

The American Experiment:
A 21st Century Assessment
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On February 28, 1796, seven years after the adoption of the experimental new United States Constitution, Thomas Jefferson wrote to John Adams, “This I hope will be the age of experiments in government, and that their basis will be founded on principles of honesty” and the “morals of the people,” not of “mere force.” Adams replied on April 6 that “This is indeed as you say the Age of Experiments in Government,” and both thought the experiments of their legendary generation might do much, as the first *Federalist* paper had said, “decide the important question, whether societies of men are really capable or not of establishing good government from reflection and choice.” Both expressed confidence that in their lifetimes, American elections, so central to its modern republican governments, would not become “corrupt.” Even though, as Adams said, “corruption in elections has heretofore destroyed all Elective Governments,” “You and I,” he assured Jefferson, “shall go to the Kingdom of the just or at least shall be released from the Republick of the Unjust, with Hearts Pure and Clean of all Corruption in Elections.”ⁱ Within a few months, the two old political allies would be locked into the first of two increasingly vicious election campaigns in which charges of corruption flew in all directions. It was quickly proven that at least some of the results of America’s experiments in new forms of republican self-governance did not fulfill all the hopes expressed on their behalf.

But much has happened since then. Today, roughly two and a quarter centuries have passed since colonial Americans embarked on their experiments new forms of government, including their greatest experiment, the U.S. Constitution. It therefore seems appropriate to consider what lessons we might draw early in the 21st century from the American experiments in constitutional republicanism. There are many worth analyzing; but I wish to call attention to the apparent consequences for constitutional republicanism of the ways in which the U.S. Constitution structured three realms of activity that have proven crucial for the American experience of republican self-governance: commerce, science, and religion.

I am tempted to say these are three “basic” realms of human activity, but part of my claim is that American systems of government helped to make these activities, in the distinctive forms they are found in the United States, more fundamental in American experience than in many other societies, past and present. That sounds perilously exceptionalist, however, so I hasten to add that my core argument is this: the institutions, practices and activities of commerce, science, and religion aided by the Constitution’s structuring have transformed commerce, transformed science, transformed religion, and transformed Americans and America, in ways that have taken the nation as a whole far from the understandings of those realms that prevailed when the American experiments in constitutional republican governments began. These transformations have made modern Americans wealthier, more scientifically knowledgeable, more powerful, in many ways more diverse, and in important ways more democratic and inclusive, than the founding generation. But these changes have also made modern Americans more deeply

divided over many matters, perhaps especially over what James Ceaser has rightly called “foundational concepts,” than their founding predecessors, whose conceptions of science, religion, and to a lesser degree commerce were more similar to each other, even if not identical.ⁱⁱ

Over time, an original commitment to commerce that promised and in many respects delivered greater opportunities and prosperity for all has also proven to foster unprecedented private corporate power and economic inequalities. A commitment to scientific progress has generated revolutionary technologies but also profound intellectual challenges to the doctrines of rationally self-evident moral and political truths the American revolutionaries proclaimed, and in which many Americans still believe. The refusal to establish a national church has contributed to a plethora of religions that have increasingly become divided between more ecumenical and more fundamentalist outlooks, with the latter opposed to much in more secular scientific worldviews. These changes are interconnected: America’s developing forms of commerce, science, and religion have shaped each other’s transformations. And for many 21st century Americans, some or all of these transformations count as advances in human civilization, while for many others, some or all seem new kinds of barbarism. These divisions are posing new challenges for constitutional and republican self-governance today that Americans and their institutions are struggling to meet, even as these developments leave the nation with few means to resolve them other than sharply contested democratic politics.

However one assesses these developments normatively, the more controversial point I wish to stress is that they must be seen as things not only permitted but facilitated by core elements of the American experiments in constitutional republican government. For better or worse, these transformations are more the products of than they are departures from those experiments--which many political communities have sought and are seeking to emulate in many regards in many parts of the world. Whether they are seen as progress or declension, then, these developments represent crucial lessons of our republican example, for Americans and for all humanity.

II. The Experiments: Republicanism, Commerce, Science, and Religion. John Pocock argued in his magnum opus *The Machiavellian Moment* that the American founding generation felt compelled by the absence of an evident natural aristocracy to design institutions in which all power stemmed from “the people” conceived of as an “undifferentiated mass”; but that mass could and should only govern through its selection of representatives.ⁱⁱⁱ To many of the founders, “representation was the only great discovery in theoretical politics since antiquity.”^{iv} The *Federalist* authors praised representation not only because it might serve to “refine and enlarge public views,” but because it also permitted the enlarging of the territory governed in order to “take in a greater variety of parties and interests” and make majority factions less likely.^v Indeed, Publius particularly celebrated the fact that American constitutions totally excluded “*the people, in their collective capacity,*” from any share in direct governance.^{vi} A large, diverse republic would have to be governed by, and would be more safely governed by, coalitions of directly and indirectly elected

representatives who would act on behalf of a range of interests and, perhaps, the common good, rather than the immediate, sometimes selfish or short-sighted decisions of mass majorities.

But the founders' embrace of republican self-governance by the representatives of a "great variety of parties and interests" raised the question of what would promote cooperation and united action despite this diversity. What would constitute the "common good"? Rousseau had urged that republics be bonded in part by a "civil religion," but most Americans recognized that, amidst the variety of contentious Protestant denominations that held sway in different states, no national "Church of the United States" was feasible or desirable. The deist Thomas Paine had announced in *Common Sense*, "Our plan is commerce"; the Philadelphia Convention was called to strengthen the capacities of the Confederation to protect and promote commerce; and the *Federalist* proclaimed confidently that the desirability of fostering commerce through a more perfect Union "is one of those points about which there is least room to entertain a difference of opinion, and which has, in fact, commanded the most general assent of men who have any acquaintance with the subject."^{vii} The founding generation and many to come nonetheless did have sharp differences over the forms of commerce that were best for American governments and over the means through which they should be fostered, as Jefferson's advocacy of state-centered, westward-expanding commercial yeoman agriculture and Hamilton's contrary support for national financial, manufacturing, trade and infrastructure initiatives soon demonstrated.^{viii}

But it is undeniable that when Article I, sec. 8 of the Constitution authorized Congress to lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts and excises; to pay debts; to borrow money; to establish laws for bankruptcy; to coin and regulate the value of money; and above all, to regulate commerce with foreign nations and among the several states, it created a national government with powers to seek to foster the commercial prosperity that most Americans wanted, whatever their other differences. Article I, sec. 9 then prevented Congress from favoring the ports of one state over another; Article I, sec. 10 prevented the states from impairing the obligation of contracts; and together the sections prevented Congress and the states from granting titles of nobility. Article IV required the states to give full faith and credit to each other's acts and to grant citizens of other states the same basic privileges and immunities accorded their own.

Collectively, these provisions made clear that the new extended republic was fundamentally to be one united commercial market in which all citizens would have formally equal economic rights, including the rights of contract that were increasingly ordering economic activities via private agreements, not customs or legal codes; and in this national commercial market, none would have aristocratic economic privileges. This constitutional framework did not guarantee that the United States would become an overwhelmingly commercial society in which most citizens had a wide range of formal economic opportunities and most felt impelled by physical necessities, family and social pressures, and personal ambitions to pursue them. But that was the aim, and that was the result.

Yet to say only the above would be to neglect two other important aspects of the place of commerce in the Constitution. The first is that Article 1, sec. 8 also authorizes Congress to regulate commerce “with the Indian tribes,” a textual indication that the tribes were viewed as neither “foreign Nations” nor “among the several” domestic “States.” They were peoples that had a distinct, not fully defined status in relation to the republic partly unified by commerce that the Constitution sought to create. The fact that they were not simply included yet not definitively excluded, and the often harsh, sometimes generous answers subsequently given to how the Constitution’s still-extending commercial republic would relate to these peoples, inevitably shaped the kind of republic the U.S. would become.

The second, still more fundamental point about the Constitution’s commerce powers is that southern slaveholders feared the creation of a national government with authority to interfere with the slave labor and slave trading so crucial to their peculiar commercial agrarian economy. At the constitutional convention, Charles Cotesworth Pinckney of South Carolina argued that it was in fact “the true interest” of the southern states to have no national “regulation of commerce”; but because the northeastern states had agreed to permit the international slave trade at least until 1808, he was prepared to accept it.^{ix} The Constitution’s series of compromises on how the slaveholders’ legally recognized property in slaves would affect the apportionment of taxation and political representation, the return of fugitives, national powers over domestic insurrections and more, all showed both how ardent the framers were to create a national union bonded in part by its support for the economic interests of its dominant members--and how from the start the example of

the new republic was bound up with its treatment of persons of African descent as factors of production and little more.

Still, commercial prosperity was not the Constitutions' only goal. Article I, sec. 8 also empowered Congress "to promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts, by securing for limited Times to Authors and Inventors the exclusive Right to their respective Writings and Discoveries," to fix "the Standard of Weights and Measures," and to establish "Post Offices and Post Roads." These provisions assisted commercial development, to be sure, but also committed the national government to the cause of scientific, technological, and intellectual progress more generally. James Wilson of Pennsylvania argued that in fact "the most noble object" of government was not "property" but the "improvement of the human mind."^x James Madison proposed that the new government not only protect copyrights but also establish a national "University" and provide "premiums & provisions" to encourage "the advancement of useful knowledge and discoveries."^{xi}

Those aspirations gain further significance from Article VII's sweeping mandate that "no religious Test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or public Trust under the United States," and the fact that, though the Constitution's Preamble spoke of goals of "Union," "Justice," "Tranquility," "defence," the "general Welfare," and the "Blessings of Liberty," there was no constitutional promise to encourage religion, as in the Northwest Ordinance of 1787. The First Amendment then made explicit that Congress could not legislate "respecting an establishment of Religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof" and protected the freedoms of speech and press. The Constitution thereby left some state religious

establishments intact, but most scholars agree its example contributed to their eventual abandonment.^{xii} The result was to permit a plurality of religions that might well develop in ways that could not be foreseen and that American governments would, by and large, not seek to guide or constrain.

Since Article IV also required the United States to guarantee to all states a republican form of government, these provisions of the Constitution collectively worked to wed the American experiments in republican self-governance to the open-ended growth of commerce, to unpredictable “Progress” in science, and to the outcomes of religious freedom and, in practice, religious pluralism--rather than to any fixed economic structure or any settled orthodox scientific and religious understandings, as most if not all previous political societies had been. Most of those favoring the Constitution must have believed that a constitutional republic so conceived and so dedicated could long endure, whatever transformations the pursuits of commerce, science, and religious liberty might foster. And many must have hoped that the results, unforeseeable as they necessarily were, would represent advances in each and all of these interconnected realms.

III. Antebellum Consequences of the Constitution’s Commitments. What has happened since then? The most authoritative analysis prior to the Civil War was Alexis de Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America*. The young French aristocrat was fascinated with America precisely because he thought the Americans appeared to “have handed over the world of politics to the experiments of innovators” in democratic government.^{xiii} Not all innovations won support: Tocqueville visited a nation that, after ratifying a Constitution that refused to establish a national church,

also refused to establish Madison's national university—and one that, after intense political struggles, created and destroyed two national banks (with the second under assault as Tocqueville traveled the United States).^{xiv} But if Americans clearly remained wary of centralized governmental actions in pursuit of the Constitution's goals, their society nonetheless displayed the manifold impacts of the constitutional commitments concerning science, religion, commerce, and republicanism.

By 1831, the American state and national republics had further democratized, with the franchise extended to virtually all white males, a political process Tocqueville saw as an almost “irresistible” rule of democratic social behavior.^{xv} The Constitution's support for a national market and contractual rights and its refusal to countenance aristocratic privileges had also indelibly reinforced the commercial character of American life. Tocqueville said that it was only in America that “everybody in the country is engaged in both commerce and industry,” and that he knew of “no other country where love of money occupies as great a place in the hearts of men or where people are more deeply contemptuous of the theory of permanent equality of wealth.”^{xvi} Against Jefferson's hopes, the fact that in an ever-churning commercial economy, fortunes tended to be “middling and ephemeral” meant that while all honest work was seen as “necessary, natural,” and “honorable,” most Americans were coming to prefer “commerce and industry” to agriculture.^{xvii} More money could be made more rapidly in those occupations, so they better advanced what Tocqueville saw as Americans' “fervent ardor” for prosperity.^{xviii} Tocqueville also believed that “as American industry progresses, the commercial

ties uniting all the confederated states grow tighter, and the Union, no longer a matter of opinion, becomes a habit," just as the founders hoped.^{xix}

But if the growth of American commerce brought greater prosperity and unity in many regards, Tocqueville also saw dangers. Consonant with Jefferson's fears, Tocqueville foresaw that, even though wealth circulated rapidly in America, there was a potential for a "manufacturing aristocracy" to arise that might reintroduce "permanent inequality of conditions" into the world.^{xx} This aristocracy would be "one of the harshest that has ever existed on earth" in its treatment of its impoverished workers, but politically it would nonetheless be among the "most limited and least dangerous" because of its economic preoccupations.^{xxi} Tocqueville also thought America's expanding commercial and industrial society would deprive the native tribes of their lands and ultimately "destroy" them.^{xxii} And he expected the practices and culture of the free labor North ultimately to become "the common measure" throughout the Union; but he could not see how the end of slavery, which he thought must come, could be followed in America by peaceful racial equality.^{xxiii}

Tocqueville's concerns about whether European-descended, economically-striving Americans could find ways to co-exist with those they perceived as racially and culturally distinct connect in revealing ways with his reflections on religion in antebellum America. In both regards, Tocqueville did not see Americans as easily embracing a very robust "multiculturalism." He observed that although there were "countless sects in the United States," they all preached "the same morality...everything in the moral field is certain and settled, though the political world seems given over to controversy and experiment."^{xxiv} Christianity maintained

“more actual power over souls in America than anywhere else.”^{xxv} Even would-be revolutionaries there were “obliged to profess a certain public respect for Christian morality and equity,” despite the fact that Americans philosophically had “an almost insuperable distaste for the supernatural.”^{xxvi}

Tocqueville explained this apparently paradoxical combination of devout, morally monolithic faiths and intellectual worldliness and experimentation in two ways. He first noted that Americans believed such religious morality helped preserve their “republican institutions.”^{xxvii} He also contended that the constitutional separation of church and state meant that American religions spoke primarily to “the desire for immortality that torments the hearts of all men equally,” rather than aligning themselves with partisan political causes.^{xxviii} Hence American religions won dedicated spiritual adherents while being generally seen as political assets, not as threats to any political interests. They did so, however, only because all denominations, including Catholics, rejected all opinions “hostile to democratic and republican institutions...but a single current commands the human spirit.”^{xxix}

Tocqueville discerned a comparable uniformity in the American “philosophical” opinions that regulated “everyday actions and guide conduct in general.”^{xxx} Americans, he wrote, believed that “the source of moral authority lies in universal reason” and that “the spread of enlightenment necessarily brings useful results...all consider society a body in progress and making a changing tableau in which nothing is or should be fixed forever, and they admit that what seems good to them today may be replaced tomorrow by something better but as yet hidden from

view”—beliefs that, again apparently paradoxically, Americans also treated as certain and settled.^{xxxii}

Tocqueville explained this seeming contradiction by noting that philosophically, Americans were not given to “speculative inquiries.”^{xxxiii} They had a “common philosophic method,” borne of the “constant state of flux that prevails in a democratic society,” that treated “tradition only as a source of information,” that regarded “existing facts as useful to study only in order to do things differently and better,” and that looked “to results” in “practical life.”^{xxxiii} Focused in their daily lives on mundane, generally commercial and technological concerns, Americans simply “accepted the principal dogmas of the Christian religion” and “a large number of moral truths derived from and dependent on those dogmas” without “examination,” setting “narrow limits to individual analysis” that omitted “several of the most important matters of human opinion.”^{xxxiv} At the same time, they “admirably cultivated” the “purely practical part of the sciences” and “those theoretical aspects of science that are immediately necessary for the application at hand. In this respect the American mind has invariably shown itself to be clear, free, original, and fertile. But almost no one in the United States,” Tocqueville averred, “devotes himself to the essentially theoretical and abstract aspects of human knowledge”—including the questioning of widely accepted Christian theological tenets.^{xxxv}

Tocqueville’s characterizations may have understated the breadth and depth of the differences among American Baptists, Episcopalians, Congregationalists, and Quakers, much less Catholics and members of the new Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints. He may also have minimized how religious and scientific views

could provoke controversy, as in the monogenesis/polygenesis debates over the origins of what were perceived as distinct human races. But his basic contention is hard to deny: that, even as Americans energetically pursued economic, technological, and democratic political innovations and a wide variety of religious and civil associations, they were still to a large degree “united by shared ideas” on basic moral and political principles, seen as eternal universals supported by both religion and reason.^{xxxvi} These “shared ideas” helped Americans operate their commercial economic and democratic republican institutions successfully.

IV. The Great Transformations. The antebellum American union was of course shattered and then transformed by conflicts over the place of slavery in the constitutional republic. But though the economic, political, and moral dimensions of those conflicts ran very deep, it is not clear that they went all the way down to foundational concepts.^{xxxvii} On the eve of the Civil War, the Vice President of the new Confederacy, former Whig congressman Alexander Stephens, praised the recently adopted Confederate Constitution for maintaining all “the essentials of the old constitution,” including “religious liberty” and “perfect equality” of rights for all honest “labor and enterprise.” The Confederate document did not provide national commercial powers, but not, Stephens maintained, from any “hostility to commerce, or to all necessary aids to facilitating it,” only out of belief that internal improvements should be paid for by those localities benefiting from them. The greatest difference between the Confederate and the U.S. Constitutions was in their treatment of “the proper status of the negro,” which Stephens termed “the immediate cause of the late rupture and the present revolution.” The Confederate

Constitution had as its cornerstone “the great truth that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery subordination to the superior race is his natural and normal condition,” a “truth” that Stephens presented as a discovery of modern “science” as well as an “ordinance of the Creator.”^{xxxviii}

Four years later, Stephens’ erstwhile congressional and Whig ally Abraham Lincoln agreed in his Second Inaugural Address that slavery “was, somehow, the cause of the war,” and he noted that both sides “read the same Bible, and pray to the same God.”^{xxxix} Both men and most of those they led in fact subscribed to worldviews in which scientific reason and religion were expected to converge on affirmation of enduring standards of natural justice that should guide politics, and both were devotees of republicanism and commercial growth. They disagreed on the institutions and policies through which those endeavors could best be advanced, and they disagreed still more on slavery and the natural rights of African Americans. Apart from that great issue, their ideas at bottom remained very similar.

But shortly before and shortly after the Civil War, Charles Darwin published two scientific works, *On the Origin of the Species* (1859) and *The Descent of Man* (1871), which proved to interact with the American “common ideas” of commerce, science, and religion in ways that helped to generate the profound transformations and modern divisions that are my chief theme here.^{xl} Reinforced by the impact of the German historicist thought that made the St. Louis Hegelians the vanguard of American philosophy during the Civil War and for decades thereafter, the Darwinian idea of evolution spurred both excited hopes and profound anxieties in American intellectuals and, to a lesser degree, the American public.^{xli} What James

Kloppenbergs has aptly termed the late 19th century “marriage of Hegel and Darwin” gave birth to new visions of the natural and social worlds as evolving over many millennia in ways that generated changing physical environments and changing animate species, including humanity, and very different human societies.^{xlii}

In many respects, the Constitution had prepared Americans to embrace these new visions. Conceptions of historical evolutionary development fit well with the American beliefs in “society as a body progressing” toward “something better” that Tocqueville had discerned. They also provided defenses of the economic inequalities that burgeoned during the late 19th century American industrial revolution, presenting these features of America’s evolving commercial society as natural products of economic competition. As a result, the English theorist Herbert Spencer, who coined the term “survival of the fittest,” enjoyed “near-cult status in America,” as James Ceaser has observed.^{xliii} William Graham Sumner, the first professor of political science and sociology at Yale, wrote a popular anti-redistributionist treatise in 1883, *What the Social Classes Owe Each Other*, which has remained in print to the present day.^{xliv} On evolutionary grounds, it expressed intellectually re-bolstered contempt for the “theory of permanent equality of wealth.”

Yet at the same time, the new evolutionary scientific perspectives “staggered” prevailing religious beliefs in biblical inerrancy, along with confidence that reason could discern unchanging standards of justice and rights that applied in any and all human contexts.^{xlv} As Ceaser also argues, “the dominant partner “ in the Darwinian synthesis of nature and history “turned out be History,” in a form that unsettled Enlightenment confidence that progress would still affirm basic, eternal religious

and moral verities expressing “the permanent and unchanging character of things.”^{xlvi} The responses to these challenges were many and varied; but the most influential thinker who sought to incorporate these intellectual developments into a comprehensive new philosophy was the leading voice of modern democratic pragmatism, John Dewey.^{xlvii} Dewey’s views on science, religion, commerce, and democracy simultaneously represent clear culminations of and clear departures from the predominant understandings of the founding era that had been incorporated in and advanced by the Constitution.

For Dewey, “the ‘scientific revolution,’ the ‘industrial revolution’ and the ‘political revolution’ of the last few hundred years” of which the American Constitution was a key part had produced a “much changed human situation” that required pervasive “reconstruction” of philosophy, science, religion, and political and economic institutions.^{xlviii} He believed that in much of the 19th century, as Tocqueville observed, a “compromise” had existed in which modern science restructured pursuits of “lower material concerns” while leaving “moral and ideal matters” undisturbed “in their older form.”^{xlix} But Dewey believed this “equilibrium” was “decidedly uneasy;” the development of science fostered a kind of “secularization” of prevailing perspectives and practices in every realm.¹ This secularization resulted from “the most revolutionary discovery yet made,” that “in natural science as well as in moral standards and principles,” the development of fuller knowledge required abandoning “the assumption of fixity” and recognition what was “actually ‘universal’ is *process...processes of change.*”^{li} Modern theories,

modern institutions, modern behavior should be reconstructed on this foundational reality of inescapable evolution.

And in every realm, Dewey thought reconstruction involved democratization: recognition in the natural sciences that the earth, sun, moon and stars are not hierarchically ordered but “equal in dignity” and subject to the same laws, and that living species do not fall into fixed “classes of higher and lower” but evolve; and recognition in politics and economics that “the supreme test of all political institutions and industrial arrangements shall be the contribution they make to the all-around growth of every member of society,” without regard for “race, sex, class, or economic status,” and with the good of each person in every situation regarded as “of equal worth, rank and dignity with every other good” in any other situation.^{lii}

Dewey believed this economic and political egalitarianism stemmed logically from the rejection of any fixed natural or divine ordering of existence, including human existence, which evolutionary science demanded.^{liii} Since there were no natural hierarchies, all should count equally in, and all should have equal opportunity to share in shaping, “in proportion to capacity,” the evolving determination of appropriate human means and ends, including “new and better ends,” to be achieved by humanity’s newly unleashed imagination and by intelligently guided democratic “social and moral engineering.”^{liv} And as “new ideas” of human purposes and practices thus came to be expressed in social life, Dewey promised, they would “take on religious value,” revivifying “the religious spirit” in new forms that would be “in harmony with men’s unquestioned scientific beliefs and their ordinary day-to-day social activities.”^{lv}

Ceaser contends correctly that in advocating these positions, Progressives like Dewey “set up a battle of the Titans between the Founders’ philosophy of natural right and their own new philosophy of pragmatism,” and, we can add, between reformulations of religion meant to be compatible with modern science and more traditionalist religious perspectives.^{lvi} Ceaser also notes that some scholars nonetheless see similarities between the Progressives and the founding generation due to “their emphasis on science and reason as well as their rejection of tradition”—though he argues that “in the end, it is the contrast between the two views,” particularly their rejection of any fixed natural morality, “that stands out.”^{lvii}

Here I advance a third alternative. There is, indeed, a great gulf between most founders’ endorsements of natural rights and religious revelations and the democratic pragmatists’ rejection of eternal natural and religious moral and political standards. Yet there are also undeniable connections between the founders’ initial decisions not to establish a national religious orthodoxy, to foster a culture of scientific and commercial innovation and growth, and to give ultimate political power to the undifferentiated mass of the people, and the subsequent development of a public philosophy valorizing democracy and change above all and calling for sciences that assist the people in continually imagining new goals—commercial, political, intellectual, aesthetic and spiritual--and discovering new means to achieve them. Democratic pragmatism is a fit theoretical counterpart, if not indeed the logical “high” philosophic articulation, of the “purely practical” everyday philosophy Tocqueville delineated.

Even so, perhaps the apparently paradoxical combination that Tocqueville portrayed in antebellum America, in which Americans regarded basic moral and religious values as fixed while seeking to experiment and innovate in science, technology, commerce, politics, and other realms, could and should have been sustained in the “uneasy equilibrium” Dewey perceived. But after the advent of Darwinian evolutionary science, it is difficult to see how this could have been done: either that science had to be rejected or some sort of “reconstruction in philosophy,” with uncertain but potentially far-ranging implications for republicanism, commerce, and religion, had to be undertaken. And though it may be possible to fuse evolutionary perspectives with intellectually powerful affirmations of unchanging, rationally discernible natural moral universals, no effort to achieve that sort of philosophic reconstruction has yet proven to be broadly persuasive.^{lviii}

But democratic pragmatist perspectives have also failed to persuade many Americans, for understandable reasons. The belief that modern science pointed to democratization itself proved paradoxical in many ways. Although Progressive era pragmatists did endorse democratizing reforms include nominating primaries, direct election of Senators, initiative and referendum processes of direct democratic decision-making, and eventually women’s suffrage, their belief in the authority of the new sciences of economics, public administration, sociology and more led them also to favor increased governmental power for appointed “experts” of various sorts.^{lix} In the name of democracy, pragmatists then and since have often sought to empower intellectual elites.

And though many pragmatists remained convinced during the first third of the twentieth century that biological and social evolution so far had generated races and sexes at different levels of development, so that segregation and even disfranchisement were appropriate for most non-whites and women, many came over time to agree with Dewey that political and economic institutions should instead be restructured to treat all persons as “of equal worth, rank, and dignity,” regardless of “race, sex, class, or economic status.”^{lx} This agreement drove their advocacy of heightened governmental efforts to regulate commercial activities in order to promote greater economic security for all and a more egalitarian distribution of wealth. It also spurred the legislation and judicial decisions banning many forms of discrimination and promoting integration that marked the transition of Progressive-era democratic pragmatism into modern American liberalism.^{lxi}

But even 20th century thinkers who accepted evolutionary premises continued to divide sharply between those who believed relatively unbridled commercial competition comported best with those premises, and those who thought expertly-informed governmental decisions should instead guide the economy to more broadly beneficial results. And the anti-discrimination initiatives, in particular, could often be accurately accused of disregarding rather than expressing the will of democratic majorities.^{lxii} Many in an America that had wariness of an inclusive “multiculturalism,” especially multi-racialism, embedded in its Constitution found the “new ideas” of social, political, and economic “reconstruction” that Progressives and liberals advocated to be an assault on, not a religious revivification of, their “ordinary day-to-day social activities.”

Even so, abetted by the pressures of a depression and global warfare, hot and cold, during the middle third of the 20th century, longtime Progressives and later liberals did build broad popular support for their state and national economic regulatory and redistributive restructuring of American commerce--such as the programs fostered by the Social Security Act--and for many of their racially and culturally inclusive political and social reforms, such as the banning of legal segregation and racial voting discrimination.^{lxiii} Perhaps the arena in which democratic pragmatist and liberal perspectives proved least successful in winning popular acceptance, despite what at first appeared to be evidence to the contrary, was religion. As David Hollinger has recently detailed, many early 20th century Protestants and other religious leaders sought to reconcile their faith intellectually with modern scientific beliefs, as Dewey had urged, and did so in part by embracing “Social Gospel” goals of service to the needy in this world, rather than insisting on religious conversion to faith in scientifically improbable “literal” interpretations of the Bible.^{lxiv} And from the 1940s through the 1960s, especially, the “intellectual leadership of mainstream liberal Protestantism” advanced intense self-critiques as part of these socially conscious efforts, “attacking the ethnocentrism and sectarianism they professed to find all around them, including in their own churches.”^{lxv} They sought to foster egalitarian practices of inclusive diversity, supported by liberal theologies so influenced by modern philosophy that God became simply the “ground of being,” as in Paul Tillich’s formulation, or a crudely sectarian term that should perhaps not be used at all, as Harvard theologian Harvey Cox argued in 1965.^{lxvi}

Although the growth of all American churches in the post-WW II years concealed the trend for a time, these theologically liberal and diversity-embracing, social service-oriented religious perspectives proved from the 1940s on far less appealing to many Americans than more evangelical forms of faith focused on “facilitating a close emotional relationship with the divine,” with Jesus Christ as one’s savior.^{lxvii} Such evangelicalism better responded to the “desire for immortality” that Tocqueville saw as tormenting most if not all human hearts. Many evangelicals also supported public policies aimed at fostering a “vibrant world of Christianity, not compromise and accommodation with diversity,” in ways that many Christian Americans found comforting and inspiring.^{lxviii} And most conservative evangelicals allied themselves strongly with American capitalists against godless communism, and against what they saw as equally impious liberal reform policies that threatened to hamstring American commerce.^{lxix} Though critics contended that such pro-capitalist stances appeared to replace God with mammon as the chief object of worship, many saw no discontinuity between Andrew Carnegie’s 19th century “Gospel of Wealth” and the ancient Gospels of the Lord.^{lxx}

From the 1960s through the 1980s and beyond, Hollinger argues, the “liberal-conservative political divide” has therefore “mapped quite easily on the ecumenical-evangelical divide,” and conservative political forces have benefited from the fact that during those years, all of the more liberal “mainline denominations have experienced a precipitous drop in membership numbers,” while evangelical denominations have swelled.^{lxxi} The significance of these developments can be overstated. Hollinger notes that the children of mainline

Protestants have often become secularists but have continued to favor much in “Social Gospel” morality, and that, as I have also argued, many contemporary evangelicals are willing for various reasons to endorse notions of equal treatment for all moral and religious viewpoints, rather than insisting that the U.S. see itself as a “Christian nation.”^{lxxii} Though many evangelical churches felt threatened by the civil rights movement and other modern liberation movements, none seek to restore segregation, and many are increasingly willing to countenance greater gender equality and even some government programs designed to assist those in need. As a result, on some issues “young adults of virtually all faiths” can sound like “classical liberal Protestants.”^{lxxiii} Yet it cannot be denied that on many other topics, American religions no longer preach “the same morality,” regarded as “certain and settled,” expressing “but a single current,” to nearly the degree that Tocqueville saw. And they do not in part because conservative evangelicals and liberal ecumenicals have come to accept very different foundational concepts concerning religion, nature, history and science—with most in the first camp adhering to older notions of revelation and natural justice, most in the second adopting more recent evolutionary premises and reformist pragmatic beliefs.

In terms of conceptions of American constitutional democracy, these contrasts are well exemplified by the two Illinois lawyers who became President of the United States, Abraham Lincoln in the 19th century and Barack Obama in the 21st.^{lxxiv} Lincoln was a free thinker as a young man and never conventionally religious, and he famously interpreted the Constitution not chiefly by reference to the views of those present in Philadelphia in 1787 but through the language of the

Declaration of Independence in 1776. In his 1857 speech attacking the *Dred Scott* decision, Lincoln argued that in proclaiming that all were entitled to natural “inalienable rights,” the Declaration “set up a standard maxim for free society, which should be familiar to all, and revered by all; constantly looked to, constantly labored for, and even though never perfectly attained, constantly approximated, and thereby constantly spreading and deepening its influence, and augmenting the happiness and value of life to all people of all colors everywhere.”^{lxxv} Lincoln thought these commitments made it unjust as well as unwise to permit slavery to be extended to the American territories, and he believed the new Republican Party and the U.S. Congress were entitled to contest the view of the U.S. Supreme Court that the Constitution required such extensions. In so arguing, Lincoln showed that in his view, American constitutionalism did not require close attention to the immediate intentions of the framers of specific constitutional provisions or complete acquiescence to a conservative judiciary’s views on those provisions; and he saw the constitutional enterprise as one aimed at change and progress over time. Yet this was still change and progress toward fulfillment of the fixed standards of natural justice, which he also regarded as standards of God, that Lincoln saw articulated in the Declaration and the constitutionalism of the founders.

Barack Obama has often professed his allegiance to Lincoln’s views of constitutional statesmanship, and he is particularly likely to invoke Lincoln on behalf of national powers to intervene in the economy.^{lxxvi} But unlike Lincoln, Obama perceives implicit in the “structure” of the Constitution, “in the very idea of ordered liberty,” a “rejection of absolute truth, the infallibility of any idea or

ideology or ‘ism,’ any tyrannical consistency that might lock future generations into a single unalterable course.”^{lxxvii} He interprets all the “elaborate machinery” of the Constitution—“its separation of powers and checks and balances and federalist principles and Bill of Rights”—as “designed” to create a “deliberative democracy” in which “all citizens are required to engage in a process of testing their ideas against an external reality, persuading others of their point of view, and building shifting alliances of consent.”^{lxxviii} For Obama, the Constitution’s “rejection of absolutism” aids the “process of information gathering, analysis, and argument that allows us to make better, if not perfect, choices, not only about the means to our ends but also about the ends themselves.”^{lxxix}

If these “living Constitution” arguments sound like Dewey’s pragmatist dismissal of eternal verities and calls for the discovery of better ends through democratic processes, updated via contemporary theories of “deliberative democracy,” that is no accident. Obama’s closest colleague at the University of Chicago, Professor of Law and Political Science Cass Sunstein, argued explicitly for interpreting Madison and the Constitution in these ways, and linked them to Dewey, in an influential *Yale Law Journal* article written shortly before Obama joined the Chicago Law faculty.^{lxxx} Yet their views are not quite the same. More than Sunstein, and more like Lincoln, Obama professes himself “absolutely sure” of the principles of “universal rights” and “the equal worth of every individual” to which he sees the Constitution as committed.^{lxxxi}

Obama explicitly rests his beliefs, however, not on rationally discerned fixed principles of natural justice. He appeals instead to religious faith—and specifically

to the forms of modern liberal Protestant faith that center on “the battle for economic and social justice,” with theologies that hold, in pragmatist fashion, that “the ultimate irony of faith is that it necessarily admits doubt.”^{lxxxii} Though Lincoln and Obama therefore might agree on many constitutional and policy issues, as Obama insists, there is an undeniable gulf between the foundational concepts on which they rest their views of commerce, religion, scientific reason, and constitutional republicanism. Yet for Obama as for many other ecumenical Protestants and twenty-first century pragmatic proponents of constitutional democracy, his 21st century views represent the fruits of American labors to spread and deepen the influence of the principles of universal individual rights and worth with which their constitutional republic began—principles that, as the scientific, commercial, and religious quests they favored have developed, have themselves required the formulation of new and in some ways anti-foundational foundations.

V. Consequences for 21st Century America—and the World. But even if the changed perspectives that Obama exemplifies are in some ways consequences of the American experiments in government, they are nonetheless far from broadly accepted and are, instead, often bitterly contested in modern America. Many 21st century Americans continue to see in the successes of modern scientific, technological, and commercial innovations only affirmations of the wisdom of the older understandings of natural justice and religion that originally helped to launch them, rather than indications of any need for new philosophical premises and political purposes. And though it is debatable whether their numbers are growing, these Americans are more politically mobilized now than at some points in the

past.^{lxxxiii} Democratic pragmatic Progressives and New Deal and Great Society liberals and their economic and social policies dominated American politics from 1932 through the early 1970s. But since then, dissatisfactions with the perceived costs and consequences of their national economic regulatory and redistributive programs, disquiet at many kinds of liberal diversity initiatives and at liberal internationalist and multilateralist foreign policies, and the rise of the Religious Right all generated a broad and powerful new conservative coalition in American politics and life that gained increasing control of national governmental institutions from 1980 to 2004. Its reversals in the elections of 2006 and 2008 were, moreover, partly offset by victories in 2010, a year that also saw the emergence of the passionate Tea Party movement whose fondness for “American exceptionalism” in many ways represents a call for return to earlier foundational concepts. Today there is little doubt that, while many Americans support particular positions favored by modern liberal democratic pragmatists, conservatives can often win electoral and legislative majorities opposed to many liberal policies toward commerce and religion, and to a lesser degree toward modern science, in favor of policies that express more traditional commitments in all three arenas.

What have been the results of the predominance of this conservative coalition in the past generation? In regard to commerce, aspirations for any “permanent equality of wealth” have clearly been beaten back. In 2005 three financial analysts for Citigroup Research, a division of Citigroup Global Markets, drew on the work of former Republican strategist Kevin Phillips to argue that with the aid of modern conservative economic policies, the United States had become a

“plutonomy,” as it had previously been in “the Gilded Age and the Roaring Twenties.”^{lxxxiv} By “plutonomy,” these analysts meant an economy, generally aided by “capitalist-friendly cooperative governments...the rule of law, and patenting inventions,” in which “growth is powered by and largely consumed by the wealthy few.”^{lxxxv} In the U.S. “the top 1% of households,” or about 1 million households, had come by 2000 to account for “20% of overall U.S. income” and “40% of financial net worth,” percentages comparable to the overall income share received by the 60 million households that comprised “the bottom 60% of households,” and greater than the financial net worth of “the bottom 95% of households.”^{lxxxvi} As a result, of these economic hyper-inequalities, the Citigroup researchers argued that lower saving rates and higher prices for many goods, including oil and other commodities, were not likely to harm economic growth, investment, and innovation. The wealthy did most of the buying and investing and would be able to continue to do so even if their saving rates were low.^{lxxxvii}

These financial analysts thought eventually a political “backlash against plutonomy,” probably involving labor protections and higher taxes, might occur, but saw little threat of this in the U.S., so long as the economy continued to grow. Three years later, of course, the United States plunged into a deep recession from which growth rates have yet to recover very fully, contributing to the election of Barack Obama to the presidency and to intense and protracted struggles over national economic policies. Whether these developments suggest the U.S. now has a kind of “manufacturing aristocracy,” and if so, whether it is as politically “limited” as Tocqueville expected, is another topic on which Americans are deeply divided.

Also during the last generation of conservative political ascendancy, some scholars believe the place of science in America has begun to undergo new and far-reaching transformations as well. The United States, to be sure, continues to seek to be the world's leader in scientific research and intellectual advances more generally. But education scholar Roger Geiger argues that beginning "around 1980," American research universities, which became the key venues for scientific experimentation in the 20th century, began to undergo "a fundamental reorientation" in which they "embraced the mission of contributing to the economy, especially by forging links with private industry."^{lxxxviii} And as university research budgets then rose, in part to service commercial interests, and tuition rates also increased, state support for public higher education diminished, fostering a "shift toward the privatization of public higher education."^{lxxxix} Conservative national legislators have also begun pushing for cuts in National Science Foundation and other governmental research funding, arguing that too much goes to intellectual work that does not directly produce scientific, medical, or technological benefits—developments that again incline many universities to seek new alliances with industry.^{xc} And at the elementary and secondary levels, fresh controversies have arisen over the place of evolutionary biology and religious alternative accounts in public school classes.^{xcii} Collectively, these developments have raised concerns that American science and scholarship are becoming restrictively tied to commerce, on the one way hand, and hampered by traditionalist forms of religions, on the other; though others see in them salutary pressures to make research more genuinely useful and more respectful of the full range of modern perspectives.^{xciii}

The public school controversies over evolution are intense in part because exposure to modern science continues to have consequences for religion. A recent national survey indicates that today, unlike the 1960s and 1970s, Americans become more likely to attend religious services the more they are educated. But they are also more likely to attend “a mainline Protestant denomination,” to deny that their religion is the “one truth faith” and that the Bible is the literal “Word of God,” and to affirm that they believe in a “higher power” rather than they “definitely believe in God.” Thus though religion continues to matter to Americans at all educational levels, and indeed there is a slight trend for the educated to return to active religious participation, the author of the study, sociologist Philip Schwadel, concludes that “the religious worldviews of the highly educated differ from the religious worldviews of those” with less education.^{xciii} Obama clearly expresses the religious worldview more characteristic of the highly educated. Most with more traditionalist religious outlooks—along with many other educated, middle-class and more affluent voters—tend to vote Republican. And though the association of ecumenical religious liberals with regulatory and redistributive economic policies and conservative evangelicals with more full-throated support for American commercial capitalism is far from complete, those combinations continue to be far more prevalent than their opposites.^{xciv}

In sum, the differences over foundational concepts that have emerged in the course of American constitutional development are contributing today both to pronounced economic inequalities and to deep disagreements over policies toward commerce, science, religion, and many other matters. Americans, to be sure, still

have many “common ideas” --but not so many as to enable clerical, scholarly, or industrial leaders to foster any underlying national consensus that might enable political and economic institutions to operate without intense friction. One consequence is that there is now increased pressure on representative democratic institutions and processes to be the arenas in which these profound differences over current policies and foundational commitments are worked through—what alternative is there? In this regard at least, the results of the American experiments in government are making government more important than ever.

But they may well also be making democratic republican self-governance harder than ever. It is probably not wise to draw too many conclusions from the difficulties that are in view at this writing in the summer of 2011, when the world’s wealthiest nation, facing real economic problems but not a crisis, proved so incapable of reaching policy agreements that it came to the brink of default and sent stock markets tumbling around the globe. But it seems reasonable to suggest that throughout the 20th century and into the 21st, the United States has experienced a deepening of the foundational divisions that emerged in the late 19th century, sundering the broadly shared moral and religious worldview that Americans previously displayed. So ironically, the rise of views that valorize collective decision-making processes appears to be rendering those processes more dysfunctional.

Yet that irony concerning modern democratic pragmatist perspectives is matched by an irony concerning their Enlightenment rationalist and religious predecessors—or more accurately, ancestors. Although it appears to many

Americans desirable to return to those older foundational concepts, I have argued here that the institutions and practices based on those concepts appear to have encouraged processes of innovation and change in commerce, science, and religion that have led many modern Americans to reject these founding ideas, at least in their original form. To seek to return to the past, then, may be to seek to return to what gave us the present. It is not clear whether such a quest is an affirmation or a repudiation of the founders' experiments.

Let me note in closing that, despite the current difficulties, I do not think the either America's present condition or this analysis of the circumstances that have contributed to it warrant any such repudiation. The modern American scene remains, after all, one of extraordinary commercial abundance, breathtaking scientific and other intellectual achievements, and the blossoming of many, largely happily co-existing faiths in which millions find spiritual fulfillment, all governed by democratic institutions that have grown more fully inclusive and democratic over time. Modern divisions over foundational concepts may well require Americans to demand more of their governing institutions, and perhaps also to undertake new political experiments, if they are to govern themselves more successfully. Those divisions may also indicate that there is much work to be done in American political thought if a more harmonious pluralism, or even a new unity, in the nation's foundational beliefs is to be achieved. But they do not show that these challenges cannot be met. They simply identify some of the core lessons of "our republican example" in the 21st century, lessons both for Americans and for everyone in the

world for whom the flourishing of commerce, faith, science, and constitutional democracy are compelling concerns.

ⁱ “Jefferson to Adams,” February 28, 1796, in *The Adams-Jefferson Letters: The Complete Correspondence Between Thomas Jefferson and Abigail and John Adams*, vol. I, ed. Lester J. Cappon (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1959), 260; “Adams to Jefferson,” April 6, 1796, *ibid.* 261-262.

ⁱⁱ James W. Ceaser, *Nature and History in American Political Development* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 4-10. Ceaser sees more dispute over what he terms the foundational concepts of nature and history prior to the Civil War than I do, though he sees most political actors appealing to “nature” as “the chief foundational concept of American political life” (26, 29).

ⁱⁱⁱ J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), 516-517.

^{iv} *Ibid.* 521.

^v *Federalist Papers*, 51-52, 67-68.

^{vi} *Ibid.* 321-322.

^{vii} Thomas Paine, “Common Sense,” in *Tracts of the American Revolution, 1763-1776*, ed. Merrill Jensen (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1976), 423; *Federalist Papers*, 54.

^{viii} Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 528-545.

^{ix} James Madison, *Notes of Debates in the Federal Convention of 1787* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1966), 548.

^x *Ibid.* 287.

^{xi} *Ibid.* 477.

^{xii} E.g., Akhil Reed Amar, *America’s Constitution: A Biography* (New York: Random House, 2005) 166 (noting that Delaware adopted the Article VI ban on religious qualifications for office “virtually verbatim” in 1792, after having required belief in the Holy Trinity in 1776).

^{xiii} Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, transl. Arthur Goldhammer (New York: Library of America), v. I, pt. II, ch. 9, 344.

^{xiv} *Ibid.* v. I, pt. II, ch. 10, 448-450.

^{xv} *Ibid.*, v. I, pt. I, ch. 4, 64.

^{xvi} *Ibid.* v. II, pt. 1, ch. 9, 517; v. I, pt. 1, ch. 3, 57.

^{xvii} *Ibid.* v. II, pt. 2, ch. 18, 642; v. II, pt. 2, ch. 19, 645.

^{xviii} *Ibid.* v. II, pt. 2, ch. 13, 625.

^{xix} *Ibid.* v. I, pt. 2, ch. 10, 444-445.

^{xx} *Ibid.* v. II, pt. 2, ch. 20, 652.

^{xxi} *Ibid.*

^{xxii} *Ibid.* v. I, pt. 2, ch. 10, 391.

^{xxiii} *Ibid.* 412-419, 444.

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- xxiv Ibid., v. I, pt. 2, ch. 9, 335, 337.
- xxv Ibid., 336.
- xxvi Ibid., 337; v. II, pt. 1, ch. 1, 484.
- xxvii Ibid., v. I, pt. 2, Ch. 9, 338.
- xxviii Ibid. v. I, pt. 2, 343..
- xxix Ibid. 334.
- xxx Ibid. v. 1, pt. II, ch. 10, 431.
- xxxi Ibid. 431-432.
- xxxii Ibid. v. 2, pt. 1, ch. 1, 483.
- xxxiii Ibid. 483-484.
- xxxiv Ibid. 486-487.
- xxxv Ibid. v. II, pt. I, ch. 10, 523.
- xxxvi Ibid. v. I, pt. II, ch. 10, 432, 466-467.
- xxxvii Ceaser, *Nature and History*, thinks they did: “the political debate of the day focused directly on foundational concepts” (44). I see the core dispute as not between conceptions of nature and history but as resting on the less foundational issue of whether all races were entitled to the basic rights of the Declaration of Independence, according to notions of divine ordinance and natural science to which both sides appealed. I agree with Ceaser’s subsequent argument that “Progressivism,” not Jacksonian Democracy, was “the first major national movement to offer the concept of History as the nation’s primary foundational idea” (60).
- xxxviii Alexander H. Stephens, “Cornerstone Speech,” March 21, 1861, Savannah, Georgia, at <http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?documentprint=76>.
- xxxix Abraham Lincoln, “Second Inaugural Address,” March 4, 1865, in Hollinger and Capper, op. cit., 528.
- xl A useful overview is Carl N. Degler, *In Search of Human Nature: The Decline and Revival of Darwinism in American Social Thought* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).
- xli For Hegelianism in America in these decades, see e.g. James A. Good, “A ‘World-Historical Idea’: The St. Louis Hegelians and the Civil War,” *Journal of American Studies* 34: 447-464 (2000).
- xlii James T. Kloppenberg, *Uncertain Victory: Social Democracy and Progressivism in European and American Thought, 1870-1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 35.
- xliii Ceaser, *Nature and History*, 55; cf. Kloppenberg, *ibid.* 21, 23; Degler, *Human Nature*, 11.
- xliv William Graham Sumner, *What the Social Classes Owe Each Other* (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Printers, 1982, orig. 1883). See also Ceaser, *ibid.*, 55-56.
- xliv Ibid. 23, and see generally 15-46.
- xlvi Ceaser, *Nature and History*, 54, 58.
- xlvii Kloppenberg notes that only Dewey “played an equally decisive part” in the philosophic and political re-thinking spurred by the rise of historical and evolutionary perspectives (*Uncertain Victory*, 9-10).

xlviii John Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, Enlarged Edition (Boston: Beacon Press, 1948; original edition 1920), vii-viii. I cite extensively from this among Dewey's many writings because its original and enlarged editions together express his thinking through the first half of the 20th century.

xliv Ibid. xxi-xxii.

li Ibid. xxxi-xxxiii.

lii Ibid. xiii.

liii Ibid. 65, 75, 176, 186. See also Ceaser, *Nature and History*, 63.

liiii Ibid. 70, 208-209.

liv Ibid. 72-73, 173, 177, 209.

lv Ibid. 210.

lvi Ceaser, *Nature and History*, 62.

lvii Ibid. 64.

lviii Efforts along such lines include Roger D. Masters, *The Nature of Politics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989) and Martha Nussbaum, "Non-Relative Virtues: An Aristotelian Approach," in *The Quality of Life*, ed. Martha Nussbaum and Amartya Sen, (New York: Oxford University Press, 242-269).

lix See e.g. Thomas C. Leonard, "American Economic Reform in the Progressive Era: Its Foundational Beliefs and Their Relation to Eugenics," *History of Political Economy* 41: 109-141 (2009).

lx Smith, *Civic Ideals*, 412-424, 473-475.

lxi Ceaser, *Nature and History*, 64-70, provides a similar account.

lxii Ibid.

lxiii See e.g. David Plotke, *Building a Democratic Political Order: Reshaping American Liberalism in the 1930s and 1940s* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), and Kevin J. McMahon, *Reconsidering Roosevelt on Race: How the Presidency Paved the Road to Brown* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

lxiv David A. Hollinger, "After Cloven Tongues of Fire: Ecumenical Protestantism and the Modern American Encounter with Diversity," *Journal of American History* 98: 22-23, 30 (2011).

lxv Ibid. 23.

lxvi Ibid. 28-29.

lxvii Ibid. 22, 33-34, 37.

lxviii Ibid. 34.

lxix Ibid. 34-35.

lxx Nor had Carnegie: see e.g. Andrew Carnegie, "The Gospel of Wealth," in *American Political Thought: A Norton Anthology*, ed. Isaac Kramnick and Theodore J. Lowi (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2009), 736-737.

lxxi Ibid. 37, 39.

lxxii Ibid. 38, 46-47; Rogers M. Smith, "An Almost Christian Nation? Constitutional Consequences of the Rise of the Religious Right," in *Evangelicals and Democracy in America: Volume I, Religion and Society*, ed. Steven Brint and Jean Reith Schroedel (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2009), 329-355.

lxxiii Hollinger, *ibid.* 47.

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- ^{lxxiv} I have elaborated this comparison in “Lincoln and Obama: Two Visions of Constitutional Union,” in *Representing Citizenship*, ed. Liette Gidlow (forthcoming, Wayne State University Press, 2012).
- ^{lxxv} Abraham Lincoln, “Speech on the Dred Scott Decision in Springfield, Illinois,” in Kramnick and Lowi, eds., *American Political Thought*, 657.
- ^{lxxvi} See e.g. Barack Obama, *The Audacity of Hope: Thoughts on Reclaiming the American Dream* (New York: Crown Publishing Co., 2006), 97-98, 152, 159,
- ^{lxxvii} *Ibid.* 93.
- ^{lxxviii} *Ibid.* 92.
- ^{lxxix} *Ibid.* 94.
- ^{lxxx} Cass R. Sunstein, “Beyond the Republican Revival,” *Yale Law Journal* 97: 1548-1553 (1988).
- ^{lxxxi} Obama, *Audacity of Hope*, 86, 224.
- ^{lxxxii} *Ibid.* 208, 224-226.
- ^{lxxxiii} For some of the doubts, see Morris P. Fiorina with Samuel J. Abrams and Jeremy C. Pope, *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America* (New York: Pearson Longman, 2005). For the mobilization, see Nancy T. Ammerman, “American Evangelicals in American Culture: Continuity and Change,” in Brint and Schroedel, eds., *Evangelicals and Democracy*, 54-66.
- ^{lxxxiv} Ajay Kapur, Niall Macleod, Narendra Singh, “Plutonomy: Buying Luxury, Explaining Global Imbalances,” 1, , at <http://jdeanicate.typepad.com/files/plutonomy-1.pdf>. For an analysis of these phenomena by two leading liberal political scientists, see Jacob S. Hacker and Paul Pierson, *Winner-Take-All Politics: How Washington Made the Rich Richer—and Turned Its Back on the Middle Class* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010).
- ^{lxxxv} *Ibid.* 1-2.
- ^{lxxxvi} *Ibid.* 2-3
- ^{lxxxvii} *Ibid.* 3, 20-21.
- ^{lxxxviii} Roger L. Geiger, *Knowledge & Money: Research Universities and the Paradox of the Marketplace* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004), 3.
- ^{lxxxix} Roger L. Geiger, Carol L. Colbeck, Roger L. Williams, and Christian K. Anderson, “Introduction,” in *Future of the American Research University*, ed. Roger L. Geiger, Carol L. Colbeck, Roger L. Williams, and Christian K Anderson (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2007), 3-5.
- ^{xc} Stephanie Pappas, “Scientists Cry Foul Over Report Criticizing National Science Foundation,” *LiveScience*, May 26, 2011, <http://www.livescience.com/14353-coburn-nsf-funding-misleading.html>.
- ^{xci} See e.g. Jay D. Wexler, “Darwin, Design, and Disestablishment: Teaching the Evolution Controversy in Public Schools,” *Vanderbilt Law Review* 56: 751-858 (2003).
- ^{xcii} For a balanced overview, see David Sikkink, “Conservative Protestants, Schooling, and Democracy,” in Brint and Schroedel, eds., *Evangelicals and Democracy*, 276-304.
- ^{xciii} Steve Smith, “Does Education Influence Religious Beliefs?” *Charisma News Online*, August 10, 2011, <http://www.charismamag.com/index.php/news/31750-does-education-influence-religious-beliefs>.

^{xciv} See e.g. John C. Green, "Exploring the Traditionalist Alliance: Evangelical Protestants, Religious Voters, and the Republican Presidential Vote," in Brint and Schroedel, eds., *Evangelicals and Democracy*, 117-158.