost to his readers is the important underlying message that his "myth" really is a complete culture whose ideas now, in the twenty-first century, may appear as mythic to its inheritors at times because they are givens, accepted as truths without rational argument, but that these 'truths' originated in different forms as mythic narratives, religious instructions, and ideological arguments.¹ Awareness of the origins of these cultural aspects brings understanding to their natures, interaction, and development as a political culture. Alongside its universal stature, this conceptual integrity brings autonomy to ideological thought.

Ideology might be seen, then, as involving "a distinct and broadly coherent structure of values, beliefs, and attitudes with implications for social policy and with implications for governance."² However, if this distinction is to be apprehended, if ideology is to maintain conceptual integrity, it must be in contrast to other forms of

¹Lawrence H. Fuchs, The American Kaleidoscope: Race, Ethnicity, and Civic Culture (Hanover: Univ. Press of New England, 1990), pp.2-3.

²J. Richard Piper, Ideologies and Institutions: American Conservative and Liberal Governance Prescriptions Since 1933 (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997), pp.1-2.

symbolic thought, particularly religion and myth. Herbert McClosky approaches this distinction, defining ideologies as

systems of belief that are elaborate, integrated, and coherent, that justify the exercise of power, explain and judge historical events, identify political right and wrong, set forth the interconnections (causal and moral) between politics and other spheres of activity, and furnish guides for action (emphasis original).¹

However, it is in the work of Willard Mullins that ideology is brought into discrete terms and, thus, conceptual clarity. Mullins defines ideology as

a logically coherent system of symbols which, within a more or less sophisticated conception of history links the cognitive and evaluative perception of one's social condition--especially its prospects for the future--to a program of collective action for the maintenance, alteration or transformation of society.²

Here, myth and religion are excluded by ideology's rationality, its logical, systematic rendition of symbolic language. The social nature of ideological communication is given by its programmatic action, prescribed or implied by ideology's guidance according to a given society's historical sense of itself and its possibilities for the future.³ Ideology becomes one of several symbolic constructions that tell us what we are, what our future should be like, and how we are to get there.⁴ It is the primary modern way and, unlike myth or religion, is exclusively a political way that "we are trying to gather together the intricacies of the present so that we can calculate what we must be resolute in doing to

¹Herbert McClosky, "Consensus and Ideology in American Politics," The American Political Science Review 58:2 (June 1964):362.

²Mullins, "On the Concept of Ideology in Political Science," p.510.

³Ibid., pp.507-510.

⁴Mullins, "Ideology and Political Culture," pp.130-131.

bring about the future we desire."¹ In this, American liberalism becomes one of the "three dominant ideologies of our century--marxist communism, American liberalism, national socialism--they all similarly called men to be resolute in their mastery of the future."²

Part of "Americanism" or American political culture, then, American liberalism is a full-fledged ideology;

American democratic "ideology" possesses an elaborately defined theory, a body of interrelated assumptions, axioms, and principles, and a set of ideals that serve as guides for action. Its tenets, postulates, sentiments, and values inspired the great revolutions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and have been repeatedly and explicitly set forth in fundamental documents, such as the Constitution, the Declaration, and the Federalist Papers. They have been restated with remarkable unanimity in the messages of Presidents, in political speeches, in pronouncements of judges and constitutional commentators, and in the writings of political theorists, historians and publicists.³

The symbolic content and rational argument of this ideology include natural law expressions of nature as the source of political authority, rather than any supernatural or Divine origins; the primacy of the individual in the political world by right, individuals being the sole constituents of nature; thus, individual natural rights; political consent and the social contract as the bases for legitimate government; accordingly, government is rational and, as government is the solution to inconveniences of nature, it is limited in purpose to the preservation of nature's benefits, natural rights; political representation and universal franchise of citizens, government being the agent of its citizens through

¹George Grant, as quoted in *Ibid.*, p.130.

²George Grant, *Time as History*, 1969 Massey Lectures (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1995), pp.16-17.

³McCloskey, "Consensus and Ideology in American Politics," pp.362-363.

contract; the primacy of individuals and individual endeavours as the promoters of progress, pursuant to government's limited role and derivative nature as social agent; thus, the pursuit of self-interest is in the public interest; consequently, laissez-faire social and economic life constitute the appropriate environment for human prosperity, progress, and the pursuit of happiness.¹

With liberalism's creation of autonomous social and economic realms of human activity, ideology is imbued at its inception with a compelling economic orientation. These economic implications of liberalism's political 'theory' are vitalized by a crucial contribution from Adam Smith--a timely contribution to American ideological development, as its formal material expressions in the American Revolution coincided with the publication of Smith's Wealth of Nations. Smith's arguments not only serve as midwife to the ideological birth of a new nation, they also reinforce the central position of economic society within the framework of that ideology. Echoing the arguments of Locke's Second Treatise, Smith posited the economy as the key factor in society, a natural order rightfully beyond the direct involvement of governments. Smith's laissez-faire view is in keeping with Locke's arguments on the limits of government. It provides the mantra that now surrounds Locke's fundamental property premises, fleshing out the content of liberalism with practical articles of faith that induce ideological evaluations and direct actions--incentive, competition, productivity, and the market. Imbued with political legitimacy given through ideological justifications, "the competitive market

¹Ibid., p.363; Hobhouse, Liberalism, pp.32-34.

would become a religious totem" in America.¹ The rugged individual of Locke's political theory gains social context within Smith's economic 'system,' his private and competitive pursuit of self-interest is elevated by an "invisible hand" to public promotion. Now mingled with Lockean ideology and American religious approval, Smith's market has "acquired a theological beneficence" that justifies not only economic circumstance, but all arguments that appeal to its image in America²--a "marketplace of ideas," for instance, is supposed to provide not only a reasoned account of American public opinion, but also implicit approval and promotion of its particular content as rationally distilled from among any competitors in a fair and open "market."³ Just as competition is supposed by many political scientists to justify particular policy within systems of "pluralism," so American ideology is sanctioned by its own terms--survival of the fittest is a normal fact within American liberalism.

Not only must ideology provide explanatory accounts of social life and its relationship to politics, then, it must also render its appeal for political action largely in terms of an economic vision if it is to function as the ideational link between politics and society. An ideology that ignores economics increasingly would be irrelevant to modern society. Ultimately it would lose its ability to render any compelling account of the relationship between political and social lives. As well as losing explanatory power, it would lose popular appeal as a prescriptive guide to improvement. Political progress

¹John Kenneth Galbraith, Economics in Perspective: A Critical History (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987), p.39.

²Ibid., pp.63-65.

³Lowi and Ginsberg, American Government, pp.416-428.

increasingly is economic progress, as ideology's account of the connections between politics and economics is necessarily dominated by the fundamental nature and legitimacy of social life. Politics gets relegated to subsidiary roles. Ideology situates politics within a larger vision of social reality and progress, and defines that progress according to social life and its rules. As mundane earth life was a necessity situated within grander schemes of religious cosmos, so political life becomes a necessary evil to social and economic life--the prosperous society becomes "the true and only heaven."¹ The appeal of any particular ideology is attached to its ability to persuade conviction, not only about what is, but what might be, according to social and economic axioms and, thus, to instill faith in a better tomorrow. The rules of modern social life demand that compelling ideologies promise the hope of that improvement in economic terms, that they explain and guide politics according to the needs and expectations of improved social and economic life. Popular appeal rests upon the promise of a better life and the popular meaning of a better life is economic improvement. Prosperity is happiness for modern politics and ideology is the medium of communication between politics and that prosperity, the link between political and economic life.² Thus, I have adopted a modified version of Mullins's definition of ideology so that, upon situating people socially within history, this logically coherent system of symbols emphasizes economic well being in its cognitive and evaluative functions, especially focusing upon economic improvement and/or stability in

¹Christopher Lasch, The True and Only Heaven: Progress and Its Critics (New York: W. W. Norton, 1991).

²Wolin, Politics and Vision, pp.292-310.

its prospects for the future.

v. Civil Religion:

As part of the rise to prominence of modern rational thought, ideology's claim to truth is always at risk. As a rational form of thought, it must recognize the legitimacy of other forms of thought, or become just another absolutism. Even particular ideologies must recognize the rational content of other ideologies and even of religions, must grant them at least partial claims to truth. In doing so, ideologies risk venturing into self-understanding, risk coming to terms with themselves as ideologies. Samuel Huntington, for instance, brings modern conservatism into such self-awareness. Huntington lays the groundwork for a conservative ideology, outlining a rational, systematic structure of ideas and beliefs for conservatism in an argument that is itself an ideological prescription for judgement and action by conservatives.¹ Huntington self-consciously draws conservative thought into a rational program, to preserve, update, and renew sentiments peculiar to conservatives and, in turn, to renew their political relevance, or to make them new in an America that lacks a conservative tradition. A stance that once eschewed "ideology" is deliberately refashioned into one ideology amongst others, becoming more comfortable with "others" than with members of its own species: "The usefulness of the conservative ideology in justifying any existing order is manifest...the true enemy of the conservative is not the liberal but the extreme radical no matter what ideational theory he may

¹Samuel P. Huntington, "Conservatism as an Ideology," American Political Science Review 51 (1957), pp.454-473.

espouse."¹ Conservatives who become reactionaries are to be rejected by a conservatism that becomes a useful ideology within the framework of any regime, or of any ideology for that matter; "The nature of conservatism as an institutional ideology precludes any permanent and inherent affiliation or opposition between it and any particular ideational ideology. No necessary dichotomy exists, therefore, between conservatism and liberalism."² Huntington's unabashed rejection of traditional conservatism is explicit in its appeal to conservatives to embrace their thought as an ideology, for the benefits of being an ideology--ease of communication, mass appeal, political relevance. Substance gives way to form, to the form of ideology, as Huntington leaves behind all that once was "conservative" in an embrace of ideology for the sake of ideology, and for the sake of political relevance in the modern world.

The relativism of modern rationalism, then, is carried in its offspring, ideology. However, it is inoculated against by the rise of another form of thought, another hybrid creature of modernity. Just as ideology evolves as a debased rhetoric of philosophy to bridge traditional religious thought to a rising modern rational science, so civil religion develops in modern public life to accommodate political ideology with that same religious thought. As debased religion, civil religion absorbs the language of philosophy as it passes through religion and through ideology both. Civil religion is the crossroads at which truths converge.

In its development and in its doctrine, liberalism presupposes the existence of a

¹Ibid., pp.457, 460.

²Ibid., p.460.

pre-political society, a cultural coherence involving shared notions of "the good" and of its pursuit. The security of that pursuit is liberalism's *raison d'être*. As liberal ideology becomes institutionalized through the state, it supports and enhances the culture of that society. Elements of that culture, particularly religious elements, aid not only in the institutionalization of liberal culture but also in the reception of the state's expression of that culture. As its ideological doctrines are communicated back into religious conceits, American religion, especially American civil religion, buffers the otherwise raw edges of liberalism--rugged individualism and absolute property rights, for instance. But more, this religion also communicates key elements of the ideology to believers otherwise excluded. Ideological doctrine is softened and broadened by a supporting civil religion that touches upon points of danger for liberalism--alienation, nihilism, and the dangers and discomforts of liberty.¹

Although they remain distinct symbolic forms, ideology and religion influence one another in content and expression, supporting one another as in the case of American culture or struggling against one another when incompatible. With the rise of ideology, Christianity's adaptations to rationalism were incomplete--religion remained religion, unable to absorb rationalism as fully or as quickly as required for the intellectual integration of newly evolving symbolic content of ideological, religious, and mythic forms. Civil religion is created through the attempted embrace of ideological and religious doctrine, its development keeping pace with the rise to prominence of ideology. In the

¹Thomas Bridges, The Culture of Citizenship: Inventing Postmodern Civic Culture (Albany: State Univ. of New York Press, 1994), pp.214-215, 216-264.

religious attempt to harness all truth within itself, a new form of religion is loosed, one that is more harmonious with ideology, more resilient in its capacity for rational thought and earthly kingdoms. It is upon this terrain of civil religion that Locke meets God. It is here that the self-evident truths of the Declaration of Independence become a "sacred cause."¹

Sheldon Wolin points to cultural sources of success enjoyed by powerful empires past. Whereas the Greeks based their greatness upon a loyalty that was generated through participation, through "the Greek idea of citizenship...from a sense of common involvement," the Romans centred their generation of loyalty "in a common reverence for power personified." Leadership was transformed into a cult and surrounded by "an elaborate system of signs, symbols, and worship." Wolin argues that "these developments suggest an existing need to bring authority and subject closer by suffusing the relationship with a religious warmth."² American liberalism enjoys doubly a success grown out of both sources. Liberal ideology communicates participation, citizenship, and common enterprise, while civil religion sacralizes that enterprise, its leaders, and its institutions. Individual rights become God-given, the social contract becomes a covenant once again, and national endeavours become a righteous cause. Politics becomes the battleground of good and evil.³

During the transition from religious to ideological dominance of the political in

¹Pangle, The Spirit of Modern Republicanism, pp.23-24.

²Wolin, Politics and Vision, p.76.

³Lipset, American Exceptionalism, p.63.

America, the development of civil religion eased any crisis usually engendered by the abandonment of existing intellectual arrangements. The existing order of things--ideas, institutions, and processes--for handling public matters plays "a fundamental role in ordering and directing human behaviour and in determining the character of [political] events."¹ American civil religion makes intelligible the continuity of America's political 'nature'; "The organizing role of institutions and customary practices creates a 'nature' or field of phenomena that is roughly analogous to the nature confronted by the natural scientist."² The blending of ideological and religious symbology within civil religion justifies the rational and rationalizes the righteous, preserving religious sympathies and prejudices while harmonizing them with new, scientific approaches. It is here, in civil religion, that religion becomes explicitly oriented to this world, strengthening the ideological streak in American experience.³ Thus, the pre-Revolutionary legitimacy gap that opened up between American culture and its institutions, between fading traditions and a rationalizing, secularizing state, was filled by ideology and civil religion together, in a movement towards Samuel Adams's "Christian Sparta."⁴

American institutions are supported in the United States by a "common faith,...a kind of generalized Christianity" that is "firmly established,...an unexamined generalized religion" built around core beliefs held in common by most Americans: "What it is, is

¹Wolin, Politics and Vision, p.6.

²Ibid., p.6.

³Lipset, American Exceptionalism, pp.61-63.

⁴Nolan, The Therapeutic State, pp.35-36.

the lowest common denominator of all presently accepted and respectable institutional religions found within the borders of our country."¹ Rooted in and defined by its enunciation in the Declaration of Independence and its renewal as Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, this common faith or "natural religion" provides the core of America's civil religion--the "belief in God, in the afterlife, and in divine punishments."² The Founders relied upon the existence of this autonomous, pre-ideological common religiosity in their attempt to forge a transcendent unity above sectional and sectarian differences. American Founders fostered this common religion, channelling the zeal and conviction of sectarian religiosity "into something larger, such as the nation; thus Benjamin Franklin called for a 'public religion'."³

Franklin's "call for a new American religion" amounted to a civil religion proposal,⁴ built upon an American creed to unite formally a diversity of believers into a common religiosity of the nation:

Here is my creed. I believe in one God, the Creator of the universe. That he governs it by his Providence. That he ought to be worshipped. The most acceptable service we render to him is in doing good to his other children. That the soul of man is immortal, and will be treated with justice

¹Boorstin, The Genius of American Politics, pp.28, 136, 140, 147.

²Robert N. Bellah, "The Revolution and the Civil Religion," in Religion and the American Revolution, ed. Jerald C. Brauer (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), pp.55-57.

³Martin E. Marty, Pilgrims in Their Own Land: 500 Years of Religion in America (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984), p.154; also see Andrew Delbanco, "Holy Tolerance," pp.39-40.

⁴Ibid., p.155.

in another life respecting its conduct in this. These I take to be the fundamental points in all sound religion.¹

With religious sects competing for national dominance, American Founders induced the birth of a nation that itself would perform the dominant world-making role once accorded to established religion. This role was vacated by the mutual exclusion of lesser sects through a disestablishment of religion, leaving the way open for the sect of the nation to carry its creed to dominance as the national religion. The nation became God's agent and expression of Divine will through its Providential history.² This nation, with its creed "set forth with dogmatic and even theological lucidity in the Declaration of Independence," is both unique and original, an exceptional participant in the authority of its Creator.³

The vacancy filled by the American nation was, in part, created by that nation as it came together under the auspices of the Constitution. The apparent religious neutrality of the Constitution and its separation of church and state entrenched in the Bill of Rights rendered all American churches--all Protestant Christian churches--equally potent as sources of public values, equally valuable as educators of civic virtue, freeing their exercise while imposing upon them all "the 'equality' of sameness".⁴ Entrenched rights of conscience led to an increasingly individualized religiosity that, in turn, brought about

¹Benjamin Franklin to Ezra Stiles, as quoted in Cleon W. Skousen, The Making of America: The Substance and Meaning of the Constitution (Washington, D. C.: The National Center for Constitutional Studies, 1985), p.677.

²Sidney E. Mead, "The 'Nation with the Soul of a Church'," in American Civil Religion, ed. Russell E. Richey and Donald G. Jones (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), p.45.

³Ibid., pp.45-46.

⁴Moseley, A Cultural History of Religion in America, p.63.

an ecclesiastical decline. The symbol-generating potency of the common religion of the nation and its mediation of ultimate 'truths' corrupted church religion, nationalizing its content and degrading beliefs other than those common beliefs of the national religion; sectarian doctrine and beliefs wilted into opinions, one sect became as good as another--none as good as the nation.¹ Thus, Mead asserts that the Constitution involved not the separation of church and state, but of churches and the church. Put another way, sects as carriers of particular creeds are separated from the nation as carrier of the universal creed. The eventual Constitutional secularization inherent in the 'neutrality' of American separation of church and state "is more accurately described as desectarianization of the civil authority."² Common religion presaged the subsequent civil religion.

America's common religion has been celebrated as a unifying medium that moderates the effects of the religious pluralism out of which it grew, overriding divisive sectarian interests in a thrust towards a common creed that is definitive of the American polity.³ While American pluralism is expected to diminish the influence of any one sect or doctrine, common religion provides a sort of compensation for that inefficacy. The inclusion of sectarian particulars within the American universal, and the subsequent public infusion of religious zeal as faith in and loyalty to political doctrine, invests that

¹Ibid., p.63; H. Mark Roelofs, "Church and State in America: Toward a Biblically Derived Reformulation of Their Relationship," The Review of Politics 50, 1988, p.566; John Edwin Smylie, "National Ethos and the Church," Theology Today 20 (Oct. 1963), p.319.

²Mead, "The 'Nation with the Soul of a Church'," pp.54-55.

³James Fenimore Cooper, The American Democrat (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1989; First published 1838), pp.132, 96.

creed with religious potency and democratic legitimacy. The nation 'gathers her chicks' in a religious democratic patriotism that embraces an otherwise straw-splitting American diversity: "In the great and sublime ends of Providence, little things are lost, and least of all is he imbued with a right spirit who believes that insignificant observances, subtleties of doctrine, and minor distinctions, enter into the great essentials of the Christian character."¹ Unified in its vision of "great and sublime ends," an American consensus indulges "a besetting vice of democracies" in positing public opinion as law, in this case as common or natural law. The American creed becomes truth, "given" once and for all through the American nation as the carrier of beliefs that once were particular, then common, now inviolable. This transubstantiation of belief into truth, then persuasion of conviction into knowledge and wisdom, was decried by no less an American patron saint than Alexis de Tocqueville for its overwhelming, irresistible enchantment: "No tyranny of one, nor any tyranny of the few, is worse than this."²

The American Civil Religion is more than the common religion from which it sprang, however. Its advocates consistently deny the equation of civil religion with common religion in America and are equally adamant in their denial of religious nationalism as its essence. On the contrary, they argue that the American Civil Religion leads America away from nationalism by its invocation of a judgemental god that oversees the national project and inflicts punishments upon the nation as liberally as He pours out blessings. In this view, God keeps national self-righteousness at bay. Without

¹Ibid., p.234.

²Ibid., p.130. Also see de Tocqueville, Democracy in America, pp.112-122.

this Divine judgement, communicated publicly and nationally through the civil religion, self-righteousness would degenerate into nationalism amidst the self-satisfaction of a plentiful America. The civil religion, they say, forms a distinct religion with its own theological content, distinct from the common religion of the nation, yet competing with that common religion and the churches for national dominance--it aspires to become the common or national religion, persistently invoking the American creed and its promise as judgement against the complacency of an ever errant nation.¹ The American Civil Religion, it follows, is a religion of renewal.

As the civil religion invokes original doctrine to Americans, persistently pursuing the purity of American origins as a vestige of Eden, its prophetic judgement challenges the status quo. Those who wallow in American "GIVENNESS" are engaged in a priestly religion of self-congratulation, rather than in the prophetic civil religion that continually strives to forge America as a new beginning, to recover her original moment of "innocence"--a heritage 'taken' by Americans as free agents rather than 'given,' the creed chosen rather than simply inherited.² Prophetic judgement, after all, is what religion has

¹Robert N. Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," in Religion in America, ed. William G. McLoughlin and Robert N. Bellah (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1968; First published in Daedalus, Winter 1967), p.3; Conrad Cherry, God's New Israel: Religious Interpretations of American Destiny (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1971), pp.18-19; Gehrig, American Civil Religion: An Assessment; Phillip E. Hammond, "The Conditions for Civil Religion" in Varieties of Civil Religion, ed. Robert N. Bellah and Phillip E. Hammond (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980); Conrad Cherry, "Two American Sacred Ceremonies: Their Implications for the Study of Religion in America," American Quarterly 21 (1969), 739-754; J. Ronald Engel, "The Theology of the Republic," in The Lively Experiment Continued, ed. Jerald C. Brauer (Macon: Mercer Univ. Press, 1987).

²Hughes, "Recovering First Times," pp.212-213, 194, 198-200, 202-203.

to offer, according to Clifford Geertz. This judgement subjects everyday life to transcendent rules, extracts of past experience--moods, motives and reactions whose extraordinary significance is captured in symbols, mythologized and sacralized--that constrain social and political worlds.¹ American judgement, however, is democratically chosen, again and again imbued with ritual significance that heightens its potency in this world. The prophetic civil religion is far from benign; "the faithful believed that their community was true, right, and natural because it stood as a virtual recovery of the truths of the first age," inspiring an America that "increasingly particularized and even absolutized its primordial identity," so that "redemption through persuasive example gave way to redemption through coercion."² American judgement claims universal significance.

Transcendent judgement continues to impose heightened significance upon the mundane details of life in America. Newt Gingrich, for example, insists that American rights are absolute, hence sacred, because they are endowed by God, a fact that "makes a huge difference in terms of crime." Gingrich asserts that

if you're raping somebody who is endowed by God, the level of violation is infinitely greater than if you're merely put here for a purpose and it's an effective transaction. The whole underlying nature of society changes, depending on which vision of reality you believe.³

This heightened significance is bolstered by ritual, the ceremonial coupling of everyday and transcendent worlds: "In a ritual the world as lived and the world as imagined ...turn

¹Clifford Geertz, "Religion As A Cultural System," in Religion American Style, ed. Patrick H. McNamara (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), pp.22-23.

²Hughes, "Recovering First Times," pp.207, 209.

³Newt Gingrich, as quoted in Esther Dyson, "Friend and Foe: The Wired Interview," Wired (Aug. 1995), pp.110-111.

out to be the same world." These momentary participations in a symbolically presented transcendent reality generate conviction and commitment through the renewal of original experience as feelings shared by participants. Transcendent and mundane worlds reinforce each other in their permanence and security, tainting each other as sacred and profane merge, often automatically but nevertheless religiously, shaping the actual world in which they dwell.¹ American national ritual vitalizes its world of confusion, of mingled or mangled politics and religion, its "civil religion."

As Boorstin observes, a religious ceremonial calendar mingles American patriotism with the "non-denominational ritualism [that] accompanies the sessions of Congress and state legislatures and the inaugurations of presidents and governors." This state religiosity is rounded out by an abundance of religious rhetoric in the political arena and the study of civil religious texts--"the most dramatic and effective public speeches"--in public schools and universities.²

We can find few nations whose oratory can bring the student so close to their history. The famous Fourth of July oration is not simply an example of the dilution of American literature; it is actually an important institution, a touchstone of American political thought.³

The ceremonial calendar joins "sacred and secular, ...holy day [and] holiday," in an American world in which symbols--written and spoken words, religious beliefs and practices, creeds and ceremonies--join familiar signs such as the flag, to substitute

¹Geertz, "Religion As A Cultural System," pp.23-25.

²Boorstin, The Genius of American Politics, pp.146, 150.

³Ibid., pp.156-157.

renewal of accomplished truths for new action and feeling.¹

Robert Bellah gave conceptual birth to The American Civil Religion in 1967,² by applying the civil religion concept to persistent American phenomena that had been integrated practically, if not formally, into American political culture for more than one hundred years, perhaps twice that:

Crèvecoeur and Tocqueville found in America a realization of what their master Rousseau had called 'civil religion.' The American body politic, like Rousseau's ideal commonwealth, had at its core certain irreducible principles: the existence of God, belief in an afterlife in which virtue would be rewarded and vice punished, and the assurance of religious toleration. These ideas, according to the Founding Fathers, constituted the circle that circumscribed civilization.³

Later, in the course of debate over the existence or non-existence of a civil religion in America, Bellah invoked Tocqueville to bolster his own advocacy of civil religion as public philosophy. Bellah's invocation itself constitutes participation in the civil religion, a recovery and renewal of Tocqueville as part of the sacred. However, this also involves a misprision, or creative misreading, of Tocqueville's Democracy in America as it has been absorbed into American scripture. Bellah notes that

for Tocqueville Christianity was simultaneously our public philosophy and our public theology. ...He went so far as to say that religion should be considered 'as the first of their political institutions,' not because it is established by law or intervenes directly in government, but because it provides the secure principles of our public life. 'Christianity,' he wrote, 'reigns without obstacle, by universal consent; consequently, everything in

¹Warner, "An American Sacred Ceremony," pp.89-90.

²Bellah, "Civil Religion in America."

³Delbanco, "Holy Tolerance," pp.39-40.

the moral field is certain and fixed, although the world of politics is given over to argument and experiment."¹

In Bellah's self-affirming manoeuvre, an Americanized Tocqueville praises the civil religious context of the American experiment. His analysis of American life is taken by Bellah, and by Americans typically, to be prescriptive. Like other American truths, American civil religion's universality as described by Tocqueville is portrayed by Americans as "self-evident" in its pervasiveness, which is itself an affirmation of its "GIVENNESS."

Phillip Hammond points to "a few religiopolitical tenets" that are accepted widely in America and that underlie an alliance of politics and religion. Hammond agrees with Bellah's collection of them into a civil religion that historically transcends the variations of felt religiosity that pollsters are intent upon capturing:

(1) There is a God; (2) whose will can be known through democratic procedures; therefore; (3) democratic America has been God's primary agent in history, and; (4) for Americans the nation has been their chief source of identity.²

God's presence in the national *schema* is deemed necessary for the inculcation of virtue, a necessity asserted by the Founding Fathers, reiterated by Tocqueville, and thus entrenched in the civil religion. Individual self-interest can be moderated in the public arena only by the promise of rewards and punishments in some future world of reckoning:

¹Robert N. Bellah, "Public Philosophy and Public Theology in America Today," in Civil Religion and Political Theology, ed. Leroy S. Rouner (Notre Dame: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1986), pp.79-80.

²Hammond, "The Conditions for Civil Religion," pp.41-42.

There are certain sacrifices which individuals are called upon to make for which they cannot reasonably expect a reward in this life; moreover, whatever ingenuity may be employed to prove that virtue is useful, there are individuals upon whom such arguments fail to make any impression. Virtue, then, must have an otherworldly support.¹

Virtually any religion can serve this political function of inculcating public virtue, according to Tocqueville, through the assertion of common beliefs sanctioned by a judgmental God--no matter whether true or false, so long as they are believed.² President Eisenhower, "as a priest of this national faith" who saw "the nation itself as a kind of shrine or instrument of God,"³ made this clear in his assertion that "our form of government has no sense unless it is founded in a deeply felt religious faith, and I don't care what it is."⁴

Less benevolent than Tocqueville's virtuous guarantor of freedom, Rousseau's civil religion is a political device of legitimation and mobilization. Forced to "learn the language of the vulgar, and that is chiefly the language of divine inspiration or religion," to achieve its ends, the legislator adopts piety to persuade and motivate.⁵ Rousseau denounced the social disunity engendered by Christianity with its manifestation as an

¹Marvin Zetterbaum, "Alexis de Tocqueville," in History of Political Philosophy, ed. Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1963; 3rd ed. 1987), p.778.

²Ibid., p.779.

³Marty, Pilgrims in Their Own Land, p.404.

⁴Dwight D. Eisenhower, as quoted in Max Lerner, America as a Civilization: Life and Thought in the United States Today (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1957), p.715.

⁵Allan Bloom, "Jean-Jacques Rousseau," in History of Political Philosophy, ed. Strauss and Cropsey, p.573.

alternate power-centre competing with the state. This disunity finds expression in the historical development of the separation of church and state. Even when united with political power in the personage of a Christian king, moreover, Christianity still is self-centred, inevitably forcing a reorientation of the political and submitting it to religious ends.¹

Rousseau claims with his civil religion to improve upon Hobbes's remedy for the religious/secular schism--the unification of church and state as one entity. Hobbes's sovereign is the arbiter of all public statements of belief. The Sovereign is intimately involved in the development of all social utterances: "for the Actions of men proceed from their Opinions; and in the wel (sic) governing of Opinions, consisteth the well governing of mens Actions, in order to their Peace, and Concord."² Thus, Hobbes attempts to blend civil law and individual conscience, denying any discrepancy through their confluence as "the publique Conscience."³ Hobbes's Common-wealth becomes the church. As the publique signifies holiness, the profane "Common" is joined with that which is "Holy" or "Proper." Repeated sacralization of the publique, that is to say ritual, re-iterates sacred obligations and stirs allegiance to the sovereign as ultimate authority,

¹Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "On The Social Contract" 4:8, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, The Basic Political Writings, Trans. Donald A. Cress, (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987), pp.220-222.

²Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan II, ch.18 (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968; rpt. 1985; First published 1651), p.233.

³Ibid., II, ch.29, pp.365-366.

unifying once divided loyalties, religious and political.¹

Hobbesian civil religion practically amounts to a forced control of belief in its public utterance, cutting off any difference or liberty of speech as it leaves the mouth--much as "Mrs. Hutchinson was not banished for her opinions but for publicizing them and causing 'disorders'." ² While aspiring to its own religiosity as faith in the sovereign, ritually instilled, Hobbes's public religion relies upon Christianity for its pageantry and doctrine, and for its binding truth, ultimately leaving the "publique" with a split conscience and divided loyalty. Rousseau heals the rupture by eradicating Christianity altogether, as unsuitable for republican government. A new religion is required, and provided for, by Rousseau--a civil religion proper.³

Rousseau's civil religion claims for its tenets a providential god, a future life after death of reward and punishment for deeds of this life, sanctity of the state and its law, and a proscription against intolerance.⁴ Following this pattern, Washington's perpetual invocation of a providential god joins with Jefferson's reliance upon the next life for punishments and rewards as the germ of civic virtue. The result is a religion that sanctifies the Constitution while celebrating, as an aspect of the national religion, the Constitution's exclusion of established religion in a proscription against intolerance in its

¹Ibid., III, ch.35, pp.449-451. Also see Laurence Berns, "Thomas Hobbes," in History of Political Philosophy, ed. Strauss and Cropsey, p.407.

²Chard Powers Smith, Yankees and God (New York: Hermitage House, 1954), p.26; Roelofs, "Church and State in America," p.569.

³Rousseau, "On The Social Contract" 4:8, pp.222-226.

⁴Ibid., 4:8, pp.226-227.

interpretation and application. This is to say that the American Civil Religion proscribes intolerance against its own.¹

While Rousseau's civil religion strove for national unity in the rejection of Christianity, American civil religion has co-existed with Christianity by using only parts of it to bolster a new and distinct religion of the state.² Rather than struggling with the church for legitimacy, as in the European model of alternating mutual opposition and embrace, Americanism developed its own eschatology with its own ritual and pageantry to invoke and re-vitalize its potency: Washington, like other "sacred cities, ...is the central 'Mecca' for pilgrimage on behalf of the American polity," its pageantry of presidential inauguration ceremonies combining with more routine Congressional and judicial formalities to "serve as regular expressions of civil piety."³ Additional sacred places are consecrated in the landscape of American history and in the American mind. The "Hallowed ground at Gettysburg," for example, joins other Revolutionary and Civil War battlefields as sanctuaries of dead saints. It is sacrilege to disturb these locations, as is evidenced by Virginia's rebuff of a Disney enterprise planned for the near-sacred soil of a Civil War battlefield--a testament to the continued weight of the Civil War in the

¹William J. Federer, "George Washington," America's God and Country: Encyclopedia of Quotations (Coppell, Texas: FAME, 1994), pp.634-665; Thomas L. Pangle, The Spirit of Modern Republicanism, p.120; Tuveson, Redeemer Nation, p.127.

²Robert N. Bellah, "Religion and the Legitimation of the American Republic," in Varieties of Civil Religion, ed. Bellah and Hammond, pp.4-10.

³John F. Wilson, "The Status of 'Civil Religion' in America," in The Religion of the Republic, ed. Smith, p.5.

American imagination.¹ But this landscape of memory is held sacred only so far. Whereas mere amusement of American Disneys debases, urban sprawl continues to reclaim once blood-soaked and thus sanctified ground; middle-class homes and shopping malls are "an odour of a sweet smell," signifying "a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God,"² and fulfilling American consecration.

In harmony with, yet separate from, Christianity, the American Civil Religion reconciles Rousseau's "mutually exclusive...terms,...in speaking of a Christian republic."³ It does so by pretending never to be quite Christian, or quite a religion, but a sentiment shared by all Americans, inoffensive and even attractive in its unifying creed. This illuminates the furor raised by Bellah's finally calling it a religion in its maturity and thereby implying a rival and threat to church religion and to Christianity in its appealing embrace of a supposed universal Americanism.

Bellah's American Civil Religion is an invocation of "that Revolutionary faith--what Lincoln called 'our ancient faith'"--that stirs the heart in renewal of America's original moment. This faith is based in and defined by the Declaration of Independence and the Gettysburg Address or, rather, in their continued transcendent judgment over the American experiment. A Lincolnian Jefferson coalesces with Washington and Benjamin Franklin in their announced fears of the loss of virtue associated with religious decline,

¹John F. Wilson, "A Historian's Approach to Civil Religion," in American Civil Religion, ed. Russell E. Richey and Donald G. Jones (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), pp.127-129; Fred Bruning, "The Self-hypnosis of America," Maclean's 107:34 (Aug.22, 1994), p.9.

²Philippians 4:18.

³Rousseau, "On The Social Contract" 4:8, p.225.

to embed that fear in the civil religion along with its subsequent persistent call for renewal and vigilance in pursuit of public virtue and an idealized American "common good."¹ Bellah points to John F. Kennedy's inaugural address as a typical manifestation of the American Civil Religion. Its call for renewal through an invocation of God and the American Founders is a call to continue the American Revolution in support of God's work. Bellah's civil religion echoes those Founding fears of decline and strives to revive itself, and America, in the prophetic spirit of its origins.²

The self-affirmation of American civil religion conspires with Bellah's conceptual self-affirmation to stand against denials that civil religion exists or claims that it is only a coherence intellectually imposed upon something scattered.³ These claims are dismissed by the 'proof' of its existence in the very use of the concept to gather, describe, and explain historical and political phenomena, a use that has been widespread since Bellah's initiation of a, thus, bona fide concept that is certified by its utility.⁴ Religious conviction often serves as a better guide to Congressional voting patterns than does party affiliation, Robert Fowler asserts, and is always a better indicator than denominational affiliation. And it is important that the civil religiosity of the nation's ruling elite coincides with that of the population over which they preside. Their shared religious sentiments endow

¹Bellah, "The Revolution and the Civil Religion," pp.55-56, 60-65.

²Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," pp.3-6, 18-21; Robert N. Bellah, "American Civil Religion in the 1970s," in American Civil Religion, ed. Richey and Jones, pp.255-272.

³Roderick P. Hart, The Political Pulpit (West Lafayette: Purdue Univ. Press, 1977).

⁴Bellah, "American Civil Religion in the 1970s," p.256.

Congressional politics with a supposed righteousness. Civil religion participates in "a well-implanted establishment of religion in the United States" that continues to be supported by the courts as well as by the people and their representatives; "We have a clearly established civil religion in the United States," existing "at least in the sense of certain symbols which link religion and the government and state in our nation." Its establishment has withstood every challenge in the Supreme Court, its persistence has been popular and political, even Constitutional.¹

The manifestation of this religiosity in political rhetoric--inaugural speeches and executive pronouncements being prominent, but not exclusive examples--is seen by some as empty of meaning, merely rhetorical and basely political. As politicians undoubtedly use the language of civil religion to muster votes, especially in presidential politics, their sincerity is questioned and their insincerity asserted as defaming and trivializing religion proper. Political religiosity is dismissed as being merely an accommodation to the religiosity of the American people, a religiosity that requires appeals for political support to be masked as religious petitions. With the confusion of religion and politics in America, however, politicians have become the caretakers of the public religion. Religiosity has become a political function. Religious rhetoric is more than an appeal through the civil religion to broaden and crystallize one's electoral base.² The American

¹Robert Booth Fowler, Religion and Politics in America, ATLA Monograph Series No.21 (Metuchen, N.J.: ATLA and Scarecrow Press, 1985), pp.127, 129, 237, 242, 268.

²Stephen L. Carter, The Culture of Disbelief: How American Law and Politics Trivialize Religious Devotion (New York: Doubleday, 1993), pp.44-48, 51, 59, 68, 75; R. Laurence Moore, Selling God: American Religion in the Marketplace of Culture (New York: Oxford Univ. Press), pp.67-71.

Civil Religion imposes moral significance upon the mundane, raising profane policy to sacred heights and, thus, inspiring unity and movement around once isolated or inconspicuous interests. Economic policy issues are zealously pursued, seemingly practical considerations become matters of righteousness, and ideological doctrine becomes gospel, as religious language unifies the various political parts of the nation, realizing the potential for symbolic identification and motivation at individual levels.¹ Religious rhetoric is indispensable to American politics.

Elitist interpretations of American civil religion argue that this rhetoric, while it is demanded by the religiosity of the American people, shapes those demands and constrains American sensibilities and public roles as an instrument of social control. Elite manipulation of key symbols legitimizes their desired policy and crystallizes popular support, thus shaping demands upon the ruling class to which that class responds, instilling elite values as it unifies national opinion.² Thus, America's Founders used religion as a language of legitimacy, pursuing their ends while inculcating public spiritedness as a religiously masked social control.³ In this way,

the 'unity' of the American people derived ...from the ability and willingness of an Anglo elite to stamp its image on other peoples coming to this country. That elite's religious and political principles, its customs

¹Rhys H. Williams and Susan M. Alexander, "Religious Rhetoric in American Populism: Civil Religion as Movement Ideology," Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion 33:1 (1994), pp.1-15.

²Murray Edelman, Political Language: Words That Succeed and Policies That Fail (New York: Academic Press, 1977); Robert Bell, The Culture of Policy Deliberations (New Brunswick: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1985); Winthrop S. Hudson, "Liberty, Both Civil and Religious," in The Lively Experiment Continued, ed. Brauer.

³Roelofs, "Church and State in America," pp.561-565.

and social relations, its standards of taste and morality, were for 300 years America's.¹

While this may be true, it does not hold that insincerity and manipulation characterize the actions and rhetoric of America's elite. It goes too far to say that the Constitution may no longer be sacred for the powerful, yet that they continue to 'sell' it to the American masses "as Latin-American dictators kept commoners traditionally Catholic" to ensure obedience and limit insurrection.² In fact, American elites are "more likely to believe intensely" in American creedal values, more likely to be sincere in their rhetoric and civil religiosity.³ America's political elite are carriers of the creed, priests and prophets of the national religion.

Samuel Huntington agrees with Bellah that there is a civil religion characterized by the transcendent judgement of America according to its original creed.⁴ According to Huntington, this religion is characterized by 1) an American consensus surrounding its articles of faith, 2) by the content of that creed--liberal, individualistic, democratic, egalitarian, anti-government values--and 3) by a changing but continuous intensity of belief in these values, over time and across groups. Furthermore, there is an "ever present gap" between the ideals of the American creed and their practical implications in political institutions, a gap that implies various social and political responses, including renewal

¹Benjamin Schwarz, "The Diversity Myth: America's Leading Export," The Atlantic Monthly (May, 1995), p.62.

²"The Talk of the Town," New Yorker (Dec.1, 1986), p.29.

³Huntington, American Politics, pp.18, 72-73.

⁴Ibid., p.159.

through the prophetic invocation of the creed, or celebration according to a priestly model of self-congratulation in which Americans deny the existence of that gap and claim instead self-realization.¹ The prophetic civil religion stands in judgement of that gap, in judgement of actual America, challenging Americans to live up to the promise of their destiny; "its ideals and aspirations stand in constant judgement over the passing shenanigans of the people, reminding them of the standards by which their current practices and those of their nation are ever being judged and found wanting."² Future America, the promise of American origins now sacralized historically by the national sacrifice of blood, judges present America. Destiny, made manifest, beckons.

This American creed has persisted throughout American history more or less unchanged for over two hundred years. It has shaped American political values and has enjoyed broad support as it defined the national identity. Its core ideas are nested in the Declaration of Independence, implemented by the American Constitution, and interpreted through a combination of elements drawn from seventeenth-century Protestant Christianity and the Enlightenment as filtered through Lockean liberalism--chiefly, moralism, millennialism, individualism, natural rights, liberty, the social contract, and government dependence upon society. Without any theory to describe their co-existence, this "complex and amorphous amalgam of goals and values" is best understood as it coalesces

¹Ibid., p.4; Leroy S. Rouner, "To Be at Home: Civil Religion as Common Bond," in Civil Religion and Political Theology, ed. Leroy S. Rouner (Notre Dame: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1986), pp.135-136.

²Sidney Mead, as quoted in ibid., p.30.

in the civil religion of the nation.¹ Civil Religion allows for, in fact describes and accounts for, this American coalescence of political and religious ideas that might, in other contexts, be irreconcilable. This concept contains the relationship of religious revival to social reform and political renewal, explaining the cyclical nature of American politics and the persistence of peculiarly American political rhetoric.²

American political culture, then, is akin to an alloy. Myth, religion, civil religion, and ideology are its chief elements. In their fusion, each is debased by another. Their properties are distorted and purity is lost as these concepts are applied to the phenomenal world. Their origins can be discerned, however, and their natures delineated to assist in understanding the visible blends and their subsequent politics. American political culture is a mercurial alloy, fluid in the movement of its elements upon and through each other, as well as the movement of this or that element to featured prominence. Of such is American politics.

¹Ibid., pp.14-16.

²As well as Huntington, American Politics, see William G. McLoughlin, Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform: An Essay on Religion and Social Change in America, 1607-1977 (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1978) and Tuveson, Redeemer Nation.

PART TWO: THE MATRIX OF AMERICAN POLITICAL CULTURE

Chapter Two: Ideology in America

"A singular feature of the present historical situation is that political thought and political life are, in modern times, intimately linked. This is something new....It was from the experience of life in the Greek city-state that Plato and Aristotle elaborated their interpretations of human life, which constitute the matrix of all subsequent philosophy. But these interpretations emerged *after* the great cycle of Greek politics occurred. The case of modern political philosophy is completely different. One is tempted to say that it was conceived and chosen *before* being implemented. It was at dawn that the owl of liberalism took flight."

(Pierre Manent, An Intellectual History of Liberalism)

Section A: The Ascent of Liberalism on the American Horizon

i. Beginning Historically:

While concepts may lend themselves to elemental analyses, to intellectual refining that removes dross and separates elements out of their alloy for examination, concepts that develop historically are tempered by time, hardened in their resistance to static science. Instead, these supple concepts are better likened to a rope, their elements to "the intertwining of its strands," ravelled by time:

To analyze or clarify such a concept is not to isolate a core strand, as one tries to do by finding necessary and sufficient conditions for a term's use, but to disentangle a number of its strands so that we can see what is actually involved in it. History can play an important role in conceptual clarification because it can help us to separate out the strands that have become so tightly intertwined that they seem inseparable. Nietzsche tells us that at earlier stages the synthesis of "meanings" that constitutes the concept will appear "more soluble, also more capable of shifts; one can still perceive in each individual case how the elements of the synthesis change their valence and rearrange themselves accordingly, so that now this, now that element comes to the fore" (GM II: 13).¹

¹Maudemarie Clark, "Introduction," in Friedrich Nietzsche, On the Genealogy of Morality, Maudemarie Clark and Alan J. Swensen, Trans., (Indianapolis:Hackett, 1998), pp.xxv-xxvi.

Ideology is such a concept. Liberalism and, here especially, American liberalism must be seen as historical phenomena, both in development and in communication. Thus, they lend themselves best to understanding by historical examination, the undertaking of this chapter. Jerome Huyler warns us not to get "preoccupied with locating ideological origins" so as not to "overlook the fact that ideologies are capable of transcending their temporal circumstances and transforming themselves into timeless, philosophical absolutes."¹ Contrary to this counsel, however, an examination of both the origins and the progress of modern ideology reveals that ideological dogma never is able to perform such trans-substantiation. Its ability to dominate the realms of thought in political culture, to be taken as "timeless, philosophical absolutes," is the precise feature that beckons the political scientist to know ideology and understand its appearance as given truths. This demands fixation upon origins, tracing growth and development, and analysis of the mature creature. We must become historians to apprehend historical phenomena.

Seymour Lipset's assertion of a virgin birth, an America "born out of revolution," involves a misleading abridgement of centuries of cultural and political gestation. Yet his insistence that "the United States is a country organized around an ideology" pointedly demonstrates the need for understanding the foundations that Lipset places at the centre of that American ideology, its "set of dogmas about the nature of a good society." This need is exacerbated by Lipset's confusing fusion of various symbolic forms, particularly

¹Jerome Huyler, Locke in America: The Moral Philosophy of the Founding Era (Lawrence: Univ. Press of Kansas, 1995), p.31.

ideology, religion, and myth, into one synthetic ideology--"Americanism."¹ Lipset's fusion of the elements of political culture into "ideology," as well as the histories of those elements into one historical moment, obscures their diverse, yet harmonious workings. His valid assertions of a coherent "Americanism" and the centrality of the American Revolution are undermined by this confusion, leaving them open to refutation by ready examples of historical development and diverse cultural phenomena that seem to argue against such singular, coherent, and totalistic explanations of American thought. However, such arguments against the coherence of American culture commonly rely upon the mere demonstration of one or another of these cultural elements as self-evident articles of diversity. Countering such shallow portrayals of difference, Lipset's cogent idea of "Americanism" can be preserved by being elevated to the stature of political culture rather than ideology, thus absorbing its apparent anomalies such as religion, myth, and colonial history, as well as providing for the integrity of the concept "ideology" in a coherent, more limited meaning. This is accomplished, while preserving the importance and distinction of its elements, through an articulation of their development and interaction with American ideology into one harmonious whole.

Tracing the development of mature America's ideology, American liberalism, reveals key symbols and ideas that are communicated across the different forms of political culture, and articulated throughout their development. These symbols, because of their shared nature within different forms of expression, can be confused, as can the forms themselves. Thus, the American Revolution becomes an "ideology" in its own right

¹Lipset, American Exceptionalism, p.31.

for some, a condensation of ideological and religious beliefs and action into "Revolutionary ideology,"¹ rather than being seen correctly as a particular political manifestation of American liberal ideology and its aspirations, bolstered by mythic experience and religious zeal, a culminating expression of their supportive interaction and mutual development. In this sense, Hartz maintains, the Revolution really is the ideological birth of America, the application and culmination of doctrines from the colonial past in a new secularism, the completion of an ideological absorption and revision of religious and philosophic ideas but, significantly, "which contains the whole individualist essence of the earlier period."² This new ideological orientation eclipses, but does not extinguish, the past religious light by which it burns. The Revolution, then, is not a disjunction, neither the beginning of ideology, nor the end of Puritanism. It is not the birth of the American mind.³

That genesis is more ancient. Something of its development is evident already in John Winthrop's "A Modell of Christian Charity" of 1630, a shipboard sermon that, combined with the "Agreement" of its Massachusetts Bay Colony even before leaving England, "was a beginning that contained its own principle," according to Robert Bellah. Here was a mythic moment containing the archetypes of a beginning point, but which were made explicit by religious symbols that soon became ideological arguments:

¹Bloch, "Religion and Ideological Change in the American Revolution."

²Hartz, "United States History in a New Perspective," pp.73-74.

³Regarding Vernon Parrington's assertions of Revolutionary disjunction with America's colonial past, see David W. Noble, Historians Against History: The Frontier Thesis and the National Covenant in American Historical Writing Since 1830 (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1965), pp.101-103.

individual decision, the covenant society, and the Promised Land of John Winthrop's new America were to become individual right, the social contract, and the American Dream. Thus, Bellah harkens us to Perry Miller's assertion that "Winthrop stands at the beginning of our consciousness."¹

We should see, then, the rise of American ideology out of religious symbols. The development of ideas such as the individual and the social contract are logical, rational extrapolations of earlier religious doctrine, given impetus by the growth of an increasingly impressive scientific approach to understanding the world. The original Protestant religiosity that spawned such political ideas and their associated ideology, liberalism, continued to constrain and shape their development for generations. Here, Ruth Bloch is correct in her assertions that, even into the Revolutionary age, American ideology was still absorbing key religious themes, particularly of action, and that religious constraints continued to shape ideology at that late date.²

ii. Puritan Seed:

From early on, the primacy of religious vision in America limited the possibilities for American development; coming out of their English, Puritan religious history, "there is a sense in which Americans, from the outset, could not fully control their own destiny

¹John Winthrop, "A Modell of Christian Charity," in An American Primer, ed. Daniel J. Boorstin (New York: Meridian, 1966; rpt. 1985), pp.28-41; Bellah, The Broken Covenant, pp.15-16; Perry Miller, Nature's Nation, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1967, p.6.

²Bloch, "Religion and Ideological Change in the American Revolution," pp.44-47.

because they had a mythology before they even had a country." This mythology included the symbology that lay at the heart of Protestant Puritanism, that shaped its religious development, a constraint that remained effective in America even for latecomers and for centuries.¹ Thus, myth, religion, and ideology are engaged in a fluid system of mutual development and shaping. The constraints and prevalence of earlier religious explanation and world-ordering system over nascent ideological ideas should not be seen, however, as political suppression or sublimation. Rather, in the emergence out of those forces, out of that mythic and religious womb, we are witnessing the birth and the vital generation of ideological ideas, followed by their systematization into a coherent ideology. This extension of the Protestant Reformation into political and, finally, economic realms, is the birth of liberalism, the birth of modern political ideology.²

The transition of other-worldly religious beliefs into this-worldly ideological beliefs is implicit in the Puritan idea of "visible saints," that this world visible points to the other world spiritual.³ Such interpenetration of sacred and secular realms seems to demand the application of sacred covenant theology, for instance, to political life in some form of social contract. As well, individual capacities for salvation are communicated into the political realm, first as duty then as right for individuals, involving an individualism that originated and thrived within the supposed communal context of Puritanism. The

¹Kammen, People of Paradox, p.9.

²Kevin Phillips, The Cousins' Wars: Religion, Politics, & The Triumph of Anglo-America, (New York: Basic Books, 1999), pp.xxi-xxii; Isaac Kramnick and Frederick M. Watkins, The Age of Ideology--Political Thought, 1750 to the Present, (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1964; 2nd ed., 1979), pp.1, 10.

³Marty, Pilgrims in Their Own Land, pp.62-63.

permeation of everyday life by religion gave it a primacy for explaining, interpreting, and ordering the world that remained dominant until the Revolution and its ascent of ideology. The political founding of individual colonies can be discovered in the aspirations of individual Protestant sects, not excepting the supposed economic enterprise of Southern colonies such as Virginia. The basic similarity between these Protestant enterprises, the religious context of their politics, is only excepted by Maryland, having a Catholic founding. That singular difference, however, presents no exception to the primacy of religion in the development of political ideas and institutions in early America.¹ According to one historian, the evidence of this primacy "is so abundant as to be trite."² There is nothing trite about its influence, even today.

The most influential of all intellectual forces in America, religious or political, has been Puritanism, "the most conspicuous, the most sustained, and the most fecund" of the "elements that have gone into the making of the 'American mind'," according to Perry Miller.³ The ideological regeneration into liberalism of Puritan ideas renders an appreciation of Puritan thought and experience crucial to the apprehension of modern

¹William Bradford, "The History of the Plymouth Plantation," in The Frontier in American Literature, ed. Philip Durham and Everett L. Jones (New York: Odyssey Press, 1969); Powers Smith, Yankees and God, pp.131-187; Henry, The Intoxication of Power, pp.23-40; Bellah, The Broken Covenant, pp.12-19; Martin E. Marty, Pilgrims in Their Own Land, pp.53-90; Mark A. Noll, A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdsman, 1992), pp.35-82.

²Walter A. McDougall, Promised Land, Crusader State: The American Encounter with the World Since 1776 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997), p.17.

³Perry Miller, "The Puritan Way of Life," in Puritanism in Early America, ed. George M. Waller (Boston: D.C. Heath & Co., 1950), p.4; From Perry Miller and Thomas Johnson, The Puritans (American Book Co., 1938).

America. While some propose the potential relevance of Puritan thought to understanding contemporary, as well as colonial, America, Miller boldly asserts that "without some understanding of Puritanism, it may safely be said, there is no understanding of America."¹ The spread of Puritan influence through New England's physical intrusion into the American heartland and its accompanying intellectual dominance in America's political culture has involved a fertile thrust by the bourgeois culture of New England that emerged out of a secularization of Puritanism through the seventeenth century. "Without fundamental change" since 1657, it was claimed as late as the 1950s, this secularized Puritan culture continues through "most of the people of present New England, Upstate New York, Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Kansas, Colorado, Utah, Montana, Wyoming, Idaho, Washington, Oregon, and Northern California, and in many of the people of New Jersey, Pennsylvania, the Dakotas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada, and the rest of California."² In fact, with their transition from religious doctrines into ideological dogma, and with their development through subsequent history, inherited liberal assumptions have come to dominate American political culture--political ideas inspired by Puritanism are said now to bind the American nation together in a conformity of conviction.³ What has passed for "the beginning of the American mind," as the end of Puritanism,⁴ can be seen,

¹Ibid., p.4; Lawrence W. Towner, "John Winthrop," in An American Primer, ed. Boorstin, p.42.

²Powers Smith, Yankees and God, p.30.

³Arieli, Individualism and Nationalism in American Ideology, pp.17-20.

⁴Vernon Parrington, as quoted in David Noble, Historians Against History, p.101.

instead, as the completion of its transforming secularization into liberal ideology.

We should be convinced, then, that Puritanism is essentially at least as political as it is religious. Just as Eric Voegelin asserts that Puritans see themselves as political agents of God at work on political, legal, and economic institutions, so too does Sacvan Bercovitch urge us to see American Puritanism as a secular as well as a sacred project. The sacred destiny of a secular American polity is at the heart of the American jeremiad, according to Bercovitch: "The Puritan concept of errand entailed a fusion of secular and sacred history. The purpose of their jeremiads was to direct an imperiled people of God toward the fulfilment of their destiny, to guide them individually toward salvation, and collectively toward the American city of God." This fusion is demonstrated, says Bercovitch, by the once sacred nature of American election days, and by continuing American attitudes towards success as proving scripture.¹

Democratic impulses are said to have risen out of the formal democracy that surrounded Puritan elections.² More fundamental, however, are the individualistic tendencies inherent to Puritanism. Although the mid-seventeenth century Puritan proposals for a bill of rights were not yet based upon appeals to nature, and were not yet rationally based "scientific" arguments that characterize ideology, they nevertheless did

¹Eric Voegelin, The New Science of Politics (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1952), pp.146-147; Sacvan Bercovitch, The American Jeremiad (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1978), pp.9, 44, 114.

²James T. Kloppenberg, "The Virtues of Liberalism: Christianity, Republicanism, and Ethics in Early American Political Discourse," Journal of American History 74 (1987), p.12; Judith N. Shklar, "The Boundaries of Democracy," in Redeeming American Political Thought, ed. Stanley Hoffmann and Dennis F. Thompson (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1998), pp.128-129.

emphasize assertions of individual rights, including property rights. These assertions were characteristic expressions of the Puritan emphasis upon individual salvation and election, upon the individual ability to "know" through direct communion with God.¹ This personal experience of religious conversion and its inspiring of individual commitment translated directly into the political world as conviction of individual efficacy. The later "secularization of English Puritanism by Locke," that so powerfully united diverse Protestant sects through a convincing ideology,² was convincing precisely because it capitalized upon these fundamental sentiments, among others. This is especially true in America, where these sentiments were regarded to have been proven by experience in the new wilderness. The practical and tough independence of adventurous individualists among the earliest Americans was prototypically natural to Lockean ideology.³ The individualist nature of dynamic leadership in early colonies, exemplified by John Smith for instance, and the individualism expressed in dissent by religious and political complainers emerging against established men, both demonstrated and perpetuated the mingling of religious, political, and economic motivations amongst early colonists.⁴ The new ideological emphasis upon political and economic justification, although yet to come,

¹Charles M. Wiltse, The Jeffersonian Tradition in American Democracy (New York: Hill and Wang, 1935; rpt. 1960), p.16; Lawrence H. Leder, America--1603 to 1789: Prelude to a Nation (Minneapolis: Burgess Publishing, 1972; 2nd ed. 1978), pp.51-52, 60; Kammen, People of Paradox, p.173.

²Noble, Historians Against History, pp.6-9.

³Pangle, The Spirit of Modern Republicanism, p.114.

⁴David Hawke, The Colonial Experience (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1966; rpt.1976), pp.92-93, 131-132.

was clearly nascent in the American experience from the beginning.

John Adams is correct in asserting of the Puritan rebellion that, at least initially, "it was this great struggle that peopled America."¹ However, the dominant individualist thread in the American tapestry is not spun from this single source. Bernard Bailyn convincingly argues the centrality of individualism amongst all British emigrants to the new land. Those who left were individualists by experience before ever departing England. Many had been displaced from employment and families, members to a mobile society of which "the peopling of North America was a spill-over--an outgrowth, an extension--of ...established patterns." The lamentable individualism of migration forced by the dislocation and fragmentation of peoples in early modernity eventually gave way to an individualism of hope, as America became an attractive testament to the efficacy of the rugged individual. Rather than remaining "simply another destination available to people in motion," America became a land of promise to those with faith in themselves, to 'natural' individualists. According to Bailyn, this was true as well for non-British immigrants to the New World, especially proven by those who had to break their homelands' national laws to emigrate.² Thus, individualism, implied by and stirring beneath the surface of its Puritan justification, was confirmed by experience, and ultimately celebrated by American experience. It may be seen as an incipient feature

¹John Adams, as quoted in Richard L. Bushman, "Massachusetts Farmers and the Revolution," in Society, Freedom, and Conscience: The Coming of the Revolution in Virginia, Massachusetts, and New York, ed. Richard M. Jellison (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1976), p.95.

²Bailyn, The Peopling of British North America, pp.12-13, 25-26, 36-37, 40.

common to Americans, ironically a binding feature that became central in the new culture.

This Protestant individualism is carried to its logical political conclusion at an early stage in American history, in the person of Roger Williams, a harbinger of Lockean liberalism and a little-recognized key to American thought. Being "the incarnation of Protestant individualism,"¹ Williams induced a political rebirth of mature religious assertions surrounding natural rights of individual conscience. The infant issue of his freewheeling individualism, Rhode Island, was an expression of radical Puritan aspirations and thought. These assertions of natural rights to life, liberty, and property, and associated calls for a separation of governmental powers--characteristic of radical Puritan, and early liberal, approaches to government as instrumental, as the agent of a pre-existing and independent society--came to rest here, in Williams's thought, and in America's proto-liberalism.² Its transformation of natural law into natural rights was accomplished through a peculiar rendering of another implication of Protestant individualism, the notion of consent and its transfiguration into political consent with the subsequent "compact theory" of government.

Although the idea of popular consent was not new, it became an increasingly effective and active argument in early American politics, being "consciously, explicitly, and repeatedly acted upon in covenant form during the colonial period and during the

¹Vernon L. Parrington, Main Currents in American Thought: Volume One . 1620--1800, The Colonial Mind (New York: Harvest, 1927; rpt.1954), pp.64-65.

²Ibid., pp.63-67; Charles M. Wiltse, The Jeffersonian Tradition in American Democracy (New York: Hill & Wang, 1935; rpt. 1960), pp.16-18.

formation of the nation in establishing local, state, and national governments."¹ The Biblical covenant idea was a key and universal symbol in American culture through her first centuries, and remains a potent, if often subliminal, image today. The transfiguration of covenant into contract is a central accomplishment of liberalism, and a major source of its success as a popular ideology, particularly in America. Richard Niebuhr points to the distinction between covenant as a religious idea that denotes acceptance by citizens of the laws as their own, and contract as a political idea that denotes limits to obligations; "Contract always implies limited, covenant unlimited commitment; contract is entered into for the sake of mutual advantages; covenant implies the presence of a cause to which all advantages may need to be sacrificed." Contractual government is a late degeneracy, then, of earlier theories of reciprocal political relationships and citizenship.²

The essence of these earlier covenantal theories of government is expressed in the thought of Richard Hooker, their arguments being gathered together in the last great work of the medieval tradition in England, his Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity.³ While Hooker condenses and systematizes earlier medieval thought, he stands at the cusp of modernity as a conduit of medieval political ideas into modern politics and into the newly developing ideology of liberalism.⁴ However, the communication of these ideas, and

¹Sandoz, A Government of Laws, p.226.

²Niebuhr, "The Idea of Covenant and American Democracy," pp.126-135.

³Richard Hooker, Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity.

⁴Alexander Passerin D'Entreves, The Medieval Contribution to Political Thought (New York: The Humanities Press, 1959; First published by Oxford Univ. Press, 1939), pp.89-90.

particularly of the idea of consent, into modern ideologies is a corrupted transmission that renders entirely different political creatures than intended by Hooker, or by his forebears. In fact, Locke's abuse of "the judicious Hooker" typifies the degeneracy of political philosophy into ideology generally and its concomitant degradation of philosophic ideals into ideological symbols as potential slogans with mass appeal, such catchwords as individual consent and social contract being specifically liberal examples.

Hooker's political arguments were intended to counter the rise of an increasingly political Puritanism, and were especially aimed against the more radical, proto-liberal elements of the movement. Hooker saw his enemies as non-academic, non-theocratic, religious theorists who were self-flatterers, populists appealing to mass opinion and prejudice against traditional church authority. Their appeal had a rational element that pricked at the consciences of individuals, rousing this newly potent voice surfacing from deep within. Puritans excited individual conscience to public action that claimed social knowledge out of this cauldron of belief. Ideology confuses belief with truth, in one breath inspiring and appealing to a conscience based upon conviction rather than knowledge.¹ Thus, conscience became a surging bulwark for individuals against traditional authority, as the common man became increasingly equipped with the 'knowledge' of theory and action required to govern one's self.

This emerging ideological way of approaching the intellectual and political environment, however, involved a scattering of sentiments, ideas, and arguments that were only beginning to coalesce. They still lacked any really systematic coherence.

¹Wolin, Politics and Vision, p.291.

Hooker responded to the proponents of these ideas, to these new theorists, by clobbering them with the club of complexity. A deep thinker himself, Hooker's elaboration of the social bases for government resembles Hobbes's arguments about the creation of a public sphere out of the consenting agreement by all to obey a common authority.¹ Hooker's idea of consent and the social compact "lacks the ideological overtones that characterized most seventeenth-century social contract thinking," and that included such notions as the right of resistance and popular sovereignty.² His central argument about consent was intended, instead, to foster submission through inclusion in a human enterprise of collective authority, not to fragment that governing authority. Hooker's notion of consent involved the consent of all, of society, to the governing authority and a subsequent obedience on the basis of that given acceptance, rather than being based upon foundations of individual conscience that ultimate liberal arguments concerning consent built upon. Thus, for Hooker, it was "the people," rather than individuals, that gave consent and formed the basis for legitimacy of the political powers that be. This prohibits grounds for arguments justifying individual resistance that are characteristic of contract theories of government. Although any rendition of consent may imply a nascent contract theory, Hooker's thought sounds the medieval notes of communal harmony, of covenant theology, of the assembly

¹Wolin, Politics and Vision, pp.259, 279; Hooker, Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity.

²W.D.J. Cargill Thompson, "The Philosopher of the 'Politic Society': Richard Hooker as a Political Thinker," in Studies in Richard Hooker: Essays Preliminary to an Edition of His Works, ed. W. Speed Hill (Cleveland: The Press of the Case Western Reserve Univ., 1972), p.40.

of the church, of submission to authority.¹

Hooker's theory of consent is intended to foster obedience, particularly to the Anglican church, contra the Puritan revolution, because 'we as a people' have consented to its authority. Hooker's interest and argument are philosophic, an investigation of the origins of society and of political authority, rather than being ideological. His concern for consent stops there, conservatively, ideas of individual rights and the right of resistance being pre-empted by Hooker's own resistance to the idea of a limited political contract as the conclusion of consent.² Hooker does not espouse a liberal sort of social contract, though he may imply it, nor is he a forerunner of Locke, except in a very limited sense. Locke used and abused Hooker, usurping his name for authority more than his ideas, as he twisted their meaning into revolutionary conclusions. Locke "speaks in the name of Hooker, but the words are the words of Brutus," leading "to diametrically opposite political conclusions."³

Locke's abuse of Hooker centres on the contractual ramifications of individual consent, the hinge pin of Puritan individualism's turning into liberal ideology. This turn moves consent from a social foundation of individual obligation and duty towards government to a political justification for limited government, for protection of individual

¹Wolin, Politics and Vision, p.279; E.T. Davies, The Political Ideas of Richard Hooker (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1946), pp.65-66.

²Thompson, "The Philosopher of the 'Politic Society'," pp.20, 33-43.

³D'Entreves, The Medieval Contribution to Political Thought, pp.124-126; Peter Munz, The Place of Hooker in the History of Thought (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1952), p.205; F.J. Shirley, Richard Hooker and Contemporary Political Ideas (London: S.P.C.K., 1949), pp.216-221.

rights from intrusion by government authority. Consent becomes a mechanism for controlling power, rather than for submission to it.¹ John Cotton's arguments on "The Limitation of Government," 1655, and Nathaniel Ward's rendition of "The Massachusetts Body of Liberties," 1641, each pointed to justifications for limited political authority, despite the authors' shared distaste for popular government. Ward's treatise included a sort of bill of rights, embodying existent practices such as the rule of law, property rights, mobility rights, voting rights, legal rights, and religious rights, each springing from the well of individual consent. The document was sent around to towns for approval, popular consent, before being enacted.² This shifting of the bases for authority in America towards the masses prepared new ground for the reception of John Locke's assertions that power legitimately comes only through the veil of consent and that legitimate government is only an agent of the people.

These new, rational arguments emerging out of religious ideals were given impetus by the general rise of reason and modern science. These forces also supplied energy to equally new, but alternative attempts to justify political power. Thomas Hobbes attempted to lay new foundations for political authority, based more rigidly upon the demands of scientific reason. Hobbes's Leviathan is an attempt to absorb the influence

¹Wiltse, The Jeffersonian Tradition in American Democracy, pp.14-15; Bushman, "Massachusetts Farmers and the Revolution," p.95.

²John Cotton, An Exposition upon the Thirteenth Chapter of the Revelation (London: Livewel Chapman, 1655), pp.71-73--reprinted as "On Limitation of Government," in Puritan Political Ideas 1558--1794, ed. Edmund S. Morgan (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), pp.173-177; Edmund S. Morgan, "The Massachusetts Body of Liberties," in ibid., pp.177-178; Nathaniel Ward, "A Coppie of the Liberties of the Massachusetts Colonie in New England," in ibid., pp.178-203.

and strength of modern science into political philosophy, to update its methods and, thus, its assertions and conclusions. However, Hobbes's refusal to appeal to prejudice or passion, his resistance to degrade philosophy into mass-consumable arguments, left his project unpopular and prone to the same abuse by liberal ideologues, as was Hooker's equally unpopular political theology. Rather than catching on as political movements, the central arguments of these thinkers became marginalized, resting in the shadows of a few concepts and key words that, re-shaped, became the stuff of a popular harangue, liberal ideology.¹

While Hobbes asserts the primacy of the individual and of individual right as the source of political sovereignty, implying a democratic foundation for any form of government through the mechanism of consent,² still Hobbes's individual is harnessed, limited in capacity and promise by the political demands attached to that consent. The only effective moment of individuality, the only truly individual action, in Hobbes's theory, is the moment of consent--a moment in theory. Thus, Hobbes is akin to Hooker in his search for the source of government and the use of consent towards submission, an end that fails to capture the imagination or impetus, not to mention the pecuniary interest, of a rising bourgeoisie. So are these thinkers alike in their provision of a political language to their liberal posterity, a language that, upon revision, becomes politically potent through its familiarity, its terms becoming matters of common sense to which

¹Wolin, Politics and Vision, p.194-195.

²Pierre Manent, An Intellectual History of Liberalism, Trans. Rebecca Balinski (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1995), pp.25-27.

proponents of ideology can appeal, and upon which they can rely to move "the people."

The variations upon the theme of consent and social contract in early America only reinforce the idea of a congealing consensus regarding political legitimacy. Particular social contracts established by Roger Williams or William Penn demonstrate a fundamental agreement upon "the rules of the game" in America. Each colony represents expressions of different interests or actors, different particulars being contracted, yet each attests to the significance of the idea of contract and to the underlying importance of the individual as political actor.¹ This basic political consensus transcends differences of nuance--much as the basic Protestant consensus transcends sectarian differences--not only among colonies, later states, but also serves to establish solidarity within these particular polities. Leading up to the Revolution, for instance, Virginia enjoyed a consensus of ideals that rendered even faction and political party illegitimate, that prevailed over mere "difference of opinion" which "different men, coming from different parts of" an "extensive Country might well be expected to entertain."²

This consensus involved a "framework of assumptions and perceptions about politics and society" that was "wholly conventional and almost entirely English. ...It was, moreover, above debate."³ This framework was only raised, however, only became

¹Charles Edward Merriam, A History of American Political Theories (New York: Macmillan, 1928), pp.16-17, 26-27.

²George Tucker, as quoted in Jack P. Greene, "Society, Ideology, and Politics: An Analysis of the Political Culture of Mid-Eighteenth-Century Virginia," in Society, Freedom, and Conscience: The Coming of the Revolution in Virginia, Massachusetts, and New York, ed. Richard M. Jellison (New York: W.W. Norton, 1976), p.37.

³Greene, "Society, Ideology, and Politics," pp.44-45.

systematic and fully articulated in America, during the Revolutionary era. In earlier American experience, there was "little systematic discussion of the problems of political theory." Yes, "a steady democratizing process was going on under the influence of the new conditions" encountered in the New World, and particularly as they were encountered by Puritan assumptions, "but there was little conscious reflection accompanying this process."¹ Instead, the arrival of the political individual upon the crest of rising religious and scientific reformations was more or less an implicit element of a complex of Enlightenment principles, something 'in the air', an *influentia*, unconsciously absorbed in earliest American thought.²

Rather than drifting in on foreign currents of air, some American historians, including Daniel Boorstin and Vernon Parrington, argue that American values spring from the soil, more gospels of a virgin birth for American ideals.³ Boorstin argues that "our belief in the mystical power of our land has ...nourished an empirical point of view," that "the United States is the *land* of the free" (emphasis original). American values are born in a transpiration from the land, Boorstin argues, prompted to rise from the still soil once disturbed by plow and foot. Then, "independence, equality, and liberty, we like to believe, are breathed in with our very air." There is an American consensus, says Boorstin, that "ours is a golden land, that values spring from our common ground. If American ideals are not in books or in the blood but in the air, then they are readily

¹Merriam, A History of American Political Theories, pp.36-37.

²Pole, Equality, Status, and Power in Thomas Jefferson's Virginia, p.14; Ingersoll and Matthews, The Philosophic Roots of Modern Ideology, pp.23-25.

³Noble, Historians Against History, pp.100-103, 163.

acquired; actually, it is almost impossible for an immigrant to avoid acquiring them. He is not required to learn a philosophy so much as to rid his lungs of the air of Europe."¹ However, not only are these ideals demonstrably inherited from European thought--incrementally developed and communicated over centuries by theologians, philosophers, and finally ideologues, primarily as written text--but even this very idea, this whole line of argument, that values spring innocently from the soil, from their natural environment, is itself an inheritance from British tradition, according to David Noble.² Parrington and Boorstin are themselves specimens of American ignorance, ancient babes claiming innocence by wrapping themselves in the swaddling clothes of a "new" world bastardized, orphaned by its own intellectual patricide.

Nevertheless, the American environment has had a profound effect upon the reception, if not inception, of these foreign-born values. The availability of land in America meant opportunity to all, confirming sentiments of freedom and of individual efficacy that are so central to liberalism. As "the land of opportunity," America invited upward social mobility and fluid social leadership, practically proving the faith of all believers, all comers. Success marked the virtuous fit for political power and authority, attested to concretely by "examples of nobodies becoming somebodies" including, among so many others, several families of signers of the Declaration of Independence.³ The "vast

¹Boorstin, The Genius of American Politics, pp.25, 28.

²Noble, Historians Against History, p.163.

³Arthur M. Schlesinger, Sr., "The Aristocracy in Colonial America," in The American Record: Images of the Nation's Past, ed. William Graebner and Leonard Richards (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982), pp.140-144.

and empty chaos" of the American wilderness invited the virtuous abroad to migrate from their poor estate, and from within America to new adventure and independence.¹ This standing invitation imposed freedom and independence upon all Americans, breaking down class distinctions as Americans penetrated the frontier and pursued business and profits as avenues to salvation. Social stature and political power were transformed by new economic pressures in America just as in Europe, a process accelerated by the availability of land and its very pronounced opportunities.²

Eric Foner notes that "John Smith had barely landed at Jamestown in 1607 when he observed that in America, 'every man may be master and owner of his owne labour and land'."³ The availability of land to almost anyone laid the groundwork for a mobile society in Plymouth Colony, as well. The individualism involved in expansion into the land of opportunity, in the independence of mobility, was a predisposition transported from the Old World, according to John Demos. Demos agrees with and largely anticipates Bernard Bailyn's later argument,⁴ as he himself argues that this American mobile individualism comes out of a tradition and experience of mobility in England, a tradition that created movers, individuals prone to succumb to the heady lure of America as the

¹Robert Cushman, "Reasons and Considerations Touching the Lawfulness of Removing out of England into the Parts of America" 1622, Document 1.1 in John Demos, "Character and the Social Order in Puritan New England," in Main Problems in American History vol.1, ed. Howard H. Quint et al, (Homewood, Illinois: The Dorsey Press, 1972; 3rd ed.), pp.10-11.

²Miller, "The Puritan Way of Life," p.15.

³Eric Foner, The Story of American Freedom (New York: W.W.Norton & Co., 1998), p.10.

⁴Bailyn, The Peopling of North America.

land of opportunity.¹ Immigrants to the New World expected the freedom associated with economic independence and the acquisition of property, a promise that became a given inheritance for future generations of Americans. By the end of the seventeenth century, economic success, the "ability to wring material gain from the wilderness,"² was the clear mark of leadership in America. Economic elites began to replace the older social aristocracy in political importance. Bernard Bailyn argues that "the private interests of this group, which had assumed control of public office by virtue not of inherited status but of newly achieved and strenuously maintained economic eminence, were pursued with little interference from the traditional restraints imposed on a responsible ruling class."³ The availability of land, the absence of any landed aristocracy, and the underlying irrelevance of accompanying ancient institutions such as primogeniture, left established political hierarchies open to challenges from upwardly mobile, aggressive and ambitious "frontiersmen." Economic opportunities became a levelling force against political authority. This was a dynamic common to all American colonies.⁴

iii. Bacon's Rebellion--The First American Revolution?:

The first substantial wave of these challenges met with resistance from established

¹John Demos, "Notes on Life in Plymouth Colony," in , New Perspectives on the American Past 1607 to 1877 2nd ed., ed. Stanley N. Katz and Stanley I. Kutler (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1972), pp.18-23.

²Bernard Bailyn, "Politics and Social Structure in Virginia," in ibid., p.41.

³Ibid., p.42.

⁴Ibid., pp.53-55, 57.

rulers, prompting rebellions in every colony during the latter half of the seventeenth century.¹ Most notable among these is Bacon's Rebellion in Virginia. In 1676: The End of American Independence, Stephen Webb argues that this rebellion differs from the others and is in fact the first, if not the only, American revolution.² Bacon led disgruntled expansionists against William Berkeley's colonial Virginia government, a government that blocked further intrusion into Indian lands. Bacon's westerners felt that their 'natural' freedom was being denied them, their freedom to land acquisition and all that went with it.³ Daniel Boorstin asserts that Bacon's Rebellion "expressed the demand of western settlers for more aid against the Indians."⁴ However, as these Americans confronted Indians as a 'natural' obstacle to progress, Berkeley's government itself became a conservative, authoritarian, 'conventional' obstacle, anti-American in its resistance to progressive development by the rising entrepreneurial class.⁵ Berkeley opposed education and printing as "a menace to sound colonial government, for learning has brought disobedience, and heresy, and sects, and printing has divulged them and brought libels against the best government. God keep us from both!"⁶ More directly, his government's

¹Ibid., p.37.

²Stephen Saunders Webb, 1676: The End of American Independence (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984).

³Bailyn, "Politics and Social Structure in Virginia," p.48.

⁴Daniel J. Boorstin, The Americans: The Colonial Experience (London: Cardinal, 1988; rpt.1991; First published by Random House, 1958), p.348.

⁵Ted Morgan, Wilderness At Dawn: The Settling of the North American Continent (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993), pp.189, 224.

⁶William Berkeley, as quoted by Ibid., p.224.

impediment to such progressive domestic aspirations was matched by its resistance to 'foreign' policy that would remove the Indians as any obstacle to expansion, territorially and economically. Although, "the Indian menace had never been serious because a great plague had decimated the Indian population just prior to English settlement," conflict with settlers nevertheless arose in the confrontations involved in expansion into Indian territories.¹ While these conflicts were little hindrance to economic progress, when Berkeley's colonial government sided with the Indians against ambitious expansionists, allying with Indians to control and thwart the aspirations of "lawless" upstarts, then a formidable barrier to opportunity intruded upon the American psyche for the first time.

The Indian wars of seventeenth-century America were a direct consequence of colonial political and economic pressures for more land. Genocide became the preferred solution for western settlers, despite the desires of traditional propertied interests for treated solutions to the conflicts.² These were viewed suspiciously by westerners, as machinations to counteract their economic assault upon those same interests and their status. As well, the individualism expressed in the vigilante nature of spontaneous action against the Indians by Bacon and his allies, without authority of official sanction, challenged Berkeley's own political status and authority. To squelch such threats, Berkeley moved against Bacon as a rebel, for leading unauthorized Indian attacks.

Despite his heroic image amongst his neighbours, perhaps because of it, Bacon's

¹Lawrence H. Leder, *America 1603-1789; Prelude to a Nation*, 2nd ed., (Minneapolis: Burgess Publishing, 1978), p.75.

²*Ibid.*, pp.76, 94.

spontaneous self-government unsettled the existing relative peace with Indians that had been accomplished by English policy.¹ That peace was initially threatened by the inability of Berkeley's government to protect its citizens as they forayed into the Indian frontier. Bacon's action against the Indians, however, highlighted the government's *de facto* inability to command its own citizens' obedience. This constituted a dissolution of the social contract.² The "complete overthrow of the established government ...by those who were previously subject to it" was only suppressed upon Bacon's untimely death by disease. The rebellion included many elements of a full-fledged social revolution, including demands for political and social reform by a mixed group of rebels that included women, servants, and even slaves.³ However, a key element was missing, signified by the rebellion's fizzling upon Bacon's death. The lack of any systematic theory to collect and communicate the felt ideas behind the revolutionary action, their early stage of ideological development, prevented their transmission. That these ideas were not communicable across even the limited space of colonial Virginia or the very short time involved in the life of the rebellion, left the revolution dead in its infancy, along with Bacon. The revolution's reliance upon the individual leadership of Nathaniel Bacon emphasizes both the potency of the idea of the individual and that idea's acute lack of any system to capture it at that time.⁴

¹Webb, 1676, pp.13-17.

²*Ibid.*, p.21.

³*Ibid.*, pp.3-163 *passim*, pp.409-416.

⁴Hawke, *The Colonial Experience*, pp.246-249.

Britain's subsequent heavy-handed restoration of peace and order over Bacon's rebels squelched the immediate effects of American individualism and barricaded the temptation of frontier land expansion for a hundred years. These limitations to the development of American independence were shored up by Indian alliances with the English Crown. Thus, peaceful English development was ensured for the colonies over the next century, a century in which theory would be developed and communicated across the ocean in an ideology that both explained and justified the actions of America's first revolutionaries.¹ This theory, that ultimately was able to organize and move whole colonies in revolution, was anticipated by its premature issue, Bacon's rebels. Bacon's Virginia was an early American announcement of this new liberal ideology, an ideology that, once arrived, would champion these same aspirations for American independence in a new revolution. Until then, however, Bacon's rebellion would remain America's "revolution without dogma."²

Through the next century, liberal ideology provided the political justification for expansive economic and technological means of overcoming nature's 'defects.' In harmony with its origins in protest, its penchant "to pull down, to remove obstacles which block

¹*Ibid.*, pp.357-404 *passim*, 409-416.

²Daniel Boorstin devotes a chapter in The Genius of American Politics to the American Revolution, a chapter that he subtitles "Revolution Without Dogma." Boorstin argues that Revolutionary Americans produced no political theory and, thus, had no dogma behind their action. Thus, Boorstin attempts to save America from any sort of ideological birth. In fact, the American Revolution was an application of theory, a consummate enactment of liberal ideology upon the political environment, as is discussed below. Bacon's Rebellion, on the other hand, failed exactly because it lacked the dogma of a developed and coherent ideology. Thus, it is only the first American revolution that could rightly be designated the "Revolution Without Dogma."

human progress,"¹ liberalism's prescriptions for development provided Americans with inspiration and justification for overcoming all the limits of nature, including those of the Indian frontier. The idea of 'Manifest Destiny', largely a mythic notion, has an early beginning in "reasoning" akin to that of John Locke's Second Treatise of Government. One Pilgrim maintained that there "is a sufficient reason to prove our going thither to live lawful: their land is spacious and void, and there are few and do but run over the grass. ...They are not industrious, neither have art, science, skill or faculty to use either the land or the commodities of it."² This sounding of Locke's argument, that "God gave the world ...to the use of the industrious and rational" and that America constituted a vast expanse that had only "want of improving it by labour,"³ echoes through centuries of American thought and policy towards her west. The 1842 "Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs," for instance, is noteworthy only in that it is a typical, and official, ideological justification for grabbing western lands. In its terms, Indians are destined for removal or extermination because of their unwillingness or inability to work the land, their failure to improve it. In fact, there is a concomitant reversal of causation here, as it is asserted that Indian savagery is a result of inhabiting unimproved lands, simultaneous to the land's

¹Hobhouse, Liberalism, p.14; Isaac Kramnick and Frederick M. Watkins, The Age of Ideology--Political Thought, 1750 to the Present (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1964; 2nd ed. 1979), p.2.

²"Reasons and Considerations Touching the Lawfulness of Removing Out of England into the Parts of America," as quoted in Kammen, People of Paradox, p.34.

³John Locke, Second Treatise of Government, §34, §41.

utter lack of improvement as a result of the purported savagery of America's natives.¹ Such ideological arguments organized and legitimized sentiments for expansion that were reportedly "broad, capacious, and eminently national" by the time of the American Revolution.²

Bacon's Indian removal policy for progress was, thus, ultimately organized and justified within liberal thought. So, too, were those early aspirations for independence. As liberal ideology became a lens by which events were judged and through which events were seen and magnified, distorted even by conviction, its "integrated group of attitudes and ideas" became not only the context for events, but also the meaning behind them.³ Of the sources behind those ideas, only Locke's thought was "clearly dominant" and "wholly determinative" of the American Revolution.⁴ Locke was the primary theorist behind the revolution, providing the system and the dogma that was lacking in the colonist's first bid for independence. Lockean thought permeated America's intellectual life through the eighteenth century, unchallenged for dominance; "Above all we knew our Locke," writes Carl Becker, "and especially his second discourse on Civil Government."⁵

¹"Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. Pub. Doc. No.2, pp.370-528. Dec.7th, 1842," The Southern Quarterly Review 5 (1844), pp.118-156.

²John Tyler, "Annexation of Texas: The Message of the President of the United States to the Senate" (1844), The Southern Quarterly Review 6, 1844, pp.483-520.

³Bailyn, The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution, p.94.

⁴Ibid., p.30.

⁵Carl Becker, "The Spirit of '76," in The American Record, p.157; First published in The Spirit of '76 and Other Essays, ed. Carl Becker, et al. (The Robert Brookings Graduate School of Economics and Government, 1927).

Thomas Paine is said to have cribbed Locke's writings, although Paine said that he never had read his work.¹ The obvious parallels point to these ideas as being "something in the air." The rationalizing of "the American Enlightenment" largely involved an adaptation of Lockean principles into religious and political thought. Success lay in the very nature of this second American Revolution, as it worked "to complete, formalize, systematize, and symbolize what previously had been only partially realized, confused, and disputed matters of fact. ...This completion, this rationalization, this symbolization, this lifting into consciousness and endowing with high moral purpose inchoate, confused elements of social and political change--this was the American Revolution."² Its concrete assertion was the final stage of becoming for American liberalism.

iv. John Locke's American Revolution:

Locke's impact upon the development of liberalism is crucial. He gathers together the lingering sentiments, symbols, and ideas of an as yet unspoken ideology, giving them new life and new meaning in a popular appeal. Ellis Sandoz argues that Locke's use and abuse of "intuitive knowledge and self-evident principles," his incorporation of mythic images, religious assumptions, and appeals to common sense, work "to excise political theory from philosophy and reduce it to the level of uncritical or ignorant opinion

¹Richard J. Ellis, American Political Cultures (New York: Oxford Univ. Press), p.31.

²Bernard Bailyn, "Political Experience and Enlightenment Ideas in Eighteenth-Century America," American Historical Review 67 (1962), pp.339-351; Pole, Equality, Status, and Power in Thomas Jefferson's Virginia, p.15; Hawke, The Colonial Experience, pp.430-467; Milton Cantor, "Great Awakening and Enlightenment," in Main Problems in American History vol.1, ed. Howard H. Quint et al., pp.37-46.

(*doxa*)."¹ This is not philosophy, then, but its degradation--ideology. While Locke presents a coherent and, at times, rational argument in his Second Treatise, he is bound by both his audience and his purpose to speak plainly, unphilosophically. The printing of this treatise as a cheap pamphlet "so that it should be 'scattered amongst common readers'" is an explicit indication of Locke's intended audience.² Thomas Pangle reports that Locke readily admits that his purpose is to convince the masses by using their own language, assumptions, and beliefs--an approach that Locke maintains must be used by all modern political reformers.³ This abandonment of philosophy for popular politics, as well as this indication of his intended audience and purpose, is implicit both in the content and in the form of the argument in his Second Treatise.

In harnessing the ideas and sentiments that come to constitute liberal ideology generally, Locke christens the fundamentals of a political world-view whose basis lies in prejudice, "common sense," historical experience, and in aspirations for increasing success and prosperity that are largely economic. An assertion of natural right combines with an overwhelming faith in individual capacity and accomplishment in this ideological tract, to restrict political life and purpose dogmatically: Politics is carved out of what is supposed to be humanity's naturally apolitical existence, government is set apart to a special and limited role as agent and arbiter only of social security. Freed from vexation

¹Sandoz, A Government of Laws, p.62.

²Peter Laslett, "Introduction" to John Locke, Two Treatises of Government, ed. Peter Laslett (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1960; rpt.1988), p.9.

³Pangle, "The Philosophic Understandings of Human Nature Informing the Constitution,"p.38.

by "the fancy or covetousness of the quarrelsome and contentious," the unbounded capacity of "the industrious and rational" to create wealth is thus secured. Finally, Locke provides the grounds for dispelling a government that oversteps its proper limits, again providing for the security of prosperous aspirations against any machinations by wicked men who might be "rational" enough to use government against its people, to use the social contract against itself.

While Locke pretends to a certain rationality of his own through the argument of the Second Treatise, he seems unabashed in his appeal to religious prejudice for accomplishing certain fundamentals. His early assertion of natural human equality is immediately qualified by his accompanying assertion of God's own authorship for any inequality that may be "manifest...by an evident and clear appointment, an undoubted right to dominion and sovereignty"--saints must be visible.¹ However, equality is supposed to prevail generally. Its accompanying liberty is preserved from license, again by God. Locke asserts that a law of nature, discernable by reason and thus applicable to all humanity, proscribes injury to "life, health, liberty, or possessions" because we are all creatures of one God, "all the servants of one sovereign master, sent into the world by his order, and about his business"; we are "his property." We are obliged, Locke maintains, to preserve our fortunes and ourselves, and "to preserve the rest of mankind" and their fortunes when not immediately competitive with our own interests. Thus, we have a certain sociability that is natural, given by reason's discovery of natural laws but which rests upon our relationship to God. We may be instructed in this relationship, its

¹Locke, Second Treatise, §4.

duties and obligations, by reason or by religion. However, reason alone cannot account for this sociability, as it cannot account for the reason behind Locke's natural law--God.¹ Some argue, including Jerome Huyler, that this apparent religiosity is essential in Locke's view of human nature, that Locke is seriously religious here.² He is not. Instead, there is a superficial use of God in the Second Treatise, specifically purposeful in the content of the argument, as well as in Locke's method--the very invocation of God to persuade to conviction.

Locke uses religion to 'get away with something' in his presentation. He avoids the type of discursive argument essential to the first twelve or thirteen chapters of Hobbes's Leviathan. He does so to come to a different conclusion about man's nature than that demanded by reason alone. Whereas Hobbes's rationality brings us to see man as an asocial creature who requires positive government to accomplish any good, Locke's pseudo-rationality mingled with religious doctrine has us arrive at man as a social being with natural rights in need of only a limited, negative governance. The political individual arrives in Hobbes's theory only to be constrained by what some maintain is "distinctly illiberal" politics, according to the demands of his nature.³ As Locke frees this same individual by using God, he imbues his theory with "a far more palatable flavor than Hobbes's." However, God is not present as an end in Himself in Locke's theory, as some overarching representation of The Good. Nor are human sociability and its "palatable

¹Ibid., §6.

²Huyler, Locke in America, pp.31-32, for instance.

³Ingersoll and Matthews, The Philosophic Roots of Modern Ideology, p.25.

flavor" ends in themselves here. God, man's subsequent sociability, and Locke's appeal are means to another, more palatable, end--natural rights to life, liberty, and estate. Collecting these rights together as "property," Locke's theory is not "more palatable" merely because of its invocation of God, but is "more palatable" because the ends of that invocation are realized--the natural right to property. Natural rights that remain conceptual with Hobbes, become concrete, practical rights with Locke. In this transformation, God is an effective device.¹

Liberal natural rights are actualized by virtue of Locke's appeal. His argument collects together predispositions, tendencies, and aspirations and gives them a qualifying and justifying foundation. As James Kloppenberg argues, Locke is congenial with popular sentiment whereas Hobbes is not, because of Locke's explicit appeal to Protestant Christianity. Here, however, Kloppenberg tries to rescue Locke from any mere 'ideology' of self-interest by infusing his argument with a moral content. In his attempt to make liberalism more religious and moral than it has appeared, Kloppenberg implicitly strives to rescue America and its origins from being tainted by amoral, or even immoral, 'ideology.' In Kloppenberg's struggle to define the nature of Locke's liberalism rests the recognition that this same liberalism is definitive of the ideological nature of America. Furthermore, as Kloppenberg works to infuse Locke's thought with moral content, that moral value is derived from religion, from Christianity.² Any morality that is claimed for

¹Ibid., pp.31-32.

²James T. Kloppenberg, "The Virtues of Liberalism: Christianity, Republicanism, and Ethics in Early American Political Discourse," The Journal of American History 74 (1987), pp.15-16.

Locke's liberalism remains a 'holdover' from its Christian roots and is not part of liberalism proper, but is part of the religion that accompanies it. The "virtues of liberalism" are not its own. The harmony of liberal and Christian thought exemplify the way that ideology and religion can be worked together in a political culture of apparent diversity to create a dynamic, monolithic structure of thought.

Locke's tract lays down the pattern for any successful ideological appeal. At each important juncture, his appeals to reason are supported by assertions of God's harmonious approval for Locke's rational arguments. The common ownership of the earth, the imperative to develop its gifts, the subsequent natural right to estate emerging from that labour and thus the right to 'privatize' that which began in common, each is supported by Locke's invocations of reason, common sense, and God.¹ That God is used, however, does not make this the "God-centred revolutionary ideology" that Huyler professes for America.² Readers merely are free to take their pick of suitable justification--reason, religion, common sense--for the arguments at hand; Locke's appeal is widespread, its simplicity is complex; mass appeal is the object of ideology.

One might agree with Huyler, that there seems to be some "Calvinist commitment" to liberalism in America.³ However, this is a peculiar feature of American inheritance, of American culture, and not properly of liberalism nor of ideology. During the crucial gestation period of American liberalism, the co-existence of Calvinist

¹Locke, Second Treatise of Government, §25, §26, §31, §32, §34.

²Huyler, Locke in America, p.17.

³Ibid., p.17.

absolutism with liberalizing individualist 'theory' led to a peculiar marriage of content and form. With a growing emphasis upon mass society, the absolutism of a declining American Calvinism survived to join with the popular individualistic liberalism that was on the rise, to form a dogmatic liberalism, a new absolutism that prevailed by America's Revolutionary era. Its emergence alongside the surety of Calvinist absolutism led to a dogmatizing of liberal political theory in response to the felt need for "givens" even by liberals. This new dogmatism did not emerge explicitly as an article of intolerance within liberal doctrine--liberal doctrine pretends towards a certain tolerance of opinion and action within its own purview. Instead, intolerance surrounded the entire project as an absolute approach to the world. The whole of liberalism became a "given" in America.¹ That it is "given" does not, in itself, transform an ideology into a religion.

As the argument of the Second Treatise proceeds away from first principles, Locke increasingly shifts away from invocations of God and towards reliance upon common sense and experience. Of course, God is called upon when necessary to convert any possible stragglers, but the appeal and momentum of the argument suffices, more or less, to bring 'on board' most anyone with any measure of claim to being "industrious and rational," all those seeking such justification as Locke provides for their 'virtue'. Instead of extrapolating first principles of human nature, Locke concentrates more on

¹Parrington, The Colonial Mind, pp.5-15; In his implications, Parrington anticipates Louis Hartz here. However, American liberalism's dogmatic absolutism arises for different reasons in the precis of these two thinkers. Parrington implies a more original, essential dogmatism. Hartz is more explicit, but relies more upon liberalism's reaction to the American environment--or more precisely, lack of environment, i.e. feudalism--to create this dogmatism as a corruption over time, of some original liberalism from which America fragments.

accomplishing a sleight of hand that relies upon the readers' progressive movement away from God and into his/her own experience. We are moved away from the "state of nature" and its first enunciation of "natural rights," away from a conceptual presentation of human nature. Now, in a sort of narrative, Locke elaborates upon the problems inherent in nature that might threaten our rights and our enjoyment of sociability. Through a series of felt threats, accomplished by Locke's reasoned appeals to experience, we must acknowledge the need for some authority to secure our rights in society. If Locke were doing theology in this treatise, he might now point to our natural sociability and reasonable awareness of God, to propose some religious solution to his impending social disorder. Religion could fit perfectly and naturally into Locke's state of nature, with potential to form the fundamental social authority. Instead, political government is the recognized solution to society's increasingly delicate apprehension of natural rights.¹

Joining Kloppenberg's and Huyler's attempts to rehabilitate Locke's, and by implication America's, ideology, Ellis Sandoz views Locke's Second Treatise as essentially theological. It is civil theology, Sandoz maintains, because it succeeds in creating a new account of reality that takes hold and replaces the traditional, theological account of human being. While Sandoz is correct that times of crises call for replacement visions of reality--this need is by definition intellectual or spiritual crisis--he is certainly

¹Locke, Second Treatise of Government, Chapters 2-5, 7-9; See Maureen Henry's The Intoxication of Power for a cogent argument about the primacy of religion in the order of man's retreat from a Lockean "state of nature." Her account of this is harmonious with a persistent American sensibility. In America, however, this only serves to emphasize Locke's assertions of social independence from politics and subsequent limitations placed upon the political.

wrong in the implicit, and at times explicit, assertion that replacement accounts of reality must and do somehow conform to the structures of thought that they are replacing.¹ This would mean that Platonic philosophy must be poetry and that science must be myth. While philosophy may participate in poetry, of a sort, and science may have its own mythic content, conceptual clarity is lost and one is entirely misled by assertions that philosophy essentially is poetry, or that science essentially is myth. Diverse forms of thought may serve similar social or political functions at times, especially in times of crisis. They may, and do, even share many of the same symbols--but to a different effect.

Leo Strauss argues that Locke's account arose necessarily as something other than religion precisely because of this crisis:

Locke...must have been aware of the fact that a political teaching based on Scripture would not be universally accepted as unquestionably true, at least not without a previous and very complex argument for which we seek in vain in his writings.²

Religion alone would not convince in Locke's age. In America, even the churches absorbed Locke's dogma and certainly "a secular public was waiting for a new message." Locke became the messenger.³

Although Kloppenberg, Sandoz, and Huyler have no doubt about the centrality of Locke in American thought, it is this assurance that makes the content of Locke's thought so compelling for each of them. That the meaning of Locke's thought is somehow intimately connected with the meaning of America is so compelling as to bring Huyler,

¹Sandoz, A Government of Laws, pp.51-52, 75.

²Strauss, Natural Right and History, pp.211-212.

³Shklar, "The Boundaries of Democracy," pp.131-134.

against his own counsel, to a preoccupation with the origins of liberalism. In this fixation, each of these thinkers does harm to the integrity of Locke's work, stretching its purposes to encompass all of the important symbolism of early American culture, rather than recognizing what is liberalism proper, and preserving truly religious or mythic symbols intact. Still, Sandoz does seem perceptive in his appreciation of Locke's use of symbolism:

Locke creates a scientistic myth of man, society, and civil government that evokes a sense of history and satisfies the demands of common reason in men seeking earthly peace and eternal salvation....The Second Treatise is told in mythic imagery, designed to persuade Everyman of its truth through common sense, the reason whereby men attune themselves to the love of life in the shadow of ineluctable death. God's and nature's law encompasses the earthly drama, surrounding the suspense of time in the infinitude of benevolent eternity. Reason is the voice of God in man, which narrates how it is that power in society comes to be fixed in the hands of those who rule. The tale begins: Once upon a time in the primordial state of nature when every man was equally his own master, free, and rational.¹

However, Sandoz's own argument about "civil theology" in the Second Treatise dismisses the manipulation of these symbols, asserting that "Locke was inexact and vague in theoretical points just because he was composing a broadly evocative myth and a civil theology."²

While Sandoz is correct about Locke's appeal to a broad audience, he is certainly wrong in his assertions of a "civil theology" at work here. Locke is creating ideology, something quite different from religion, although related to it, especially in its effective

¹Sandoz, A Government of Laws, pp.75-76.

²Ibid., p.78.

use of religious symbols. Such use, however, only signifies that an ideology has not yet entirely come to dominate a particular culture on its own terms, that the religious "reality" continues to be effective at some level. By capitalizing upon that remaining vigour, ideology can shore itself up and prevail over competing ascending or retiring world-views. While philosophy or science are more or less elite forms of thought and, thus, not required by mass appeal to co-opt declining symbols, ideology is popular and must latch on to what is left of previous "realities" in order to communicate with its audience and convert. Sandoz concedes this less than theological invocation of God:

Among the seventeenth-century thinkers the purpose of the minimum dogma was less ambitious. It was intended merely to subdue the religious passions that were disruptive of the public peace and dangerous to personal security. At just this point, it may be said, that religion became in the view of intellectuals "the opium of the people," as Marx later spoke of it.¹

That Locke uses religion in this fashion does not make his work theological in any way, and certainly does not make ideology a "secular religion" or civil theology. As Sheldon Wolin maintains, Locke perceptively uses religion to govern the passions of ordinary men. He takes advantage of an extant "morality suited to the common understanding" in the absence of any "rational ethic accessible to the majority of men." As Locke takes this "refuge in Christianity," it is "at the cost of converting the latter into a species of ideology."² American experience only confirms this infectious movement of ideological content back into religious thought. Thus, while religion continues to render itself to

¹Ibid., pp.55-56.

²Wolin, Politics and Vision, pp.335-337.

modern ideological manipulations, we should not see these manipulations as giving any real theological, or even religious, content to ideology and particularly not to Lockean liberalism. Harmony sounds the union of a chorus of accord, rather than the echo of a single note.

Sandoz ignores entirely the lack of any orientation towards religious salvation, the lack of any elevation of political phenomena to a heavenly plane, by Locke. It seems that Sandoz strives to make Locke more religious than he is, to make Lockean America more properly religious. This is unnecessary, as much of Sandoz's text demonstrates a profound religiosity in early American thought and the self-elevation to the sublime of the American nation, entirely independent of Locke.¹ American liberalism is not required to be religious, so long as it effectively allies itself with dominant religious symbols. Again, Locke is exemplary. Similarly, Huyler's assertions ring hollow, that Locke's early invocations of God amount to the essence of his work in the Second Treatise, that Christian morality is the key to Locke's political theory.² Locke more or less abandons God after these early invocations, Divine appearances in text that are necessary only to these early stages of Locke's 'argument'. In the end, the only salvation here is economic, and Locke's orientation is entirely fixed upon the political security of that earthly "salvation." Rather than elevating the political realm to the religious, Locke merely degrades religion to a political argument, importing God when necessary to make his argument commonly compelling. There is nothing "vague" or "inexact" about it, nor

¹Sandoz, A Government of Laws, pp.83-132.

²Huyler, Locke in America, pp.107-108.

anything "theological."

In pursuing a justification for a particular form of political government, Locke accomplishes real threats to natural rights by abandoning his initial concept of human nature, although this is not immediately explicit. By spinning out his rendition of human nature and society, Locke is able to obscure his contradiction of unsocial sociability in man. Having first established natural rights, including the right to estate, Locke brings his readers to the intended point of argument, the need for political government to secure those rights. We are supposed to have forgotten the initial concept of human nature, that of reasoned and religious sociability, yet we maintain that same sociability, although it is under attack by the "contentious and quarrelsome." By spinning out his description of human nature through narrative, Locke is able to subject that nature to social and historical experience, experience that makes sense to us in a common way. This common sense appeal moves us away from a conceptual approach to human nature, yet all the while we are under the impression that this is precisely what is being defined. We must recognize that Locke does not argue conceptually in the Second Treatise. If we try to squeeze his narrative account of human nature into a concept, into a human nature proper, we arrive at man as a being that is sociable enough to get along, to recognize and respect natural rights, to co-operate in pursuing and expanding the gifts of those rights, sociable enough to agree upon matters of religion, and even sociable enough to create a civil contract to escape the state of nature. Yet, under the slightest fear of any threat to this sociability, this same man is not sociable enough to get along with others, will not recognize nor respect natural rights, cannot co-operate for prosperity, and does not form

any natural religious authority. But, on this one point, he retains his natural sociability: he contracts civilly to escape the sore effects of nature. This concept cannot hold; Locke is not doing philosophy.¹

The ideological treatment of human nature in Locke's Second Treatise is, in fact, a treatment of human experience, a popular account of the coming into existence of a particular form of society and its political government. With Locke's assertion of a society independent of political structures, government is brought into existence through a social contract, as a trustee of sovereign social powers. These powers are limited in their legitimate exercise. Government becomes an umpire over potential social disputes, chief protector of individual liberty to pursue prosperity. Such virtuous pursuits are protected against machinations by any "quarrelsome and contentious" ne'er do wells who might infringe upon natural property rights--rights to life, liberty, and estate. Any attempts to use these delegated political powers to infringe upon those rights are, then, illegitimate attempts to use sovereign social power against itself, against the sovereign society. Locke, once again, invokes reason, common sense, and God to attest to this "dissolution" of government and the subsequent right to resist the "tyranny" of broken trust.² That the locus of this right rests ultimately in individual conviction is a heritage of the Puritan idea of conscience, the very individual original basis for this social contract.

Locke's assertions of the primacy of the social and this limited role for government are communicated directly into American attitudes towards the political and

¹Locke, Second Treatise of Government, Chapters 2-5, 7-9.

²Ibid., chapters 8-9, 11, 13, 18-19.

their resistant suspicion of government. More spectacular, however, is the transmission into American politics of Locke's "right of revolution." Not only is the theme of resistance to tyranny directed into such large scale politics as the American Revolution, the Civil War, and America's participation in the World Wars and the Cold War. This same theme also invests more local politics with a certain fervour of conviction, such politics as are involved in the Constitutional debates, presidential campaigns, religious persecutions, the anti-communist "red scare," the growth and development of the welfare state, in civil rights movements and protests, the separation of church and state, and in "cultural politics." Tyranny always is a valuable symbol upon which to prey in America to move "the people." The conviction attached to Locke's ideological argument here, rises to righteous indignation when supported by mythic and religious invocations against tyranny.¹

The arrival of ideology to a place of primacy within the public realm is signalled by its invasion of Revolutionary America's churches. Civil and religious liberties become linked in religious rhetoric leading up to the Revolution. Tyranny, political and religious, is condemned by prominent preachers "in the language of Locke," while promoting natural rights, free enterprise, and finally revolution in the right of resistance: "Revolution meant improvement, not hiatus; obedience, not riot; not a breach of social order, but the fulfilment of God's plan."² Political liberty became a "sacred cause" as American theology expanded to include liberalism "as a primary article of faith." With the shift of agency

¹This theme is developed in chapters three and four, below.

²Bercovitch, The American Jeremiad, pp.123-131.

in redemptive history away from the churches and into the political, Lockean liberalism became the fundamental American vision and salvation gained a new practical meaning. Political tyranny took on new meaning, as well, so that Locke's 'reasoned' arguments became infused with religious conviction, driving these unchallenged "self-evident truths" to new heights of absolutism.¹ Reverend Jonathan Mayhew sounded Lockean arguments in his sermon call to revolution, invoking natural rights, popular sovereignty, and the right of resistance to government tyranny.² As well, Mayhew anticipates the much later arguments of Bernard Bailyn and John Demos that America's immigrants were individualist by nature, their love of liberty driving them from foreign lands into its American bosom.³

Mayhew's discourses on the right of resistance against political tyrants strikes notes that were familiar to Lockean disciples throughout the decades preceding the American Revolution--limited government and the right of revolution are chief among them.⁴ John Wise is notable here for his invocation of Lockean ideas within the religious domain, his justification of congregationalism being a prime example of the continuing shift toward the primacy of "reason" even within the American church, the 'feedback' of

¹Hatch, The Sacred Cause of Liberty, throughout.

²Jonathan Mayhew, "Discourse," in Pamphlets of the American Revolution: 1750-1776, ed. Bernard Bailyn (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1965), p.213-214.

³Jonathan Mayhew, "A Sermon Preach'd in the Audience of His Excellency William Shirley...(Boston, 1754) p.23, as quoted in Hatch, The Sacred Cause of Liberty, p.46.

⁴See, for example, "Jonathan Mayhew on the Right of Revolution," in Puritan Political Ideas, ed. Morgan, pp.304-330, taken from a 1750 discourse.

ideology into its religious roots.¹ Wise adopted Lockean ideas--natural rights, the social contract, self-interested individuality, resistance to tyranny--into his entire theological schema, interpreting ancient scripture and revelation through the ideological lens of liberalism; "John Wise, a perfectly orthodox preacher, gives us a very good idea of how Locke was taken in as a spiritual lodger in Puritan thinking."² While Wise's "profane" arguments influenced early American churches, in turn influencing their political offshoots in "village democracy" and "local self-rule," his influence is as a conduit for Locke's liberalism.³ Ideology rightly claims centre stage in America through the eighteenth century.

This ideology was communicated most intensely throughout the propagandist pamphlets that saturated America's "public space" in the years preceding the Revolution. Although their "reasoned arguments" betray a certain philosophic pretension on the part of their authors, on the whole these pamphlets and their arguments were "always essentially polemical," striving to convince their audiences and move them to political action. Typical of ideological invocations and their debasing of both philosophic style and method, these arguments were full of "dash and detail, of casualness and care."⁴ American pamphleteers were not professional writers, but were amateurish and crude as is American

¹See "John Wise on the Principles of Government," in *ibid.*, pp.251-267, taken from John A. Wise, "A Vindication of the Government of New England Churches (Boston: J.Allen for N.Boone, 1717).

²Shklar, "The Boundaries of Democracy," p.132.

³Parrington, "Stirrings of Liberalism: John Wise, Village Democrat," in Parrington, *The Colonial Mind*, pp.119-126.

⁴Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*, p.4.

politics generally. They were absorbed in other bourgeois professions, careers, and enterprises. Thus, they were political actors and writers as "an uncommon diversion, peripheral to their main concerns."¹ Their public lives were accessory to their private interests. Their political arguments were ancillary to their social security, as is American political thought to the American Dream.

Locke's thought remains the keystone to the overarching ideology of Revolutionary America. Thomas Pangle assures us that Locke and Montesquieu are the two most influential thinkers expressed in the American Founding. While each asserts the protection of individual liberty, expressed primarily as the security of economic self-interest,² we might see Montesquieu's influence as largely surrounding questions of "machinery of government." His thought was "too mechanical, too geometrical," and fundamentally too rational for popular appeal in America.³ Montesquieu's system was not entirely necessary in a nation that embraced property as the "whole basis of national freedom."⁴ Locke properly stands as the source of fundamental principles of American liberalism. His views became predominant in America, Pangle asserts, by direct influence and indirectly, filtered through other thinkers and writers.⁵ By the time of the Revolution,

¹Ibid., pp.13-15.

²Pangle, "The Philosophic Understandings of Human Nature Informing the Constitution," p.35.

³William Vans Murray (Sept. 1787), as quoted in Bailyn, The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution, p.372.

⁴Noah Webster (1787), as quoted in ibid., p.373.

⁵Pangle, "The Philosophic Understandings of Human Nature Informing the Constitution," p.76.

Locke's theory appeared as fact to American colonists, their past experience having confirmed its ideas even before they were enunciated. Thus, Locke gave voice and theoretical legitimacy to American experience; "Colonials found him appealing because their situations so nearly paralleled the general theory he espoused. They had found themselves in a wilderness with no legal authority to govern and had fallen back upon a social contract before he had enunciated that idea."¹ Locke collected such experience into an ideological system that gave its parts coherence and purpose, preparatory to the appearance of the first ideological nation--America. In this way, what was once rebellion in "Bacon's Rebellion," becomes revolution in "The American Revolution," as similar actions gain entirely new meaning and cosmic significance. This gain is achieved through ideology.

Huyler asserts that long before the American Revolution, "Americans adopted the tenets of Lockeanism as a daily routine. In daily practice they were living and enjoying the 'Lockean' mode of life." It is the preservation of this "way of life," Huyler argues, that "drove their ideological speculations, their political resistance, and their efforts at constitutional reconstruction."² Thus, by the time of the Revolution, Lockean dogma was "quite a common matter of fact" in America. Of the Declaration of Independence, Hartz maintains that, "from every angle the Declaration was socially 'real' to a remarkable extent in America before it was signed."³

¹Leder, America: Prelude to a Nation, p.135.

²Huyler, Locke in America, p.39, pp.175-208.

³Hartz, The Founding of New Societies, p.75.

Unlike those who would cleanse Locke of mere 'ideology' to preserve an elevated Americanism, Garry Wills argues that Locke is not central to American thinking at all, particularly not central to the Declaration of Independence. Wills seems to know that attempts to rescue Locke from 'ideology' are futile, and thus sees the necessity to rescue America from Locke. Wills maintains that Jefferson did not "plagiarize" Locke into the Declaration but, instead, drew from "timeless principles" that were in the colonial air. Jefferson appealed to "common sense," Wills argues, rather than any authority, even the authority of Locke. That Jefferson refuses to acknowledge the sources of his ideas is precisely because they are "given." That he is able to appeal to these ideas as part of the "common sense," and that Wills also appeals to them as common sense in his attempt to eradicate their particular, human, and historical origins is definitively an ideological appeal. Wills is perpetrating his own ideological argument in this 'rational' appeal to common sense as the residence of ideas that seem to have no origins.¹

Contrasting Wills, Carl Becker points us directly to Locke as an original source of Jefferson's inspiration, arguing that "the Declaration, in its form, in its phraseology, follows closely certain sentences in Locke's second treatise on government."² Rather than some pure condensation of American vapours, "it was Locke's conclusion that seemed to the colonists sheer common sense, needing no argument at all. Locke did not need to convince the colonists," Becker continues,

¹Garry Wills, Inventing America: Jefferson's Declaration of Independence (New York: Doubleday, 1978), pp.171-175.

²Carl L. Becker, The Declaration of Independence: A Study in the History of Political Ideas (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1942; first published 1922), p.27

because they were already convinced; and they were already convinced because they had long been living under governments which did, in a rough and ready way, conform to the kind of government for which Locke furnished a reasoned foundation. ...They were accustomed to living under governments which proceeded, year by year, on a tacitly assumed compact between rulers and ruled, and which were in fact very largely dependent upon 'the consent of the governed.' How should the colonists not accept a philosophy, however clumsily argued, which assured them that their own governments, with which they were well content, were just the kind that God had designed men by nature to have!¹

Huyler reminds us that Richard Henry Lee charged that the Declaration was copied from Locke's Second Treatise, and that Jefferson "saw no need to deny the charge."² Jefferson claimed to express nothing new in the Declaration but, instead, to gather prevailing sentiments of common sense from wherever they were expressed, including such "elementary books of public right, as Aristotle, Cicero, Locke, Sidney, etc." Jefferson, thus, answered Lee's charge by affirming his Declaration to be "an expression of the American mind."³ That Locke appears as only one of several thinkers in Jefferson's mind cannot obscure his singular position in the mind of America. This is underscored by the charge that Jefferson's Declaration of Independence was not much more than a crib of George Mason's Declaration of Rights for Virginia, in which "all the sentiments and most of the words...came straight from John Locke's..." Second Treatise.⁴

¹Ibid., pp.72-73.

²Huyler, Locke in America, p.2.

³Thomas Jefferson, "Letter to Henry Lee, May 8, 1825," in Political Thought in America: An Anthology 2nd ed., ed. Michael B. Levy (Chicago: Dorsey Press, 1988), pp.83-84.

⁴David Hawke, A Transaction of Free Men: The Birth and Course of the Declaration of Independence (New York: Scribner, 1964; rpt. De Capo Press, 1989), pp.147-148.

Mason's Declaration had expanded Locke's triad of rights--"life, liberty, and property"--to include not only "the means of acquiring and possessing property," but also of "preserving and obtaining happiness and safety."¹ Mason's early revision of the draft altered "preserving" happiness to "pursuing" happiness, a revision whose beckoning openness to the participation of all Americans was furthered in Jefferson's version by his having dropped altogether any explicit reference to property.² However, we should understand that Mason's association of "acquiring and possessing property" with "the pursuit of happiness" remains an implicit feature of Jefferson's Declaration and of the American Dream. Jefferson's veiling of this association does not diminish it. As well, we should understand that this association involves an original Lockean understanding of political right. Along with the right of self-preservation, "Locke emphasized the right to pursue happiness. Moreover, he connected both rights with property, which helps secure peace and provide happiness."³ Jefferson's rephrasing was no misunderstanding of his master, nor was it out of the way. Early in its reception by political thinkers, this element of Locke's thought, the "connection" of property to happiness, became an equation; "Thomas Jefferson replaced 'property' with 'the pursuit of happiness,' though some of the most influential Scottish writers used the terms interchangeably." By the time of Jefferson's invocation, Southern writers in America were steeped in Lockean premises.

¹George Mason, "Declaration of Rights for Virginia" (draft), as quoted in Hawke, A Transaction of Free Men, p.147.

²Hawke, A Transaction of Free Men, p.149.

³Ted V. McAllister, Revolt Against Modernity: Leo Strauss, Eric Voegelin, and the Search for a Postliberal Order (Lawrence: Univ. Press of Kansas, 1995), p.159.

"Locke's triad of 'life, liberty, and property' was the most widely invoked of natural rights in the South."¹

Locke's ideas became unexamined assumptions in America as they were invoked in popular arguments throughout the eighteenth century. This coalescent ideology inculcated its liberal values in mass society so that they could be called upon for justification and inspiration in the Revolution. Jefferson's "Summary View of the Rights of British America" (1774), is laced with Lockean assertions and presumptions, including Jefferson's argument that the annihilation of property is the dissolution of government and that these are synonymous with the reduction of a people to the "state of nature."² Earlier, John Dickinson had asserted the Lockean right of resistance to secure happiness against such tyranny.³ And Earlier still, John Adams's Lockean announcement that political rights come from God and from original social contracts with their origins in human nature was intended to secure these same rights from incursions by princes or governments.⁴ America's Revolution completes the birth of this ideology, as it signals a successful mass

¹ Oakes, Slavery and Freedom, pp.63-64.

²Thomas Jefferson, "A Summary View of the Rights of British America (1774)," in Essential Works of the Founding Fathers, ed. Leonard Kriegel (New York: Bantam, 1964), pp.97-113.

³John Dickinson, "Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania (1768)," in Essential Works of the Founding Fathers, ed. Leonard Kriegel (New York: Bantam, 1964), pp.23-96, particularly see "Letter III," pp.35-39.

⁴John Adams, "A Dissertation on the Canon and the Feudal Law (1765)," in Essential Works of the Founding Fathers, ed. Leonard Kriegel (New York: Bantam, 1964), pp.6-22, particularly see pp.20-21.

movement, which is the objective of ideology proper.¹ With this success, American rhetoric is transformed into universal ideals, elevated by the completion of its ideology to a cultural primacy among other symbolic forms of representation. Its ideals and values become fundamentals. With the Revolution, then, American liberalism as ideology becomes the dominant motif of American thought.² Its success rested upon, and continues to rest upon, the conviction of the American "people," its ability to prick and move. As one observer noted in 1770: "the minds of the people are wrought up into as high a degree of Enthusiasm by the word liberty, as could have been expected had Religion been the cause."³ Liberalism, then, becomes the American faith.

Section B: The Progress of Liberalism Through the American Landscape

i. The Capstone:

The key ideas or symbols that come to abide in American liberalism, then, are: 1) the primacy of the individual, 2) natural rights of the individual, including the rights to life, liberty, and estate, 3) the social contract, as formed by individuals, 4) society's independence of government, 5) a limited fiduciary role for government and 6) America's historical role in the realization of these ideals. As they coalesced into a systematic, rational justification of individual desire, these ideas became compelling in their ennobling of independent action and ambition. Arguments that praise America's Founders

¹Bailyn, "The Central Themes of the American Revolution," pp.7-11.

²Foner, The Story of Freedom, pp.15-18; Phillips, The Cousins' Wars, pp.xi-xxviii.

³Bellah, The Broken Covenant, p.28.

as men of principle, and counter-arguments that dismiss, if not denounce, the same as men of interest, miss the mark. Lowi and Ginsberg's compromising view of the Founders as principled men of interest is only slightly less misleading in its adumbration of an essential feature of ideological appeal.¹ Yes, the Founders were men of principle as well as interest, but through ideology these two are collapsed; their principles were their interests. Any ideology must accomplish this conflation of principle and interest to meaningful degrees, if it is to be successful in its appeal and in its conversion of citizens into faithful believers. American liberalism has assimilated principle and interest in an immediate sense and to a degree unseen in other ideologies. Thus, it has become a tremendously successful ideology. In it, the hopes and dreams of citizens for a better life are directed into the principles of self-government. Through it, this conflation of principle and interest is communicated in terms of a wonderful, universal aspiration, the American Dream. Every American, as such, hopes and expects to 'get ahead' because of ideological conviction, and each remains convinced of the veracity and righteousness of the principles of American ideology precisely because of these same hopes, ambitions, and expectations.

With this appeal, these principles and ideas prevailed in shaping the approach to things political in the New World into the "Constitutional period"; "what appeared in England to be the utopian ravings of an impotent fringe were in America not utopian at

¹Lowi and Ginsberg, American Government 6th ed., pp.36-38.

all, but rather the common sense of things."¹ These "things" became "self-evident truths" through their ideological currency. Gathered together loosely yet compellingly in this new medium of political communication, these ideals, values, and symbols empowered the movement of common citizens even as they found themselves being moved upon by them.

Events were apprehended then, perceived and judged, through American liberalism's ideological lens during the "Constitutional period" that followed closely upon the American Revolution, logically as well as temporally.² The Constitution became a subject of "popular" debate as a matter of possibility as well as of necessity--in publications that comprise the Constitutional debates, "Cato" implies this need for a medium of political knowledge and communication, as well as the possibility of its fulfilment, declaring that "in principles of *politics*, as well as in religious faith, every man ought to think for himself" (emphasis original).³ Individual conscience requires a medium for such apprehension of political beliefs as well as for fluidly communicating subsequent conviction. As it happens, "the colonials were in full possession of a language and a grammar to delineate in utmost extent and detail what was revealing itself" through their experience with England, a language that not only nurtured the Revolution but now also sustained the security of that tree's fruits.⁴ The ideological nature of the public

¹Stanley Elkins and Eric McKittrick, The Age of Federalism (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1993), p.7.

²Ibid., p.4.

³"Cato" I, in Bailyn, ed., The Debate on the Constitution vol.1, p.33.

⁴Elkins and McKittrick, The Age of Federalism, p.7.

Constitutional debate is readily apparent in its media, in the conduct of the debate in pamphlets and newspapers across the nation. Federalist and Antifederalist alike published in newspapers, using ideological rhetoric--"a tool employed by bad people" toward the common man--because the United States was not a nation of philosophers.¹

Concerning the new Constitution, Noah Webster insisted upon both the possibility and the necessity of a political deliberation by common citizens that is only a modern expectation, and only an ideological achievement: "In the formation of such a government, it is not only the *right*, but the indispensable *duty* of every citizen to examine the principles of it" (emphasis original).² Ideology was needed to make each citizen something of a political scientist, to make these principles accessible to all. The very rise of American liberalism occasioned this possibility and awakened American citizens to it, so that cause and effect are united in this self-moving engine of thought.

With this ideology, the "informed citizen" evolved in America, an accomplishment of socialization that was not fully realized by political parties, clubs, newspapers, nor legislatures. Rather, communicated through these and other institutions, and particularly communicated first in America through her churches, liberal ideology is the medium through which ordinary men moved into citizenship. If the churches were the first institutions of political communication, that communication could not have moved out

¹Cesar, Reconstructing America, pp.54-55; Also see Michael Kammen, The Origins of the American Constitution: A Documentary History (New York: Penguin, 1986), *passim*; Bailyn, ed., The Debate on the Constitution, 2 vols., *passim*; Bailyn, The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution, *passim*.

²Noah Webster, "A Citizen of America," in Bailyn, ed., The Debate on the Constitution vol.1, pp.129-130.

of those churches without the development of ideology. It is only after that movement that ideology then makes the quest for new institutions possible and necessary, leading to the creation and increased importance of political parties, associations, popular legislatures and democratic institutions. Initially, "many of the founders objected to opening governmental proceedings to the populace. The Senate's doors were closed to the public until 1795...and no provision was made for reporters to be admitted to the floor until 1801." The Founders worked to limit public participation in the short term even as they strove to broaden that participation in longterm schemes for the sake of order and legitimacy--but only at the speed with which "good citizens" could be made.¹ Jefferson feared that the security of American liberties rested solely upon this power, upon the ideological conviction of average citizens, upon their socialization through "education," or ideological indoctrination.² Ideology alone could secure the conviction of which Jefferson speaks, and by which the United States Magazine of 1779 determined "the people" judge principles of government according to their "feeling," leaving educated men to determine the form of government according to their reason.³

Thus, Michael Schudson argues that American statesmen tried to incorporate a limited participation by their citizenry in a sort of 'watchdog' role. Citizens were to be educated enough only to support their governments and to guard themselves against

¹Michael Schudson, The Good Citizen: A History of American Civic Life, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1998), pp.69-71.

²Jefferson, "Thomas Jefferson Replies to Madison," (Dec.20, 1787), in The Debate on the Constitution, ed. Bailyn, pp.209-213.

³Andrew Burstein, Sentimental Democracy: The Evolution of America's Romantic Self-Image (New York: Hill & Wang, 1999), pp.121-122.

government encroachments upon their rights, but not so much as to involve them actively in politics and government. However, although that may be the end sought for by America's Founders, their efforts towards such education were rendered moot by the compelling presence of ideology through their citizenry and beyond. A population that can be mobilized to revolution by ideological argument and religious fervour is not going to relinquish its new sovereignty and active evaluative powers, is not going to quit its active judgement provided them through that same ideological conviction. Thus, Jefferson and Madison looked to institutions to harness those public powers and persuasions. "What they expected and hoped is that public opinion would find its voice in and through the formal institutions of government. Public opinion was as much something that government would make possible as it was the instrument to make a government."¹

The Constitutional debate, then, ultimately rested upon an American ideological consensus, upon the universal acceptance, even assumption, of the key principles of American liberalism. To a great extent, a national cohesion was taken for granted culturally. At least at the ideological level, there was no work to be done here. Americans expected to unite around the common principles that formed "the ideological currents" that had moved them along with Jefferson, currents of "common principles and harmonious interests" that he had hoped to direct. What was necessary was to preserve that nation, a political endeavour of self-definition.² The project at hand became an

¹Ibid., pp.72-89.

²Peter S. Onuf, Jefferson's Empire: The Language of American Nationhood (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 2000), pp.10-13, 53.

enunciation of this consensus, as Americans struggled to institutionalize, to constitutionalize, the principles of their ideology. Never in question was what ideology to institutionalize, but only how best to institutionalize the principles of prevailing liberal thought.

As this liberal consensus is expressed in records of the Constitutional debate, we can discern the beginnings of a subsequent pattern of American politics--the Constitutional debate presents us with the first "politics of nuance" in the United States, in which much disturbance is made over small matters of interpretive and rhetorical difference within an assumed framework of fundamental agreement. As well, the debates involve a typically American heightening of the political importance of personalities, as individuals come to be associated with particular arguments, or as others are invoked symbolically as tyrants or more often as heroes, notably Washington and Franklin.¹ Connor O'Brien notes that "the ratification of the Constitution by Virginia had been obtained only with difficulty, and would probably not have been obtained at all had it not been for Washington, who threw his immense personal prestige and popularity onto the scales for ratification."²

In many ways then, by precept and by example, the Constitutional debate can be said to explain America to itself. First, we see that the pressing arguments of American politics, even the fundamental politics of constitution building, involve means to ends

¹Jack N. Rakove, Original Meanings: Politics and Ideas in the Making of the Constitution (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996), pp.132-136.

²Connor Cruise O'Brien, The Long Affair: Thomas Jefferson and the French Revolution, 1785-1800 (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1996), p.71.

rather than any conflict over political ends themselves. "The good" becomes a deeply embedded assumption in America. Second, American politics consists of slight differences of nuance involved with these arguments over means, procedure and policy, arguments about how to "play the game" rather than over the "rules of the game." Finally, personalities are associated with these different arguments, ultimately taking upon themselves exaggerated importance as differences in policy often are so subtle as to be ineffective political markers for democratic choice. Thus, personal "virtues" or even quirks become signals for discernment by sovereign citizens--past military service, family fidelity, education, past deeds and misdeeds, and even height and other features of physical appearance become popular guides to favoured policy. With the coalescing ideological consensus, then, came a new politics of personalities in which, at its best, personalities represented particular positions and the personal conviction of politicians mattered to their ability to shape anew the features of the political landscape upon which that consensus lay.¹

We see the roots of other features of American politics in these aspects of the Constitutional debate, as Americans begin to establish themselves within their liberal consensus. Notably, America's party system can be seen to emerge out of these debates, as political groups and interests coalesced around particular arguments and personalities. Thus, American parties straddle a line of procedural difference, rather than ideological difference. Hartz fails to note the presence of a potent and pervasive liberal party system, in the place of what he viewed as an absence of a liberal party; "There has never been

¹Elkins and McKittrick, The Age of Federalism, pp.78-79.

a 'liberal movement' or a real 'liberal party' in America: we have only had the American Way of Life, a nationalist articulation of Locke which usually does not know that Locke himself is involved."¹ This misses a crucial developmental feature of America's founding moment, as well as misleads in mapping the institutional landscape of American politics. As major parties in America enunciate slight differences in how best to achieve assumed liberal ends, we see that "what in Europe formed the program for a political party became in the United States a description of reality."² All relevant political parties, and most certainly the two major parties at any given moment in American history, are essentially variants of the liberal party system that holds the field in the United States. As these parties developed from nascency in the Constitutional debates they would not be divided ideologically. As Boorstin asks, "what need has either party for an explicit political theory when both must be spokesmen of the *original* American doctrine on which the nation was founded?" (emphasis original).³ Instead, they would differ over policy just as they had during the debates. The system of the new Constitution was able to harness these debates, the people and positions involved, into policy parties within the ideological consensus. The strength of that consensus, or the subtlety of party differences of nuance, is exemplified by the crossing of original party lines by people and positions; "eventually, this great diversity of views about the Constitution resulted in the formation of two fairly

¹Hartz, The Liberal Tradition in America, p.11.

²Joyce Appleby, "Liberalism and Republicanism in the Historical Imagination," in Appleby, Liberalism and Republicanism in the Historical Imagination (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1992; rpt. 1993), p.1.

³Boorstin, The Genius of American Politics, p.17.

clear political parties--Federalists (headed by Alexander Hamilton) and Republicans (whom Hamilton derogatorily called 'Anti-Federalists,' but who really were the followers of Jefferson, some of whom, like Madison, for example, had strongly supported the adoption of the Constitution)."¹

The Constitution itself is a focal point for American values in its establishment of them as the unquestioned common ground of ideological belief. These values and ideas may be disclosed more eloquently or more completely in other 'sacred' texts, the Declaration of Independence or the Gettysburg Address for examples, as well as in the political culture itself, but it is in the Constitution that they are legally entrenched as American fundamentals.² Even here as American ideals were being entrenched, however, interpretation and debate follow a course already marked, in pursuit of "given" ends. Thus, "The Federalist does not discuss systematically, as would a theoretical treatise, the question of the ends or purposes of government."³ Instead, the Constitution is seen as preserving and safeguarding the principles of the Declaration of Independence in "prophylactic measures," by ensuring "good government" as is supposed to be based upon popular consent and that secures individual rights.⁴ This is "the work of able lawyers and men of affairs confronting a definite situation," Vernon Parrington tells us, "rather than

¹Richard E. Amacher, American Political Writers: 1588-1800 (Boston: Twayne, 1979), p.181; also see Elkins and McKittrick, The Age of Federalism, pp.77-79.

²Levin, Representing Popular Sovereignty, pp.5-10.

³Martin Diamond, "Democracy and the Federalist: A Reconsideration of the Framers' Intent," American Political Science Review 53:1 (March, 1959), p.61.

⁴Ibid., p.55.

of political philosophers; and it was accompanied by none of that searching examination of fundamental rights and principles which made the earlier Puritan and later French debate over constitutional principles so rich in creative speculation." As "little abstract political speculation accompanied its making and adoption," Parrington continues, the Constitution merely is a defence of liberal rights already established in thought. No great political thinker emerges from the debates that "drew freely upon the materials supplied by [earlier great] thinkers, but added little that was new."¹

Entrenching the "limited government" of Lockean liberalism in the Constitution involves a process of institutionalizing the Revolution, harnessing the spirit of American liberalism in a new structure much as the charismatic movement of sectarian impulses is harnessed, and thus tempered, by subsequent church organizational imperatives. As it is constitutionalized, the Revolution is eternalized in the American mind.² The problem was to reconcile apparently irreconcilable tensions presented by Americans in the Revolution, the Declaration of Independence, and the Articles of Confederation, "the age-old problem of reconciling liberty with authority" or, as Lowi and Ginsberg present it, "freedom and power."³ American political science supposes that Jefferson's democratic human nature demonstrates the need for political liberalism and its rejection of hierarchy, superstition, and tradition-based impositions. This Americanism further holds that Madison's and

¹Parrington, Main Currents in American Thought vol.1, p.283.

²Lance Banning, The Sacred Fire of Liberty: James Madison and the Founding of the Federal Republic (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1995; rpt. 1998), pp.210-219.

³John C. Miller, The Federalist Era, 1789-1801 (New York: Harper & Row, 1960; rpt. 1963), p.23; Lowi and Ginsberg, American Government: Freedom and Power.

Hamilton's political science responds by showing how governments and states can be organized upon rational principles of law and popular consent to realize that realm of liberty. The Constitution is supposed to embody this realization.¹ In a very real sense, then, the Constitution is said to secure the accomplishments of the Revolution, not only "to maintain democracy and at the same time avoid or mitigate its vices," as Gordon Wood maintains,² but also may be said to bind the direction of a people's sovereignty within the narrow purview of its own imagination.

That America's founding culture is so ideologically narrow, and that so narrowly liberal, is readily apparent, if not "self-evident", in the record of the Constitutional debate. Federalists and Antifederalists alike argued their favoured policies from within the same ideological framework, thus further delineating the key assertions of American liberalism. By this time, the spirit of adventurous and independent individualism had prevailed in dislodging earlier monarchist traditions, so that only fiduciary, limited government by popular consent could be considered legitimate in America.³ The Revolution had completed the transition from monarchy to liberalism, powder and ball having silenced or banished the minority of alternate voices that were not convinced by ideological persuasion. That Federalists and Antifederalists shared a common ideology meant that both could support the Constitution once it was ratified, as evidenced during

¹Shklar, Redeeming American Political Thought, pp.94-99.

²Gordon S. Wood, "Freedom and the Constitution," in Freedom in America: A 200 Year Perspective, ed. Norman A. Graebner (University Park: Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 1977), p.50.

³Pangle, The Spirit of Modern Republicanism, p.114.

Washington's first presidential term of office. Both sides believed the preservation of liberty to be a most essential end of government, to be accomplished as the protection of individual rights; both sides consisted of "good Lockeans" working with Locke's Second Treatise as an assumed fundamental of American faith.¹ This not only provided the basis for a polity after ratification, it also formed the ground upon which that ratification could be even accomplished--the invocation of common ideals among Federalists and Antifederalists alike forced compromise, each side being compelled to recognize the veracity of the others' arguments, each side recognizing them as their own. Ultimately victorious Federalists were able to disarm many Antifederalist arguments by co-opting them and adjusting, ever so slightly, their own views on popular consent and sovereignty, the delegated powers of government, and the new Constitution.² According to Daniel Boorstin, "no part of our history is more familiar than the story of how the framers of the federal Constitution achieved a solution: by compromise on details rather than by agreement on a theory."³ Such manoeuvring and compromise did not involve ideological debate, did not involve grand questions of political theory. The most divisive issue was whether or not elected representatives should be paid, hardly a matter of deep theory.⁴ Instead, what was being negotiated were the terms of federalism, the relative size

¹Michael Kammen, "Introduction," in The Origins of the American Constitution: A Documentary History, ed. Michael Kammen (New York: Penguin, 1986), pp.xvi-xvii.

²Elkins and McKittrick, The Age of Federalism, p.12.

³Boorstin, The Genius of American Politics, p.96.

⁴Paul Johnson, A History of the American People (New York: HarperCollins, 1997), pp.195-196.

and power of state and national governments, the division of powers.¹

As the tenets of Lockean liberalism shaped the Constitutional debates as well as the substance of the Constitution itself, then, they became doubly entrenched as fundamentals of American ideology. Commitment to individualism and concerns for the protection of property rights are intensified by legal actions and decisions centred on their 'definitive' expression in the Constitution.² Individual conviction of liberal rights and reverence for the Constitution and its interpretation are heightened by what Harry Jaffa calls the "Talmudic fashion" in which the Supreme Court renders itself.³ Hartz pointed to this long ago, arguing that American liberalism and its

liberal way of life ...is the secret root from which have sprung many of the most puzzling of American cultural phenomena. Take the unusual power of the Supreme Court and the cult of constitution worship on which it rests. Federal factors apart, judicial review as it has worked in America would be inconceivable without the national acceptance of the Lockian creed, ultimately enshrined in the Constitution, since the removal of high policy to the realm of adjudication implies a prior recognition of the principles to be legally interpreted.⁴

Hartz finds it incredible that "the largest issues of public policy should be put before nine Talmudic judges examining a single text."⁵ Here, Hartz points to civil religion without developing its implications, which are rehearsed in chapter three below. For now, it

¹Smith, Civic Ideals, p.118; Miller, The Federalist Era, pp.20-21.

²Lipset, American Exceptionalism, pp.20-21.

³Harry V. Jaffa, A New Birth of Freedom: Abraham Lincoln and the Coming of the Civil War (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), p.32.

⁴Hartz, The Liberal Tradition in America, p.9.

⁵Ibid., p.10.

should be noted that the fundamental law of the land implied and imposed liberalism's key articles of faith, and bound the questioning and interpretation of that imposition to take place entirely from within the shared ideological perspective from which these ideals arose. Thus, the imposition was welcomed, once mere details were worked out.

Noticeably absent from the Constitution is any affirmation of social duties and obligations, of welfare rights and state obligations to citizens, as were acknowledged by eighteenth and nineteenth century European constitutions and codes.¹ Thus, the Constitution helps to define American liberalism as much by what it excludes as by its explicit text, a feature that is compounded by the narrow and extreme interpretive context of American culture, referred to by Jaffa and Hartz above. As the Antifederalist "Brutus" asserts, all Americans agree as to the principles of government; "these principles seem to be the evident dictates of common sense, and what ought to give sanction to them in the minds of every American, they are the great principles of the late revolution, and those which governed the framers of all our state constitutions." These principles are that "the design of government is to protect the rights and promote the happiness of the people" through limited powers. "There are certain rights which mankind possess, over which government ought not to have any controul (sic), because it is not necessary they should, in order to attain the end of its institution."² Revolutionaries defined "American"

¹*Ibid.*, pp.22-23; see Mary Ann Glendon, "Rights in Twentieth Century Constitutions," in *The Bill of Rights in the Modern State*, ed. Geoffrey R. Stone, et al. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), pp.524-525.

²"Brutus IX" New York Journal, January 17, 1788, in Bailyn, ed. *The Debate on the Constitution* vol. 2, p.40.

by adherence to these principles, as those who found these principles to be "self-evident."¹ Ever since, "Americans" have debated policy, how best to realize these principles, but the principles of this ideology have remained as fundamentals to American identity, pronounced beyond debate.² When Lance Banning argues, then, that the Constitutional debates went to the fundamentals of American politics, we should see this as approaching the fundamentals of American institutions and institutional change and, thus, we should see that this is the object of American politics.³

The question for debate concerning ratification of the Constitution, for "Cato," was whether or not the Constitution adequately established the social contract, whether it properly and effectively limits the actions of government and, thus, satisfies the ends of politics by preserving liberty in individual rights. "Cato's" account of natural rights and the social contract, and of the Revolution as resistance to British tyranny in default of that contract, demonstrates the hold of these ideas upon the American mind. For "Cato" and his contemporaries, Lockean ideas had become assumed as facts in theory and in history. "Cato" turns to other philosophers, notably Montesquieu, to argue points of contention, matters of policy. However, on all points of fundamental theory, Locke is assumed. He only is mentioned authoritatively to rule out other forms of government. What Locke rules in is understood and agreed upon consensually, there is no need to

¹Jaffa, A New Birth of Freedom, p.4.

²Pangle, The Spirit of Modern Republicanism, pp.278-279; Huntington, American Politics, *passim*.

³Banning, The Sacred Fire of Liberty, p.238.

quote him.¹ When "Cincinnatus" recommends his adversaries to "Mr. Locke," he recognizes that Locke's Second Treatise forms a basic assumption in American politics. He points his readers there so as to avoid exposing their ignorance again on such fundamental matters as popular sovereignty and the separation of powers.²

In accord with these 'opponents', "Publius" begins The Federalist by throwing up for debate seemingly everything but the fundamental principles of Lockean liberalism. Even the desirability and "utility of the UNION to your political prosperity" is tabled for resolution, as are the Articles of Confederation along with present and future governments. As well, "the conformity of the proposed Constitution to the true principles of republican government" is to be tested and debated along with "the additional security, which its adoption will afford to the preservation of that species of government, to liberty and to property." Never in question are those very "true principles of republican government." The principles and ends of politics and government found in Lockean liberalism had become deep assumptions, so that every matter of policy for the new government should be examined and proven, even the very existence of the country itself. But not questioned are the principles by which that policy is understood and judged, according to which it must prevail. The ideology is a "given" fact of theory and of history.³

¹"Cato III," in The Debates on the Constitution vol.1, ed. Bailyn, pp.214-216.

²"Cincinnatus V," Reply to Wilson's Speech, in The Debates on the Constitution vol.1, ed. Bailyn, p.119.

³Hamilton, "Publius: The Federalist I", in The Debates on the Constitution vol.1, ed. Bailyn, pp.219-223.

Jefferson's support, or not, for the Constitution revolved around its ability to protect individual liberty, around its reflection of Locke's thought; according to Jefferson, Locke was one of the three greatest men ever to have lived, along with Newton and Bacon. Thus, in Jefferson's mind, Lockean ideology was the greatest of all political thought.¹ We should not be surprised, then, that Jefferson's chief complaint, shared by other Antifederalists, was that the Constitution was not explicit enough in its expression of liberal ideology nor in its defence of its individual rights. Here, Jefferson had wanted the Constitution to "fix too for the people the principles of their political creed," to galvanize popular conviction as the ultimate guardian of liberty.² As it was presented, without a "bill of rights," the Constitution was not liberal enough, Antifederalists argued, not ideologically expressive enough to secure what the Revolution was deemed to have won. Liberalism is implied unabashedly in the Constitution's provisions for a limited government, in the separation of powers, its checks and balances, the bicameral legislature, short and staggered terms of office for elected representatives, and in its division of powers. However, Antifederalists complained that it did not expressly protect individual rights.³

As "Antifederalists agitated for explicit constitutional guarantees of fundamental rights," they met with only a 'soft' opposition from Federalists, who did not so much

¹Jefferson, to Rush, Jan. 16, 1811, Writings XIII, 4; to G.F. Hopkins, Sept. 5, 1822, Writings XV, 394, as cited in Wiltse, The Jeffersonian Tradition in American Democracy, p.63.

²Jefferson, to Priestly, June 19, 1802, Writings X, 325, as quoted in Wiltse, The Jeffersonian Tradition in American Democracy, p.90.

³Burstein, Sentimental Democracy, pp.145-149.

oppose such measures as they did think them unnecessary. Here, however, Jefferson's desire for a galvanizing definition of American liberalism's creed influenced Madison, and must have influenced other Federalists directly or indirectly, towards the promise of a bill of rights amendment to the Constitution upon its ratification. Jefferson communicated clearly to Madison the rhetorical power of such for moving 'the people' to political action, as well as its usefulness against any potentially over-ambitious national government.¹ This, precisely, is the challenge faced by the framers of the Constitution, "the practical problem" of erecting "a system" to secure individual rights as enunciated by American liberal ideology.²

ii. Mechanics and Pillars:

In erecting this new system of government, the elevation of the separation of powers into a first principle of government is exemplary of an American confusion of political ideas and institutions, so that institutions seem to Americans not as expressions of political thought but as their substitution. The mechanics of government become the principles of government.³ Daniel Boorstin's The Genius of American Politics is both will and testament to the longevity of this aspect of the American mind entrenched so long ago in the Constitution and in the debates surrounding its ratification. As political means

¹Onuf, Jefferson's Empire, pp.93-94; note Jefferson's letter to Madison, March 15, 1789, Thomas Jefferson Papers 14: 659-63, cited in Ibid., fn.46, p.209.

²Parrington, Main Currents in American Thought vol.1, p.286.

³Samuel H. Beer, To Make a Nation: The Rediscovery of American Federalism (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1993), p.284.

seem to become ends in themselves for American thought, with the ideological ends of government already "given" as "truths," a technological efficiency is achieved in that the form of government becomes the end of government, "the realization of the public interest, the individual and political rights of republican liberty. The controls institutionalized in the separation of powers according to the findings of their new science of politics served not only efficiency [of process] but also this great and primary purpose."¹ Thus, as a political device, the Constitution is a most efficient technology-- technological efficiency is a measure of the proximity of means to ends. Boorstin argues that this is just what the Founders were most interested in. They "were interested less in the ideology than in the technology of politics. They were testing well-known principles by applying them to their specific problems." In organizing the means to satisfy their needs and desires, Boorstin points out, they were adhering to a dictionary definition of technology, as well as exemplifying America's "open, experimental, *technological* spirit" (emphasis original).² Thus, much is revealed in Washington's writing of his hopes for America putting in motion the "political Machine" of the new Constitution and its government.³

This new technology would bring light to Americans "in their darker moments in the years after the Revolution, as a continuing democratic revolution shook the traditional

¹Ibid., pp.287-288.

²Daniel J. Boorstin, Hidden History (New York: Harper & Row, 1987; rpt. Vintage, 1989), p.184.

³"George Washington to Alexander Hamilton, August 28, 1788," in The Origins of the American Constitution, ed. Kammen, pp.120-121.

social order, and many of the Founders worried that the United States was sliding into barbarism."¹ The Constitution implemented institutional solutions to the increasingly apparent problems of democratic government. Through checks and balances, the separation of powers, and federalism to limit government powers, American democracy was made safe, sapped of its revolutionary energies. Gordon Wood argues that liberty was transformed from the freedom to participate on the part of the individual to freedom from interference on the part of the individual.² Liberal rights were entrenched as the surest way to keep governments within their proper bounds. Despite his tentativeness about the Constitution as a whole, even Jefferson the "democrat" insisted that the mechanical, liberal device of checks and balances was the most effective guarantor of the people's freedom. In this there lies the root of Jefferson's democracy, the tree of liberty growing out of a lack of faith or trust in the virtue of American leaders. The Constitution, for Jefferson, is meant to keep leaders tied to their society on a short lead, to keep the social contract always near the surface yet with continuity and order built upon the mechanics of government rather than upon the virtue of governors, a virtue that ultimately was seen to be lacking. Again for Jefferson, Locke is the source of his thought, the source of appeal for the separation of powers.³ America's would be a systemic virtue, the people's representatives improving legislation not by their own virtue but by virtue of

¹Richard L. Bushman, "The Genteel Republic," The Wilson Quarterly 20:4 (Autumn, 1996), p.14.

²Wood, "Freedom and the Constitution," pp.51-53.

³Wiltse, The Jeffersonian Tradition in American Democracy, pp.94-96.

their participation in the mechanics of the Constitution.¹

Jefferson's lament for America's absent political virtue was typical. John Adams also was faithless, looking to institutional mechanisms to control human passions rather than trusting in virtues he knew to be ephemeral. Civic virtue would never accomplish in America what could be tendered by the political science of the Federalist Constitution.² Adams came to stress the separation of powers and the system of checks and balances of the Constitution as great improvements for mankind, delivered by the modern science of politics. He looked to past constitutions of classical and European ages only to demonstrate this modern improvement by Americans and to point out what should be avoided, and was successfully avoided by the Constitution.³ Classical republics provided ready examples of what not to do, according to Judith Shklar, the Roman republic being entirely irrelevant to the Founders except as a source and object of contrasts to their thoroughly modern project. Rather than depending upon great men for good government, Americans built a system with the political science that the Founders learned in their youth. Past republican models were rejected explicitly in order to innovate, to construct something entirely new. According to Shklar, "this was to be a republic based not on virtue, but on the consent of people with diverse interests and a shared concern for life,

¹Beer, To Make A Nation, p.281.

²Kammen, "Introduction," in The Origins of the American Constitution, ed. Kammen, p.xv.

³Amacher, American Political Writers, pp.166-167.

liberty, and the security of property."¹ In other words, America was to have a constitution based upon the fruits of liberal ideology, a government built upon ideological consensus rather than civic virtue. The Constitution was the way to avoid the errors and faults of past republics, by its establishment of a modern republic built mechanically upon the tenets of liberalism, the principles of a modern "improved political science that was unknown to the ancients." This modern outlook is transparent to Shklar, particularly in The Federalist's "Publius" looking not to the past for models but to the future. In fact, in the Constitution and in The Federalist, Shklar maintains, "America had discovered the future."² If so, the vehicle of discovery was mechanically contrived, a technological device--the Constitution--and every American gazing upon that future does so through the tintured lens of liberal ideology that gives sight to the vistas and definition of being "American."

"Americanus" assures us that the American republic is vastly different from ancient republics, and that classical virtue is neither required nor possible in a modern American world in which the pursuit of self-interest is all that is required for good government. This, he argues, is assured by the Constitution:

A Government formed on this plan, requires in the execution of it, none of those heroic virtues which we admire in the ancients, and to us are known only by story. The sacrifice of our dearest interests, self-denial, and austerity of manners, are by no means necessary. Such a Government requires nothing more of its subjects than that they should study and

¹Shklar, "A New Constitution for a New Nation," in Shklar, Redeeming American Political Thought, pp.162-165; also see Shklar, "Montesquieu and the New Republicanism," in Shklar, Political Thought and Political Thinkers, pp.257-258.

²Ibid., pp.166-169.

pursue merely their own true interest and happiness. As it is adapted to the ordinary circumstances of mankind, requiring no extraordinary exertions to support it, it must of course be the more firm, secure and lasting. A Government thus founded on the broad basis of human nature, like a tree which is suffered to retain its native shape, will flourish for ages with little care or attention.¹

James Wilson had argued that the checks and controls embedded in the Constitution were enough even to make "bad men act for the public good."² Accordingly, "the new Constitution, it was felt, harnessed individual acquisitiveness to public order."³

Madison agrees that classical republicanism is not to be America's vehicle to freedom in the modern age, arguing instead for the creation of something entirely novel in the Constitution that would secure the achievements of the American Revolution in a mechanical structure. "If Europe has the merit of discovering this great mechanical power in government," Madison argues in The Federalist XIV, then "America can claim the merit of making the discovery the basis of unmixed and extensive republics." America will be the land of implementation for modern political ideology, of which only one existed at that time, namely liberalism. Madison goes on in celebration of the novelty of this practical institutionalization of liberalism:

Is it not the glory of the people of America, that whilst they have paid a decent regard to the opinions of former times and other nations, they have not suffered a blind veneration for antiquity, for custom, or for names, to overrule the suggestions of their own good sense, the knowledge of their own situation, and the lessons of their own experience? To this manly spirit, posterity will be indebted for the possession, and the world for the

¹"Americanus III" (John Stevens, Jr.), in The Debate on the Constitution vol.1, ed. Bailyn, pp.437-442.

²James Wilson, as quoted in Bellah, The Broken Covenant, p.32-33.

³Bellah, The Broken Covenant, p.32.

example of the numerous innovations displayed on the American theatre, in favor of private rights and public happiness. ...Happily for America, happily we trust for the whole human race, ...they [the leaders of the American Revolution] accomplished a revolution which has no parallel in the annals of human society: They reared the fabrics of governments which have no model on the face of the globe. They formed the design of a great confederacy, which it is incumbent on their successors to improve and perpetuate. ...this is the work which has been new modeled by the act of your Convention, and it is that act on which you are now to deliberate and to decide.¹

This all is possible through the new science of politics, Madison tells us in The Federalist IX, through its "wholly new discoveries" or through its "progress towards perfection in modern times" of earlier principles. These novelties include the separation of powers, checks and balances, elected representatives, and an independent judiciary, each an aspect and expression of the advanced nature of the new Constitution. Furthermore, Madison explicitly rejects here the classical republics as any sort of model for modern government; "It is impossible to read the history of the petty Republics of Greece and Italy, without feeling sensations of horror and disgust at the distractions with which they were continually agitated, and at the rapid succession of revolutions, by which they were kept in a state of perpetual vibration, between the extremes of tyranny and anarchy." From such examples, Madison argues, come anti-republican arguments. Clearly, The Federalist is not reaching back to rescue ancient virtues. Instead, we should see that Madison is celebrating modern virtues, the impersonal virtues of science that are embedded in the institutional mechanical wonderwork of the Constitution as the remedy of past political

¹James Madison, "Publius: The Federalist XIV", in The Debate on the Constitution vol.1, ed. Bailyn, pp.431-436.

misfortunes and as the hope and promise of the future, for America and for the world.¹

The revealing nature of Madison's institutional "discovery ...of unmixed and extensive republics" unveils American institutions as modern mechanisms. The American Senate is not a classical institution, according to Martin Diamond, is not representative of a nobler class in a mixed constitution, but is instead an institution to be pitted against the House of Representatives in a contest not of class against class but of institution against institution. This mechanical check of the people upon itself is required precisely because America's is not a mixed constitution. Again, Judith Shklar argues that "classical republics and mixed constitutions ceased to matter in 1787, " as American "republicans" revealed themselves as "the people" in a new, modern sense, untempered or uncorrupted by mixed cultural elements. The American "people" was homogenous, the everyman of modern liberal democracies.² In a society that is not 'naturally' self-conflicted, and because of American suspiciousness of government, the framers were driven by desires for such self-contradiction to disturb the locus of power.³ Even federalism, in this regard, becomes mechanics, the means to an end in the disruption or division of power.⁴ Here again, it can be noted that the proximity of means to ends in the Constitution is nearly complete, the technology of the Constitution is near perfect. Ralph Hancock reminds us of Tocqueville's admiration for "the good of American federalism," the liberty provided

¹James Madison, "Publius: The Federalist IX", in The Debate on the Constitution vol.1, ed. Bailyn, pp.339-344.

²Shklar, "A New Constitution for a New Nation," p.160.

³Diamond, "Democracy and the Federalist," p.59.

⁴Banning, The Sacred Fire of Liberty, p.212.

by its division of power, yet the massive power available to the people for grand schemes as desired and accorded by the Union. Federalism, the system, becomes a good in its own right, the means become an end.¹ It is upon these means and this end that the Constitution is fixed, and after it a history of American politics. The process of government is the end of government, liberty accomplished. And even this accomplishment is achieved as stilted Lockeanism: In one of two most widely read and distributed pamphlets of the entire debate, James Wilson built upon Lockean assumptions by asserting that state governments come together into a social contract in the Constitution, giving up natural liberties to achieve a greater civil liberty, much the same way that individuals are said to abandon nature for the benefits of civil society.²

Madison was unable to give a name to this new system of government that was being worked out as a mechanistic compensation for the people's lack of civic virtue.³ It was not classical republicanism when "ambition must be made to counteract ambition" and "the interests of the man must be connected with the constitutional rights of the place. It may be a reflection on human nature, that such devices should be necessary to controul (sic) the abuses of government. But what is government itself but the greatest of all reflections on human nature?"⁴ It is here, in the underpinning of the Constitution

¹Ralph C. Hancock, "Tocqueville on the Good of American Federalism," Publius: The Journal of Federalism (Spring 1990) 20:2, pp.89-108.

²"James Wilson's Opening Address," (Pennsylvania Ratifying Convention, November 24, 1787), in The Debate on the Constitution vol.1, ed. Bailyn, pp.791-803.

³Banning, The Sacred Fire of Liberty, p.213, 222-223.

⁴James Madison, "Publius: The Federalist LI", in The Debate on the Constitution vol.2, ed. Bailyn, pp.163-168.

with the human nature of liberal ideology; that Madison's famous lament resounds, that "if men were angels, no government would be necessary." Instead, because Americans are known by the Founders to be self-interested liberals, as opposed to angels or virtuous republicans, the Constitution must mechanically control the governed and governors alike.¹ It accomplishes this in a new political science of interest in place of virtue, "starting with a realistic view of human nature" and building from there, ideological consensus emerging from national experience with institutions and constitutions upon the pilings.² Unable to rely upon civic virtue as the protection of individual rights amidst popular government, Madison and with him the new nation turned to a Constitutional system that eliminated the need for virtuous and great leaders thereafter.³ Ultimately, "America would remain free not because of any quality in its citizens of Spartan self-sacrifice to some nebulous public good, but in the last analysis because of the concern each individual would have in his own self-interest and personal freedom."⁴ The standard of American liberty is raised upon the tethers of its ideological origins, liberalism. There it remains, tethered and "true".

The very accomplishment of the framers of the Constitution might be seen as revolutionary, in that "the Philadelphia Convention vastly exceeded its authority, and the

¹Ibid., p.164; Banning, The Sacred Fire of Liberty, pp.222-223.

²Banning, The Sacred Fire of Liberty, p.6.

³Diamond, "Democracy and the Federalist," pp.65, 68.

⁴Gordon S. Wood, The Creation of the American Republic 1776-1787 (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1969), p.612.

men there undertook what amounted to a usurpation of legitimate authority."¹ The Articles of Confederation, it was feared, had failed in fulfilling the Lockean purpose of government--the protection of property. Guided by ideological correctness, the framers urged the people to create a new social contract where the original had defaulted. "The right of revolution had been explicitly invoked in 1776 and implicitly practiced in 1787."² This was to be "A Revolution Effected by Good Sense and Deliberation," according to New York's Daily Advertiser, according to the "reign of reason" against private passions. Accordingly, the new Constitution was seen as renewing the social compact within America's Revolutionary tradition. The Revolution, thus, at once is protected from "Gorgon-headed anarchy," from "a miserable aristocratic domination" with all its "wretchedness and wickedness," and from "lawless Democracy."³ It was a revolution to end revolutions. With its establishment of popular sovereignty, and with an impeachment process entrenched within, the Constitution undermines the legitimacy of direct popular action against the government, undermines the Lockean right of revolution even as it implicitly invokes that right.⁴

With its accomplishment as a matter of policy by able lawyers, the Constitution

¹Kammen, "Introduction," in The Origins of the American Constitution, ed. Kammen, p.xix.

²Ibid., p.xix; also see Miller, The Federalist Era, p.1.

³"A Revolution Effected by Good Sense and Deliberation," Daily Advertiser (New York), September 24, 1787, in The Debate on the Constitution vol.1, ed. Bailyn, pp.12-14.

⁴Pauline Maier, "Freedom, Revolution, and Resistance to Authority, 1776-1976," in Freedom in America, ed. Graebner, pp.33-34.

fits Boorstin's description of a nation "being born in an atmosphere of legal rather than philosophical debate," more readily than does the Revolution.¹ The framing of the Constitution, then, is America's second "revolution without dogma," an affirmation of the thoroughly dogmatic American Revolution. Bacon's Rebellion of 1676, the first "revolution without dogma," truly a revolution without dogma, signals the beginning of America's ideological journey and the need for fuller development of ideology as a symbolic form of thought. The American Revolution marks that development as American liberalism and its ability to take the field in American politics. It is a revolution accomplished with dogma. The Constitution, the second "revolution without dogma," actually is a revolution within dogma that renders the birth of a post-dogmatic American politics. America is post-dogmatic in a peculiar sense, however, not in any absence of dogma as in Bacon's Rebellion but in its demonstration of the decisive absorption of liberal dogma into the political landscape. Liberal dogma is "truth" in America, revealed by the Revolution and its assertion of the Declaration of Independence, entrenched by the Constitution without question, and blessed with a longevity that only can come from above. American dogma is not seen as dogma at all, but as "self-evident truths." Thus, they are beyond debate in a politics that subsequently appears devoid of ideological warfare but, in fact, is consumed by dogmatic quibbling. America is the expression of one decisive ideology, liberalism, in a land that has been compellingly vacant of any other competing political ideology. This post-dogmatic nation is itself a vital and faithful

¹Boorstin, The Genius of American Politics, p.88; also see Parrington, Main Currents of American Thought vol.1, p.283.

dogmatism, its politics fixated upon self-expression, upon the naval-gazing of politics as the perfection of mechanical means to fixed liberal ends. Such is the accomplishment of the Constitution, the legacy of America's Founding Fathers.

iii. Under the Shelter:

America's underlying ideological consensus, evident during the Constitutional debates, accounts for the swift unification of Americans rallying around the new Constitution once ratified. The arguments about the basic institutional framework that would harness American liberalism were over; "no anticonstitutional party emerged in the new United States. As early as the spring of 1791 the Constitution was accepted on all sides as the starting point for further debates."¹ As all Americans embraced it, the Constitution quickly became part of America's sacred scripture, a gospel in its own right almost immediately after ratification. According to William Watkins, "a survey of American political discourse after the Constitution's ratification reveals that its provisions were often quoted in such a manner as a minister would quote the Gospel."² Watkins reminds us that Woodrow Wilson had pointed to "an indiscriminating and almost blind worship of its principles" upon its adoption.³

Under the Articles of Confederation, America had been "a union of liberal republics," according to Rogers Smith. Now, under the Constitution, the United States

¹Lance Banning, "Republican Ideology and the Triumph of the Constitution, 1789 to 1793," William and Mary Quarterly 31:2 (Apr., 1974), p.167.

²William J. Watkins, Jr., "The Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions: Guideposts of Limited Government," The Independent Review vol.3 (Winter, 1999), p.385.

³Ibid., p.385.

had become a national liberal republic that was "more nation-centered and liberal." As a response to problems inherent in the democratic surges of the Revolution, the Constitution now secured individual property and political rights. Initially, the desire to secure these concrete fruits of America's liberal ideological development had instigated constitutional reform. All now agreed that the terms of that security had been accomplished, that the Constitution was indeed the foundation of a new liberal democracy.¹

As the interested parties that had comprised the Federalists and Antifederalists united into a new order under the auspices of the Constitution, their focus turned to the practical matter of shaping the operation of its new political institutions. This became the American experiment in government once the Constitution was ratified, putting their novel machinery of government to work.² The development of political parties in America began to revolve around the recognition that Americans were united in principle, that their Constitutional debates had involved arguments about federalism and the balancing of divided power, not ideological differences. Thus united fundamentally, American parties could safely continue to be divided by federalism, by divisions of power and their own quests to locate it where they could best manipulate it.³ However, throughout their history, each would bring the same liberalism to bear upon their quests for power, each would invoke the same liberal principles to justify their own particular movement of the

¹Smith, Civic Ideals, pp.116, 123.

²Miller, The Federalist Era, pp.5-7; Bellah, The Broken Covenant, p.31.

³Marvin Meyers, The Mind of the Founder: Sources of the Political Thought of James Madison (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1973), pp.88, 100.

machinery of government. Thus, both would act to endow the Constitution with a popular legitimacy that would swiftly entrench it in the American mind. Now that American ideology had been actualized, given substance in its concrete manifestation as the Constitution, all that remained for ideology was to defend that concrete appearance--to continue to justify the Constitution and to bring citizens into its fold.¹

The best way, the American way, to prove the Constitution was to operate it, to test its machinery. Practical success would determine the greatness of the new system. But that success or failure was to be determined according to American expectations as the standard of judgement, expectations that were shaped and constrained directly by ideology. Thus, a common ideological conviction remained at the heart of American political and constitutional development. In his First Inaugural Address, Thomas Jefferson pointed to this as the basis of American political debate: "Every difference of opinion is not a difference of principle," he maintained. "We have called by different names brethren of the same principle. We are all Republicans, we are all Federalists."² It has been demonstrated that this was not merely a rhetorical unification as is customary in presidential addresses, though it was that, but was in fact Jefferson's private view as well, "that the mass of our countrymen, even of those who call themselves Federalists, are

¹Joyce Appleby, Inheriting the Revolution: The First Generation of Americans, (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 2000), p.54.

²Thomas Jefferson, "First Inaugural Address, March 4, 1801," in Davis Newton Lott, The Presidents Speak: The Inaugural Addresses of the American Presidents, From Washington to Clinton, (New York: Henry Holt, 1994), pp.17-21.

republicans."¹ As in the Constitutional debates, there was enough common ground under the feet of both parties upon which to draw them together in conviction and consensus.² Ultimately, this consensus was proven in Jefferson's ability to unite the parties. "Rather than remove all Federalists from office, Jefferson converted them to Republicans with such success that the Federalists soon ceased to be a viable second party."³

This ideological conflagration amounted to a "Second American Revolution," according to Jeffersonians. This was a bloodless revolution, however, despite Jefferson's now infamous call for the blood of tyrants to water the tree of liberty in each generation. Instead, this generation's revolution would be electoral, with victory intimately connected to a religious revival that prodded citizens to internalize and, thus, to consummate the ideology of the Revolution in "a new birth of freedom."⁴ According to Merrill Peterson, "this completed the first democratic transfer of power in the nation's history, indeed in the history of modern politics."⁵ Jefferson described it as "the revolution of 1800, ...as real a revolution in the principles of our government as that of 1776 was in its form; not effected by the sword, as that, but by the rational and peaceable instrument of reform, the

¹Jefferson to Thomas McKean, July 24, 1801, as quoted in Elkins and McKittrick, The Age of Federalism, p.753.

²Elkins and McKittrick, The Age of Federalism, p.753.

³Merrill D. Peterson, "Freedom and the Crossroads of Politics, 1789-1801," in Freedom in America, ed. Graebner, p.73.

⁴Bellah, The Broken Covenant, p.35.

⁵Peterson, "Freedom and the Crossroads of Politics," p.71.

suffrage of the people."¹ This revolution produced no new policy, however, and seems to many as merely a change of governments. While it was that, it nevertheless did amount to a revolution in principle--not a declaration of new principles, but an affirmation of the old and true. As the American Revolution had affirmed a developing American liberalism in its concrete appearance, so Jefferson's second revolution now affirmed America's post-Constitutional consensus in its own concreteness. It declared the success of the Constitution by proving American democracy established and benign. Liberal rights and particularly property rights remained secure despite, rather because of, this change of governments by the voice of the people.² No changing principles resulted, no overthrow of the Constitution and no attack against the interests it safeguarded. America's ideological consensus had gathered together all parties under the shelter of the new system.

With this success, the Federalist Party had lost its *raison d'être*--no real differences, of policy nor of ideology, separated the two parties. The Federalist Party "was good for little beyond orchestrating the transition of the 1780s and 1790s to more effective government. Its capacity to be a window on the philosophic future was negligible."³ On the other hand, little else than their opposition to the Federalist Party united Jefferson's Republicans. Their coalition of diverse interests compromised in pursuit of power began to unravel, as the "demise of the Federalist Party after 1800 served to

¹Thomas Jefferson, as quoted in *ibid.*, p.71.

²Peterson, "Freedom and the Crossroads of Politics," pp.71-72.

³Phillips, *The Cousins' Wars*, p.333.

heighten the differences between radicals and moderates within the Republican Party." Here again, however, we should see this discord as merely renewed wrangling over fiscal policy and federalism's division of powers, and not as ideological variance. The "issues" of difference involved patronage, the Federalist-controlled judiciary, and the national debt--the Republican party began to split over demands for a little less government spending as opposed to demands for a little less even than that, a foreshadow of much of twentieth-century politics amongst their offspring Republicans and Democrats.¹ "The two wings of the party also split over the kind of reception to be given the aged but still popular Tom Paine, who returned to America in 1804." Recognizing the crucial role that civil religion played in the fledgling democracy, Jefferson and his moderates wanted to stifle Paine's "controversial newspaper articles on religious subjects."² An appeal to the proper character of "American" had been central to Jefferson's election as president. Federalists had denounced Jefferson as "a hardhearted infidel," an enemy of the nation and of the people. He and all Republicans were to be seen as thoroughly 'un-American'. "Under him the churches would be destroyed and the nation laid waste by revolutionary fanaticism," it was feared.³ It is no wonder that, in the end, Jeffersonians would distance themselves from the radical rationalism of the likes of Tom Paine.⁴

With his election signalling the imminent demise of the Federalists, Jefferson

¹Richard E. Ellis, "The Meaning of the Jeffersonian Ascendancy," in New Perspectives on the American Past, ed. Katz and Kutler, pp.177-179.

²Ibid., pp.179-180.

³Peterson, "Freedom and the Crossroads of Politics, 1789-1801," pp.70-71.

⁴See p.420 of chapter 4 on myth below.

claimed that he "now enjoyed the unanimous support of all true Americans."¹ Those that obstinately remained Federalists were 'un-American', Republicans now argued. They portrayed "Federalists as foreigners," linked in their interests with England and, thus, demonstrating the Republicans "themselves to be authentic American patriots." Jefferson's Inaugural unification of Americans in spirit--"we are all Republicans, we are all Federalists"--rendered any that remained distinctly Federalists as 'un-American' in their continued desire for division, an impurity characteristic of "European" politics and to be shunned. Such characterization of political opponents, and even of unapproved social associations, has itself become characteristically American. Later sectarian divisions would be denounced as 'un-American' as they became explicitly political or even as they innocently acquired political significance--(to name only a few) Masons, Mormons, and Catholics were followed by abolitionists and, ultimately, by the entire South in acquiring 'un-American' status in the eyes of major segments of popular opinion because of real or supposed divisiveness created by their very presence within the fabric of American society.

Along with this idiosyncratic drive to institutionalize the American liberal consensus, Jefferson's claim to "unanimous support" also signals the fantastic nature of American politics. In fact, Jefferson had won only minority popular support. However, the slave-related three-fifths clause of the Constitution inflated that support, giving Jefferson a tie in the Electoral College. The decision was given to a Federalist-controlled House of Representatives that struggled with the temptation to resist Jefferson's

¹Onuf, Jefferson's Empire, p.103.

ascendancy through thirty-six ballots. Peter Onuf has characterized this as "an electoral impasse--and a constitutional crisis," in which "Republican governors Thomas McKean of Pennsylvania and James Monroe of Virginia had both put their states in a state of military preparedness should Jefferson's enemies attempt to seize the government." Sure of popular support for his potential appeals to "first principles," Jefferson himself was prepared and determined to resort to force in order to take the presidency against any political machinations.¹ Thus, Jefferson's "unanimous support" of the American people is the product of a fanciful movement from an inflated minority vote, through an Electoral College tie, into a prolonged Congressional compromise that narrowly pre-empted civil war. Finally elected and "in retrospect, Jefferson came to see the crisis as a virtual plebiscite, a moment of national reaffirmation and reconstitution." The filigree of American democracy is fantastic.

America's fanciful politics and the compulsion towards consensus are joined by a third characteristic that is featured in Jefferson's election: the importance of personality and the political efficacy of personal attacks. Popularity is more important than is virtue for achieving and holding public office in the United States, an attribute that clearly marks America as a liberal democracy rather than a classical republic. One must be possessed of "those small arts of accommodation so essential to the success of an American politician." One's real talents and experience must be "combined with the arts of ingratiation, with an affected affability and a willingness to pander to popular tastes

¹Ibid., pp.102-104.

and to flatter popular prejudices."¹ The heightened importance of popularity and the effectiveness of personal attacks led to an overweening concern for personal reputation, a concern intimately connected to a revival of duelling. As private lives were publicized, "duelling acquired a peculiar, American twist--the predominance of politics as the trigger of a challenge." Men were killed in duels over congressional campaigns, slights to the reputations of public officials, election day quarrels, and other political controversies. Many famous politicians thus defended the honour of their names, among them Hamilton, Monroe, Burr, Taney, Jackson, and Randolph. Political battles in the House of Representatives often were heated enough to be settled outside in a nearby field that became known as the "Congressional duelling ground." Popularity may be significant in any democracy, but reputation matters in America precisely because there is so little else upon which to distinguish candidates for election. "The rash of military men who ran for President in the 1840's and 1850's was no accident." Rather, it is symptomatic of a political deficiency in the development of America's political culture. "Universal democracy made it difficult to deal with issues requiring subtle understanding and delicate handling."²

Ultimately, "Americans' fondness for publicity led to their only innovation to the morbid tradition" of duelling--newspaper attacks levelled opponents who failed to show

¹Page Smith, The Nation Comes of Age: A People's History of the Ante-Bellum Years (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1981), pp.1-2; also see Peterson, "Freedom and the Crossroads of Politics, 1789-1801," pp.70-72.

²David Herbert Donald, Lincoln Reconsidered: Essays on the Civil War Era 3rd ed. rev. (New York: Vintage, 2001), p.57.

on the "field of battle," baiting them to confrontation.¹ Short of deadly duelling, editors were horsewhipped in the streets and Congressmen brawled "even in the Halls of Congress." One pair of Representatives "went at it tooth and nail in the House Chamber," another "got into a real donnybrook in the House lobby," a bloody affair that "lasted one hour and seventeen minutes!"² Such infighting results from the lack of real ideological differences and distinguishing principles between men and the lack of meaningful issues between parties. President Monroe's administration was celebrated for having offered no new policies: "Had Monroe been born ten years earlier, he would have been a signer of the Declaration of Independence."³ Tocqueville noted that the basic agreement between parties left them undistinguished, "scrambling over "petty, shameful passions...a wretched and shameful sight."⁴

The most important party issue for a time involved the impulse towards solidifying America's "cultural" consensus through the political rejection and physical persecution of American Masons. Arising "from the cultural anxieties that had been unleashed" by the supposed Masonic presence of division within the liberal consensus, political Anti-Masonry amounts to an illiberal political movement to secure liberal politics. John Quincy Adams declared the destruction of Masonry to be "the most

¹Appleby, Inheriting the Revolution, pp.40-45.

²Leonard L. Richards, The Advent of Democracy, 1815-1848 (Glenview: Scott, Foreman, and Co., 1977), pp.6-8.

³Louis P. Masur, 1831: Year of Eclipse (New York: Hill & Wang, 2001), p.106.

⁴Alexis de Tocqueville, as quoted in ibid., p.88.

important issue facing 'us and our posterity'."¹ This was the only issue of division between the major parties in the 1825 presidential election, the Anti-Masons being crucial to electoral victory when "the two parties agreed on 'every thing the general Government can or ought to do'" but differed only on Masonry.² In fact, no material issues existed in presidential campaigns from that time through the elections of Jackson, Van Buren and Harrison.

Along with centripetal cultural forces, self-conscious politicking enhanced political consensus; "Van Buren spent most of Jackson's second term cautioning against letting serious issues develop, and ran as heir apparent rather than as advocate of any specific action." Actually renewing Jefferson's rhetoric, "both parties ran on 'democratic' and 'republican' principles and with praise of 'equality' and 'the people,' to which almost no people objected, and against 'privilege' and 'corruption,' which very few favored, in theory at least." Until after 1840, gimmicks and popularity took the place of any real differences or issues of dispute. By 1840, American politics had entrenched a tradition of elections as entertainment; "the Whigs' greatest democratic contribution was to make politics attractive fun for more Americans."³ Such was typical of American politics, in the North as well as in the South, where "the political barbeque" had become "a favorite rural entertainment" that was attended everywhere by "a wide local populace." Although Jefferson Davis complained persistently at having to change his style to suit the common

¹John Quincy Adams, as quoted in *ibid.*, p.92.

²Henry Clay, as quoted in *ibid.*, p.96.

³David Grimsted, *American Mobbing, 1828-1861: Toward Civil War* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1998), pp.188-189.

man, lamenting that his oratory and poetry fell upon "uneducated" and "rough-and-tumble forums," others assert that "this was American democracy, Jacksonian democracy, at its best, the people seeing and hearing their candidates and advocates face to face and having a great time in the bargain."¹

This political entertainment and its benefactor, the peaceful co-existence of ideological union, of a people united in principle, are characteristic of the United States as the "republican millennium," for Jefferson "the culminating moment in the progress of world history."² Most Americans at this time believed that history, at least in the large sense or "macro-history," had ended with the Revolution. Only the details of "micro-history" remained to continue, it was thought, the details rendered by the individual lives of citizens and institutions improving and conforming to established ideals.³ This was the American mission now, to live up to the Declaration of Independence. Striving to realize universal significance in their founding myth, "that sense of mission pushed Americans towards a powerful emotional and spiritual national patriotism." Lawrence Fuchs maintains that this nation became the first to describe itself with such universal significance as the culmination of history's, and God's, grand design.⁴ With such self-consciousness, then, America became the end of history. "America's discovery,

¹William C. Davis, Jefferson Davis: The Man and His Hour (New York: HarperCollins, 1991), pp.102-103.

²Onuf, Jefferson's Empire, p.51.

³Rush Welter, Mind of America, 1820-1860 (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1975), pp.26-27.

⁴Fuchs, The American Kaleidoscope, p.31.

colonization, growth, and independence are the hymeneals of the wedding of time with eternity."¹ Conceiving itself to be the last that is first, the omega and alpha, the end of the old order and the beginning of all that is new, the United States claims "to be the closest approximation to perfect enduring order the world has ever seen." American democracy constituted the apex of history's progression towards perfection, in a mythic self-translation that claimed God's chosen favour precisely because of America's democratic fidelity to the social contract. What remained now was the expansion of that contract through time and space, most immediately through the West. The Providential development of America's past history now turned to a Providential expansion of that history, of American liberalism and the Constitution, through a mythic vehicle that carried its accompanying ideology westward with vigour--Manifest Destiny.² Again, its marker would be prosperity.

In that liberalism exists as the political justification for the capitalist economic system, so political liberty and economic liberty have been coeval to the American mind. America's Revolutionaries had determined upon "the liberation of the nation's commerce from British shackles and an expanding commercial system founded on the liberal tenets of free trade. Commercial freedom was a close ally of political freedom, for the absence of the former would jeopardize the latter."³ Economic hazards, particularly fiscal policy, and political disruptions engendered by democracy had fostered the ratification of a new

¹Henry, The Intoxication of Power, p.54.

²Ibid., pp.54-56, 81-82.

³Peterson, "Freedom and the Crossroads of Politics, 1789-1801," p.59.

constitution as a general remedy. "The Revolution itself had called such conditions into being."¹ The Constitution had responded. Its success is manifest in the speed with which "you have a society that increasingly comes to regard the business of America as business, buying and selling, with exchange for monetary gain as the basic adhesive of society."² Prosperity became a universal ideal and, thus, a universal standard, the renewed marker of virtue.

So long as wealth is 'earned', that is to say 'deserved', great disparities of wealth are tolerated in America because there are no class barriers to wealth, at least theoretically. Everyone can advance him or herself, according to the American ideal, in which commercial exchange ties people together in the place of an absent civic virtue. The Founding Fathers created a political environment in which citizens "certainly didn't feel the need for old-fashioned republican virtue; they simply wanted to get ahead, and pursue happiness. They took Jefferson's pursuit of happiness quite literally."³ The Constitution facilitated that pursuit, systematically safeguarding the individual rights of liberal self-interest. Those rights led to commercial prosperity and a quickened demonstration of the virtues of Hamilton's "commercial republic."⁴ The Federalist had implied this promotion of commerce and the equation of economic prosperity with the

¹Elkins and McKittrick, The Age of Federalism, p.702.

²Gordon Wood, "The Radical Revolution," American Heritage 43:8 (December, 1992), p.54.

³Ibid., pp.54-55, 58.

⁴Peterson, "Freedom and the Crossroads of Politics, 1789-1801," pp.56-57.

happiness that is the object of government security and preservation.¹ Joyce Appleby sounds a trenchant echo of Gordon Wood's description of the Constitution's success:

The elaboration of a commercial society took place in the United States under circumstances that forged a powerful link between political and economic freedom. Nations have been described as "imagined communities," but the United States became more of an imagined enterprise. ...In the ruminations of those born after Independence we get glimpses of the bedrock under America's culture of capitalism: national goals cemented for personal ambitions to an imagined national enterprise that vindicated democracy in a world of monarchies. ...If the Constitution provided the foundations of America's liberal society, the free enterprise economy raised its scaffolding.²

Thus, the conviction inspired by the ideological conflation of very personal interests with universal principles is embellished by their elevation to world-historical significance in a national purpose of mythic movement.

As well as eternal importance, individual self-interest gains the very concrete protection of government and its military power through this translation of individual "pursuit of happiness" into the very purpose of the social contract. Congress readily and routinely enacted military and naval support for the expansion and protection of American commerce.³ Although elites in the United States were considered to be "self-made men," their self-creation *ex nihilo* was deemed to be not quite secure without the force of combined American might surrounding their arrival.⁴ And their arrival, their economic prosperity and creation of wealth, was of national import, as it announced the real value

¹Diamond, "Democracy and The Federalist," p.63; Also see The Federalist XXX.

²Appleby, Inheriting the Revolution, pp.56-57.

³Elkins and McKittrick, The Age of Federalism, pp.588-590.

⁴Ibid., p.751.

of liberalism and "confirmed the truth of popular values."¹

The Constitution had institutionalized such mutual support, of government machinery and private enterprise, ensuring the security of expansive business interests as well as those of landed property. Charles Beard's economic interpretation of the Constitution, although essentially accurate, has been received as though it polarizes these interests in its attempt to demonstrate class-based support for the Constitution's ratification. Beard points to the very wealthy as desirous of a breakwater against the flow of democratic pressures that threatened large property owners. This is correct. However, in demonstrating this, Beard has been taken to have set these wealthy interests as the only supporters and beneficiaries of the new Constitution. In fact, Beard demonstrates a broad commercial support for its ratification, with manufacturing and merchant groups rounding out the contributions of larger property interests. Beard's point is that, in order to foster economic prosperity, wealthy and industrious Americans accomplished the Constitution against its opposition by smaller agrarian interests and a debtor class.²

A notable critic of Beard's analysis, Forrest McDonald, argues against this interpretation by demonstrating that many of Beard's "wealthy" interests were not so rich, some even in debt themselves. As well, McDonald works to demonstrate that there is not a clear co-relation between the personal wealth of delegates to the Constitutional Convention and their votes for or against the Constitution. Ultimately, McDonald rejects

¹Appleby, Inheriting the Revolution, p.53.

²Charles A. Beard, An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States (New York: Macmillan, 1913).

the existence of two distinct classes in America and, thus, he rejects Beard's analysis.¹ While McDonald does accomplish some of his stated purpose, "not to depreciate but to clarify and fill in the details" of Beard's thesis,² he nevertheless distorts Beard's argument by focusing upon it as though it forwards a polarized, absolute dichotomy of wealth against poverty. Thus, Jackson T. Main rejects McDonald's critique, arguing that McDonald misrepresents by minimizing the wealth of some delegates to the convention. As well, Main demonstrates that the representatives of smaller farming interests tended not to go to the convention, resulting in the domination there by wealthier propertied interests.³ McDonald may take issue with Main's assertion that the signers of the Constitution were all rich and well-to-do, by demonstrating failed ventures or personal debt and the like--McDonald points to the very wealthy Pierce Butler, for instance, owner of 143 slaves, as "financially embarrassed" by a succession of crop failures and, thus, "he was rich but a debtor," as though he was permanently removed from his class and its interests by the vicissitudes of nature (and demonstrating McDonald's shallow approach to class and interest).⁴ Nevertheless, the crucial assertion made by Main, and by Beard,

¹Forrest McDonald, We the People: The Economic Origins of the Constitution (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1958).

²"Forrest McDonald's Rebuttal" (to Jackson T. Main's "Charles A. Beard and the Constitution: A Critical Review of Forrest McDonald's We the People"), William and Mary Quarterly 17:1 (Jan., 1960), pp.104-105.

³Jackson T. Main, "Charles A. Beard and the Constitution: A Critical Review of Forrest McDonald's We the People," William and Mary Quarterly 17:1 (Jan., 1960), pp.86-102.

⁴"Forrest McDonald's Rebuttal," p.105; McDonald's shallow approach to the relationship of economics and ideology is underscored by his later assertion that Beard's economic analysis of the Constitution was displaced in the 1960s and 1970s by

is that they all were on the rise--actually or figuratively.

Essentially, this same argument arises between Arthur Schlesinger Jr. and Richard Hofstadter, with Schlesinger maintaining that American history amounts to the rise of a politically excluded working class, rising to power and control over business classes and "capitalistic groups." Hofstadter counters that it is the struggle to be included that is crucial here, that American history involves democratization as "itself strongly capitalist in spirit," moving against "any limitation on free entry into the game of capitalist exploitation."¹ Charles Sellers strives to highlight the "significant affinities between the two interpretations," arguing for our reception of post-Constitutional America as a "democracy of expectant capitalists."² This, precisely, is the central point of correspondence between liberal ideology and capitalist economics--liberalism justifies the economic system by its political inclusion of each individual in the rights of capitalist pursuit. This also is a central aspect of westward expansion for the United States; western expansion would demonstrate America's future, would prove the success of liberal property rights and capitalist competition or, failing, the viability of large, landed owners

ideological interpretations of The Founding, as though ideology was a form of thought removed from any concrete interest, and particularly from any venal economic interest--see McDonald, Novus Ordo Seclorum: The Intellectual Origins of the Constitution (Lawrence: Univ. Press of Kansas, 1985), pp.vii-viii.

¹Charles Grier Sellers, Jr., Jacksonian Democracy, American Historical Association Publication No.9 (Washington, D.C.: Service Center for Teachers of History), pp.9-10; see Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., The Age of Jackson (Boston, 1945) and Richard Hofstadter, The American Political Tradition and the Men Who Made It (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948).

²Sellers, Jacksonian Democracy, p.10.

and their "aristocratic pretensions" would be established.¹

Thus, more than innovation, the West would involve a re-affirmation of the American economy and ideology. Ultimately, this would be the proving ground of Yankee dominance and destiny.² Here, those that argue against the verity of a "commercial republic" in the North, because of its large agricultural base, fail to see that even in agriculture Northerners saw themselves as commercial, their enterprise governed by an "Invisible Hand" in a market that removed even farmers from "natural" life; "the practice of commerce removed men from immediate dependence on the land and substituted a system of values and relations determined by the invisible hand of the market, and by intellect."³ Manufacturing and the rationalization of nature through technology amounted to a triumph of Northern ingenuity in its own mind, a triumph over nature. Industrialization imposed human order upon natural chaos, creating a model of organization for all human endeavours, including the fundamental organization of civil society. Regimentation becomes second nature in the routinization of technological industry over labour, just as in the programmatics of politics normalized by the systematization of ideology over intellect. Thus removed from nature, the North represented a higher culture in its own estimation than the South. The West, then, represented a grand commercial and ideological opportunity for Northerners to make

¹Onuf, Jefferson's Empire, pp.33-34.

²Richards, The Advent of Democracy, pp.54-55.

³Anne Norton, Alternative Americas: A Reading of Antebellum Political Culture (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1986), p.21.

manifest their saintliness.¹

iv. Renovations, Reforms, The West:

From the turn of the century, the realization of the American Dream through western expansion became official policy. As Jefferson took the presidency, he celebrated "a rising nation, spread over a wide and fruitful land, ...advancing rapidly to destinies beyond the reach of mortal eye." Jefferson's own eye was upon the West as "a chosen country, with room enough for our descendants to the thousandth and thousandth generation."² As American expansion into these territories would prove the tenets of liberalism and capitalism, so early expansionists offered paeans to liberal property rights by their concern to "purchase" Indian lands. Jefferson's Notes on the State of Virginia points to "repeated proofs of purchase" in the past rather than conquest, "although in his original manuscript Thomas Jefferson acknowledged that 'these purchases were sometimes made with the price in one hand and the sword in the other'."³ With Jefferson's Louisiana Purchase, Americans explicitly claimed the continent by right. Floodgates were opened to the Providential flow of civilization westward through government compacts that were analogous to religious covenants, but more practical in that they channelled the condescension of divine right through the body politic to "legalize" its claims.⁴

¹Ibid., pp.20-23, 33-38.

²Jefferson, "First Inaugural Address," in The Presidents Speak, ed. Lott, pp.17-21.

³Jefferson, as cited in Onuf, Jefferson's Empire, p.34, p.197 fn 38.

⁴Frederick Merk, Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History (New York: Vintage Books, 1963), pp.3-12.

Under the umbra of liberal 'theory,' Jefferson further defended America's anti-Indian policy by equating Indian culture with ancient monarchy and with tyranny. Thus, Indian removal amounted to a continuation of the Revolution and American liberalism's overthrow of tyrannical systems. According to Jefferson's liberalism, Indians represented monarchical oppression against their own peoples and against Anglo-Americans by having helped the English king during the Revolution. Thus, they were to be swept away as corrupt vestiges of European contamination.¹ While the tenets of liberalism justified particular actions against Native Peoples, even actions of anti-liberal policy, the feeling perceived by Americans of the historical movement of these principles *en masse* seemed to relieve individuals of their moral burden even as they blessed them with their material results;

Jefferson's presidential addresses to the Indians offered a righteous justification for an expansionist territorial policy that would set the stage, within less than two generations, for Andrew Jackson's removal policy. The inexorable progress of civilization--self-evidently a good thing--absolved Americans of agency or moral responsibility for the displacement of indigenous peoples.²

To Jefferson, the Indian represented "un-reason," the object of eradication by an enlightened civilization. The annihilation of Indian nations through extermination or through their "degradation" by succumbing to irresistible civilizing forces constituted an exposition of the end of history for Americans, the advance of progress to the farthest reaches of civilization's frontiers. This was the morning glory of America's rising sun, its

¹Onuf, *Jefferson's Empire*, pp.17-52 *passim*.

²*Ibid.*, p.49.

"light" chasing from the "savage" the "darkness [that] brooded over his mind." This was America's first conquest, envisioned by many as the establishment of "education, knowledge, and religion against ignorance, superstition, and paganism," but accomplished as such only among a remnant, stubble by the wayside of a swath cut across the continent and through a people. Although replaced by the long gun as the 'tool' of choice for the removal of human growth, the axe remained "the appropriate symbol of the early American attitude toward nature."¹

The discovery of gold on Cherokee lands in Georgia prompted laws and court decisions that ultimately prohibited the treatment of Indians as foreign peoples and disallowed any autonomy to their nations. Although the Supreme Court tried to remind Americans that Indians historically had been treated as nations by the federal government, the State of Georgia ignored the Court's rationale in what ultimately amounted to a contest of the federal division of powers rather than an argument over Natives' rights. In the end, Americans were governed by the value that could be extracted from the land once the Indians were removed. Their removal became policy across the states.² America's "common man," frontiersmen and yeoman farmers, accounted for the democratic force behind this policy of Indian removal. These were the staunchest supporters of Andrew Jackson, the motive force of "Jacksonian democracy" as they sought new economic opportunities with the power of their expanding franchise. These also, as a group, were those most affected by the inculcation of ideological aspirations

¹Drinnon, Facing West, pp.73-74, 102, 172-175, 187-189.

²Smith, The Nation Comes of Age, pp.83-110.

and by their mythic and religious justification.¹ These are they that most immediately are the beneficiaries of Lockean justifications for American expansion and, thus, are moved most swiftly by ideological invocations such as that of Indiana's governor during the War of 1812: "Is one of the fairest portions of the globe to remain in a state of nature, the haunt of a few wretched savages, when it seems destined by the Creator to give support to a large population and to be the seat of civilization, of science, and of true religion?"²

Pecuniary interests and their fulfilment so readily in the bountiful American hinterland fuelled the ideological conviction of aspiring Americans on the rise, a phenomenon that continued from her earliest origins right through the closing of the frontier. "No conviction was held more deeply by nineteenth-century Americans than that virgin land was there for man to improve." With their consolidation of political and military strength in the Revolution and subsequently under the Constitution, Americans now could not be restrained. With economies driven by expansion in both North and South, and expansion enabled by Indian removal throughout the West, the government alliance with private enterprise that forged America's "manifest destiny" became characteristic of American progress.³ America's conviction became policy, and her policy became reality: "All those who frustrated the aspirations of free men were rightly swept

¹Ibid., pp.107-108.

²As quoted in Albert Katz Weinberg, Manifest Destiny: A Study of Nationalist Expansion in American History (Gloucester, Mass.: Smith, 1935), p.79.

³Charles Sellers, Henry May and Neil R. McMillen, A Synopsis of American History 4th ed. (Chicago: Rand McNally College Publishing, 1976), pp.103-107.

aside, their lands made forfeit."¹ While the immediate satisfaction of particular local interests fuelled the engine of western expansion, the political hay to be harvested by conceptualizing and universalizing this foray into "Manifest Destiny" was a bonanza. Manifest Destiny would become definitive of the character of American civilization not only through her expansion into the western frontier lands, but also later as its guiding impulse strove for domination of American policy throughout the world. As early as the 1840s, "some radical Manifest Destinarians even contemplated 'liberating' densely populated foreign countries to bring them the blessings of American civilization."² Closer to home, these same Lockean principles would lace the 1842 "Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs," revealing themselves to be definitive not only of the aspirations of America's 'common man', but also of the policy of the national government.

Published in The Southern Quarterly Review of 1844, this "Commissioner's Report" attributes the "savage" and unworthy state of American Indians to their habitation of unimproved, unworthy lands. However, in a circular account, the low state of these lands is deemed to be caused by their neglect at the hands of a low people, "wild and undisciplined," who must be exterminated or removed. Their removal by the federal government would be a good service to Indians as well as to white Americans, the report argues, helping both races to improve their respective conditions. Low purchase prices paid to Indians for their lands are justified by those lands' lack of worth until the investment of white labour raised them to fruitful production--an implicit invocation of

¹McDougall, Promised Land, Crusader State, p.83.

²Ibid., p.84.

the Lockean theory of property and labour, boldly followed by its explicit account: "The doctrine was laid down by Locke, that all right of property arises from the mixing of human labor with materials comparatively valueless before." The "Report" refers the reader to section 27 of Locke's Second Treatise.¹ The "Report" goes on to imply that American Indians acted as a 'dog in a manger' in their unwillingness to let Americans develop the land while they themselves made little use of it. Furthermore, "under the principle laid down above, the Indian right of property is very weak." And, as they themselves were deemed to have gained the land by conquest rather than by their own labour and by right, "we might claim by the same right as theirs: it is only applying the rule, 'he who lives by the sword shall die by the sword.'"² Thus, American expansion is justified by ideological right and by religious persuasion. Thus, American Indians are said to reap what they have sown, their own destiny is fulfilled even as America's destiny is made manifest:

The interests of the human race will thus be advanced, by extending civilization, and providing for the necessities of a greater number of individuals....It is for the welfare of mankind that all the world should become civilized; this is absolutely necessary...hence, the Indians must either submit to change their mode of life, or must give place to more important races....If, in this time, they cannot alter their condition and live as civilized men, they must pay the penalty entailed upon them by their nature, and must give way to other races....This is the general law of humanity; and under this law has the world been peopled, and civilization carried forward.³

¹"Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs: Pub.Doc. No.2, Dec.7th, 1842," in The Southern Quarterly Review 5 (1844), pp.118-126.

²Ibid., pp.127-128.

³Ibid., pp.131-133.

Thus are the immediate and selfish aspirations of Americans on the rise justified and thus are the sentiments of an expanding nation ennobled, universalized by their ideological appeal and communication.

As America came to be synonymous, in her own mind, with liberty, her expansion increasingly was seen by believers as the movement of freedom towards its pinnacle, the culmination of a history that had pointed in this direction since the Mayflower.¹ At this pinnacle, the West represents the coincidence of individual desire and national mission, according to Joyce Appleby, the merging of particular and universal aspirations. Individuals in pursuit of new beginnings and opportunities to raise themselves up social and economic ladders found themselves pursuing their self-interest as part of a national mission that was shaped within God's 'grand design'.² The individualism inherent in liberalism, made rugged by its American accomplishment, gained universal and even sacred significance. In his first Address to Congress, John Quincy Adams re-iterated this relationship of the individual to social improvement. Adams declared that "the spirit of improvement is abroad on the earth," pointing to its most obvious manifestation in the American system of economic and political progress under the protection of a government limited in its powers to that very protection.³ Post-Constitutional Americans "undoubtedly used this concept of the 'American System' and the 'public interest' to camouflage their

¹Joyce Appleby, Telling the Truth About History (New York: W.W. Norton, 1994), p.109.

²Ibid., p.133

³John Quincy Adams, as cited in Herbert Wallace Schneider, A History of American Philosophy (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1946), pp.103-104.

investments in land speculation and industry and their private profits from protective tariffs, national banking, and commercial development in the West." The national policy that cloaked private enterprise with national purpose too soon revealed itself as sectional, driving out of its political embrace such early nationalists as Calhoun.¹ This premature break, however, did not signal a fissure in the ideological consensus but, rather, a contest over economies and the ideological pursuit of tangible ends. Calhoun had agreed with Adams that "North America appears to be destined by Divine Providence to be peopled by one nation, speaking one language, professing one general system of religious and political principles, and accustomed to one general tenor of social usages and customs." Even with the early split developing over economic policy, Calhoun still would have sympathized with Adams's declaration that "for the common happiness of them all, for their peace and prosperity, I believe it is indispensable that they should be associated in one federal Union."²

While powerful interests sought prosperity through Manifest Destiny, more 'democratic' forces joined wealthy investors and aspiring speculators in their impulse towards western expansion. The rising, reform-minded political 'movers and shakers' known as "Jacksonians" enthusiastically "supported the availability of cheap lands as a means of removing workers from complete dependence on their industrial employers." Henry Steele Commager concurs that "there was a safety valve of mobility, geographical mobility on a continental scale" that was connected to "social and economic mobility

¹Ibid., p.104.

²John Quincy Adams, as quoted in McDougall, Promised Land, Crusader State, p.78.

within the national scale, which effectively discouraged the development anywhere of a class order."¹ This contrivance responds to one of the chief objects of the American Revolution, the expansion of American freedom through the official affiliation of entrepreneurial free enterprise with free land. As far back as Bacon's Rebellion, this had been characteristically American policy. Bacon's rebels had fought for a government that would support rather than hinder American conquest. The Revolution removed any British hindrance to American expansion, and the Constitution secured the terms of government by which successful commercial progress might be achieved. Even "the framers of Shays's Rebellion and the Whiskey Rebellion were not so much intent on tearing something down as on simply bettering their own conditions," Francis Jennings argues. "Resentment against the perceived ruling class deflected into aggression against Indians. Instead of conflict with the ruling class, seizure of Indian lands could be effected with its complicity. Thus, perpetual conquest diverted rebellious sentiment into the satisfaction of demands for personal advancement at the expense of Indians instead of the wealthy." Jennings points out that "it needed only tacit redefinition of Indian property into land free to be taken, regardless of legalities, and the ruling class would put the standing army at service to the takers."² Thus, the American policy of Bacon and his rebels became America's "manifest destiny."

As well as the immediate concrete incentives, democrats were influenced

¹Henry Steele Commager, Commager on Tocqueville (Columbia: Univ. of Missouri Press, 1993), p.29.

²Francis Jennings, The Creation of America: Through Revolution to Empire (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2000), p.285.

westward by a Jeffersonian agrarian heritage that preached regeneration through agricultural endeavour--one's proximity to the soil approximated one's virtue under this agrarian ideal. Such regeneration always was significant to Americans striving to renew their origins, the more so now after several generations had passed since the Founding.¹ The "personal independence" awarded to those that struck out into the West emphasized American individualism and re-invigorated the foundations of American democracy. "Among the intellectual classes in the eighteenth century the agrarian myth had virtually universal appeal," according to Richard Hofstadter. By the nineteenth-century's fulfilment of Manifest Destiny, this myth had become an American "mass creed" that supported "a continental strategy designed to establish an internal empire of small farms."² Thus, national policy, interested investment, and common aspirations combined to take and to justify the taking of western lands. "It would not be amiss to conclude that the yearning for economic independence among ordinary white Americans sealed the fate of dependency for Native Americans." Mingling their mythic sympathies with ideological dogma and 'rational' justifications that raised these to public purpose, and most immediately "eager for farms of their own, poor white Americans pushed west in a never-ending stream, with confidence in their right to the land."³

The population of the United States doubled during the years between 1830 and

¹Norton, Alternative Americas, p.65; Bellah, The Broken Covenant, pp.116-117.

²Richard Hofstadter, "The Myth of the Happy Yeoman," in Myth and the American Experience, ed. Nicholas Cords and Patrick Gerster (New York: Glencoe Press, 1973), p.100.

³Appleby, Inheriting the Revolution, pp.58, 64.

1850, leading to a nation that everywhere was "teeming with new life, new projects, a belief in 'manifest destiny', and confidence in 'young America'." With their expansion westward driven by an enthusiastic optimism, Americans believed in the continued spread of her democracy and democratic values.¹ The combined necessities of industrial capitalism in the North and territorial expansion in the West directed American immigration policy during this period. The influx of foreign peoples led to fears of the encroachment of foreign ideas, subsequently deepening the profound American urge towards political unity. President Monroe had made it clear to Congress in 1823 that "the political system of...old world powers...is essentially different from that of America" and that "we should consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere, as dangerous to our peace and safety."² The Monroe Doctrine, thus, disallows from America the force of alien ideas as well as the physical presence of alien forces; "Its fundamental principle is sound: that is, the defence of the American continents against alien doctrine or conquest."³ Typifying this post-Revolutionary generation's concern for maintaining purity, John Quincy Adams already had warned that immigrants "must cast off their European skin, never to resume it." They must abandon alien principles and old ways as they enter a new world, "they must be sure that whatever

¹F.J.Turner, The United States, 1830-1850: The Nation and its Sections (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1958; First published by Henry Holt & Co., 1935), pp.9, 22.

²James Monroe, "The Monroe Doctrine," in An American Primer, ed. Boorstin, pp.276-277.

³Dexter Perkins, "The Monroe Doctrine," in ibid., p.281.

their feelings may be, those of their children will cling to the prejudices of their country."¹ During their entire antebellum history, Americans continued to fear their own degradation by contamination with new-coming 'others'.

Despite these fears, or perhaps because of them, new Americans assimilated quickly to American principles and practices, and to the symbols and celebrations of the civil religion.² Ideology provided the practical, political language that unified Americans, old and new. Nevertheless, new immigrants were to be denied citizenship until given sufficient time to become fluent in this symbolic communication. Persecution resulted from initial fears that immigrants would corrupt American institutions, rather than become Americanized themselves through their interaction with these institutions. Catholic opposition to liberalism in Europe prompted a continued American resistance to the Church's development in the United States. "A patriotic concern for the fate of the nation and a benevolent desire to liberate the immigrants were thus the impulses which purportedly actuated the partisans of assimilation and anti-Catholic crusades."³ Driven by their own universalizing and absolutizing of their Protestant values, American 'WASPS' subjected immigrants to a harsh treatment as 'others', as "un-American."⁴ Anti-Catholic and Americanist movements erupted in violence throughout the antebellum decades in America, despite the rising industrial powers' continued need for these immigrant

¹John Quincy Adams, as quoted in Norton, Alternative Americas, p.81.

²Norton, Alternative Americas, p.65; Fuchs The American Kaleidoscope, p.13.

³Norton, Alternative Americas, pp.78, 80-81.

⁴Appleby, Telling the Truth About History, pp.134-135.

labourers.

Ultimately, however, new arrivals were absorbed into the market and into American society through their participation in the political system--a feature of their early absorption of American ideology. Political participation simultaneously helped new Americans become adept in American ideology and helped them to gain concessions and legitimacy through their ability to wield that ideological conviction in democratic pressures.¹ As immigrants become 'American' by assimilating to her principles, they no longer are alien outsiders. Instead, they move in from liminality toward the centre. Then, the American majority only lays claim to being 'more' American to the degree that they were in the land first--similar to Federalists who claimed for themselves a purer Americanism than Republicans because they were the first majority party, the first to govern. None are culled by any difference of principles in America, only by degrees of imagined adherence to them and by degrees of inheritance, defined as generations by degrees of separation from the Founding.

The persecution of new immigrants not only resulted from abstract fears, but also resulted from direct conflicts in rivalries with prior Americans competing for jobs and wages in a fluid labour market. The persecution of new workers often was couched in religious terms--they were persecuted as "Catholics" rather than in ideological terms.² American liberalism, per se, does not provide the language nor the grounds to fault fellow labourers for competing in the marketplace, but instead provides for a unifying,

¹Fuchs, The American Kaleidoscope, pp.13-21, 38-48.

²Richards, The Advent of Democracy, pp.97-98.

homogenizing mind. Thus, workers had to resort to religious language and ancient prejudices to marginalize and ostracize competitors as 'groups' rendered illegitimate. Ironically, such persecution provides for the subtle development of an American characteristic among the persecuted peoples themselves, one that more surely aligns them with their mainstream counterparts once ethnic and religious differences are eclipsed by ideological unity. The self-definition of a people under attack by external, unjust, or oppressive forces against which one's principles must be secured and strengthened has characterised American life from its inception. The fundamentalism emerging from such onslaughts is rigorous, but its intensity and loyalty are transferable within the minds of adherents, from Calvinism to liberalism for example or, here, from Catholicism to Americanism. Similar transitions have endured for many American sub-groups, groups that are able to maintain religious or ethnic distinctions but mute them into relative insignificance by their overwhelming adoption and profession of American ideological principles.¹

In Northern industrial regions of the country, religion and ethnicity shaped the lines of social division and political alignment during the nineteenth century, a pattern that "leaps out in lesser industrial sections" of Northern states as well.² These were not ideological divisions--liberalism soothed the waters of religious and mythic undercurrents,

¹See R. Laurence Moore, "Insiders and Outsiders in American Historical Narrative and American History," The American Historical Review 87:2 (April, 1982), pp.390-412; R. Laurence Moore, Religious Outsiders and the Making of Americans (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1986).

²Phillips, The Cousins' Wars, pp.380-381.

and gathered these into a "North" that coalesced to compete with and eventually to combat with the "South" for economic and political dominance of the bounties of American civilization. It is notable that as the South organized itself in resistance to this incursion, it did so first along economic lines, and then according to religious and mythic distinctions, but never did the South abandon its original liberalism. Its adherence to America's original ideological doctrine enabled its 'rehabilitation' and the continuance of the American nation after the Civil War victory of Northern politics. Though passion did, in fact, strain the "bonds of affection" beyond the breaking point against Lincoln's stillborn pleas, America's ideological consensus is more resilient, more persuasive, and more emollient in its cold and calculating way, than are the passions of religious persuasion and mythic sensibility. The American consensus of liberal ideology is the common ground upon which America has been built. This is the locus of her public square.

The South increasingly rejected the Northern "vision of a Western utopia of yeoman farmers" due to its acquired anti-slavery overtones, dismissing the possibility of any sanctity or virtue in the life of agriculture itself; "Agriculture was not an end in itself but merely a way of making a living," to Southern gentlemen now. Nevertheless, the West provided the basis for an alliance, real and imaginary, with the South that continued to support economic and political careers and aspirations. By 1845, Calhoun would describe the South and the West as "a single physiographic region--a patent translation of political desire into geographical terms."¹ The open 'wilderness' beyond the frontier

¹Nash Smith, Virgin Land, pp.143-148.

provided for a mythic rebirth and regeneration of American life, a redefinition of American values.¹ The free land and the human, political liberty that Americans associated with it provided an opportunity for both North and South to test again their economic systems and by their success establish anew the meaning of liberty and of America. Each felt the chance to vouchsafe the meaning of American liberalism, yet each seemed keenly aware that only one could prove successful. Thus, an internal, political struggle developed in America over the nature of Western expansion, a struggle that inspired Northerners to social and political reforms at home in order to there conform more closely to the ideals that they professed and wished to export to the West. In the South, religious and mythic renewals struggled to bring new life to the social and economic structures that surrounded slavery, to justify its expansion and, thus, secure its continuance at home. Political renewals in the South, however, amounted to retrenchments into the original battlements of 1776 and more especially of 1789 and the Constitution. Thus, a religious fundamentalism in the North arose to oppose a reactionary, political fundamentalism in the South. Ultimately the South failed in their attempt to define Western expansion, "and the failure was a turning point in American history."²

President John Tyler's defense to Congress for the annexation of Texas reveals well this Southern combination of the articulation of Lockean liberal principles and the vindication of chattel slavery, as well as the dependency felt by Southerners for the vitality of this combination as resting upon its Western expansion. Tyler argues for the

¹Ibid., p.253.

²Ibid., p.149.

right of revolution by Texans against Mexican tyrants, their tyranny amounting to a dissolution of government that renders legitimacy to Texas independence and its new government. Texans had made a Lockean "appeal to God" and "the appeal thus made was answered by a just and overruling Providence." Thus, it is a properly independent Texas that makes its appeal for union with the United States.¹ Appealing to the Founders and explicitly to the framers of the Constitution to enshrine annexation as part of America's Constitutional fulfilment as well as her Manifest Destiny, Tyler argues that they knew even as they framed the Constitution "that all North-America must at length be annexed to us....The statesmen of those times were men of forecast and wisdom."² Americans expected to inherit the continent, Tyler points out: "These Western regions are peculiarly their heritage. It is property of the fathers of America, which they hold in trust for their children."³ Tyler argues against Northerners that opposed expansion, insisting that America's Founders "were trustful and confident in the destinies of their descendants." Those that now opposed expansion are portrayed as sectional enemies of liberty, posing sectional interests as 'national' and standing in the way of destiny.⁴

A new civil religion in the North is said to inspire resistance to Southern expansion, a peculiarly Northern civil religion that opposes union with Texas because of slavery. Tyler argues that this strand of emancipation sentiment originates in Britain and,

¹John Tyler, "Annexation of Texas," Southern Quarterly Review 6 (1844), pp.483-491.

²Gouverneur Morris, as quoted in ibid., p.493.

³Gouverneur Morris, as quoted in ibid., p.495.

⁴John Tyler, ibid., pp,496-498.

thus, constitutes a foreign influence that is insidiously creeping into the American character. Southern resistance to it is, once again, analogous with resistance to British tyranny and, therefore, amounts to a continuation of America's Revolutionary tradition. Britain is said to be trying to prevent the rise of American civilization, a civilization whose power will be built upon Southern slavery. Thus, the annexation of Texas and the expansion of slavery are both crucial to American vitality, proven by British opposition on each count.¹

Having defended Southern aspirations as the national interest and as part of the national character, Tyler proceeds to an outright defence of slavery on its own terms. He argues of the better physical, social, and political conditions extant in the South, even of those conditions as experienced by slaves. In Tyler's defence of slavery we see the beginnings of a new rationale for slavery and the emergence of a new Southern civil religion that attempts to counter the Northern revival's purchase upon the national character. The South, according to Tyler, represents American civilization at its highest reaches of advancement and, therefore, the new abolitionist civil religion of the North constitutes a direct threat to American civilization and its 'ancient' and national civil religion. The Southern states are portrayed as engaged in "an incessant conflict for the security of their rights of property, and in the defence of their national character," a conflict thus elevated in Southern claims to the preservation of American liberalism and its enhancement of life for all, even for black Americans.² Throughout, we see a

¹Ibid., pp.503-507.

²Ibid., pp.509-513.

reactionary expression of Southern righteousness and its own supposed preservation of the American founding. Tyler typifies the Southern entrenching effort to ward off the incursions of Northern religiosity. He sounds the alarms of crisis, warning against any pressures by Northern interests and insisting that Southerners stand united.¹ In this, we see a South solidifying and thus becoming itself a real threat to national unity as it develops and enunciates a civil religion that it would not have had to imagine without Abolitionist pressures. Once again, the expressions of American difference are religious and mythic, and ultimately only of local historical significance, the South as "the children of Judah," the 'true' and righteous America, for a time.² Only here are there cultural symbols that provide room to manoeuvre slight diversities into cataclysmic significance for interests' sake, only to have 'sacred' principles shrivel into insignificance again once interests are satisfied or defeated. Such sparks of division cut against the dense grain of Americanism and its ideological invocations that always remain uniquely liberal and consummately American. Thus, even as Tyler warns off Northern interests, abolitionists, and associated religious pressures through his ultimately divisive religious rhetoric, he welcomes Texas into the brotherhood of states with the same ideological justifications that form the foundation of the nation and through which all Southern states will one day be welcomed back into that same fellowship. With the language of Locke, President Tyler approves the Senate treaty annexing Texas.

It is through the lens of this liberal ideology that all Americans saw their

¹*Ibid.*, pp.512-515.

²*Ibid.*, p.517.

westward expansion as the advance of civilization and of the civilized (American) man into his virtuous future. Northern versions of this expanding liberalism included the thrust towards Emerson's liberty through an individual morality accomplished at the expense of the state--once the state inculcates virtue in its citizens it loses its rationale for existence--and Thoreau's conclusion of this development in civil disobedience as obedience to a higher law to be divined within one's own conscience. Such expressions of extreme individualism signal the direction, if not the accomplishment, of antebellum ideological movement in the North. In them we find the essence of characteristically Northern appeals to the Declaration of Independence as a higher law to that of the Constitution, and we see a mythic type for the North to emulate *en masse*, as a UNION of virtuous citizens acting as one moral agent according to its conscience. In the opportunities for physical improvement provided by the open West lay opportunities for moral improvement, according to the Puritanical Northern mind, opportunities for the nation to prove and improve the American "philosophy of liberty" and for the individual to justify once and for all "self-government."¹ With liberalism's rational account of the moral improvement of entrepreneurial citizens striking out upon and into America's free soil, we have the ideological announcement of the mythic regeneration of the individual through Lockean rights of property and of the nation through its united participation in Manifest Destiny.²

¹Ralph Henry Gabriel, The Course of American Democratic Thought (New York: Ronald Press, 1940; 2nd ed. 1956), pp.20-23, 34.

²Burstein, Sentimental Democracy, pp.155-158.

American ideology absorbed its own air of righteousness in the North with the likes of Lyman Beecher praising the "political conditions" of America as essential to "the moral renovation of the earth." Representative self-government patterned after the American model and proven by the American experience of "popular ownership of land" as the only way to foster industry, self-reliance, and true religion became the earmark on the most important page of history, a story written by God but whose pages now were being turned by common energies and American ingenuity.¹ The protraction of this American "millennium" through time required the continued extension of this same American spirit through space, namely the West. Already, America's growing economy was creating new barriers to upward mobility even as political participation was being extended down the social ladder to an increasing number of "poor" Americans. The safety afforded perpetual democratization by the ongoing inculcation of liberal ideology seemed delicate to some. From the viewpoint of a new and growing American bourgeoisie, it appeared only a tenuous inoculation of workers against the evils of envy and covetousness. A growing gap between rich and poor spoke of an economic and social exclusiveness that threatened to belie the inclusiveness and equality that characterized the ideal of American politics and liberal ideology.² Thus, the importance of "opportunity" in the western outlet as a pressure relief was highlighted continually by the growing and worrisome problem presented by America's urban poor in the east--and so the character

¹James Fulton Maclear, "The Republic and the Millennium," in The Religion of the Republic, ed. Elwyn A. Smith (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), p.197.

²Richards, The Advent of Democracy, pp.96-104.

of western expansion involved more than the definition of the "spirit of America," it involved the security of material interests that underscored that spirit.

Along with the open West and the open franchise, prominent citizens strove to open American minds. "Rehabilitation" and reform intended to coerce and to teach the newly enfranchised in the ways and rights of American government, an endeavour that continues to this day in high school and university civics courses across the nation. Public education emerged as a partner to religious revival in a sort of two-pronged approach to civilizing new Americans and the new West through religious and moral reformation.¹ Schools and Sunday schools shaped the improvement of American souls together as a 'forked tongue' speaking truth into being. Universities were expected to teach an American creed, to safeguard the political culture from "heretical intrusions."² Citizens needed political education, according to education official and Congressman Horace Mann, they needed to become adept, at least somewhat, in political science to enhance their participation in American democracy. Mann insisted that each American be taught the principles of the Constitution, the importance of the separation of powers, and the nature of their liberal rights.³ Ensuring such public education was the mark of statesmanship, according to Mann, the strengthening of American civilization through the education of its citizens into the proper operation of liberal principles.⁴ In a wonderful

¹Boorstin, The Genius of American Politics, pp.153-157, 314.

²Meyers, The Mind of the Founder, pp.442-446.

³Mann, "Report of the Massachusetts Board of Education, 1848," in An American Primer, ed. Boorstin, pp.360-375.

⁴Ibid., pp.361-362.

precis of America's 'politics of nuance', Mann assures us that it is acceptable for teachers to have different interpretations of the Constitution and to promote different political parties in their education of young Americans, because all teachers will have much more in common than these smaller matters of difference. More than ninety-nine times out of one hundred, Mann says, all Americans will agree upon the important principles "about which there is no dispute." No matter the political affiliation or persuasion of the teacher, the principles of liberal ideology are held in common by all and are sure to be taught in American education.¹

Andrew Jackson, in his First Inaugural Address, had celebrated the elevation of the common man through the education of his individual conscience. The development of this still small voice within each is the foundation upon which democracies are built and through which the elevation of all mankind is accomplished, according to Jackson's philippic. Jackson points us to the social and cultural foundations upon which politics and states are framed, political cultural foundations of mythic, religious, and ideological proportions.² As public education embarked upon the "deliberate indoctrination" of immigrants and newly enfranchised native (white male) Americans, the successful use of liberal ideology as a secular cultural form for absorption and assimilation of individual conscience was demonstrated.³ Particularly in the North, people were refit, intellectually and spiritually, for new lives as citizen-workers:

¹Ibid., pp.369-370.

²McLoughlin, Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform, p.139.

³Norton, Alternative Americas, pp.71-73, 82.

Through the educational system, the altered patterns of behavior characteristic of the factory were disseminated beyond the factory into the population at large....Proponents of modernity saw in the factory the triumph of reason over a chaotic and capricious nature. In the factory, the natural was remade--reformed--and emerged in a more useful form. The project of remaking man was an appropriate sphere in which to apply the methods of industry.¹

This application was appropriately justified and consummated through ideological indoctrination.

The struggle of Jacksonian democratization against established and propertied interests was fought within a liberal consensus. Jacksonians and anti-Jacksonians all claimed an inheritance of the "Spirit of '76," all sought to enlarge the country's fortunes by rallying to the cause of continuing the Revolution.² "The Revolution dramatically expanded the circle of people who considered themselves capable of thinking for themselves about issues of freedom, equality, sovereignty, and representation." Just as in the Revolution, later generations of "ordinary people moved towards these new horizons as they gained access to a powerful new vocabulary, a rhetoric of liberty" that was suspended in American liberalism.³ The increasing inclusion of immigrants and propertyless men within the citizenry constituted a marked advance within liberalism. Previously, these were excluded, generally, throughout the United States. The extension of the franchise, even to white males, was accomplished with great struggle within most

¹Norton, Alternative Americas, p.40.

²Bercovitch, The American Jeremiad, p.143.

³Nathan O. Hatch, "The Democratization of Christianity and the Character of American Politics," in Religion and American Politics: From the Colonial Period to the 1980s, ed. Mark A. Noll (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1990), p.93.

states. It seemed to go against the standards of a Lockean morality that associated the moral and financial worth of individuals.¹ Ultimately, however, a new standard was created in the figure of the "worthy poor." Property qualifications were lowered so as not to exclude the working poor from citizenship rights, but only to exclude those that did not work at all.² Locke's 'theory of labour' had devalued not only the raw materials of nature but also had devalued human beings that did not use their labour. Those that refused to offer their labour were possessed of no visible estate, real or potential, and thus were deemed possessed of no moral or spiritual value. They become as nature's callow waste in Locke's equation. These are the "unworthy poor" of liberal ideology in America. Those that invest their labour, regardless of its profitability, become the "worthy poor" in American liberalism, the outward display of their labour being their estate as opposed to their having real estate. Thus endowed with financial worth, these men become morally worthy agents and thus qualified citizens. The participation in the polity of an increasing number of voters without property qualifications, then, accompanied the growing importance of the labour of these same men in the burgeoning economy. Both brand the absorption of America's working class through political socialization. "Ordinary white men, North and South, responded enthusiastically to their inclusion in the body politic." With the accompanying economic and ideological inclusion came a growing ideological conviction that prosperity and economic success "confirmed the truth of popular values"

¹Schneider, A History of American Philosophy, p.115.

²Diamond, "Democracy and the Federalist," p.58.

of liberalism.¹

As the "well-ordered man" is visible in his success, in his ability to remake himself inside and out, the re-ordering of the "internal and external natures" of man became the central object of moral crusades in America. The image of the "self-made man" in America has roots at least as deep as Benjamin Franklin's precedent, as does the propensity for such successful individuals to advise social reform, to write manuals for improvement, to crusade for "routinization as a method of transformation." Along with public education, moral crusades "promised to produce a population whose industrious virtue was wholly in accord with the requirements of industrial society." Good citizens were required, but beneath them good men must endure. This was the purpose of antebellum American education, the salvation of the whole man. It could not be accomplished alone.²

Fearing the "rabble and tumult" of a broadened popular sovereignty in America, "contemporaries agreed that a successful representative society and government, by definition, depended on a 'virtuous people'."³ That is to say, civic leaders increasingly turned to religion, specifically Christianity, as a ready resource for the inculcation of virtues that would pacify the newly empowered elements of society, to sanctify the rights of liberal ideology in their minds until justified by their own experience. Just as a written Constitution had satisfied the needs and dissipated the fears of an earlier generation by

¹Appleby, Inheriting the Revolution, pp.51, 53-54.

²Norton, Alternative Americas, pp.38-39.

³Butler, Awash in a Sea of Faith, p.213.

creating institutions powerful enough to secure individual rights, now this generation would inscribe those rights in the hearts and souls of those newly claiming the right to wield that government's power. This would be accomplished through religious revival.

As the urban working poor increasingly cut their filial ties with masters and employers, they began to comprise "recognizable and self-conscious elements of urban society."¹ The absorption of liberal principles by America's rising bourgeoisie through their experience in social and economic success involved them in a world in which families were no longer the models of government. Instead, the individual was the essential political element. As successful and proven individuals, bourgeois citizens were ready and fit for popular government. However, their newly 'freed' charges were not. They must be controlled and shaped, readied for citizenship by social controls and a thorough and effective socialization, controls that would be symbolized and communicated through religious language. Detached and rowdy workers would be brought under discipline by the imposition of religious standards and civic laws that would secure an efficient workforce for the growing economy. Though this piety would be resisted by the working class, and by Democrats as opponents of "forced morality," nevertheless this religious revival would be an important development in the growth of free labour and in the support of capitalism in the United States.² It also would signal a

¹David Montgomery, "The Working Classes of the Pre-Industrial American City, 1780-1830," in New Perspectives on the American Past, ed. Katz and Kutler, pp.225-226.

²Paul E. Johnson, A Shopkeeper's Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837 (New York: Hill & Wang, 1978; rpt. 1990), pp.3-14, 32-34, 54-61, 89, 95-141 *passim*.

cultural strength that is accomplished by the coherence of American ideology and religion: "a nascent industrial capitalism became attached to visions of a perfect moral order based on individual freedom and self-government, and old relations of dependence, servility, and mutuality were defined as sinful and left behind. The revival was not a capitalist plot. But it certainly was a crucial step in the legitimation of free labor."¹

The moralism of reforming Yankees was allied closely with their desire for commercial success and an expansion of the American economy. Like their forefathers, these Americans sustained their principles and interests in concert. Prohibition laws throughout the Northeast reduced the consumption of alcohol dramatically, providing a more reliable workforce for industrial production. Along with their improvement of efficiency on the supply side, businessmen and economic promoters "leavened their moralism with incorrigible commerciality" that was intended to shape public demand. Public affirmations of moral correctness carried favourable responses from consumers determined to 'do the right thing' in all facets of their lives. The "all-but-Sunday stagecoach lines" of faithful Protestant entrepreneurs thrived alongside "free-grown produce groceries" opened by abolitionists.² The Civil War itself may be seen as a sort of moral reform, irrepressible in its intention to end the "sectionalism and political infighting between Yankees and Southerners [that] had stalled commercial progress and economic expansion."³ The violent imposition of Northern morality is portended by this

¹Ibid., p.141.

²Phillips, The Cousins' Wars, pp.376-377.

³Ibid., p.377.

union of principle and interest in the party of Lincoln: "The politics of commerce and the politics of moral righteousness eventually fused, in tried and true Puritan style, with the emergence of the Republican Party. Between 1854 and 1856, it cobbled together a coalition of all the politically potent Yankee 'isms'--anti-Masonism, temperance, anti-Catholicism, muted nativism, and free-soil sentiment mixed with abolitionism."¹ The mingling of American liberalism with these other "isms" girded it with self-righteousness.

This congruence with prevailing "isms" was central to the shaping of party politics in antebellum America. New parties developed around different moral and policy reform issues erupting from the Second Great Awakening. "Antislavery, Indian policy, nativism, temperance, education, penal reform, treatment of the insane," all emerged as matters of difference for Americans, based not upon ideological divergence, but upon moral implications of religious impulses within the Awakening.² The organizing nature of the Second Awakening and its reforms testify of it as a social rather than a theological development within American culture. The Awakening involves the movement of a people towards its own social control, a religious chorus in consonance with the political democratization of America.³ Characterized by the impulses of unity and organization, the Awakening signalled American Protestantism as the agent of social and political

¹Ibid., p.360.

²Daniel Walker Howe, "Religion and Politics in the Antebellum North," in Religion and American Politics, ed. Noll, pp.124-125.

³Donald G. Matthews, "The Second Great Awakening as an Organizing Process, 1780-1830: An Hypothesis," American Quarterly 21 (1969), pp.23, 27.

action.¹ New urban associations of the "better sort" of people strove to reorganize society according to religious longings and passions. So long as it aimed at reforming individuals, this revivalism met with little resistance. But with the movement away from individual and toward institutional reform, the attempted "creation of a more integrated American society as opposed to a confederation of provincial societies" only brought the country to disintegration, North and South. Again, however, the rupture of the nation at the narrow time of this intemperate nationalizing influence manifests the hubris of American religion, rather than revealing any fissures in its liberal ideology.²

Perfectionism characterized American social thought throughout the antebellum period.³ The belief in progress, a confident expectation of the future, whether as divine revolution or as the gradual improvement of humanity, permeated the decades that would end in war. Millennial hope mingled with democratic faith in the growing Northern nationalism. "The vision of the world saved by democracy was the secular version of the Protestant millennial hope," in a world in which both secular and religious millennialists looked to the same signs.⁴ Nor was this concerto exclusively Northern. Justice George Robertson of Kentucky celebrated the Fourth of July, 1843, with harmonious aplomb:

Christianity, rational philosophy, and constitutional liberty, like an ocean of light are rolling their resistless tide over the earth....Doubtless there may

¹Ibid., p.30.

²Ibid., pp.34-35, 39. For a more complete discussion of American religion, its awakenings, and its role here in the years leading up to the Civil War, see chapter 3 below.

³McLoughlin, Revivals, Awakenings, Reform, pp.95-96.

⁴Gabriel, The Course of American Democratic Thought, p.37.

be partial revulsions. But the great movement will ...be progressive, till the millennial sun shall rise in all the effulgence of universal day.¹

American democracy was fulfilling its origins as a moral-religious and social ideal, according to Yehoshua Arieli, as a system of constantly surfacing foundational belief that was beyond the political. The supposed pre-political rudiments of liberalism had so saturated American society that they now raised politics above the political world; the principles of liberalism had become metaphysical truths.² The close inter-relationship and mutual inter-dependence of the "secular faith of democracy" and the "religious faith of changing Protestantism" in America distinguished the complement of religion and ideology in the political culture: "Together they provided the American with a theory of the cosmos which gave significance and direction to human life, and with a theory of society which gave a meaning not only to the relation of the individual to the group, but of the United States to the congregation of nations."³

¹George Robertson, as quoted in ibid., p.37.

²Arieli, Individualism and Nationalism in American Ideology, p.275.

³Gabriel, The Course of American Democratic Thought, p.39.

v. Destiny:

The liberal rights of the Declaration of Independence were embedded into individual consciences throughout America. The Declaration's rhetoric continued to occupy the station of essential moral truths for all good men as well as for good citizens in the revivalist restoration and renewal of the Revolution. Buoyed by democrats and pious enthusiasts alike, its political potency was stroked to a point intended to pierce the hearts and minds of fellow citizens. The 1848 "Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions" for the rights of women repeats the patterns and even the exact words of Jefferson's for independence. The inclusion now of women with men in the equal creation and endowment of rights involves the claim to a Revolutionary inheritance and signals the call for the political realization of these rights.¹ The wielding of these words can only be accompanied by expectation when they are thrust into the ploughed furrows of cultivated minds.

Pre-eminent amongst the invocations of liberal principles that were associated with the birth of the nation, William Lloyd Garrison's Liberator "helped to launch" a crusade that "lasted until 1865, when the Thirteenth Amendment finally abolished slavery and the Liberator was discontinued."² Invoking the self-evident truths of the Declaration as ideals, Garrison was an American prophet "of overbearing dogmatism, of irritating self-

¹"The Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions, 1848," ed. Barbara M. Solomon, in An American Primer, ed. Boorstin, pp.376-384.

²Kenneth M. Stamp, ed., "William Lloyd Garrison: Prospectus for the 'Liberator', 1831," in An American Primer, ed. Boorstin, p.298.

righteousness....He was, no doubt, a 'fanatic'."¹ He was, also, triumphant in the outcome, however violent and late, of his argument against slavery as a violation of American ideals. Men were provoked by their own consciences to the cause of abolitionism, however distasteful it may have appeared in its early stages, first by the handful and finally as a nation. Their own suspension of cherished self-evident truths was wielded against them, striking painful, embarrassing blows as Garrison poured out guilt upon the entire nation for having abandoned the very ideals that had been so fervently renewed throughout the Awakening. The nation stood crosslegged, twisted by its own standards and teetering on the point of moral collapse, Garrison charged. Slavery not only constituted a transgression of natural laws of labour and property, by Lockean standards, it also was by that very violation of natural law a desperate threat to the social contract, according to Garrison.² Raising the Declaration above the Constitution in the meaning and purpose of America, Garrison burned a copy of the Constitution publicly in 1854. By then, that document's preservation of slavery had left it hollow, a contract vacant of moral worth, even evil in its compromise that prevented the United States from living up to its ideals.³

As a movement, abolitionism dwelt upon the discrepancies between the actual United States and its political ideals. This gap between the real and the ideal America made slavery the shame of all Americans, the nation as a whole bearing the guilt of its

¹Ibid., pp.299-300.

²Political Thought in the United States, pp.168-170.

³Bellah, The Broken Covenant, pp.50-51.

Constitutional and legal supports. Abolitionists aggravated the load aggressively when the Fugitive Slave Act burdened the North with additional moral culpability in 1850. Uncle Tom's Cabin subsequently became "the single most effective piece of antislavery propaganda."¹ Abolitionists increasingly aroused Northern indignation, a resentment heightened by its self-directed inwardness, through a tenacious pricking of the American conscience. However, Jefferson Davis charges, the fanaticism of some "original" abolitionists soon gave way to an opportunism on the part of later politicians and aspirants to power in the North, as the cause gained popularity.²

Along with idealistic motivations, Northern resistance to the expansion of slavery had roots in the struggle for a 'balance of power' between the North and the South, with economic ramifications in trade and tariff laws and their direct benefits.³ Economic competition and inter-dependency, both North and South, led to animosity between the sections. Southern politicians and commercial interests saw expansion into the West as the solution to problems arising from a growing imbalance. In this, they envisioned themselves engaged in a fight for freedom from economic vassalage akin to their struggle against the British in the American Revolution. Likewise, Northerners saw the promise of their futures and the fruition of American independence, national and personal, awaiting them on the evening horizon. Such aspirations underscored the importance of

¹Ronald G. Walters, American Reformers 1815-1860 (New York, Hill, 1978), pp.81-84, 91-92.

²Jefferson Davis, The Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government (New York: Collier, 1961), pp.36-39.

³Sellers, et al. A Synopsis of American History, p.116.

"Manifest Destiny" to the definition of the American polity.¹ Thus, anti-slavery sentiment in the North was accompanied by the development of an equally important anti-Southern sentiment within the attitude of many Northern politicians. "Several historians have argued that Republicans were characteristically more anti-southern and anti-slaveholder than they were truly anti-slavery," although Kenneth Stamppp maintains that they may, in fact, have held all of these sentiments in a common, monolithic apprehension of the South.²

Abolitionists themselves, Stamppp argues, invoked a highly moralistic tone that was characteristic of the political rhetoric of that age. The movement involved an unrealistic realism, according to Stamppp, as the success of contemporaneous reform movements held out the promise of swift success and social reformation, an empty promise in the case of emancipation. The greatest immediate accomplishment of the enthusiasm and heightened politics of abolition was the creation of increased resistance to manumission in a South that began to dig in its heels and to defend the institution of slavery more vigorously.³ "Southerners were stunned at this explosive attack on slavery" that was emerging from the North. Thousands of petitions and hundreds of thousands of signatures were circulated in the effort to stop the expansion of slavery. The number of abolitionist associations skyrocketed, rising from just forty-seven in 1833 to over one thousand by 1837.

¹James M. McPherson, The Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1988), pp.91-116.

²Kenneth M. Stamppp, The Imperiled Union: Essays on the Background of the Civil War (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1980), pp.121-122.

³Ibid., pp.226-227, 230-231.

Abolitionists seemed to be everywhere in the North, taking advantage of new efficiency in the forms of communication technology that fostered increasingly warm public receptions.¹ By the time of the violence of the late 1850s, lines had become hardened, irrepressibly and irreparably, in both North and South. Even further violence seemed inevitable, as many wondered "whether America's sins might not be so horrible that they would have to be washed away in blood."²

Antebellum America experienced a congruence of three visions of the universe, according to Thomas Peterson: 1) Enlightenment rationalism; 2) Scientific theory; and 3) the Biblical interpretation of America as New Israel. Peterson argues that these were competing visions in the American psyche. In the thirty years before the Civil War, he maintains, abolitionism drove the South away from the Enlightenment rationalism and scientific theory that would have prevailed otherwise, and into the third vision with a vengeance.³ However, we should see that these three visions are not competitors in America, but have instead been worked together routinely in the shaping of the American mind. The South always had participated in all three visions, as had the North. Both continued to do so, even into the present time. What happened in the build-up to war was that the liberal ideology of Enlightenment rationalism revealed its impotence to the South for the preservation of slavery, particularly considering the use of the same ideology by Northerners to attack the institution. The South did not abandon liberalism, nor science

¹Schudson, The Good Citizen, pp.105-106.

²Walters, American Reformers, pp.97-99.

³Thomas Virgil Peterson, Ham and Japheth: The Mythic World of Whites in the Antebellum South (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1978), pp.111-112.

per se, but in order to defend itself had to retreat increasingly into the language of a particular version of the vision of America as New Israel. The North, too, invoked this same Biblical symbolism but in its own way, so that both North and South continued in a triplex vision of America, but each with its own admixture of the three elements. Ideologically, Southern liberalism acquired a reactionary tone as it tried to resurrect for itself some 'original' liberalism of the Revolution, a development that was not out of tune with the general restorationist thrust of the antebellum Awakening. Southern science took on a racial tone akin to later evolutionary Darwinism, attempting to harmonize itself with the new emphasis placed upon the Old Testament version of American Israel and its justification and even sanctification of Southern slavery. None of this was out of character with American culture--the rationalism of liberal ideology and modern science was combined with the authority and expectation of Biblical religion and underscored by mythic symbols. Together, the whole strove for coherence around the key political rights of life, liberty, and property. Indeed, emphases had changed within the different concoction of these same elements, North and South. But as important as was the outcome of these differences, they were more temporary, more superficial, and less diverse than was imagined.

A "tension in southern constitutional and political thought" existed, according to Eugene Genovese, "between its inheritance of the philosophical liberalism of the Enlightenment and its basic conservatism." This conservatism is a matter of disposition,

however, and is not so inimical to the 'theory' of American liberalism.¹ Elsewhere, Genovese elaborates upon this tension, in his description of internal contradictions within Southern ideology.² However, Genovese points not to ideological contradictions but to the cultural mixture of ideology and religion. The reversion by the South to a religiosity that no longer readily supported its liberal ideology accounts for a loss of cultural coherence. This appears as an ideological contradiction to Genovese because he confuses ideology and religion. In reverting to the patriarchal language of the Old Testament, the South tried harder to support slavery under attack than it did to pursue a freedom it thought already accomplished by the Revolution. Later, when Southern liberty was felt threatened and secession declared, American liberalism rang out with a vengeance throughout the South, as emotive rhetoric harkened countrymen to the principles of the Revolution and rallied them to their defence. In this, the conservative disposition of the South is manifest, in its apparent retreat to an 'ancient' heritage, whether in the realm of religion or ideology, to shore up political institutions and practices of the day whenever threatened. Rather than conservatism, this seems to signal Southern thought as a reactionary Americanism, a tempting model for all future political conservatism in the United States. But even in this, differences between the North and South were exaggerated as the North expanded and conflict approached.³

¹Eugene D. Genovese, The Southern Tradition: The Achievement and Limitations of an American Conservatism (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1994), p.45.

²Eugene D. Genovese, The Political Economy of Slavery: Studies in the Economy and Society of the Slave South (New York: Random House, 1961; rpt. 1967), pp.7-10.

³Ibid., pp.16-17.

Despite Genovese's insistence that North and South represented different civilizations with different worldviews, the only essential difference he finds between the two is slavery and its defence in a South that Genovese argues is more liberal, more republican, and more democratic than the North, a South in which individualism prevails in the pursuit of liberty through limited government and the enjoyment of liberal rights.¹ Daniel Boorstin agrees that in both North and South Americans continued to claim their own adherence to America's traditions, its symbols, and to the Constitution. Each accused the other of overthrowing the Founding, of apostasy from its principles and from America's original, pure doctrine. "Each side purported to represent the authentic original doctrine," says Boorstin. In this, each wielded the power of America's Revolutionary dogma, an "original doctrine" that Boorstin pretends elsewhere is non-extant.² Its expected and "given" persuasiveness here, as demonstrated by both North and South, is demonstration enough of the living reality of this dogma.

The original dogma of the American Revolution had continued to unite America's sections throughout the Constitutional, Jacksonian, and antebellum eras. Being influenced largely by the North, Southern culture was more like America's Northern aspect than it was unlike it.³ During these years, state constitutions in the South, like their Northern counterparts, asserted the residence of their warrant in the liberal social contract and its foundational bases. The primacy of individual rights had become a deep assumption

¹Ibid., pp.16-36.

²See Boorstin's "Revolution Without Dogma," in Boorstin, The Genius of American Politics; Also see pp.151-152, 207 of this chapter above.

³Oakes, Slavery and Freedom, pp.40-41.

throughout the South. Governments were maintained as the protectors of these liberal rights, even as constitutions explicitly declared these rights as their very foundations. Constitutional bills of rights recognized and protected these foundations everywhere.¹ "Maryland's revolutionary constitution of 1776 declared that 'all government of right originates from the people and is founded in compact only'."² The Bill of Rights in Virginia's constitution of the same year declares "that all men are by nature equally free and independent, and have certain inherent rights" that are inalienable even as they compact socially through them.³ The explicit fidelity to Lockean principles in the South was only increased and exaggerated after the Revolution, according to Vernon Parrington, as the South became more and more liberal through its continual re-immersion in the liberal ideology of the Revolution.⁴

Mississippi's and Florida's constitutions, 1832 and 1838 respectively, asserted the origins of government and the source of their powers to reside in the sovereignty of liberal individuals and in the "social compact" that ensures their rights.⁵ "And even Alabama's secession constitution of 1861 retained the standard 'declaration of rights' that opened with the commonplace assertion that 'all freemen, when they form a social

¹Ibid., pp.64-67.

²As quoted in ibid., p.66.

³As quoted in ibid., pp.66-67.

⁴Vernon L. Parrington, Main Currents in American Thought: Volume Two. 1800 - 1860, The Romantic Revolution in America (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1927; rpt. 1954), pp.7-8.

⁵As quoted in Oakes, Slavery and Freedom, p.67.

compact, are equal in rights'."¹ The South, generally, was more individualistic and more adamant in the preservation of that individualism than was the North. Excessive individualism has been cited as a major cause of the Confederacy's defeat in its war for independence.² This same liberalism, however, provided much of the rationale for Southern secession in the first place, with arguments for the protection of rights and for the re-establishment of a legitimate social contract.³ In his justification of Southern secession, Alexander Stephens argued at length the liberal social contract theory of American liberalism. His detailed analysis of the United States Constitution, covering hundreds of pages, 'proves' the ideological argument of Lockean liberalism and its social contract to be the only legitimate source for any government in the United States, North or South. As a major contributor to the authorship of the Confederacy's constitution, Stephens ensured that the South was not departing from America's heritage, but instead was re-establishing and over-emphasizing it. Ultimately, the constitution of the Southern confederacy would be more democratic and more liberal than the United States Constitution.⁴

Jefferson Davis argued that the South remained in greater fidelity to the Revolution and to the principles of the Declaration of Independence than did the Northern apostates. Southerners were thus better liberals, Davis proposed as he succumbed to the

¹As quoted in ibid., p.67.

²Stampp, The Imperiled Union, p.250.

³Parrington, The Romantic Revolution in America, p.11.

⁴Ibid., pp.81-84.

pressures created by Northern abolitionists to submit to the Declaration as the final standard of judgement. The South held the principles of the Declaration in higher regard than they did union, Davis argues. They were willing to pay the highest national price for their fidelity.¹ By the time of secession and civil war, Southern ideology may have amounted to a confused liberalism, but it was liberalism nonetheless.

Some rejected the idea of a 'state of nature' that was so central to Locke's doctrine, yet these same Southerners claimed a 'natural' right to the gifts of Locke's argument, a right to life, liberty, and property. Furthermore, they continued to claim that the preservation of these rights constituted the origins and sole purpose of government and civil society. Those that dropped the 'state of nature' from their ideological rhetoric did so to pre-empt any logical ground for revolution by slaves. In effect, however, they imported slavery into the 'state of nature' as property that pre-existed the social contract and that was, thus, subject to its protection by right. The equivalent of a natural right to slavery was thus created by implication and by sleight of hand, but notably a liberal sleight of hand that absorbed slavery into Lockean property rights.² This was possible now only because property rights were "given" truths that were beyond question, so that the rhetorical elimination of a 'state of nature' to prevent African-American rights did nothing to diminish the liberal rights of American citizens, at least in the South. This contradiction was precisely the point argued by Northern abolitionists, that natural rights must be recognized for slaves. In the South, however, this argument was deflected by the

¹Davis, The Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government, p.33.

²Oakes, Slavery and Freedom, pp.68-71.

vacillation between the denial of nature as the source of rights--again possible only because white rights were nowhere threatened--and the assertion that slaves were property and, thus, slavery was a natural right. Whatever the confusion, the actual outcome of these ideological expressions was not much different from that of the ideological implications of the United States Constitution.

Central to the Southern confusion of liberalism is the thought and character of John C. Calhoun. Calhoun is a key thinker for both the antebellum South and for the United States generally. "He is the one outstanding political thinker in a period singularly barren and uncreative....Like Jefferson, he was a pervasive influence in shaping men's opinions."¹ Harry Jaffa argues that Calhoun's "sophistry", pre-eminently behind Southern secession, is antithetical to Lincoln's thought and to the thought of the Founders. It is, thus, not only a departure from American liberalism; it is a full about turn.² However, Calhoun's political thought represents little more than a reversion to Jefferson's, rather than an opposition, according to Herbert Schneider. It "scarcely deserves the recognition it has received as an original contribution to political philosophy," but "was a clever defence of minority rights without the customary defense of natural rights and of the social contract theory....but apart from these technical innovations his aims and ideas were Jeffersonian."³ Jefferson remained the most dominant thinker in Southern culture as late as 1860, an icon in an increasingly schizophrenic liberalism that combined itself with

¹Parrington, The Romantic Revolution in America, p.65.

²Jaffa, A New Birth of Freedom, p.404.

³Schneider, A History of American Philosophy, p.104.

despotism.¹

In the accommodating adaptation of American liberalism to Southern slavery, Calhoun has been seen by some as a peculiar liberal. According to Lacy Ford, Louis Hartz portrayed Calhoun as "a wayward Lockean liberal" in search of a defence for slavery "in a society lacking the materials needed for a genuine Burkean conservatism."² Ford marshalls Richard Hofstadter's assessment of Calhoun into service with Hartz's analysis to demonstrate an authoritative rendition of Calhoun as an American liberal. Ford concludes that "both Hartz and Hofstadter agreed that the Jacksonian political mainstream and Calhoun's own political heritage were pretty thoroughly Lockean and liberal."³ America's liberal consensus is said to have overwhelmed even Calhoun. However, Ford turns against this assessment, arguing not that Calhoun was conservative, but that he was a republican rather than a liberal. As a republican, Calhoun was at home in America's Founding ideas, Ford argues, and not a departure into uncharted waters.⁴

We should see, however, that Ford's Founding "republicanism" is none other than American liberalism. It is modern, not classical, and involves the procedural, institutional approach to the goals and values of liberalism, as indicated in the thought of key

¹William W. Freehling, The Road to Disunion: Secessionists at Bay, 1776-1854 (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1990), pp.121-143.

²Lacy K. Ford, "Republicanism Ideology in a Slave Society: The Political Economy of John C. Calhoun," The Journal of Southern History 54:3 (Aug. 1988), p.408.

³Ibid., p.409.

⁴Ibid., pp.409-410.

Founders such as Madison.¹ As Ford goes into detailed descriptions of Calhoun's "republicanism," he points us to Calhoun's intellectual adherence to typical features of American liberalism and capitalism. "Calhoun accepted," Ford tells us, "the most aggressively and persuasively argued economic premises of his day...the antimercantilist economic liberalism of Adam Smith."² Furthermore, Ford describes Calhoun's vice-presidential opposition to a national bank as plain evidence of his extreme "liberal antimonopoly tendencies."³ Coherently, "Calhoun championed an enhanced version of the concept of possessive individualism that lay close to the core of economic liberalism."⁴ Oddly, Ford refrains from attributing Calhoun's thought to politics, refrains from using political designations when referring to liberal ideas, persisting instead in referring to these as "economic" liberalism. Yet, Ford explicitly refers to the political elements of liberal ideology in assessing Calhoun's pursuit of "the ideal of minimal government, or of the negative state." This "was a bulwark of economic liberalism," Ford says, "which emphasized individual rights and freedom *from* government exactions and obligations" (emphasis original).⁵ Recognizing that these ideas have little or nothing to do with classical republicanism, Ford continues his description of a liberal Calhoun despite his desire to find a republican: "Calhoun's opposition to protective tariffs and his advocacy

¹See pp.179-208 of this chapter above. Also see conclusion below.

²Ford, "Republicanism Ideology in a Slave Society," p.413.

³Ibid., p.418.

⁴Ibid., p.419.

⁵Ibid., p.419.

of free trade also revealed strong strains of Smithian liberalism."¹ Into the 1840s, Calhoun's policies and arguments "emphasized the South Carolinian's economic liberalism and explicitly distanced" him from conservative politics.² Calhoun was explicit and almost violent in his adamant denunciations of Filmer's patriarchal ideas. He refused to endorse any universal theory or sentiment of hierarchical society. Instead, Calhoun "drew on a special blend of republican and liberal ideas." Although arguing that "Calhoun articulated a modified republicanism," Tracy Ford, against his intentions, provides an adequate portrayal of Calhoun the American liberal.³

Harry Jaffa tells us that Calhoun asserted that any form of government is suitable so long as its people chooses it. "The *only condition* limiting their freedom of choice," for Calhoun, "is that the government be republican" (emphasis original). This begs the question, for Jaffa, "of what constitutes the republican form of government" for Calhoun.⁴ Ford fairly answers this question, as indicated above. Calhoun's modification of earlier liberal ideas does not depart from the purpose or the approach of American liberalism. Focusing upon the machinery of government and the mechanics of representation, Calhoun's liberalism, like Madison's and other federalists', involves the quest for the preservation of Lockean liberal rights through the structures of government and the

¹*Ibid.*, p.419.

²*Ibid.*, p.420.

³*Ibid.*, pp.422-425.

⁴Jaffa, *A New Birth of Freedom*, pp.405-406.

limitations placed upon governments by constitutional rights.¹

In his "Discourse on the Constitution and Government of the United States," Calhoun rehearses the standard Lockean liberal and accepted American doctrine that government powers generally, and the United States government's powers specifically, are delegated powers from a sovereign people, held in trust in a fiduciary relationship. Once delegated, these powers are limited in their exercise to the purpose for which they are entrusted, and for which governments are instituted.² These ideas are expanded and argued more elaborately in his "Disquisition on Government." This tract reveals a mixture in Calhoun's thought, of Hobbesian and Lockean approaches to government, its origins, and the justification of its powers. Calhoun holds man to be social by nature, and yet to require government for the preservation of that sociability, reminiscent of Locke's arguments. The irrepressible self-interest of man is stronger than the impulse toward sociability and, thus, conflict in the pursuit of self-interest and self-preservation is inevitable. Bias in favour of one's own increase ensures a conflict of each against each, unless there exists government to moderate the competition. Here, we are reminded of Hobbes's state of nature and its inexorable state of war.³

Government is necessary for the preservation of society and for its perfection,

¹Parrington, The Romantic Revolution in America, pp.85-86.

²John C. Calhoun, "A Discourse on the Constitution and Government of the United States," in John C. Calhoun, A Disquisition on Government and Selections from the Discourse, ed. C.Gordon Post (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1995), pp.85-86.

³John C. Calhoun, "A Disquisition on Government," in John C. Calhoun, A Disquisition on Government and Selections from the Discourse, ed. C.Gordon Post (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1995), pp.3-6.

according to Hobbes, lest all honour of humanity be wasted in struggle to no purpose. The difference between Hobbes and Locke here is one of emphasis and timing, and of Locke's conceit.¹ Hobbes sees the inevitability of universal conflict in nature requiring man to form government and rise above himself to then acquire benefits from his interaction one with another. Locke argues that such benefits and sociability are prior to government, yet he argues the necessity of government to secure those benefits from an inevitable breakdown of natural society. Some Hobbesian universal war must result. Ultimately, Hobbes and Locke arrive at the enjoyment of rights, particularly property rights, through the institution of government. For Hobbes, government ends the war of each against each in raw nature and thus begins society. For Locke, that conflict occurs in society within nature. Government for Locke rescues society, rather than creates it. Nevertheless, both argue that government is necessary to the enjoyment of rights, only in Locke's conceit of an asocial sociability these rights are said to pre-exist government. Thus, as government is intended for the enjoyment of these rights and not responsible for their creation, its powers must be limited to ensure that it does not overstep this purpose. There must be a limited government, for Locke.

Calhoun rejects the idea of a state of nature entirely. To him, the whole argument, whether in Hobbesian or Lockean form, is rhetorical, a mythic conceit for the explanation of ourselves to ourselves, our need for government and its benefits.² However, this precisely is the position of both Hobbes and Locke, although liberals since have tended

¹See pp.166-168 of this chapter above.

²Calhoun, "A Disquisition on Government," pp.44-45.

to forget this and have treated the state of nature as a concrete historical reality. This is true especially in America, where migrating liberalism tended to encounter concrete wilderness conditions reminiscent of the idea. As this philosophical conceit is translated into ideological argument, it loses the necessity of logical rigour. Conviction is the object of ideology. Calhoun's rejection of the Lockean state of nature enables him to deny 'natural' rights to slaves. Nevertheless, the common sense absorption of liberal doctrine and the expectancy felt by Americans toward the fruits of Locke's state of nature, all accomplished through American experience, ensure that those rights are never threatened by Calhoun's incision. Liberal rights are "given" possessions in antebellum America. Calhoun continues for white Americans as though he had never rejected nature's grounds, claiming for himself and his fellows the fruits of Locke's argument in life, liberty, and property. Calhoun proceeds with his disquisition of the roles of nature, government, and right upon Lockean lines of reasoning. People stand in need of constitutional limits against the powers of government, Calhoun argues. Along with preserving liberty and property rights, constitutional limits form the very mechanism of social and human perfection.¹

In these arguments for constitutional limitations of government, Jaffa argues, Calhoun stands on common ground with "Jefferson, and the Founders generally."² Akin to the arguments of the Constitutional debates, Calhoun expresses the necessity for enlightened citizens who understand their rights and the purposes of government as the

¹Ibid., pp.6-7; Oakes, Slavery and Freedom, pp.67-68.

²Jaffa, A New Birth of Freedom, p.416.

agency of a sovereign people. He implies the need for a language to communicate these arguments generally, the continuing need for ideology. Thus, he justifies his own rehearsal and renewal--the recollection and expression anew of "given" truths.¹ To ensure popular understanding, "Calhoun stressed the basic simplicity of a constitution that said precisely what it meant and was accessible to ordinary citizens."² Without constitutional government and the enlightenment, or ideological indoctrination, of its citizens as to the rights and purposes of government, there may as well exist an absolute government, Calhoun argues in an implicit embrace of Lockean liberalism and the simultaneous rejection of Hobbesian government.³

Just as Calhoun echoes the Federalist in his call for the common communication of political science through the language of ideology, so too does he resound Madison's procedural approach for limiting government by its internal structures, by constitutional mechanisms. Good and legitimate government preserves individual liberty, for Calhoun, and secures private property arising from that liberty. Through this, the constitutional security of individual liberty and property rights, society is propelled forward into that progress that is the object of American liberalism. The rising tide of social progress raises all, perfecting society and humanity at once.⁴ Throughout his argument, Calhoun focuses upon liberty as the greatest good and upon procedural and institutional mechanisms for

¹Calhoun, "A Disquisition on Government," pp.11-12.

²Genovese, The Southern Tradition, p.43.

³Calhoun, "A Disquisition on Government," pp.11-12.

⁴Ibid., pp.40-44.

its preservation. Government overstepping its proper bounds and interfering with individual rights constitutes the greatest of all dangers faced by society, according to Calhoun. Only individual rights made effective can limit government and ensure their own self-preservation.¹ For Calhoun, individual rights are made effective by the constitutional shaping of government institutions and the entrenchment of rights within those constitutions, but also by his social mechanism of concurrent majorities. Calhoun must return to society for some remedial potential should institutional structures and "parchment barriers" fail to halt a government bent on tyranny. The idea of concurrent majorities involves a modified apprehension of American federalism, particularly in its twentieth-century varieties of "opting out" and "de-regulation." While Locke uses the weight of society as a whole to enforce individual rights against illegitimate infringements by government, Calhoun envisions a more complex society with different aspects coming to the aid of this or that individual, groups rallying to the cause against overbearing or unhearing indifference.²

In this, Jaffa sees Calhoun as "the founding father of 'interest group liberalism' in twentieth century American political science. Calhoun's theoretical writings are a landmark in the transition from individual rights to group rights as the ground of constitutionalism and the rule of law," Jaffa announces.³ However, Calhoun does not

¹Ibid., pp.46-47.

²Ibid., pp.46-49.

³Jaffa, A New Birth of Freedom, p.430.

constitute "the end of liberalism," nor does his thought commence pluralism per se.¹ Calhoun is focused upon the preservation of individual rights. These are the sole objects of his desire to recognize concurrent majorities, which never exist for their own sake. Calhoun's "groups" exist and deserve recognition only to the extent that they give effect to the preservation and enjoyment of individual rights, the same individual rights as Lockean liberalism--life, liberty, and property. Perhaps Calhoun announces the beginning of the end of classical liberalism, a shift in liberal theory towards the recognition of a general inefficacy of the individual in an increasingly complex modernity. With this shift away from the 'pure' existence and expected efficacy of the individual within society, we see the right set of circumstances for some future reactionary liberalism that will harken back to a golden age of classical liberal individualism. Perhaps this marks the origin of American conservatism, as the decline of the individual comes to be lamented by liberals intent on arresting the atrophy and by reactionaries trying to restore individual efficacy and the accompanying features of classical liberalism. In this, however, Calhoun was not a conservative, but a radical liberal reinstituting the foundations of American rights. It is his reinstitution that will render the need or opportunity for the rise of an American conservatism. Calhoun is a federalist of a different sort, an American confederalist perhaps, arguing for group pursuit and insurance of individual rights, rather than of group interests around which later "pluralist" groups would coalesce.

Whatever we choose to call Calhoun because of his procedural prescriptions and

¹The expression "the end of liberalism" is borrowed from Theodore Lowi's The End of Liberalism.

mechanistic innovations, the object of those prescriptions--limited government and the enjoyment of liberal rights to life, liberty, and property--mark Calhoun an American liberal. Jaffa's pretended rejection of Calhoun from liberalism is based upon Jaffa's own desire for a universal enjoyment of liberal rights. Ultimately, Jaffa rejects Calhoun from liberal study because Calhoun denies liberal rights to African-American slaves. People can be excluded from citizenship, according to Jaffa's own interpretation of liberalism, but they cannot be enslaved nor excluded eternally. All those capable of contracting socially must be included within civil society, he argues. Only those not capable of understanding and contracting into self-government may be excluded legitimately from citizenship. By this argument, African-Americans may be excluded from citizenship only if they are incapable of contracting socially and participating in self-government. Here, precisely, we will find a major contribution by other symbolic forms--myth, religion, and science--in providing the rationale for such exclusion. By arguing the non-capacity of African-Americans on these grounds, Calhoun and the slaveholding South were able to justify exclusions while preserving their liberal outlook. In fact, liberal ideology contains some of its own cement with which to bind these arguments.

American liberalism long had prevailed as a coherent ideology with its own exclusion of different peoples from rights and citizenship. Such exclusion is justified by the ideology, so long as those prohibited are not capable of participation in self-government.¹ Apart from women and children, people of colour had been relegated to a

¹Lane Crothers, "Individualism, Egalitarianism, and the Shining City on a Hill: The Political Cultural Foundations of Violence in American Foreign Policy," American Political Science Proceedings paper, 1999.

category of "invisible others" by American as well as European liberals since America's colonial days. Not only were African-Americans thus excluded, but "Americans extended the category of invisible others to those who failed to play their part in the high drama of progress" as well.¹

African-Americans were excluded routinely from civil society throughout the United States, not just in the South. Many Northern states went further and denied even legal admission of blacks into their borders. Indiana, Iowa, and Illinois barred the immigration of any black person, slave or free, into their states. The southern borders of these states comprised three-fifths of the American border between slave and free states. That closed border had been larger: Ohio repealed its Negro exclusion law in 1849, but its people along the southern border remained hostile to blacks. Along with their own initiations of violence, they also actively assisted Southern slave catchers. Throughout the North, Americans assisted Southerners in the retrieval of their 'property'.²

Initially, Americans had invoked the liberal rhetoric of the Revolution to uphold slavery. Virginia and South Carolina were explicit, in 1784, in their use of Lockean arguments to justify the institution. Other Southern states, such as Louisiana and Alabama, followed with equally explicit liberal declarations in subsequent decades. Their rhetoric had its provenance in colonial laws and charters. "To argue, then, that the common law made no allowance for slavery or that the South was not liberal because

¹Joyce Appleby, "Recovering America's Historic Diversity: Beyond Exceptionalism," The Journal of American History (Sept. 1992), p.421.

²McPherson, Battle Cry of Freedom, p.88; Oakes, Slavery and Freedom, pp.67-69.

slavery negated the premises of liberalism is to misunderstand the nature of the problem."¹ The language of property rights was used in the defence of slavery throughout the United States, such arguments persisting, more or less, right up into 1860 and Southern secession. Liberalism already had justified for itself the exclusion of women and Native Americans from citizenship rights. It was no accommodation to include slaves in a special category of this exclusion.² Basing justifications of slavery on liberal property rights enabled Revolutionary Americans to maintain this hypocrisy within liberalism without any sense of ideological contradiction. Jefferson's ownership of one hundred slaves was upheld by his penning the Declaration of Independence, rather than being challenged by it. American liberalism readily embraced multiple exclusions according to prejudices at that time.³ Later, mythic and religious sentiments would be brought to bear upon these earliest liberal justifications of slavery, both to attack them from the North and to shore them up in the South.

Despite this conflict, the exclusion of blacks increased throughout America's antebellum years, in both North and South. In some Northern places, the franchise was withdrawn from blacks even as it was extended to 'common' white men. Even the few blacks that were thought possessed of 'natural' rights were excluded as aliens without civil rights, according to Lockean arguments. Only propertied blacks were enfranchised in some places, consistent with American and Lockean perceptions of virtue's immanence

¹Oakes, Slavery and Freedom, pp.68-73.

²Ibid., p.73.

³Foner, The Story of Freedom, pp.32-33.

in material values. To some extent, liberal arguments were used on both sides of the problem, to warrant inclusion and exclusion of African-Americans in civil society. But mostly, liberalism was used to exclude them.¹ Thus, the South, far from being contra liberalism, is said to have embraced an ideology of "slaveholding liberalism" that was shaped largely by Madison's "proto-liberalism."² The Constitution of the United States secured not only the Declaration of Independence for post-Revolutionary generations, it also secured slavery within the territorial and ideological boundaries of the new nation. Through its preservation of slavery in the guise of liberal property rights, the Constitution created a "slaveholding republic."³

It has been argued that America's Founders might not have developed many of their celebrated ideas without their involvement with the institution of slavery. Slavery constituted a constant and tangible image of what white colonial Americans did not want for themselves. Their rhetoric against British tyranny was far from hollow for Americans living shoulder to shoulder with their own despotism. In their witness of the lives of genuinely oppressed peoples, Americans knew only too well what they feared, however symbolically.⁴ Exposure to slavery in the South led to an increased zeal in the love of

¹Laura J. Scalia, "Who Deserves Political Influence? How Liberal Ideals Helped Justify Mid Nineteenth-Century Exclusionary Policies," American Journal of Political Science 42:2 (April, 1998), pp.355-363.

²James Oakes, "From Republicanism to Liberalism: Ideological Change and the Crisis of the Old South," American Quarterly 37:4 (Fall, 1985), pp.552-554.

³Don E. Fehrenbacher, The Slaveholding Republic: An Account of the United States Government's Relations to Slavery (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2001), pp.15, 25.

⁴Benjamin Schwarz, "What Jefferson Helps to Explain," Atlantic Monthly 279:3 (March, 1997), pp.64-66.

freedom among whites there. The accompanying embrace of liberal ideology pre-dated the Revolution and did not subside through the years leading up to civil war and its second struggle for independence and freedom. Throughout these years, the language of liberalism constituted the sole ideological communication, a compelling language that spread even to the slaves themselves.¹ As blacks began to invoke the symbols of the prevailing ideology, along with Northern opponents of slavery, the apparent contradictions of a liberal despotism began to demand ideological adjustments. Thus, the modifications by Calhoun and others, as noted above. The need to develop other rationales for slavery became apparent, as liberalism would fail to hold the contradiction when pushed to logical extremes. When not pushed so, Americans have been quite comfortable ignoring the gap between their ideals and the actual condition of their political life and its institutions.² That the people of a country do not live up to their professed ideals in some or all of their political endeavours does not warrant the denunciation of their self-appraisal according to those principles.

James Fenimore Cooper's *American Democrat* explicitly justifies the exclusiveness of liberal democracy in America by pointing to this gap, rather than denouncing it. Cooper argues that the Declaration of Independence involves a "theory" of America, and that theory and practice always must differ. In fact, he argues that liberal property rights guarantee that "equality of condition is rendered impossible." The shape of other political rights in any liberal society guarantee exclusions, he maintains, such as women and

¹Foner, *The Story of Freedom*, pp.31-35.

²See Huntington, *American Politics*.

children from the franchise, immigrants from the presidency, or felons and paupers from full participation. Exclusions are justified. Furthermore, slavery is justified within the states that uphold it by their preservation of property rights.¹

While he himself ignores the gap between the American ideal of religious freedom and its actual enjoyment (or lack of it) through American history, Henry Steele Commager criticizes Alexis de Tocqueville for having overlooked inequalities and undemocratic features of the United States. Tocqueville ignores American tolerance of the gap between the ideal and the real, Commager charges. Americans believe in the opportunities promised by their dogma of equality, Commager argues, and thus they accept the inequality of actual conditions. The end of slavery in the United States was accomplished by warfare, he maintains correctly, and "not by the arguments of reason, of morals, or of economy....It is still true that the most important and the most spectacular constitutional decision in our history was made at Appomattox."² This was not a struggle between two ideologies, but within one. Nor did it, nor could it, eradicate all difference between ideal and actual conditions. Only enough change was accomplished to soothe the American conscience, to reduce the gap to tolerable conditions once more. Commager continues his analysis of American ideals into the twentieth century, demonstrating a continued exclusive liberalism to exist in the United States right up to the present. Blacks continued to be excluded from full participation after the Civil War. Immigrants, women, and poverty-stricken Americans have never enjoyed the full fruits of citizenship. People

¹Cooper, The American Democrat, pp.107-108.

²Commager, Commager on Tocqueville, pp.36-37.

of other countries are never treated liberally by the United States, but are treated politically instead. They are enemies, at least potentially, and are treated as though in a 'state of nature'. They are excluded from the enjoyment of the fruits of civil society, from enjoying the rights and benefits of Americans.¹ This is all well and justified by principles of American government and its ideology. The definition of non-citizens and of varying degrees of participation is a practice engaged in by all governments. American liberalism always has been exclusive.

As Northerners increasingly attacked slavery in antebellum America, it was not upon the charge that Southerners were "un-American," only that they were not acting in accordance with American principles that they themselves shared. Southerners were not excused as illiberal, but were reprovved precisely because they were supposed to be liberal. They were being called to repentance in a language that they shared with their Northern brethren. Because they shared this language, Southerners were forced to respond to the terms of liberal ideology. Thus, as Northerners began to decry the Southern exclusion of African-Americans, Southerners were required to justify that exclusion in liberal terms. The sleight of hand that made slaves into property could only withstand logical scrutiny if African-Americans were not fit for civil society and self-government. Thus, the need for supporting rationale became apparent. Racialism emerged with justifications in mythic, religious, and scientific terms to warrant the exclusion of blacks from liberal rights.² A "scientific racialism" that relegated blacks to the lowest echelons

¹*Ibid.*, pp.38-49.

²Phillips, *The Cousins' Wars*, pp.324-325.

of a racial hierarchy pretended to justify their exclusion as unfit for civil society, satisfying the needs of liberal argument.¹ A resurrection of the myth of Ham, and a retreat into Old Testament religion generally, played supporting roles to the preservation of this ideological exclusion.² Ultimately, the South was able to preserve for itself its image and self-conception as a liberal democracy.³

The antebellum expansion of slavery signalled the increasing power of capitalism in the South. Not only were profits from slavery invested in projects of material development, but so too did the pressures of capitalism for efficiency and economy force the westward expansion of the South into cheaper and cheaper lands. The South actively participated in the larger capitalist world of markets and was forced to deal with its 'rules'. In the eastern portions of the South, slavery drove smaller farmers from the land and into the workforce of wage labourers. Thus, where industrialization was the engine of capitalism in the North, slavery was the engine of capitalism in the South. The rhetoric of liberal ideology was the political justification of this expanding capitalism, North and South.⁴ "Slaveholding liberals envisioned a world of competitive individualism rather than community-oriented interdependency. They spoke not of independence but of personal achievement. Success rather than virtue became the major qualification for officeholding. Consumption took a place alongside production as a sign of a healthy and prosperous

¹McDougall, Promised Land, Crusader State, p.88.

²See pp.455-458 of chapter 4 on myth below.

³Parrington, The Romantic Revolution in America, pp.74-76.

⁴Oakes, "The Crisis of the Old South," pp.555-569.

society."¹ The political power of slaveholders came from their financial power as capitalist participants in the economy. These were capitalists with influence. There were no 'rights of the masters', no 'aristocratic privileges'. There were no other rights but the liberal rights of property owners. "It was precisely this distinction between liberalism and aristocracy that allowed so many Southerners to speak of their society as egalitarian--on the assumption, of course, that slaves were not part of society."²

North and South in America had enough in common to rebel together against British colonial rule to form a new nation. "That unity was as significant as the American Revolution, no more and no less."³ This unity was an accomplishment of liberal ideology. The national reunification after the Civil War demonstrates the abiding strength of this ideological unity. North and South were not so different as to disintegrate in this nation-defining event. Expansion had forced a re-definition of America, but one of renewal and reaffirmation of the liberal principles of her Founding.⁴ There had been no distinct nation in the South, no mystical unity. Many Southerners would have preferred to stay in the Union. Even as they left, they took with them the Constitution, laws, and traditions of their United States. Confederate nationalism existed only as a dream for the future, not

¹Ibid., p.569.

²Oakes, Slavery and Freedom, pp.76-77.

³Ibid., p.79.

⁴William Lee Miller, The First Liberty: Religion and the American Republic (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986), pp.22-23, 504-512.

an expression of the past and present culture.¹ Full of national self-doubt, without a passionate dedication or deep commitment to the cause, Northern victory was acceptable in the end. Southerners were Americans, believing in the American Dream, despite their formal break with the North. They were brethren.²

North and South may have applied liberal principles differently. As Lincoln noted, different people may mean different things by "liberty." There is diversity within America's liberal consensus. But the differences and misunderstandings between North and South were not polar extremes, they were not essential differences.³ They were not ideological differences. The South feared the loss of their liberty to apply American principles according to their own interpretation. The "party of Lincoln," as well as Lincoln himself, had given them cause for that fear. As the South was forced to defend the institution of slavery, their liberal ideological arguments were rejected by the North, forcing them increasingly into stronger mythic and religious invocations that may make the South appear to be a different culture, for a time.⁴ However, "by explaining conflict on the grounds of a multivocal liberal consensus, it not only offers a persuasive theory of civil-war causation but also explains the overall patterns of continuity and change in

¹Richard E. Beringer, et al., Why the South Lost the Civil War (Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1986), pp.66-78; Stampp, The Imperiled Union, pp.256-257.

²Stampp, The Imperiled Union, pp.247-267.

³David M. Potter, "The Causes of the Civil War," in Why the South Lost the Civil War, ed. Beringer, et al., p.322.

⁴David F. Ericson, "Sorting Out Theories of Civil War Causation," American Political Science Association annual meeting, 2000.

American history."¹ And so we must turn to these other voices, to religion and to myth, if we are to apprehend America's political culture.

¹Ibid.

Chapter Three: American Gospel

"...we have taken for granted that God himself drew the plans of our career and marked its outlines in our history and on our very ground. This is what I have called the sense of 'givenness'."

(Daniel Boorstin, The Genius of American Politics)

Section A: Renewal, Revival, Revolution

i. The Temple of American History:

The earliest American polities took shape under the auspices of "God's will," basing governments upon scripture and commanding commitment to the political covenant as it arose unanimously from the pre-existing religious order known by all. Religious offenses were seen as crimes because of their injury to political foundations.¹ Even the Southern economic pre-occupation was bolstered and justified by a mythico-religious context within which enterprise gained meaning and permanence.² Jon Butler asserts that any inter-colonial religious diversity is outweighed by a more convincing and stunning similarity. The intermingling of American political and religious realms forged a public ceremonialism that joined the sacred and secular in places, institutions, and persons. This was especially swift and true in Virginia, a supposed economic enterprise. Throughout the American colonies, religion and politics provided mutual support and legitimacy, reinforcing the social, political, and religious status of individuals and of

¹Henry, The Intoxication of Power, pp.31-35.

²Perry Miller, Errand Into the Wilderness (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1956), pp.99-140; Peterson, Ham and Japheth, pp.13-16.

beliefs.¹ We see then, that religion provides more than a legitimizing sanction. Religion converges with myth to provide politics and ideology with a 'ready-made world' to stand upon, but with which politics and ideology must also converge--even revolutionary ideologies that strive to destroy pre-existing 'worlds' must themselves create their own, or build upon some other mythic or religious foundations. They must have an intuitive or emotional consensus about how things are so that they can then explain that status logically and direct practical responses to it.

Ideology requires this consensus base for its mass appeal, for its direction of belief into action as "political mass movements." Rather than being exclusively elite knowledge, ideology brings political ideas into the realm of ordinary belief, a realm of common mentality where myth and religion are potent symbolic forms.² Typically, people of "lower-income groups and those with less formal schooling" are more 'believing', especially in things religious. However, even Americans with higher education and incomes are surprisingly religious:

one ought not overlook that 50 *percent* of U.S. *college graduates* await Jesus Christ's return. As Gallup and Castelli observed in 1989, the United States is nearly unique in the Western world with its "unmatched combination of high levels of education and high levels of religious belief and activity."³

Religion, moreover, continues along with myth as a unifying social force in America,

¹Jon Butler, "The Plural Origins of American Revivalism," in Diversity and Unity in Early North America, ed. Philip D. Morgan (New York: Routledge, 1993), pp.151-156.

²Wolin, Politics and Vision, p.194.

³Paul Boyer, When Time Shall Be No More: Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1992), pp.13-15.

cutting across class lines and shaping a common sense of things. Americans unite in millennial expectations, in reverence for the Founding Fathers, or in admiration and emulation of Boone, Crockett, and a host of mythic figures. As well, ideology acts according to policies based upon and incorporating these underlying common sense realities. Ideology's active impulse is most potent in America when it 'uses' mythic and religious pre-suppositions.¹

Although liberalism is a humanist, non-religious, and ultimately anti-religious ideology, the American Founding demonstrates how two opposed forces can feed upon each other as they converge toward similar political ends. Ralph Hancock explains that interpretations of a liberal founding and a religious founding in America are not opposed, but are "two sides of a single coin" that converge in their commitment to secular liberal progress.² Furthermore, Lockean liberalism and its later Jeffersonian variation, however slight, both rely upon external sources of virtue to moderate centrifugal social forces. Both, therefore, looked to the Great Provider to temper political culture. Both built upon the religious framework within which a liberal society arose in early America.³

The core beliefs of America's civil religion derive from Biblical archetypes. Most immediately, however, these beliefs derive from American history as supposed reenactments of those archetypes. Persons and events of national significance gain cosmic meaning as reincarnations of scriptural models. The sanctification of these heroic

¹Mullins, "Ideology and Political Culture," pp.129-130.

²Ralph C. Hancock, "Religion and the Limits of Limited Government," The Review of Politics 50 (1988): 695-699.

³Kloppenber, "The Virtues of Liberalism," pp.22-23.

moments cascades into national institutions and into the nation itself. American leaders are canonized: Lincoln becomes a Christ, Washington a fusion of Moses and Joshua. As leaders become sacred, their legacy--the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, and the Gettysburg Address, for example--becomes American scripture. America is, thus, thought to be an ongoing revelation of God through "the transcendent movement of history."¹

As the content of the civil religion is revealed in American history, so the active course of that religion is visible as interpreter and instigator of the American nation. The past is continually revived in America, through a religious interpretation in which history becomes a matter of faith. American history becomes a living tradition. Ideological tenets and their vehicles become vibrant, sacred teachings. Thus, the historical sources of American beliefs "are not mere historical documents, but also *living* documents, ...the testaments of our history."² With a tendency "to imagine that the crucial documents of our past were somehow delivered on an American Sinai, direct from God to the American people,"³ American historians become High Priests, "secular theologians" charged with the preservation, description, and defence of the American covenant. The social contract becomes holy again.⁴ Such religious interpretation of the world involves awe and

¹Cherry, "Two American Sacred Ceremonies," pp.749-750; Engel, "The Theology of the Republic," p.52; Maier, American Scripture, passim.

²Boorstin, An American Primer, pp.xiv-xvi.

³Ibid., p.xvi.

⁴Engel, "The Theology of the Republic," p.63.

reverence for history as action that constitutes a declaration of faith.¹

As prominent American historians participate in the development and direction of civil religion and in its inculcation by America's citizenry, so historical interpretation in America typically involves indoctrination in "good citizenship," civics rather than history.² Recent cries for schools to return to the teaching of Americanism are recognitions of this original nation-building function of public education in the United States. Implicitly, they are admissions that cultural "pluralism" can only be tolerated within the context of an over-arching, all-encompassing Americanism, the unity of petty diversities. America's "man of the century," Franklin Delano Roosevelt, announces the civil religious admixture that forms the strong gravitational centre of America's narrow orbit: "I am a Christian and a Democrat--that's all."³ Roosevelt affirms for all true Americans "that Americanism is a matter of the mind and heart; Americanism is not, and never was, a matter of race and ancestry. A good American is one who is loyal to this country and to our creed."⁴

The separation of church and state in the United States is a red herring, misused by some and misleading to others. It is a formal, constitutional conceit that utterly fails to purge American politics of religion. Serious historians do not shrink from America's

¹Michael Novak, "Religion as Autobiography and Story," in Religion American Style, ed. McNamara, pp.30-35.

²Gore Vidal, Screening History (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1992), p.82.

³Franklin Delano Roosevelt, as quoted in Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., "The Man of the Century," American Heritage 45:3 (May-June, 1994): 83.

⁴Franklin D. Roosevelt, as quoted in Schlesinger, The Disuniting of America, p.37.

religious past. American courts have used history to acknowledge the long co-penetration of religion and politics in the United States. The history of American public schools is itself an acute history of American civil religion.¹ Until recently, American "schools were unabashedly Protestant in their prayers, morning devotions and general religious orientation. But they were also the depositories and purveyors of the events and documents of the national religion." Despite apparent secularization of the schools through limited Court action, "in the texts and classrooms students are still instructed in the basic documents of the civil religion (including references to God and providence), the religion's heroes and martyrs are still celebrated on their birthdays and on Memorial Day, the American ceremonial calendar is still observed."² Religion is alive and well in American public life.

American history is sanctified by an original religiosity that permeates down through its years. Hartz reserves acknowledgement of religious intrusions into America's liberal mind, limiting its influence to only a secular Hebraic analogy during the Revolution and to the sectional fanaticism and backwardness of the zealous and thus illiberal South.³ This secular liberal interpretation of the American tradition is an ideological myth that ignores other potent gifts of the derivative nature of the American mind. Whereas America constitutes a liberal fragment, there is no question that America's

¹Fowler, Religion and Politics in America, pp.268-269; Robert Michaelson, "Is the Public School Religious or Secular?" in The Religion of the Republic, ed. Smith; Lynnell Hancock, "History Lessons," Newsweek (July 10, 1995): 28-32.

²Cherry, "Two American Sacred Ceremonies," pp.750-751.

³Hartz, The Liberal Tradition in America, pp.37, 146, 168.

mind also has been self-absorbed in inherited religious sources of apocalyptic Christianity.¹ The American fragment is at least as Puritan as it is liberal:

...central themes of the Puritan Awakening pervaded all of the British colonies in North America. If we accept the fact that Puritanism in some form influenced most of the denominations that broke off from the Church of England in the seventeenth century, and if we acknowledge that, even within Anglicanism, Puritanism had its exponents, we will have a better understanding of the importance of the Puritan Awakening on the nascent ideology of Americans. It is sometimes forgotten that in Anglican Virginia there were Puritans and Quakers who upheld this ideology, and Puritan views in sectarian form were widely diffused in Maryland and Rhode Island, which tolerated all sects. Quakers espoused their form of Puritanism widely, but especially in the colonies of Pennsylvania and New Jersey. In fact, most of the churches in the colonies were decidedly Calvinistic in their theology; ...In short, a broad Calvinistic Puritan base was the common feature of the colonial world view, and it grew stronger rather than weaker as the years went by. In this respect, Puritanism was the prevalent ideology in the colonial period.²

Being truly religious, the circumscription of reality by earliest Americans was total: Puritanism constituted a broad theological, political and social theory.³

American civil and Christian religiosities converge in a redemptive history of America as the political messiah.⁴ The potency of this image is evident throughout American history. Salvation is to be achieved in America by transcending history.

¹Butler, Awash in a Sea of Faith, p.5.

²McLoughlin, Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform, pp.38-39. McLoughlin's use of "ideology" here signals an unconscious awareness of the blending of symbols in early American culture, so that Puritan myth, religion, and a nascent liberal ideology properly constitute the prevalent "political culture" of the colonial period, rather than constituting the prevalent "ideology." Nevertheless, this only bolsters McLoughlin's assertions of the pervasiveness of the ideas streaming out of Puritanism and of their dominance in American thought.

³Ibid., p.27.

⁴Henry, The Intoxication of Power, p.104.

America is an escape to something new, or renewed. It involves a recovery or restoration of supposed original purity. The American quest is one through time rather than space, a quest for innocence.¹ Even "Manifest Destiny" has included the Puritan pursuit of this pristine, "original" condition. Its 'hunger' for land and material expansion, in this sense, is nothing more than an insatiable appetite for opportunity, for new locales and circumstances for acting out and proving this righteousness. Locke's theory of property and its vindication of usurpers by a "use it or lose it" approach merely provides a "rational" argument for this potent religious anticipation and its own sense of goodness. This remains true of later global aspirations and for economic expansions. Each frontier opens upon a vast vista of innocence, upon new opportunities to assert and renew original vitalities. America has been a land of renewal from its earliest moment.²

ii. Colonial America as Puritan Renewal:

America's first self-conception is defined by the re-enactment of religious myth.³ As soon-to-be Americans voyaged across the Atlantic "Red Sea," the New World became a "New Israel," Maryland became an Edenic "Earthly Paradise," Georgia was the "Promised Canaan."⁴ John Winthrop's "city upon a hill" and John Cotton's harmoniously separate yet unified church and state quickly suffered ridicule in Europe. Some took this American fusion of sacred and secular histories as blasphemous. Ultimately, European

¹Hughes, "Recovering First Times," pp.196-198.

²Noll, A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada, p.42.

³Henry, The Intoxication of Power, pp.38-39.

⁴Bellah, The Broken Covenant, pp.6-8, 13-15.

clergymen would campaign for declarations of "Americanism" as an official heresy. By the twenty-first century, American "philosophers" would strive to rescue their updated version of "Americanism" from equivalent denunciations by twentieth-century continental thinkers.¹ Thus spurned by orthodox Europeans, early American prophets re-conceived America as an "errand into the wilderness." America became Israel struggling for Zion in the land of Canaan. Old and New Testaments converged in anticipation of the New Jerusalem.² This self-attribution of the Hebrew myth guaranteed a standing for the American enterprise within the careful Providence of God. A sense of chosenness and mission ensured a claim to global significance that has driven American history ever since. This remains "almost as relevant to an understanding of America today as it is to an understanding of the Puritans of 1630. ...Like the Puritan, the modern American also has a strong sense of being a part of a chosen people with a mission to perform."³

These Biblical mythic foundations provide Americans with a sense of law, duty, and right as preceding political organization. Colonial Americans are, thus, prepared to

¹James W. Ceaser's Reconstructing America is a prime example of such attempts to rescue American thought and elevate its stature against the dismissals of serious European philosophers. Trying to restore some imagined "real America" from denigration across a sea of naysayers, Ceaser embarks on his own "errand in the wilderness" that marks him well as a twentieth-century John Winthrop.

²John Winthrop, "A Modell of Christian Charity (1630)," in God's New Israel: Religious Interpretations of American Destiny, ed. Conrad Cherry (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1971), pp.42-43; John Cotton, "A Discourse About Civil Government," in Church and State in American History, ed. John F. Wilson (Boston: D.C. Heath & Co., 1965), pp.3-7; Bercovitch, The American Jeremiad, pp.39-41; Gustav H. Blanke, "'God's Base of Operations': Mormon Variations on the American Sense of Mission," B.Y.U. Studies 20 (Winter 1979), pp.85-86.

³Towner, "John Winthrop," in An American Primer, ed. Boorstin, pp.27, 42-43; Cherry, God's New Israel, pp.27-28.

embrace Lockean liberal accounts of the social contract and the limited role of government as guardian of these "natural" rights. Religion forms the foundations of American self-governance.¹ Believing that the Bible is possessed of "absolutely authoritative answers to all questions of human and social action," early Americans subjected both church and state to Biblical law. The separation of church and state, then, amounted to only a division of administration rather than of power or principle. Churches carried responsibility for sacred things, the state for things political. Yet, both realms were perceived as administered under and by God through Christ with the admonition that the separation be kept harmonious. Church and state were supposed to be coordinates rather than opposing contraries.² This notion of a separation that is somehow harmoniously unified has coloured the politics of church and state in America since the beginning.

Despite arguments for the actual separation of church and state, Americans generally have seen themselves within a mythic and religious context under an over-seeing and favouring Divine Providence.³ Thus, the confusion of America's politicized religiosity and religious politics. Throughout American history, ordinary and extraordinary events have been perceived as being under God's watchful eye. The mundane details of everyday life and even the reporting of those details were deemed Providential.

¹Henry, The Intoxication of Power, pp.29-30, 40; Morgan, Wilderness at Dawn, pp.12-13.

²McLoughlin, Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform, p.31; Cotton, "A Discourse About Civil Government," pp.4-5.

³Bailyn, The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution, p.33.

Since Providence was believed to permeate and make possible all of American life, God was "seen" in greater accomplishments as well.¹ "Providential" town building in Connecticut led New Haven's founders to agree to base their political order explicitly "upon the Scriptures." The Mayflower Compact, originally the "Mayflower Covenant," was sandwiched between God's hands.² The religious invocation of the Mayflower Compact reflects the transparency of the social foundations of politics in American culture.³ Religious co-operation with civil powers in America transfigures the political covenant, making it a Divine project. As the "Mayflower Covenant" becomes the "Mayflower Compact," the political contract is invested with meaning and direction; rich purposes are transmitted from God and religion to man and politics.

John Winthrop celebrated his election "by the Company to be their Governor" as a calling from God: "I have assurance that my charge is of the Lorde and that he hath called me to this worke."⁴ Success and prosperity were the self-proclaimed tokens of worthiness and God's approval. Furthermore, Winthrop was assured of his own worthiness for office by his election according to persistent American qualifications: being "a godly

¹Henry, The Intoxication of Power, pp.31-32; William Bradford, "The History of the Plymouth Plantation," in The Frontier in American Literature, ed. Durham and Jones, pp.33-35, 37; Marty, Pilgrims in Their Own Land, pp.60-65.

²Samuel Eliot Morison, "The Mayflower Compact," in An American Primer, ed. Boorstin, p.24.

³Henry, The Intoxication of Power, p.29.

⁴John Winthrop, as quoted in Lorin Baritz, City on a Hill: A History of Ideas and Myths in America (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1964), p.12.

man and highly approved among them," his fellow Americans.¹ Being chosen by other visible saints bolstered such assurance--the franchise in Massachusetts was then restricted to full church members. Later, it was extended to "half way" members by the "half way covenant" of 1662, virtually an expression of the terms of America's present franchise.² This "half way" membership of numerous present-day Americans is a stumbling block for critics of the American civil religion who argue that its members cannot be identified. The loosened social cohesion of "half way" citizenship involves declining authority and social control. This leads to repeated religious revivals of political authority to restore American integrity.

The first Puritan decline met with lamentations that became "the common, persistent ritual" in American public life, political sermons that decry decline and apostasy, and that call Americans to repentance in a renewal of the original covenant.³ Election days became sacred days in which colonists were subjected to recitations of God's great blessings and His warnings against infidelity.⁴ Distinct from "regular" Sunday sermons, these "occasional" sermons were "preached at the first meeting each year of the legislatures, on special days of fasting or thanksgiving, before militia companies, and at other signal moments in a community's life."⁵ Contemporary political speeches often

¹William Bradford, "The History of Plymouth Plantation," p.37.

²John F. Wilson, Church and State in American History (Boston: D.C. Heath & Co., 1965), p.xxi.

³Butler, Awash in a Sea of Faith, p.172.

⁴Bercovitch, The American Jeremiad, p.44; Cherry, God's New Israel, p.27.

⁵Noll, A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada, pp.45-46.

continue the general style and purpose of these occasional sermons. As well, these sermons are the ones published, then and now, making them "timeless" contributions to the "American record."

Jon Butler maintains that in the ritual ceremonialism of these "occasional" sermons, an effective establishment of religion was "firmly replanted" in America. "Cities became centers of ecclesiastical splendor" as Americans "understood that individual religious observance prospered best in the New World environment through the discipline of coercive institutional authority." The civil religiosity of preaching before Assemblies and other public sermons was bolstered by an elite ceremonialism that included "installation ceremonies for public offices, silver maces for magistrates' courts, engraved seals for commissions, and duplication of English court and legal ceremonies." This rising civil religion became increasingly important in crystallizing public opinion, its "occasions held immense ceremonial importance. Here were unparalleled opportunities to speak to a broad range of men and women in local society, not just church members." Always, these sermons denounced moral and political decay as intertwined, harkening citizens to their religio-political foundations: "Ministers thundered out the word of God through the authority of the state," laying down the pattern for American posterity.¹

Cotton Mather's jeremiads involved a renewal of early colonial history, revising the past according to the maturing civil religion. Mather's invocation of Jesus Christ as the hand that carried Americans across the waters to purify His church is coupled with

¹Butler, Awash in a Sea of Faith, pp.128, 168, 172-173.

an Old Testament covenant renewal as the basis for continued success in North America.¹ Renewed is John Winthrop's assertion that smallpox was God's plague. This sense of righteousness was intensified by Mather's account of a contemporary Divine annihilation of Indians. This is an early manifestation of a felt destiny for Americans as heirs to the Promised Land: "The woods were almost cleaned of those pernicious creatures to make room for a better growth."² American religion prepared the ground for property owners and their vindication by liberal rights.

American history became "Christ's Great Deeds in America," in a strange mixture of Old and New Testament typology. Americans were likened to Israel struggling against Indians who were likened to Canaanites and other lawless tribes. As well, Mather likened early Christians to Americans among Indians who were "lost tribes," Jews in their "ancient work of opposing Christ." He reminded Americans that their "biblical 'wilderness' is not an area uninhabited but the dwelling place of devils--like that desert in which Jesus was tested."³ Amidst his own attempt to revive missionary efforts to the Indians--"The seal of Massachusetts Bay, Mather remembered, depicted an Indian quoting the biblical words 'Come over and help us'"⁴--we are reminded of the ambiguity of the

¹Cotton Mather, Magnalia Christi Americana: or The Ecclesiastical History of New England, 2 vols. (New York: Russell & Russell, 1967). Also see Stout, "Rhetoric and Reality in the Early Republic," p.68, and Bercovitch, The American Jeremiad, pp.86-87, 92.

²Cotton Mather, Magnalia Christi Americana 2:388-91. Also see Garry Wills, Under God: Religion and American Politics (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1990), p.139.

³Cotton Mather, Magnalia Christi Americana 2:390; Wills, Under God, pp.137-139.

⁴Marty, Pilgrims in Their Own Land, p.110.

Indian as a symbol in the American imagination. As Jews, Indians retained a noble lineage and must be converted; as Canaanites, they must be swept off in Divine judgement. Increasingly, as American destiny was made manifest, Providence seems to have joined with American governments in favouring the latter interpretation and the destruction of America's Canaanites.¹ Where religious vision is clouded, unable to determine upon a clear course of annihilation, America's later absorption of liberal ideology enables decision. Here, ideological arguments will come to support the realization of earlier mythic and religious sensibilities, and help blaze the trail across the American West.

The catastrophes that befell American colonies in the latter part of the seventeenth-century--the near ruin of the colonies in King Philip's War, for instance, and the earthquakes, floods, and famine that plagued settlers alongside savages--were interpreted alternately as judgements, punishments inflicted by God upon a backsliding people, or as a grand human participation in the unfolding of God's will. Weary victims were subjected to ministering 'Jeremiahs' calling them to repentance, to fidelity and an appeasing sacrifice to God. This outlook was offset by the optimism and expectation of celebrated heroes. Their victories were seen as manifestations of God's will and a

¹Thomas Morton's New English Canaan (1637), a celebration of America as a second promised land, filled with milk and honey and friendly red men that Americans should join and emulate, was poor prophecy. A century and a half of Indian wars, the annihilation of entire peoples, was celebrated as the 'righteous' approach to the Indian 'problem' in Timothy Dwight's The Conquest of Canaan (1785). This gave a decisive identification of ancient Israel with the new United States, in which redskins joined redcoats as the devil's armies--and post-Revolutionary Indian wars became a mopping up, a police action. See Drinnon, Facing West, pp.14, 18, 48-55, 66, and Slotkin, Regeneration Through Violence, pp.58-93.

bestowal of Divine favour. These examples communicated to colonists the efficacy of man in the movement of history towards its millennial ends.¹ Indians were slaughtered according to "sufficient light from the word of God," as human agency in history now began to take up the work where God's plagues had failed.² Success and relative prosperity, however, were again followed by spiritual decline into the eighteenth-century.³

Despite the outward religiosity of American governments and public life, a general concern ran through New England Puritanism at the turn of the century. Official civil-religious invocations of the Bible, such as New Jersey's declaration that "Righteousness exalteth a nation," seemed insincere when "men often undertook full membership [as Puritans] only just before assuming local political office."⁴ A mature institutionalized religion struggled with a growing awareness of its own declining relevance in personal lives.⁵ The punishment of religious offenders by the state and the persistent berating of all Americans by the clergy involved what increasingly seemed to be an illegitimate use of authority. Churches and governments housed unconverted agents who claimed Divine authority. Societies were divided by such abuse; "'estrangement' between the ordinary

¹Hawke, The Colonial Experience, pp.243, 301; Slotkin, Fatal Environment, p.55; Henry, The Intoxication of Power, pp.36-37; Boyer, When Time Shall Be No More, p.69.

²John Underhill, as quoted in Hawke, The Colonial Experience, p.157.

³Baritz, City on a Hill, pp.47-48.

⁴Proverbs 14:34, as quoted on the Provincial Seal of New Jersey, 1697. See Federer, America's God and Country, p.472; Butler, "The Plural Origins of American Revivalism," p.153.

⁵Cantor, "Great Awakening and Enlightenment," p.38; James West Davidson, The Logic of Millennial Thought: Eighteenth-Century New England (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1977), pp.95-97.

people and their leaders in church and state had created unbearable stress," pointing to the need for new sources of legitimacy for both civil and religious authority.¹

iii. Reviving the Spirit, Uniting the Nation:

Coincident with the rise of ideological thinking to prominence in public life, the Great Awakening began as stirrings of emotional religiosity in response to this decay of the outward covenant. This led to a search for a more inclusive membership system than the half way covenant, some manner of 'harvesting' lost souls into the controlling embrace of authority.² Jonathan Edwards became involved in the beginnings of a religious revival as a "foretaste of coming glory," directed at the hearts of all Protestants, regardless of sectarian creeds. Americans became unified in experience and outlook in this revival that ultimately set the stage for renewed national religious and political legitimacy.³

Awakening Americans responded to the concern for an inner covenant, for an America where political actions and beliefs coincide with some obligation to a "higher law".⁴ This thrust towards the elimination of any gap between the actual and professed America remains the primary motivation of all American renewal. The religious infusion of politics has become typical in America, a spiritual response to decline and hypocrisy in the public arena. Beginning in response to a crisis of authority, the Great Awakening

¹McLoughlin, Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform, pp.55, 58.

²Noll, A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada, p.87.

³Davidson, The Logic of Millennial Thought, pp.122-125; Cantor, "Great Awakening and Enlightenment," p.39.

⁴Bellah, The Broken Covenant, pp.20-21.

blazed a trail for later religio-political revivals. Understanding that people cannot be led from above, but that they must be led from 'within,' Edwards laid down a pattern for American leadership, setting out to penetrate the masses in two ways: from alongside them as a man of the people, and from within through reason.¹

The Awakening sought to renew an original fidelity to American beliefs and to re-establish authority by grounding it in the new legitimacy of "the voice of the people as the voice of God." The democratic appearance of this sentiment is belied by persistent demands of revivalists for more authority, and must be understood as an invitation to all Americans to participate in God's will rather than an antinomian declaration of independence.² The method of this mass participation, human reason, was 'revealed' as the agency of God's participation in the actual world. Sharing common elements and themes with the Enlightenment, the Awakening embraced reason "to banish mystery from the universe" in a revived faith that was accessible to all men.³ Sermons began to explain catastrophes scientifically as having been caused by God indirectly through nature, an "agency of second causes" that could be studied and understood rationally. In this manner, American religion harnessed the forces of the Enlightenment, much as Thomas Aquinas had done with the Aristotelian infusion that challenged the Church's legitimacy

¹Miller, Errand Into The Wilderness, p.163; Marty, Pilgrims in Their Own Land, pp.131-133.

²McLoughlin, Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform, pp.86-87; Bercovitch, The American Jeremiad, p.97; Butler, Awash in a Sea of Faith, pp.179-181.

³Cantor, "Great Awakening and Enlightenment," p.42.

into the thirteenth century.¹ However American science explained events, God still caused them, but by 1755 the potency of reason and human agency had demonstrated man's superior capacity for the actuation of Divine will. Human history, as opposed to natural history, became the script of Divine intervention through religious and political "tumults."² Thus, the new primacy of interest in human affairs and the discovery of new "sciences" such as economics and politics--the latter being the "divine science."³ This general blending of religion, morals, and science has characterized American political science from its initiation and continues sub-consciously, giving American studies an unacknowledged yet distinctive eighteenth-century flavour.⁴

The introduction of liberal ideas and their portrayal as the will of God involved a politicization of American pulpits as never before. This trend towards humanism, however, was offset by a retention of key religious concepts in association with political thought. This enabled a religious revivification of the political world to pre-empt any scientific expulsion of God from the *civitate*.⁵ Even the movement into Deism "was embraced by only a handful of Americans," its rational god discoverable through reason alone being too elusive for most seekers. The most radical of Deists, Thomas Paine, has

¹For a discussion of Edwards's integration of Lockean thought into American Christianity, see Pangle, The Spirit of Modern Republicanism, pp.22-24.

²Davidson, The Logic of Millennial Thought, pp.98-103.

³John Adams, as quoted in Skousen, The Making of America, p.195. Also see Cantor, "Great Awakening and Enlightenment," p.42.

⁴Noll, A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada, pp.156-157.

⁵Powers Smith, Yankees and God pp.226-227.

lost his standing among American Founders due to his denunciations of America's Biblical god. Yet, even his Deism is not so foreign to civil religion with its belief in a god and its subsequent imposition of political behaviour as religious duty, its demand for religious tolerance, and the prescription for living life according to the expectation of accountability in an afterlife and attendant punishments or rewards. These are the fundamental elements of civil religion, Paine and the Deist minority departing from other Americans only in their methodology, that is their rigid insistence upon the lone rule of reason in the discovery of those religiously imposed political obligations.¹

Although the religious embrace of reason avoided the divisive potential of such individualism, an ever-increasing religious pluralism threatened the social unity and stability that was expected to derive from the Awakening's revival of authority. Diverse sects gained legal legitimacy as reason justified them and expediency demanded their acceptance--pluralism arose in colonies that needed and encouraged immigration, despite its tendency towards "un-Americanism" and instability, the two key issues that set the Awakening in motion in the first place. It was in this context that "Benjamin Franklin decided to found a school in 1749, being "prompted particularly by the presence in Pennsylvania of numerous 'foreigners unacquainted with our language, laws and customs.'" His hope was "to see the Germans assimilated and anglicized" by his school's " homogenizing influence."² It was in Franklin's "Proposals Relating to the Education of

¹See Thomas Paine, The Age of Reason, Library of Freedom (New York: Gramercy, 1993). Also see Cantor, "Great Awakening and Enlightenment," pp.43-46.

²Kammen, People of Paradox, pp.45, 63-66; Butler, "The Plural Origins of American Revivalism," pp.155-159.

Youth in Philadelphia" that he defended "the Necessity of a Publick Religion" as a unifying device.¹

The diversity of sectarian pluralism was absorbed by a national cohesion around an emerging common sense concerning American destiny and its common religion. As the importance of human participation in the unfolding of God's design became increasingly self-evident, expectations arose concerning the imminence of the coming millennium and the possibility of America's restoration of itself as a "city on a hill."² Building upon the new humanistic self-consciousness, Edwards pointed to history as the progress of the work of redemption, a human endeavour in the actualization of the millennial ideal. Human effort and ingenuity were to bring on the millennium, yet as participation in the Divine will and a restoration of the "organic human-divine whole" of creation. This context of progressive history injects political American meaning into Edwards's renewal of the call to "Zion" to "put on thy beautiful garments, O America, the holy city."³ The city of man becomes the city of God in America's millennial initiation. The entire history of American discovery and settlement becomes a religio-political prelude enacted by God and man together, so "that the new and most glorious state of God's church on earth might commence there [America]; that God might in it begin a new world in a spiritual respect, when he creates the *new heavens* and *new*

¹Marty, Pilgrims in Their Own Land, p.155.

²Cherry, God's New Israel, p.29.

³Jonathan Edwards, as quoted in Bercovitch, The American Jeremiad, pp.98-99.

earth."¹

The American millennialism that surged throughout the Great Awakening heightened the importance of current events, elevating every development, however minor, to sacred heights in a renewal of earliest American outlooks. A new world beckoned, once again, as Edwards's post-millennial interpretation became a dominant American self-conception, the context of human upheavals and a looming national genesis.² Now America became the continuation of scripture, fulfilling biblical prophecy as an actualization of the word of God, rather than being merely a typical mirror. America was making new history now, no longer re-enacting antiquity. All of human history pointed the way to an American millennium and, as revivalist thinking escalated into New England specifically as the site for a literal return of Jesus Christ,³ a spark was struck in the American mind that, when coupled with the new stress on unity, would explode a century later onto Civil War battlefields throughout the country.

As Franklin's school had demonstrated, unity now was marked as a national virtue in response to sectarian conflict that was waged as a "figurative war."⁴ This bickering was soon pacified by increased unity sentiments engendered through American participation and success in actual warfare. The French and Indian War was seen largely as an

¹Jonathan Edwards, "The Latter-Day Glory Is Probably To Begin In America," in God's New Israel, ed. Cherry, pp.55-56.

²Boyer, When Time Shall Be No More, pp.70-71.

³Henry, The Intoxication of Power, pp.44-47; Bercovitch, The American Jeremiad, pp.107, 111-113; Baritz, City on a Hill, pp.64-65, 93-94.

⁴Marty, Pilgrims in Their Own Land, p.116.

apocalyptic struggle against the forces of evil, the French-Catholic "Scarlet Whore of Babylon." Public religiosity proved itself in recruiting sermons that mustered an overflow of volunteers against a "raging Satan" who was embodied in "heathen savages" and "French papists." Ultimately, evil was defeated by a combined military and clerical prowess, an indication of American righteousness and of the rhetorical potency of the jeremiad in unifying and reinforcing millennial optimism.¹

With the Awakening, the mystical effectiveness of public demonstrations of unity came to reside increasingly in the common religion, now becoming the public religion. Official "fast days" and public prayers gained increased emphasis in response to war and continued social strife. Their intrinsic union and harmony was supposed to be music in God's ears.² Edwards called for all America to unite in prayer for the coming of the Kingdom of God as a union from North to South, and this became the revivalists' new object of desire. Consistent with the Awakening mind, these religious sentiments translated directly into political policies, as in Franklin's early proposal for a union of all American colonies: "Benjamin Franklin's 'Join or Die' cartoon, with its drawing of a sectioned snake, had been published in the Pennsylvania Gazette in May 1754, during the French and Indian War." The spiritual strength acquired by common prayer now turned to military strength in fighting together, as inward and outward covenants converged in American victory. Renewed Americans "found a voice in Patrick Henry: 'the distinctions

¹Ibid., pp.126-127; Davidson, The Logic of Millennial Thought, pp.197-201; Bercovitch, The American Jeremiad, pp.115-116.

²Federer, America's God and Country, p.240; Davidson, The Logic of Millennial Thought, pp.166-167.

between Virginians, Pennsylvanians, New Yorkers, are no more. I am not a Virginian but an American.' This was not a statement of fact but a rallying cry."¹

iv. With Spirit Revived, the Body Politic Follows--The American Revolution:

American unity became coupled with liberty even at this early stage in national development. The inscription of the tenth verse of the twenty-fifth chapter of Leviticus on the Liberty Bell ultimately would cap Awakening thinking, celebrating political liberty as a Divine, albeit humanly instituted, achievement.² The story of Israel, ancient and American, emerged from the Awakening as the story of liberty in anticipation of a "New Canaan of Liberty," and in preparation for the American Revolution.³ Thus, a religious Awakening fostered an "intercolonial solidarity" that emerged as a "radical nationalism which in political terms alone put even Hamiltonianism to shame."⁴ Into the national period, jeremiads continued to celebrate their own contribution to America's ultimate growth "as one living body, animated by one living soul"--colonies becoming states that merged "'into ONE GREAT REPUBLIC' with 'ONE INTEREST--ONE END--ONE

¹Morgan, Wilderness at Dawn, p.369.

²Leviticus 25:10: "And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubile unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family."

³Bercovitch, The American Jeremiad, pp.117-118.

⁴Reinhold Niebuhr and Alan Heimert, A Nation So Conceived: Reflections on the History of America from Its Early Visions to Its Present Power (London: Faber and Faber, 1963), pp.16-17.

HEART AND ONE LIFE."¹

As Ernest Lee Tuveson asserts, "the nascent nationalism that followed the French and Indian War" gave birth to "a conception of the colonies as a separate chosen people, destined to complete the Reformation and to inaugurate world regeneration."² Through the 1760s, the tyranny that had characterized the papal Anti-Christ was figuratively shifted onto the shoulders of the British king. Americans continued to polarize their political thought in religious terms. Ongoing political struggles were understood in terms of good and evil, as godly forces against those of the Anti-Christ. As the sacralization of liberty continued, so too was its achievement seen as part of an overall American unity. New England's religious rhetoric increasingly included all of the colonies, as millennial religiosity infused a growing Revolutionary "ideology" with fervour, and political terminology with religious meaning. Liberty became a sacred right, a necessity in the pursuit of salvation. The Revolution, then, became another step, although history's most dramatic one yet, into the millennial future. "Millennial symbolism ...came to pervade Revolutionary ideology, enabling Americans to perceive the outbreak of war and assertion of national independence as steps towards the realization of God's Kingdom on Earth."³ Although not "ideological" itself, this religious symbolism substantiated the emerging ideology of the Revolution with an original godliness that now translated into saintliness

¹John Murray, "Jerubbaal, or Tyranny's Grove Destroyed, and the Altar of Liberty Finished. ...Delivered at the Presbyterian Church in Newburyport, December 11, 1783," as quoted in *ibid.*, p.18.

²Tuveson, *Redeemer Nation*, pp.101-102.

³Bloch, "Religion and Ideological Change in the American Revolution," pp.49-53.

for another generation of American believers. It is in this sense that John Adams declared the Revolution to have begun in 1620 with a religious exodus that gave birth to American freedom and independence.¹

Some argue that the American Revolution was merely a rational, legal transition to local government, that it was no revolution at all.² Rather than being a social revolution, these thinkers maintain, the primary goal of the American Revolution was the preservation of political liberty.³ American understanding about the source of that liberty, however, and hence of its future course, had departed dramatically from its European origins:

As Bailyn and the propaganda studies have amply shown, there is simply too much fanatical and millennial thinking even by the best minds that must be explained before we can characterize the Americans' ideas as peculiarly rational and legalistic and thus view the Revolution as merely a conservative defense of constitutional liberties.⁴

Gordon Wood asserts that millennialism underscores the American Revolution as a true revolution, the quest for a "regenerated society" marking America as a new order, just

¹John Adams to Thomas Jefferson (1818), as quoted in C.H. Van Tyne, "Influence of the Clergy, and of Religious and Sectarian Forces, on the American Revolution," American Historical Review 19 (1913-1914), p.44.

²For example see Bailyn, The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution and Boorstin, The Genius of American Politics. Also see Franklin Wickwire, "The Conservative Revolution," in Main Problems in American History, ed. Quint et al., pp.65-89, and Hartz, The Liberal Tradition in America, pp.39-49.

³Bailyn, The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution, p.19.

⁴Gordon S. Wood, "Rhetoric and Reality in the American Revolution," in New Perspectives on the American Past, ed. Katz and Kutler, p.118.

as religious rhetoric marked revolutionary politics with transcendent meaning.¹ Although Thomas Pangle denies this religiosity any dominance in the American revolutionary mind, he still finds the powerful grip of Christianity upon the American people distinctive: "Nothing distinguishes more sharply the Americans, in their revolutionary spirit, from the French." Although the commitment of some Deist and Unitarian leaders to the Christian tradition is arguable, all American leaders were nevertheless, according to Pangle, "in important respects influenced by Christianity" and "they were compelled to speak and accommodate themselves to a Christian citizenry."² Religion must be seen, then, as a dominant, supporting element in the development of Revolutionary rhetoric and in its communication. The righteous fervour and godly self-confidence with which it infected political debate may in fact be crucial in moving colonial America from a legal dispute to a revolutionary war. Certainly, its communication of ideas, fears, and aspirations co-mingled with liberal ideology is central to the Revolution as a movement of "the people." It is the extraordinary success of this very blending of ideas and forms of thought that makes the Revolution revolutionary. Without this, we might be seduced, however innocently, by that historical rubric of America's "High Priests," the conservative and legalistic "The War of American Independence."³ Religion is no addendum in America, but is a central testament.

The Revolution, then, did not so much change the political and economic order

¹*Ibid.*, p.119.

²Pangle, *The Spirit of Modern Republicanism*, p.21.

³John Shy, "The American Revolution: The Military Conflict Considered as a Revolutionary War," in *Essays on the American Revolution*, ed. Kurtz, pp.121-122.

of things as it did establish the American interpretation of that order, a joint religious and political interpretation bequeathed by "the millenarian impulse of New England Puritanism" and the "eighteenth-century Enlightenment."¹ This amounted to a revolution in thought, if not in action. Together, these strains emerged from the Revolution full-fledged as "civil millennialism," the spirit and thrust of the American Civil Religion.² As John Adams later would write, "the Revolution was effected before the War commenced. The Revolution was in the Minds and Hearts of the People. A Change in their Religious Sentiments of their Duties and Obligations."³ More than any declared list of grievances, American progress and its increasingly national conception in millennial terms, "to the point of overwhelming persuasiveness to the majority of American leaders, ...explains the origins of the American Revolution." American history crystallized in the American mind through the 1760s and early 1770s, so that "Americans had come to think of themselves as in a special category, uniquely placed by history to capitalize on, to complete and fulfil, the promise of man's existence."⁴

The Revolution was a political response to a religious as much as a political problem, a civil religious phenomenon in its deliberate interpretation by its participants.⁵

¹Niebuhr and Heimert, A Nation So Conceived, p.125.

²Hatch, The Sacred Cause of Liberty, p.53.

³John Adams to Hezekiah Niles, February 13, 1818. See L.H. Butterfield, "John Adams: What Do We Mean by the American Revolution?" in An American Primer, ed. Boorstin, pp.246-257.

⁴Bailyn, The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution, pp.20-22.

⁵Bailyn, The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution, pp.96-97; Sandoz, A Government of Laws, pp.86, 93; Kammen, People of Paradox, p.244.

Here we see the co-penetration of religious and ideological symbols and the obligato of a heightened politics of conviction and fervour. As such, the Revolution fits within the pattern of American revivalist politics:

Political influence and corruption were but palpable manifestations of the deeper spiritual malaise of *sin* and iniquity whose rot portended divine retribution unless the people (individually and collectively) repented, prayed for forgiveness, and returned to Christ in humility and faith. ...The general sentiment of the times was that America was a land blessed of Divine Providence, inhabited by a Chosen People, and led through Divine Grace by Christian men of heroic stature.¹

Throughout revolutionary propaganda, this notion of "chosenness" imbued Americans with cosmic significance. America became the last hope for liberty in an initiation of Christ's kingdom that ensured "the hand of God" in the course of events, or at least in their explanation and justification. The American Revolution politicized religious expectation.²

"Rationalists" and supposed Deists participated in the promulgation of this religio-political interpretation. "Rationalists" used scripture to explain the context and meaning of the Revolution as apocalyptic, as the fulfilment of prophecies found in the Books of Daniel and Revelations.³ Revolutionary leaders understood the value of religion as a "mobilization instrument," continuing their expression of political goals in religious rhetoric throughout the Revolution. Religion explained the Revolution to average Americans and moved them as it was successfully preached to them in terms of religious

¹Sandoz, A Government of Laws, p.86.

²Bailyn, The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution, pp.140-141; Boyer, When Time Shall Be No More, pp.72-74.

³Maclear, "The Republic and the Millennium," p.183.

revival.¹

The Revolution became an "antidote" for moral decay in a renewed "fusion of piety and politics." A new faith in the "regenerative powers of republicanism" involved an ideological intrusion into religious doctrine, such that Locke became part of the gospel in American churches.² Old and New Testament justifications for the rebellion were joined to Locke's ideological prescription in a widespread religiosity that co-opted liberal principles as Christian values. Politics became millennial as religion became political in this blended "republican" theology.³

Although it provided the only non-biblical symbols in the American Founding, Romanism remained superficial and narrow in its appeal. Even among elites, it took more the form of mere description rather than of an internalized motivation. Religion provided the language that moved Americans, defining the Revolution for most as it both enabled and enforced a religious rhetoric that was used by all. Even Roman symbology, in so far as it was apprehended at all by the ordinary public, was interpreted through Biblical eyes, so that its "novus ordo" became Christian and millennial. Despite the Roman facade of the emerging republic and its admitted appeal to the imaginations of some Founders, even

¹Bloch, "Religion and Ideological Change in the American Revolution," pp.46-48, 53; Moseley, A Cultural History of Religion in America, p.33; Sandoz, A Government of Laws, pp. 129, 135-143.

²Wood, The Creation of the American Republic, pp.114-124; Van Tyne, "Influence of the Clergy ...on the American Revolution," p.49.

³Alice M. Baldwin, The New England Clergy and the American Revolution (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1928; rpt. 1958), p.129; Noll, A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada, pp.116-118; Hatch, The Sacred Cause of Liberty, pp.12, 16, 70, 79.

the most "Roman" of these were Christianized. This "republican" ideology was spared irrelevance by the same tactic that saved most Founders: conversion, sincere or otherwise, into the American-Christian faith.

Political sermons proved more consistent and more effective in stirring Americans to revolution than did books, pamphlets, philosophers and politicians combined. The clergy taught inalienable rights and covenant government from pulpits, at town meetings, county conventions, and provincial conferences, even calling Americans to war to "wield the sword of the Lord." So successful were ministers and their sermons in recruiting soldiers and crystallizing public opinion around the revolutionary cause that legislative resolutions commanded the publication and distribution of those sermons throughout the colonies. The Presbyterian pulpit promoted the Revolution so strongly that it became known in some parts as the "Presbyterian Rebellion." Princeton University followed with its reputation as a "revolutionary nest" instigated by John Witherspoon, its President and clerical signer of the Declaration of Independence.¹ In all, political sermons deeply moved Americans, striking chords that resonated throughout the nation in a vibrant unison of religion and politics.

As the Revolution wore on, political sermons increased, however much governments and churches gradually shifted their religious rhetoric from mobilization and

¹Cherry, God's New Israel, pp.61-62; Powers Smith, Yankees and God, p.285; Baldwin, The New England Clergy and the American Revolution, pp.124-125; Van Tyne, "Influence of the Clergy ...on the American Revolution," p.55; Marty, Pilgrims in Their Own Land, pp.138-139.

dissent to national legitimation and perseverance.¹ Recognizing the value of these religious-political sermons, the Continental Congress initiated "Fast Days," opportunities for occasional sermons and re-dedication of resources to the cause. From 1774 to 1776, all colonial governments declared "Fast Days" and published as patriotic pamphlets attendant sermons inciting resistance against the British. Throughout 1775 and 1776, sermons increasingly preached obedience to the Continental Congress and, from 1776 onward, consistently stressed union and obedience to the Congress.²

The new Congress imposed "Fast Days" and national prayers in behalf of the cause of independence.³ Positive Christianity was deemed by legislatures and generals alike the best promise for an English defeat--Massachusetts, for instance, declared that its Minutemen could only fulfil their Christian duty against tyranny in so far as they were good Christians and sought forgiveness and grace through fasting and prayer.⁴ Washington repeatedly ordered his soldiers to act as Christians and to "attend divine service, so as to implore the blessings of heaven upon" their cause. His officers were instructed to be Christian examples and even to stop cursing so as to invoke "the blessing

¹Butler, Awash in a Sea of Faith, p.201; Bloch, "Religion and Ideological Change in the American Revolution," p.53; Sandoz, A Government of Laws, pp.137-140.

²Baldwin, The New England Clergy and the American Revolution, pp.123, 133; Van Tyne, "Influence of the Clergy ...on the American Revolution," p.58.

³Baldwin, The New England Clergy and the American Revolution, pp.123, 133; Van Tyne, "Influence of the Clergy ...on the American Revolution," p.58; "Journals of the Continental Congress, September 6-7, 1774," as quoted in America's God and Country, ed. Federer, pp.136-137, 220-221.

⁴John Hancock and Provincial Congress of Massachusetts, resolutions quoted in America's God and Country, ed. Federer, pp.59-60, 426-428.

of Heaven on our Arms." This Puritan concern for the smallest detail was to be matched by "the higher duties of Religion. To the distinguished Character of Patriot, it should be our highest glory to add the more distinguished Character of Christian," a sentiment that Washington repeated for the nation upon disbanding the army at war's end.¹

On July 1, 1776, John Adams stood in the Continental Congress and called down God's blessings upon independence. The next day, Congress approved the wording of the Declaration of Independence--its references to God the Creator and His Divine Providence were general enough, yet also particular enough, for all. After all had signed their approval, Samuel Adams declared this moment as the restoration of God to His throne in heaven and as the enunciation of His coming kingdom.² Ultimately, this was "the great responsibility" that Patrick Henry insisted "we hold to God and our country." In his famous "give me liberty or give me death" speech, Henry insisted that "an appeal to arms and to the God of Hosts is all that is left us." This Lockean-Puritan-American fusion of ideological and religious symbolism was possible only with the ripening of American thought over the past century, with the adoption whole-heartedly of Locke's arguments and with the fervour injected into them by the Great Awakening. Henry's

¹George Washington, "Letter to Benedict Arnold, September 14, 1775; Instructions to Arnold, September 14, 1775; General Orders, 1775-79 (Headquarters, Cambridge, July 4, 1775; Headquarters, New York, July 9, 1776; Headquarters, New York, August 3, 1776; Headquarters, Valley Forge, May 2, 1778; Headquarters, Moores House, July 29, 1779); Speech to Delaware Chiefs, May 12, 1779; Circular Letter to the Governors of the States on Disbanding the Army, Headquarters, Newburgh, June 8, 1783; Address to Congress, December 23, 1783," in *In God We Trust*, ed. Cousins, pp.47-56.

²Journal of the Continental Congress, July 2-3 1776, in *America's God and Country*, ed. Federer, pp.141-143.

invocation of the supposed Deist "God of nature" is revealing in its equation with the Providential "Almighty God" and the Biblical "Lord of Hosts."¹ America's god has many names by which to find unity in the vague, thus general, apprehension by His people.

Although America's early civil religion remained a porous Christianity, its strident Protestant temper was quieted by the Revolution. American Catholics fighting alongside patriots did much to soften any religious rhetoric of difference, as did the aid of Catholic France to the American cause. Washington announced France's entrance to the war as evidence that God was on the American side--an early indication that the American national god assimilates all. Catholicism became just another sect within an American "pluralism." Necessity now submerged the Protestant prejudices that had moved Samuel Adams to denounce to Mohawks the Quebec Act as a vehicle of false gods, or that had moved Americans to celebrate as a colonial custom Guy Fawkes Day--an earlier civil religious ritual in which "the pope and the Devil were religiously burned."² Equally practical, Catholic-American participation in the patriot cause was directed selfishly, at least in part, toward this achievement of an increased religious toleration and recognition of Catholic rights. That is to say, Catholics joined the struggle in an opportunistic strike into America's civil religion. The sentimental rewards of tolerance through the struggle were joined by "official" rewards as Charles Carroll, a prominent Catholic layman, signed

¹Patrick Henry, "Liberty or Death," (Virginia Convention, St. John's Church, Richmond, Virginia; March 23, 1775), in Great American Speeches, ed. Suriano, pp.1-4.

²George Washington Proclamation, May 1, 1777, in ibid., p.642; Marty, Pilgrims in Their Own Land, pp.143-146; Van Tyne, "Influence of the Clergy ...on the American Revolution," pp.59-60.

the Declaration of Independence.¹

Some new constitutions reflected and entrenched this newly broadened civil religiosity. The Constitution of Maryland (1776), of course, established a generalized Christianity and dutiful worship of the god to whom a debt of gratitude was owed for American liberties.² The Constitution of Delaware (1776) included a generalized Christian oath test for membership in both legislative houses, written by one George Read, a signer of the Declaration of Independence and future signatory to the federal Constitution, as well as a future United States Senator and Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Delaware.³ Such "tolerance" was not unanimous in America, however, as North Carolina re-established a Protestant oath test for public office in its constitution, a test that would exclude Catholics until 1835 and Jews until 1868 when America's Christianity had consolidated its identity through another civil war. Thus, the American embassy sent to Canada to "preach" revolution could speak only for the Continental Congress and, perhaps, some of the new states, in declaring the free exercise of religion and the right of any Christian to hold public office as enticements to the American cause.⁴ In fact, six states emerged as officially Protestant--New Hampshire, Connecticut, New Jersey,

¹Noll, A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada, pp.120-121, 132.

²"The Constitution of the State of Maryland," August 14, 1776, Articles XXXV and XXXVI, in America's God and Country, ed. Federer, pp.420-421.

³Ibid., pp.527, 528; See p.528 for Article XXII of the Constitution of the State of Delaware, 1776.

⁴"Constitution of the State of North Carolina," 1776, Article XXXII (altered in 1835 and 1868), in ibid., p.482; "Preamble to the Constitution of the State of North Carolina," 1868, in ibid., p.483; Roger Sherman, John Adams, and George Wythe, "Instructions to the Canadian Embassy," in ibid., p.559.

Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina--while all state governments joined the national government in its insistence upon the existence of a god and some religiously imposed political duty to Him--the foundations of civil religion. New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Maryland, and South Carolina maintained religious establishments through assessments. While Delaware demanded assent of public office holders to the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, Pennsylvania and South Carolina merely demanded declarations of belief in one god and in heaven and hell.¹ Several state constitutions would continue to prohibit Jews, Moslems, and atheists from public office and from voting into the 1840s. Upon his 1809 election to the legislature of North Carolina, Jacob Henry, a Jew, argued his right to keep his seat despite an article of the state constitution that required legislators to believe in Protestantism and the New Testament. Henry argued his right based upon the liberal Declaration of Rights of the state of North Carolina, arguing upon rational and ideological terms of natural right and the freedom of worship. Henry's ideological argument, however, was only for the religious freedom of some, as Henry agreed that "if a man should hold religious principles incompatible with the freedom and safety of the State" he should be barred from office. Henry was allowed to take his seat by a special election of the legislature,

¹James H. Smylie, "Protestant Clergy, the First Amendment and Beginnings of a Constitutional Debate, 1781-91," in The Religion of the Republic, ed. Elwyn A. Smith (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), p.117; Wood, The Creation of the American Republic, pp.427-428; John M. Murrin, "Religion and Politics in America From the First Settlements to the Civil War," in Religion and American Politics: From the Colonial Period to the 1980s, ed. Mark A. Noll (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1990), pp.29-30; "Articles of Confederation," 1777-1781, "Constitution of the State of Georgia," 1777, "Constitution of the State of Massachusetts," 1780, in America's God and Country, ed. Federer, pp.29, 148, 261, 429-430.

but not by right--Henry was successful, well respected, and popular amongst his electorate, he bore the signs of American saintliness. North Carolina's constitution was revised in 1868, during Reconstruction, to eliminate religious restrictions for office. The Supreme Court of the United States finally renounced all religious tests for public office in 1961.¹ As well as Jews and Catholics, professed atheists only became fully enfranchised in America during the twentieth century.²

Section B: The Union and America's Civil Religion

i. Foundations and Fathers:

As the Federal Constitution emerged in response to the democratic surge inherent in the Revolution, ideology and religion continued to coalesce in view of their object. The first priority of post-Revolutionary political leaders, to curb populism and democratic individualism, was shared by clerical leaders who became Federalists in their own quest for renewed authority. A power vacuum in central government existed alongside concerns about post-Revolutionary vice and declining public virtue.³ As Hofstadter notes, a tension stood between liberalism's natural rights, especially the right to property, and the potential goals of democracy that ultimately end in substantive equality. This tension permeates

¹Joseph L. Blau, ed., "Jacob Henry: On Religion and Elective Office, 1809" in An American Primer, ed. Boorstin, pp.238-245.

²D. Michael Quinn, The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power (Salt Lake City: Signature, 1994), pp.107, 344 n.9.

³Bercovitch, The American Jeremiad, p.135; Hatch, The Sacred Cause of Liberty, pp.100, 110-115.

the fears of property-owning federalists, that "democrats" would use power unjustly to infringe upon American rights, as is signalled by Shays's Rebellion. This same tension is everywhere present in the Federalist struggle for a new Constitution.¹ Once loosed by ideology, revolutionary cultural forces now needed to be reigned in under new institutional arrangements. In the Constitution, American leadership shifted from mobilizing power to reconciling power, checking and balancing its capacities in a renewed emphasis upon the outward covenant. Civil authorities became as though they were the true ministers of God, pursuing and administering the public good through a mechanical apparatus that enabled governments to rely upon public virtue no longer.² Whereas the Revolution existed in the spirit of conversion, carrying with it the zeal of an American sect, the Constitution responded to the next generation, so to speak, with the external covenant of an American church,³ harnessing the forces loosed by the Awakening and finally completing its work.

The Constitution is a product of the Awakening in at least two ways: the nature of its accomplishment and the nature of its operation. In its accomplishment, the Constitution is a document of enlightened liberalism, a product of rational "controversy and debate." As Daniel Boorstin asserts, "it emerged from the conversation and debates

¹Hofstadter, The American Political Tradition And The Men Who Made It, pp.12-13.

²Moseley, A Cultural History of Religion in America, p.33; Hatch, The Sacred Cause of Liberty, p.116; Bloch, "Religion and Ideological Change in the American Revolution," pp.55-56.

³Bellah, The Broken Covenant, pp.33-34.

of men whose names and lives we know, and from their outspoken disagreement."¹ Despite the apparent open and rational nature of the Constitutional debate, however, man's agency was once again bolstered by its cosmic significance within a superimposed sacred context. Keeping pace with its time--fully one-third of all citations in propaganda and pamphlets from 1760 to 1805 were biblical²--Divine sanction was claimed by forces for and against the federal document, in broad assertions that constitute neither theological treatises nor political theory, but instead bring religious and political symbols to the fore as ideological argument and persuasion for a particular constitution.³

The debate for ratification opened with a celebration of the Constitution and its Convention as the "blessing of Heaven" upon this "revolution effected by good sense and deliberation." A prayer offered thanks and asked continuance of God in His keeping America from "running into a lawless Democracy."⁴ The whole endeavour ended with ratifying conventions again expressing gratitude to God for the opportunity provided by Providence to enter into "an explicit and solemn compact" and with prayers asking Him

¹Daniel J. Boorstin, The Exploring Spirit: America and the World Experience (London: British Broadcasting Corp., 1976), pp.30-31.

²Sandoz, A Government of Laws, p.129.

³Boorstin, The Genius of American Politics, pp.96-97.

⁴"A Revolution Effected by Good Sense and Deliberation," Daily Advertiser (New York), September 24, 1787, in The Debate on the Constitution: Federalist and Antifederalist Speeches, Articles, and Letters During the Struggle over Ratification, 2 vols., The Library of America (New York: Literary Classics, 1993), 1:12-14.

to convince Americans of the pure intentions of its framers.¹ In between, even supposed "rationalists" once again could not resist the language and potent symbolism of America's civil religion. "Centinel" complained that some Federalists had the audacity to present the Constitution as divine revelation. Additional Antifederalists cried out that "the great names of WASHINGTON and FRANKLIN have been taken in vain," an indication of their civil religious importance even at that early date.²

Pelatah Webster invoked the importance of civil religion in favour of the Constitution, in his assertion that even a divine constitution cannot rise above bad government and, therefore, Antifederalists should quit their opposition to its form and concern themselves with its administration. Invoking a central tenet of Rousseau's civil religion, Webster assured those that doubted good government would result from the new constitution that a "mighty influence to the noblest principle of action will be *the fear of God before their* (public officials) *eyes*; for while they sit in the place of God, to give law, justice, and right to the States, they must be *monsters indeed* if they don't regard *his law*, and imitate *his character*." Webster deems national strength and vitality signs of righteousness and, as "righteousness exalteth a nation," so the Constitution in its

¹"Ratification of the Federal Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts"; "In Convention of the Delegates of the People of the State of New Hampshire, June the Twenty-first, 1788; "Form of Ratification, which was read and agreed to by the Convention of Virginia," in *ibid.*, 2:547-550, 550-552, 557-558.

²Samuel Bryan, "Centinel" II, Freeman's Journal (Philadelphia), October 24, 1787 in *ibid.*; William Findley?, "Reply to Wilson's Speech: 'An Officer of the Late Continental Army'," Independent Gazetteer (Philadelphia), November 6, 1787, in *ibid.* pp.77-91, 97-104.

strengthening character must be a righteous endeavour.¹

In this religious rhetoric, the problems experienced by dissenting Rhode Island became a living example, "purposely left by Heaven to its present madness" to convince the other states that their only hope lay in the unity and solidarity of the Constitution.² Such unity was of particular interest to Madison, whose Federalist papers have become American scripture. Although he appears to remain purposefully quiet on the subject of religion in those papers, Madison cannot help but point to the Constitution's having been touched by "a finger of that Almighty hand" that providentially cared for America throughout the Revolution.³ As well, Madison's entire discussion of factions and interests should be seen in the light of America's religious "pluralism" and its attendant problems, as is indicated in Madison's October 24, 1787 letter to Jefferson. In it, Madison speaks of interests, parties, and the tyranny of majorities, all in terms of sectarian sentiment and religion, under the specific heading of "Religion." The formulae for mutual checks in a large national pluralism are discussed; all familiar to readers of Federalist X.⁴ America's religious experience underlies her political history, in practice and in theory.

Numerous occasional and rhetorically significant invocations of religion and

¹Pelataiah Webster, "The Weaknesses of Brutus Exposed: 'A Citizen of Philadelphia'," Philadelphia, November 8, 1787, in ibid., 1:176-188.

²Oliver Ellsworth, "A Further Reply to Elbridge Gerry: 'A Landholder' V," Connecticut Courant (Hartford), December 3, 1787, in ibid., 1:239-244.

³James Madison, "'Publius,' The Federalist XXXVII," Daily Advertiser (New York), January 11, 1788, in ibid., 1:754-761.

⁴"James Madison to Thomas Jefferson," New York, October 24, 1787, in ibid., 1:192-208.

America's early civil religion conspire to enframe the entire debate in a continued setting of Divine creation. Antifederalists invoke the symbology of the Revolution and the Articles of Confederation as Divine, denouncing Federalists as apostates committing blasphemy by asserting imperfections in what all agreed God had wrought. Federalists set the Constitution alongside the New Testament, both being scriptures that make men free. Finally, Washington's approval was joined by God's to carry the document through ratification--Benjamin Franklin compared Antifederalists and their rejection of a divine constitution to Jews and their rejection of Christ. Again, Israel-America parallels were drawn, with an increased emphasis upon the transubstantiation of the thirteen tribes and colonies, and a final assertion of the Divine inspiration under which the Constitution was 'born.'¹

The Constitution's primary concern with national unity is transparent. In this way, the document is a product of the Awakening. The entire national thrust that emerged from the Awakening to fight two wars now finds constitutional perpetuity in "a more perfect union." Antifederalists, too, were concerned with unity, a "given" necessity for the survival of political liberties. However, Antifederalists remained assured that such gifts were only "given" to small republics. Uniformity, they argued, could only be *imposed* upon larger peoples. Federalists, however, asserted that national unity could rise above federal diversities, that the nation entailed some degree of transcendence through the new

¹Benjamin Franklin, "'K' to the Editor," Federal Gazette (Philadelphia), April 8, 1788, in ibid., 2:401-405.

covenant.¹ Here, reliance was placed upon the Christian character and religious virtue of a people who would relate to a higher calling, pursuing a national destiny above the petty interests and concerns of mere political government. The Constitution was intended to channel any divisive, sectarian concerns through a complex process that would stifle their effects upon the nation and dampen any detraction from the American mission. Quite simply, government would moderate factional pressures and, thus, enable the rise of virtuous individuals to lead the nation in pursuit of the common good.² Divisive social forces were to be side-tracked from encroachments upon a citizenry's natural and rising solidarity and its hoped for attendant virtue. The Constitution was to prevent the zealous, the ambitious, and the unvirtuous from contaminating a happy American people, and from diverting it from its mission.³ The unity and optimism of antecedent decades were to be secured eternally, the nation freed of the effects of 'politics' so that its destiny might be realised. The Constitution then is a servant, if not indeed a Founding document, of the American Civil Religion.⁴

The Constitution, as well as formally drawing the nation into "a more perfect

¹Bailyn, The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution, pp.343-344.

²Bellah, The Broken Covenant, pp.253-255.

³Bailyn, The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution, p.369; James Madison, "'Publius,' The Federalist X," Daily Advertiser (New York), November 22, 1787, in The Debate on the Constitution, 1:404-411; James Madison, "'Publius,' The Federalist XLV," Independent Journal (New York), January 26, 1788, in ibid., 2:101-106; James Madison, "'Publius,' The Federalist LV," Independent Journal (New York), February 13, 1788, in ibid., 2:202-207.

⁴James Madison, "'Publius,' The Federalist Papers LV," Independent Journal (New York), February 13, 1788, in ibid., 2:207.

union," becomes a symbolically unifying sacred text for the nation.¹ This energy remains vital across centuries of American history. Daniel Levin describes the federal government's Commission on the Bicentennial of the United States Constitution as a peculiar re-affirmation of this spirit of the civil religion. The commission sponsored anniversary celebrations that reached out to "common Americans." When spokesman Warren Burger announced plans to place the Constitution at every checkout in the United States, to print it on cereal boxes, and other popular deliveries of The Word to Americans at large, the commission met with opposition that Burger denounced as elitist. The Constitution 1787 accomplishment in Philadelphia, Burger retorted, was all about the Constitution belonging to "the people." Furthermore, Levin tells us, Burger defended the printing of the Constitution's preamble and the images of Founding Fathers on McDonald's restaurant placemats, pointing to the wide distribution thus enjoyed by millions of Americans every day. Similar presentations in Roy Rogers Restaurants were also defended as being, along with McDonald's, "in the very best of taste." Congress had required that the commission not do anything in bad taste, that the Constitution be venerated. William J. Bennett celebrated the commercialization of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence by their appearance on souvenir ashtrays as being "high-minded, commercial activity," not at all undignified and certainly no civic sin.² The Philip Morris Companies capitalized on the celebration by publishing full page newspaper ads, miniature "essays" on the rights and freedoms enjoyed by Americans because of the

¹Levin, Representing Popular Sovereignty, pp.2-4.

²Ibid., pp.61-64.

Constitution, especially their own right to advertise tobacco products.¹ Mobil Oil published its own series of "essays," in which they celebrated the Constitution's securing of "one of the great natural rights," the right to property that "people naturally brought with them into civilization." As "the second American Revolution," the Constitution is credited with America's financial success by maintaining "freedom of commerce" through "an idea not much honoured today: that people should be left as free as possible to make contracts and business arrangements without state interference." Thus, America's civil religion continues to be imbued with ideological arguments that are made sacred by their celebration as remembrance of their "God-given" origins.² The New Yorker lamented that, with such commercialization, "there is at least conceivably a danger that the Constitution could cease to have its secularly sacred meaning for powerful men."³ Levin, however, goes further. He denounces all of this as the profaning of sacred texts and symbols, as sacrilege to America's civil religion. For Levin, these common festivities amount to an apostate departure from the intended civil religious celebration of "symbols of popular control over the machinery of government and of the government's rootedness in the people."⁴

¹Philip Morris, "The Story of a Government That Almost Didn't Happen," New York Times (November 3, 1989); Philip Morris, "...a bill of rights is what the people are entitled to against every government on earth...", New York Times (November 7, 1989).

²Mobil, "the most monstrous and absurd injustices," New York Times (October 1, 1987); Mobil, "the danger of the levelling spirit," New York Times (October 8, 1987); Mobil, "an inexhaustible mine of national wealth," New York Times (October 15, 1987).

³"The Talk of the Town," The New Yorker (December 1, 1986), pp.29-30.

⁴Levin, Representing Popular Sovereignty, pp.46-48.

The popularizing social force that gave birth to the nation and to the Constitution, however, is the very thing against which this document struggles to entrench the civil religion. The religious zeal of the Awakening and its inherent democratization demanded such formal curbs on their potential by elite sectional forces who were wholly dedicated to notions of a national ideal, but who remained unconverted to populist ideals loosed by the revival. Such populism loomed as a threatening backdrop to the new American nationalism. Although the Awakening had penetrated the entire country, the Southern revival had lagged behind the North. Right through the Revolution, New England continued to set the tone of American religious rhetoric, a tone increasingly dominated by Christian patriotism. The middle and southern colonies joined in the rhetoric of cosmic struggle and national unity, but the more intense Christian revivalist rhetoric remained somehow 'alien' to a long established tradition of Old Testament rhetoric and social orientation in the South.¹

By 1785, Jefferson would denounce Northerners as self-righteous, superstitious hypocrites. Their intense public religiosity was askew and threatening to post-Revolutionary society.² Virginia, a middle state that had proven highly susceptible to Northern emotional incursions, gave birth to the Constitutional initiative in response. The Constitution attempted to prevent concerted efforts like those recently directed against foreign foes, to avoid them turning inward and Southward. Throughout the Constitutional Convention, Virginia remained the dominant force pushing for a federal union in which

¹Noll, A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada, pp.119-120.

²Kammen, People of Paradox, p.248.

the effects of all factions, sects in Madison's deliberations, would be eliminated and the unity of the people in general preserved. While religious revivals might continue to stir, it was hoped that no such momentous uprising as the Revolution would ever again threaten national political authority nor move the people away from the generalized national religion that now was securely established in the civil religion. It should be remembered that the post-Revolutionary "lawlessness" that triggered the Constitution, of which Shays's Rebellion is indicative, signalled an anarchist tendency in democracy, a tendency that was intrinsic to Christian revivalism and of which Southern Federalists were keenly aware.¹ With the Constitution, it was hoped, American government would be safeguarded against the effects of religious zeal. At the same time, the American civil religion was expected to contribute nationally by keeping sectarian politics and religion illegitimate. Just as political authority would preserve the civil religion, so the civil religion was expected to reciprocate and guard government against revivalist slights to its own national legitimacy. Thus, the Massachusetts Constitutional Convention sincerely acknowledged "with grateful hearts, the goodness of the Supreme Ruler of the Universe in offering the people of the United States" the opportunity for deliberating upon and ratifying the Constitution and, thus, entering anew the social contract--the secular accomplishment of man is made possible by the sacred powers of God.²

¹For a discussion of the Virginia initiative and drive for ratification of the Constitution, see Hall, "James Madison: Architect of the Constitution," pp.340-369.

²Arieli, Individualism and Nationalism in American Ideology, p.31.

ii. Civic and Religious Union, Separation of Church and State:

American leaders, and most prominently American presidents, used and nurtured the growing civil religion as the language of public virtue. Blending Christian and patriotic symbols, they were able to publicize private virtues and thus fill a void in the public 'philosophy' of American liberalism. America's so-called "republican" virtue came to be defined by the Protestant clergy in Hebraic and Puritan terms, with the belief that only Christian piety could serve true patriotism. This "republican" virtue thus became intertwined with Judeo-Christian virtues as a fusion of public and private virtue, a modern virtue for The Republic. Most believed that virtue could be inculcated only by religion and that, with churches already in place as the source of virtue, all that remained for government to do was to not interfere with them.¹ Americans now appealed to Christian virtue as American virtue, with the benefit of having cast off sectarian differences in this generalization of religion provided for by the First Amendment. Thus, American politics continued its traditional blending of religion and politics not despite, but because of the so-called separation of church and state. Even the allegedly "reluctant" Madison crossed his "line of separation" between church and state as president, proclaiming "Fast Days," especially during the War of 1812; After the fashion of the Revolution, he called down the blessings of Heaven upon America's armies.

Despite such invocations, Anson Stokes and Leo Pfeffer esteem Madison as a

¹Hatch, The Sacred Cause of Liberty, pp.108-110; Richard Vetterli and Gary Bryner, "Public Virtue and the Roots of American Government," B.Y.U. Studies 27:3 (1987), pp.29-49.

strict separationist who merely used religion politically.¹ This use, nevertheless, fails Jefferson's own standard against church-state alliance and clouds the issue with supposed motivations. Of course civil religion is political, but the problem at hand is that it also is religious. Whatever Madison's motivation, he blended religious symbols and rhetoric in the highest office of government, and did so to effect particular ends knowing full well the potency of his words, having chosen them precisely so. Furthermore, Stokes and Pfeffer insist that there is only one reference to religion in the entire eighty-five Federalist papers, clearly a falsehood intended to bolster their desired interpretation of those papers.² There are nearly two-dozen explicit references to religion in The Federalist, three-quarters of them by Madison, with many more expressions of religious implication. As well, there are numerous explicit civil-religious references, including repeated invocations of the sacred nature of liberty and the social contract, political piety and heresy, guiltless sacrifices on the altar of justice, zealous adherence to political doctrine, reverence and veneration for laws and constitutions, and countless more. In documents meant as reasoned arguments for particular machinery of government, these are remarkable. Throughout the entire Constitutional debate, religious references are legion. "Publius's" use of religious symbols signals The Federalist papers as ideological tracts meant to convince and persuade as well as to inform. Acknowledging as "true that all governments rest on opinion," Madison insists that such opinion itself must be strengthened by

¹Anson Phelps Stokes and Leo Pfeffer, Church and State in the United States (New York: Harper & Row, 1950; rev. one-volume ed., 1964), p.89.

²Ibid., p.91.

numbers, by the self-reinforcement of mass conviction: "The reason of man, like man himself, is timid and cautious when left alone," he writes, "and acquires firmness and confidence in proportion to the number with which it is associated."¹ On the use of religious and mythic prejudice, Madison maintains that

when the examples which fortify opinion are ancient as well as numerous, they are known to have a double effect. In a nation of philosophers, this consideration ought to be disregarded. A reverence for the laws would be sufficiently inculcated by the voice of an enlightened reason. But a nation of philosophers is as little to be expected as the philosophical race of kings wished for by Plato. And in every other nation, the most rational government will not find it a superfluous advantage to have the prejudices of the community on its side.²

Clearly, the apparent self-consciousness of The Federalist's ideological expression, at least at times, demands that we not dismiss its religious and civil religious references as anomalous posturing or convenient rhetoric. Instead, they are integral partners to rational arguments in the sought-for conviction of American minds.

Such perfunctory dismissal of the political role of religion as Stokes's and Pfeffer's is akin to Gordon Wood's assertion that Washington was not a public Christian, that "in twenty volumes of his correspondence he never mentions Christ." This is supposed to demonstrate that religion was important "mostly to ordinary people" but not to America's elite and, thus, is not properly part of America's public parlance before its democratization by the Revolution. Afterwards, American leadership is supposed to be

¹James Madison, "Publius: The Federalist Papers II," The Federalist (New York: The Modern Library, 1941) p.329.

²Ibid., p.329.

disingenuous in its religious expression.¹ In fact, Washington offered public prayers for the nation in the name of "Jesus Christ our Lord," advocated the religion of Jesus Christ to the Delawares for the improvement of their greatness and happiness and offered the help of Congress for their Christianization. As well, as President he committed the government to the civilization and the Christianization of "the savages of the wilderness," and spoke of "the pure spirit of Christianity" to American Catholics. That this was not mere presidential posturing is demonstrated by Washington's long activity in the Anglican church, his professed belief in the atonement of Christ, his notations in his personal prayer book and his adoption of the Anglican creed including its Christian articles. His public praise for the "Character of Christian" to his armies as the "highest Glory," greater even than "the distinguished character of Patriot," as well as his admonitions for those he commanded to be good Christians and his public Christian prayers with them and on their behalf, demonstrates that Washington's private virtues and beliefs were his public virtues long before 'mere politics' may have forced a public servant to adopt any pretence.²

A winking blindness to religiosity in American government is endemic to political studies in the United States. Their insistence upon the reality of Jefferson's supposed ideal, the "wall of separation," when such never has been realized in actuality is at least misleading. Again, Jefferson's ideal condemns the entire course of actual American

¹Gordon S. Wood, "Ideology and the Origins of Liberal America," William and Mary Quarterly 44:3, p.637; also see Fredric Smoler, "The Radical Revolution: An Interview with Gordon Wood," American Heritage (December, 1992), pp.52.

²"George Washington," in America's God and Country, ed. Federer, pp.634-666.

history, including his own Governorship of Virginia. Even Jefferson reverted to the "chosen people" language of religiosity in his Second Inaugural Address; even Jefferson invokes God as President and places America within its Divine context to secure his own place at the altar of the American temple, and even Jefferson as president utters "A National Prayer for Peace" in the name of Jesus Christ.¹ Rather than any "wall of separation," the relationship of church and state has more closely followed the schizophrenic pattern of North Carolina's early constitution, which "after barring all clergymen from public office, required all officeholders to believe in God, an afterlife, the truth of the Protestant religion, and the divine authority of both the Old and New Testaments."² This certainly has more to do with actual American history and politics than does any "wall of separation." Furthermore, despite the relaxation of Protestant oath tests, Christianity remains a necessary attribute for any aspirant to America's highest office, at least practically if not formally.

The sensation caused by the faith of a Jewish candidate for Vice-President in the year 2000, the controversy that arose with the nomination of a Catholic priest as Congressional Chaplain, as well as the very existence of that position, and the denunciation on religious grounds of Mitt Romney, Mormon candidate for the United States Senate, by his opponent, Catholic Ted Kennedy, all testify of the practical

¹Thomas Jefferson, "Second Inaugural Address, March 4, 1805, Capitol Building, Washington, D.C.," in Lott, The Presidents Speak, pp.21-25; President Thomas Jefferson, "A National Prayer for Peace," March 4, 1805, in America's God and Country, ed. Federer, pp.327-328.

²Murrin, "Religion and Politics in America," p.30.

necessity for right religion by those seeking public affirmation in America.¹ Eric Foner maintains that "under the Constitution, it was and remains possible, as one critic at the time complained, for a 'papist, a Mohomatan, a deist, yea an atheist,' to become president of the United States."² Despite the supposed removal of barriers by this parchment, however, and belying the spirit of Foner's praise, America's political culture effectively barred even Catholics from its highest office until 1960, and certainly can be expected to continue to preserve that institution from "Mohomatans" and "atheists." Deists, if any, may have had the potential to preside over the nation only during a short period between the ratification of the Constitution and the Second Great Awakening and its renewed Christianization of American public life. The separation of church and state has in no way kept religion out of American politics. In fact, it has done quite the opposite. Politics and religion have grown together in America, as if in ignorance of the Constitutional blueprint.

Jefferson's Virginia bill for elementary schools reveals his ambivalence in a conditional attitude towards government-sponsored religion. Through this bill, Jefferson approves the teaching of general religion in schools, so long as no person or sect is

¹Richard Pérez-Peña, "Lieberman Seeks Greater Role for Religion in Public Life," New York Times (August 28, 2000); Maureen Dowd, "A Match Made in Heaven," New York Times (August 9, 2000); Martin E. Marty, "Bound by Belief," New York Times (August 15, 2000); Lizette Alvarez, "Rancor Over Selection of Chaplain Builds in the House," New York Times (March 13, 2000); Lizette Alvarez, "After Months of Rancor, Speaker Names a Catholic Priest as House Chaplain," New York Times (March 24, 2000);

²Foner, The Story of American Freedom, p.27.

offended by its content.¹ Madison took this approach farther into civil religion, by insisting that presidential proclamations could, and should, participate in this type of religiosity. Furthermore, Madison outlined the "American political creed" that should be taught and "safeguarded against heretical intrusions," including the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, the Federalist papers, and Washington's Inaugural and Farewell Addresses. The Farewell Address and its promotion of religion as the basis of good government were said by Madison to "contain nothing which is not good."² Actually, it merely reasserted much of the Federalist's argument and attempted to point government in the direction intended by Madison's version of the Constitution.

Ultimately, the courts would take charge of interpreting the First Amendment and defining the often slight variations of "original intent" by key Founders, vacillating awkwardly between Jefferson's "wall" and Madison's "line of separation." Founders, thus, have been established as civil religious authorities and subjected to invocations second only to God in a near-biblical exegesis of documentary and intellectual history.³ By 1833, Joseph Story, described as the second most influential Chief Justice in early American history, would officially interpret the Constitution and First Amendment to be consistent with governmental fostering of Christianity as the foundation of the Republic.⁴ This

¹Thomas Jefferson, "Bill for the 'Establishing of Elementary Schools' in Virginia," as quoted in Skousen, The Making of America, p.676.

²Meyers, The Mind of the Founder, pp.432-446. For Washington's Farewell Address, see Richard B. Morris, "George Washington: Farewell Address," in An American Primer, ed. Boorstin, pp.211-229.

³McBrien, Caesar's Coin, pp.68-71, 73-100.

⁴Noll, A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada, p.147.

reasoning followed recent juridical affirmations of general Christianity as an aspect of American government. Offenses against the Christian religion were deemed offenses against the American government, religion remaining an explicit concern of government despite the Constitution. In different states, Christianity and the Bible were declared a part of American law in 1811 and again in 1824, and in 1817 oaths affirming future states of punishment and reward along with subsequent religious duties were declared a necessity to law itself.¹ Clearly, the civil religion was being entrenched ideally as well as practically.

Justice Story would go on to declare the First Amendment a friend to religion in 1840, finally even declaring America to be a Christian nation in 1844. Christianity, he said, was not to be laid prostrate to Mohammedanism, Judaism, and infidelity. Rather, the First Amendment was intended to exclude sectarian rivalry, but not Christianity altogether, from American government.² These laws and decisions kept pace with the drift of America's citizenry, especially in the North, towards a de facto establishment of Protestant Christianity as the civil religion in spite of any intended consequences of Constitutional disestablishment.

¹New York Supreme Court, "The People v. Ruggles," 1811; Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, "The Commonwealth v. Wolf," 1817; The Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, "Updegraph v. The Commonwealth," 1824; in America's God and Country, ed. Federer, pp.476-77, 347-48, 505-6, 506-8.

²Joseph Story, "A Familiar Exposition of the Constitution of the United States," 1840; United States Supreme Court, *Vidal v. Girard's Executors*, 1844; Joseph Story, "Commentary on the First Amendment's original meaning"; all excerpts in America's God and Country, ed. Federer, pp.573-574, 595-596, 574.

iii. Stirrings:

Difficulties quickly arose out of the Constitution's loosening of the formal ties between the new religious and political worlds that emerged from the Revolution. The sudden perception of political and social freedoms left American life disjointed, without a mainstream of cultural definition. Nathan Hatch sees the changes involved in this post-Revolutionary period as nothing less than "cataclysmic." The new freedom lent itself to religious experimentation and renewed quests for American meaning. Once again, social upheaval sent Americans to the Bible for refuge, for prophetic explanation and self-assurance.¹ In the new freedom of official disestablishment, American religion again embarked upon a quest to re-establish religious authority and political legitimacy. As it did so, millennial expectations provided ends and justifications for both civil and religious ambitions. The two realms converged in the objects of their desires, and in the nation as their mediator.²

The American project had become an ecumenical endeavour as the civil religion celebrated unity above the fray of sectarian difference. Civil religion and the nation displaced church religion. High levels of public religiosity in national life were contrasted by a simultaneous and general ecclesiastical decline. America witnessed its lowest levels ever of church membership and participation.³ Only about ten percent of Americans were

¹Hatch, The Democratization of Christianity, pp.6-7.

²Robert T. Handy, A Christian America: Protestant Hopes and Historical Realities (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1984), pp.27-31; Hatch, "The Democratization of Christianity and the Character of American Politics," pp.99-102.

³Niebuhr and Heimart, A Nation So Conceived, p.20; Marty, Pilgrims in Their Own Land, p.175.

churched at the turn of the eighteenth century, a figure that threatened to drop further with continued sectarian fragmentation.¹ Amidst this general institutional decay, however, religion itself remained vital and relevant to both nation and state. In fact, any purported decline in religiosity confuses church and religion. Furthermore, some accounts of the Second Awakening reject a rising Unitarianism from the realm of "true" religion, not counting its numbers among America's "religious." However, the beginning of the greatest American revival is not merely coincident with the "high water mark" of American Unitarianism, but is concomitant with and responsive to it.²

The Constitution's formal exclusion of organized religion and its attendant elevation of civil religion above the churches challenged the relevance of America's Protestant clergy. Jefferson had expected a gradual conversion of all Americans to Unitarianism, a conversion that he hoped would bring America's churches and civil religion into close alignment. Thus, Unitarianism would be established as the civil religion by default.³ Furthermore, Jefferson, Franklin, and additional early stalwarts of the civil religion pointed to America's mythic agrarianism as an alternate source of communion with God. In this American church of the soil, 'farmers' carried the Holy Ghost with them naturally, as chosen sons of God who would lead American prosperity into the new century. The purity emanating from "virgin" soil was expected to imbue

¹Handy, A Christian America, pp.24-25.

²Douglas H. Sweet, "Church Vitality and the American Revolution: Historiographical Consensus and Thoughts Towards a New Perspective," Church History 45 (1976), pp.344-346.

³Bellah, "Religion and the Legitimation of the American Republic," p.14.

them with a righteousness that would overcome history and return mankind to Eden--the Puritan cycles of spiritual decline in the midst of luxury would finally be undone in a perfect state of incorruption.¹ This idealization of American experience and the omnipresence of the American god joined with the apparent Unitarianism of America's post-Revolutionary civil religion to spark a revival of church religiosity in response. The fire would not be quenched until Unitarianism was displaced and Protestant Christianity entrenched as the dominant content of the civil religion. Throughout the nineteenth-century, Americans would replace their vaguely generalized, Providential god of earlier civil religion with an increasingly particularized biblical and Christian god, stamping America as an explicitly Christian nation.²

iv. A Second Awakening:

The rejection of Christian atonement and the primacy of human reason in the works and will of God that Unitarianism involved were too explicit and too elite for Protestant contemporaries. A general rally of Christian forces in America responded to "overcome the threat of Enlightenment philosophy, to bring the faith into a position of influence in the young nation, and to plant churches in the rapidly opening West."³ As

¹Thomas Jefferson, "Notes on the State of Virginia, Query XIX," in Agrarianism in American Literature, ed. M. Thomas Inge (New York: Odyssey Press, 1969), pp.9-10; Benjamin Franklin, "The Internal State of America; Being a True Description of the Interest and Policy of That Vast Continent, 1799," in ibid., pp.115-119.

²Hughes, "Recovering First Times," p.208.

³Handy, A Christian America, p.25. Also see Butler, Awash in a Sea of Faith, pp.220-221, and Arieli, Individualism and Nationalism in American Ideology, pp.257-258.

a religious phenomenon, then, the revival arose to Christianize America. In political terms, the revival responded to the same forces--Jeffersonianism and Unitarianism. Jefferson's electoral victory of 1800 was the first victory of a national party, a signal of America's tendency toward one nation--the one preferred by Jefferson--one soul, despite its supposed pluralism and Constitutional opposition to factional dominance. This victory threatened America with the imposition of one identity upon a percolating, however narrowly Protestant, pluralism. This imposed identity was repugnant to Christian elements despite Jefferson's affirmations of Christian belief, enough so in New England as to spark secession movements there.¹ As President, Jefferson turned to public invocations of a Providential and biblical god. This, however, came too late to assuage Protestant opponents. In a strange mirror of events to follow decades later in the South, Northern Americans rejected national change and 'apostasy,' and rose up in religious revival against the irreligion of "foreign infidelity, deism, and Jeffersonianism (all synonymous terms)." This "crusade to recall their countrymen to the faith of their fathers," however, would quickly move from conservative preservation to aggressive thrusts of conversion as the renewal of Puritan perfectionism recalled the ideal of a sinless American millennial empire²--a New England ideal that needed to be restated and made relevant now in response to the comparative tolerance and openness of the national myth fostered by the

¹Niebuhr and Heimart, A Nation So Conceived, pp.20-21.

²Kenneth H. Winn, Exiles in a Land of Liberty: Mormons in America, 1830-1846 (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1989), p.45.

likes of Franklin and Jefferson.¹ When this renewed Puritanism came to be imposed upon the rest of the nation, it would also meet with sectional secession and renewal in response, this time accompanied by violence.

In its earliest years, the revival constituted another element of American experience that tended towards unity and followed patterns found in the First Awakening. National themes of millennial approach and Providential care were expressed across sections by all American denominations--thus "American Christianity" emerged in this period, characterized by participation in and conviction concerning the American millennial enterprise. Civic and ecclesiastic rhetoric converged in the re-articulation of an American mission that harmonized religious and political values. Against the encroachments of elite humanism, American history and destiny were again preserved within God's grand design.² The national consensus of belief in American "chosenness" and its accompanying "manifest destiny" involved a conspiracy of Christian faith and American patriotism that marked America, setting her apart as exceptional. The American way became the only way--truth revealed through human and Divine American action. This consensus of belief existed wholly apart from the churches and their particular faiths, forming the stuff of America's civil religion, a universal Christian faith around which American churches merely organized and directed their flocks.³

The nationalist rhetoric of the American jeremiad and the persistence of itinerant

¹James Fulton Maclear, "'The True American Union' of Church and State: The Reconstruction of the Theocratic Tradition," Church History 28 (1959), p.45.

²Maclear, "The Republic and the Millennium," pp.193-194.

³McLoughlin, Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform, pp.104-107.

preachers continued the work of the Constitution--the levelling of all sects into one American religion united in reverence for America's primacy in God's design, reverence for her millennial promise.¹ This religion, however, was markedly different from Jefferson's 'benign' Unitarianism. Instead, American Protestantism was action-oriented, a movement infused with ideology, constantly dissatisfied with the status quo. In the very nature of Protestantism, the rejection of present circumstances in favour of an idealized promise constitutes the core of American renewal. This is the prophetic civil religious quest to eliminate the gap between ideal and actual conditions.² The inter-denominational unity that American religion exhibited in revivals and camp meetings, a shared communion signifying shared faith to participants, existed across sections and classes. This contributed to another national mobilization.³ Unlike the time of the Revolution, however, this time America mobilized against internal forces that threatened the very nature of the American project with "wrong" belief. The Awakening became a valid Christian response to America's perceived spiritual decline and political divergence from her original purpose. Officials and governments joined in the revival from its earliest stages, providing monies and legal protections for the spread of Protestant Christianity

¹Bercovitch, The American Jeremiad, pp.166-172.

²Mathews, "The Second Great Awakening as an Organizing Process, p.30; John B. Snook, Going Further: Life-and-Death Religion in America (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1973), pp.30-31; Huntington, American Politics.

³Handy, A Christian America, p.26; Bernard A. Weisberger, "The Cane Ridge Camp Meeting," in That Old-Time Religion, ed. Jan Gilmore and Ginny Jacoby (Kansas City: Hallmark, 1972), pp.46-47; Frank Lawrence Owsley, Plain Folk of the Old South (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1949; rpt. 1965), pp.99-102; Snook, Going Further, p.26

and its religious morality as the foundation of the good society. These court decisions and legislative provisions are typical of the Awakening's central and potent concern: social control and organization.¹

The original impulse of the Awakening was one of conversion, or religion as the internalization of government. Such self-government would render external compulsion unnecessary.² In this way, American freedom could be managed and liberty directed. Revivals were intended to teach people, to socialize citizens for democracy in an ever-widening electorate that might become increasingly ungovernable.³ It is here in the drive toward social control that American unity was lost in the Awakening, and North and South parted company. Southern revivalism continued in the tradition of individual reform and conversion from sin to alter man's standing with God rather than with his fellow man. In terms of social standing and practice, Southerners clung to an Old Testament with its patriarchal family orientation. So long as the Awakening remained focused upon its sinful individual orientation, the revival remained a national and unifying force.⁴ The

¹James Kent, to the American Bible Society, as quoted in Federer, America's God and Country, pp.348-349; *The People v. Ruggles*, 1811, in ibid., pp.347-348; "Constitution of the State of Ohio, November 1, 1802," Article VIII, Section 3, in ibid., p.486; "The Enabling Act for Ohio, April 30, 1802," and "The Northwest Ordinance," Article III, in ibid., p.165; "The Enabling Act for Indiana, April 13, 1816," and "The Enabling Act for Mississippi, March 1, 1817," as quoted in ibid., p.167; "Constitution of the State of Mississippi, 1817," in ibid., p.451.

²Bellah, The Broken Covenant, p.47-48.

³Maclear, "'The True American Union' of Church and State," pp.48-49.

⁴Peterson, Ham and Japheth, p.16; Paul E. Johnson and Sean Wilentz, The Kingdom of Matthias (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1994), p.10; Mathews, "The Second Great Awakening as an Organizing Process," p.34.

entire American nation retained an Old Testament orientation, and was characterized as an "Old Testament culture" throughout most of the first two decades of the nineteenth-century.¹ Thus, Southern culture was at home within the United States. The focus of Northern revivalism, however, soon shifted towards institutional and coercive legislative reforms. Prisons, temperance, education and, eventually, slavery all fell subject to a Northern reform impulse that emerged from a millennial impatience tinged with cultural anxiety in the presence of a population that was increasingly diversified by immigration. The immediacy of 'foreign' elements troubled Northern primal concerns for social unity, initiating institutional suppression of such diversity. As the North shifted the revival to political impositions that tended to nationalize its sectional culture, the South rejected the Awakening and retreated from it.² This also involved a retreat from what was becoming the American nation, so that by the 1830s American unity was economic and commercial only, the nation having begun to split apart spiritually and sectionally.³

As a phenomenon of social control, the Second Awakening was a decidedly political and social instrument of American prosperity. The organizing impulse of the revival was especially evident in the North, where urbanization and industrialization were predominant problems. The amorality of an increasingly free market and the disruption of familial ties and controls due to modernization and changing labour arrangements

¹Nathan O. Hatch and Mark A. Noll, "Introduction," in The Bible in America: Essays in Cultural History, ed. Hatch and Noll (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1982), pp.5-6.

²Peterson, Ham and Japheth, p.16; Johnson and Wilentz, The Kingdom of Matthias, pp.8-9; Mathews, "The Second Great Awakening as an Organizing Process," pp.34-35.

³Niebuhr and Heimart, A Nation So Conceived, p.23.

demanded the reorganization of society by the new "better sort" of urban Americans.¹

Paul Johnson's case study of Rochester revivals in the first decades of the Northern Awakening establishes the emerging middle-class urban business interests as the chief proponents of the re-churching of America and the accompanying reforms in social legislation. Owners and managers responded to looser social and business connections with the labouring class, a class that threatened to detach itself completely from any kind of moral domination by its 'betters.' Relations were increasingly and restrictively economic, requiring anxious employers and well-to-do neighbours to resort to political and legislative coercion to enforce their preferred moral behaviour. This was augmented by church revivals that worked to reform people "from within." Religion provided a ready language to communicate standards and expectations for a large, unstable population of transient workers in need of socialization. Rochester politics became infused with a religiosity that was more explicitly Christian. Local government was reorganized, licensing fees were imposed to control suspect behaviour, and opponents were ostracized as perverse and ignorant. Religious reform led the way to a new society of detached, yet responsible citizens. Together, petty-industrialists and clergymen built a sober work force by specifically targeting grocers for religious conversion--grocers had close links with the lower class and were crucial in their supply of liquor. Large economic and spiritual investments were made in changing the habits of the poor. Economic incentives were given to workers to "get religion"--workers must convert to get or keep their jobs--in a

¹Mathews, "The Second Great Awakening as an Organizing Process," pp.31-36; Brian Harding, American Literature in Context, II: 1830-1865 (London: Methuen, 1982), p.9.

revival that was a crucial step in the legitimation of "free labour." Employers imposed religious standards upon their workers, controlling behaviour with an upward mobility that was fostered by church attendance. Getting religion meant getting ahead in Rochester. Although this type of study has not been undertaken for many American cities, Johnson maintains that those cities that have been examined show similar patterns of revivalist development and motivation, making Rochester typically American in its Christianization of local civil religion.¹

Additional students of American revival and reform assure us that this is the case nationally, that revivals and reforms were pursued as social controls by business and "secular" interests throughout this period of American history (religious reforms would also serve social control functions in the 1930s, when labour became further detached and threatening).² As a nationalizing influence, the revivals corresponded with the Constitution in its tendency to integrate American society and move the country away from a confederacy of states. In New England, religious duties became social duties, much as the federalist thrust had moved political thought into religion.³

American politics became permeated with Christian religiosity in this period. Revivals mobilized and socialized Americans in advance of political parties and legislative coercion. Consensus became the authority Americans had sought after. Ostracism, the "Invisible Hand" of conformity, directed affairs according to its

¹Johnson, A Shopkeeper's Millennium, pp.3-14, 80-81, 116-135, 136-141.

²Walters, American Reformers, p.34; Marty, Pilgrims in Their Own Land, p.176, 377, 386.

³Mathews, "The Second Great Awakening as an Organizing Process," pp.39-41.

"judgment." All of the apparent divisiveness of splintering sectarianism amounted to nuance in an Americanization of Christianity that diluted doctrinal differences and mediated them through politics. "From the early part of the nineteenth century, religious language riddled the development of party politics in the United States." Revivals precursed political rallies and party conventions, and elections became civil-religious "holy days" in a process, not of secularization, but of political and religious reinforcement. "Middle-class men began to join churches in larger numbers at almost precisely the same time [in the 1830s and 1840s] that they began to join political parties." In all of this, American perfectionism pushed Northern politicians and community leaders toward demonstrations of their worthiness. Politics increasingly involved confrontations of "visible saints." Saintliness likewise involved the pursuit of political goals through religious societies formed locally or statewide around specific issues, later taken nationally.¹ Through these associations, people came to identify their cause with God's cause, their mission with America's mission.²

As the Awakening wore on, moreover, these American voluntary societies institutionalized the reform impulse in a drive to legislate Christianity. Initial reforms aimed at social control of the poor and disenfranchised quickly included a concern once limited to elites and federalists--temperance. Now temperance became characterized by an explicitly religious argument. This movement became nationalized as a social as well

¹Moore, Selling God, pp.72-74, 78-79, 84-85; Handy, A Christian America, pp.38-39.

²Merle D. Sturge, "Jerry Falwell and 'The Simple Faith on Which This Country Was Built'," in The Political Role of Religion in the United States, ed. Stephen D. Johnson and Joseph B. Tammey (Boulder: Westview, 1986), p.108.

as a religious cause, picking up such advocates as Abraham Lincoln in the 1840s. The Congressional Temperance Society of 1833 decided to set a personal example for the nation, rather than legislation. "The first president of the society," however, "had already used his political position as Secretary of War to accomplish a temperance objective, that of removing liquor from the Army's rations." A portent of future sectional splits, in the 1830s voters began to vote across party lines against candidates who were known drinkers. Massachusetts passed liquor laws in 1838, Maine in 1846 and again in 1851, the second time imposing prohibition. By 1855, all of New England was "dry," a condition rejected by the more moderate South where temperance failed to make the same headway as in the North. In fact, the less industrialized South was "solid" in not passing prohibition legislation, thus refusing to mix middle-class morality with politics. Unmoved by the Northern example, Southerners invoked tradition and constitutional theory to reject such state coercion of individual freedom. More than successful legislation differentiated Northern temperance movements from Southern counterparts, however, as many temperance leaders in the North were also abolitionists. Abolition was aligned with temperance in various campaigns as joint avenues of cultural progress, harbingers of the American future.¹

Despite the accomplishments of the American revival in churching citizens and driving them towards a consensus in which democracy would be safe for property and business interests, social control became a growing problem for the North as the century

¹Walters, American Reformers, pp.174-175, 123-137; Smith, The Nation Comes of Age, pp.689-693.

proceeded. American expansion became a fact of life in the nineteenth century, spatially as well as culturally. Manifest Destiny and the expansion of the West spurred on American self-consciousness to creedal re-definition. An American creed was made rigid in response to immigration and the population of urban industrial centres. The socialization of the immigrant and America's uneducated class accompanied the expansion of the political franchise, a special concern in the North as its culture suffered the pressures of westward migration and tremendous influxes of foreign immigration to the industrial Northeast.¹

Although Northern capitalists promoted immigration, the Catholicism of most immigrants presented problems for "true" Americans. The Protestant crusade that emerged from the Awakening in the Northeast was directed largely at these immigrants, their religion being their "definitive characteristic." The Americanization that was directed at these immigrants was accompanied by violence, a mark of vigilance against "wrong" thought. A nationwide Anti-Catholic movement was joined by anti-Masonic and anti-Mormon violence, these animosities often residing together simultaneously in individuals searching to define "true" Americanism. Anti-slavery would follow once these alien 'others' were suppressed amidst the early sounds of war.²

With the Constitution's "disestablishment" came freedom for the Puritan tradition.

¹Harding, American Literature in Context, pp.2-3; Walters, American Reformers, pp.4-5, 8; James M. McPherson, "The Distinctiveness of the Old South," in The Coming of the Civil War 3rd ed., ed. Michael Perman (Toronto: D.C. Heath & Co., 1993), p.196.

²Norton, Alternative Americas, pp.66-68; Tuveson, Redeemer Nation, pp.171-173; Walters, American Reformers, pp.8-10; Gabriel, The Course of American Democratic Thought, p.54; Marty, Pilgrims in Their Own Land, p.276.

It was loosed from local reference to take the religious reconstruction of New England to the rest of the United States, particularly to the West. Religious and political rhetoric became increasingly national while retaining Christian overtones. Unity once again rose to the surface of revivalist thought. Union became the design of God in the Second, as it had been in the First, Awakening. The first revival, however, had invoked unity for the sake of liberty, God's primary concern. Now American union became sacred in and for itself, a central issue in a changing society unsure of its integrity.¹ Protestant reformers set out to exclude difference from an American "sameness." Uniformity was idealized by the renewal of the "dream of an organic and tightly knit community made up of like-minded people who worshipped the same God the same way and who imparted to one another a sense of wholeness."² With liberty already accomplished, unity now meant conformity this time around.³

In this pre-occupation with conformity the West played a central role. It was seen by key interpreters of America's mission as the definitive arbiter of national meaning and direction. The fate of the nation and of the world were to be decided in the American West. The American character was to be determined there once, for all. Lyman Beecher's "Plea for the West" pointed to the migration of Puritan blood that carried Puritan traditions to the land that now promised to test the American character, to refine it and

¹Maclear, "'The True American Union' of Church and State," p.53; Henry, The Intoxication of Power, pp.81-82.

²Marty, Pilgrims in Their Own Land, p.234.

³Norton, Alternative Americas, p.74.

decide its destiny.¹ Beecher announced western migration as the final millennial initiation of "moral and political emancipation of the world." It was to be definitive of America's "religious and political destiny."²

America's "true" political religion was carried into expansion by New England's spreading population. Intense efforts were exerted to Christianize the West.³ This mission was to be accomplished through public education, another pillar of reform in the Second Awakening. As evangelical religion was shaping American politics and setting patterns for political reform, so it shaped American thought through Sunday schools, common schools, and colleges.⁴ Common schools were forwarded as civil religious institutions that were to teach a generalized religion that governments and reformers alike thought to be the basis for society. The "non-denominational" content of public education, however, involved common symbols of Protestant Christianity only. These were blended with republican symbols in the promotion of national unity through a "common" faith. "The civil religion is both parent and child to the public school."⁵

Sunday schools emerged in tandem with America's common schools. Their

¹Marty, Pilgrims in Their Own Land, p.273; Maclear, "'The True American Union' of Church and State," p.57.

²Lyman Beecher, "A Plea For The West (1835)," in God's New Israel, ed. Cherry, p.120.

³Maclear, "The Republic and the Millennium," p.195; Powers Smith, Yankees and God, p.291; Noll, A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada, pp.222-223.

⁴Noll, A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada, pp.228-230, 242-244.

⁵Hammond, "The Conditions for Civil Religion," pp.72-75; Handy, A Christian America, pp.34-35.

"charity" was targeted at the urban poor across the North and mid-West, in order to assimilate increasingly liminal Americans to a New England version of American citizenship. Such religious socialization was not limited to private schools, however. The New Testament became a public school text. In 1836, McGuffey's Reader, "the mainstay in public education in America till 1920," included "copious extracts from Sacred Scripture." These were augmented by lessons on prayer, Christian salvation, the Bible and Christian morality, as well as lessons on truth and punishment in an afterlife of judgement--itself a main pillar of any civil religion.¹ Catholics and other immigrants were expected to be Americanized through such Protestant education that, along with instruction in "true" history, boldly stared down threats of multi-culturalism in the West.²

In the East, mob violence beat down difference, with spillover effects in the public schools, where it gained official sanction. In 1859, a Catholic student refused to recite the Protestant version of the Ten Commandments, only to have his subsequent beating at the hands of a teacher upheld by the Police Court of Boston. The thirty-minute beating, "inflicting serious wounds," was found warranted in support of religious morality--the basis of any republican constitution.³ Catholic Schools were officially opposed in New York City, in order to stifle alien viewpoints. Only in the 1860s, after Catholics

¹William Holmes McGuffey, excerpts from McGuffey's Reader, in America's God and Country, ed. Federer, pp.439-442; Carl F. Kaestle, Pillars of the Republic: Common Schools and American Society, 1780-1860 (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983; rpt.1993), pp.31, 44; McLoughlin, Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform, pp.112-113.

²Niebuhr and Heimart, A Nation So Conceived, pp.31-32.

³"Commonwealth v. Cooke, Police Court of Boston, Massachusetts, 1859," in Religion in American Life, ed. Conrad Wright (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1972), pp.90-93.

participated in another American war, were they again deemed sufficiently assimilated into the American Civil Religion. After the Civil War, New York State tax dollars poured into religious schools and hospitals to resume antebellum reforms. Of such religious recipients, Catholics would receive the lion's share of New York City funding.¹ Clearly, popular opinion and the relationship that any particular religion has with the civil religion has had more to do with public funding and the (dis)establishment of religion than has the Constitution's disestablishment clause.

Henry Barnard and Horace Mann, "regarded as 'founders' of American public education," promoted public schools as vehicles of a "holy cause." They were to be the "Ark of God" in a "Christian crusade."² With this approach to public education, Mann had served in the Massachusetts House of Representatives and in the Senate, where he was president for a time. In Mann's final annual report to the Massachusetts Board of Education before his election to Congress, he asserted the need for legislators to mingle "knowledge, justice, temperance, and obedience to the laws of God" in their deliberations. In the spirit of America's First Great Awakening, Mann presented scientific and natural laws as realms of human endeavour that were, nevertheless, "ordained of God." He invoked the Bible in defence of public education, asserting that religious education is necessary to moral education. Thus, governments must support and direct educators as they inculcate general Christianity and Christian morals. The Bible is to be taught in

¹Amy Bridges, A City in The Republic: Antebellum New York and the Origins of Machine Politics (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1984; rpt.1987), pp.86, 151.

²Hammond, "The Conditions for Civil Religion," p.74.

schools without sectarian reference, according to Mann, in order to unify Americans around the principles of generalized Christianity.¹ In fact, differences of emphasis and interpretation across the sections ultimately would lead to a generation divided by their inability to rally around such principles, a generation no longer able to "generalize" its Christianity.

v. Sectarian Union, Sectional Disunion:

The public school system and its explicit socializing drive towards cultural unity met with opposition in the South. Although tax supported schools blanketed the North and mid-West with American "truth," they did not penetrate the South.² Beecher's "Plea for the West" to "educate! We must educate!" fell on deaf ears in the South. Invocations of public education as the guarantor of American liberty in securing an American destiny yet to be decided were only slightly veiled references and threats to Southern slavery. The extension of such Southern backwardness into the West must be opposed, it was argued, "powerfully [by] the cause of free institutions [for] the liberty of the world."³ Thus, common school texts taught American chosenness as a conditional covenant with God, a covenant that required American fidelity and provoked the nation to realize its promise. Biblical invocations supporting abolition were buttressed by the involvement of Northern clergymen in public education. They denounced slavery as a sin that blighted

¹Horace Mann, "Report of the Massachusetts Board of Education, 1848," in An American Primer, ed. Boorstin, pp.360-375.

²Kaestle, Pillars of the Republic, pp.x-xi.

³Beecher, "A Plea For The West," pp.120, 125.

the entire nation with God's punishment and threatened the covenant.¹ Increasingly, Southerners replaced Catholics, Masons, and Mormons as the 'alien' others who required assimilation.

With the potential for Western expansion to determine America's character, North-South differences became increasingly exaggerated, slavery becoming an issue of supposed cultural difference. The reform impulse that began with a national Awakening now was expected to decide the nature of a national civil religion. Political renewal would institutionalize the Awakening's reform impulse.² Virginians had prophesied a crusade against slaveholders in 1832; Northern "crackpot reformers" invested with Christian righteousness, began to change a moderate anti-slavery sentiment into abolitionism.³

By 1840, it was plain that Northern evangelists were determined to make the entire nation conform to a sectional version of America. This emerging tyranny of the majority seems acceptable to Louis Hartz, not tyrannical at all due to its blandness and non-violent nature. Liberalism accounts for a pacific Americanism, according to Hartz's uncharacteristic celebration: "the American majority has been an amiable shepherd dog kept forever on a lion's leash." Hartz asserts that "the North simply affirmed its principles with a new and wilder fury," when confronted by a Southern apostasy. However, we

¹Strege, "Jerry Falwell and 'The Simple Faith on Which This Country Was Built'," pp.108-109.

²David Herbert Donald, "An Excess of Democracy: The American Civil War and the Social Process," in The Coming of the American Civil War, ed. Perman, pp.58-62.

³Avery O. Craven, "The Repressible Conflict," in ibid., pp.44-45.

should see that this new fury belongs to Northern Puritanism invested with a certain militancy by its renewal in the Second Awakening. Rather than Southern apostasy, it was a changing, spiritually renewed North that lashed out at a retrenching South. One self-righteous and tyrannical sectional will exploded to crush another and remove its embarrassing traces from the national civil religion.¹ Thus, "the abolitionist attack was overwhelmingly moral and religious," as it moved upon the national spirit in a sort of Christian "cleansing action." Early on, revivalists fought against slavery as a national sin to be purged in order to realize the Kingdom of God in the American West.²

Abolitionists invoked a particular interpretation of the Declaration of Independence in the North, as though they were a sect over and against the generalized civil religion of other American churches. They denounced American religion and politics both, for having embraced the Southern slave system. Abolitionists shocked fellow Americans by endorsing Northern secession. Their high moral tone pointed to national guilt for not realizing their own idealized version of America's civil religion. The civil religion, as they conceived it, condemned American churches along with the rest of the nation.³

By affirming their civil religion to be more vital than established church religions, abolitionists forced a crisis within American churches. The renewed civil religion seemed

¹Niebuhr and Heimart, A Nation So Conceived, pp.25-26; Hartz, The Liberal Tradition in America, pp.129, 156.

²Stampp, The Imperiled Union, p.84; Freehling, The Road to Disunion, pp.289-290; Niebuhr and Heimart, A Nation So Conceived, p.34.

³George M. Fredrickson, "White Supremacy and the American Sectional Conflict," in The Coming of the American Civil War, ed. Perman, p.227; Walters, American Reformers, pp.89-92.

more able to bring America to its promise through politics and reform than could churches. Thus, politicians and reformers began again to appear as agents of God's will, a new 'elect' to replace ministers and clergymen in moral and social standing. Antebellum politics became the battleground of a purified American religion that would rid the nation of shame and guilt. Lincoln's late confession of national guilt merely echoed the earlier, explicit religiosity of abolitionists such as Lyman Beecher, Henry Ward Beecher, and William Lloyd Garrison.¹ The pressure to renew church religion, to live up to the demands of the emerging civil religion, split American churches apart; two versions of Christian America diverged.

In response to this pressure applied to American churches by the changing civil religion, major denominations began to split along sectional lines in the 1830s. American Presbyterians parted company in 1837, and remained apart until 1983. Baptists and Methodists followed with their own splits in the 1840s; the Southern Baptist Convention formed in 1845, Methodists split later as a pre-cursor to the approaching civil war.² Jon Butler points to these religious divisions as pre-figuring the secular division of the nation and setting the stage for greater division.³ In 1850, John C. Calhoun directly asserted to the United States Senate that American religion was coming undone and with it the nation. The strongest of social ties, religion was not strong enough to withstand an

¹Jerald C. Brauer, "The Rule of the Saints in American Politics," Church History 27 (September, 1958), pp.251-253; Paul C. Nagel, This Sacred Trust: American Nationality 1798-1898 (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1971), p.167.

²Noll, A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada, pp.315-316.

³Butler, Awash in a Sea of Faith, p.292.

internal attack by radical sectional prophets.¹ At the least, American religion no longer acted as a unifying agency; at worst, it directly provoked hostilities.² Underscoring this division was the prophetic judgment of an American civil religion lurching towards pre-eminence in its own establishment.

The changing Northern version of the civil religion began to involve the rejection of the Constitution as a binding document, because its compromise tainted it with worldliness. John Humphrey Noyes wrote to Garrison urging him to reject the document in favour of the Declaration of Independence--Noyes's burned the Constitution in 1837, Garrison copied seventeen years later. In this fashion, Robert Bellah asserts, abolitionists worked from within the framework of the civil religion to change its content, primarily by elevating the Declaration of Independence to a pre-eminent position amongst American scripture. This would become the civil religion of Lincoln and, eventually, of America.³ Garrison's Liberator began to give new meaning to American civil religious symbols, such as Bunker Hill, the Declaration of Independence, and the liberty fought for in the Revolution, by connecting them to the abolitionist struggle.⁴ Thus, the Northern civil religion claimed for itself a continuity with the American Founding.

¹Noll, A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada, pp.316-317.

²C.C. Goen, Broken Churches, Broken Nation: Denominational Schisms and the Coming of the Civil War (Macon: Mercer Univ. Press, 1985).

³Bellah, The Broken Covenant, pp.50-51; Noll, A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada, pp.316-317; Arieli, Individualism and Nationalism in American Ideology, p.274.

⁴William Lloyd Garrison, "Prospectus for the 'Liberator'," in An American Primer, ed. Boorstin, pp.295-300.

By 1854, Lincoln was calling for the "restoration" of the Declaration of Independence as the standard of judgment for American institutions.¹ America's "republican robe is soiled," he said, "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."² With such mythic imagery, Lincoln joined abolitionists in changing the civil religion from within, shifting the emphasis and meaning of familiar symbols, renewing them. By 1855, Lincoln was adeptly manipulating these symbols in a language of apostasy that accused Southern divergence from the Founding.³

The Republican Party formed around the renewal of America's founding moment. Charles Sumner attributed eschatological significance to the new party, claiming for it a part in redemptive Christian history. Sumner maintained that Americans now could follow patterns laid down by Moses and Christ. American slaves would be freed, he argued, so that Christianity might progress throughout the world.⁴ This would be a political accomplishment, achieved by the election of righteous legislators.⁵ Walt Whitman began to look for his "Redeemer President" in 1856, to direct America to the realization of her millennial promise, and to redeem her from national guilt and shame.⁶

¹Boorstin, The Genius of American Politics, p.126.

²Abraham Lincoln, as quoted in Wills, Under God, p.209.

³Nagel, This Sacred Trust, p.168.

⁴Charles Sumner, quoted in America's God and Country, ed. Federer, pp.576-577.

⁵Walters, American Reformers, p.97.

⁶Tuveson, Redeemer Nation, pp.205-206.

Two versions of the American faith had developed: a Northern millennialism that was linked closely to abolition as the perfectionist drive to eliminate the national "flaw," and a Southern covenant theology that remained linked to slavery and a supposed patriarchy.¹ Southerners reacted to Northern zeal by retrenching into their original culture that now 'suddenly' became alien to the national mainstream--because the North now returned the nation to a "founding before The Founding," to Puritanism and its thrust towards "the materialization of God's will in the world."² Southerners rejected this veiled union of church and state. They insisted that pure, "true" religion remained vital only in the South, through individual and voluntary association and compliance with the word of God. Compulsion--political reform, chiefly abolition--was rejected as radically opposed to the American tradition. Religious liberty, it seemed, remained safe only in the South and, by implication of the Revolutionary tradition, civil liberty depended upon religious liberty.³ Thus, each section used America's civil religion to offend and shame the other as sinners and tyrants, destroying its former potential as a nationally unifying force. American consensus may be a homely thing that is enforced by local pressures of persecution and ostracism, but civil religion universalizes and nationalizes the standards of belief in that consensus, raising its conformity to a national level.⁴ This universality

¹Maclear, "The Republic and the Millennium," p.201.

²Norton, Alternative Americas, pp.3-4.

³William E. Channing, "The Duty of the Free States," The Southern Quarterly Review 2 (1842), pp.130-177; Robert Baird, "Religion in America," The Southern Quarterly Review 7 (1845), pp.350-372.

⁴Bertram Wyatt-Brown, "Honor and Secession," in The Coming of the American Civil War, ed. Perman, pp.249-250, 256-258.

was lost and the nation split apart as America's civil religion came undone through its own rhetorical invocation in sectarian difference.

The North lacked the political will to stifle abolitionists early on, a failure that led to a reactionary stridency in the South; sectional lines of difference were increasingly hardened. In 1839, Henry Clay threatened and prophesied Southern secession to preserve republican government. Slavery and abolition were explicitly the central issues at this time--unlike South Carolina's secession scare of 1832.¹ The militancy of Northern abolitionists had been intended tactically to harden Southern rhetoric and, thus, to emphasize differences and discourage compromise. However, Southerners reacted with more than rhetoric; new state constitutions entrenched slavery more firmly than ever in response to Northern radicalism, as moderate anti-slavery movements fizzled in the South. Abolitionists were antagonized further in turn, so that a spiralling disintegration began. Abolitionist tactics worked to gather support into the spectacular growth of a movement that signalled a changing political will in the North.²

Rhetorically, the South responded by entrenching itself deeper into the Old Testament and by re-asserting its own connections with the American Revolution. Again Americans attributed tyranny to their opponents. Now, Northerners took the place of the English as tyrants in a pending civil war. The North became corrupt from the Southern

¹Freehling, The Road to Disunion, pp.294-295, 359.

²Handy, A Christian America, pp.54-55; Smith, The Nation Comes of Age, p.607, 609; John B. Boles, Religion in Antebellum Kentucky (Lexington: Univ. of Kentucky Press, 1976), pp.101-122; Fredrickson, "White Supremacy and the American Sectional Conflict," pp.229-232.

perspective, a declining power akin to the England of America's Revolutionaries. Furthermore, Northern tyranny seemed particularly British to Southerners who resented American opposition to the annexation of Texas as a slave state. Northern opposition to Texas was perceived as part of an un-American conspiracy to realize British occupation of the western territories.¹ In response, President John Tyler gave a civil religious defense of slavery as necessary for the advancement of Christian civilization and for the fulfilment of America's mission. The South represented the "true" America, Tyler told the United States Senate, one that must be extended through the west and Texas if America would accomplish her destiny.²

Southerners argued that a Northern apostasy departed from the Old Testament as the Bible of America's civil religion, the religion that continued in the South. In it, the Bible provided a mythic foundation for slavery and Southern society.³ Former governor of South Carolina and United States Senator, James Henry Hammond wrote a defence of slavery that was based upon the Old Testament and the ever American "will of God." Eventually, this was published as "Slavery in the Light of Political Science," a typically

¹Kenneth S. Greenberg, "Anglophobia, Southern Nationalism, and the Sectional Conflict," in The Coming of the American Civil War, ed. Perman, pp.204, 210, 214-217; President John Tyler, "Annexation of Texas," The Southern Quarterly Review 6 (1844), pp.483-520; David Brion Davis, The Slave Power Conspiracy and the Paranoid Style (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1969), pp.43-48.

²President John Tyler, "Annexation of Texas," pp.507-520.

³Cherry, God's New Israel, pp.156-157; Arieli, Individualism and Nationalism in American Ideology, pp.298-301.

American mingling of religion and "science."¹ Alexander Stephens also had defended the Biblical foundations of slavery; in 1846, Stephens insisted to the U.S. Senate that Divine laws approved of the institution and, as the Declaration of Independence conforms to those laws, it too must approve of chattel slavery. This was a significant argument in light of the new weight placed upon the Declaration as Northern abolitionists were then forwarding it, the approach that eventually was adopted into America's civil religion through Lincoln and the Republicans. In contrast to the North's movement by the spirit of the New Testament and the Declaration of Independence, Southerners retained a literal reading of the Bible and the Constitution in their own civil religion. Addressing the Senate, Calhoun invoked Biblical authority for slavery, signalling that in the South "political leaders joined clergymen [in] paying homage to the authority of the Bible for regulating social relationships." The implicit denigration of the Old Testament by Northerners elevating the New Testament was heretical to a South that now proved its own Puritan heritage just as intensely as did the North: "The legal literalism of interpreting the Bible as the world's divine constitution helped revitalize in the South the colonial Puritan's myth of the state."² America's politics of nuance had invaded the civil religion. Here, however, slight diversities of emphasis had great and violent implications.

As Republicans refused any compromise with their version of America, violence

¹James Henry Hammond, "Slavery Defended on Scriptural Grounds," an excerpt in Religion in American Life, ed. Wright, pp.106-108; First published as "Slavery in the Light of Political Science," in Cotton is King, and Pro-Slavery Arguments, ed. E.N. Elliott (Augusta, Ga.: Pritchard, Abbott & Loomis, 1860), pp.634-636.

²Peterson, Ham and Japheth, pp.20-23.

became increasingly likely. Reformers even purposefully pursued violence now to step up the pace of their agenda, frustrated that years of political haggling had concentrated support but had not freed any slaves. It seemed to them now that only violence could bring on God's planned redemption.¹ On February 22, 1857, George Washington's birthday, Fountain Pitts, a Methodist minister, came "by invitation of 'several members of Congress' [and]...delivered in the U.S. Capitol a day-long sermon on America's prophetic destiny" to an overflowing crowd. The sermon linked the Declaration of Independence with millennial prophecy from the Book of Daniel. Pitts then pointed to the anticipated war and destruction through which God and the United States would lead the world to republican Christianity as the only form of government and religion.² Civil religious symbols were mingled with anticipation of change amidst violence. William Seward's "Irrepressible Conflict" (1858) was equally extreme and explicit in its enunciation of America's internal confrontation of two systems that could not endure together. Seward threatened as he resonated Lincoln's famous "House Divided" speech that, the same year, spurred Republicans, if not Americans, on to victory in a cause for which they had come so far.³

By 1860, Southern opposition to the changing North became petrified in its own

¹Eric Foner, "Politics, Ideology, and the Origins of the Civil War," in Nation Divided: Essays on the Civil War & Reconstruction, ed. George M. Fredrickson (Burgess, 1975), p.182; Walters, American Reformers, pp.97-98; Tuveson, Redeemer Nation, p.83.

²Boyer, When Time Shall Be No More, pp.84-86.

³William H. Seward, "An Irrepressible Conflict," in Main Problems in American History, ed. Quint et al., pp.352-356; Abraham Lincoln, "A House Divided," in Words of Our Nation, ed. Hunt, pp.82-86.

renewal of civil religion, just as Calhoun had warned in 1837. The North, too, had become rigid in its civil religion. Lincoln's Republicans refused to compromise with Stephen Douglas's feeble attempt to avoid civil religion altogether--Douglas's willingness to compromise marks him as a man out of step with his time. With Lincoln's election, it seemed clear to the South that the North would force its morality upon the nation, that the Northern civil religion would impose a 'restoration' of itself to gain national stature.¹ Earlier, in his last speech to the U.S. Senate (1850), Calhoun maintained that the Union already had come undone through the loss of religious unity, that political unity had fallen with it, and that all this was done by Northern abolitionists.² Now ten years later, this spiritual split became actual as Southern statesmen "created" their new nation in a renewal of 1776 that carefully invoked original symbols that afforded them some continuity with America's first Founders. Jefferson Davis called upon America's god, the god of the Revolution, against the North as he left his office in the U.S. Senate.³ South Carolina's "Declaration of Causes" is a rehearsal of American history that amounts to a civil religious invocation of fidelity in their purpose. It appeals "for the rectitude of our intentions" to the same god as had the framers of the Constitution.⁴

The Confederate constitution and its reception further enhanced a renewal of civil religion in the South. The new constitution was celebrated as a "covenant with the God

¹Foner, "Politics, Ideology and the origins of the Civil War," pp.175-182.

²John C. Calhoun, as quoted in America's God and Country, ed. Federer, p.87.

³Robert Hendrickson, Sumter: The First Day of the Civil War (Chelsea, Michigan: Scarborough House, 1990), pp.144-145.

⁴"The South Carolina Declaration of Causes," in ibid., pp.263-266.

of Heaven, ...the God of Nations." The emerging Southern 'nation' becomes "a sort of person before God" in the mythic perception of this covenant. The unity of social life is personified as an individual through the constitutional incorporation of society. The South's fidelity to God and the Founding is pronounced with its renewal of constitutional religiosity. The previous omission of God from the U.S. Constitution is said to be the chief fault in the original founding, a fatal error that enabled later incredulous and hypocritical leaders of the North to now shatter the American nation. The Confederate Constitution is supposed to repent of this error by officially recognizing God in its first sentence. In contrast, the North was thought to have fallen away into apostasy by chasing after the "golden calf" of industrial wealth, signalled by its associated tyrannical and illegitimate, according to Lockean standards, imposition of tariffs upon Southern trade. In response, God now decreed Southern secession for the continued progress of American civilization. Now the South alone was likened to Israel in its faithfulness to the covenant. Thus, the South alone becomes heir to the Revolution, becomes the only righteous actor in God's grand design for America. As such, the South is itself mankind's last best hope for self-government.¹

In his inaugural address, Jefferson Davis made official the South's claim to this civil-religious heritage. Davis took his oath of office on Washington's birthday, a fact that he played upon in the first lines of his address. Therein, Davis referred to Washington and to America's original independence as his spiritual progenitors, embracing them

¹Benjamin M. Palmer, "National Responsibility Before God, June 13, 1861," in God's New Israel, ed. Cherry, pp.177-194.

within the South's own "hope to perpetuate the principles of our Revolutionary fathers...under the favor of Divine Providence." Still, Davis's language remains moderate compared to the concurrent religious rhetoric of Northern abolitionism. He still displays an openly vague religiosity after the fashion of an earlier American civil religion, a religion that he now coloured decidedly Confederate for the South and its independence. Davis closes his speech by committing himself and his country into the hands of the already favourable "Providence which has so visibly protected the Confederacy during its brief but eventful career." He claims "God's will" in support of the South and its continued American righteousness.¹ However, both North and South would invoke this same American god, a god whose will ultimately would be known only through bloodshed and proven through military might. Thus, America's destiny was made manifest, revealed by God through men. Had this destiny been manifest before its accomplishment:

had the Founding Fathers been more certain, had their provision for the expansion of the national territory been less obscure, the Civil War might either have been postponed or have come much sooner. The continental extent of the nation and the means of associating or dissociating its parts--these were not settled until the Civil War resolved them in a sea of blood.²

In war, Northern and Southern forces both invoked the support of their Christian God, through civil religious fast days in the South and through Thanksgivings in the North. Union forces became "the armies of the Lord and of Gideon." Reminiscent of

¹Jefferson Davis, "Inaugural Address as President of the Confederate States of America, February 22, 1862," in Great American Speeches, ed. Suriano, pp.88-92.

²Boorstin, The National Experience, p.274.

Washington's Christian soldiers pushing onward in the Revolution, Yankee troops expected victory to come through their personal religious observance. At the same time, as their own cause faltered, the South as a whole became increasingly pious in their expectation of miracles and Divine intervention. They hoped that God's will would be made manifest on their behalf--again reminiscent of the Revolution and its reception as a religious event by Americans. To the disappointment of the South, His will became manifest in the power of the North and in their ability to impose their own will and to restore the nation to unity. This restoration was a renewal, however, as the union was reconceived in new terms. Ultimately, the Civil War became the most successful political reform of the antebellum Christianizing effort, finally settling the character of the nation and of its western expansion. The United States as a whole would become the Protestant civilization of the North.¹

With this reform accomplished, the American nation and its civil religion became entrenched as political and religious authorities throughout the country. The quests for unity and authority that had plagued America's antebellum politics and religion both, finally were answered in a new American nationalism that pre-empted any real political significance or potency to sectarian division. Thereafter, differences between Protestant churches and sects remained harmonious in the political irrelevance of their differences, as they competed religiously but not politically. Eventually, even Mormons abandoned their supposed "un-American" experiments of polygamy, communitarianism, and theocratic democracy in a return to more mainstream expressions of their liberal,

¹Noll, A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada, pp.318-319, 325.

Jacksonian roots. Having previously dominated the voting behaviour of their members, Mormon leaders disbanded uniquely Mormon political parties after achieving statehood for Utah. As they strove to accommodate themselves to the larger American polity, these leaders were prescient in their acknowledgement that it mattered little which party individual Mormons supported, so long as the Church divided itself fairly equally among the Democrats and Republicans--action was taken to prevent the Mormons going over *en masse* to either one of the parties and alignment with both parties was preached from the pulpit at church conferences. Allegiance with either party would serve to mark one as sufficiently American, now that one's religious affiliation lacked any qualifying distinction, at least politically.¹ Having put aside the outward social differences of their religion, Mormons quickly embraced, and were embraced by, political Americanism. This was possible because they participated in the same ideology, they became Republicans and Democrats, Utah became a state.² For 'others' in America, the last remnants of any religious political oaths and tests in the states finally were abandoned, and Jews and Muslims now acquired equal political standing with Americans throughout the United States. Thus, America's civil religion emerged from the Civil War with a confident consolidation of itself and its place within America's national life.

The nation and its government had defined God's commands in actual political and social terms. Sectarian politics now were irrelevant altogether in America, sounding

¹James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, The Story of the Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City: Deseret, 1976), pp.416-419.

²Rodman W. Paul, The Far West and the Great Plains in Transition 1859-1900 (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), pp.181-182.

alternate voices never to be "heard" in any meaningful way. The national civil religion prevailed over particular religions in this new arrangement wherein "true" religious meaning now was found in what Americans had in common.¹ As Herbert Richardson maintains, America re-defined itself as a nation-state through the Civil War and through the celebration of a civil religion that justified the war and its outcome. A dominant faction had unified its power with the state and established its identification with the nation by force through the destruction of a lesser faction and the ratification of the entire project through the renewed civil religion.²

Curiously, High Priests of American history persistently assert that the goodness of America is made manifest by the fact that the United States never has experienced a religious war. Henry Steele Commager, for instance, maintains that "Americans, almost alone of Western people, have never had genuine religious wars, or even religious persecution." Commager does acknowledge that "it was tyranny, just the kind Tocqueville had in mind, in the persecution of the Mormons both in Illinois and in Missouri." But, Commager argues, "the Mormons found refuge in the West, set up their own commonwealth, and proceeded to establish a majoritarian rule of their own, which a good many gentiles regarded as tyranny."³ Whether or not Commager's insinuations of later Mormon "tyranny" against their own justify earlier American persecutions and tyranny

¹Maclear, "The Republic and the Millennium," p.205; Hammond, "The Conditions for Civil Religion," p.68.

²Herbert Richardson, "Civil Religion in Theological Perspective," in American Civil Religion, ed. Richey and Jones, pp.167-170.

³Commager, Commager on Tocqueville, pp.26-27, 30.

against them does nothing to dismiss the Mormon wars from incrimination as American religious wars, particularly after the American army followed the Mormons west to war upon them again there. Furthermore, de Tocqueville had in mind a subtler form of tyranny, a tyranny of opinion, not the tyranny of military actions taken and deaths inflicted by state militia and national soldiers, nor such official declarations as Missouri's "extermination order" against all Mormons, an order that stood unrescinded well into the late twentieth century. Nor would de Tocqueville's "tyranny of opinion" have included the American government's confiscation of all Mormon property and the suspension of citizenship rights for religious belief, actions upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court in an unusual departure from its coherent First Amendment jurisprudence. Not only against Mormons, but against Catholics, Jews, and others, American religious persecution has been more traditionally tyrannical, more physical and violent, than the community's moral censure and ostracism that were envisioned by de Tocqueville--de Tocqueville is prescient in his observations concerning a tyranny of the majority in a purely liberal democracy, but he neglects the violence that is associated with religious zeal even in America. We should reject the revisionist cleansing of religious conflict from "official" American history, accomplished by patriotic priests who themselves denounce "revisionism." Instead, we should understand that "the Civil War was as much a war between differing versions of Christianity (or about the teaching of the Bible) as it was about slavery and the Constitution."¹ As Paul Johnson asserts, "the Civil War was not only the most characteristic event in American history, it was also the most characteristic religious

¹Jaffa, A New Birth of Freedom, p.153.

event."¹ Two earlier Mormon wars and numerous smaller 'wars' against other inner religious "diversities" in America testify of religious conflict within the development of the American nation. These "diverse" uprisings have involved American idealists whose impulses and urges led them to prod "mainstream" America to live up to the promise of its ideology. Almost always, these reforming minorities have been left disappointed by the stronger, more powerful impulse of the American majority towards conformity. In the Civil War, however, these idealists came to constitute a powerful political and military majority, as abolitionism became the cause of the North and, thus numbered, they were able to have their way. A religious majority now successfully 'persecuted' the non-conforming minority.

The Civil War settled religio-political differences in America for the next century. The war itself stood as a declaration that the inculcation of virtue that Americans thought necessary to the successful operation of the Constitution would no longer be expected to come from church religion and its promulgators. War now had decided for Americans the final forms of their first principles, since religion was unable to do so peacefully. Such principles were removed forever from political discussion. This meant that now American ideology was supported most immediately by a civil religion that had become almost entirely independent of church religion. Subserviently, American churches aligned themselves, more or less, with the civil religion in matters of politics, thus further supporting liberal institutions and ideology. Wherever churches would not or could not ally themselves to the civil religion, they kept silent differences. American politics, then,

¹Johnson, A History of the American People, p.435.

were left with an increasingly singular and compelling vision to guide its pursuit of practical policy. Mark Noll sees this accomplishment as tragic. The antebellum fight by churches in both North and South to assert their own Christian virtues, he maintains, ultimately had rendered that virtue irrelevant to the public square. Instead of Noll's complete tragedy, however, we should see a partial triumph, at least, of Northern religiosity. Yes, churches were relegated to the edges of politics, but civil religion stood front and centre in the new national life--a situation akin to American political life after the Revolution. Victory carried with it a vindication of Yankee self-righteousness and the Northern, reform-minded, institutionally-oriented religiosity. And, no small matter, it provided Lincoln as a mythic gift to the national consciousness, a worthy representative of that Northern religion, and a martyr for it no less. As well, victory deepened the sense of givenness that Americans felt towards the civil religion. Its values and symbols seemed irresistibly approved by God and country in the national blood sacrifice. Rather than removing Protestant Christianity from the public realm, the war had embedded its antebellum values into American "givenness" forever.¹ In this way church religion, already removed from American government by the Constitution, removed itself practically from American politics, and was replaced in the public realm by the American Civil Religion.

Lincoln became a key figure in this civil religion. Through him an Americanized Christian symbology entered the public square to keep America essentially a Christian nation. Acting in characteristically civil-religious ways, Lincoln connected himself to

¹Noll, A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada, pp.328-332.

America's Founders, to her first principles, and to her God. When he first departed Springfield for the White House, Lincoln invoked the same god that had cared providentially for George Washington. "With that assistance," Lincoln declared, "I cannot fail. Trusting in Him who can go with me, and remain with you, and be everywhere for good, let us confidently hope that all will yet be well."¹ None better than God could be relied upon to bind together the nation as a spiritual entity in America's emerging civil religion. Having called down from the heavens God's endorsement, Lincoln stood in Philadelphia two weeks later to assure Americans of the Founders' part in his effort to renew America. Here, as President, Lincoln asserted that the creed for which the war would be fought and for which he would sacrifice his life arose from "the sentiment embodied in the Declaration of Independence." Now, with God, Founders, and virtuous principles assembled in the work, it became a cause for martyrdom: "I would rather be assassinated on this spot than surrender" this sentimental attachment to the American Creed, Lincoln declared.² Thus, he was the first of many Americans to lay his life on the line. And while this first was symbolic, the actual physical death of Lincoln offered a profound symbolism in the life of the nation. Lincoln's sacrifice emerges at the beginning of the war, and is consummated by his death on Good Friday at war's end. "His assassination at once brought to mind the tender, familiar outlines of the Christ story."³ In America's civil religion, then, Lincoln becomes as the first and the last.

¹Abraham Lincoln, Springfield Illinois, February 11, 1861, in America's God and Country, ed. Federer, p.377.

²Abraham Lincoln, Philadelphia, February 22, 1861, in ibid., p.377.

³Donald, "The Folklore Lincoln," in Donald, Lincoln Reconsidered, pp.21-22.

Throughout the war, Lincoln would claim persistently that he was fighting for American union alone. In a speech in New Haven, Connecticut he established that civil religion would be the medium through which this unity could be achieved. In this speech, Lincoln asserts that only slavery had ever threatened American unity, and only slavery is the issue that must be decided for the preservation of the Union. The decision is to be made, Lincoln maintains, according to the underlying 'philosophy' of the system, the civil religion. Its standards judge the correctness of any particular policy, and so it becomes these fundamental standards that must be decided by the nation in order to judge and decide upon this critical policy of slavery. Either the nation must unite around Southern slavery--a pecuniary interest and thus a particular policy and a narrow decision--or it must rally to the moral, altruistic religion of the North--an expression of a universal sentiment and a standard that rises above any particular policy to judge all politics. One must be earthbound and profane with the South, or be holy and glance heavenward through the North. The civil religion of the South is profane, Lincoln maintains, with its own standards created according to the existence and justification of a particular policy; a declaration of the righteousness of slavery and the defence of this institution are attempted through an apostate Southern civil religion. To counter, Lincoln proclaims that Americans must first choose the standard and only then judge the policy. And it is this precise standard, the moral character of the American nation, that is to be chosen in the coming war.¹

¹Abraham Lincoln, "New Haven Daily Palladium, 7 March 1860," in Harding, American Literature in Context, pp.222-224.

However, it seems that Lincoln did not expect war. Except for a few slaveholding tyrants, he believed Americans to be one nation universally attached to his Northern principles. Lincoln's interpretation of American doctrine was removed only slightly from that of radical Republicans, liberal progressives who have been termed since in moderate, favourable tones as "more advanced Republicans." This sympathetic appraisal results from their success in making their own sectional standards prevail nationally. They are claimed as favoured sons by a nation that later comes to resemble them. However, in Lincoln's self-appraisal he thought himself to be aligned more closely with America's Founders and, thus, with the American people as a whole. In this we see Lincoln striving truly to be a spiritual president. His idolatry of the Founders began in his youth, it is reported, resulting from his coming of age in the Second Awakening's sacralizing of American history. The South's having fallen out of step with the progress of that Awakening, Lincoln thought, now threatened to undo the work accomplished by those Founders in the Revolution.¹ Renewing that work, Lincoln now invoked the Founders throughout the famous Lincoln-Douglas debates and beyond, striving rhetorically to connect himself to them spiritually in the minds of his audience. Envisioning himself as completing the Revolution, Garry Wills maintains, "the act of bringing forth a new nation conceived in liberty is always an *intellectual* act for Lincoln" (emphasis original). However, Wills admits that it is an actual civil *war* that completes that Founding (emphasis mine).² A

¹Stephen B. Oates, Abraham Lincoln: The Man Behind the Myths (New York: Meridian, 1984), pp.80-81, 96-97, 59.

²Garry Wills, Lincoln at Gettysburg: The Words That Remade America (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992), pp.79, 85, 59.

political founding embraces the body and the mind, is a physical enforcement as well as an ideational construction. Likewise, its supporting civil religion is never entirely of the city nor of heaven. It is not wholly one or the other, civil or religious, intellectual or concrete, but always is both. As his former student, Burke Hinsdale, wrote to James Garfield at the time, "all the great charters of humanity have been writ in blood."¹

While he might have based his American creed on "the intentions of the founders of the nation, as he understood them," Lincoln nevertheless transformed original American meanings in that understanding.² His perhaps arbitrary emphasis of the Declaration of Independence as the "birth of a nation" and his assertions of the binding commitment to equality that it imposed upon the American people can be seen as historical revisionism.³ Still, Lincoln was sure that most Americans believed as he did.⁴ Lincoln assumed an American consensus to exist and then he worked to enforce its existence. In America's final version of civil religion, this 'improvement' upon the original founding merits the inclusion of Abraham Lincoln among the names attached to the Declaration of Independence.⁵

¹Burke Hinsdale to James A. Garfield, as quoted in James M. McPherson, Abraham Lincoln and the Second American Revolution (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1991), p.3.

²Harding, American Literature in Context, p.227.

³Willmoore Kendall and George W. Carey, The Basic Symbols of the American Political Tradition (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1970), pp.84-95.

⁴Garry Wills, "Lincoln: The Power of Words in Times of War," Life 14:2 (February, 1991), p.27.

⁵Wills, Lincoln at Gettysburg, p.87.

The Gettysburg Address captures best Lincoln's religious, as well as political, significance in the civil religion and the life of the nation thereafter. As Garry Wills points out, that speech's biblical prophetic language and its references to the Declaration of Independence and the Founding Fathers carry Lincoln's audience into his own belief in a sublime creation *ex nihilo* of the nation in 1776. The Declaration of Independence represents a "virgin birth" as opposed to the Constitution and its messy compromises.¹ In the Address, the Declaration becomes a pre-eminent ideal and with it the Union and its cause are idealized.² The entire Civil War becomes transcendent and is universalized in its struggle for human freedom and sublime truth. Thus, Lincoln changes the more imminent Constitution by changing its meaning within the minds and hearts of Americans, subjecting it to the higher law of the Declaration, Wills asserts. Lincoln moves Americans from the letter to the spirit of the law, effectively Christianizing them in practical political terms. Although Wills maintains a difference between this type of destruction and Garrison's symbolic burning of the Constitution, both men moved in the same direction, with the same effect--a Christianizing movement from Old Testament pharisaic law to New Testament freedom in the spirit of the word.³ Both men moved American policy and values by working from within the civil religion. Garrison merely was earlier and more courageously explicit, or less politically expedient, than was Lincoln.

¹Wills, Inventing America, pp.xv-xviii.

²Harding, American Literature in Context, p.240.

³Wills, Lincoln at Gettysburg, pp.37-38.

As nations are made by blood as well as by creeds, in Lincoln's estimation, so the war's dead must be embraced, he asserted, by idealizing their sacrifice. Lincoln's renewed, idealized Declaration of Independence would now join the Union dead in egalitarian rows at Gettysburg. The Constitution was merely an imperfect, particular attempt to realize the ideals embodied in that Declaration--Lincoln followed the North's conversion to abolitionist dogma earlier in the revival. For them, the Declaration of Independence was the standard that judges history, the scripture that hermeneutically reveals the meaning of God's grand design to historians, ministers, and politicians alike. Lincoln now followed along, entrenching that 'revelation' in a new piece of American scripture even as young men carried its ideals with them into now hallowed ground, entrenched in earthen rows. Through the Gettysburg Address Lincoln changed forever the emphasis of the Declaration of Independence, simultaneously changing the meaning of the Constitution. All the while, he effectively changed America's civil religion and its standards that judge the "correctness" of any particular policy--slavery for instance.¹ In this way, the Civil War has been said to constitute a "second American revolution," another revolution of thought and self-conception. This is true especially within the civil religion. Much as the earlier Revolution had been achieved in the spirit of the First Awakening, now this revolution was accomplished out of the Second Awakening. In each case, ideals led to war in which victory secured those ideals and ensured their extension throughout the nation and its sacred redemptive history to come in the years of the following century. Akin to the American Revolution, the Civil War is questionable for its lack of revolutionary change

¹Ibid., pp.86, 101-113, 145-146.

in social and economic conditions. But also like the Revolution, the Civil War did involve a cultural revolution, shifts within the content and emphases of the symbolic forms that constitute political culture. Northerners claimed fidelity to the earlier Founders through their own participation in this revolutionary spirit, while Southerners perceived themselves as counter-revolutionaries who conserved the Founding. Again, both sides invoked versions of an original civil religion. Each invoked the Founding and its god in defence of their struggle to redefine that very civil religion and with it America. And each version of the civil religion, each version of America supported, justified, and sanctified an equally particular interpretation of American liberalism.¹

The new emphasis and meaning that Lincoln placed upon the Declaration of Independence has successfully altered the American mind. The original American Founding now is seen through Lincolnian eyes. For Americans, the past now is changed through this interpretation, much as for Christians the Old Testament and Hebraic history have been reinterpreted through the New Testament and Christian dogma. Typical of American struggles to reconcile this revision with an original purity and legitimacy, Wills's account strives to keep Lincoln in consonance with original founding sentiments, yet all the while insisting that he is instituting a new founding and changing America.² Similarly, in American minds Jefferson becomes very much like Lincoln, evidenced by Bellah's preservation of Jefferson the Founder in the later Lincolnian, New Testament

¹McPherson, Abraham Lincoln and the Second American Revolution, pp.3-22, 23-42.

²Wills, Lincoln at Gettysburg, pp.38-39, 183-184.

version of America's civil religion.¹ A certain fidelity to the Founding Fathers is required for legitimacy in America; a harmony is required among first and second Founders. However, the American expression of itself as fact and truth enables Lincoln's new founding to stand as presented--not as change, but as a renewal of first principles and of the original "moment."

With this caveat--that words matter in America more than deeds--Lincoln can be praised for inspiring "'the better angels of our nature', ...while waging our bloodiest, most divisive war." Indeed, it is Lincoln's text that makes him "great," as Garry Wills asserts. His "morally persuasive rhetoric" remains the measure of the man, rather than his actions as commander-in-chief through a terrible war.² In this way, Lincoln can be remembered in high school readers for his "dignity, tolerance, avoidance of doctrinaire solutions" that somehow "turned him into a successful war leader in a democracy."³ His Second Inaugural Address, its invocation of charity and the frank 'admission' by Lincoln that he bears "malice toward none," speaks louder than do his war guns to declare Lincoln's morality and establish himself as prophet and priest to the American people. His persistent calls for American repentance are answered by the baptism of a nation, first through fire, and then through the word--the Second Inaugural joins Thanksgiving Day proclamations to define the role of the war and of the nation in explicitly biblical messianic terms.

¹Bellah, "The Revolution and the Civil Religion," pp.63-64.

²Wills, "Lincoln," pp.23-24.

³Andrew Lee, Lincoln, Reputations Series (London: B.T. Batsford, 1988), p.9.

Throughout, Lincoln appears as the agent of history's judgement and of "God's will." He insists that he is unsure of himself, that he is hoping to be on God's side, rather than declaring that God has joined him.¹ Thus, Americans believe, Lincoln is the humble servant of higher powers seeking only to discern God's will and do it. Nevertheless, Lincoln's perseverance in doing the work of the Lord as He reveals it to America has given new impetus to the perpetual equation of the American cause with Divinity. The Lincolnian inversion justifies and sanctifies America's will as neatly as if read the other-way-around. This way, however, the American will claims for itself a certain Christian humility in its exercise.

Christian sentiments of rebirth and sacrifice are embedded in the civil religion, then, by the Civil War, by Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, and by his personal religiosity. Wills correctly asserts that Lincoln "dreamed ...that out of all the suffering the nation would be born again in the biblical sense--'that this nation, under God, may have a new birth of freedom.'" Wills adds that this is "naive stuff; but most Americans believe it, basically, still."² Robert Bellah agrees that Christianity establishes itself within the civil religion through Lincoln and the Civil War. Much of this Christianity is muted symbolically, making it effectively 'universal' in its appeal: "With the Civil War, a new theme of death, sacrifice, and rebirth enters the civil religion. It is symbolized in the life and death of Lincoln. Nowhere is it stated more vividly than in the Gettysburg Address, itself part of the Lincolnian 'New Testament' among the civil scriptures." The imagery of

¹Wills, "Lincoln," p.24; Wills, Lincoln at Gettysburg, pp.183-189.

²Wills, "Lincoln," p.28. Also see Wills, Lincoln at Gettysburg, pp.88-89.

conception and birth is writ large in Lincoln's speech. Sacrifice and sacrament imbue the civil religion with a "Christian quality of the symbolism" without "any sectarian implication. The earlier symbolism of the civil religion had been Hebraic without being in any specific sense Jewish." In Lincoln's idealized version, freedom and equality now were removed from Jefferson's original invocation and joined with Christian sacrifice, death, and rebirth--themes that are encapsulated in the Memorial Day celebrations that grew out of Northern victory.¹

Although the non-denominational Lincoln began to attend church regularly during his presidency, his own general Christianity qualified him perfectly for leadership in America's civil religion. Lincoln's faith itself is better described as American civil-religious than as Christian.² Lincoln's martyrdom, however, with its immediate symbolic communication of death and sacrifice, cinched Christianity's grip upon the American imagination. "With the Christian archetype in the background, Lincoln, 'our martyred president,' was linked to the war dead, those who 'gave the last full measure of devotion.' The theme of sacrifice was indelibly written into the civil religion."³

The apotheosis of Abraham Lincoln was accomplished swiftly after his death. Linked to Christ in his "personification of humility, love of country and sacrifice," Lincoln's death on Good Friday made him the perfect symbol for the Christian atonement of the country's sins and for the promise of national redemption. Eulogized as a man of

¹Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," pp.11-13.

²Noll, A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada, p.322; Butler, Awash in a Sea of Faith, pp.294-295.

³Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," p.13.

God, Lincoln the anointed joined another anointed one, George Washington, in his ascension to the American heaven. An 1865 engraving by John Sartain, "Abraham Lincoln the Martyr Victorious," is reminiscent of an earlier canvas, "The Apotheosis of Washington." But now the band of angels raising Lincoln up to the heavens includes Washington among them. With this stroke, Lincoln joins the "Patriots of '76" and all of the Union dead in heaven, an army of angels with Christ at the head. Washington and Lincoln become Father and Saviour in the national pantheon, with Lincoln threatening to overshadow his elder statesman, and even Christ himself.¹

As a Christ figure, Lincoln's adoption into the civil religion mutes its Christianity, so that immigrants and Jews especially could identify with the nation and the civil religion through the martyred President. These are able to become 'Americans' through their identification with Lincoln rather than through an explicit conversion to American Christianity. The South, too, could convert quietly to the civil religion of the North through Lincoln as symbol and "Savior of our Country." While this conversion was slow, the South had begun to re-enter the national civil religion through Lincoln by mid-twentieth century. To support the legitimacy and continuity of their policies, twentieth-century American presidents linked themselves with Lincoln rhetorically, much as Lincoln had struggled to link himself to the Founders. Presidents Hoover, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Ford, were explicit in likening themselves to Lincoln. John F. Kennedy had his speeches modeled deliberately after Lincoln's style to connect himself with "the Great Emancipator" sub-consciously in American minds. President Lyndon Johnson

¹Peterson, Lincoln in American Memory, pp.3-35.

closed off the nation's mourning for the martyred Kennedy by standing on the steps of the Lincoln memorial where Lincoln and his sacred American scripture are enshrined, making the connection of himself to the past explicit so that he might "continue" the work with national legitimacy.¹ Richard Nixon, in the depths of the Watergate scandal, "climbed the steps" of the Lincoln temple "to remind voters that 'no President in history ...was more vilified during the time he was President than Lincoln'--hoping, no doubt, that they would see a link between Honest Abe and himself."² Unlike Nixon at the time, however, Lincoln's death fixed a different image of the president in the American schema. Death now seems to have repaired to some degree Nixon's image too. Death renews in the Christian symbology of America's civil religion.

In Horace Bushnell's 1865 commencement address, all of the Civil War dead were linked to Christian redemption by blood.³ Life is in the blood, Bushnell declared. There must be blood and sacrifice to open new and greater chapters of life. History and its progress must feed upon blood, Bushnell says, as he punctuates the war with meaning and unknowingly foretells of future American adventures abroad. The war brought a new age of history for America, he announced, and a new literary age as well in which Americans would no longer write English, but American. Even as this confident American identity was forged through death, America's free institutions were preserved

¹*Ibid.*, pp.206-232, 251-255, 314-326.

²Wills, "Lincoln," p.34.

³Horace Bushnell, "Our Obligations To The Dead, (An oration given at the Commemorative Celebration held in New Haven, on Wednesday of Commencement week, July 26, 1865, in honor of the Alumni of Yale College, who fell in the War of the Rebellion)," in *God's New Israel*, ed. Cherry, pp.199-209.

through bloody sacrifice:

In these rivers of blood we have now bathed our institutions and they are henceforth to be hallowed in our sight. Government is now become Providential--no more a mere creature of our human will, but a grandly moral affair. The awful stains of sacrifice are upon it, as upon the fields where our dead battled for it, and it is sacred for their sakes. The stamp of God's sovereignty is also upon it; for he has beheld their blood upon its gate-posts and made it the sign of his pass-over.¹

Americans must now "honour and sanctify the dead" by taking up their cause and fulfilling "the idea that inspired them." Foretelling the approaching future with consciousness now, Bushnell speaks for the nation: "we swear by our dead to be Americans, ...to cherish the country and assert our future, ...to invigorate both in our civilization, and to consolidate them in our religion...."to champion, by land and sea, the right of this whole continent to be an American world." This is the very cause for which the Civil War was fought.²

With the consolidation of belief that came in the Civil War, America's civil religion emerged to instill confidence in a new American consensus. The American character had been decided for the next hundred years, a century of expansion and promulgation, rather than of contention and development. The American Civil Religion stood cleansed of any potential for diversities that might support differing versions of American liberalism. Supporting America's ideology in a tightly wrapped package now, the civil religion became an uncritical, approving ally that channelled traditional religious criticism through itself, stifling the only source of ideational division in America at its

¹Ibid.

²Ibid.

source. Thus, one interpretation of liberal ideology came to prevail in America. An already narrow ideological spectrum--Northern and Southern liberalism--was pinched even thinner into the American liberalism that we have known since.

Chapter Four: America's Mythic Undercurrents

"A portrait is mythical as compared with the scientific exactitude of a photograph. Though a wise photographer will try to catch the permanent and significant rather than the passing mood of his subject he is always limited by the physical facts. The artist, on the other hand, falsifies some of the physical details in order to arrive at a symbolic expression of the total character of his subject, this total character being a transcendent fact which is never completely embodied in any given moment of the subject's existence."

(Reinhold Niebuhr, "The Truth in Myths")

Section A: Wanderings in the Wilderness

i. Exodus from History:

While Richard Slotkin maintains that America has been a mythic land from the beginning,¹ America's own sense of that "beginning" is protracted through time and space. American history perpetually involves repeated attempts at renewal and recovery of one original "moment." The mythic concentration of a symbolic beginning or imagined founding permeates hundreds of years of American history, consolidating all into a compact image of heroic, even Divine creation that transcends historic constrictions. The potency of America's mythic origins remains vital.

Unlike ancient myths that seek a history, that seek actualizing manifestations of their archetypal stories in fixed and unique historical realities, in America historical realities are mythologized.² Here, a history seeks and finds its own myths. Heroic Founders epitomize the mythic man, the self-made maker of worlds who is engaged in

¹Slotkin, Regeneration Through Violence, p.16.

²Daniel J. Boorstin, The Americans: The National Experience, (New York: Random House, 1965), p.338.

regeneration and renewal through the recovery of origins. The eternally present is ripped from its unconscious sleep in this creative enterprise.¹ For Americans, eternally present given values transcend time but not space--they are part and parcel of the American landscape. They imbue the original founding with perfection and completeness.² As mythic men, the Founders approach divinity in their ability to rend the veil that seals these original, creationist powers from the hand and mind of human being. Joseph Campbell approaches Boorstin's manner in his own apprehension of American origins, in which Campbell looks to a perfect founding and original purity, a purity that Campbell himself believes in and for which he longs.³ While shining his own rational light upon myth, particularly America's mythic founding, Campbell, too, eclipses himself with his own mythic beliefs, exposing himself as a firm believer in American original innocence. In this, Boorstin and Campbell are both Americans--mythic men, participators in the recovery of the past as a purifying, regenerating essence. Americans are creators.

Americans are also destroyers. That which Boorstin asserts is given is not given at all, but violently taken. Allen Tate, in urging Southerners to take possession of their tradition by violence, points to the constantly necessary fight for, and recovery in each generation of, the embodiment of givens that constitute "tradition."⁴ Here we approach the American original myth, the perpetual re-capitulation of earlier myths in a history

¹Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane, pp.100, 65, 81-85, 88-89.

²Daniel J. Boorstin, The Genius of American Politics, pp.22-29, 13.

³Joseph Campbell, The Power of Myth (New York: Doubleday, 1988), pp.24-28.

⁴Genovese, The Southern Tradition, pp.4-5.

that, while visible to rational historians, nevertheless re-enforces early myths through repeated participation in the original. Each participation itself is mythic, a self-sacralizing aspect of the mythic archetype, an occasion of its visibility and remembrance.¹

A secular orientation might be ascribed to pre-Columbian European myths that looked westward for regeneration, echoed by later American myths of the westward course of civilization.² Originally, however, American myth was sanctified by total immersion in Biblical writ. Although the derivative nature of the American mind and of American myth again begs the question of a given or taken tradition, there is no question that America's first mind was self-absorbed in the mythico-religious waters of apocalyptic Christianity.³ American myth and Christian myth coalesce in a new political redemptive history in which all previous salvation history is reduced and concentrated imagistically into America as the political messiah.⁴ This myth involves themes that were laid down by the clergy in the first generation of American colonization, a generation that transported its renewed fervour for the Book of Revelations from the Old World to the New.⁵ This transportation through time continues to reveal itself in the mythic undergirding of American culture to this day in American millennialism. Ellis Sandoz asserts that, as the dominant literature in America for over 300 years, dominant even on

¹Bellah, The Broken Covenant, pp.4-5.

²Slotkin, Regeneration Through Violence, p.28.

³Butler, Awash in a Sea of Faith, p.5.

⁴Henry, The Intoxication of Power, p.104.

⁵Bercovitch, The American Jeremiad, pp.4-6, 70.

the frontier wilderness, the Bible is vital to our understanding of America.¹ Its mythic images and psychological types were etched on the minds of Americans in a mythic entrenchment that was both potent and pervasive. Biblical images provided context for the interpretation of mundane events, heightening the importance of every occurrence, every American event leading towards the expected apocalyptic end.² Thus, the potency of the myth of American primacy in the working out of mankind's destiny is evident throughout American history. Americans from the beginning have viewed themselves as God's agents in His grand design, and have continued in this self-appraisal right through the 1990s.³

America's self-involvement in God's grand design pits the United States as a chosen people in a great cosmic struggle against evil, however defined. This permeates America's mission into the wilderness in which it fights Indians as the physical embodiments of Satan. It carries through every American self-recrimination for backsliding and apostasy which are to be overcome by covenant renewal. This is the spirit of the civil war, in which the sacred landscape groans under the weight of American guilt and trial, only to be sanctified by the prayers of Lincoln, God's hand and agent in history. He renews the covenant through the re-iteration and transformation of

¹Sandoz, A Government of Laws, pp.129-131.

²Bellah, Broken Covenant, p.12. Also see Slotkin, Fatal Environment, p.61. And see Bailyn, The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution, p.32. Also Butler, Awash in a Sea of Faith, p.184-185.

³Blanke, "God's Base of Operations: Mormon Variations on the American Sense of Mission," p.84. E. Douglas Clark, The Grand Design: America From Columbus to Zion (Salt Lake City: Deseret, 1992).

the Declaration of Independence. This same pattern is found right through the cold war and the Reaganite defeat of communism as the latest evil empire confronting the Puritan remnant as it lives out its own scripture.¹ America lives, makes, and transforms myth in its thrust toward origins and the restoration of a nation to some primitive glory. The past becomes prologue in this recovery of Eden. Intervening history between beginning and end is erased through a mythic collapsing of time. America becomes beginning and end, both Eden and its millennial recovery, an eternal present²--unveiled by American Adams, godlike in their violently creative powers. As America eradicates world history in its recovery of Eden, so each American generation wipes away its own inheritance of local history, reaching back to American foundings in claims of renewal and regeneration. Each claimant is thus purified by mythic participation in founding again one magical "moment."

The inherent quality of myth that conquers time and space, that collapses all critical experience into the immediate present, is alluded to by Daniel Boorstin's assertion of the intermingling roles played by time and space in America.³ America's first frontier is time as history--an ideal wilderness standing between the present and a past purity and glory. America's earliest Puritans hoped to transcend history in their recovery or

¹Wills, Under God, pp.138-143, 208-209, 213, 219, 346.

²Winton U. Solberg, "Primitivism in the American Enlightenment," in The American Quest for the Primitive Church, ed. Richard T. Hughes (Chicago: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1988), pp.62, 65; Hughes, "Recovering First Times," pp.194-198.

³Anne Norton, Republic of Signs: Liberal Theory and American Popular Culture (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1993), p.173; Boorstin, The National Experience, p.333.

restoration of this original purity, rejecting reform as compromise. The original American quest is one through time, then, not through space. It is a quest that occurs within space, however, to be embarked upon in isolation, in the actual wilderness.¹

ii. Purifying the Promised Land:

The Puritan land of renewal was a land of promise, a wilderness awaiting transformation. This became part of the first quest. The worthy man, elect of god, embarked upon the transformation of the wilderness, submitting it to his transformative powers so that it could live up to its promise. He makes it worthy of a chosen people.² Previously waste lands become property of worth, and of right, once human labour wrenches usefulness from them--and once Lockean liberalism justifies this transformation of nature into property and celebrates its use through the imposition of human powers upon latent nature. Wigglesworth's apocalyptic Day of Doom, "for a century ...read in every house in New England, and as far south as the Shenandoah," laid out God's pattern of devastation that must precede the new world regeneration.³ An American pattern of regeneration through violence is laid down in the wilderness as man's intervention in sacred history, a forced interruption of the constant human story of decline and decay to effect a restoration of original purity, thus transforming the wilderness and sacralizing the

¹Hughes, "Recovering First Times," pp.196-198.

²Slotkin, Regeneration Through Violence, pp.15, 32, 38.

³Perry Miller, "The End of the World," Errand into the Wilderness (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1956), pp.218-219; First published in The William and Mary Quarterly 8 (April, 1951).

American landscape.¹ The wilderness becomes not only the place of heroic regeneration, but also an active ingredient in the purification, a proving ground and provider of sacred, primitive powers. Wilderness trials represent a mythic transcendence of time and space, as the hero assimilates primitive powers and characteristics that regenerate not only himself, but also his society upon his return.² The future stands invigorated by present renewals, journeys into the past for recovery and individual worthiness.

While the wilderness was a land of promise and transformation, it was most immediately a land of danger. The success of individuals and cultures in withstanding the terrors and temptations of the wilderness while partaking of its primitive goodness and inherent promise demonstrated their worthiness and marked them as chosen of god. Through repeated intrusions of this progressive worthiness, Americans transformed the dangerous wilderness into a garden fit for a worthy people, thus carving out a homeland for the world's worthy, God's elect.³ In this mission of redemption and regeneration through the application of old world myths, their living vitality became self-evident in America. Religion is thus revitalized by myth, by religious experience.

In a life enframed by religious structures, this reinvigoration of religion in general translates into an invigoration of an otherwise mundane daily life. The American application of Christian myth to daily life signifies a "New England Way" that was

¹C. Leonard Allen, "Roger Williams and 'the Restauration of Zion'," in The American Quest for the Primitive Church, ed. Hughes, pp.33-40. Also, Slotkin, Regeneration Through Violence, pp.30, 38, 90.

²Slotkin, Fatal Environment, p.63.

³Schlesinger, Cycles of American History, pp.13-16.

deemed more "real" than creed or church.¹ The "real" quality of mythic underpinnings prevailed over the wooden dictates of religious or political doctrine, as Americans brought their beliefs to life through action. Boorstin's assertions of the perceived un-American quality of doctrinally correct American actions by immigrants and newcomers trying to apply the American creed reveal the depth of this mythic underpinning, as the creed is inadequately translated by those not equipped with the accompanying American mythology.² The unrehearsed political activity of those not fully socialized historically has resulted in social conflicts that subsequently have prodded Americans to strike out into the world in order to transform its larger wilderness abroad, so that the world's worthy might stay home in their own land made worthy--all the world becomes America.

Attempting to transcend history in the New World, Americans emulated Biblical "types," prophetic patterns and symbols, through which they interpreted their own experience. New World locations became grounds for Old World re-enactments. As the Atlantic became "the Red Sea," or as Georgia became the "Promised Canaan," Americans became Biblical and "chosen" in the renewal of an ancient covenant.³ The self-attribution of the Hebrew myth guaranteed the standing of the American enterprise, contextualizing all New World endeavours within the careful Providence of God. These Biblical mythic foundations provided the "natural" sociality requisite for liberal self-governance. Arriving in America apparently without government, mythic constrictions shaped spontaneous

¹Boorstin, The Americans: The Colonial Experience, pp.7-9, 17.

²Boorstin, The Genius of American Politics, p.14.

³Henry, The Intoxication of Power, pp.38-39; Bellah, Broken Covenant, pp.6-8, 13-15.

political phenomena arising out of society, out of what liberalism later would perceive as the pre-political--the mythic covenant became the social contract.¹

The American placement of itself within a mythic context of an over-seeing and favouring Divine Providence was pervasive.² Social, economic, and political activities joined the religious as expressions of God's strivings through man. All of life was experienced as one whole, its aspects seen as diverse expressions of God's Providence.³ Ultimately, colonial election sermons consistently would warn against any detachment of political life from this foundational context, a warning that is still heeded in America today.⁴ Clinton Rossiter and John Winthrop join pens across the centuries to contextualize America within this Providential history of world significance. Winthrop's "City upon a Hill" is an experiment that Rossiter claims is a mission that must succeed for "all men wanting or deserving to be free."⁵ 'Secular' politics continue their errand to fulfil a sacred destiny in America, their interpretation and practice continue to be shaped and constrained by original mythologies.

An early and decisive mythic interpretation and contextualization of one American "event" is "The First Encounter," a Puritan signification of place as well as occurrence.

¹Henry, The Intoxication of Power, pp.29-30, 40. Also see Morgan, Wilderness at Dawn, pp.12-13.

²Bailyn, Ideological Origins of the American Revolution, p.33.

³Henry, The Intoxication of Power, pp.31-32. Also see William Bradford, "The History of the Plymouth Plantation," pp.33-35, 37.

⁴Butler, Awash in a Sea of Faith, p.173.

⁵Blanke, "God's Base of Operations," pp.84-85.

Reported by William Bradford, "The First Encounter" involves a miraculous victory of Puritans who find themselves under Indian attack, a "deliverance" given through "His special providence."¹ From the beginning, America's God was an Indian fighter. The constraints of mythic minds limit the possibilities for understanding and apprehending experience. The Puritan dichotomy of saint and sinner marks all enemies as sinners--enemies of God and, thus, subject to righteous violence inflicted by cold, calculating Puritan killers who are willing to engage in any means necessary--pre-cursors to mythic cowboy gunslingers. Every war is a holy war for the Puritan saint, every confrontation a demand for apocalyptic cleansing.² Every American war has participated in the recapitulation of this myth to some extent; each has been a righteous cleansing that has felt the wrath of God. The earliest Americans judged Indians by Christian standards, seeing them as savage obstacles to civilization and settling upon an early policy of assimilation or annihilation.³ This policy persisted through the nineteenth century, annihilation becoming the consistently proven favourite of "Providence."

Being God's chosen in the wilderness was more than metaphor for the Puritans, it was a daily reality.⁴ God saved the American wilderness for a "remarkable history," a place of refuge and paradise for the proven worthy, a place of darkness, temptation, and tutelage for the proving. As sojourners in the wilderness, the Puritans saw themselves

¹Bradford, "History of the Plymouth Plantation," p.35.

²Bellah, Broken Covenant, pp.101-102.

³Solberg, "Primitivism in the American Enlightenment," pp.56-57.

⁴Boorstin, The Genius of American Politics, p.41.

engaged in a harsh test that might ultimately restore the wilderness to Eden's garden, tempting it to offer up its promise to the obedient.¹ Such fulfilment, however, required the active engagement of Puritan righteousness against the enemies of God. With the mythic transformation of the Indian enemy into Satan's soldiers, the Puritan struggle to survive became the struggle to survive *by defeating evil*.² This American struggle continues into the coming millennium.

Although the Virginia experience has been portrayed as predominately economic and largely secular, the mythic contextualization of enterprise under God's care was engaged in from its earliest days. Preceding the Puritans by ten years, Virginians also perceived themselves as a chosen "Israel" in a "Promised Land," engaged in the Christian work of remaking a wilderness under Providential care.³ Alexander Whitaker's Good Newes from Virginia (sic), published in 1613, "enumerated the religious reasons why the English should maintain a financial interest in Virginia."⁴ Whitaker called Englishmen up to economic prosperity in America, as examples of Christian virtue every whit as important and Providential as the destruction or Christian conversion of Indians. Striving to follow the Reformation to its ultimate economic and social implications as well as its religious fruition, Christians in Virginia--Americans--"shall find riches and honour in this

¹George H. Williams, "The Idea of the Wilderness of the New World in Cotton Mather's *Magnalia Christi Americana*," in Cotton Mather: *Magnalia Christi Americana* ed. Kenneth B. Murdock (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1977), pp.49-55.

²Boorstin, The Genius of American Politics, p.45.

³Henry, The Intoxication of Power, pp.24-26.

⁴Cherry, ed., God's New Israel, p.26.

world, and blessed immortality in the world to come."¹ Virginian literature consistently portrays the colony as a religious as well as an economic endeavour, enframing all activities within a Providential context. Afflictions and mistakes are attributed to trial, punishment, and tutelage under the Divine hand, or to Satanic temptation and error, the curse of the wilderness. Such mythic interpretation appears in personal letters as well as published materials, attesting to the pervasive entrenchment of Biblical types and myths. Virginians declared that "God goeth before us" preparing the way for settlement and economic development.² As a man of the frontier, God is part trailblazer and part speculator-booster. These mythic sensibilities toward improvement were ripened by the visible heat of economic progress, preparing Americans for a ready acceptance of Lockean "theory" that not only accounted for these developments in 'rational' terms, but also justified them.

Responsible for both Indian plagues and stump removal, the Puritan god helped clear the American wilderness of its dark and tangled resistance to civilization. America's destiny was manifesting itself within its first generation. Bradford outlined the problem of increasing immigration, the need for more worthy land for a worthy people being challenged by the wickedness and temptation of devilish powers that possessed the wilderness.³ Individual regeneration through the violent eradication of the forces of evil

¹Alexander Whitaker, "Good Newes from Virginia," in God's New Israel, ed. Cherry, pp.30-36; First published as Good Newes from Virginia (London, 1613), pp.21-35, 44.

²Perry Miller, "Religion and Society in the Early Literature of Virginia," in Miller, Errand into the Wilderness; First published in The William and Mary Quarterly (Oct., 1948 and Jan., 1949), pp.100-118.

³Morgan, Wilderness at Dawn, pp.139-150.

relieved social expansionist pressures in a conspiracy of Indian killing and land 'reclamation' that cleansed the American landscape and the American people in one mythic "moment."¹ Open land meant opportunity, opportunity that, once taken, confirmed an American sense of freedom, of liberty, and that vitalized American individualism by proving individual efficacy. The American wilderness stood ready for transformation by visible saints, mythic regenerators seeking purification amidst the forces and skins of darkness.²

Puritan jeremiads consistently demanded a mutually dependent social and individual regeneration that was original and millennial, the recovery of a mythic past as the path to future progress. The Indian wars of the seventeenth century provided the persistent crises necessary for the heightened potency of these jeremiads, keeping the mythic wilderness vital. American Jeremiahs routinely invented crises to supplement God's tribulations, prodding sojourners to compliance with mythic constraints and, thus, effecting progress.³ Indian wars, the transformation of the wilderness through a violent ethnic cleansing that leads to individual and social regeneration, represent the true essence of America, according to Richard Slotkin. The territorial and economic expansion involved with Indian killing, as in the vigilante actions of Bacon's Rebellion, not only tried the incipient American individualism but also challenged traditional authority, provoking Americans to begin again, stirring the makings of a new social contract that

¹Slotkin, Regeneration Through Violence, pp.38-42.

²Ibid., pp.57, 66.

³Bercovitch, The American Jeremiad, pp.62, 24-25.

would have to wait for consummation in Locke's embrace and the Revolution.

The mundane and sacred are mingled in a project of conquest and expansion through time and space, a working out of salvation through the recovery quest in the wilderness.¹ Just as John Cotton's myth of a literal Biblical America prevailed over Roger Williams' metaphorical approach to scripture, so John Underhill's aggressive project of Indian extermination dominated the American landscape, setting aside the more defensive, conservative preservation of the given as advocated by Philip Vincent.² Such advocacy rendered Vincent "un-American." These two "victories," Cotton's and Underhill's, are not unrelated. Being Providential, Cotton and Underhill join God as project men--Americans.

Increase Mather was a project man, as well. Amidst the frontier backsliding that called down God's judgement in the form of defeat at the hands of Indians, Mather's demands for a project of regeneration were met with more than fasting and prayer. The appeasement of God that was necessary for victory over the temptations of the wilderness demanded the recovery of a Biblical military type, an Abrahamic army--delivered (in sermon) by Samuel Nowell. This mythic self-identification accounted for more than victory as God's blessing, more than the murder of King Philip as a direct intervention by the hand of Deity. Increase Mather's account of "the defeat of King Philip" describes the quartering of Philip, "like as Agag was hewed in pieces before the Lord," Philip being "now hanged up as a monument of revenging Justice." Mather closes his account with

¹Slotkin, Regeneration Through Violence, p.71.

²Bercovitch, The American Jeremiad, pp.40-43; Slotkin, Regeneration Through Violence, pp.69-78; Also see Morgan, Wilderness at Dawn, p.183.

a threatening admonition: "So let all thine Enemies perish, O Lord!"¹ The self-righteousness afforded Americans by their chosenness, the willingness of American armies to strike out as the Army of Salvation, sanctified Puritan brutality. Their extra-legal violence stood approved, actions that were condemned when duplicated by their enemies.² God blesses those that bless themselves. American self-righteousness simultaneously provoked the material expansion and soothed the conscience of those thus pricked. In many ways, piety pays.

The Puritan treatment of Indian captives at Deerfield was far worse than that inflicted by Indians upon their captives.³ Still, the personal suffering and tribulations of Puritan captives gained intense meaning through their mythic socialization in captivity narratives. The narratives mythologized captive experience, encapsulated it within a sacred context of wilderness trial. While the potency of the captivity experience fostered deliberate myth-making by the clergy, the captives themselves interpreted events mythically, contextualizing their experience as having been brought on by their own actions, as punishments or tests inflicted by God.⁴ Puritans loved themselves enough to know that God loved them enough to be influenced by their neglect, that God would influence the course of nations to save His saints, effecting awful chastisements as

¹Increase Mather, "Defeat of King Philip: Increase Mather's Account," in The American Record: Images of the Nation's Past, ed. William Graebner & Leonard Richards (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982), p.27.

²Slotkin, Regeneration Through Violence, pp.80-88, 76.

³Morgan, Wilderness at Dawn, p.186.

⁴Slotkin, Regeneration Through Violence, pp.95, 74-75.

signifiers of his love. Chosen individuals stand set apart, meriting individual salvation through ordeal.

The captivity myth is "the first coherent myth-literature developed in America for American audiences." In it is condensed the meaning of American experience, a rationalization of action, and a motivation to new action within a single potent image.¹ This image exemplifies the pattern of Puritan myths, the condensation of Puritan experience--innocence, alienation, trial, and rebirth.² John Williams, the "Redeemed Captive" from Deerfield, typifies the captivity ordeal. Earlier, Mary Rowlandson had seen herself in Biblical terms, contextualizing her captivity ordeal through scriptural quotations.³ So, now, Williams preached a sermon to his fellow captives en route from Deerfield, in which he blamed their present misfortunes upon individual unworthiness and scriptural fulfilment.⁴

As part of an American "Israel" gone soft, Deerfield had collectively brought upon itself punishment, had provoked the god that had brought them out of "Egypt" into "Canaan." Williams' personal letters affirm his own mythic entrenchment of his public rhetoric. Reminiscent of William Bradford, Williams' written narrative contextualizes even its own writing within the mythic Providential care that had decreed his punishment and

¹Ibid., pp.95-96.

²Ibid., p.101.

³Ibid., p.104.

⁴John Demos, The Unredeemed Captive: A Family Story from Early America (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), p.33.

trial.¹ Captivity was purification, a purging ordeal that rendered its redeemed survivors worthy once again.² Descendants of the first chosen worthy who had sanctified the landscape, America the remnant of "Israel" is perpetually called to judgement, cleansed again and again by its wilderness and made worthy once more to dwell in a land of promise.

Pride in one's afflictions arises out of the knowledge that they are inflicted by God's love, the greater tribulation signifying the greater love.³ Nevertheless, John Williams warned against the temptations suffered by the redeemed captive. Celebrity and heroic status following his return could lead to the sinfulness of pride and self-glorification. One must not credit one's self with survival, but must give all praise to God.⁴ This seems to undermine the efficacy of the individual, asserting his inability to make any of his success happen for himself. We are reminded to be wary of the faults that led to these unfortunate, however blessed, events. The potency of the captivity narrative is not to be found in its regeneration, a regeneration effected upon the individual to make him worthy rather than effected by the individual to claim or capture worthiness. Instead, captivity regeneration is an exquisite gift of God, bestowed upon His chosen through inscrutable love. Captivity narratives do, however, reinforce the idea of the "individual" as independent object before God, or later within nature.

¹Ibid., pp.41, 46-47, 51.

²Ibid., p.59.

³Bercovitch, The American Jeremiad, p.58.

⁴Demos, Unredeemed Captive, pp.60-65.

Rather than regeneration, the potency of the captivity narrative is to be found in its re-affirmation of wilderness terrors, of temptations and the darkness that await those who succumb. The refusal of Williams' daughter to return to "civilization" and her loss of the English language in the babble of French-Catholic apostasy, encapsulates the powers of the wilderness to ensnare and to damn. Initially withstanding the wilderness in her determination for purity through her resistance to the forced repetition of Latin prayers, Eunice finally succumbs to the apostasy held out by the wilderness. Its apparent licence leads her into temptation. She joins the "children of the Devil" who stand accused by Williams, ungrateful apostates living under great condemnation and in need of sorrowful repentance.¹ Individual choice and its associated moral agency is an assumption buried in the image of this myth. So, too, is the political implication of this agency, as righteous approval or sinful condemnation is transferred contagiously to the society or even to the inanimate environment surrounding moral individuals. The wilderness itself lives under the same condemnation as the infidels and apostates that it harbours, having great need to "repent." Captivity narratives demand the cleansing of this potent wilderness, a renewal of the errand to make the land worthy, capable of progress²--they demand Indian removal and regeneration through violence.

Deerfield was "in the enemy's mouth," one outpost of worthiness among the many that were perched precariously upon the frontier, "that long blood-stained line" that

¹Ibid., pp.116, 146, 151, 37, 175.

²Morgan, Wilderness at Dawn, p.189.

separated the civilization of God's children from the dangerous land of Satan's soldiers.¹ "Proving" themselves through the cleansing of the wilderness, "the point men of Manifest Destiny" became effective frontiersmen through the acquisition of American powers, absorbed in the vapours of the wilderness that carried native powers once harnessed by now rotting corpses.² The early eighteenth century involved a transition from national Providential dependence to individual efficacy, English immigrants now becoming Americans through the killing of first Americans, recovering original powers in the magical wilderness quest in which the victor claims worthy powers and characteristics of his vanquished foe.³ The new Americans' increasing worthiness for the struggle signified an independence from God, a new ability to fulfil the mission of wilderness cleansing and sanctification through "secular" means. Being themselves worthy, Americans could now strike out confidently to squeeze the promise out of the land, exercising newly acquired American powers as individual arbiters of God's will. The efficacious individualism of these first Americans became the raw material upon which Locke's social pattern later was stamped. These are the rugged individuals of his state of nature, Americans all, sweeping the land clean and thus cleansing themselves--"*tabula rasa*" ready to receive God's endowment, Locke's "theory."

Individual prowess in the wilderness approached pathology as God rendered

¹Frederick Jackson Turner, "The First Official Frontier of the Massachusetts Bay," in Turner, The Frontier in American History, (Tuscon: Univ. of Arizona Press, 1986; rpt. 1992), pp.48-52.

²Morgan, Wilderness at Dawn, p.348.

³Slotkin, Regeneration Through Violence, pp.160-171, 174.

Himself irrelevant through this bestowal of Providential blessings. This was signalled by such characters as Thomas Cresap and Tom Quick. Cresap, a Marylander and self-made American, presaged movie cowboys in his shoot first and ask questions later policy.¹ Tom Quick, a Pennsylvania "serial killer," avenged his family's massacre through a life-long vendetta with redskins in which he claimed 99 lives only to be disappointed in his dying wish: "that a final, 100th Delaware be brought close enough for him to fire Long Tom, its stock all but worn away."² From such was signalled the need for an Awakening, as the dangers of the wilderness--and of God--became increasingly remote through American success and expansion.

iii. Covenant Renewal:

Jonathan Edwards reached back to the captivity narratives as ammunition for revival, warning of impending pains should the self-righteousness of supposed worthy Americans turn their successes into stumbling blocks. Americans were declared in great need of repentance, in need of the purification once engendered by their proximity to wilderness trials, now remote.³ Edwards's Awakening would, however, deepen the mythic entrenchment of worthy independence and individual efficacy, such that his retrofitting of Puritan myths enabled them not only to serve his own time, but also to permeate the

¹Morgan, Wilderness at Dawn, p.311.

²William Sterne Randall, "Tom Quick's Revenge," The Quarterly Journal of Military History 4:4 (Summer, 1992), pp.70-75.

³Slotkin, Regeneration Through Violence, pp.97-98.

landscape of the then American future.¹ The recovery of the mythic past, the re-assertion of the core content of original myths, guarantees the course of the mythic present through the constrictions imposed by its interpretation and the inter-penetration of past and present "moments." This recovery also guarantees a continuity of the mythic past into the mythic future.² Recovery is regeneration.

Edwards's emphasis in the re-creation of the American Adam was placed squarely upon works, upon the ability of the American to accomplish something great and marvellous with his newfound worthiness. Americans were to lead the world into the millennium in a regenerative recovery of original purity in which America was the key to sacred history.³ The increasingly this-world orientation that was roused by the Awakening primed Americans for the reception of ideology and its focus upon political action. This action continued to be augmented by a mythic underpinning that provided "felt" unity and participation in a political project intended to realize a religious ideal. The millennium was to begin in America, with the creation of "the new heavens and new earth."⁴ It would involve a mythic return of beginnings through the present-negating violence of Divine creation by Americans waging war. In a struggle of "cosmic significance," the attribution of evil to the enemy again effected a chosenness upon the American self, fighting "evil" rather than human enemies of kindred spirits--The French

¹Bercovitch, The American Jeremiad, p.105.

²Hay, "George Washington: American Moses," pp.789, 791.

³Bercovitch, The American Jeremiad, pp.98, 107-108.

⁴Jonathan Edwards, "The Latter-Day Glory Is Probably To Begin In America," in God's New Israel, ed. Cherry, p.56.

and Indian War became a "prelude to Armageddon."¹ The defeat of French infidels laid the groundwork for an imminent "new heaven and new earth."² Invocations of righteousness that accompany Americans into later wars against "godless" ideologies are underscored equally by these same mythic images.

Post-millennialism and its "works" orientation came to dominate the mind of eighteenth-century Colonial America.³ With its eyes fixed upon the millennium as an achievable project of mankind, the American Kingdom of God emerged from the French and Indian War confident in its own destiny as part of God's "grand design."⁴ In the intervening years between the French defeat and the American Revolution, Americans reasserted themselves as the culmination of history, a mythic recovery that led to revolution more effectively than any list of "grievances."⁵ On the eve of the Revolution, America proclaimed its imminent purity, its almost accomplished recovery of primitive apostolic perfection. The mythical "pre-supposition of eighteenth-century history and political theory--that 'what happened yesterday will come to pass again, and the same causes will produce like effects in all ages'"--ensured that "the preservation of liberty would continue to be what it had been in the past, a bitter struggle with adversity."⁶ The dramatic effect

¹Bercovitch, The American Jeremiad, p.115.

²Hatch, The Sacred Cause of Liberty, pp.39-42.

³Maclear, "The Republic and the Millennium," pp.186-190.

⁴Tuveson, Redeemer Nation, pp.97-102.

⁵Bailyn, Ideological Origins of the American Revolution, pp.20-22.

⁶Ibid., p.85.

of the Great Awakening and its mythic recovery of original powers meant that the subsequent American Revolution could not be a merely political phenomenon, but must be an apocalyptic revelation. That it was perceived as such was apparent in Revolutionary literature from the outset.¹

iv. American Revolution, or Purifying the Promised Land--Part Two:

Two centuries of millennial anticipation and national aspiration "reached a perfect crescendo" in the Revolution, as God's "first-born nation" emerged from a spontaneous unity engendered by the confluence of ideology and myth. With the mythic entrenchment of individual sufficiency, Americans stood as original, "natural" men, ready to contract anew, ready to receive Locke's prescription and prone to respond to his use of mythic images--Eden, the state of nature, American wilderness and freedom, tyranny and slavery. As well as forming the common sense of social backgrounds to the Revolution, American mythic experience heightened the sense of urgency engendered by renewed religious invocations of Christian and Puritan mythologies, helping to surround the Revolutionary cause with fervour and zeal. New England Puritanism conspired with Virginian republicanism, both widely diffused in the colonies, to forge a deeply rooted, spontaneous consensus within the first months of the "battle against the anti-Christ," that "beast of Revelations 13"--George III.² British tyranny, the broken trust of a government meant only to preserve the natural rights of Englishmen, Locke's right of revolution, and its

¹Maclear, "The Republic and the Millennium," p.184.

²Bellah, Broken Covenant, pp.42, 27-28.

righteousness, all became encapsulated in such images. Accounts of America's changing circumstances, reasons for change and renewal that came through ideological renderings and religious exhortations, were developments upon the burgeoning feelings of revolutionary myth. Nevertheless, accounts came. In a conspiracy of faith and reason, American Founding Fathers joined the patriotic clergy in declaring the Providential destiny evidenced by the Revolution and its fulfilment of John Adams' divinely instituted "grand design."¹ Patriotic leaders indulged in an increasingly apocalyptic rhetoric that reiterated Winthrop's American parallels to Israel's journey across the Red Sea into a land of promise, an interpretation of events that was itself constrained by the same mythic entrenchment that it deepened.² All of American history became a prelude to the Revolution, as God's plan unfolded in the dawning of a new world, *novus ordo seclorum*.³

The only non-Biblical images invoked by America's founders were Roman, a symbology that "dominated the surface" waves of the Revolutionary tide. The Latin mottos of the Great Seal, Washington as the Cincinnatus of the West, "republic," "president," "congress," and "senate" were accompanied by a Greco-Roman architectural and artistic revival that hinted at a deeper preoccupation with republican virtue among a founding intellectual 'class.'⁴ The Roman republic stood as a golden age of actual history, not so distant nor so elusive and esoteric as primitive apostolic Christianity. This

¹Sandoz, A Government of Laws, p.125. Cherry, God's New Israel, p.65.

²Bercovitch, The American Jeremiad, pp.121, 123. Bellah, Broken Covenant, pp.12, 15.

³Bercovitch, The American Jeremiad, pp.124-128, 120.

⁴Bellah, Broken Covenant, pp.22-23.

republican age seemed recoverable to rational Americans imbued with a sense of restorationist mission and a thirst for some primitive glory.¹

In pamphlets, declarations of this republican recovery--"the same sacred flame ...which once showed forth such wonders in Greece and in Rome ...burns brightly and strongly in America"--were mingled with an apocalyptic dispensational recovery of Providential myth-history, as "the hand of God was 'in America now giving a new epocha to the history of the world.'"² This collapsing of history into principles that could be duplicated and, thus, squeezed of their virtuous juices in a mythic recovery was limited, amounting to a "Roman facade" that was beyond the apprehension of most. Roman archetypes were not as profound as Biblical ones. Instead, Israel's Exodus under Moses became the image of America's founding.³ Even "rationalists" turned to Scripture to find ultimate meaning for the Revolution, finding apocalyptic millennialism to be the only framework acceptable to Americans for housing their national uprising.⁴

Thomas Paine played upon American notions of renewed beginnings, of millennial aspirations to new world achievement and to chosenness. Renewing these images by blending them with ideology, "he incorporated as well John Locke's notion of political and economic progress as the product of individual conduct guided by calculations of

¹Solberg, "Primitivism in the American Enlightenment," pp.61-62.

²Bailyn, Ideological Origins of the American Revolution, p.141.

³Ibid., pp.25-26; Bellah, Broken Covenant, pp.44, 24.

⁴Maclear, "The Republic and the Millennium," p.183.

utility and self-interest."¹ Paine's prescriptions for government, his proposals for "how" that millennial achievement might be realized, were rejected. Ultimately, his "common sense" remains too rational for America--Paine still lacks honours as a "Founder," statues and memorials being denied even through the later years of the twentieth century because of his "controversial" views against religion.² However, Americans unanimously embraced in mythic terms Paine's image, his espousal of a new American world of independence. Jefferson's oft supposed "rational" Declaration of Independence was declared to be the literal fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecies, a salvation from the English plot to enslave America, a plot that God had Providentially revealed³--a plot that resonated with Americans through its analogy to the widely familiar Biblical Book of Esther.⁴ England quickly became the "Babylon," the "Whore," in a re-vision of the Puritan myth of the evil "other." This revision incorporated the struggle for liberty into the Puritan quest for worthiness and landscape cleansing, to rid America of British infidels and redcoats. Its demands were invoked in a new jeremiad that was widespread in its hearing and its effect. It mobilized a country to war and to victory.⁵

¹Michael H. Hunt, "Ideology of National Greatness and Liberty," in Major Problems in American Foreign Policy Volume I: To 1914, ed. Thomas G. Paterson (Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath & Co., 1989), pp.8-9.

²M. K. Stone, "No Brotherly Love Yet for Thomas Paine," New York Times, (February 19, 1992).

³Sylvanus Conant, Plymouth, Mass., Dec. 1776, as quoted in E. Douglas Clark, The Grand Design, pp.64-65.

⁴Bailyn, The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution, pp.122, 126-127.

⁵Bercovitch, The American Jeremiad, pp.117-119.

The mythic interpretation of the American Revolution was immediate and sincere, certainly amongst those prodded on to the struggle, if not among the prodders--in them, the depth of mythic entrenchment might be seen as ambiguous. Revolutionary soldiers were told, and presumably believed, that God was on their side, that angels were "encamped round about them," ready to take up the battle at their side. Michael the Archangel stood ready to "slay the dragon"--Britain--in one of the last struggles against Satan. Victory would "initiate Christ's millennial kingdom."¹ Mormons, the ultra-American restorationists that arose out of the Second Awakening, claim that the angel of their ecclesiastical founding, the Angel Moroni, was present and active among the Revolutionary armies in their national founding, presiding over the destiny of God's political messiah.² Recently, America's angelology of the 1990s signalled another harkening back to this same image, another recovery of this American presence.

The Revolutionary clergy "aroused people to the cause of the Revolution," stirring in them a sense of American destiny under God that prepared more colonists for battle than did books and pamphlets, philosophers and politicians combined. Sermons and jeremiads implored Americans to purge themselves of impurities through repentance. "God's New Israel" was called upon to "gird herself with holiness" in order to defeat the enemy. These clergy calls were "paralleled by successive recommendations of the Continental Congress for days of 'publick humiliation, fasting, and prayer'" so that through a "self-administered spiritual purge" Americans might "acquire God's energies"

¹Hatch, Sacred Cause of Liberty, pp.21-24.

²Clark, The Grand Design, pp.219-221.

as displayed in the Old Testament;¹ "Their first responsibility was not to shoot redcoats but to cleanse themselves; only thereafter to take aim."² In 1777, the Massachusetts militia was told to repent, that through the atonement of Christ Patriots might win the Revolution.³ This order was echoed by George Washington's appeal to repent and "endeavour so to live, and act, as becomes a Christian Soldier," that they might receive "the blessing and protection of Heaven."⁴ Clearly, liberty in North America was "God's cause." Once again, the American self-attribution of chosenness aligned the American cause with the cause of Heaven.⁵

The immediate post-Revolutionary literature and rhetoric further entrenched the mythic-religious bases of the new nation. In 1783, Ezra Stiles preached a sermon to the General Assembly of Connecticut, in which he declared that God had fought the battles of His American Israel, having miraculously controlled the forces of nature and led American leaders--inspiring Washington to victory and Providentially revealing Benedict Arnold's treachery. America's victory was attributed to God's fulfilment of scriptural history as Daniel's stone--the millennial kingdom, without hands carved out of the mountain of the Lord--was now rolling forth to consume all nations.⁶ Timothy Dwight's

¹Cherry, God's New Israel, pp.61-62.

²Perry Miller, as quoted in Cherry, God's New Israel, p.62.

³Peter Thacher, as quoted in Clark, The Grand Design, pp.72-73.

⁴George Washington, as quoted in Clark, The Grand Design, p.75.

⁵Hatch, Sacred Cause of Liberty, pp.64, 59-61.

⁶Ezra Stiles, "The United States Elevated to Glory and Honour," in God's New Israel, ed. Cherry, pp.82-92.

"The Conquest of Canaan" (1785) united the cause of Ancient Israel with that of the United States, collapsing time in a millennial recovery of Eden such that beginning and end, Eden and Millennium, join in one creative "moment" in America.¹ Examples abound of clerical attribution of American success to Providential care, of preaching the Revolution as religious revival. The churches were not alone in mythic-religious interpretations of contemporary history, however. Ellis Sandoz maintains that the government of the United States actively participated in this same myth making, and persisted in its diffusion long after American victory. American myth once mobilized and now legitimized American worthiness in a "new world" of zealots at which Europe scoffed.² The brilliance of the shining stars of America's "new heaven" was lost upon that world-wise continent.

George Washington, the "man of god" that Ezra Stiles likened to God's high priest Melchizedek, quickly became the "American Moses," transfigured into a demigod in a mythification that Boorstin calls "shameless" in the "light of history," yet that he upholds as befitting a heroic counterpart of ancients in this American "age of heroes."³ Washington became an American Saviour. His Bunker Hill and Valley Forge are sacred places, Gethsemanes, through a sacralizing of the Revolutionary landscape.⁴ In the act of

¹Drinnon, Facing West, p.66. Also see Tuveson, Redeemer Nation, pp.106-107 and Hughes, "Recovering First Times," p.200.

²Sandoz, A Government of Laws, pp.136-141.

³Ezra Stiles, "The United States Elevated to Glory and Honour," pp.88-89; Boorstin, The National Experience, pp.339, 344, 327.

⁴Bercovitch, The American Jeremiad, p.129.

sacralizing Washington as Moses, America also is made worthy, is now Israel in a sanctification of landscape and people. Just as "the spiritual origins of the two leaders were one," so the spiritual origins of the two nations become one in this mythic apprehension of God's chosen. The chosenness afforded America by Washington's parallel to Moses surmounted Israel's standing before God, as Washington surpassed Moses in his ability to actually take the promised land himself.¹ As the Father of his country, Washington bequeaths all that he is, or is not, to the American nation. His mythic personification is a versatile encapsulation of an evolving American self-perception. The "real" George Washington, "the flesh and blood man behind the graven image," recently has been presented as an "improviser," a "real man" who was brilliant and brave to a fault, indifferent to danger, virtuous rather than talented, determined rather than lucky. Yet, he was blessed by a Providence that inflicted smallpox upon him as a young soldier so that, inoculated, he might survive epidemics during the Revolution and save his country. He is a man whose close calls with death in battle are legendary, who took himself from the frontier to the capital city as a self-made man, risking all as a traitor in the Revolution, yet who is just a "regular guy," shy, "one of the folk."² This "real" Washington is a "true" American, a mythic figure himself even as he wields the creative powers of past myths restored. He is the efficacious individual.

The Revolution and its deliberate myth-making--Americans re-telling themselves in action what they already believed in spirit as they immersed themselves in their

¹Hay, "George Washington: American Moses," pp.782-788.

²"George Washington: Founding Father," A&E Biography.

"givenness"¹--petrified an American future in its American past. A perpetual repetition of history is fixed as ever present by a mythic collapse of time that was central to New England religious and political thought during the Revolution.² Boorstin's "conservative" Revolution was indeed conservative, in that it was and continues to be mythic, a heroic conservation of the "given."³ It is, however, revolutionary in its continual recovery and re-assertion of beginnings. The social contract always is surfacing, like a great bloated fish hooked in deep waters and dragged to the top too quickly on heavy line. The Constitution is renewed in the minds of each generation, the Declaration of Independence is invoked in judgement, and the "state of the union" continually is examined, as the size and shape of the great fish is admired. So near the surface, mythic sensibilities from which societies are formed are released in the spray of the swell, dizzying those that drink at these over-rich waters. Heady, Americans render a perpetually new world in a politics that constantly revives and renews yet always is the same. America is a land of revolutionary conservatism, of beginning and end, a land of myth.

Section B: Manifest from Heaven

i. "Upon the Altar of Liberty":

Robert Bellah tells us that "the profoundly mythic meaning of 'America'" was not undone by the 'rational' politics of framing the Constitution, but instead was enhanced and

¹Henry, The Intoxication of Power, p.52.

²Hatch, Sacred Cause of Liberty, pp.71-72.

³Boorstin, The Genius of American Politics, pp.68-95.

preserved, reinforced in the creation of the new nation.¹ Antifederalists had been concerned that representatives in the new central government would not fairly represent their constituents, believing that only smaller, closer governments could adequately express the shared sentiments and prejudices of a people. They implicitly recognized that mythic and religious sensibilities formed the necessary underpinning of ideology, that in them lay the deep directives of government. Supposed rational processes and their mechanical institutions are merely skiffs on the surface of political power.² It became apparent, however, that differences between Federalists and Antifederalists did not run so deep, that beneath their rational arguments about government machinery they were united by mythic images of Providential history, the recent Revolution and its sacred cause of liberty, by the Declaration of Independence, and by their shared hopes for an American future.³ These symbols were invoked throughout the Constitutional debates because of their shared apprehension and their ability to inspire and move a people to unity and Union.

The Constitution, then, represents a striving for "a more perfect union" on the part of a people already united by "a sense of community which predated it and was presupposed by it."⁴ From this foundation and with this hope arose the invocations of America's Founders. James Wilson's Pennsylvania Convention speech and best-selling

¹Bellah, The Broken Covenant, pp.4-5.

²Burstein, Sentimental Democracy, p.146.

³Sandoz, A Government of Laws, p.83.

⁴Niebuhr and Heimert, A Nation So Conceived, pp.15-16.

pamphlet appealed to the Revolution as a mythic symbol, calling upon its sacred memory to inspire Americans for what might seem profane in the matters at hand. Difficulties of trade and commerce experienced by post-Revolutionary Americans under the loose alliance of the Articles of Confederation are compared to American enemies of past decades, challenges to be overcome in the realization of the full potential of a national character. Solving these economic problems by concerted national effort through the mechanics of the Constitution is made analogous to winning the Revolutionary war all over again. In this mythic rehearsal, Wilson bestows the dignity and sanctity of the past Revolution onto the new American enterprise, business, and the Constitution that favours its success.¹ John Jay's "Address to the People of New York," the other of these two most widely read documents of the Constitutional debate, mingles rational arguments with sentimental nationalist appeals, a mythic sounding of America's sentimental union.² Jay's Federalist II resounded with the same message, of one people mythically bound by custom and tradition that had been sanctified by the sacrifice of blood, most recently in the Revolution. With Providence, Americans had thus been bound together as "a band of brethren, united to each other by the strongest ties." At such a cost and with such blessing attending America's sacred unity, Jay demands that Americans rededicate themselves explicitly once more in the outward covenant of the Constitution, contracting

¹"James Wilson's Opening Address," Pennsylvania Ratifying Convention (November 24, 1787), in The Debate on the Constitution, ed. Bailyn, p.800.

²John Jay, "An Address to the People of the State of New York," (Spring, 1788), The Founders Constitution vol.1, pp.233-235; on the wide distribution of this and Wilson's speech, see Johnson, A History of the American People, p.192.

socially again with their natural rights for the purpose of liberty and prosperity.¹ Liberalism mingles with myth and religion here in the creation of a national 'church', a civil religion in which the Revolution is the baptism of fire. The ratification of the Constitution is the subsequent first communion that honours and rededicates the sacrificial covenant. Each election thereafter is a renewing sacrament.

Madison, too, argued that America's communion runs deep. The Revolution had proven Americans to be "a band of brothers," he said, united by sympathy rather than by interest.² America's liberty was purchased by "the precious blood of thousands spilt," according to Madison, so that Americans might move forward in history towards its fulfilment.³ Upon elucidating the principles of American liberalism, "Brutus" reminds Americans of their universal agreement upon them, and then bathes this credo in the blood of the Revolution with the assertion that these are the truths for which they all fought.⁴ God had blessed this sacrificial struggle by Americans for a sacred liberty, Madison tells us, a truth recognized by every "man of pious reflection." Thus, to now turn away from what was won at so high a cost is impiety. To turn away from the new Constitution as it reflects and secures the bounty of the Revolution is to be impious, a renunciation of that Revolutionary faith that defines "Americans." Here in The Federalist

¹John Jay, "Publius: The Federalist II," The Federalist (New York: The Modern Library, 1941), pp.7-12; Amacher, American Political Writers, pp.172-173.

²Niebuhr and Heimert. A Nation So Conceived, p.17.

³James Madison, "Publius: The Federalist XLV," The Federalist (New York: The Modern Library, 1941), pp.298-299.

⁴"Brutus IX," New York Journal (January 17, 1788), in The Debate on the Constitution vol.2, ed. Bailyn, p.40.

and in the surrounding debate we have some of the first intimations of becoming "un-American."¹ We also have hints that the thought behind Madison's reputation as a "realist reformer" may signal an American trope--in the twentieth century, C. Wright Mills called it "crackpot realism."²

Not only did the Revolution unify Americans as a historical fact, then, it also secured that unity by its later invocation as part of a founding myth. "Hearken not to the unnatural voice which tells you that the people of America, knit together as they are by so many chords of affection, can no longer live together as members of the same family," Madison pleads.³ Pay no heed to infidels,

no my countrymen, shut your ears against this unhallowed language. 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 defence of their sacred rights, consecrate their union, and excite horror at the idea of their becoming aliens, rivals, enemies.⁴

To be American is to carry this sacred blood, but what once was sanctified by action and sacrifice now is hallowed, or not, by ideas. They are heard as the "truth" expressed by 'natural' American voices or as the "unhallowed language" of beguiling "poison." Of such are made "aliens, rivals, enemies." The radical mythic individual that is embedded in this homily stands ready to answer the call by more "rational" parts of The Federalist, ready

¹James Madison, "Publius: The Federalist XXXVII," in The Debate on the Constitution vol.1, ed. Bailyn, p.760.

²C. Wright Mills, The Power Elite (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1956; rpt. 1967), p.261.

³James Madison, "Publius: The Federalist XIV," in The Debate on the Constitution vol.1, ed. Bailyn, p.435.

⁴Ibid., p.435.

to contract again a society into existence and to build upon it the structures of government. Such mythic intonations form a crucial substructure to America's ideology and all that is piled upon it.

To be "un-American" is more than to be unpatriotic in this wonderful mythic image, even more than to be treasonous. It is to be contrary to the "natural" voice of "truth." For an "American" turning to these other voices, it is a condition of infidelity towards God, truth, and humanity as well as one's nation. America and its ideas, Madison tells us, are being established for all the world, "for the whole human race."¹ Here, "Publius" aligns himself with a tradition as old as America, renewing her mythic calling as "a city upon a hill." First the Revolution and now the Constitution are built upon America's old problem of anticipation and impatience at this calling, upon the tension between the calling to be a model for the world or to transform it by "an errand in the wilderness." John Adams, "with reverence and wonder," expressed his own personal anticipation of "the opening of a grand scene and design in Providence for the illumination of the ignorant, and the emancipation of the slavish part of mankind all over the earth."² Alexander Hamilton, the most reasoned member attached to "Publius," rationalized America's myth of a chosen people and its "city upon a hill" in the first of The Federalist papers. The ratification of the Constitution takes on world significance for Hamilton, as a test of mankind's ability to realize the ideals of liberalism.³ The mythic

¹Ibid., p.436.

²John Adams, as quoted in Tuveson, Redeemer Nation, p.25.

³Alexander Hamilton, "Publius: The Federalist I," in The Debate on the Constitution vol.1, ed. Bailyn, pp.219-223.

unity relied upon for ratification of the Constitution will be enhanced and revitalized as it surfaces for that ratification. This act of "union will enable us ...to vindicate the honor of the human race. ...Let the thirteen states bound together in a strict and indissoluble Union, concur in erecting one great American system."¹ America's mythic union will be the world's regeneration.

What had been one, simple, unifying idea of self-identity in the myth of America as "New Israel," God's modern chosen nation, was renewed now with full measure once again given to its implications for other, less worthy peoples. The lessons of ancient history, of the fall of Greek and Roman republics on the backs of individual spiritual corruption, were transposed onto European nations. Europe was thought to be on the verge of divinely instituted plagues as a new "Egypt." Americans were called to "come out of her, be not partakers of her sins." They were warned not to flirt with her poisonous twists of truth, such as the "liberty, equality, and fraternity" of the French Revolution, the new Antichrist.² America became the servant of Christianity, liberating it from European sin and corruption and carrying it forward into the new world of the future.³ Historical progress would continue to be the revelation of God, with the United States as living scripture, the New Testament to the Old Testament of European kingdoms.

According to Lawrence Fuchs, America was the first nation to describe itself this

¹Alexander Hamilton, "Publius: The Federalist XI," The Federalist (New York: The Modern Library), pp.62-69.

²Arieli, Individualism and Nationalism in American Ideology, pp.41-43; Hatch, The Sacred Cause of Liberty, pp.133-134.

³Arieli, Individualism and Nationalism in American Ideology, p.255.

way. The world significance that Americans attached to their fidelity to the Declaration of Independence and its principles made the realization of the founding myth in the Constitution a matter of universal importance. "That sense of mission pushed Americans towards a powerful emotional and spiritual national patriotism."¹ Part of God's "grand design" for Adams, a Providential endeavour for Franklin, and proof of the existence of a benevolent god for Jefferson, America's founding confirmed the New Israel for Samuel Cooper. The nation would be "a theater for the display of some of the most astounding dispensations of His Providence."² It was the arrival of a new Zion for Ezra Stiles, an Annunciation that "the Lord shall have made his American Israel high above all nations."³ Through participation in this American mission and conviction in "its millennial denouement," Americans were provided with unity. Like the tribes of Israel, Americans shared a special relationship with God, and a special destiny in which this common mission eclipsed any diversity.⁴ Benjamin Franklin rehearsed the history of ancient Israel's departure from Egypt and their reception of The Law from above in a mythic invocation of its retelling in the history of an analogous America.⁵ Franklin emphasizes that Israel was comprised of thirteen tribes. Egypt represents Britain's past tyranny, the Revolution is America's exodus, and the Constitution is The Law. Those opposed to it are likened

¹Fuchs, *The American Kaleidoscope*, p.31.

²Samuel Cooper, as quoted in *ibid.*, p.32.

³Ezra Stiles, as quoted in *ibid.*, p.32.

⁴Maclear, "The Republic and the Millennium," p.194.

⁵Benjamin Franklin, "K. to the Editor," *Federal Gazette* (Philadelphia), April 8, 1788, in *The Debate on the Constitution*, ed. Bailyn, pp.401-405.

to Israel's "discontented, restless Spirits" that wanted to return to Egypt or, by trying to cling to the Articles of Confederation, they are apostate idol worshippers that would not accept Moses's "New Constitution." In a sudden shift into Christianity, this also is likened to the rejection and crucifixion of Christ by the "High Priests and Scribes."¹ Franklin seems to hesitate at making explicit the assertion that the Constitution was divinely inspired, but declares that

I have so much Faith in the general Government of the world by *Providence*, that I can hardly conceive a Transaction of such momentous Importance to the Welfare of Millions now existing, and to exist in the Posterity of a great Nation, should be suffered to pass without being in some degree influenc'd, guided, and governed by that omnipotent, omnipresent, and beneficent Ruler, in whom all inferior Spirits live, and move, and have their Being (emphasis original).²

With ancient history retold in the actions of modern Americans, the mythic deliverance of the new nation is assured, and with it the world.

In America's redemptive history of the world, the United States once again becomes the Book of Daniel's stone rolling forth as God's agent for mankind. This time in America, the Kingdom of God will lead to the millennium in fact as well as in theory. It will be accomplished through action that is justified by ideology, structured by political science, and sanctified in mythic righteousness. "The Kingdom of God and the virtuous republic become for Americans one and the same empire."³ The Revolution sounds the drum of the march into the future; the Constitution codifies the step and draws Americans

¹*Ibid.*, pp.402-404.

²*Ibid.*, pp.404-405.

³Hatch, *The Sacred Cause of Liberty*, pp.141, 148, 156.

into line and into pace for the duration. Its secular means to sacred ends mark this modern system. The hand of man is upon the technology rendering the mind of God within it.¹ As Noah Webster, "A Citizen of America," celebrated the Founding as a mythic moment, still he did so within the light of reason. The Founders, he said, would be "celebrated by posterity with the honors which less enlightened nations have paid to the fabled demi-gods of antiquity."² With such enthusiasm, America would come to enjoy a semi-religious nationalism of sentiment and energy, rather than perspective and wisdom in her civic culture.³

Ultimately, Americans would be taught that the Founding was next only to the birth of Christ in importance to the world. Joyce Appleby reminds us that nineteenth-century schoolbooks taught that God had decreed and directed the American Revolution. Associated myth making provided a national pantheon of heroes.⁴ Jefferson's mythification of the delegates to the Constitutional Convention as "demi-gods" formed part of "the sacred penumbra that had enveloped the document" from the beginning.⁵ Even as the Convention sat, Washington already was a demi-god. "As the fifty-five delegates shaped their image of the presidency, they had before them, day after day, the image of George Washington on the dais presiding over the debate." Had anyone else sat

¹Maclear, "The Republic and the Millennium," pp.186-191.

²Noah Webster, "A Citizen of America," Philadelphia (October 17, 1787), in The Debate on the Constitution, ed. Bailyn, p.129.

³Miller, The First Liberty, pp.259, 266.

⁴Appleby, Telling the Truth About History, p.105.

⁵Ibid., p.137-138.

in that seat, it is said, a different government might have been formed.¹ American myth making is swift and sure, according to Michael Kammen, distinct from ancient mythos in its idealization of present men instead of its humanization of absent gods.

America has been "a nation of myth makers," yet born in the light of reason it has been "a nation of myth makers obsessed with authenticity." American mythology has been subjected to detailed documentary histories and extensive reconstructions of historic sites to the minutest detail.² The concrete authenticity that these lend to mythic sites contributes a validity to the ideal mythification of the past. No matter that many studies 'debunk' mythic beliefs, or that historical sites reveal different stories from those of tradition.³ The light of reason does not diminish mythic truths for Americans who can stand at the Alamo, find the exact spot where Custer made his last stand, or join Washington in prayer at Valley Forge. In pilgrimages to the past through works of literature, works of art, historical and cultural analysis, and in personal visits, a sense that these things really happened is communicated along with their mythic meanings already learned. As one touches the past, one becomes a participant in that meaning through its personal renewal, through its inspired personal conviction. Such celebration of "events, ideas, or heroes" was destined to become a mainstay of America's political culture, "when nationalism and political ideology started to supplant, at least partially, a role that religion

¹"George Washington: Founding Father," A&E Biography.

²Michael Kammen, Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture (New York: Penguin, 1986; rpt. Vintage, 1993), pp.27-28.

³James W. Loewen, Lies Across America: What Our Historic Sites Get Wrong (New York: The New Press, 1999).

had customarily fulfilled in civic culture."¹

ii. A Righteous Graft:

The years between the Revolution and the Civil War involved a convergence of the Puritan myth of wilderness cleansing, regeneration through violence, with an equally potent and well-embedded agrarian myth of regeneration through agro-toil. These conspired under the rubric of "Manifest Destiny." This project continued the recovery of sacred time through the physical expansion of civilization into the wilderness, conquering forces of darkness and ignorance in a joint initiative of gun smoke and spade. America's retreating frontier, "the line of march of the Puritan farmer,"² marked the final taming and salvation of the American wilderness.

Agrarian regeneration, the leeching of moral and civic values from American soil, had always been part of the Puritan "struggle with the wilderness, ...a part of the universal conflict with evil, as satanical devices employed against them in defense of what once was 'the devil's territories.'"³ Later agrarians, however, masked the violence inherent in their work behind a benevolent husbandry. The Revolution's recovery of original purity renewed America's millennial thrust, tearing the veil from between these two regenerative mythologies and infusing each with the goodness of the other's efficacy.

¹Ibid., p.33.

²Turner, "Dominant Forces in Western Life," The Frontier in American History, p.239; First published in Atlantic Monthly (April, 1897).

³M. Thomas Inge, "An American Arcadia: Theoretical Perspectives," in Agrarianism in American Literature, ed. M. Thomas Inge (New York: Odyssey Press, 1969), pp.1-2.

America marched and plowed ahead toward the millennium, convicted by the Revolution of the moral and civic superiority of its yeomanry, confident in the manifest reasons for America's chosenness where Israel's had lain hidden.¹

One of the grievances listed in the Declaration of Independence was the complaint against the king for preventing and controlling American expansion, an interference with a destiny decreed by God.² American notions of this destiny long had been articulated as part of a given not yet congealed into one coherent myth-symbol. Bacon's Rebellion, 1676, is an early, if thwarted, expression of these American strains. The publication of Timothy Dwight's "America" (1771), its allusions to American empire and worldwide glory--perhaps the earliest American espousal of aspirations to Asian conquest--might be "the moment when America's position in the millennialist pattern becomes 'manifest'."³ Earlier "moments" do, however, reveal an American self-appraisal that places expansion squarely within a destiny that was inherited from American origins, an inheritance "thrust upon the United States" by its worldwide mission of apocalyptic revelation.⁴

While America's destiny was manifest in the colonial mythology of beginnings, and in the disjointed western surges of Bacon's era, the agrarian mythology that accelerated an onslaught and grafted Manifest Destiny began to take shape in the middle

¹Hofstadter, "The Myth of the Happy Yeoman," p.100.; Also see Cherry, God's New Israel, p.114.

²Thomas Jefferson, "The Declaration of Independence, 1776," in An American Primer, ed. Boorstin, pp.87-88.

³Tuveson, Redeemer Nation, p.103.

⁴Ibid., pp.91-92.

of the eighteenth century. This timing coincided with the entrenchment in America of Lockean ideology and its self-justified demands for the appropriation of nature as property. Mythic developments substantiated ideological arguments with vision and feeling that made them seem obvious and inevitable. In 1749, Benjamin Franklin anticipated the cleansing of the wilderness through a gradual agricultural march that would uproot Indian savages and make room for cultivation and civilization in a frontier zone of yeoman mediation.¹ Franklin's 1751 vision of an America destined to "fill up new western lands"² was punctuated by his 1799 approval of American prosperity through agriculture, "the great business of the continent." It had provided incomparable wealth to Americans, urban and rural, "since the Revolution." The land stood as guarantor of American purity, protector of America's innocence from the decadence and luxury that doomed former republics. Regenerating themselves through the penetration of virgin soil, Americans would be forever young, their destiny always permeated with the recovery of sacred origins: "We are the sons of the earth and seas, and, like Antaeus, if, in wrestling with Hercules, we now and then receive a fall, the touch of our parents will communicate to us fresh strength and ability to renew the contest."³

The levelling effect of yeoman agriculture, the democratization engendered by the American soil, constituted a regeneration of the European mind, tradition, and legacy that

¹Slotkin, Regeneration Through Violence, pp.212-213.

²Clyde A. Milner II, "National Initiatives," in The Oxford History of the American West, ed. Clyde A. Milner II, et al. (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1994), p.166.

³Benjamin Franklin, "The Internal State of America; Being a True Description of the Interest and Policy of That Vast Continent, 1799," in Agrarianism in American Literature, ed. Inge, pp.115-119.

cut America off from the historic past. The American was "leaving behind him all his ancient prejudices and manners," in a recovery of original, Edenic purity that was intended to "finish the great circle." As the "new man" fit for a new heaven and new earth, the American conquers time in a mythic embrace of past and future under a destiny that only he can tempt God to actualize. American frontiersmen, John the Baptists leading the world into America-west waters of baptism, till the earth and coax a new civilization out of the soil. The millennium arises out of mud, earth, and sweat, rather than descending as a star from the heavens. Civilization grows out of the virtuous husbandry of American agrarians who cultivate men for a new world.¹ Such is the perception of America's agro-millennialists.

Thomas Jefferson's First Inaugural Address is both a statement and a prayer for America's sense of expansive chosenness and her potential for agrarian regeneration under a Providential destiny of world significance. "A rising nation, spread over a wide and fruitful land," was destined to free itself from "the throes and convulsions of the ancient world." This would be accomplished through the political manifestation of America's character in conjunction with an appeal to "that Infinite Power which rules the destinies" of nations.² Such an appeal was expected to be fulfilled, since America's farmers were perceived as "the chosen people of God, ...whose breasts he has made his peculiar deposit for substantial and genuine virtue." These yeomen breasts were God's repository of the

¹Michel-Guillaume Jean de Crèvecoeur, "What is an American?," in The Frontier in American Literature, ed. Durham and Jones, pp.20-25.

²Thomas Jefferson, "First Inaugural Address, March 4, 1801," in The Presidents Speak, ed. Lott, pp.17-21.

last, best hope of earthly salvation. In them, "he keeps alive that sacred fire, which otherwise might escape from the face of the earth."¹ Righteous soil-diggers were carriers of the Holy Ghost, mediators between man and God, frontiersmen--Americans.

Revolutionary millennial zeal looked westward for its rising sun, its eyes fixed immediately upon the Pacific but glancing beyond. Thomas Prince joined other preachers in their interpretation of the Revolution as the unfolding of prophecy that prompted them to look to California and even to Asia as the future extent of the American millennium.² An impatience for destiny heightened American zeal at the prospect of the coming world, transforming it into a determination to *bring* that world into being. Americans could no longer wait upon the god who waits upon men, but were compelled themselves to works.³ Being cleansed of redskins and most recently of redcoats, America now stood in need of new lands with their new opportunities for growth and for spiritual regeneration. Reaching out for this, Americans began to meld violent cleansing with virtuous husbandry in a Providentially commanded national wilderness quest that became known as "Manifest Destiny."

Manifest Destiny is a myth that arises out of American origins. These origins constrain actors and their interpretation. Their renewal guides Americans in moments of

¹Thomas Jefferson, "Notes on the State of Virginia," in Agrarianism in American Literature, ed. Inge, pp.9-10.

²Maclear, "The Republic and the Millennium," p.190.

³Henry, The Intoxication of Power, pp.81-86. Maclear, "The Republic and the Millennium," p.191.

decision and crisis, moments of myth assertion.¹ Just as America had done in its beginning, the West became synonymous with opportunity. It seemed to provide an apparently endless environment of space and time within which to recover, once again, primitive purity. The recovery of original virtue through reversion to primitive archetypal action in the western wilderness involved renewing the purity of America's original independence and freedom from European influence. Such renewal once again would lead Americans to the promise and progress of the future.² The Revolution had cleansed a land that in its righteousness now stood in judgement of its inhabitants. Now ordinary men stood in need of heroic regeneration to make Americans worthy once again of the promise to be worked out of God's chosen land, a previously hidden land that had been reserved for high purposes and worthy workmen.³ American territorial expansion always had involved a mythic collapsing of past and present, a conquest of time as well as space.⁴ Manifest Destiny, however, now gathered all westward aspirations, diverse mythic, secular, and religious orientations, into one potent symbolic image of work and worthiness, and of regeneration.⁵

With the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, the work began "in earnest." American expansion for national greatness affirmed its own success, confirming the nation's destiny

¹Nash Smith, Virgin Land, pp.35-38.

²Turner, "The Problem of the West," in Turner, The Frontier in American History, pp.209-212; First published in Atlantic Monthly (Sept., 1896).

³Nash Smith, Virgin Land, p.42.

⁴Norton, Republic of Signs, p.173. Also see Norton, Alternative Americas, p.31.

⁵Cherry, God's New Israel, p.113.

and strengthening self-perceptions of the American character as "special." Americans' worthiness for being chosen was made manifest in their mastery and spoilage of the richness and bounty of God's chosen land.¹ White Anglo-Saxons, Jefferson thought, were destined to cover all of North and even South America.² Jefferson's West guaranteed the Republic. Its future rested upon agriculture and agrarian regeneration, the gardening of virtue.³ This expansion harboured a colonizing policy that Frederick Jackson Turner maintains was a hidden policy of the United States from the beginning, secreted in policies of "interstate migration" or "territorial organization."⁴ The foundational violence of world-making and American purification is obscured by such terminology.

iii. Cleansing:

Manifest Destiny entailed a denial of cultural integrity to foreign peoples that served to justify their negation by annexation or even annihilation. Indians, Blacks, Mexicans and Filipinos, all were treated to a "racist righteousness" that percolated throughout America's chosenness.⁵ Earlier prophecies of 'benign' progress--Benjamin Franklin's gradual economic march, or Jefferson's inevitable natural social decline of

¹Cherry, God's New Israel, p.111. Hunt, "Ideology of National Greatness and Liberty," pp.9-10.

²Drinnon, Facing West, p.80.

³Nash Smith, Virgin Land, pp.127-128.

⁴Turner, "The Middle West," in Turner, The Frontier in American History, p.127; First published in International Monthly (Dec., 1901).

⁵Bellah, Broken Covenant, pp.36-38.

inferior races--now gave way to the zeal of "Indian removal." This aggressive action of outright violence has been termed "a form of 'domestic' foreign policy."¹ Even now, Americans persist in embracing their actions against Indian nations as within the realm of domestic policy. Soldierly massacres of Indians are referred to as occasions in which "Federal troops were called on to police internal dissidents."² Daniel Boorstin sees the entire post-Civil War mop-up of the Indian West as a "police" problem that is twinned with that of the Reconstructionist South.³ C. Vann Woodward also describes Indian wars as a domestic problem involving an army of Indian-fighters as a "police force."⁴ Through violence, Indians were obliged to join the rest of the world and follow America into the future of civilization--follow or die. Manifest Destiny gave the West to the United States in an edict more dynamic than those of laws and treaties: "Appeals to the Genesis account of creation underpinned claims not only to Indian lands but also to Mexico and even to the Oregon Territory."⁵

Americans have seen their advance of civilization as the progress of virtue. America's civilized man is the virtuous man on the march to a better world through the extrapolation of laws and morals that are based upon natural law and the Judeo-Christian

¹Milner, "National Initiatives," p.166.

²Richard Maxwell Brown, "Violence," in The Oxford History of the American West, ed. Milner, et al., pp.416-417.

³Boorstin, The National Experience, p.263.

⁴C. Vann Woodward, "Free Security," in Major Problems in American Foreign Policy, ed. Paterson, p.4.

⁵Hughes, "Recovering First Times," pp.210-211.

experience. Such is the image of Manifest Destiny embraced by Story, Channing, Emerson, and Thoreau. American origins and her destiny are combined in a recapitulation of past chosenness and Providential blessings that justifies a beckoning expansion, the completion of the American project--not by example, but by rolling forth as Daniel's magical stone carved out of the mountain without hands, conquering the world in a millennial onslaught that would signal the completion of the Revolution.¹ A millennium that always was thought to begin in America now was expected to begin in The West. Here would be the residence of the Spirit of God, here stood the ultimate wilderness that finally would decide the American character and test its fundamental worthiness.² Once more, the Puritan god would exert Himself in the image of an archetypal Indian-fighter and American--Andrew Jackson.

Throughout the Seminole War, Jackson perceived himself to be typical of an Old Testament agency for the Avenging God.³ He reiterated the righteousness of Indian extermination in 1830, declaring that it was not something "bad" but was something natural in the progress of the human race and in the advancement of civilization as its progressive waves rolled westward.⁴ Jackson's attitude toward the "domestic dependent nations" that Chief Justice Marshall declared were reliant upon his kindness and power,

¹Gabriel, The Course of American Democratic Thought, pp.14-24, 37.

²Lyman Beecher, "A Plea For The West" (1835), in God's New Israel, ed. Cherry, pp.120-123.

³Drinnon, Facing West, p.108.

⁴Andrew Jackson, "Andrew Jackson's Case for Removal, 1830," in Major Problems in American Foreign Policy, ed. Paterson, p.212.

who looked to him for protection and appealed to him for their wants and needs, even addressing him as "their great father," seemed an attitude universal in its appeal and in its application.¹ Indeed, it seemed Providential, a truly American policy towards the Indians and the taking of western lands, the policy of Bacon's Rebellion. America now was becoming herself.

iv. Providence West:

In the spirit of James Fenimore Cooper's "movement of Providence" west, Americans offered civilization in exchange for Indian lands, attaching a sense of honour to expansion in the face of an inevitable Indian decline.² Nevertheless, a bloodthirsty and lawless treatment of Indians was deemed to be justified, according to laws of nature and national progression that were bolstered by Lockean assertions of the principle of higher uses. Although the transformation and civilization of the Indian was an integral aspect of "expansion with honour," assimilation was deemed impossible at least by 1819, leaving only annihilation as the ultimate solution.³ The 1842 "Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs" is an explicit, official elaboration of some key themes of Manifest Destiny: of its perception of Indian savagery due to habitation of unimproved lands (worthy land and worthy people being contiguous); of Indian destiny fulfilling itself in

¹"Cherokee Nation v. the State of Georgia, 1831," in Major Problems in American Foreign Policy, ed. Paterson, pp.216-220.

²James Fenimore Cooper, "The Heidenmauer" (1832), as quoted in Tuveson, Redeemer Nation, p.127.

³Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., "The White Advance Upon Native Lands," in Major Problems in American Foreign Policy, ed. Paterson, pp.227-230.

the removal or extermination of indolents unable or unwilling to work the land, thus bound to lose it; of the destiny of U.S. civilization in a land that "for them [the Indian] ...is no land of promise--no Canaan, flowing with rivers of milk and honey"; of a resolution to exterminate the unassimilable in the righteous imposition of civilization upon a last American wilderness; of a destiny reserved. The Indian, unable to follow into the American future, must die.¹

Thus, America's destiny was manifest long before the appearance of John L. O'Sullivan's phrase in 1845. His "manifest destiny" is a late exclamation, according to Ernest Tuveson, a response that merged American excitement at Texan potential with American millennial fervour.² It should be seen, however, that Texas merely occasioned this latest excitement of a long embedded American vein. Manifest Destiny is a mythic condensation of a longstanding American opportunism, blending together agrarian and violent regenerations and establishing them under the auspices of the All-Seeing Eye that overlooks the American project, that unfinished Great Pyramid that stands between garden and wilderness on America's seal. There, above that symbol, the Eagle's extensions of olive branch and arrows point alternate ways to America's future, policy avenues of millennial approach.³ Manifest Destiny is a continuation of the original myth, a continuation of the Creation.

O'Sullivan declared that it was "the right of our manifest destiny to overspread

¹"Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. Pub. Doc. No.2, pp.370-528. Dec. 7th, 1842." The Southern Quarterly Review 5 (1844), pp.118-156.

²Tuveson, Redeemer Nation, p.125.

³Campbell, The Power of Myth, pp.24-27.

and to possess the whole of the continent which Providence has given for the development of the great experiment of liberty and federative self-government entrusted to us," in effect to complete America's Revolution and, thus, her Creation.¹ The "finger of God Himself" had placed the United States there, he said, echoing his earlier assertion that "we are entering on its untrodden space, with the truths of God in our minds." This was a wilderness of both time and space--past history, the future, and The West. O'Sullivan explicitly mingled time and space, original recovery and creation with destiny, in declaring that "our national birth was the beginning of a new history," one that cannot be stopped. It is "the era of American greatness" marked as a "magnificent domain of space and time ...destined to manifest to mankind the excellence of divine principles; to establish on earth the noblest temple ever dedicated to the worship of the Most High."² Such a mythic temple must be cleansed of "real" infidels.

Americans embarked upon a symbolic Indianizing of Mexico, mythically converging Mexicans and Indians. In this way, like treatment of Mexicans and Indians was not only justified, it was demanded both spiritually and physically, in a renewed war against the forces of darkness. American expansion again provided an opportunity for violent regeneration. The attribution of Indian savagery to the mythic Mexican liberated Americans to violence, unleashing their terrible original powers in an attempt to wipe the landscape clean. This transposition of Indians for Mexicans and the resulting mythic

¹John L. O'Sullivan, "The True Title" (Dec. 1845), in God's New Israel, ed. Cherry, p.129.

²Ibid., p.129; John L. O'Sullivan, "The Great Nation of Futurity" (1839), as quoted in "John L. O'Sullivan on Manifest Destiny, 1839," in Major Problems in American Foreign Policy, ed. Paterson, pp.255-256.

constrictions that constrained and shaped both action and thought is an early revelation of America's turning of every war against people of colour into an Indian war, and a Holy War.¹

The Mexican joined the Indian as an inferior race that must give way to the advance of Anglo-Saxon civilization. Unimprovable, as were the Indians, Mexicans "will, like the Indian race yield to the advance of the North American population."² The Texas Revolution was interpreted by Americans in both the United States and Texas as a racial manifestation of American destiny, the progress of advanced Anglo-Saxon civilization.³ Later American expansion into Mexican Territory was heralded by Walt Whitman as being "for the good of the whole world" in its promise to push aside a "miserable, inefficient Mexico" that had nothing to do "with the great mission of peopling the New World with a noble race."⁴ So obviously dark and still so European, Mexicans had no original potential. They still had no potential well into the twentieth century, when the "First Congress of Historians of Mexico and the United States" met for five days in 1949, in which the first three days of "peaceful" deliberation were followed by two days of

Mexican professors reading papers [that] blasted the North Americans whose ancestors had stolen the great Southwest from Mexico in the war of 1846. We American historians listened in pained silence to the tongue

¹Slotkin, Fatal Environment, pp.180-181.

²Sam Houston, 1844, as quoted in Reginald Horsman, "Anglo-Saxon Racism," in Major Problems in American Foreign Policy, ed. Paterson, p.269.

³Horsman, "Anglo-Saxon Racism," p.268.

⁴Walt Whitman, as quoted in Horsman, "Anglo-Saxon Racism," p.276.

lashing given us. As far as I know, there has never been a "Second Congress."¹

Americans cannot hear that which cannot be.

Texas provided the opportunity for both rhetoric and action, as America moved to consolidate its national character through western experiment. President John Tyler of Virginia echoed Puritan sentiments in his appeal for the annexation of Texas, asserting American ownership of Texas through the Louisiana Purchase and, more importantly, through the destinies that had been promised to American Founders. The West was the heritage of their descendants, an inheritance held in trust by a god whose enemies were the opponents of American expansion, enemies of liberty standing in the way of Destiny. Tyler quotes the framers of the Constitution as having declared the common cause of North America and as having, even in that earlier day, a knowledge of the inevitable annexation of all of North America, views that they held to be "broad, capacious, and eminently national."² More than this rhetoric, however, Texas provided the opportunity for action, heroic regeneration, and Davy Crockett's martyrdom.

Davy Crockett's regeneration through wilderness adventure and violent negation - killing wolves at age six, hugging bears to death and killing snakes with his teeth--is a recovery of the Daniel Boone myth. It also is a repetition of an Old World heroic archetype in its mythic rendition of a remarkable birth, superior strength, heroic combat,

¹Brigham D. Madsen, "The Education of a BYU Professor," Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 28:1 (Spring, 1995), p.25.

²John Tyler, "Annexation of Texas: The Message of the President of the United States to the Senate," (1844), The Southern Quarterly Review 6, 1844, pp.483-520.

and tragic death.¹ The Boone myth is one of heroic mediator straddling the frontier of civilization and wilderness, the tension of social constraint and individual liberty. Boone is the prototype frontiersman, a larger than life hero of the Revolution whose reputed affinity with his Indian neighbours makes him a perfect candidate for mediator between Red and White.² Thus, Boone guides us through several borderlands, both physical and spiritual.

Boone's affinity with civilization is ambiguous. His constant advance ahead of the frontier signifies a purity from the decadence and corruption of civilization. Yet Boone is a missionary of progress, leading civilization into the wilderness, transforming the wilderness as "God's pioneer." He is one who was chosen in the councils of heaven to support progress and to advance civilization. Somehow, Boone seems to remain pure from the temptations and degradations of both worlds, wilderness and civilization, while exemplifying the best that both have to offer. Boone, Cooper's Leatherstocking, and Davy Crockett appear as "real" men in their masculine circum-habitation of feminine civilization, flirting with agrarianism and yeoman regeneration, yet always resorting to the violence deep within when push comes to shove. "Real" men are found outside the town, and even beyond the farm, beyond the physical constraints of needs and wants, when critical mythic moments arise.³

Thus, Crockett's mythic figure remains outside, a "real" man and mediator through

¹Slotkin, Fatal Environment, pp.162-164. Boorstin, The National Experience, p.331.

²Elizabeth A. Moize, "Daniel Boone: First Hero of the Frontier," National Geographic 168:6 (Dec. 1985), pp.812, 836.

³Nash Smith, Virgin Land, pp.53-64.

his ability to assimilate Indian skills without detracting from his American morality. Mythologized while still alive, he is a son of the Revolution, an heir to the western lands, a self-made, pragmatic, natural man as opposed to a learned, theoretical, or scholarly pretender. Crockett has gone to "the school of hard knocks," he is an American, a lover of weapons, house, dog, and women¹--probably in that order. More than anything, however, Crockett loved The West. He once sold his proudest possession, his rifle, for a horse with which to move west and "make a new life." He would move west many times, and bring the west with him whenever he went back to the east. A common man, one of the folk, Crockett arrived to take his Congressional seat in buckskins.² This self-made myth responded to "the public's demand and hunger for tall stories about the frontier. They loved hearing about the frontiersmen going out and conquering the beasts and the Indians and anything else that was out there."³ Crockett's final westward move came in response to his failure in the 1835 election--Crockett told his rejectors to "all go to hell, I'm going to Texas."⁴

Leaving for Texas dressed in his hunting suit and coonskin cap, Crockett again flirted with agrarian regeneration. He proclaimed Texas to be the "garden spot of the world," a land of opportunity in its abundance. The unpredictability of the life of an illegal settler under threat by Santa Anna provided Crockett with the perhaps unnecessary

¹Boorstin, The National Experience, pp.328-331.

²"Davy Crockett," A&E Biography, (Greystone Communications, for Arts & Entertainment Network, 1994).

³Gary Forman (Crockett Historian), "Davy Crockett," A&E Biography.

⁴"Davy Crockett," A&E Biography.

instigation to join with liberating volunteers. It is reported that, at the Alamo, Crockett's reputation would merit him the toughest assignment, one in which he would survive the massacre of 1600 Mexicans and 181 other Texans, only to be "hacked down with swords," shot, and bayoneted. "From the smoky ruins of the Alamo, the nation would soon learn that Davy Crockett had given his life defending Texas and the American Dream."¹ Crockett's martyr's death was the perfect ending to an already mythologized life, making him a national hero through his ultimate sacrifice for the cause of America's Manifest Destiny:

Davy Crockett has had a remarkable afterlife, growing to proportions that no one at the time of his death could have ever imagined. New Crocketts have been created, meeting the needs of new generations of Americans. I think it's safe to say that Davy Crockett will always live in the American heart, at least as long as Americans cherish decency and equality and freedom.²

While "real" men of American regeneration may linger on the outside, they are first within the hearts of their compatriots, physical and spiritual examples of American prowess and recovery in the wilderness.

v. Fate:

The mythic individualism of western expansion underscores America's ideological fixation upon individual actors as the atomistic basis of society. An efficacy is thus attributed to American individuals, reinforcing their roles as citizens and entrepreneurs.

¹Ibid.

²Paul Andrew Hutton (Prof. of History, Univ. of New Mexico), "Davy Crockett," A&E Biography.

With the origins of the social contract belonging to an increasingly dim past, Americans are reassured of the capacity and integrity of individual action by mythic re-enactments of creative powers. Implicit in this is the vitality of the original powers that individuals are supposed to bring with them into society and the social contract. Political life is thus continually invigorated by mythic images. Within each citizen reside the individual sovereign powers that give substance to the sovereignty of the people and weight to its enforcement of natural rights. Americans are reminded that governments are their creatures and agents, and that they, as citizens, remain strong and independent of them.

While the mythic individualism of western expansion re-invigorates citizens individually, its context of Manifest Destiny draws this power into a social and political framework and reminds Americans of the potential that exists in the social contract, the capacity they share in unity and compact. As a social and political myth, Manifest Destiny claims the power of a nation on the move. Although that movement is charged with self-interest and greed, its enjoyment is garnished with social purpose and meaning embedded in mythic action. The power of mythic images to unify is immediate, uncontaminated by discourse and the compromising demands of reasoned argument. Contraries are collapsed within myth; their tensions are rendered inert. Thus, Manifest Destiny was able to unify, for a time at least, Americans that increasingly were divided by local interests. Urban and rural, agrarian and industrial, Northern and Southern, all were seduced by the promise of western expansion and the righteousness of Manifest Destiny. As American religion became focused upon issues of political reform, it began to unravel the American fabric, defaulting its role as a unifying agent. Ideology remained

a relatively constant medium of thought, as Americans continued in their liberal persuasion. However, liberal ideology provided Americans no framework other than the operational machinery of government that is the Constitution. It provided no purpose or meaning to unify a nation, other than the unity of self-justification in pursuit of self-interest. Increasingly, it was the myth of Manifest Destiny that unified Americans and kept this pursuit within social bounds during the antebellum era.

Ultimately, however, the great weight that the nation invested in this myth became unbearable. National unity could not be retained in this single image. In fact, Manifest Destiny and western expansion became so central in the America mind, so crucial to the definition of American character, that it too was torn asunder. The image became divisive, as it was endowed with sectional interests that brought with them too much discourse. Unable to master the myth of Manifest Destiny, unable to resist its domination by Yankees, the South increasingly turned inward in its mythification and pursuit of sectional interest over national purpose. A new idealization of Southern society recalled America's earlier vision of a city upon a hill, "whose mission was to uphold God's civil and religious laws as a beacon of light to the rest of the world."¹ As the South renewed the Puritan image of America as New Israel, its emphasis of the Old Testament as the basis of self-government provided their sectional interest with a new myth that would justify their hardened resolve against Northern political incursions into social life.

"In the thirty-year period before the Civil War, a certain interpretation of the Bible as the constitution for the advance of Southern civilization became the dominant

¹Peterson, Ham and Japheth, p.23.

grounding for the Southerners' world view."¹ From within this renewed political "authority of the Bible for regulating social relationships," the myth of Ham was revived. Southerners had used it as early as 1818, in the U.S. Senate, to justify slavery. Now it was renewed and embellished to sanctify Southern race relations, to the satisfaction of clergy and politicians alike. Ham and Japheth provide Southerners with mythic archetypes for black and white relations, archetypes that validated the treatment of blacks by whites in the American South; "God decreed slavery--and shows in that decree, tokens of goodwill to the master....Ham's enslavement to Japheth in America accorded with God's will for the advancement of civilization."² The liberal ideology of the South and even Southern religion focused moral responsibility upon the individual. This pre-empted any impulse toward institutional reform as a means of improving society by correcting individual behaviour. Nevertheless, when it came to blacks Southerners argued for the maintenance of their institutional status quo as the social response to the "sinful predispositions of the black race." Slavery controlled these, according to a Southern argument in which the freedom and equality demanded by the rational aspects of their liberal ideology properly could be opposed by an institution mythically "ordained to control mankind's inclination to evil"--the Mosaic code had sanctioned explicitly the institution of slavery in the Old Testament and Southerners found no condemnation of it in the New Testament but, rather, found the Apostle Paul actually supporting the validity of the institution. Southerners now argued that laws should conform this

¹Ibid., pp.112, 45-104.

²Ibid., pp.5-7; and Thornton Stringfellow (Baptist clergyman), Culpepper County, Virginia, 1841, as quoted in ibid., p.5.

"revealed Constitution" of the Bible.¹ This limited conservatism in the South, the traditionalist justification of slavery for the black race, has been taken incorrectly by many as definitive of Southern culture. Instead, it should be seen as one aspect, mythic and religious, of support for the prevailing liberal ideology and its capitalist economic aspirations;

By framing the blacks' subordination in terms of God's plan for America, the story depicted a sacred history and therefore clearly functioned as a religious myth. A story becomes mythic when it makes everyday attitudes and motivations fit a universal context. Thus, racist attitudes in the antebellum South were not 'religious' simply because they were deeply held, but because they were enclosed in a universal system of belief (worldview) that gave meaning to the nature and destiny of the white race in America, the New Israel.²

Thus sanctified, Southerners found their own American liberalism to be irresistible.

Postscript: *ense petit placidam sub libertate quietem*³

Richard Slotkin maintains that the American Civil War "interrupted" the opening of the frontier and that Manifest Destiny leap-frogged the Great Plains, due to their yet to be found economic use, to take more attractive Pacific lands.⁴ This perception conceives of Manifest Destiny as a purely economic phenomenon of geographic expansion, ignoring its psychological and spiritual core. The Civil War was integral to

¹Peterson, Ham and Japheth, pp.20-23.

²Ibid., p.95.

³with the sword she seeks calm repose under liberty -- motto of Massachusetts.

⁴Slotkin, Fatal Environment, p.37.

Manifest Destiny, a consolidation of its mythic content and constraints, a purification and violent recovery of the sacred American character anticipated in "The West." Puritanism re-asserted itself decisively in a national violent regeneration, a renewal of original Creationist powers that approached a second American Founding. Consonant with Manifest Destiny, the Puritan regenerators of the Civil War were "farm boys," agrarians reaching deep within to unleash a violence unexpected, yet sacred and desired. While the Middle West may not have been America's financial El Dorado, it was America's spiritual proving ground, the instigator of a national self-inquisition. A civil war in Kansas churned itself into the Civil War as the dominant Puritan and German strains in the Middle West asserted themselves in a quest for American purity. The Middle West supplied more than one-third of all Union troops throughout the Civil War,¹ proving that the graft that was Manifest Destiny had taken well, that agrarian and violent regeneration were "a match made in heaven."

Northern perceptions of the war as "a baptism of blood" that would "redeem America for her destiny" eventually prevailed as the national sentiment. Horace Bushnell's benediction to the war declared such redemption by blood to be the only key to destiny's door. History must feed itself on blood for there to be a future, he says; bloody sacrifices open new ages and baptize new worlds. While "agonizing" himself over the "ultimate meaning of the tragedy," Abraham Lincoln similarly celebrated the war as a testing of national destiny, taking occasion to renew America's pledge to that destiny in his

¹Turner, "The Middle West," p.142.

'recovery' of origins--the Gettysburg Address.¹ This statement of first principles is the capstone of the psychological consolidation, the mythic retrenchment, of American destiny and character. It is the mythic moment for which Americans had set foot west.

With the conclusion of the war, America's 'Genesis' was complete; the scripture was written in blood across the landscape. Bushnell's closing remarks pointed America once again to its destiny, a destiny to which it now more than ever owed a duty of compliance and fulfilment. Swearing for his countrymen to "cherish the country and assert our future," Bushnell voiced a national aspiration and determination to extend their energies, sacrifice, and now consolidated Union to the creation of "an American world."² The Civil War was no "interruption" of Manifest Destiny.

Looking further west, Americans had their eyes on Pacific islands from a very early date. Initial forays in that direction, however, had been through missionary rhetoric that sought public support for the expansion of "a superior American Civilization."³ With the consolidation of American culture, Josiah Strong was able by 1885 to represent an America prepared to "save the world" in his declarations of a universal dependence upon Americans for the destiny of mankind.⁴ Albert J. Beveridge transformed Strong's justification for American overseas expansion into a duty. In a speech to the Senate in January of 1900, Beveridge described the wealth of the Philippines as suffering wasteful

¹Cherry, God's New Israel, pp.160, 158.

²Bushnell, "Our Obligations To The Dead," p.209.

³Cherry, God's New Israel, p.115.

⁴Josiah Strong (1885), as quoted in Cherry, God's New Israel, p.116.

neglect under the residence of indolent natives incapable of self-government (reminiscent of America's denigration of American Indians and then the Indianization of Mexico). Beveridge concluded his call to plunder with the assertion that it was their duty under God to "establish system where chaos reigns," since "God marked the American people as His chosen nation to finally lead in the regeneration of the world."¹ In 1898, God turned President William McKinley from his Inaugurally declared resistance to any "war of conquest." Considering the Philippines, McKinley dropped to his knees in the White House for prayer and guidance only to hear "the voice of God instructing him to annex the Philippines." As for Hawaii, McKinley declared, "we need Hawaii just as much and a good deal more than we did California. It is manifest destiny."²

¹Albert J. Beveridge, Senate speech, Jan. 1900, as quoted in Cherry, God's New Israel, p.116.

²William Pfaff, The Wrath of Nations: Civilization and the Furies of Nationalism (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993), pp.177-178.

Conclusion: A Complex Consensus

"Our cultures, our histories, grasp us with a thousand invisible fingers."
(Robert Conquest, Reflections on a Ravaged Century)

Liberals, as liberals, exist in society as atomized individuals, without any compelling ideological grounds for community and social being. The foundations of social life are found in nature, for liberals, provided by religion and myth and not by the ideology. Being imperfect, nature is abandoned and with it the natural conditions for society become secondary to the political arrangements of the social contract. Now in civil society, each might recognize others as similar, or even compatible, participants in a mutual enterprise of individual economic self-advancement. However, with only their ideological doctrine accounting for this participation, liberals would remain isolated members of a fragmented society. There are no "ties that bind." But, as Americans, these same liberals are bound together by religious and mythic symbols, meanings, and purposes that provide context and perspective for American individualism.¹ Within this context, the individual is both celebrated and nurtured as a conceptual reality. Thus, America's ideological consensus is one in which political actions are guided by liberal tenets that are supported substantially for their goodness and righteousness by religious belief and, equally, are embraced personally through feelings of mythic evocation. Mythic narratives provide frameworks for social behaviour and models for individual action that shape a fundamental assurance of the ultimate outcome of adherence to the more rationally known principles of American religion and ideology.

¹Huyler, "Was Locke a Liberal?" The Independent Review 1:4 (Spring, 1997), p.524.

Where the rational instruction of ideology lends itself to critical analysis, the more spiritual understanding of religious faith and the emotional apprehension of mythic images inspire individual hopes and assuage disappointed expectations. The rationality of ideology ensures that its doctrines are communicated as universal truths. Thus, the rational promise of the American Dream is expected to be "true" for all Americans. Each strict follower of the doctrine should be assured of his or her place at the table of liberal success. Such is not the actual case, however, as many live in the shadows of the dream without ever realizing it. The certain dissonance between social 'truths' and some particular individual realities is mollified by mythic participation and a vicarious enjoyment of success. So it is mollified by the religious promise of a next life. As well, the individualistic American religion announces that apparent failures or misfortunes in this life may carry within them the more valuable knowledge of God's love and attention for persons individually, in the form of testing and chastening His chosen people. Thus, one can 'reasonably' celebrate one's own misfortune and push on faithfully possessed of a different sort of success in the knowledge of God's individual love. In this way, American religion potently reaches out to those otherwise excluded from any real promise of individual worth that may be communicated by liberal ideology.

Religion helps those deemed of lesser worth by the ideology to retain a non-rational belief in its principles, for which they have no practical or rational bases to uphold. Even those partially or entirely excluded from participation in the political community are able, through religion, to sustain the very ideological principles of their exclusion. Often, those downtrodden by practices and institutions of the dominant liberal

consensus are the most faithful supporters of the principles upon which those same practices and institutions are founded, since theirs must be an adherence of faith and hope. Their zealous embrace of these principles is expected to be the vehicle of their deliverance from oppression and poverty. Thus, while political reform movements in America have their roots in religious Awakenings, so too is a certain preservation of stability accomplished by the enhancement of religious and ideological harmony.

In less vibrant times, Americans are lulled to a sleepful acceptance of their ideological-institutional dissonance, by church religion that brings acceptance and compliance to individuals and by the civil religion that quiets the nation. Inaugural Address lullabies and the therapeutic sermons that announce the "state of the union" strive to include all within their civil religious embrace, celebrating the accomplishments of successful Americanism and bringing succour to the weary lest they lose faith and wander off the paths of righteousness.

The ability of the civil religion to prop up America's ideology is somewhat beautiful in its rhetorical appeal. Yet, the same often is a homely accomplishment in which the props are painfully visible--akin to a mid-western scene in which a weatherworn housewife carefully aligns straight-backed chairs beneath freshly washed sheets hanging on a stretched clothesline that sags under their weight. The chairs prop up the renewed whiteness of the water-soaked linen, keeping it out of the hard dirt, just as America's civil religion supports liberal ideals to keep them unsoiled by practical political realities. Thus, an early American liberalism that at times fostered the political exclusion of women, lower-class men, immigrants, and African-Americans could also

enjoy support and belief by the same in its doctrines. They remain unsullied. Religion justified in sacred terms the ideology's rational exclusion, and gave hope to some for future inclusion through adherence to these same principles if only they could "better themselves," their behaviour, or their condition. Mostly, struggling Americans looked forward to a better life for their children and their children's children. Promising this, ideological conviction persuades the actions of America's downtrodden to righteousness. The gap between institutional and ideological realities has not disqualified American liberalism, nor has it sparked widespread apostasy from its doctrines. Instead, it has signalled an imperfect liberalism and has inspired responses intended towards its perfection. Americans have not become socialists, communists, conservatives, or fascists at the failures of liberalism, but have instead become 'better' liberals. The relatively universal appeal of liberalism in America has been accomplished not only by its own flattery of individual efficacy, but also by the religious supports that would make wholesale departures sinful. Furthermore, where ideology and religion are not well-sounded, mythic images have worked to shore up the consensus by including even the thoughtless and careless, the "quarrelsome and contentious" to use Locke's language, in an intuitive socialization that pre-empts the growth of ideological alternatives. It is not so much that American myth weeds out alternate visions as that it acts as a solid fundamental barrier beneath the soil of American religion and ideology, a barrier that keeps other seedlings from working their way up into social consciousness.

It is the breakdown of these fundamental supports that accounts for America's great conflict, North and South. Northern liberals could not denounce Southern slavery

in ideological terms, but could point to very real practical differences through religious denunciations. While religion gives vitality to American liberalism, compensating in diverse ways for actual shortcomings, it also provides a language through which these shortcomings can be highlighted, criticized, and denounced. Religion provides some sense of a conscience to an otherwise unbounded and aggressive liberal ideology. In such cases, American religion may account for 'real' differences of policy (though these are not ideological fissures).¹ Nor could Southerners retaliate with ideological speech, but too were forced into the language of religion and the images of myth to enunciate supposed fundamental differences. Its embrace of slavery did not mean that the South was not liberal, however. Nor did its own anti-slavery signal an ideological divergence in the North.

Religion prompted Northern liberals to institutional reform in attempts to perfect American liberalism, while new emphases in Southern religion and myth were intended to repel this reform and to shore up the institutional status quo. Thus, a breakdown in the American consensus existed only in the sense that one section was on the move within America's liberal horizon while the other attempted to stay put. The movement and its counter-resistance were sparked by religious interpretations of the ideology, and not by any abandonment, nor any innovation, of liberalism. It is notable that this ideational conflict existed contemporaneously with the actual movement of America's physical western horizon. In the independence enjoyed after the Revolution, the relatively sudden

¹Hillel Fradkin, "Does Democracy Need Religion?" Journal of Democracy 11:1 (January, 2000), pp.87-94.

substantiation of America's long manifested destiny, the realization of an American policy towards the West that dated back at least to Bacon's Rebellion, brought old acceptable differences to the point of critical decision in the national identity. The zealous attachment to liberal principles in the North, accomplished through the religious revival of the Second Awakening, both precipitated and confronted newfound bases for a Southern withdrawal of support from the cultural consensus--new religious principles and mythic pronouncements undermined national unity in order to support a new Southern 'nation'. The movement of these social underpinnings was both shallow and temporary, however. The earth did not open, nor did American civilization collapse at these tremors. No new ideology was found, and the opportunistic religious and mythic supports of slavery soon were abandoned upon their physical defeat in warfare. Longstanding attachments to America's mythic and religious traditions hastened the recovery of the South within the prevailing Americanism. Ultimately, the American consensus was strengthened.

Generally, American myth and religion have bolstered a cultural consensus, providing models of behaviour and worthy examples of power, success, and prosperity. Myth, especially, exemplifies rather than argues. Thus, mythic lessons are absorbed as "given" truths. These remain steadfast supports to the religious and ideological arguments that are built upon them. Religion provides explanations for these mythic truths, accounting for differences between the self and the modeled images, differences that cannot be harnessed within mythic images. Spiritual and physical worlds are united into one world by religion, with meaning, purpose, and consequence thus embedded into the

world of appearance, including the political realm. Early mythic visions of the individual in the New World provided substance to the political impulses of religious reformation. Individual belief and action attained profound meaning for individual lives and heightened social significance in the fledgling nation, paving the way for the rise of liberal ideology in America.

The emphasis upon individual virtue, power, and leadership that is highlighted in Bacon's Rebellion involves an expectation that had been communicated mythically in some of the earliest American experiences. Through 'heroic' Indian-killing, a myth of the efficacious individual merged with religious myths of a New Canaan and the promise of its regeneration under the tutelage of a remodelled chosen people. The frontier's beckoning call was irresistible when individual urges for self-advancement and economic self-aggrandizement sounded from within and resounded from without as a people's destined inheritance in a sacred history seeping with promise. Thus, the first impulses of independence rumbled as the nascent nation began to coalesce mythically, emerging into a first Americanism. Later, this mythic consensus found legs in the itinerant preachers of America's First Awakening. Their increasingly rational exposition of American purpose unified a people as it enlightened them to the principles of the emerging ideology of Lockean liberalism. Newly equipped with rational justifications for longstanding aspirations, the American consensus gained political self-consciousness and emerged as the first ideological nation. The impetus towards American independence became irrepressible when the renewal of conflict between American aspirations and British interests became inflamed by ideological belief. Now directing these beliefs against the

motherland for a season, ideological doctrines became revolutionary arguments when bolstered by zealous religious hopes for purification and deliverance.¹ And soaked with the fuel of mythic purpose, the long wick of American experience was fired like a short fuse. The images of apostasy, harlotry, and tyranny were transmigrated from Indian and French enemies onto British redcoats. The once-nurturing motherland now became, herself, the Scarlet Whore. All the un-American world was Babylon in the mythic image that linked religious righteousness with ideological rationality in a new politics for a new world, "a new order for the ages."

This mythic reinforcement of ideological communication was reciprocated in kind. Mythic sensibilities found rational expression in the new form of ideology, giving argument and reason to their posture. The American Eden that provided mythic substance to Lockean arguments of "the state of nature" was equally supported now by the increasingly successful institutional appearance of the ideology. The state of nature itself became institutionalized in the American wilderness and, thus, a mythic image became a living reality. America became Eden. With this, the new American nation once more became God's people in actuality, inheriting the promises of Israel in a new covenant. Thus, ideology returned the favour to its mythic and religious supports, revivifying and renewing them and reinforcing its own social foundations. The language, and at least some of the meaning, of this thrust into history remains alive throughout the American experience. It appears most recently in Ronald Reagan's evening serenade to the "city on a hill," and in the Democrats' response in the form of a "New Covenant," Bill Clinton's

¹Wood, The Creation of the American Republic, p.124.

reveille for a new dawn.

The American marriage of religion to ideology has kept religion generally, and Christianity specifically, politically vibrant in the United States. The accomplishment of political independence in the Revolution itself, in no small measure, ensured a perpetual interdependence of religion and ideology in American politics. The Declaration of Independence announced the arrival of a new political regime that fell into its own embrace as a renewed manifestation of the Kingdom of God. The Declaration's restoration of God to His throne, according to Samuel Adams, was an integral accomplishment of the Revolution and its rhetorical appeal. The ideological renewal of religion as civil religion enhanced the legitimacy of the new symbolic form, ideology, at the same time that it thus preserved the ideational content of American religion. The dawn of American liberalism, then, appearing as it did in the twilight of Western Christianity, salvaged American religion from the long night ushered in by 'secular' rationalism. For religion, America became the land of the midnight sun.

As America's clergy renewed the key mythic images of American chosenness and a New Israel, their invocations made not only the Revolution, but also America herself a "sacred cause." With the convictions of individual conscience and the movement of social consciousness, Revolutionary Americans became carriers of eternal truths. The Declaration of Independence enunciates these ideological doctrines as "self-evident truths." But they are embodied best in the souls of "patriots," in the hearts and minds of individual Americans. Here resides the "spirit of '76." Individual citizens are enobled by their patriotic embrace of these mythic images, of America as a renewal of the Kingdom

of God and of their cause as sacred. Engaged in such a cause, battle dead became martyrs of timeless significance and battlefields became holy sights of future pilgrimage. As bloody victories announced God's Providential blessings, common men entered the ranks of saints, fighting and dying for life, liberty, and happiness. Thus, a deeply rooted Christian religious and mythic symbology was renewed. So, too, did these same symbols provide for an ongoing mythification of the Revolution itself, even while it was unfolded before its participants. American eyes beheld a coming glory that seemed beyond themselves, even as they ushered it in with their own hands and arms and will. Religious and mythic images moved ready hearts and steadied weary knees among common Americans. Thus, an effective alignment of American Christianity and liberal ideology entrenched itself within the political culture.

This blend of mythic and religious imagery with rational argument echoes Locke's own amalgamation of these same elements in his moment of ideological creation. America enacted in deed what Locke had accomplished in thought. As a polity, she became herself this same compelling union. This is the cultural constitution that is "America." And this is the revolutionary accomplishment of the American Revolution, "given" in perpetuity. In Locke's argument, when one's condition is sufficiently endangered, revolution announces an "appeal to God" for relief and restoration. For individuals, this appeal emerges as a right of resistance, a matter of rebellion. When the contagion of such an appeal becomes national, its reason becomes righteousness and then revolution, in this case the American Revolution.

The "rightful" reason of the majority becomes "righteousness" forever afterwards

in America.¹ As civil and religious liberties became linked in its cause and rhetoric, the American Revolution emerged as a successful mass movement--the object of ideology. By changing Locke's right to property into the Declaration's right to "the pursuit of happiness," Jefferson ensured that this American movement would remain 'revolutionary', that it would remain compelling as a mass movement. Whereas the right to property involves the conservative preservation for some of their past accomplishments--property--the right to pursue one's happiness involves a future-oriented, promise-filled expectancy for the many. Thus, a democratic faith and an economic hope are kept alive within the ideological conviction that is inspired by liberal right. So, too, is the mass appeal of the American Revolution and of the ideology itself preserved as part of the American Dream.

America's Founders were a generation of moderns, enjoying a common sense of optimism, hope, and expectation for the future. Christian millennialism had emerged out of a previous religious celebration of the past. Now, a new emphasis was placed upon celebrating the future, as a religious faith in progress arose in tandem with the rise of ideology. Liberalism's pursuit of happiness and economic prosperity resounded with a reconstitution of man and his polity that was at once rational and sacred. Ideology and civil religion conspired in the spirit of the Revolution, helping to shape events and their reception.

These liberal republicans were thoroughly modern. They were explicit in their rejection of the past and its classical models. This was a generation filled with a liberal spirit and character, using republican forms to enhance and preserve the fruits of that

¹Commager, Commager on Tocqueville, p.21.

spirit.¹ Madison espoused only a simulacrum in his institutional replication of republican practices. His aim was to secure liberal rights and enjoyments against feared democratic pressures and forces that had been loosed by the Revolution. Americans would be constrained by the new government's republican mechanics, rather than by the people's republican virtues--these were lacking. In Madison's system, there was no need to trust in absent virtues of republicanism amongst the democratic masses that had been so recently politicized and mobilized by the new ideology of liberalism. The rise of mass politics called for the appearance of excellent systems to stand in the place of excellent men, systems that would subdue the sore effects of unfettered self-interest.²

Shays's Rebellion only highlighted the problems of democratic politics experienced throughout the states, signalling alarms of concern for the absence of virtue. As the Founders called for a new Constitution, they lamented this lack of virtue among their fellow citizens. But theirs was not a lament for republican virtues lost, there had been none. Theirs was a lament for Christian virtue only recently abandoned. The First Awakening had ensured that the Bible and Christian religion would be the most important sources of virtue and the surest foundations for the rising liberal polity. Now, with the way to the future before them in open vistas, the Founders tried to rally Americans to the values of liberalism surrounded again with the virtues of Christianity. This was no classical republicanism. Their appeals to their fellow citizens for respect for the common good and some moderation of raw self-interest may now sound republican to current

¹Banning, The Sacred Fire of Liberty, p.78.

²Ibid., pp.207-209.

proponents of republicanism. But, according to Richard Ellis, such appeals were seen as religious to the founding generation.¹ The Constitution would appear as the political response to these fears, while the Second Awakening would emerge as a cultural fulfilment, not only of these fears, but also of the hopes and dreams of the Revolutionary generation. That Awakening would pursue a spiritual regeneration of Americans, striving to fill with the spirit of a nation the tabernacle of the state that was framed so expertly by the Constitution.

Republicanism does not constitute an alternate tradition among America's Founders. It does not enjoy the same ideological coherence or the profound adherence as are enjoyed by American liberalism. An elite segment of Americans emerged in a relatively shallow celebration of republicanism during the Revolutionary era, attempting to introduce classical virtues, perhaps, but failing completely to do so.² And even here, its language was not a common one, but was exclusive even among America's elites. Ultimately, the Founders themselves denounced classical republics and rejected their models. Instead of emerging as an ideology itself, American republicanism constituted a vehicle for the ideals and values of liberal ideology. Republicanism might be seen as involving a "science of politics" in partnership with liberalism as the "fundamentals of politics." Thus, republicanism deals with the forms of government and the mechanics of institutions, while liberalism embraces the ideals and values that permeate these systems

¹Richard Ellis, American Political Cultures, pp.13-14.

²Pangle, The Spirit of Modern Republicanism, p.104.

and the culture surrounding them.¹ Joyce Appleby argues that within this culture the substance of liberalism is seen as truth, while all other alternatives become "values." Bernard Bailyn's key contribution here is his demonstration that American liberalism, particularly the liberalism of the Revolutionary generation, also is ideological, that it is not truth. It, too, is comprised of "values." Following this, Appleby maintains, others--notably Gordon Wood and John Pocock--have argued for the rejection of liberalism as mere ideology and for its replacement by another set of more preferable values--republicanism.²

Gordon Wood does demonstrate that the Founders spoke of republicanism, that they debated its meaning and import. Still, Wood says, liberalism was their reality.³ The debate of republican ideas was an argument about policy and procedure and not one of values and ideals.⁴ The meaning of "republicanism" was not self-evident, as were the ideals of liberalism. Republicanism was "a weasel word," according to John Adams, used to forward any cause espoused by its advocates.⁵ Nevertheless, contemporary historians and political theorists have endeavoured to 'resurrect' it. This work has been one of conceptual creation throughout the later years of the twentieth century, one that seeks

¹Huyler, "Was Locke a Liberal?", p.532.

²Appleby, "Republicanism and Ideology," p.471.

³Gordon S. Wood, "Ideology and the Origins of Liberal America," The William and Mary Quarterly 44:3 (July 1987), p.634.

⁴Daniel T. Rodgers, "Republicanism: The Career of a Concept," The Journal of American History 79:2 (June 1992), p.38.

⁵Joseph Ellis, American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas Jefferson (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997), p.260.

legitimacy by rooting itself in the thought and aspirations of the Founders, only now being fulfilled, it is supposed, by this creation.

This neo-republican proposal has been effective in rooting itself in the bramble among the Founders, but it is said to lack historical fidelity.¹ The current proponents of republicanism reject religion as a source of virtue and support for the rights of man, or they lament its supposed collapse in modern politics. Seeing only a failure of liberalism emerging from such unvirtuous politics, they have turned to republicanism as a source of virtue to replace what is supposed to be lost. These American conservatives are disenchanted liberals that have become reactionary revisionists. As republican 'revivalists', they seek only the pleasures of a more exclusive liberalism.² This involves a political project in its own right, as contemporaries use 'republicanism' for their own political purposes. This is part of a communitarian critique of liberalism, according to James Young, as contemporary historians and theorists wield republicanism as a weapon against liberalism with its flaws and failures. They seek to institute an alternative "ideology" in republicanism, one that does not rely upon the vicissitudes of self-interested conflict or upon the ebb and flow of religious passions. Theirs involves virtues of a better sort.

Yet, even the most pronounced of these republican advocates admits that the Founders' republicanism was very "unclassical."³ Pocock argues, though, that the

¹John C. Williams, "Virtue and Oppression," Nomos 34.

²Harvey Mansfield, Machiavelli's Virtue (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1996; rpt. 1998), p.xv.

³J.G.A. Pocock, "The Machiavellian Moment Revisited: A Study in History and Ideology," The Journal of Modern History 53 (March 1981), p.70.

Founders were not Lockean either, that they were not liberals. His explicitly stated purpose is to debunk "a myth of liberalism" that is supposed to have dominated American political history. Yet he does so by planting his own myth of republicanism in the garden of his discontent. It must be maintained, upon reflection here, that he and others with him are wrong to assert that Locke and Lockean liberalism are irrelevant to the formation of American political culture and to its institutions. Such theorists are wrong-headed, if not mean-spirited, in their absence of reflection upon the Declaration of Independence and in their deliberate ignorance of American liberalism. In setting up republicanism in opposition to liberalism, they abandon the thought of a central figure to their supposed appearance of American republicanism--Thomas Jefferson. After all, Jefferson maintained that American republicans were liberals, that republicanism was perfectly compatible with Locke's thought and with its inheritance by Americans.¹ Bernard Bailyn himself reminds us that Locke's thought was of singular importance to the formation of ideology amongst the generation that stands as the foundation to America's political culture. Alongside Locke's influence, Bailyn tells us, the Bible and Christianity stand as strong supports to America's liberal ideology. Republicanism pales in comparison, fading as an elite fad in that first generation, he says, only to make a comeback now amongst other elites, resurfacing as fads do. But Jefferson's republicanism was serious policy, a means to liberal ends and the preservation of liberal values. As well, the mechanics of republicanism were to be supported by the spirit of religion, Jefferson argued, by a power

¹James P. Young, Reconsidering American Liberalism: The Troubled Odyssey of the Liberal Idea (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996), pp.47-52.

that institutionalizes virtue and forces common Americans to sacrifice themselves to the common good for their own sakes. In his view of religion thus standing alongside the Constitution's institutional compensation for an expected lack of virtue, Jefferson was thoroughly modern and thoroughly American, trusting in scheme and mechanism to moderate and refashion man and his environment.¹

The American Founding, then, is in large part an ideological accomplishment, a cultural phenomenon as well as a political event. The Constitution institutionalizes America's liberal conviction, substantiating and perpetuating it throughout American politics and government. Ideology provided a language for participation in the Constitutional debates and for participation in citizenship within the new nation-state. The debates involved a conflict within an ideological consensus, as Americans strove together to find the best ways to institutionalize their liberal principles and ideals. As a new form of government, the Constitution proved to be an application of American ideology. It was a statement of American political science in its modern technological protection of individuals and their rights through the machinery of limited government. With its success, the Constitution helps to enframe Americans within their liberal interpretation of the world and that interpretation's ideological expectations for the future.

The Revolution lent itself to this project through its own mythification, becoming the mythic ground upon which this national construction was built. The Revolution was invoked throughout the Constitutional debates, its heroes and martyrs were recalled and

¹Mansfield, "Thomas Jefferson"; Commager, "Take Care of Me When I am Dead"; Jefferson, "First Inaugural Address."

their ideals elevated in what now became a continuation of their struggle. These ideals and the blood shed for them became the foundations upon which Americans would establish their human improvement of God's own handiwork. The Constitutional Founders would themselves become sacralized as demi-gods within their own re-creation of the mythic unity and Providential context that they appropriated from the Revolution. Religious rhetoric and solemn prayers surrounded the Constitutional debates, ratifying the document with eternal significance. The invocations of Franklin and Washington, the remembrance of the Revolution, and the inspiration of the Founders provided a civil religious persuasion for the support of the Constitution as part of a Providential Founding.

The Constitution became the capstone of the Great Awakening's rational impulses and of its tendencies towards union. It established order upon the revolutionary and democratic forces that had been loosed in the recent struggle. And its rational, ideological essence worked to squelch any remainders of religious zeal, any unspent fervour that lasted the revival. Yet, this rational effort also was "an holy thing," a continuation of God's plan within which America's position was secured. The union of the Constitution signalled strength, and strength signalled righteousness, as America became herself a "visible saint" in the framework of the Constitution and in its government.

The relatively free competition among American churches and sects, particularly associated with the formal disestablishment of religion that came with the Constitution, opened those churches now to new ideas and to different forms of thought. The infusion of modern science and secular reason into American religion through awakenings was re-emphasized by an aggressive appeal for converts on the part of evolving churches and,

especially, new sects. As America's clergy spoke the language of the rising ideology of liberalism, they accelerated that rise to prominence by perpetuating and justifying this new expression of 'timeless principles'. Thus, the 'secularization' of American politics involved, to at least some extent, a secularization of American religion. American religion transformed itself, harmonizing itself with liberalism.¹ In this same motion, religion was able to retain political relevance in America, by renewing itself with this ideological absorption.² Thus, the partial secularization and rationalization of American religion--i.e. the liberalizing of American religion--ensured that the same secularization and rationalization of American politics also would be only partial. Religion would remain, and continues to remain, a vibrant voice of political argument in America, to the extent that it participates in American liberal ideology.

The common ground of America's ideological consensus undergirds the political system in the United States. The importance of personalities and personal private virtues has been exaggerated in a system that offers little real choice. Political parties have formed around differences of policy rather than differences of principle, so that a liberal party system has evolved. The differences between the parties within this system are differences of nuance. Each embraces liberal fundamentals. This consensus has led to the enjoyment of stability, for the most part, and an exceptional prosperity. The party system supports business and economic interests, not only in matters of policy, but as a matter

¹Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, "How the Upstart Sects Won America: 1776-1850," Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, (1989) 28:1, pp.41-42.

² Hammond, "The Conditions for Civil Religion," pp.67-69.

of principle--private individual enterprise has been endowed with national significance in the United States, has been elevated by the shared ideological conviction to the heights of national purpose.

American ideology has provided a language of assimilation for immigrants and workers, a unifying language of dreams and hopes. In the years of early national development, this ideological potential for national unity demanded the persecution of difference in an aggressive Americanization that was supported by the civil religion. Americans Christianized and civilized the world within and without, using religion to enforce ideological uniformity on newcomers and to justify the taking of western lands. The socialization of democratic masses and the shaping of workers' morality were accomplished through religious language and public education. All of this emerged out of the unifying impulses of another Awakening that laboured to give rebirth to "America" as we know it.

This same unifying impulse sparked division, however, between North and South, as reformers challenged Americans to live up to her ideals. Southerners used the language of ideology, at first, to resist this religious reform by re-entrenching itself into the Revolution and its sacred rights. Abolitionists were not very divisive initially, they were not taken seriously. Instead, they were seen as cranks and extremists. They only became divisive with their successful use of religious language. In the face of their increasingly contagious zeal, ideology became impotent as a language of combat--since both sides agreed upon liberalism. Southern attempts to maintain the status quo through reactionary liberalism and appeals to the Revolution, their claims for themselves as the true carriers

of the ideals of the Declaration of Independence, were not persuasive against the Northern religious assault. Yet, the North also could not use ideology to denounce the liberal property rights claimed by the South for slavery. Finally, the South turned to religion to justify its exclusiveness and its own interpretation of liberal ideals--enabling excluders to continue to hold and espouse liberal ideals. Southerners used religion to justify their exclusion of Blacks from political status, marking them as unfit according to God. Thus, this Southern exclusion became righteousness. The African-American part in slavery was supported by the myth of Ham, while white slaveholders found support for their roles in a version of Old Testament patriarchy.

Both North and South used the language of civil religion to denounce the other as apostate from liberalism, the Revolution, and "America." That the ideational conflict was civil religious meant that its resolution, too, must come through civil religion. The character and rhetoric of Abraham Lincoln have been persuasive in the national imagination over time, helping to accomplish this resolution. The Gettysburg Address and Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address are key elements of a religious redefinition of the nation. The mythic Lincoln stands as a rejoinder to the conflict, rejoining the nation and renewing its sacred purposes.

This redefinition of national purpose had been importuned by another myth, the myth of Manifest Destiny. This myth combines the myths of Christian millennialism and American agrarianism into a national policy of territorial expansion and economic development. The work of bringing on the millennium became an American project that enhanced individualism and American democracy. It imbued national expansion and

violence with religious zeal and cleansed the land once more for the regeneration of American civilization. The religious and mythic sensibilities of Manifest Destiny were bolstered by the more rational Lockean arguments for taking Indian lands, arguments that posited the action as work in a project of progress and national greatness, setting a precedent and model for future American excursions as holy wars. American aspirations became sanctified by sweat and blood, and by God.

Within this national development, individualistic myths were preserved in the images of Indian fighters, frontiersmen, mountain men, and even in common settlers--each carried a certain nobility. Each was a Crockett or a Boone in the opening of the West as a heroic adventure of the efficacious individual. This expansionist myth was supported by ideological argument, by a rational account of nature's purposes and opportunities, an account that has continued to be rehearsed into the twenty first century--Patrick Buchanan argues that "these lands were contiguous and largely empty," in his justification of Manifest Destiny. Their conquest was a matter of domestic policy, being accomplished on the American continent, a matter of destiny and of benign Americanism being spread by "those warriors of Manifest Destiny." According to Buchanan, "Manifest Destiny was never about imposing rule on alien peoples; it was about extending the frontiers of American liberty and freedom."¹ Rather than hindering this "extension of freedom," the Civil War hastened its progress. Amidst the arguments and war over the meaning of the American West, "out west they just got on with it, and made money."

¹Patrick J. Buchanan, "Jimmy Polk's War," The National Interest 56 (Summer 1999), pp.103-105.

Railroad and Homestead Acts were passed by Congress during the early years of the war, states and territories continued to be acquired, and freedom rolled forth.¹

Harry Jaffa's celebration of "the terrible sacrifices exacted upon the battlefield of Gettysburg" is joined by his own late exaggeration of that sacrifice "upon ten thousand other battlefields of the Civil War." Such loss "could be vindicated only by a 'new birth of freedom'," he argues.² Through the mythification and civil religious embrace of the Civil War, America is said to have become truly a nation-state. The renewed civil religion justified that accomplishment, its bloodshed and horror, and its continued exercise of power and dominion.³ The mythification of Lincoln alone is a major source of national inspiration. Its role in the reunification of North and South is of central importance to the story that follows. Now, as Jefferson's reputation falters, as he falls like a shooting star across the American horizon, Lincoln's light shines brighter than ever. His is the Declaration of Independence; his is the inheritance of Americanism. His are the virtues and his is the wisdom of the American liberalism that winds its way through the twentieth century.⁴

¹Johnson, A History of the American People, pp.490-491.

²Jaffa, A New Birth of Freedom, p.79.

³Herbert Richardson, "Civil Religion in Theological Perspective," in American Civil Religion, ed. Richey and Jones, p.169.

⁴A recent article questions the proper abortion policy for America and finds an answer by asking "what would Lincoln do?" See George McKenna, "On Abortion: A Lincolnian Position," Atlantic Monthly 276:3 (Sept. 1995), p.51; For an account of the Lincoln myth and image through time, see Merrill Peterson, Lincoln in American Memory; For Lincoln's as the consummate American virtues, see William Lee Miller, Lincoln's Virtues: An Ethical Biography (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002).

The myth of the redeemer nation that emerged from the Civil War became poignant to the country in its future moments of crisis, challenge, and opportunity. President Wilson's speeches in support of the League of Nations form but one example of the resurfacing of this myth in a century that would see that redeemer nation rise to the status of a superpower.¹ Only a few short years after the Civil War, Isaac Wise announced anew America's "place in history." This civil religious paeon to past and future generations is a song of "glory to the memory of the heroes of the revolution, to the generous godfathers of liberty." Wise sings;

Glory to the memory of George Washington and his heroic compatriotes. They were the chosen instruments in the hands of Providence...they proved worthy of their great mission, of their immortal work....millions of oppressed men and women in all countries, whose chains have been broken and whose prisons have been razed, are the grand chorus, who sing the praise of the American revolution.²

Myth, civil religion, and ideology combine as the essence of "America." Together the elements of this political culture render the ideals, purpose, and meaning of a people in their own language of Americanism: "Liberty is our place in history, our national destiny, our ideal, the very soul of our existence."³

Postscript:

Joshua Dienstag maintains that any attempt to resurrect Hartz's idea of a liberal

¹Tuveson, Redeemer Nation, p.209.

²Isaac Wise, "Our Country's Place In History" (Jan. 1869), in God's New Israel, ed. Cherry, p.224.

³Ibid., p.228

consensus must account for other facets of the Founders' thought.¹ This work has done that and more. Although the object of this work is broader than a Hartzian resurrection, the more muscular system of political culture that Mullins argued to be necessary to salvage Hartz's work certainly is contained within this essay. The examination of America's ideological consensus has been added upon, rounded out by a rehearsal of other features of the political culture. In so doing, it is argued that there have been no credible challengers to the dominance of liberalism as an ideology in America. Those that argue against such a consensus theory seem to think that its proponents are arguing that all Americans think identical thoughts, that they all hold the same mixture of ideals to the same extent and purpose. However, to argue that Americans are overwhelmingly liberal, so far as ideology goes, is not to argue any absolute absence of diversity. First of all, there are religious and mythic ideals and images that augment the ideological articles of faith. The precise mixture held by any particular Americans may vary widely across space and time--there is diversity within the consensus. There may even be some ideological diversity within this consensus, varieties of liberalism perhaps. But, consensus theorists, myself among them, argue that these are variations upon a single theme--American liberalism. Just as there are different sorts of apples in the world--red and green, sweet and sour, ripe and rotten--so there are different sorts of American liberals in the United States. There just aren't many oranges, so to speak; and mangoes, dates, or more exotic fruits are rarer still. Those with a penchant for different flavours must look

¹Joshua Foa Dienstag, "Serving God and Mammon: The Lockean Sympathy in Early American Political Thought," American Political Science Review 90:3 (Sept. 1996), pp.497-511.

elsewhere, or plant their own seeds on the margins of society, in the harsh netherlands beyond the dressing of American nurture. Happily for American stability and security, such junkets are few and their revellers, generally, are easily subdued.

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