

The Responsive Community

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Reflections on European Unification

Simon Serfaty

By any standard, the European Union (EU) does not qualify as a sovereign state, either as a matter of fact (in its territory, population, government, and army) or as a state of mind (in its loyalty, identity, values, and history). Indeed, entering the 21st century the nation-states of Europe still evoke feelings and passions that can hardly be transferred to a transnational institution. For all of the EU countries that increasingly accept the need to be something more—meaning, European—this is a daunting condition. In the coming years, there exists a real possibility that they might become something else altogether: after the city-states and the nation-states, here come the member-states—ill-defined political units born out of two world wars and among which unprecedented discipline conditions an increasingly supranational will.

Even Jean Monnet, who viewed the 1957 Rome Treaties—which helped establish the European Economic Community and the European Atomic Energy Community—as a feeble and “rather vague” idea, would be astounded today. Living in a progressively integrated space—peaceful, affluent, democratic, and de-ideologized—the EU member-states form a collage of regions within which people share characteristics that clearly overcome past national stereotypes.

Now, from one country to its neighbor, a bit of everyone is found everywhere. The “ideal” European stands most convincingly as a

composite of what the idealized German, French, Spaniard, Italian, and Englishman used to be. Take the best that has remained in each of the national images, as you should, but avoid what is remembered as worst, if you can. Tamed Frenchmen who have discarded their arrogance sound like the more flexible Italians of the past. Prouder Italians are gaining a taste for discipline, which makes them behave like Germans of old. Normalized Germans, with an unprecedented tolerance for disorder, look like the old French image. At last, the elusive Europeans are acquiring a collective personality within which their varied national identities merge rather than clash.

Unfinished Community

Still, for Europeans whose loyalty is evolving from the nation-state to the transnational institution to which it belongs or wishes to join, the question of identity is daunting: Who is “We?” The question would be best answered in the face of a credible and recognizable “They”—an external threat whose leaders should be kept at a distance and, better yet, must be feared. Lacking that real threat, it may be tempting to turn against a threatening idea of something, like the post-World War Two idea of Europe or a post-Cold War idea of America, or someone, like the elusive foreigner or the intrusive imam. Populist calls to arms follow readily, as if these easy targets could define who “we” do not wish to be or explain what “they” have made us become. These are the echoes of yesteryear: close the borders, expel the intruders, protect the sacred patrimony, and altogether wage a cultural war, a trade war, or, ultimately, a military war. In other words, while modernity and European-ness attract, many in Europe miss the closer family spirit (*esprit de famille*) and community ties (*campanilismo*) that give a personal dimension to the citizens’ lives. The new Cartesian logic that stands as an obstacle to Europe is not a matter of thinking but instead emphasizes the reality of being. “I am, therefore I integrate” could be the motto for this age. But can I integrate if I refuse to stop being who “I am,” pending a better understanding of who I might become?

Even as Europeans gain a better sense of the reality *communautaire* they form, they fail to understand how the organizations that shape their emerging community—the Commission or the Council, and even the Parliament or the Court of Justice—can best serve them.

Worse yet, these organizations seem to proceed “as if” they knew. “The concept of ‘as if,’” writes leading contemporary historian Timothy Garton Ash, “is a subjective, idealistic self-definition in which the idea takes absolute precedence over reality and consciousness determines being.” In the case of the EU, the concept means to treat the union as if it fully represented all of its members, even though their citizens view it as a cage within which their sovereignty is imprisoned and their identity is diluted. For the citizens to accept such a new condition, the union will have to do more for them in such areas as employment, income distribution, pension funds, immigration flows, education, national cohesion, political leadership, and much more.

The End Game

Halfway to forming a true community, this is Europe’s end game. As it gets under way, earlier battles fought over the launch of a small Common Market in the 1950s, a modest increase in the authority of the European Commission in the 1960s, the European Monetary System in the 1970s, or the Single Market in the 1980s look odd and inconsequential. Now, completing the euro zone for all 15 EU members in 2002-2005, solidifying a common security policy in 2003-2007, nearly doubling membership by 2004-2010, and defining new rules of governance for the Union are within reach. They also serve as benchmarks for completing Europe.

In June 2000, after Germany’s foreign minister, Joschka Fischer, had voiced some personal thoughts on Europe’s future, his French counterpart, Hubert Védrine, warned against “improvised, careless or even ingenious” answers that seem “bold . . . simple . . . [and] effective”; his warning was not heard. Instead, nearly every EU head of state or government, starting with Védrine’s own mercurial president, Jacques Chirac, rushed to offer views of his own. They spoke as if each “what if” could be presented and argued according to a self-serving political schedule or even to specific personal preferences. “A superpower but not a superstate,” pleaded Tony Blair, who was already anticipating the referendum over the euro that he is planning to hold in roughly two years. Naturally protective of the European Commission, over which he presides, Romano Prodi applauded such objections to a superstate. With his eye on “superpower” status, Prodi praised the “unique combination of the intergovernmental and the

supranational” that makes the Commission “the melting pot to which the various national interests and tensions are poured.”

This remains a far cry from the “European Federation” *à l’allemande* foreseen this past April by Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder: a two-chambered system that would emulate Germany’s, with one chamber comprised of ministers from each country and the other being the popularly elected European Parliament. To be sure, it was merely a coincidence that Germany’s weight in Parliament had been reinforced at the EU Summit held in Nice, France, in December 2000. But a “division of sovereignty” that seemed to show a predilection for the member-states over the nation-states, and for Germany over its EU partners, could hardly please France and most of its EU partners. Chirac instead envisioned a redistribution of sovereignty—“*qui fait quoi?*” (who does what?)—between a small core group of “pioneer states” that would engage in multiple patterns of “enhanced cooperation” in selected areas.

Silent Partners

The desirability of an open debate on the finality of Europe at the very time when its members address the most complex and sensitive parts of the European agenda is questionable. After 1945, when a few states entered the *terra incognita* of territorial consolidation, the debate was muted by a widespread apprehension that continued fragmentation would perpetuate the conflicts waged during the previous 50 years. This shared vision of a failed past served as a catalyst to move away from the darkness behind and as a flashlight to continue on through the darkness ahead. Now, growing anxieties over the enormity and the consequences of what remains to be done can hardly be overcome by pretending that a common vision of the future can be chartered before it has been lived.

It is in its final phase that the construction of Europe turns most contentious and even most painful. Under such conditions, each decision will be made more readily if the participants do not articulate all the considerations that inform their judgment. In other words, the debate over Europe’s finality might have been most conclusive, and its results most constructive, had it been kept unheard a bit longer—while the nation-states of Europe continue to be recycled as member-states of the union they are completing.

Value in Variety

Harvey B. Feigenbaum

While there has been some agreement, at least among the elite of the advanced industrial countries, that the movement to liberalize trade has been generally advantageous, the consensus breaks down on the issue of culture. Countries as diverse as France, Canada, Korea, and many others, argue that a freer commercial exchange of movies, television shows, books, magazines, and other forms of popular entertainment will result in the complete domination of domestic markets by large American producers, and especially by Hollywood. They fear that American culture will become the global standard and that all other countries will gradually lose those aspects of their respective cultures that are distinctive and worth saving. For this reason, they have insisted that there be a “cultural exception” to the general trend toward free trade.

The United States has tended to view films and television shows, as well as the other products of the entertainment industry, as any other traded goods. Economic theory saw the advantages of free trade as unaffected by the particular goods one was trading. Michael Boskin, the senior President Bush’s chief economics advisor, famously noted that there was no difference between “silicon chips and potato chips.”

The chief advocates of this position in the private sector are, of course, the Hollywood studios. The position of these corporations—supported by official Washington—is that barriers to the import of television shows and movies are unreasonably protectionist. In each round of World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations, the U.S. Trade Representative fought to include cultural items under the general rules of free trade.

This economistic view of cultural trade should be changed. The interests of the U.S. would be well served by honoring calls for a “cultural exception” and reducing its insistence on free trade in cultural goods and services.

One reason U.S. policy should support the “cultural exception” is that the U.S. has an interest in variety. Too frequently it has viewed diversity as a problem rather than a solution. Economists often see a heterogeneous population simply as an addition to transaction costs.

However, variety can also be an advantage. Economist Stephen Smith of The George Washington University has argued that much of America's competitive advantage derives from its cultural variety. This general principle is highlighted by the success of America's entertainment industry. The reason for Hollywood's success is not just that it produces for a huge domestic market but that this market is also extremely diverse. Discovering the kinds of stories that interest various combinations of midwesterners, southerners, Jewish urbanites, Latin immigrants, and African and Asian Americans is no mean feat. In Hollywood the task has become internalized. The fortunate bonus effect is that these stories also appeal to many people outside the U.S. This helps to explain much of Hollywood's success in foreign markets.

Hollywood has also benefitted from cultural variety in the way that it draws much of its talent from around the world. The richer the variety of experience of those who produce entertainment, the greater the chance that original ideas will make their way into films and television. It is also a matter of conventional economics that with a larger pool of potential employees comes a higher quality of worker that one can hire. These two advantages of a large and diverse talent pool have recently been recognized—with some reminding from the NAACP—by the U.S. television networks, who have now made greater efforts to recruit minorities for either side of the camera. Their effort is still more symbolic than real, but the fact that two networks—Fox and UPN—owed their early success to minority niche markets is not lost on those more concerned with the bottom line.

Cultural differentiation on a global scale has real economic and non-economic advantages for all of us. Differences encourage innovation. New ideas often come from abroad and are quickly adopted here. This may, at the most obvious level, be crass imitation. Kurosawa's "Eastern" *Seven Samurai* became a Western, *The Magnificent Seven*; French comedies can become middlebrow fare like *Three Men and a Baby*. In many ways, foreign films serve as prototypes for later mass-produced offerings from Hollywood.

Foreign films are, of course, most significant when they are different, when they set new trends. That is what we call innovation. It is something that artists do well. In countries where the tradition of film is art rather than industry, innovation can be the most useful product. Moreover, art is an exercise in cross-fertilization. The foreign

film industries of Europe and the Middle East tend to produce “paintings” rather than the mass appeal “wallpaper” of Hollywood. Wallpaper may soothe, but art inspires. This elitist attitude actually benefits consumers, even when individual efforts are categorical failures (as self-indulgent art films often are). We are all better off when we have occasional works that stand out from the mass-produced entertainment that otherwise surrounds us. We do not all like the same things, but we are more likely to be satisfied if we have a variety of options from which to choose. If Hollywood rarely rises above middle-brow fare, we can be grateful to foreign entertainment producers, at the very least, for giving us variety.

It may be helpful at this point to draw analogies to biology. In 1992, the members of the United Nations agreed on a series of projects to protect the environment and proposed a Convention on Biological Diversity as part of the Common Heritage of Mankind. The members believed that it was in the world’s interest to protect the diversity of biological species. Diversity, in this sense, was a kind of insurance policy against biological catastrophe in much the same way that diversifying an investment portfolio is a kind of insurance policy against economic catastrophe. While some might bristle at equating the importance of cultural variety to that of biodiversity, it is certainly true that cultural discourse can and does deteriorate. To the extent that we treasure a life that extends beyond immediate, material concerns, we value the cultures that surround us. A constant bubbling of ideas is the lifeblood of our cultural environment.

New technologies have stimulated the demand for “content.” Content often draws on preexisting cultural products, just as film and television shows become some of the building blocks upon which new cultural edifices are built. Hollywood will do very well on its own providing the cultural materials for others to use as they see fit; it needs no assistance from government. It is the other countries of the world that need to act, not to preserve the status quo, for that is already lost, but rather to preserve some influence on the direction that the ensuing social transformation will take.

Those areas where state intervention will continue to be effective—notably, subsidies to local production—are also in America’s interests. By preserving foreign film and television industries, this

intervention will enrich the field of talented personnel and quality stories from which the world's (and especially Hollywood's) producers can choose. In a more general way, the continued flow of resources into multiple centers of production encourages artistic inspiration and innovation. Such innovations serve to maintain cultural variety. In this way, an American laissez-faire attitude towards our partners soothes our friends and serves our interests.

Our Monochrome Values

Amitai Etzioni

What is going to happen to ‘white’ values?” I was repeatedly asked by an interviewer on a television program recently. His concern was aroused by the detailed data the U.S. Census Bureau was about to release on the racial composition of American society. Although the precise breakdown of the U.S. population into 63 racial categories (including racial combinations) was not yet known, figures depicting the basic changes in America’s demography had already been issued. U.S. Census data is often said to point to a rise of a “majority of minorities” (beginning in California, following in Texas, and thereafter spreading all over the United States). But it is far from obvious what these figures mean, let alone that they entail a decline of the founders’ European values.

I told my interviewer that our core values—respect for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness (as well as the communitarian quest for a more perfect union), the democratic way of life, and the Bill of Rights—either deserve our commitment because we find them compelling or they should be rejected. It matters not the race of whoever first articulated them. Imagine discovering that the ancient Greeks really got their ideas from Egypt or Libya, as some claim. Would they be less valid? Would anything change if we learned that John Locke was a Moor?

Also, the fact is that most Americans from all social groups want the same basic things, although this cannot be completely illustrated here without taking much more space. Most Americans seek, among other things, prosperity and peace, a brilliant future for themselves and their kids, safe streets, and honest government. (Next time you read about racial discrepancies found in public opinion polls, note that the differences played up often amount to less than 20 percent, which of course means that the similarities—usually not referred to—amount to more than 80 percent.) Granted, there are differences on select issues, especially when they directly concern racial relations—for instance, between the views of African Americans and others on the outcome of the O.J. Simpson trial. But these are exceptions, not the rule.

The very notion that there are two American camps, the majority and “the minorities,” is a very dubious construction. Not only do most minority members agree with the majority on most issues, but there are only a few issues on which they agree with one another. The two major nonwhite groups, Asian Americans and African Americans, are particularly disparate, with the first much more conservative than the latter. And Hispanic Americans do not even agree with one another about what race they are. In the 1990 Census, 52 percent defined themselves as white, 3 percent as black, and 43 percent chose “Other Race.”

Furthermore, the very notion that there are monolithic “minorities,” a term tossed around daily, ignores the fact that differences within each minority often exceed differences among them. Many Cuban Americans’ attitudes are closer to Asian Americans’ than to Puerto Ricans’, whose viewpoints are closer to those of African Americans. Japanese Americans share little with Filipino Americans, and so on. Among those surveyed in the National Latino Political Survey, approximately three-quarters of Puerto Ricans and two-thirds of Cuban Americans and Mexican Americans chose to be labeled by their country of origin, as opposed to “pan-ethnic” terms such as “Hispanic” or “Latino.”

Last but not least, Americans of different backgrounds intermarry, and they—especially the young—do so at an ever-rising rate. Before too long, the majority of Americans will not be minorities or The Majority, but people whose parents, in-laws, uncles, and cousins are like those of Tiger Woods: Americans of all kinds. These multiracial and multiethnic Americans will blur the sharp edges now attributed to the various social groups, moving America ever closer to a monochrome society—although its appearance will be more akin to chocolate milk than to that of pale-faced Americans.

The importance of all this is that if people were to stop looking at pigmentation and other factors that are skin deep—jumping to the conclusion that there is a close relationship between race and the way one thinks, believes, and behaves—they would see that America is much less diverse than racial statistics are often said to imply.

Does all this mean that American society will remain basically unchanged? Certainly not. From its inception as a society of immi-

grants, it has been the genius of America to incorporate newcomers and adapt, growing richer by absorbing some of their unique features. Thus, the U.S. may well become more focused on nations south of its border and on the Pacific Rim than on Europe, but this will entail few basic substantive changes in American foreign policy. We shall still favor free trade, oppose nuclear proliferation, support human rights, and so on. And teaching children more about non-Western cultures will encourage a broadening of our educational horizons, not an abandonment of the “classics.”

Will we be a society free from racial and ethnic conflict? America never has been. However, we long ago learned to resolve, in peaceful ways, most of these conflicts most of the time. We have nothing to fear but those who try to promote fear.

ESSAYS

COMMUNITARIAN THEORY

Neutrality, Autonomy, and the Liberal State

Emily R. Gill

Modern liberal theorists typically hold that the liberal state must be neutral among rival conceptions of the good. On a standard account like Ronald Dworkin's, "political decisions must be, so far as is possible, independent of any particular conception of the good life." They should, however, reflect an equality of concern and respect for "human beings who are capable of forming and acting on intelligent conceptions of how their lives should be lived."

Although there is by no means total uniformity among communitarians on this topic, many deny the feasibility—and the desirability—of a completely neutral state. Even among contemporary liberals, there are some who argue that a liberal polity cannot espouse neutrality among rival conceptions of the good. Although William Galston, for example, agrees with Dworkin that humans are free and rational agents, calling the liberal conception of the good that of rationalist humanism, he maintains that the liberal state is not neutral, but is instead "minimally committed." Even a liberal polity embodies a more than minimal conception of the good—that is, it expresses at least partial preferences for those ways of life and principles of right conduct that share its affirmation of human rationality. Similarly, although John Rawls's conception of an overlapping consensus es-

chews the perfectionism of comprehensive doctrines of the good—that is, it does not specify any particular set of ideals, religious or otherwise, by which we ought to shape our lives—it is neither procedurally nor substantively neutral. Rawlsian liberalism permits individuals and groups to advance only certain conceptions of the good and also endorses virtues such as civility, tolerance, reasonableness, and fairness.

It is evident that both Galston's commitment to rationalist humanism and Rawls's advocacy of an overlapping consensus justified through public reason are incompatible with neutrality. Any sociopolitical institutions and the principles grounding them will exert influences that are not neutral. Common principles mean ones that are shared, not ones that are neutral. In the remainder of this essay, I shall consider one distinctively liberal value on the basis of which a nonneutral liberal polity may be justified—that of autonomy. Acknowledging that the liberal state cannot fully embrace neutrality—that is, it cannot avoid appealing to any moral values whatsoever—I shall argue that the range of options among which it can be neutral should be defined to serve the development of the capacity for autonomy. Within this context, neutrality among rival conceptions of the good is not itself a constitutive liberal value, but is a secondary or derivative value that serves the goal of the development of the capacity for autonomy. I wish to offer a conception of autonomy-based neutrality as an alternative to the strain of liberal thought that valorizes neutrality as a more constitutive value—a strain represented well by Galston.

Autonomy-based Neutrality

Moral autonomy, simply put, means the capacity to govern oneself without external or internal compulsion and free from determination by the customs, practices, and wills of others. I do not deny that we are formed and influenced in many ways by our environment, which shapes and limits the context of choice within which we exist. Within this framework, however, even Michael Sandel suggests that the intrasubjectively-conceived self surveys and reflects on its sometimes competing attachments, ranking its possible ends through a cognitive process that enhances our self-understandings. We are not self-made, but past reflections and experiences need not be binding on

our present decisions. I agree with Will Kymlicka that although humans possess an essential interest in leading a good life, this is not a fixed object and we may change our minds about what the good life is. Therefore, we are obligated to lead our life in accordance with self-endorsed beliefs about value, and we must be free to question, examine, and revise or reaffirm these beliefs as the result of rational scrutiny and self-reflection.

I hold that several points follow from this formulation. First, freedom is essential because some projects and goals are in fact more worthy than others, and freedom is a precondition for pursuing and discovering what has value for us. Liberals do espouse a theory of the good, but by this theory, what is good must be decided by individuals, each for himself or herself, over time. Second, one can recognize the presence of autonomy by the nature of the decision-making process through which individuals assess their options—how decisions are arrived at, not the actual content of their decisions. Third, although we are always “encumbered selves,” partly constituted by prior attachments and experiences in Sandel’s sense, our projects and goals are always subject to possible reexamination. Finally, the rational scrutiny to which we subject our projects and goals involves the formation of second-order desires—that is, we care about the desirability of our desires. We embrace our beliefs when we invest ourselves in them to “live life from the inside,” in Kymlicka’s terms. But we can also draw back and imagine ourselves with different projects and goals, motivations and ends, from those that we now espouse, and we may decide whether another set of encumbrances more truly expresses who we are. We want to be motivated by the desires that are most choiceworthy, but first we must decide which these are.

This conceptualization of the liberal project is not, of course, an uncontroversial one. If our goal is the development of the capacity to engage in rational scrutiny of and deliberation about our projects and goals, liberal societies may experience difficulty in showing tolerance toward lifestyles that do not place a high priority on individual independence and self-determination. Moreover, championing the capacity for autonomy appears to make this priority a comprehensive doctrine and to strive towards a perfectionist state.

This criticism is well illustrated in Galston’s interpretation of Rawls. Galston argues that Rawls’s political conception of justice

constitutes a kind of perfectionism because it universalizes both the human moral capacities for a sense of justice and a conception of the good, and also our higher-order interests in the development of these moral powers. This “single, substantive, eminently debatable ideal of moral personality,” Galston argues, is objectionable to religious fundamentalists, whose highest goods are externally defined through revelation, not self-defined through reason. Emphasis upon the capacity to form and revise a conception of the good disadvantages those for whom this activity is not a value by implying that they are stunted in the development of their moral powers. Thus, a commitment even to the political value of autonomy in the context of Rawls’s conception of the person is not necessarily shared by all citizens of the liberal state, and its pursuit may result in a perfectionist state.

The Perfect and the Good

Although Galston’s reasoning is understandable, I believe he is incorrect in his blanket rejection of anything more than a limited perfectionism. *Any* theory of the good that delineates a range of desirable outcomes for human pursuit could be viewed as a perfectionistic one. Conversely, in order to qualify as nonperfectionistic, the good would have to be equated with whatever goals and ideas people already have.

Galston advocates a minimally committed liberal state that can minimize public coercion because it rests on beliefs shared by the public as a whole, rather than on controversial assumptions about the good. Yet he also supports the inculcation and fostering of specifically liberal virtues by authoritative social institutions, calling for a “functional” traditionalism that relies “on asserted links between certain moral principles and public virtues or institutions needed for the successful functioning of a liberal community.” Divorce should be discouraged, and different family structures are not simply private “alternative lifestyles.” They merit public discussion and response because “they affect the larger society.”

Although a liberal society should minimize moral coercion, in the end, liberalism “cannot get along without a conception of the good—if you will, a kind of minimal perfectionism.” Galston must thus *ipso facto* specify a range of desirable outcomes and a means by which they

may be realized. He presumably believes that his “minimal perfectionism” is more minimal than Rawls’s. I believe that his solution is no less perfectionistic than Rawls’s or Kymlicka’s conceptions, and that it is at least equally debatable.

First, Galston rejects rationalist stances that encourage the questioning of socially central beliefs; instead, he favors civic education, which inculcates values supportive of our own particular political order. Although this conviction is focused most particularly on the content of public education, which is not mandatory, the basic legitimacy of the liberal social order can be taught in many ways, not all of which lay the groundwork for the critical self-scrutiny that many think is itself the hallmark of a liberal social order. His commitment to stability is as “eminently contestable” as the liberal humanism that he thus describes. Those who do identify their essential interest with the capacity to form, question, and revise their conceptions of the good may feel as little at home in Galston’s liberal state as those who reject this capacity supposedly feel in Rawls’s state. Galston correctly perceives a tension between the rights of those citizens who adhere to nonliberal, or even to atypical, ways of life and what might seem to liberals to be the core elements of civic virtue. His preferred resolution, however, is neither less perfectionistic nor more inclusive than that of Rawls or Kymlicka. It is simply different.

Second, if Galston’s liberal state is not really grounded in beliefs about the good that are truly shared by all its citizens, it cannot eschew coercion in the affirmation of liberal virtues as readily as he supposes. Public policy may be designed to reward or positively reinforce those who refrain from questioning “structures of unexamined but socially central belief,” but it does so to the disadvantage of those inclined to question and possibly to revise their attitudes towards these structures. If we recognize, as Galston and Rawls do, that public policy is never completely neutral in its effects, we cannot claim that it is inclusive to the point that it seldom coerces. When divergent practices appear to threaten core liberal commitments, whether the development of the capacity for autonomy or of particular liberal virtues, the specter of coercion may also appear, explicitly or implicitly. One set of commitments is no less conducive to coercion than is the other.

We must confront directly, then, the question of why a core commitment to the development of the capacity for autonomy might be preferable to other interpretations of the core commitments of liberalism. As we have seen, reflective self-evaluation or rational scrutiny of our projects and goals appears in the formation of second-order desires, as we come to care about what desires determine our wills. But in order to evaluate our first-order desires and arrive at the second-order level, we must first acquire the capacity to engage in rational scrutiny, deliberation, and critical reflection on them. Otherwise, we cannot examine, question, and possibly revise or reaffirm our beliefs about the nature of the good life for us. Moreover, we cannot lead our lives from the inside to invest ourselves in and identify with our convictions as authentically ours. Whether we choose new projects and goals or reaffirm old ones, the capacity to engage in critical reflection is a prerequisite. Even collective agreement on the virtues necessary to the sustenance of liberal societies first requires collective deliberation and reflection. Commitment to the development of the capacity for autonomy is therefore potentially inclusive of any projects or goals that we might select or affirm.

In addition, rational scrutiny and critical reflection are, as I have implied, as compatible with the affirmation of current projects and goals as they are with the choice of new ones. The capacity to form and revise a conception of the good also entails the capacity to adhere to a conception of the good already formed, but one to which we recommit ourselves after an examination of alternatives. Both Susan Mendus and Joseph Raz have suggested that an autonomous life is not itself an object of choice, but is instead the grounding upon which choices are made. In my view, this renders it imperative that we develop the capacity to reflect self-consciously upon our options, so that even if we act as we have habitually acted, we do so not from *force* of habit, but in *accordance* with habit after critical reflection on these options. In fact, critical reflection may eventuate in the actual pursuit of options that in some cases involve voluntarily abdicating the practice of questioning and revising some of our future options. But we need first to form second-order desires about what projects we *want* to desire to pursue.

Finally, I would argue that development of the capacity for autonomy is a second-order concept. It acts as a context or framework

within which we may then pursue first-order options that may appear either autonomous or nonautonomous to others. David McCabe appropriately calls this conception one of autonomy-based neutrality. Neutrality can only be affected, even in a liberal polity, when it can itself be measured or judged in terms of a standard independent of neutrality itself. What determines autonomy is not our particular ideals, but the manner in which we choose and affirm the value of these ideals. To use Galston's example, I believe that when we subscribe to an externally defined good like that of religious revelation, our subsequent actions may in part be grounded in habit—but they may also proceed from a judgment that this submission is in greater accord with what is truly good for us than are other options that might seem more emblematic of the practice of autonomy. Development of the capacity for autonomy is a necessary condition for the practice of autonomy. The development of this capacity is a second-order value that heightens the possibility that our first-order actions will be freely chosen and thus authentically ours.

Mozert v. Hawkins

I have suggested that we may “autonomously” renounce autonomy at the first-order level if we engage in critical reflection before doing so. That is, we may choose or affirm a way of life that encumbers us with duties that constrain our future choices. But because I believe that through education we must develop the *capacity* for autonomy at the second-order level if we are to choose or reject the *practice* of autonomy at the first-order level, I may appear vulnerable to the criticism that liberals often promote autonomy at the expense of diversity. This potential fault line in liberal inclusiveness is well illustrated by *Mozert v. Hawkins*, a 1987 appellate court decision that the free exercise of religion by children of fundamentalist parents in Tennessee was not burdened by the school district's insistence on the use of textbooks that their parents found objectionable. This requirement mandated only reading, not religiously forbidden conduct or belief, and was therefore not perceived by the court as threatening the inculcation of alien values.

The plaintiffs felt, however, that their free exercise of religion was not violated so much by exposure to particular, hostile values which they rejected, like evolution, as by exposure to a diversity of values in

general. They viewed seemingly neutral exposure to varying beliefs as a mechanism for undermining religious absolutes in favor of personal opinion. Mere exposure to other viewpoints itself implies that beliefs are simply subjective opinions, and that fundamentalism, in the words of Nomi Maya Stolzenberg, is “just one among many possible belief-systems from which an individual might choose.” Where liberals believe that the development of the capacity for critical reflection is accomplished through education *about* different viewpoints or ways of life, fundamentalists believe that this process constitutes education *into* a particular normative and cultural tradition, that of secular humanism or liberalism.

In my view, the core issue raised by *Mozert* is whether the diversity protected by liberalism extends to the right to hold one’s beliefs in a particular manner. The *Mozert* parents feared not only that their children might reject their own values, but also that even if they remained attached to these, they would view them as merely subjective, or as contestable matters of opinion. Their beliefs and worldview would represent just one possible life narrative among others, rather than one that transcends all others.

From a fundamentalist standpoint, then, consciousness of alternatives is a harm which, once introduced, can never be mended. Even if one’s beliefs are never seriously threatened, the manner in which they are held is not only threatened but actually damaged, and the way in which beliefs are held becomes an intrinsic part of their content. Secular liberals and fundamentalists not only espouse different beliefs with regard to the proper role of reason and critical reflection, but also differ in their metatheories of the way in which beliefs ought properly to be held. These considerations demonstrate why fundamentalist parents could experience mere exposure to other beliefs as a threat to their children’s faith. In other words, it confirms the fundamentalist suspicion that an innocent-looking political liberalism, in Rawls’s terms, in reality contains the tenet of an ethical or comprehensive liberalism, and that it is therefore the proverbial wolf in sheep’s clothing.

Although I believe that requests for accommodation of religious belief must be considered on a case-by-case basis, I would not defer to requests that may foreclose the possibility of critical reflection on

one's projects and goals. Even if we believe that citizens of faith contribute a beneficial ethos to the liberal polity, we should want citizens who embrace faith and the duties that flow from it to do so self-consciously, as the result of critical reflection. As liberals, we should want them to embrace faith because of its centrality to them as individuals, rather than because this embrace helps to sustain the polity. Although some students may depart public education for totally sectarian educational settings, public educational programs must commit to the development of the capacity for critical reflection, I believe, if they are not to risk "selling out." *Mozert* differs from cases that center on the civil consequences of Sabbath observance, for example, because the protection of such observance carries only religious significance. In *Mozert*, however, the requested accommodation bears on children's capacities for personal autonomy and civic competence. Although it is admittedly difficult to distinguish the religious and political dimensions from one another, this renders the development of the capacity for critical reflection more crucial. It is through the use of this capacity that we *decide* questions of civil injury and benefit, attempting to separate out the political dimensions of an issue from the religious.

By championing the development of the capacity for autonomy, especially in a way that requires imaginative engagement with other ways of life, I realize that I am foreclosing the possibility of some kinds of good lives, those that rely on uncritical acceptance of values one has been taught. I have maintained, however, that even the liberal polity cannot remain neutral, devoid of determinate principles and commitments. Where it appears neutral, this apparent neutrality serves to maximize particular values, even when this result is unintentional. Moreover, as I have explained, although inculcation of the capacity for autonomy at the second-order level increases the chances that citizens will want to engage in the practice of autonomy at the first-order level, it does not compel them to do so. If they do reaffirm their original religious, philosophical, or moral beliefs, I grant that they will now do so on a conscious rather than an unconscious level. But I do not see any way around this problem without relinquishing altogether the value of the capacity for autonomy at the second-order level.

Finally, although I believe that a developed capacity to engage in rational deliberation and critical reflection will indeed promote a civic competence that contributes to the health of the liberal polity, my primary concern is not that of political stability. Critical reflection promotes criticism and questioning of the status quo because we may be prompted to examine and question our current projects and goals, collectively as well as individually. My primary concern is that of enabling the individual citizen of the liberal polity to flourish *as an individual* in this context. But critical reflection contributes both to individual and to collective self-rule: the capacity for individual choice is also that for collective choice. Therefore, I believe that the development of the capacity for autonomy is a worthy goal for the liberal polity.

After ten years, the Communitarian Platform is again open for endorsements. The text of the platform, a list of previous endorsers (which includes John Anderson, Robert Bellah, Betty Friedan, Francis Fukuyama, and other leaders of society), and a form to sign the platform are available at www.communitariannetwork.org.

In Response: Maintaining Minimal Commitment

William A. Galston

A full reply to Emily Gill's well-reasoned argument would carry us well outside the bounds appropriate to a nontechnical public journal such as *The Responsive Community*. But here are some remarks on what I take to be our key areas of disagreement.

- I have long argued that liberal states cannot be wholly neutral with respect to the good but must be “minimally committed.” Liberal states are not indifferent to the preservation of human life, to the avoidance of suffering, to the opportunity for children to develop normally, or in general to securing the conditions of basic decency among human beings. Liberal states may rightly protect and promote these basic goods, even if not all its citizens endorse them. In practice, there cannot be a society without coercion, and I have never argued that there could be.

But it matters why governments engage in coercion, in the name of what. It matters whether coercion is limited or expansive. What liberal societies should not do is go beyond the bounds of minimal commitment (and the delimited range of coercion it legitimates) to promote, as normative or binding on all citizens, a broad account of the human good that in effect marginalizes or represses a range of legitimate human possibilities. Autonomy, as Gill presents it, is just such an account. That is the core of my objection to her thesis.

- But perhaps there are compelling reasons for liberal societies to promote autonomy. Gill certainly thinks so. She says that the development of the capacity for autonomy is a “second-order value that heightens the possibility that our first-order actions will be freely

chosen, and thus authentically ours.” This formulation tacitly presupposes two premises, both of which I regard as debatable. The first is that it is always a good thing for an action to be “authentically ours.” If our true self has deep-seated violent or oppressive inclinations, then arguably it is better for all concerned if we act inauthentically, restrained by “internal or external compulsion.”

Second, Gill assumes, and I deny, that a principle or practice must be “freely chosen” in order to be authentically ours. My identity as a son of particular parents, as a native-born American, and as a Jew is not something I have freely chosen. I have, however, exercised a range of choices within this framework. The constitution of the self is a complex process that cannot be reduced to choice, however understood. (I leave for another day the question of whether anyone is, or could be, autonomous in Gill’s sense.)

- I agree with Gill that as a matter of fact, our goals and commitments are always subject to possible reexamination. Liberalism, as I understand it, is committed to ensuring that individuals who wish to revise their goals and commitments are not prevented from acting on that desire. The liberal state cannot allow any civil association, secular or religious, to imprison any of its members. It must safeguard the right of exit—with intrusive coercive force, if need be. But it does not follow that the liberal state has an affirmative interest in promoting processes of self-reflection that might lead to the decision to exit. Socrates may have been right to claim that the unexamined life is not worth living, but liberal philosophers and institutions should not treat that proposition as a public purpose that is binding on all citizens and that may be promoted through public policies backed by the threat of coercion.

- Every state has an interest in fostering citizens who support its basic institutions. When the state is legitimate (as I believe liberal states are), its interest in citizenship is also legitimate. It is not entirely clear what a liberal state must ask of its citizens; that is not only a theoretical, but also an empirical, question.

From a liberal standpoint, civic virtues are functional requirements rather than intrinsic goods. If autonomy, as Gill understands it, is to be justified within this framework, it must be shown to be a requirement for liberal citizenship. She has not shown this. No one

has, for the simple reason that it is not true. People of firm religious faith—including those who are born into their faith, have never reflected on the grounds of their commitment, and have no interest in revising it—can be good liberal citizens, and many are. People who are what might be called “simple patriots”—who obey the law, do what they can to support themselves and their families, do their fair share to sustain their neighborhood and community, and love their country enough to defend it against its adversaries—can be good citizens even if they live what Gill would regard as largely unreflective and uncritical lives. I doubt that a careful empirical study, if it could be devised and carried out, would show that individuals who are autonomous in Gill’s sense (if any do or could exist) are systematically more likely to be good citizens than those who are not.

No doubt it is a functional requirement of a viable liberal democratic order (indeed, of any sustainable order) that some of its citizens be capable of engaging in wider public inquiry than is characteristic of citizens of simple faith or simple patriotism. But that *some* must is not to say that *all* must. A representative government allows for a division of civic labor. The citizen’s capacity to choose representatives and evaluate their performance is one thing, the representative’s capacity to reflect and deliberate is quite another.

I believe that liberal democracy rightly understood is the form of political community that offers maximum feasible space for individuals and groups to lead lives in the manner that expresses the meaning and value of existence as they understand it. The burden of proof rests with public institutions that undertake to interfere with the legitimate multiplicity of worthy lives. Liberals may discharge that burden by invoking the requirements for the effective functioning of basic public institutions and by offering solid empirical evidence in support of an *instrumental link* between particular beliefs or practices and effective institutions. They should be extremely cautious, however, about invoking the *intrinsic superiority* of a belief, practice, or trait of character as the justification for coercive interference.

The Unappreciated Virtue

Alan Wolfe

Many of the virtues by which Americans are presumed no longer to live, especially those whose origins can be traced back to Greece and Rome, are manly ones. The term itself stems from the Latin word “Vir,” which means “man” and which (like its derivative, “virility”) implies strength. Courage, persistence, honor, fortitude—the stuff of Homeric epic poems—are qualities forged in battle. When they came to America, the manly virtues were most likely to flourish in those areas, such as the South, in which military valor was held dear. And if the battlefield was often far away, the playing field—America’s true moral equivalent of war—was close by; sport, conquest, and military adventure became so inextricably tied together around manly ideals of virtue that one could rarely tell where one stopped and another began. To this day, when we attempt to demonstrate the importance of such virtues as loyalty, self-discipline, and honesty, we often turn, as a number of our (primarily male) respondents do, to the special exigencies of military situations.

Yet Ancient Greece and Rome are not the only sources of our conceptions of the virtues. From our country’s earliest origins until relatively recently, Americans understood themselves to be living in

This essay is excerpted from Alan Wolfe’s new book, Moral Freedom. The book draws primarily upon in-depth interviews that the author and his research team conducted in eight distinct communities—including the Castro district in San Francisco and Tipton, a small agricultural town in Iowa—each of which was presumed to represent a particular slice of American experience. This excerpt is reprinted with permission of the publisher, W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., copyright 2001.

a Christian land. The Bible gave us an appreciation for virtues significantly less manly in character than their classical counterparts: faith, hope, charity, and, most crucial of all, forgiveness. One can find testimonials to forgiveness in both the Old and the New Testament, and ideas of compassion are associated with many of the world's other religions. But it was mainly Jesus who, in asking the Lord to forgive his enemies because they did not understand what they were doing, emphasized the centrality of forgiveness to those who followed his teachings. Christianity marked a sharp break with the past for many reasons, but surely one of the most important is its revolutionary attitude toward forgiveness. A people capable of forgiveness are a people who can put behind them endless cycles of bloodshed and revenge, thereby establishing the possibility of peace on earth.

Although forgiveness was a defining—perhaps the defining—quality of Jesus's character, Christian Americans have always been ambivalent about the relevance of forgiveness to their actual lives. Christian virtues stood in such sharp contrast to the classical ones that the pursuit of one seemed to make the realization of the other impossible: forgiveness is not a quality that helps win wars. Even in times of peace, an inclination to forgive could easily be viewed as an invitation to be soft, relaxing the perpetual requirements of self-discipline necessary for the work ethic, sobriety, or sexual restraint. Victorians, so quick to uphold morality's violators as pariahs, were not about to forgive them for their fall into decadence. Victorian morality contained its share of Christian voices urging that we learn the practice of forgiveness, but they were usually drowned out by the Social Darwinist realism of writers like William Graham Sumner (or, in Great Britain, Herbert Spencer). The criminal, Sumner wrote, "has no claims against society." Instead of seeking his rehabilitation in the hopes of forgiving his crime, "society rules him out of its membership, and separates him from its association, by execution or imprisonment, according to the gravity of his offense." Whatever considerations social classes owed one another, at least in Sumner's account, forgiveness was not among them.

To this day, one can hear strains of Sumner's thinking among the diagnosticians of America's moral decline. Judges and juries, James Q. Wilson believes, are too often motivated by a misplaced sympathy when it comes to criminal defendants. Discussing a series of recent

trials, Wilson writes that “the stern task of judging the behavior of a defendant, based on a dispassionate review of the objective evidence, has given way to explaining that behavior on the basis of conflicting theories presented by rival expert witnesses speaking psychobabble.” Defendants claim that they were not responsible for their actions because of a syndrome—“a psychological condition halfway between insanity and rationality,” as Wilson describes it—that excuses away their actions. Wilson reminds us that despite the flowering of very inventive syndromes—ranging from being a battered wife to having a “rotten social background”—juries are not always swayed by these appeals. Still, he has little sympathy for those who would use the “abuse excuse” to argue that, in committing unforgivable acts, they really did not know what they were doing. . . . “It is the task of the law to raise, not lower, the ante in these circumstances,” he writes. “The law is unkind to us when we are weak and especially unkind to those of us who are often weak. It ought to be so.”

Debates over the state of America’s moral health follow an all-too-predictable pattern. Commenting on the way we live now, conservative or communitarian intellectuals insist that Americans lead morally impoverished lives because the language of virtue is so foreign to them. When it comes to forgiveness, that script can be torn up. It is the intellectuals who often fail to appreciate the need for forgiveness. The more conservative among them, moreover, find fault with the American people because they manifest too much of this virtue rather than too little. Forgiveness offers the opportunity to eavesdrop on unrehearsed comments as Americans ponder when and how—or even whether—they should forgive those who trespass against them.

The Case of Karla Faye Tucker

On February 3, 1998, the state of Texas executed Karla Faye Tucker by lethal injection. Fifteen years earlier, Mrs. Tucker, a former teenage prostitute, drug addict, and rock band groupie, had, with her boyfriend, brutally killed two people with a pickax and later talked of the sexual thrill the crime gave her. In the intervening years, she became a born-again Christian, leading many Christian conservatives, including Pat Robertson, to take up her case and to argue against the death penalty for her. Pleas on her behalf were ultimately rejected

by the United States Supreme Court and by Texas Governor George W. Bush. She became the second woman executed in the United States since the death penalty was reinstated in 1976 and the first woman executed in Texas since the Civil War.

The Tucker execution presents a test case of America's capacity for forgiveness. Her actions are unlikely to be forgotten soon, especially by the families of her victims, but also by Americans in general; when we brought up her name in our interviews, our respondents, with very few exceptions, knew exactly who she was, and even those exceptions, when reminded of her acts, had opinions about her death. But can her actions be forgiven?

With this question in mind, I chose Texas as one of the states in which I would conduct my interviews, and I requested that my interviewer there ask about Karla Faye Tucker. Because the case was also in the news around the time our interviews in Iowa were taking place, those respondents also had a great deal to say about the case. I wanted to know whether the "forgive but do not forget" formula would hold where it was tested most severely. By strongly supporting the death penalty, Americans have made it clear that murder is a crime they do not wish to forgive. But as murderers go, Karla Faye Tucker could be viewed as one of the more sympathetic. A woman, a born-again Christian—she would, I thought, be more likely to be forgiven than someone perceived as an unrepentant and dangerous criminal. Support on her behalf from conservative Christians, and a plea against imposing the death penalty from the Pope, could also provide political "cover" to those prepared to spare her life but worried that they would be labeled soft on crime if they did. Which, then, would it be: the Old Testament or the New? Would Americans demand an eye for an eye or would they extend to her the capacity for forgiveness to which they often aspire?

We found a few people in Texas who thought that Tucker's execution was wrong. Maria Gomez Romero was one of them. Insisting that it was not up to her, or any other person in this world, to forgive Karla Faye Tucker—a crime so hateful could be forgiven only by God—she also said that "I don't think as human beings that we have the right to take a life, just like she did not have the right to take somebody's life." A retired seamstress named Selena Bose agreed;

Tucker was on drugs when she committed her crime, she says, and “drugs turn a person crazy” so that “they don’t know what they are doing.” Therefore, she concludes, “I think they should give her another chance.” But these were decidedly minority viewpoints. Lucy Martin, [a] woman whose brother was killed [in the Oklahoma City bombing], was in no mood to forgive Ms. Tucker. She considers herself a forgiving person, but this case involved society. “You have laws and everybody’s included. How can you be making exceptions for someone who says, ‘I’m sorry’ afterward? No, no. You can’t say, ‘I’m sorry’ after the fact. If she was sentenced to die, then she should die.” Very similar words were used by most of those with whom we spoke in San Antonio. “If she did something wrong” is how Juan Iglesias puts it, “we should punish her. Not just because she found her religion. We shouldn’t forgive her for what she did.”

Our Tipton, Iowa respondents were even more emphatic. “I hate to see that lady killed,” says Jason Benning, [a] lawn-care business owner, “but they did the right thing.” The fact that she found Jesus “just doesn’t wash with me.” As a murderer, adds Dennis Fletcher, she already proved herself an untrustworthy person, so why should we believe her when she says she has found God? “I wouldn’t have lost any sleep over it even if I was on the jury,” Hugh Heston says, because what she had done was so gruesome. Unlike many of her neighbors, Dominique Mottau thinks that Karla Faye Tucker was “pretty genuine,” but, despite Ms. Mottau’s own faith in Jesus, she would support her execution. She believes that in the best of situations, we would want to sit down with her to find out why she killed, to get her story, so to speak. But she did take two lives, and she will have to ask for Jesus’s forgiveness in the next life.

Whatever conflicts and ambiguities exist around forgiveness, they did not exist around the case of Karla Faye Tucker. The question worth asking is why so many Americans plan neither to forgive nor to forget what she did. There is, after all, an aversion to cruelty built into much of their moral worldview; the limits of both honesty and self-discipline are reached when they bump up against cruelty to others. Support for Karla Faye Tucker’s execution also seems to violate America’s general sense of nonjudgmentalism, for the death penalty is an ultimate judgment from which there is no turning back. . . .

Whose Responsibility?

How can a generally nonjudgmental people support the ultimate judgment? The paradoxical answer is that people extend, rather than make an exception to, their nonjudgmentalism. Calling for the death penalty in a case like this may seem judgmental, because those who do so leave little doubt that such crimes must be punished severely. But in relying on the law or on God to make the final call, they are also saying that the judgment is best left out of their own hands.

Rosaria Sanchez, who believes that a truly loving God will find a way to forgive, also knows that she cannot: "I would really leave it up to Jesus Christ," she says. So would Jaime Estefan, a computer technician. "I can't judge," he says of this case. "I can't. Only God knows." Grant Lowell, [a] Tipton machinist, simply isn't sure that human beings are equipped to make such decisions. Compared with God, we lack the capacity to look into a person's heart. "I'm sure that if you went into all the prisons in this country, you would find a lot of people who said that they found salvation and would never do anything again." But, he adds, "a good percentage of them, if you put them on the street, would either rape, kill, or murder or steal." For him, this leads to an ambivalence about the death penalty, but for others, Tucker's death enabled her, as Tipton's Sharon Rice puts it, to find "the help she needed. I feel that she found the peace she was looking for."

One can understand the reluctance of these Texans and Iowans to pass the ultimate judgment somewhere else, since assuming the responsibility of deciding whether another person should live or die is an awesome task. Still, Americans often insist on the principle that a person has to be responsible for his own acts, even when doing so is difficult. Indeed, they make that judgment with respect to Karla Faye Tucker. Unlike Selena Bose, who believed that drugs drove Tucker to the point of not knowing what she was doing, Sharon Rice does not buy that excuse. "People choose to use drugs," she says, and in so doing they become responsible for what they do when they are on drugs. Defending Tucker's death sentence, Chuck Macready makes much the same point. "People have a choice whether they choose to do right or wrong," is how he puts it, and if they do wrong, we are right to punish them.

If people are to be held responsible for their acts, then shouldn't those who think that Karla Faye Tucker's life can be taken by the state be held responsible for their beliefs? This is a question much on the mind of San Antonio's Christina Rios. She responds to our inquiry about Tucker by immediately supporting her execution. Then she pauses. Her answer, she realizes, is too easy for her to make. After all, she is on the outside, simply expressing her opinion. It would be different if she were on the actual jury "because I would have to live for the rest of my life with the consciousness that I said yes." Doing so would make her an accomplice in the taking of another person's life, and she is not comfortable with the thought that "I had something to do with the killing of that person." One admires her honesty, for she is confronting an uncomfortable aspect of this case that many of our other respondents wanted to avoid. But the same point applies even if she, or anyone else, is not on the jury that passes sentence. In a democracy, the actions of government are taken in the name of the people, which makes everyone responsible when government takes a life. . . .

Forgetting Forgiveness

One reason that Americans tend to be ambivalent about forgiveness is that this virtue is a particularly demanding one. It is, in fact, so difficult to be forgiving that even those conservative and communitarian commentators who believe that Americans have lost an appreciation for the virtues do not particularly want to see this particular virtue revived. Forgiveness is the forgotten virtue among today's upholders of strict moral codes.

Gertrude Himmelfarb, our leading historian of (and advocate for) Victorian morality, recognizes the existence of "caring" virtues that she contrasts to "vigorous" ones, including in the former category trustworthiness, respect, compassion, fairness, and decency—but not forgiveness. For her, as for Marvin Olasky, even the caring virtues need to be applied vigorously. Olasky, who writes out of strong commitments to Christian values, distances himself from William Graham Sumner's indifference to the poor, but his insistence that the compassion we show for them ought not to excuse away any social pathologies developed in the course of their poverty or dependency

does not have much in common with the figure of Jesus who appears in the Gospel According to Luke.

The most interesting case of forgiveness forgetting, however, involves William Bennett. Not only does his *Book of Virtues* have no chapter on forgiveness, it is surprisingly reticent on the subject of Jesus. Evoking manly images through numerous episodes from Greek and Roman epics, Henry V's speech at Agincourt, Theodore Roosevelt's "In Praise of the Strenuous Life," and Tennyson's "Charge of the Light Brigade," *The Book of Virtues*, which retells 13 stories from the Old Testament, contains only five stories from the New Testament, and only one of those—Jesus's admonition to those without sin about casting the first stone—touches on the virtue of forgiveness. When a man as sincere in his conviction that Americans have lost a sense of virtue as William Bennett can bypass so significantly the man whom Christians consider the most virtuous person who ever lived, we get a sense of how treacherous the virtues can be. Handed-down moral instruction in the right way to live cannot be relied on to tell us how to live in ways that correspond with contemporary political ideologies.

Not only do conservatives tend to forget about forgiveness, they have a way of violating its requirements when they discuss the condition of other people's virtue. Surely they would not be encouraged by the tendency of so many of our respondents to invoke the needs of the self as their reason for wanting to forgive harmful acts. This is taking the therapeutic impulse too far, they would maintain, for if forgiveness means anything, it exists to make oneself right with God, not to smooth over a negotiating session or to ease the pain of divorce in order to marry once again. As true as such observations may be, they tend to be offered in anything but a humble way. "The first rule for mere human beings in the forgiving game," writes Lewis Smedes, "is to remember that we are not God." Because we are not, there will always exist a relationship between forgiveness and humility; we ought not to forgive, as David Augsburger puts it, from a position of moral superiority. Much the same can be said about judging other people's ways of forgiving. In adopting a tone of moral superiority, those who find that Americans persistently fail to live up to the standards of virtue conservatives hold out for them invite the question of whether they are practicing the virtues they preach.

Forgetting forgiveness, conservatives find themselves in the position of selecting some virtues as admirable but not others. That is because forgiveness—the odd man out among the virtues—works at cross-purposes to honesty, loyalty, and, especially, self-discipline. To honor the latter, we often must violate the former, for if we are too quick to forgive those who lie, turn their backs on families and friends, or slide into decadence, we send out a message that the virtues really are not virtues at all. At a time of widespread social disorder, when standards of right and wrong are so easily fudged and when deviancy has been defined so far down, conservatives may be right to insist on their priorities. But in so doing, they assume that the more heroic Greek, Roman, and Hebrew virtues continue to be viable while the more caring Christian ones are not. Such an argument is an odd one for any conservative to make, because it implies precisely the kind of moral relativism conservatives are usually quick to denounce. Traditions are traditions and, for better or else, the Christian tradition is built on forgiveness. If conservatives do not like that tradition, they ought to question whether they really want America to become a society that respects its own religious heritage. For if it did, it would also become a society unlikely to continue its support for capital punishment, prison expansion, stricter sentencing, and all those other remedies conservatives believe we need to get our sense of virtue back.

Forgiveness may make conservatives uncomfortable, but liberals and radicals are no quicker to claim it as a virtue of their own. Religious movements in the United States challenging capital punishment talk of forgiveness, as do those conservative Christians who would forgive the sin of homosexuality—if not the sinner who practices it. But the dominant intellectual trend on the left in recent years has been an antihumanistic one that stresses the impersonal power of systems rather than the personal attributes of individuals. If capitalism or modernity are to blame for what ails us, there is no need to forgive people because they never did anything wrong in the first place. That is why one is as unlikely to hear a discussion of forgiveness among radical writers like Michel Foucault as from conservative ones like William Bennett.

From a leftist perspective, forgiveness smacks of charity. Those who violate society's laws, they believe, need not charity but rights.

We ought not to pity them but to organize them. Forgiveness, precisely because it is such a Christian term, takes us back to premodern ways of thinking about moral obligation, they would argue, when what we require is a postmodern challenge to all such ideas.

If the right manages to be against forgiveness without invoking the term, the left—which can be as selective in its suspicions of the virtues as the right is in its enthusiasm for them—finds a way to be in favor of forgiveness even while not believing in the concept. Liberals and leftists think of American society as so quick to punish wrongdoers that it lacks the capacity to understand why they might be driven to break the law. And even when there is no excuse for the crimes people commit—as in the case of Karla Faye Tucker—Americans' obsession with capital punishment, from their point of view, symbolizes a society unwilling to give people a second chance. This account of America's unforgiving side is a telling one, but it is a hard case to make if one does not take the idea of virtue seriously. If the left were more willing to acknowledge that virtues such as honesty, loyalty, and self-discipline are more than just rhetorical strategies meant to exclude the marginalized from recognition, it would be in a better position to make the case that a society that practices capital punishment is not as virtuous as it sometimes asserts. People on the left tend to be so convinced that the virtues stand for things they detest that they fail to recognize that a society that honored them more might be one they could find themselves liking.

The importance of forgiveness can be traced back two thousand years to a religion that commanded obedience, yet, of all the virtues, forgiveness is in many ways the most compatible with modern ideas of self-reliance and personal responsibility. A preprogrammed forgiveness, expressed by rote without the involvement of a human heart, is no forgiveness at all; forgiveness must be given voluntarily or its capacity for reconciliation will be lost. "Nobody can make you forgive," writes Lewis Smedes. "Only a free person can choose to live with an uneven score. Only free people can choose to start over with someone who has hurt them. Only a free person can live with accounts unsettled. Only a free person can heal the memory of hurt and hate."

Forgiveness may be the unappreciated virtue among America's cultural commentators, but its resonance with modern notions of

individual freedom and responsibility is valued in other quarters. Scientists and politicians, both of whom tend to take a hard-nosed approach to the way the world works, are among those who have rediscovered the value of forgiveness. For physicians and psychologists (including those who have little in common with pastoral counseling and theology), the ability to forgive may be associated with the medical benefits that follow from channeling anger in more constructive directions. For politicians, including South Africa's Nelson Mandela, a willingness to forgive one's opponents has the demonstrable advantage of avoiding endless cycles of revenge and counterrevenge. Despite the myriad of unresolved questions raised by forgiveness, there is something to be said for holding on to the idea, surely one of the reasons that so many Americans, no matter how strong their commitments to justice, are determined to do so.

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The Culture of Political Avoidance

Nina Eliasoph

In all corners of the political world, politicians, political theorists, and concerned citizens have been voicing a new enthusiasm for voluntary associations. They rightly say that civic groups offer a unique place for citizens to broaden their emotional and intellectual horizons, enjoy the healthy pleasures of open-ended political conversation, and learn to care about each other and the world. In *Bowling Alone*, for example, Robert Putnam writes that such groups “instill in their members habits of cooperation and public-spiritedness.” Certainly, without the infinite nuances of face-to-face conversation and the bonds people forge through simply gathering together, the world of politics would be impossibly distant, cold, and lifeless.

But it is important to specify just how these groups create a sense of public spirit and what sort of public-spirited citizenship they promote. Just advocating “participation” is not enough. Yes, as Putnam claims, civic groups can serve as “schools for democracy,” helping their members learn to care about the world and talk about their political concerns. But they can also teach members how *not* to care and to silence these concerns.

This became clear to me during the two-and-a-half years that I conducted participant-observation research with volunteers, activists, and recreation club members in a sprawling West Coast suburban area. Inside and outside of their group meetings, and in their encounters with authorities like government and media institutions, I listened to them talk—and not talk—about the wider world. I had expected to learn how everyday conversation in voluntary associa-

tions works the magic of democracy. What I found instead was the cultivation of apathy—apathy that took hard work to produce.

Volunteers: “We Accomplish a Lot!”

The volunteers with whom I worked were poised to combat the specter of futility that haunts voluntary associations in the contemporary United States; central to their mission was convincing all newcomers that “You really can make a difference!” as they often put it. They hoped to communicate their message through the very act of volunteering—and tried to ignore problems that might undermine that message of hope. They tried hard not to express concern for issues that would require too much discussion to solve, and tried to shrink their concerns into tasks that they could define as apolitical, unconnected to the wider world. These citizens thought they could inspire feelings of empowerment within that small circle of concern, and they implicitly believed that helping people *feel* empowered was, in itself, doing something good for the community. In trying so hard to maintain their “can-do” spirit, their optimism, and their hope, volunteers assumed that they had to hush any discussion of far-reaching political problems.

Most meetings featured in-depth discussions of practical fund-raising projects, focusing attention on puzzles that were small and “do-able,” as they put it. For example, in one meeting they lavished detail on a “Royal Dog Steamer” that they planned on bringing to sports events as a fund-raising tool: “It can steam foot-longs, Polish dogs, hot links, regular dogs, sausages, you name it—about 20 at a time!” But when anyone came to a meeting to try to discuss issues more overtly political than, say, a Royal Dog Steamer, members ignored him or her, or quickly changed the subject. For example, Charles, the local NAACP representative and a parent of a high school student, came to one meeting to tell members that a substitute teacher had called students racist names. When the students complained, the authorities said they were “too busy” to deal with their complaint. Charles said the school hired the teacher even though he had a written record of making similar remarks in another school. Charles also said there were often Nazi skinheads outside the schoolyard recruiting at lunchtime.

Charles's deadpan report took my breath away, especially since we all knew about the recent race riot at the movie theater down the block and the Aryan Nation concert scheduled for later that month. But Parent League members remained calm. No one asked what the teacher had actually said, to judge for themselves whether it was racist. They just sat, blandly listening. First, a parent tried to dismiss the problem, remembering how hard it was for her own (white) parents to talk to teachers. Then Geoffrey, a usually mild-mannered member cut in, crossly, "And what do you want of this group? Do you want us to do something . . ." Charles said he just thought more people should know about this incident, and that more parents should be involved in general—not only to accomplish things, but to talk.

Of course, members thought involvement was important, too—but they seemed insulted by Charles's urging for greater parental participation. One parent exclaimed, "Don't underestimate us—we make efficient use of a small number of people! We get a lot done!" The parents concluded by turning to Charles: "It is unfortunate that the incident occurred—happened—but it should go through the proper authorities" (never mind that it already had). Geoffrey's minutes for that meeting reported, "Charles Jones relayed an incident for information," as if it was obvious that there was nothing the group could do. After three quick sentences on Charles, the rest of the minutes described various fund-raising projects:

Someone said that Mr. Hardee [the principal] said we should have bingo games. An extensive discussion on bingo operations ensued. Pam had [the] idea that we have one big fund-raiser each year Trudy suggested a crabfeed, Bob suggested a spaghetti feed

This continued for half of a single-spaced page.

Many parents of color came to one or two meetings and then never returned. I spoke with one who had concluded that the Parent League was "a bunch of white people who don't care about race." This might have seemed an obvious conclusion, but it was incorrect. First, the group treated all troubling issues this way, not just race. Second, about a third of the group was not white, but all members shared this practical culture of political avoidance. Third, behind the scenes, white parents really did care about a whole range of political issues;

these never came up in meetings, but relentlessly arose “backstage,” away from the main group interactions. For example, one volunteer, Debbie, hosted a family from rural Ashburn that was visiting for a big, statewide football game. I overheard this story from Cindy, a parent who was telling it to another parent in her tiny, closet-sized office one day after a meeting. Cindy said:

When they got here, the [rural] parents said, “Oh, thank God.” So Debbie said, “Thank God what?” They said, “Thank God you’re not black. We were worried they’d house us with blacks.” So Debbie said that she told her son to invite all his black friends over for a slumber party! Some of the kids from Auburn had never seen a black person before and they were asking them, “What clothes do you wear?” “What music do you listen to?” Debbie said it was quite a cultural experience.

Cindy and the other volunteers applauded this kind of direct action, but quietly. Similarly, behind the scenes I heard volunteers waxing indignant about the long-standing flood in one classroom, the roof that caved in on another, and the lack of heat and general lack of funding for the school. And they worried about homelessness, the prospect of a military draft, and a whole range of political problems that could not be solved locally by good citizens simply banding together with Royal Dog Steamers. Backstage, these good citizens did care about politics, but “frontstage,” they wanted to avoid the sense of powerlessness that publicly discussing politics could evoke.

The officials who worked with volunteers echoed this assumption—that publicly talking about problems without immediately offering a solution is just pointless, demoralizing complaining. Emphasizing happy public discourse systematically screened certain types of talk out of public circulation. One volunteer, Barney, often tried to start public debate, but social service workers repeatedly moved the debate backstage. Barney was retired; he had developed a second career as a full-time volunteer and public gadfly who constantly tested the limits of the official culture of political avoidance. At an evening meeting, oddly called a “public forum,” a panel of social service workers and police gave speeches about crime and punishment to an audience of about ten people. After the presentations there was some time for questions.

Barney was the first to raise his hand. One officer joked, “You can always count on Barney to say something!” treating him, as usual, as an eccentric old fellow who could always chip in something odd.

Julie, who always stuck up for Barney, said, “I hope so!”

Barney said:

It costs \$20,000 a year to put someone in prison, but that’s not gonna help. What they need is jobs, and good jobs—a job at \$6 an hour only gets you \$12,000 a year. Why not just pay them the extra money, give them a well-paying job, instead of waiting till they have to go to jail and then having to spend almost twice as much for them to not do anything, in jail?

Another volunteer added another question, which the police lieutenant answered first. Then he got back to Barney’s point: “It’s not \$20,000 a year, it’s \$33,000 a year. It’s cheaper to send them to Harvard. Now, they don’t all go through the whole system or every building would be a jail. But, it’s a necessary evil, something society has to have, something society wants.” The lieutenant treated Barney’s question as a request for information and deflected a potential debate.

But backstage, the lieutenant could acknowledge that he *did* understand that Barney was trying to start a political debate. After the panel ended and people were milling around, the lieutenant and Barney stood by the aluminum coffeemaker and donut table. The lieutenant, who was black, said quietly to Barney, as if in confidence, that some huge percentage of the juveniles in jail were black. Under his breath, the lieutenant said, “You know, you gotta wonder, when so many of the kids in jail are black and minorities.” Then, the local head of Child Protective Services scurried over to Barney and also engaged his contentious question under her breath: “I appreciate your question. I read letters in the paper saying ‘put more kids in jail,’ but I don’t agree, either.” Backstage, expressing opinions was acceptable. The two officials made it clear that they had indeed understood that Barney had intended to ignite a debate, but they had assumed that the public forum was no place for that.

Another way to keep discouraging issues at bay was to hone in on a concrete solution to a very large social problem. In one meeting of Just Say No, an anti-drug group, members talked about starting a collection drive for foster children who were turning 18. A member

said 18-year-olds were not supported by the state, so many were simply turned out of foster care to fend for themselves. One volunteer said, “Those kids wouldn’t have *anything* of their own.” The first volunteer had a solution: “*One* thing that 18-year-olds would surely need would be *blankets*.” So, they began planning a drive to gather blankets. With an emphasis on the word “one,” the volunteers left tacit their doubts about the other things homeless teenagers might need—toothbrushes, beds, homes, jobs, education, love. Thinking about all that would be overwhelming.

Staying “Close to Home”

In the ideal image of the public sphere, citizens casually talk politics, widening their horizons by encouraging what Habermas calls “unrestricted communication.” In the United States, we usually imagine that any “restrictions” on public debate must come from outside of the groups themselves—from laws preventing freedom of assembly, or, more subtly, from propaganda that prevents people from learning about politics, or, even more subtly, from long-standing oppression that renders people unable to stand up for themselves. Without dismissing the effects of these restrictions, we can acknowledge that here, participants did *some* of the work of restricting communication themselves: they assumed that talking about politics would only sap vigor from the healthy tasks that voluntary associations realistically could set for themselves, and would intimidate new members.

Thus, in group meetings, volunteers tried hard not to show that they had ever noticed any connections between their genuine local concerns and broader political problems. In interviews, though, it became clear just how much work it took for the volunteers to produce this public display of political disconnection and apathy. Several volunteers simply could not stop talking to me about local environmental problems, especially the nuclear military base—deemed “dangerous” by the Environmental Protection Agency—that was about a mile from most of their homes. When I finally asked why they chose to participate in an anti-drug group, and if they had ever considered “doing something about” the nuclear base, their responses were all the same: the nuclear base was not “close to home” and did

not “touch me personally.” Solving the drug problem was “close to home,” “do-able,” and “in our backyards.”

All these volunteers were within a 20-minute drive of several chemical plants that had four major fires or spills in the time I was doing fieldwork (locals said that the company reimbursed people whose cars had the paint eaten off of them by the soot); a river whose cheese-smelling water was so polluted that all the fish had died; a military station whose soil was so toxic that all the worms at the site had died; and two ozone-depleting factories. Literally, these global problems were in their backyards; environmental issues were no less close to home than drugs. Although they spoke in terms of self-interest, self-interest clearly could not account for their involvement in an anti-drug group rather than an environmental one. So why did they use such language?

By diligently using the language of self-interest, the volunteers avoided having to connect their actions to larger political issues. They, like the rest of us in the U.S., share a culture that devalues public speech, that fails to recognize any good that can come from public discussion itself. Apparent only are the many reasons to shy away from it—fear of discouragement, lack of time, and desire for agreement, to name a few. So when discussing potentially political topics, the volunteers tried hard to accentuate the personal.

Ironically, I witnessed a very similar pattern even among a group of activists who *had* decided to focus on environmental problems and were trying to prevent a toxic incinerator from being built near their neighborhood. Like volunteers, activists’ backstage and frontstage speech differed dramatically. In casual, backstage conversations, activists passionately discussed questions like where waste should go, why so much waste is produced (especially by the U.S. military), what government policies could prevent corporations from producing more waste, and why to be, in principle, against incineration-for-profit. In front of the press, though, these same activists spoke completely differently. Suddenly, the activists presented themselves as panicked “moms” and self-interested property owners. The language would often shift the very moment reporters turned on the cameras and microphones, and shift back again the moment the cameras and microphones got turned off. One activist said to every reporter she

met, “She’s a new mom and I’m an old mom. That’s why we’re in it. We’re worried.” She had been an activist since the civil rights movement, but she always presented herself as a “mom” in more formal settings.

In trying to encourage people to care about the incinerator, these activists had hoped to open up a larger debate about corporate power and the state, to inspire average citizens to ask big political questions. But saying, “I’m a mom who cares only because of self-interest” had the opposite effect; this language invited listeners to avoid questioning the overwhelming political world, and shut debate down.

The Public Minus Politics

Missing from public settings was respect for discussion itself, willingness to risk discouragement and debate about troubling issues that might not be resolved immediately. Of course, discussion does not always generate right decisions—or any decisions at all, for that matter. But saying, “I care but feel powerless” is very different from saying, “I don’t even care!” Saying, “I don’t care” may protect a delicate feeling of empowerment within a small circle of concern, but it does so by silencing broader political questions.

Without such discussion in public, people have no place for actively, collectively forming a will, a community, a vision of the wider world together. They are deprived of the powers to distinguish between what is natural and what can be changed, to say publicly what is right and what is wrong. They are deprived even if they successfully promote local projects that are in their interest. The point is not that once we figure out our real interests, and act on them, we can stop talking and go home. The point is that being able to speak in public can be a good in itself that offers its own kind of power.

When citizens relegate public-spirited dialogue to the private sphere, the public realm appears to most citizens as a spoiled moral environment, populated only by seemingly selfish people who can speak only of narrow reasons for involvement. While it is no doubt true that many powerful speakers enter public debate for sordid reasons, if citizens automatically assume that *everyone* enters *only* for those reasons, we miss a crucial opportunity to cultivate and learn about our own and each other’s broader political ideas. Thus political

ideas become ever more bewildering, and political worries come to feel more like personal woes—privately alarming but publicly unspeakable, like a kind of secret domestic abuse. The lack of learning—and the lack of a shared, public language for political worries—makes it hard for citizens to get together to advocate for better policies. In such a corrupt, vapid public sphere, it is hard for citizens to imagine any good reason for conducting potentially dispiriting political discussion. Thus, the cycle of political evaporation is complete, and we are left with a culture of political avoidance.

With this malnourished folk definition of the public forum in mind, good citizens often avoid discussing politics in public. In fact, claiming not to care about politics can be some good citizens' way of promoting local community involvement. The problem is, such involvement comes at the expense of broader political discussion. The citizens I have described here really did care about the wider political world, but could not express their concerns in the public forum. In this way, a precious moral, intellectual, and emotional good evaporated before reaching public circulation.

As the politicians and political theorists of all stripes insist, civic groups like these are necessary for democracy. But we also need to pay attention to the quality of conversation that takes places within them. To renew American democracy, we need to open up a new kind of civic etiquette that can acknowledge frustration and disagreement without causing groups to crumble, that can welcome these seemingly unpleasant feelings as challenges to overcome instead of threats to ignore.

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Black, White, and Green: A Tale of Integration

Jonathan Eig

On a chrome-bright summer day, with car stereos buzzing and ice-cream pushcarts rolling jingle-jangle outside, Tony LoBue looks out his kitchen window and ticks off a list of families who have moved onto his block in the past few years.

“Grace and Carlos, they’re Hispanic, and so is Jane,” says the 62-year-old retired cop, pointing from one boxy brick bungalow to the next. “Eddie and his wife and their two girls, they’re black. Bernard over there, I think he’s part of that Farrakhan church—but just a nice man.”

When Mr. LoBue bought his corner house 20 years ago, the view was altogether different. This neighborhood on Chicago’s Southwest Side was all white, and most residents liked it that way. In 1966, the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. was spit upon and stoned as he led a march through nearby Marquette Park to promote integration. “The people of Mississippi ought to come to Chicago to learn how to hate,” King said afterward.

But in the intervening years, something strange happened. A neighborhood once held up as a prime example of intransigent white racism evolved into a model of integration.

It started as longtime white residents watched one Chicago neighborhood after another fall to the depredations of white flight—rising crime rates, declining economic activity, and plummeting property values. Worried that the same would soon happen to their area, Mr. LoBue and other Southwest Side residents created something called

the Home Equity Assurance Program. It's an insurance pool funded by a special local tax that protects against a decline in home values, which residents feared an influx of minorities would set off.

Under the plan, if a homeowner can't sell his or her house at its assessed value, insurance will cover the difference. The only catch is that participating residents are required to wait at least five years until a sale below the assessed value entitles them to file a claim.

That catch has been crucial. Having committed to live with their new neighbors for at least a few years, many longtime white residents discovered that integration wasn't the horror they had expected.

In the ten years since the program started, only ten homeowners on the Southwest Side have filed claims. Though the white population has shrunk to about 20 percent of the total (with the rest divided almost evenly between blacks and Hispanics), it is still far greater than in most surrounding areas. Perhaps most tellingly, property values have steadily climbed.

"The rap on Home Equity was that it was devised by white ethnics who were opposed to integration," says MarySue Barrett, president of the Metropolitan Planning Council, a nonprofit devoted to planning and development in Chicago. "But it really turned out to be a force for racial integration and stability."

The Southwest Side is not an urban idyll. Not all recent arrivals have been welcomed with open arms. Residents have learned to live side by side, but they don't mix much and don't share the bonds they did when the area was uniformly white. On balance, though, when Mr. LoBue looks out his kitchen window, he sees mostly progress: "The black man is here to stay, the Hispanic man is here to stay," he says. "If we don't want to get along with each other, we're gonna have a problem."

Urban Developments

Now, cities across the country are beginning to follow Chicago's lead. The Patterson Park community in Baltimore started a home-equity program several years ago based on the Chicago model. Community leaders in Syracuse, N.Y. are developing a similar plan to ease nervousness among residents of middle-class neighborhoods such as Eastwood and Strathmore.

The brick homes along West 66th Street, where Mr. LoBue and his wife live, are small and square and lined up like parts on an assembly line. They were built about 75 years ago, when railroad workers and meatpackers, most of them of Lithuanian, Polish, or Irish origins, were lured by the promise of affordable homes.

Remnants of the neighborhood's white heyday survive. At the corner of California Avenue and Marquette Boulevard stands a statue honoring two Lithuanian pilots who crashed while attempting to fly nonstop from New York to Lithuania. White residents continue to call their neighborhoods by the names of local Catholic parishes.

After World War II, as Chicago's black population exploded, neighborhoods all over the South Side became integrated and then were segregated again as whites moved out. "I seen 'em coming," says Dan Avery, a 72-year-old white man who lives down the block from Mr. LoBue on 66th Street and has been there for 39 years.

Mr. Avery was one of the men in the park that day in 1966 when Dr. King and his peace marchers were attacked. He says he did not participate in the riot, which he calls "terrible," but went to make sure his son stayed out of trouble.

At the time, white flight was gaining speed. Fair housing laws had opened neighborhoods to black families. Hastening the process were "block-busting" real-estate agents who offered one or two white families inflated prices for their homes and then sold the homes to black families. Spreading rumors of an imminent influx of black families, the agents would then buy up white-owned homes at bargain prices and sell them at huge profits to low-income families.

Many of the minority buyers received assistance on their down payments from the federal government, and many, it turned out, couldn't afford to pay for or maintain their homes. The houses changed hands frequently or were eventually abandoned. Pockets of poverty spread westward across the Chicago landscape.

Taking notice of these developments was a community group of stay-at-home moms called the First Tuesday Club in the western suburb of Oak Park. Fearing that growing numbers of minority home buyers would spread panic among longtime residents, they decided in the late 1970s to push for a home-equity insurance program, which

one of the members had read about in an academic paper. As it turned out, the minority families who moved to Oak Park were of a higher economic status than those on Chicago's South Side. And Oak Park not only had more expensive houses, it had higher taxes, which helped fund community services to prevent the spread of poverty.

White flight never hit hard in Oak Park. In 22 years, no one has filed a home-equity claim. The population of the village is about 60 percent white, 30 percent black, and 10 percent Hispanic. The home-equity program lies nearly dormant. "Home buyers like to hear about it," says Rogene Hill, director of community services for Oak Park, "but they don't feel it's necessary to actually enroll."

Mutual Assurance

Inspired by the events in Oak Park, residents of the Southwest Side began collecting petitions in 1977 to create their home-equity program. It took nearly a decade before their efforts captured the attention of local politicians, and even then, the campaign was hindered by the perception among some officials that it was tainted by racial prejudice. "It was controversial at the time," says Alderman Edward M. Burke, who represents much of the Southwest Side in Chicago's city council. "Some people portrayed it as a racist proposal, but it never was. It's not a black or white issue. It's a green issue."

Mr. Burke, like many of his neighbors, has been trying to adapt to the changing community around him. He and his wife have been raising an African-American foster child, and Mr. Burke has taken some Spanish language lessons.

The state of Illinois finally approved the home-equity program in 1990, creating three home-equity districts in Chicago: two on the Southwest Side and one on the Northwest Side. The Northwest Side program, like the one in Oak Park, benefited from the relative prosperity of the area. The Southwest Side presented the most important test of the program's ability to stabilize a neighborhood in flux. White flight had already begun, but the neighborhood was still dominated by working-class white families, a lot of them headed by policemen, firefighters, and other city workers—people who had jobs that required them to live within the city limits. Racism lurked. In 1986, a neighborhood Ku Klux Klan rally drew 3,000 spectators.

The program taxes homeowners—all homeowners—12¢ for every \$100 of the assessed value of their homes. For most people, that's \$15 or \$20 a year. But only those residents who pay a one-time fee of \$125 for a home appraisal qualify to file claims if their homes lose value. To date, only 4,500 homeowners out of the Southwest Side's 60,000 households have enrolled in the program.

From the start, though, officials have said the mere existence of the program has been enough to spread confidence. "It was a psychological hand-holding tool," says Jim Capraro, a longtime resident and executive director of the nonprofit Greater Southwest Development Corp. "It calmed people who wanted to live in an integrated neighborhood but were worried about losing equity in their biggest investment."

Some whites moved out, and many of those who moved in after them were minorities. But instead of declining, the region covered by the program prospered. Median family income rose to about \$44,000 in 1998 from \$31,000 in 1990, while the median home value rose from \$60,000 to \$81,000.

"My honest opinion?" Mr. LoBue says. "Without home equity, 90 percent of the people would've left. They would have taken the best price they could get at the time."

Livia and Ed Villarreal were among the first minority families to move to 66th Street, a few doors down from Mr. LoBue. Livia is a native of Puerto Rico and Ed, a television news programmer, is a second-generation Mexican American. The welcome was friendly, they say, in part because Livia made it a point to get involved organizing block parties and volunteering at the neighborhood elementary school.

"What's been good is that we've gone through the change and our home values haven't suffered," Mrs. Villarreal says.

But when the first black family, the Snulligans, moved onto 66th Street three years after the Villarreals, the reception was less warm. "When they moved in, two or three families moved out just because of that," says Mrs. Villarreal.

Gayle Snulligan says there were one or two awkward moments with neighbors, but when a few of them moved out, she told herself it was a coincidence. “Maybe there was some hostility,” she says, “but I don’t remember feeling any.”

A New Era?

Today, about two-thirds of the residents along 66th Street are Hispanic, the rest a mix of black, white, and Arab. They appear to live without conflict. Neighbors spend many hours rocking on their front porches or strolling down the tree-lined sidewalks, the serenity interrupted by the occasional plane coming in for landing at Midway Airport. When school is out, the neighborhood children, strong in number, play together.

While the children interact, their parents, for the most part, do not. There is a growing feeling among residents that something is missing—that a sense of community is giving way to disconnection. Even in Marquette Park, where thousands of people turn out for picnics, basketball games, and fishing on sunny weekend days, activities are centered around family, not neighborhood.

Francisco Martinez, a 55-year-old forklift operator from Mexico, draws this take on neighborhood relations: “I understand in this country people here have jobs, and they don’t want to talk.”

Mrs. Snulligan, who received a chilly reception seven years ago, says she has no time to greet newer arrivals to the neighborhood, including the black family that moved in across the street 18 months ago. “Most of these people here, they don’t speak a lot of English,” says the public-school teacher. “We say hello.”

One of the block’s longtime white residents blames the newcomers. After having his garage door spray-painted three times by vandals, Bob Stashak, a 56-year-old machinist with the city’s water department, has lost his patience. “I have nothing against Mexicans,” he says. “But do I dislike them? Yes. When you’re in this country, you should learn the language and the customs.” He has similarly unkind words for the black home-buyers who arrived years ago. Yet he has chosen to stay in the neighborhood because the home-equity program

has preserved the value of his home and will help him afford retirement. Still, he says, “I find this whole minority shit annoying.”

Mr. LoBue, who lives across the street and has seen the graffiti marks painted on his neighbor’s garage door, says he understands Mr. Stashak’s anger. His sister lived in the nearby Douglas Park neighborhood, which isn’t covered by the home-equity program and where people eventually stopped bothering to clean up graffiti. After crime rates soared, she sold her house—her only significant investment—for far less than it had once been worth.

“I think we get along better here in this mixed neighborhood than they do in some of the solid black neighborhoods on the South Side or some of the solid Hispanic neighborhoods on the West Side,” Mr. LoBue says. If the neighbors have not all become best friends, he says, at least they respect the community as a whole. “Bernard, he puts in more time on his grass than I do,” he says of his black Muslim neighbor. “Go look.”

Over the past ten years, the Southwest Side home-equity program has collected more than \$7.7 million in tax revenue while paying only \$60,000 in claims. The interest on that revenue pays the \$340,000 annual budget for the quasi-governmental agency that runs the program. With the Southwest Side stabilized, officials are planning to dip into their accounts for the first time to finance low-interest home-improvement loans and to create a marketing campaign to attract more well-to-do residents and younger white families.

“We just got our first Starbucks—that’s a big thing,” says Helen Juozapavicius, executive director of the program and a longtime Southwest Side resident. She says vintage homes are being refurbished and new homes are being sold for up to \$350,000, a price that would have seemed absurd a few years ago. “Over ten years, the growth has been phenomenal, but now it seems people are really catching on.”

Indeed, today the home-equity program serves as a reminder that racial integration often is a matter of economic assimilation. Many of the black families that moved in a decade ago are now enrolling in the program because they fear that the new wave of Hispanic home

buyers will damage property values, and Hispanic buyers are signing up because they're not so sure about the next generation of Hispanics.

“This neighborhood has changed,” says Hector Flores, a Mexican-American who lives on 66th Street. “There are more Mexicans coming here. To be honest with you, I don't think that's very good.”

Among Friends: An Interracial Dialogue

Often it has been suggested that true, candid conversations between white and black Americans are, at best, difficult. Here follows one that the participants—Enola Aird, Amitai Etzioni, and Leah Aird Carter—consider a genuine dialogue. Enola is an activist mother; Amitai is a university professor at The George Washington University; Leah is Enola’s daughter and was, at the time of this conversation, a 15-year-old sophomore at a high school in New Haven, Connecticut. The text published here has been approved for publication by all three of them.

The dialogue started some ten years ago when Enola and Amitai happened to sit next to each other at a taping of a Fred Friendly seminar in Williamsburg, Virginia. They started to discuss communitarian ideas. Following the discussion, Enola joined the just-formed Communitarian Network—of which Amitai is the founder and director—and has since participated in many of its meetings and task forces, and has addressed audiences on its behalf.

Enola and Amitai also became friends, not the kind who call each other every day with “guess what happened today?” stories, but the kind who care about each other, can have frank conversations, and allow their respect and affection for one another to contain whatever differences arise.

The dialogue recorded here resulted from a misunderstanding. Enola and Amitai were lunching together at GWU when Enola mentioned her family’s summer plans. She said that she was “looking forward to spending time in Oak Bluffs again,” a town on Martha’s

Vineyard. Amitai asked Enola if he correctly understood that Enola meant she would be spending time within what is basically an exclusively African-American community. Enola responded that, indeed, Oak Bluffs was a place where she could “be with her own kind, and relax”—or that is the way Amitai remembered the conversation. He wrote to Enola saying that he was saddened by this comment; why did she feel she could “not relax with people like me?” Enola responded with a letter, in which she wrote:

“Memory fails me as to the exact words I used, but I am afraid that we do not share the same recollection about the tone and the spirit of our conversation. The words you quote (‘to be with our own kind,’ ‘. . . to be able to let our hair down, to tell our kinds of jokes’) have about them an acerbic quality that does not sound to me (and to my husband and children) like words that I would have spoken. But I have often spoken with passion—and I have no doubt that I did on that day—about the sheer joy of being able to retreat to one of the few places in this country that has for years been a summer home for many African American families, about the comfort of being with a critical mass of other Black people of shared values, and about our profound need to have our children be able to play with other Black children and to bask in the glow of a community of adults who look like their parents.

“Your reaction to our conversation reminds me in some ways of the reaction of white students at universities who wonder why all the Black people are sitting at the same table. It has always struck me as odd that white people fail to recognize that they too are all sitting at the same table. That is to say, there are many vacation spots that are still all-white. Our family has on more than one occasion been the only Black family in some wonderful summer retreat and I have never heard a white person wonder aloud ‘why do we all choose to vacation together?’

“Be that as it may, Stephen [Enola’s husband] and I genuinely enjoy the company of Black people. Even as we have moved freely and comfortably through many different social settings, we have always chosen to spend plenty of time with other Black folk. We have tried to share that joy with our children who have grown up in mostly white communities. It is simply a fact of life in the United States that

many Black families who have embarked on the journey toward integration find that they must be quite intentional about staying connected to other Black people—lest their children lose all sense of their rich racial and cultural heritage.

“I have a deep and abiding appreciation for the different sensibilities of people of distinct racial and ethnic backgrounds, and I do not, in any way, begrudge their desire to spend time with people who share their heritage or heritages.

“I cannot agree with your conclusion that feeling comfortable with people of like background necessarily means that communities exclude people who are different. The fact that my family and I feel comfortable in Oak Bluffs for part of the summer does not mean that we feel uncomfortable in our neighborhood in Cheshire, Connecticut, where we are the only African Americans. Or that we feel uncomfortable in Aspen, Colorado, where we have also vacationed for most of the last 15 summers and where seeing other African Americans is still a fairly rare experience.

“Our family has many affinity groups. They include the mostly white environments in which we work, where our children go to school, and in which we often socialize—as well as Jack and Jill, a Black club for mothers and children, and one of the oldest Black Episcopal churches in New England, which happens to be a church home to many parishioners of West Indian heritage. We are part of many affinity groups—all of which we have chosen. In a truly free society, surely it cannot be the case that we should not be free to choose among affinity groups based on race.

“For many, though by no means all, African Americans, things in the United States have changed dramatically. The growing number of interracial marriages in the United States suggests that increasing numbers of people are building their communities on bases other than race. We see many more interracial couples in Oak Bluffs these days than we used to, and even Jack and Jill is having to face the challenges of intermarriage in the African-American community. The day may come sooner than you think when in line with your wish, Amitai, ‘communities would be made up on the basis of what people chose rather than what they were born with.’

“As for our family, our rich racial and cultural heritage—what we were born with—is still very important to us and we are committed to doing all that we can to nourish it and pass it on to our children, so that they can pass it on to theirs and on and on. We are part of the first generation of Black Americans to enter the major institutions of U.S. society en masse. We still remember the times when no Black people held high positions. We still remember many of the firsts for Black people—Jackie Robinson, Thurgood Marshall. We remember our parents rooting for the race when someone Black made us feel proud. It often seems strange to our children because they have grown up under vastly different circumstances, but we still root for the race.

“It may seem funny but a large part of the reason that we like to be around other African Americans is that we hope and pray—and want to maximize the chances—that our daughter and our son may someday meet and marry the children of other Black people. We remember growing up feeling that we were not as good because we were not white, and we remember how hard we worked through the days of the Black Power and Black nationalist movements to grow to love ourselves and to love our people. We were determined even before we brought our children into the world to make sure that they would love themselves and their people as a foundation for loving others.”

Following Enola’s letter, she, Amitai, Leah, and Andrew, Enola’s son, met for lunch. Here is the way the conversation developed, with Leah and Andrew largely listening in, but with Leah making a cardinal contribution of her own toward the end of the give-and-take.

AMITAI ETZIONI: Much of what you wrote, I am delighted about. The place where I want to start is the concept of an affinity group that you introduce into the dialogue. Let’s say a group of people like Mozart. They, almost by definition, need to tell people who don’t want to do Mozart that, look, we don’t hate you and we’re not violating any laws about discrimination. We’re just a group of people who want to play Mozart. If you want to do Bach, sorry, this is not your place. Is that fair?

ENOLA AIRD: On the question of Mozart and Bach, I think so; we ought to be able to do that.

AMITAI: If we, for a moment, take for granted that all groups distinguish between members and nonmembers, and thus exclude some people, we come to the question by what criteria it's okay for them to do that. They may be 99.9 percent the same. On that one point, they are different; that's the basis for the group. And so, by the way, I think one reason liberals are so focused on human rights is because they dislike groups. Liberals stress that every person has the right to free speech, everyone has the right to vote, and so on. They don't recognize a need to recognize, indeed respect, particularistic differences among people. But communitarians recognize that in addition to rights, which are universal, we have particular obligations to our own kind, from family to community. Hence, for us, the question is what are legitimate criteria for exclusion rather than whether or not we should exclude. We have laws that say you cannot do this on certain grounds. You cannot do this on the basis of race, and so on. But otherwise, we do. Now, affinity groups, as you emphasized, are based on choice, not on given attributes we cannot change.

ENOLA: Right, but then it depends on the nature of the group and the reasons for which they're coming together. Suppose you have a group that happens to be very interested in jazz. At one point in the history of the United States, people who would have been interested in jazz would have been largely African American. That's not so true anymore, thanks to Wynton Marsalis and Ken Burns. And also because the music has evolved. And it seems to me that would have been a legitimate group that would have been largely defined by race but mostly about an interest in this particular kind of music. Am I missing your point here?

AMITAI: No, no. You are very much on point. The difference is exactly the one you identify. I am mainly concerned if people want to get together on the basis of something that is ascribed, the things you are born with that you cannot change. So, if the criterion is something you can acquire, like a taste in jazz, but it just so happens that all the people who do are 25 years or younger, this seems fine. But if I want to join a group that says, in order to join this group, you have to be 25 years or younger, and I cannot change my age. . .

ENOLA: Then we have a problem, right. Or if you have a group that says you have to be black to belong to this group.

AMITAI: Or—to join Jack and Jill.

ENOLA: Right, it's very interesting, Jack and Jill.

AMITAI: It's not an affinity group.

ENOLA: It isn't?

AMITAI: You can define the word any way you want, but now we are dealing with a group whose membership is defined by an ascribed criterion. Whatever I do, I cannot qualify.

ENOLA: It's very interesting because it started out, of course, in response to segregated life conditions as an attempt by black middle-class people to create for their children an affinity group around certain—not just race, but values. Achievement, success. What's very interesting now is that Jack and Jill is dealing with the issue of interracial marriage. Andrew, my son, is, for example, a Jack and Jill young man. His wife will be a legacy, entitled to join Jack and Jill by virtue of his membership. She will automatically come into Jack and Jill if she wishes and their children will automatically come in. Now, if Andrew were to marry a person outside of the black community, I think based on the way that the thing is evolving, she would be able to come into Jack and Jill. We have a white mother in our chapter of Jack and Jill because her husband is black and their children are interracial, and I think we wouldn't, given the reasons that gave rise to Jack and Jill, we're not in a position to say, "You can't join this group." We're not the only chapter that faces this challenge. Increasingly our people are choosing to marry outside of their race. I must say, for me, and for my family, it's not always an easy change.

AMITAI: Talk to me about that. I can see why one wants to preserve one's heritage.

ENOLA: I am concerned with what seems to me to be, what can only be described as a flight away from black women by black men. I think there's something troublesome. That does not negate the fact that I treat all people with respect; in fact, I always try to go out of my way to be welcoming of people who find themselves in my social circle by virtue of their intermarriage into the African-American community. I try very hard to do that. That doesn't mean that I am not hurt by it as a black woman and as the mother of a black daughter because it is a

phenomenon that affects the marriageability of black women. I'm concerned that the numbers of African-American men who choose not to marry African-American women suggest a flight away from black women.

AMITAI: Let's take this for the moment to another community. In the Jewish community, 50 percent of Jews marry outside their faith and there's a big debate in the Jewish community about that. Again, people say that's wrong. They say, "My daughter and my son should marry inside the faith because they need to maintain their heritage." And there are so many people leaving that their heritage is in danger. Now, is that your line of argument? Is that what you see?

ENOLA: That is partly it; it's a matter of heritage. But it's not exclusively a matter of heritage because you can try to maintain your heritage, your African-American heritage and your white heritage, if you're an interracial child. But for me, there's more. I don't know how familiar you are with Brazil and marriage patterns there. But in Brazil it is said that "money whitens." There is a tendency for people of dark skin who achieve a certain economic status to marry "up," they say. They tend to marry people who are lighter than they are, not darker. It's that dynamic that comes with a deep and sustained sense of inferiority within a group of people that I'm concerned about. So that if people marry incidentally outside the race, that's gonna happen. And it's okay, in my view. But if there does seem to be a pronounced pattern almost everywhere you go, as I do see in professional circles, and there'll be black men and white wives. I'm often the only black wife. That's very disturbing to me. Because that makes me wonder, given our history of shame, inferiority: what's really going on here? And what's really going on here, it seems to me, is very negatively affecting black women. And I'm enough of a nationalist to worry about this.

AMITAI: I believe I understand what you're saying, but there's one word that struck me. Why do you call it nationalist?

ENOLA: Well, maybe it's not the right word, but during the Sixties, and before, there was this idea of black nationalism. The sense that black people are a nation and that we have responsibilities to ourselves and to each other as members of a nation. I was quite taken with that idea when I was growing up, and it's a part of me. And my husband, Stephen Carter, is in the same vein, I think, and a lot of what he was

writing about in his first book was more black nationalist than black conservative, although he got painted with a black conservative brush. But it was very much the sense that we're a nation, we ought to see ourselves as a nation within our nation. We ought to do things to support the building up of the nation—including strong black family building. Sort of hunker down, not out of a sense of inferiority, but a sense of power that comes from building up the nation. So that's what I'm talking about. Obviously not a very well-rooted concept in the African-American community these days. But when we came of age, that was what was appealing to me and helped me to develop my sense of myself as a black person.

AMITAI: The reason I raise a question is about that particular word, not the idea. The idea of maintaining one's group and that we should not reject it or escape it, I fully appreciate and share some of it. But the term nation, as distinct from all the other words—community, culture, group—implies a fully drawn, extraterritorial entity. Farrakhan for instance called on African Americans to separate out of the white community and create a separate nation. I don't think that's what you mean.

ENOLA: No, it's a nationalist sentiment. Obviously we haven't lived our lives in the ways some of our cohorts did, who still fight for an independent nation.

AMITAI: *60 Minutes* showed pictures at Duke [University] where all the black students sit at one table and all the white students sit at the other one. Are you saying there's nothing wrong with that picture?

ENOLA: There could be something wrong with that picture. John McWhorter has written this book called *Losing the Race: Self-Sabotage in Black America*. It depends on the reasons you're sitting at the same table. If you're sitting at the same table because you're cowering in your boots and you're afraid and you're seeking comfort from one another, that's very different from the situation in which you're sitting at the same table because you're confident and you're plotting how you're gonna get the best grades in the class together, helping each other. Very different. And McWhorter's view is that an inordinate number of African-American children, young people, are sitting at the same table because they're intimidated and they want to with-

draw from the larger community because they just don't feel they can do it.

AMITAI: I guess you can go from table to table and check why people do it. The question is. . .

ENOLA: I've never checked, but my sense is that white people are doing it totally unselfconsciously. I've always had this feeling that on the whole black people care a lot more about what white people think than white people [care] about what black people think. White people, it seems, are just living their lives. Many black people are almost compulsively preoccupied with what white people are thinking. And that comes with, I think, being a minority. White people most of the time are just going about their business. They're not consciously saying, let's make a white table. They're just saying, hey, whoever comes, sits here. But black people tend to consciously make a black table.

I remember when I went to college. I went just right after the height of the Black Power movement and it was Barnard and Columbia and the riots and all that. I wanted to be part of the black table, and when I went to law school, I did the same thing. And when I go to campuses today, as I did when I was in college and I see other black people, I'm very deliberate about engaging at some level with them. Because there's some measure of solidarity that I think we should show by virtue of the situation that we find ourselves in, coupled with the color of our skin.

AMITAI: We are talking about social life. We obviously are integrated in the classroom and at work. We can go from here in two directions. We can either segregate the social fabric and say there's nothing wrong with it. Both sides do it. Or we can see we need a mixture. We need some occasions where we can meet in our groups, but we need also some situations where we meet socially across those lines. Because otherwise we're going to be a very divided society.

ENOLA: First of all, I don't think we have a problem. Maybe because I'm so alarmed about the rate of interracial relationships and marriage and the implications for black women, but I don't think we have a problem when it comes to people meeting socially across racial lines.

AMITAI: Should we talk figures for a moment?

ENOLA: Yes, you're right. It's not as overwhelming as I thought. And I've looked at the figures. Though at the levels where you find the most accomplished, high status males it is, I think, significant.

AMITAI: Very much so, I think you're right.

ENOLA: There are not insignificant numbers of African-American women who marry white men. Though there are significantly lower numbers. I think it's about 50 percent of the rate. But that's not as bad as I thought, actually.

AMITAI: If you had a magic lever you would increase the separate tables and decrease the social interaction?

ENOLA: I think, to be perfectly honest with you, I think that I'm a dying breed. I would. . .

AMITAI: You said you are alarmed about the interaction?

ENOLA: I am because of my children. Because I have become more and more convinced through my research and my work that there's a lot of unfinished emotional business in the black community that needs to be taken care of. Particularly around issues of self-worth and relationships that we've just not attended to. As Orlando Patterson has argued in *Rituals of Blood*, slavery was devastating in its effects on relationships between black men and black women, and those effects are still with us today. And I think that has an effect on this whole issue.

AMITAI: Can I ask Leah about the same thing?

ENOLA: Sure.

LEAH AIRD: I think that it's partially just a function of the way that I've grown up that I'm basically pretty much in favor of really integrating. The school I'm at is mostly white, and a lot of my friends are white. And, they're just my friends. And I wouldn't give them up. I wouldn't give them up just because they're not my same race. And about the issue of intermarriage: I don't know, it sounds like, I guess, hard to know that it might be hard for me to find someone to marry me because I'm black. But I think if people are really in love with other people they shouldn't really have much regard for their race.

AMITAI: I don't think it's going to be hard for you to find people to marry you. Mark my words. How old are you now?

LEAH: 15.

ENOLA: I think that this is a function of the forward motion of history and the conditions under which our children have been raised. I expect her to believe what she does because she's had a totally different life. And she and Andrew are wonderful people. And we have often had disagreements, although we don't have them as much anymore, Leah and I. Because I am sort of locked into this idea, you know, having come of age in the Sixties and the Seventies when there was very much this, again, nationalist sentiment. And so yes, that's what you did. If you were a good nationalist, your goal would be to get married to a black person and have lots of black babies so that the nation would go on. Our children do not live in that kind of experience. And we accept that. That doesn't prevent us from trying to do what we can to maximize the chances that they might happen upon someone from their own race with whom they might have something in common, shared values, etc. And be able to build a life.

AMITAI: Do you realize that your line of argument leads us to the point that if one group self-segregates, it's okay. But if another group does it, that would not be okay.

ENOLA: That's right. It's a reaction. That mindset is a reaction to the conditions existent when I was growing up. And that's why I think, when all is said and done, I can't stand in the way of this. This is going to happen. I may feel alarmed or saddened or whatever, but it's going to happen. And it's probably the right thing to have happen. But I'm trying to explain honestly how I feel and what informs my feelings.

AMITAI: My older African-American friends—present company *not* included—often tell me they feel discriminated against every day. When they try to get a cab, it won't stop for them; when they go to a shop, the shopkeeper keeps an eye on them thinking they're going to steal and such. Do you feel that way?

LEAH: I have to admit that I don't really do a lot, mostly I just go to school. And I don't really feel that way. There was one incident when there was a lady in a store. I was there with my brother and a friend of ours, and she was following us around. I mean it might have been because we were teenagers, and it might have been because we were black, I don't know. But I don't feel that generally happens to me a lot, but I do believe that it does happen to some people.

AMITAI: And when you get an “A,” you feel you got it because you deserve it?

LEAH: There was one incident when I was in a really hard class. And it was an accelerated class, and this teacher after the first quiz suggested that I go to the normal class. And as far as I know, he didn’t suggest this to everyone, but basically the whole class did badly on the quiz. But I don’t actually know.

ENOLA: She was the only black person in the class.

LEAH: Yes. So, the thought sort of crossed my mind that maybe it was because I was black, and he thought maybe she can’t handle this, you know.

AMITAI: So what happened in between, so he suggested it and you said no?

LEAH: Yeah, I basically said, he said you might be happier in the other class and I said no, because I didn’t want to quit. I’m glad I didn’t.

AMITAI: Great, good for you, good for us.

ENOLA: But she also had parents who were very tuned into this, perhaps too much so. So of course, that was our first reaction, that race was the reason why he was doing it. If Leah had wanted to quit, we would not have let her quit. Because that was just too much of a challenge to us. So we said okay, we’ll give her everything she needs, all the support she needs in order to be able to show him at the end of the year, as she did, that she was extremely capable and that she should have been there.

AMITAI: Good. Good for everybody. The teacher may have learned something, too.

ENOLA: I think he did.

LEAH: I do have black friends. It’s not like I don’t have any black friends. Some of my best friends are black. It’s just, I think, a function of being in the environment that I’m in that I do have a lot of white friends.

AMITAI: I’m going to differ with you about one thing. So far I really, truly understand and appreciate. . . I hope to have a world in which no

one has to work twice as hard (or at all) to be treated as equal. As long as that takes place it's just one more piece of evidence that we're not doing things right.

ENOLA: Well, we've raised our children that way because we still see the operation of racism and discrimination. Stephen writes about it in one of his books. Sometimes it even works in the opposite direction, that is to say, they don't expect very much so when you do a little bit, they think, "Oh wow, this is really great." I think it'll be a while before that rule—before we'll be able to throw it away. For black people, anyway.

AMITAI: Andrew Hacker and others have written about the fact, something which I actually don't find, that black-white conversations are very awkward. People are very afraid to say things lest they be offensive. Do you agree with that?

ENOLA: Oh yeah, I agree. I think people are afraid because there's not a tremendous level of trust. I don't know why it is that I'm not afraid. Well, I trust you, for one thing, and I do think that these issues have to be discussed. The issue, for example, of black women, and I think a lot of black women feel this way, black women's concern about the loss of black men is something that people don't want to talk about because it's very touchy and very painful. But it's a really important issue that affects whether or not there's going to be a black community. I have emotionally accepted the fact that this is going to happen. I think it's lamentable because I think it's happened before black people have had a chance to get themselves and their relationships psychologically and emotionally healthy.

AMITAI: Let me now take this back to where this conversation started. Now you are married. You are married of course the right way.

ENOLA: Thank goodness.

AMITAI: But you still say, not because you want to keep the community going and so on, that you want to spend the summer in Oak Bluffs rather than, say, in Edgartown. You're not doing this out of social service, right? You're doing this because you feel good there?

ENOLA: It's really selfish; I feel good.

AMITAI: That's where you hurt my feelings.

ENOLA: Really? I feel very good in Aspen. We're in a totally different group of people. It's a movable feast, every seminar is different. We meet different people every year and bond with them in a different way.

AMITAI: Where is it you're going in Aspen, the Aspen Institute?

ENOLA: The Institute, right. And Stephen does the executive seminar, so we're always. . .

AMITAI: Oh okay, this is not a social thing.

ENOLA: No it isn't.

AMITAI: The social part is especially relevant. That's where we really meet each other as persons, not as teacher-student, not as merchants. . .

ENOLA: I can say that I have very good friends who are white. I have a friend who is an executive at Paramount Pictures. We worked together, but we have a friendship beyond work.

AMITAI: As we do.

ENOLA: Right, right. But the comfort level, you know, it's a funny thing and, I don't want to digress too much, but I think that this matter of how long black people have been free, I mean really free, has an impact on this. Never feeling quite at home with the "other," black people with white people to be specific, for good reason. I think that's the thing that accounts for it the most. We haven't really been free to move about that long. It's scarcely been a generation since the passage of the Fair Housing Act of 1968, and housing patterns are still segregated. And that for me makes all the more remarkable the fact that we've been able to do as much as we have. That doesn't mean we don't have a lot of work to do, obviously we do, but it is remarkable that in 30-something years we're able to function as well as we do. But the fact is we still need—because of all that has gone before, all that damage which we again have not spent time trying to sort out and come to terms with. And one of the things I'm advocating for is that we really do need to have within our community a kind of internal reparations movement. Not just the external reparations movement that Randal Robinson and others are talking about. But how do we make ourselves whole emotionally, in terms of recognizing what

we've been through and confronting it, dealing with it, and healing and recovering?

AMITAI: That's a wonderful place to close this because, hopefully at that point, you know we're not going to need what I guess people would call self-segregation.

ENOLA: Right. I think that people will then be in a healthier place. I think that part of the reason that people have to retreat is because there is still a lot of pain. There's still a lot of need for comfort and healing.

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THE COMMUNITY BOOKSHELF

Human Nature Fights Back

Paul Lichterman

Francis Fukuyama, *The Great Disruption: Human Nature and the Reconstitution of Social Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1999), 354 pp.

Lots of people worry about the fraying of social ties. But Francis Fukuyama has a distinctive slant on the problem—and the solution. In *The Great Disruption*, Fukuyama argues that from the 1960s to the 1990s, social ties weakened across the industrialized globe, disrupting social order. At first, his argument sounds like Robert Putnam's *Bowling Alone* gone international. But *The Great Disruption* was published a year before Putnam's book hit the stands, and Fukuyama conceives the problem of social connectedness somewhat differently. Rather than emphasize rates of civic group membership, as Putnam has, Fukuyama assesses increasing rates of crime, divorce, and births to single mothers, and decreasing levels of trust in social institutions. According to Fukuyama, these are signs of a decline in social ties—but outlining this problem is only half of his story.

In fact, Fukuyama's account of social ties in the industrialized world avoids the decline-and-fall narrative that abounds in many accounts of recent social trends. For a change, things are not bad and getting worse at an increasingly rapid rate. Rather, things were bad, now they are getting better again. In developing this unconventional

argument, Fukuyama has read broadly: genetics, management science, demography, and criminology all inform this book's big picture of how Western industrial societies fell apart, and how they might be falling back together again.

There are two big players in Fukuyama's story. First is the postindustrial economy. During the past several decades, the United States and other highly developed, manufacturing-based societies evolved into societies built upon information and service economies. And as information circulated ever more freely and quickly, people in postindustrial societies gained tremendous freedom to carve out their own, personal space—weakening communal traditions in the process.

Enter, then, the second big player, one to which Fukuyama gives more attention: moral individualism. Cultivating the individual freedoms that postindustrial societies have made available, we loosened our allegiances to communities, families, and institutions. Individualism—not economic inequality, bad government, or the excesses of affluence—weakened social ties. It was because of those weaker social ties that crime and divorce increased, while social trust plummeted. Broader social connections started to shrivel, especially in the United States. And, as one of the book's memorable insights has it, Americans' "radius of trust" shrank. The neighborhood watch and the political interest group, not the Kiwanis club and the broad-based political party, are paradigmatic groups in a society with a small radius of trust.

After defining the "great disruption," the second section of the book discusses the forces that help social order reconstitute itself. Here, Fukuyama's focus turns to human nature. Human biology and psychology impel us to create moral rules, and human reason leads us to solve problems of cooperation even without the direction of a central authority. Cooperativeness is hard-wired into our brains. We gravitate toward people who can practice reciprocity with us. And our natural propensities lead us to invest in our own reputations as good community members and keep track of others' reputations. Repeated experience with reciprocal exchanges in small communities generates norms of trust and cooperation—what Fukuyama and many others now call "social capital." Creating social capital, it turns out, is part of the human condition.

As an example, Fukuyama points to a daily ritual played out in suburban Washington, D.C.: commuters line up for rides with drivers who seek enough passengers to drive in the expedient “high-occupancy vehicle” lane of the expressway. No one told the commuters to queue up; ride-sharing evolved spontaneously, taking advantage of new highway regulations that followed the 1973 oil crisis. Not all the big problems of social order can be resolved with civility on a small scale, Fukuyama realizes. But he stresses that liberal democratic societies need more of the kind of trust and cooperation that has been getting these morning commuters to their jobs in less time.

Of course, few people live out their entire lives in small communities. The egalitarian virtues of local, secular civic life do not provide enough structure for large-scale communities—nation-states—which instead require the hierarchical orders of politics and religion, Fukuyama maintains. Fortunately, or maybe inescapably, human beings have a natural penchant for hierarchy, or at least hierarchies that give us a chance to be near the top. And Fukuyama contends that in modern societies, with their multiple sources of status, most people will be able to climb at least one status hierarchy a satisfying distance. But maintaining a stable political hierarchy is not the challenge of the day in the advanced industrial societies that have endured the great disruption. It is the horizontal ties of social capital—the civic virtues of reciprocity—that need renewal, and these can only be facilitated, not simply mandated, from the top.

So what are the prospects for rebuilding social capital and expanding the radius of trust? The book’s final, short section argues that they’re better than many critics think. The postindustrial, capitalist economy produced the great disruption, but it also offers new opportunities for cooperation between self-directed equals—at least in the world of high-tech work. Fukuyama is confident that as the dialectic of technological change and social capital continues to unfold, postindustrial capitalist societies will continue to produce the social capital that they need “in the long run.” In fact, Fukuyama is confident enough to propose that social order is already falling together again in the United States. In the past decade, rates of crime, divorce, illegitimacy, and distrust slowed or reversed in many of the greatly disrupted nations. Our “innate human capacities for reconstructing social order” give Fukuyama hope for the future of liberal democracy.

No narrow specialist, Fukuyama provides a broad-based reading of recent history and the human condition. Such an ambitious project opens itself to many challenges. Sometimes the relations between the big players are not as clear as they might be. How did the postindustrial economy lead to what Fukuyama calls a “culture of intensive individualism?” Did the individualism of the marketplace “spill over” into the world of social ties and corrode them? Or is it that technological innovation creates more social disruption and less community—thus more individualism? The book offers both accounts; in the second one, individualism is simply an absence of traditional culture, not a long-standing culture in itself. Fukuyama is not the first observer to indict individualism for social ills. Given the pivotal role individualism plays in his narrative, he left me craving some fresher insights on this oft-maligned usual suspect.

I also would have liked to learn more about the new postindustrial social order that is now falling into place. Where, exactly, is it? Fukuyama points to shifts in business management as evidence of a new kind of cooperation—the move toward “flatter” organizations with less hierarchy and more self-direction for employees. Flatter organizations and informal ties help professionals cooperate for the good of their firms and their own careers. These relationships both require and regenerate a certain kind of social capital. But how does this horizontally ordered world of professional networking tell us anything about social connectedness outside of work, where, as Fukuyama observes, moral conservatives like Dr. Laura Schlessinger and the Promise Keepers promote their own alternatives to individualism? To Fukuyama, this moral conservatism may be a sign that Americans are strengthening their social fiber, reweaving their ties. Surges of moral conservatism do not convince me, though, that Americans’ radius of trust is expanding; they just as easily may signal the opposite.

Readers with a communitarian imagination might ask how this wide-ranging account can help people create societies that are civic-minded and good, as well as orderly. As *The Great Disruption* tells it, powerful forces have shaped society without much group conflict and without publics. Epic technological shifts, ocean-sized cultural “spillovers,” social corrosion on a global scale, the timeless certainty of human nature—is there room in this drama for thoughtful, active

citizenship? It may not require much reflection for suburbanites to cooperate in the interest of quicker commutes, but it makes sense to think that public debate, and moral reflection, have some role in the project of reconstituting the social order, locally and nationally. How, for instance, can diverse neighborhoods agree on what kinds of policing are fairest and most likely to make public spaces more inviting? How can parents and teachers agree on what standards public schools should uphold? How should Americans think about divorce—is it always an unambiguously bad thing for individuals and for society? In other words, what kind of social order do we want? It is hard to imagine reconstituting social order in a democratic society without some serious conversations about priorities and inevitable disagreements. Those conversations, in turn, require some carefully cultivated civic trust. Neither the market-driven networking of the professional world, nor the hierarchical relations of the state, nor spontaneous cooperation are likely to generate that trust by themselves.

The Great Disruption combines a useful overview of global trends with an informative tour of the human psyche. Fukuyama interprets this panorama with a broad storyline about human consistency amidst social change. Now we need to discover how democratic publics fit into the picture.

Fear and Loathing in the United States

Joseph Romance

Garry Wills, *A Necessary Evil: A History of American Distrust of Government* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999), 365 pp.

A distrust of government has long been a prominent feature of the American condition. Tracing the origins of this attitude—and explaining why it is misguided—is no simple task. Yet this is exactly what Garry Wills has set out to do in *A Necessary Evil*.

Wills has chosen a particularly appropriate time to undertake this project. Levels of cynicism and suspicion about government are disturbingly high—especially for an era of tremendous economic growth and at a time when the United States stands as the world's triumphant superpower. In recent years, the rise of militia movements and the Oklahoma City bombing remind us that this resentment toward government does not lead merely to sullen apathy; it can lead to violence.

What makes this issue so puzzling is that Americans are often antigovernment, but pro-Constitution. We have developed a historical myth, according to Wills, that says in order to be true to the Constitution and the Founding Fathers, we must question, or at least be hypercritical about, the present government. In effect, antigovernmental critics believe the Constitution is designed to create a kind of structural disloyalty to American government—and Wills will have none of it. This is his book's most important contribution: to carefully review what these skeptics have said about the Constitution and show how their interpretations are erroneous. In his discussion of checks and balances, the Bill of Rights (particularly the Second Amendment), and federalism, Wills uses an artful blend of textual reading and historical explanation to rebut the arguments made by these disloyalists, while simultaneously providing a refreshingly clear account of just what the Constitution actually means.

But if Wills's great strength is his splendid facility with language and the Constitutional exegesis that makes a mockery of the NRA, John Taylor of Caroline, and Yale Law School's Akhil Amar, his weakness is that he impels us to confront deeper questions about American democracy that he cannot answer. Of course, antigovernmentalists fail to recognize that the Constitution was meant to create a stronger national government than what the Articles of Confederation wrought before it. However, no matter how misguided these critics might be, over the past 200 years there has emerged a very real undercurrent of hostility toward centralized power. Wills may tell us, with great vigor and intelligence, what Madison (who receives by far the most attention of any Founder in this book) really meant, but that does not eliminate the concerns of those who oppose Madison's creation. Even if these critics are poor

Constitutional scholars, the views they express have great resonance with many fellow citizens.

In fact, after reading this book, one is left with the impression that people like Timothy McVeigh, and many of the more thoughtful and less violent commentators, would simply accept Wills's point—and say to hell with the Constitution. Indeed, we seem to be confronted with a profound question about the very limits of loyalty to any government. In some sense, Wills himself recognizes this when he moves on from his Constitutional analysis and delineates various categories of Constitutional critics—people he identifies as nullifiers, seceders, insurrectionists, vigilantes, withdrawers, and disobeyers. While each of these individual chapters is interesting in its own right, they push beyond mere Constitutional analysis and force Wills to confront the very idea of loyalty in a democracy, the nature of social criticism, and the political responsibility of the critic. In shifting to these subjects, Wills sometimes loses the tight focus of the earlier chapters and, at times, seems to miss the point. His thumbnail sketch of Thoreau, for instance, is a remarkably harsh attack on an authentic American genius, and his selective use of Thoreau's own words makes this attack unfair.

Early in the book Wills offers two intriguing lists of values, which he identifies as antigovernmental and governmental. The antigovernmental list includes “provincial,” “amateur,” “homogeneous,” and “organic”; to be governmental is to be “cosmopolitan,” “efficient,” “progressive,” and “secular.” Wills clearly champions this second list and believes that these are the values reflected in the Constitution.

The problem is that democracy requires, or at least encourages, many of the values he lists as antigovernmental. By the same token, his governmental values, as well as the Constitution as he reads it, can be far removed from the people they are supposed to represent. Madison saw this divide as useful and so does Wills—but it is bound to infuriate many people and make them value their own local ways even more. And if you give people power, as you must in a democracy, you face the possibility of occasional citizen fury. In fact, we are lucky that this fury isn't more widespread and that even these local critics of the current government are still so loyal to the Constitution—even as they misconstrue it.

At the very end of the book, Wills offers a concise chapter that reveals why government is not a necessary evil, but a positive good. This excellent chapter is the best part of the latter half of the book; reading it would benefit every student of American politics. Wills uses a series of examples about driving that nicely illustrate how government doesn't actually limit our freedom but provides the setting in which we can live our lives in meaningful and safe interaction. The open road and the automobile represent potent symbols of American freedom. Yet most roads are publicly built and maintained; driving would be chaotic and dangerous without the order provided by laws of the road. Wills rightly points out that freedom can only be truly realized in the context supplied by a government.

To bolster his illustrations with philosophic heft, he hearkens back to Plato and Aristotle. Yet it is Aristotle who tells us that putting a wall around the entire Greek world would not make it a polis—one could not have such a large city-state. Aristotle recognized that politics is about talking among citizens who can come to some kind of collective judgment. The American Founders, seeing this system as too unstable and too participatory, created a representative democracy that would, eventually, span a continent. However, in creating a republic that included elements of democracy, they presented future generations with an ongoing challenge: How can America balance the participatory demands of democracy (which Wills sees as an antigovernmental value) with the expert world of elites who would manage a Constitutional government?

Wills is right to correct the Constitutional misinterpretations that stubbornly flourish among even educated Americans. His is a welcome and civilized voice that reminds us that government is good. But he is too dismissive of the distance that exists between citizens and their government. The critics he challenges in *A Necessary Evil* may be wrong about many things, but their concerns are legitimate. With men like Thoreau, Henry Adams, and Martin Luther King, Jr. among them, they cannot be disregarded too easily even though they occasionally err. We should all heed Wills's forceful and erudite opinion about what the Constitution means, but also recognize the powerful chorus that sings the praises of local community, the world of everyday citizens, and the ideal of direct democracy.

Especially Noted

Jerome P. Baggett, *Habitat for Humanity®: Building Private Homes, Building Public Religion* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001), 295 pp.

There are roughly 350,000 religious voluntary organizations in the United States. Baggett zeroes in on one of them: the eponymous nonprofit that was founded by evangelical Christians in 1976 and is currently responsible for building ten houses a day and mobilizing a quarter of a million volunteers annually. Basing his book on two years of participant observation, nearly 100 interviews, and extensive qualitative research, he seeks not to provide a comprehensive overview of Habitat, but to identify how its religious message can shape citizens' sense of civic responsibility and spur commitment to the common good. Baggett classifies Habitat as an exemplary "paradenominational organization"—it embodies a social form of religion that continually adapts to the secularism of the modern world in order to address social injustices. In the process, though, it often adopts a pragmatic approach that dilutes some of the specific religious values and language upon which it was founded. Baggett devotes much of his analysis to describing how Habitat's members, explicitly wary of the influence of "big government," are usually oblivious to the profound effect the market has on Habitat. For example, he argues, class divisions color the relationships between volunteers and homeowners, and Habitat affiliates often promote productivity and cost-effectiveness alongside—and sometimes at the expense of—Habitat's religious values. With all the recent debate over the power and potential of faith-based civic groups, Baggett's balanced, careful analysis elucidates how these groups can adapt to, impact, and be transformed by American society.

Thomas Hurka, *Virtue, Vice, and Value* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 272 pp.

Countering instrumentalist conceptions of virtue while also challenging the virtue ethics movement, Hurka proposes a perfectionist account of virtue that he locates between these two camps. He asserts not only that virtue and vice are intrinsically good and evil,

but that such a theory of virtue can satisfy consequentialist assumptions. Though clearly designated for those readers with a deep interest in moral theory, *Virtue, Vice, and Value* offers a provocative and original contribution to the field—particularly in Hurka’s argument for why and when false beliefs and fantasies can be imbued with intrinsic moral value.

A Communitarian Influence?

In a recent interview with National Public Radio, Harvard Law professor Mary Ann Glendon discussed the role played by Charles Malik, a philosophy professor from Lebanon, in helping the United Nations Human Rights Commission draft the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. She explained:

In Article I of the declaration, which reads, “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood,” there was a great argument among the members of the commission about what exactly is the nature of the human person whose rights are being protected here. The Soviets, for example, wanted to submerge the person in the collective. Mrs. Roosevelt and the English representative had a highly individualistic idea of the person. And it was Malik who was able to bring these people together with an understanding of the person as uniquely valuable in and of him or herself, but also as a social being, constituted in part by and through relationships with others. And that was the position that was accepted by the group and that infuses the entire declaration. It’s an important point because it kept the declaration from becoming either a highly collectivist or a highly individualistic document.

THE COMMUNITY'S PULSE

The More Things Change . . .

Should churches express views on social and political questions?

	<u>2001</u>	<u>1957</u>
Should	48%	48%
Should not	46	44
Don't know	6	8

Better to Believe

Are you bothered by the number of . . .

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Non-Judeo-Christians in the U.S.?	13%	87%
Atheists in the U.S.?	23	77

Under the Influence

Which was the most important factor in shaping your views on . . .

	<u>Exper- ience</u>	<u>Friends/ Family</u>	<u>Media</u>	<u>Religion</u>	<u>Edu- cation</u>	<u>Other/ Don't know</u>
Capital punishment	12%	5%	25%	23%	14%	21%
Favor	14	6	30	15	14	21
Oppose	9	4	15	42	14	16
Gay marriages	12	8	9	40	12	19
Favor	20	15	13	4	24	24
Oppose	7	3	6	65	6	13
Human cloning	6	2	21	35	19	17
Favor	10	3	27	6	36	18
Oppose	5	2	20	42	17	14
More government aid to the poor	28	8	19	12	16	17
Favor	27	8	20	15	16	14
Oppose	33	6	17	5	20	19

Anti-Religious Bias?

Do you think Hollywood and the entertainment industry are fair in their portrayal of people who share your religious faith?

	—WHITE—				BLACK
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Evangelical</u>	<u>Catholic</u>	<u>Mainline Protestant</u>	<u>Protestant</u>
Yes	35%	20%	44%	42%	29%
No	49	68	46	38	58
Don't know	16	12	10	20	13

Do you think the news media is fair in its portrayal of people who share your religious faith?

	—WHITE—				BLACK
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Evangelical</u>	<u>Catholic</u>	<u>Mainline Protestant</u>	<u>Protestant</u>
Yes	45%	40%	55%	55%	38%
No	41	53	32	31	51
Don't know	14	7	13	14	11

Rating the Culture Warriors

What is your opinion of the Christian conservative movement?

	<u>Total</u>	—WHITE PROTESTANT—		—BLACK PROTESTANT—	
		<u>Mainline</u>	<u>Evangelical</u>	<u>Mainline</u>	<u>Evangelical</u>
Favorable	58%	48%	79%	58%	73%
Unfavorable	42	52	21	42	27

What is your opinion of the entertainment industry?

	<u>Total</u>	—WHITE PROTESTANT—		—BLACK PROTESTANT—	
		<u>Mainline</u>	<u>Evangelical</u>	<u>Mainline</u>	<u>Evangelical</u>
Favorable	53%	53%	37%	60%	60%
Unfavorable	47	47	63	40	40

Source: *The Pew Research Center for the People & the Press*, April 2001
U.S. national sample of 2,041 adults

Compiled by Jason Marsh

LIBERTARIANS, AUTHORITARIANS, COMMUNITARIANS

From the Libertarian Side

Warranted Search?

According to *USA Today*, the American Bar Association has joined the American Civil Liberties Union in condemning “zero tolerance” policies and random searches of students for drugs and weapons. Both groups demand that schools’ disciplinary policies reflect a willingness to consider the circumstances and context of each offense rather than rely on strict, mandatory punishments, which often include long suspensions or expulsion for carrying contraband.

American University law professor Jamin Raskin echoes these sentiments. He has called for the intervention of federal courts in overturning zero tolerance policies.

“The courts have to blow the whistle and restore a sense of balance to discipline and punishment in schools,” Raskin says. But not everyone agrees.

Lashon Cole, a student of Raskin’s and the parent of a child attending grade school, maintains faith in random searches and zero tolerance policies.

“I want to know if my kid is smoking weed during third period. Forget his Fourth Amendment rights. I’m willing to forgo a lot of things to make sure guns aren’t in school and other kids aren’t selling drugs to my kid,” explains Cole.

From the Authoritarian Side

The Blame Game

Muslim clerics and politicians across the Middle East have accused the popular children's game "Pokemon" of being part of a Zionist conspiracy to corrupt Muslim children.

Pokemon is a children's game, developed in Japan and hugely popular around the world, that involves collectible trading cards.

The *Jerusalem Post* reports that "top Saudi cleric Sheikh Abdul Aziz issued a fatwa urging 'all Muslims to beware of this game and prevent their children from playing it,' because it resembles gambling and promotes Zionism." Jordanian Mufti Said Hijjawi echoed this sentiment telling *Agence France-Presse* that he is "very concerned by this issue for the sake of our children."

This outrage expressed in the Islamic world over Pokemon has drawn equally strong responses. The director of the Anti-Defamation League, Abraham Foxman, noted in a written statement, "It is outrageous and incendiary for some Muslim leaders to extend their warped Jewish-conspiracy theories to a children's toy that has found broad acceptance the world over. . . . This is only the most recent in a constant stream of rhetoric filtering out of Muslim nations blaming Jews and Israel for a host of ills against Arab populations."

Can't Touch This

West Annapolis Elementary School, of Annapolis, Maryland, has banned schoolyard games of tag because the game violates the school's "no touching policy." A recent petition drive initiated by a fifth-grade student has failed to bring about a change in policy.

The school's principal, Joan Brisco, banned the game last fall to prevent students from injuring one another. She explains to Annapolis' newspaper, the *Capital*, "They would start up and inevitably it got too rough."

Huntley Cross, a spokesman for Annapolis' school district, noted, "A . . . principal's ultimate responsibility is not only education, but the health and safety of the students. Kids are rougher today; they really are. It's a judgment call that every principal has to make."

Mr. Cross elaborated on West Annapolis' "no touching" policy saying, "There are good touches and bad touches that children are taught. . . . What we're constantly trying to do is use structured discipline policies and logical consequences to let youngsters know what the rules are."

Some parents, however, disagree with Principal Brisco's decision to ban this recess staple. They argue that tag is no more physical than many other schoolyard games, and that students should be allowed to play.

"In her mind it's a safety issue," says West Annapolis parent Dan Panataleo. "But there's more physical interaction in a game of soccer than there is in tag."

From the Community

Teaching by Example

A newly constructed school in California may serve as a model of energy efficiency and conservation for schools, residences, businesses, and communities across America.

The *Los Angeles Times* reports that Carmel Valley, California's San Diego Jewish Academy, a 600-student school that opened last fall, was specifically designed not to disturb its surrounding landscape and to utilize as little energy as possible.

Students bring lunches in reusable containers instead of plastic bags. Lights are attached to motion sensors that ensure that unused rooms don't waste electricity. Landscaping is centered on native plants. Garbage is composted and fed to worms whose excrement is harvested for fertilizer.

"It's a value system that the individuals here share," says Larry Acheatel, the school's executive director. "It's one I hope more and more of the general community shares and is sensitive to."

Indeed, it seems that the broader community may be very sensitive to the school's environmental agenda. The school's design glided with ease through Carmel Valley's notoriously slow and laborious permit and zoning process. The school took only three years to complete, from site acquisition to opening day.

"They showed some real sensitivity," said planning commission chairwoman Jan Fuchs. "Respecting the community in which you are building is probably the best message I could give to anyone."

A Disciplined Measure

The *New York Times* reports that for the first time, New York City school teachers have been empowered to directly remove disruptive students from their classrooms for up to four days, under regulations promulgated by Schools Chancellor Harold O. Levy.

This new power is the result of legislation passed last July that stiffened disciplinary actions in schools across the state. In New York City, this new authority will manifest itself in teachers having the ability to place unruly students in "in-school suspension" after attempting less severe means of correcting behavior, such as calling a student's parents or holding a conference with the student.

Students may be sent to in-school suspension up to three times in a school year. A fourth dismissal from class draws the student an automatic full suspension.

This new disciplinary alternative has been applauded by many teachers' organizations, including the United Federation of Teachers.

"This is serious stuff that will give teachers more control over their environments," explained Levy. "It's important for them to have as many tools as possible to exercise authority in their classrooms and to command respect."

Working for His Conscience

According to the *Washington Post*, a single act of courage may have been the key to helping thousands of Holocaust victims and survivors reclaim assets lost during years of Nazi terror.

The *Washington Post* reports that Christoph Meili, a night watchman in a Zurich bank, saved a number of important ledgers from

being destroyed by his place of employment. The ledgers contained information outlining the assets of Jewish depositors who had hoped to hide their assets from the Nazis in Swiss banks. The documents became a crucial element in driving the Union Bank of Switzerland and Credit Suisse to offer a \$1.4 billion settlement to Holocaust survivors and their families.

Meanwhile, Meili was charged with criminal violations of Switzerland's banking secrecy act, and his family became the target of harassment and even death threats. Though all formal charges against Meili were dropped, his life in Switzerland became intolerable. He ultimately moved to the United States, where he became the first Swiss citizen to be granted political asylum by the U.S. He now lives with his family in California, where he attends college and is trying to rebuild his life.

However, Meili does not regret the choices he made. "I wanted the Swiss banks to pay," he said. "They are guilty. It was the right thing to do. . . . I had the feeling I had to do something."

Joseph Ura

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Uniting Unlikely Company

Susan Parker

It was two years after Ralph's bicycling accident before we finally ventured into San Francisco again. I found the locations of the disabled parking signs in every neighborhood we visited and made a beeline for the blue-painted curb. Strangers gave us a wide berth on the sidewalk as Ralph, who's quadriplegic, maneuvered his electric wheelchair with his chin.

We went to Chinatown, Golden Gate Park, and Fisherman's Wharf. Sightseers and children stared at us; in the Financial District we were deliberately ignored and at Macy's we were trampled upon.

But in North Beach, we finally found a comfort zone. Ralph and I stopped at the swinging doors of The Saloon, a place we never would have bothered to visit when Ralph could walk. On a beautiful Sunday afternoon like this, we would have been rollerblading, rock-climbing, or bicycling.

But things are different now. We peeked inside. It was dark and loud and full of patrons: leather-clad motorcyclists, neighborhood sex workers, poorly dressed tourists, and old geezers in shiny suits. Everyone moved barstools, chairs, and tables so that Ralph could squeeze by.

I shouted an order to the grizzled bartender—an Anchor Steam for Ralph, a glass of house red for me. On the cramped stage before us

was a cluster of elderly men holding musical instruments. It was Blues Power, the house band. The gray-haired bass player nodded at Ralph and plucked the strings of his guitar into a high-pitched cry.

Within moments the other members of the band started to play. Everyone in the bar stood up to dance. I glanced at Ralph to see his reaction. His eyes were closed and his head, the only part of his body that moves, began to rock up and down. Unconsciously I swiveled my hips, and before I knew it I was dancing with the crowd. Ralph joined us on the wooden dance floor and manipulated his wheelchair side to side by pressing the joystick with his chin. Back and forth and around in circles he went, faster and faster until we all had to move out of his way or risk being knocked over. A human circle formed around him and everyone clapped with the beat of the drums. "Oh yeah!" someone cried. "Hit it baby!" yelled another.

When the music stopped and the band took a break, Ralph wheeled himself gracefully to a stop beside our small round table. "Wow, that was fun!" he shouted. A go-go girl bent down and gave him a kiss on his cheek. A toothless man in a dirty baseball cap patted his unmoving hands. The bass guitarist pulled up a chair beside him. "Man," he said. "You sure can dance."

COMMENTARY

A Republican-Liberal's Perspective

Those who think of themselves as republican or civic liberals, as I do, will surely be of two minds about Seyla Benhabib's "Dismantling the Leviathan: Citizen and State in a Global World" [Spring 2001]. In some respects, Professor Benhabib's thoughtful essay is quite congenial to republican liberalism. She insists on the importance of human rights, for instance, and she looks for ways to expand political participation. Her indictment of "civic republicanism," however, requires a republican-liberal response.

There are three problems with Benhabib's argument, the first being that her criticism of civic republicanism is misdirected. Her target is "civic republicans like Michael Walzer," who "conflate the boundaries of the ethical community, which is inherently culture-bound, with those of the *democratic polity, which is not culture-bound in the same manner and to the same degree*" (her emphasis). If this statement accurately reflects Walzer's views, then he was surely right to protest, in his response to Benhabib's essay, that he is no civic republican. From Aristotle and Cicero to Hannah Arendt and Michael Sandel, republicans have sought to promote the civic virtues of the public-spirited citizen. They believe that the members of the *res publica* ought to be self-governing participants in public affairs, and, following Cicero, their conception of "public" is of a group of people united under law. Hence the old definition of a republic as "an empire of laws, not of men." In principle, then, republicans have no reason to insist that citizens must share ties of blood, ethnicity, or culture, and

they can be quite happy with the “constitutional patriotism” that Habermas has endorsed and Benhabib apparently accepts.

There is a difference, though, between principle and practice. This difference points to the second problem with Benhabib’s criticism of civic republicanism. Republicans acknowledge that civic virtues require cultivation and reinforcement. If the members of a polity are to take the part of public-spirited citizens, there must be some sense in which they understand themselves as part of a public—that is, as people engaged in a common, if not all-embracing, enterprise. Cultural considerations surely play a part here—through a common language, civic education, and shared traditions—as they foster feelings of attachment and solidarity. Civic republicans will join Benhabib by resisting, in principle, the conflation of cultural with political integration, but they will think that it is neither easy nor prudent, in practice, to draw a sharp distinction between culture and politics. Political integration is primary, however, and cultural considerations are important to the republican only insofar as they promote the sense that one is part of a public.

The third problem concerns Benhabib’s policy recommendations, which call for “porous borders” and limited voting rights for noncitizens. Her reasons for extending “democratic participation rights . . . at the local and regional state levels” to noncitizens are neither clear nor compelling. Her point, presumably, is that noncitizens have a stake in decisions made at these levels, so they should have a say in them. But they will also have a stake—and possibly a greater one—in decisions made at higher levels. Why, then, should noncitizens not have a vote at the national or state level? The answer, I suppose, is that decisions at the upper levels are too important; voting in local and regional elections is a low-risk way in which noncitizens may try their civic wings before becoming full-fledged citizens. That answer, however, runs counter to the presumption that people should have a vote whenever they have a stake in the outcome. It also betrays a failure to appreciate the importance of local or regional decisions, which are sometimes more salient to the people they affect, as the “Nimby” syndrome attests, than national-level decisions.

I also worry that Benhabib’s recommendations may be self-defeating. That is, their effect may well be to dilute and discourage

citizenship, and thus run counter to Benhabib's aim of "making erstwhile strangers and foreigners into *partners in a community of democratic interpretation and articulation*" (her emphasis). Benhabib will agree, I think, that citizenship has an ethical as well as a legal dimension—that one may be a citizen, in the legal sense, without being a "good" or "real" or "true" citizen. That much seems implied by her desire to help foreigners become "*partners in a community.*" When she writes, however, of "political globalization," "transnational political membership," and voting rights for people who may be "unwilling . . . to change their citizenship of origin," she hints at a kind of free-floating, cosmopolitan citizenship that is unlikely to encourage the public-spirited attitude one expects of *partners in a community*. Despite her cautious statements about the need for "minimum residency, language, employment, and family status requirements," the picture emerges of a world in which political exit and entrance are so easy that citizens, in the legal sense, will have little reason to exercise voice within or demonstrate loyalty to their supposed communities.

That is why republican liberals must hesitate, at least, to endorse Professor Benhabib's recommendations. Yet they are closer to her position, in their republicanism as much as in their liberalism, than she recognizes. Republican liberals do not want to see people consigned to "permanent alienage" or denied the opportunity to become partners in a democratic community any more than does Benhabib. Whether her transnational means will accomplish this shared civic end is the point at issue.

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Citizenship and Commitment

Democracies draw their legitimacy from claims to universal principles as well as from a particular human community's act of binding itself to a specific set of institutions and aspirations. This tension between the universal and the particular, Seyla Benhabib asserts, is neglected in the work of civic republicans, and that neglect has proven especially pernicious in thinking about the meaning of membership in an increasingly transnational and multicultural era. Benhabib rightly presses civic republicans to account more explicitly for the universal claims of human rights and to think more creatively about the relation among membership, culture, and participation. But her own approach is itself unbalanced: she stresses the claims of universalism and makes a vague commitment to communal interpretation, thereby neglecting the particularist dimension of democratic life.

Consider her proposals for citizenship policy in the European Union. She approves of the disaggregation of collective identity, political membership, and social rights that is taking place in many European countries. The exclusion of Third Country Nationals from the political dimension of that process, however, draws her ire. Benhabib urges that each member country abdicate control over its citizenship and incorporation practices in favor of an EU-wide process of harmonization. Those countries that resist being harmonized, she tells us, must undergo "political education."

This approach will only exacerbate the significant worries about a democratic deficit in Europe and stoke the kind of critical public reaction that followed the Maastricht Treaty in 1992. In the name of universal principles, citizens' capacity to govern themselves by determining who can become a member of their polity, and on what terms, is to be replaced by a common set of policies negotiated by political elites. Citizens who object to these changes are to be taught that their objections do not reflect "the changing nature of democratic polities." Their will is to be replaced by Benhabib's will.

Benhabib's own conception of membership features an "enlarged mentality" that can make "strangers and foreigners into partners in a community of democratic interpretation and articulation." But is a commitment to interpretation sufficient to bind a heterogenous popu-

lation? And from where does that commitment arise? Benhabib's enlarged mentality requires the "ability to distance oneself from one's most deeply held commitments in order to consider them from the hypothetical standpoint of a universalistic morality." Yet the ability to distance oneself from one's commitments presupposes that one has commitments. A significant challenge today, particularly in an America dominated by the nostrums of therapeutic individualism and the forces of global markets, is how to engender loyalty to being loyal. Thus, when Benhabib tells us that all that is required for political integration are "conceptions of human and citizens' rights, constitutional traditions, and democratic practices of election and representation," we should ask: How can rights and practices themselves bind citizens in the absence of those citizens' commitment to a people and a place? Even constitutional traditions are insufficient in a polity like the United States. After all, our sacred texts have been a significant source of conflict as well as cohesion.

The kind of commitment necessary to make diverse societies work has often stemmed from particularist sources. In the United States, those sources have included race, religion, language, culture, and history. Today we face the difficult question of how to sustain a civic nation in the absence of some of those commonalities. Some analysts have sought to answer this question by constructing versions of liberal nationalism that see the American nation as the best vehicle for advancing a commitment to cosmopolitan values. They emphasize the possibilities for combining individual rights and national identity. Benhabib dismisses those particularist elements that contribute to constitutional loyalty as inappropriate attempts to establish cultural preconditions for citizenship. She thus misses the extent to which democratic reforms have emerged from liberal nationalist movements, not simply from context-transcending rights claims. She confuses a cultural monism that is no longer demanded of immigrants in the U.S. with the sense of trust that must be continually generated.

The problems with Benhabib's theory show up in her policy recommendations. She sees the U.S. as a model for Europe in the success it has had in moving immigrants from civil to political citizenship. She criticizes the U.S., however, for continuing to connect nationality and citizenship, in that voting and political participation are denied to permanent resident aliens and dual citizenship is tolerated

rather than embraced. Yet the difficult transition from strangers to full members of the polity has been effective in the U.S. precisely because that polity has maintained a link between nationality and citizenship. It has stressed a transformative conception of citizenship in which new citizens come to understand themselves as part of a new people, even as the meaning of that peoplehood has been subject to debate. Benhabib does not see that the problem today is passive neglect of that transformation, not active exclusion of newcomers who want to become citizens. She therefore offers little help in figuring out how to knit together a nation of nonjudgmental, middle-class citizens who are increasingly disconnected from one another and estranged from their poorer, racially diverse fellow citizens. The American approach to incorporating immigrants faces serious challenges today, but the turmoil over immigration that is roiling Europe indicates the perils involved in disaggregating collective identity, political membership, and social rights.

Benhabib properly insists that civic republicans should devote more attention to determining what kinds of new and different forms of governance and membership are best suited to a world of porous borders and global linkages. She is especially right to emphasize the importance of actual social practices in forging new models of civic engagement. But she is wrong to think that those social practices will accomplish their purpose by being further disconnected from a shared sense of national citizenship. We should balance the claims of sovereignty and membership and the aspiration for broader forms of solidarity and democracy, not eliminate the tensions between them.

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