INTRODUCTION

THE SOLIDARITY of an aggrieved people can be a dangerous thing. No lesson from recent history could be more evident. Any nation united mainly by memories of injustices done to it is likely to behave unjustly in its own defense and to elicit similar responses from its neighbors and enemies. A cycle of self-righteous violence will then ensue. Fear and resentment will escalate all around, placing innocents at home and abroad in further jeopardy. America's newfound solidarity in the age of terrorism therefore warrants suspicion. Many around the world nervously await our next massive use of military power, understandably afraid that we have ceased to be guided by democratic ideals and moral constraints. Solidarity we will surely need in the struggles ahead. But on what basis shall we secure it? We had better have something in common besides resentful fear of our enemies. Yet we have, until recently, been preoccupied with our ethnic, racial, and religious differences. We are not used to discussing what, if anything, links us together.

It is perhaps no accident, under such circumstances, that religious conceptions of national identity immediately come to the fore. Politicians assemble to sing "God Bless America" on the steps of the Capitol or to assure that children acknowledge membership in "one nation under God" at the start of every school day. A prominent Jewish senator declares America an essentially religious nation. Judging from his past pronouncements, he means a Judeo-Christian nation. Others intend something quite a bit narrower or a little broader when they utter the same words. Many Jews and Christians find the civil religion of our day incoherent and alienating—a travesty of true faith. As a student of these traditions, I am inclined to agree. But there is also something self-deceptive, and implicitly threatening, in the appeals to religion as a source of civic unity. Vague references to God from the crepe-lined podium cannot finally disguise the vast array of theistic and nontheistic religions Americans embrace. Need I add that dissenters, free thinkers, atheists, and agnostics are citizens, too?

Some critics charge that the moral and spiritual core of our society is empty. They frequently add that the ethical substance of the predecessor culture has been drained off by liberal secularism. To view the picture in high contrast, consider the Amish, a group that nobody would characterize as either fragmented or secular. It is easy to see both what marks this group as a community and what tradition its members can take for granted when discussing their ethical differences with one another. Any such group is bound together closely by sacred stories, dogmas, and rituals transmitted

across generations. Members of such a tradition are united in their beliefs about the world and their codes of conduct, their tables of virtues and vices, their pieties and their aspirations.

In contrast, modern democratic societies appear to lack any such unifying framework. In the eyes of many observers they seem to be inherently at odds with the substantive, comprehensive visions of the religious traditions. The perception of modern democratic societies as morally and spiritually empty is hardly confined to the Amish and similarly isolated sects. It is the common link among the various types of antimodern traditionalism that have appeared in countless times and places throughout the modern era. Edmund Burke, Pope Pius IX, Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, René Guénon, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Ananda Coomaraswamy, and many others have voiced the same complaint. Since 1980, that complaint has made new gains among religious intellectuals in America, primarily under the influence of Stanley Hauerwas, a Methodist theologian, Alasdair MacIntyre, a Roman Catholic philosopher, and John Milbank, an Anglican theologian. I will call the movement they represent the "new traditionalism." The challenge this movement poses to democratic society is a central topic in what follows.

Liberal philosophers have often reinforced the traditionalist critique of modern democracy in two ways. First, they have endorsed a theory of the modern nation-state as ideally neutral with respect to comprehensive conceptions of the good. Second, they have proposed to establish political deliberation on a common basis of free public reason, independent of reliance on tradition. Not all liberal philosophers have committed themselves to these doctrines, but traditionalists have been quick to take them as definitive of modern democracy—and then to denounce modern democratic societies as embodiments of doctrinal error and secularism. There is no need for me to mount a detailed argument against these liberal ideas here, for other writers have already done the job admirably.[1] My own purpose is more positive. I want to make an affirmative case for seeing modern democracy differently. In the process of making it, I will not, however, be drawing mainly on liberal political philosophy from John Locke to John Rawls. My topic, stated in Rawlsian terms, is the role of free public reason in a political culture that includes conflicting religious conceptions of the good. But I am not trying to construct a theory of the social contract, so I cannot mean by "public reason" what Rawls does. And the object of the "overlapping consensus" I will identify in democratic culture is not what Rawls calls a "free-standing" political conception of justice.[2] We are committed to the legitimacy of constitutional democracy under circumstances like ours and to reasoning with one another about political questions in a way that perfects and honors our democratic norms. You can tell we have these commitments because of how we behave. If we were not committed to the legitimacy of constitutional democracy, we would invest much more energy than

we currently do in attempts to alter our basic arrangements. If we were not committed to continuing a discussion that perfects and honors our democratic norms, we would happily accept more restrictive and exclusionary ways of conducting political deliberation.

Yet while our norms have substantive content, we often argue over how to articulate them and what they imply. They clearly commit us to ideals of equal voice and equal consideration for all citizens, to take two examples of normative commitments that distinguish us from our unapologetically hierarchical ancestors. But how to state and apply these ideals has been in dispute since the founding of the republic. It is unlikely that we are going to reach a stable consensus on their philosophical interpretation. The sort of overlapping consensus we are searching for in public discussion is focused on particular policy questions, not on abstract conceptions of justice. Such conceptions have a role to play within the overall discussion, but they tend to be much too controversial and speculative to become the object of our consensus.

Democracy, I shall argue, *is* a tradition. It inculcates certain habits of reasoning, certain attitudes toward deference and authority in political discussion, and love for certain goods and virtues, as well as a disposition to respond to certain types of actions, events, or persons with admiration, pity, or horror. This tradition is anything but empty. Its ethical substance, however, is more a matter of enduring attitudes, concerns, dispositions, and patterns of conduct than it is a matter of agreement on a conception of justice in Rawls's sense. The notion of state neutrality and the reason-tradition dichotomy should not be seen as its defining marks. Rawlsian liberalism should not be seen as its official mouthpiece.

We claim in our official documents to be committed to substantive values. The Preamble of the United States Constitution clearly designates a list of goods that its institutional provisions are meant to serve. It takes the democratic union it formally constitutes to be something the people wish, for good reason, to make "more perfect." The people thereby express their aspiration to "establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity." Some skeptics say that the Preamble's reference to "the people" is a fiction, designed to disguise the embarrassing fact that the governed have never actually given their consent. But who among us does not hope to receive from government roughly what the Preamble promises? Agreement on the value of such goods and on the value of attempting to secure them in something like the Constitution's way would seem to be a more promising source of solidarity than resentment and fear. A constitutional democracy is in place. We consent to being governed by it insofar as we refrain as a people from pressing for alternatives to it.

Of course, nearly every nation makes grand democratic pronouncements nowadays. Empty rhetoric is hardly an adequate basis for political community. Commitment to democratic values, to be worth anything, must reside in the life of the people, in the way citizens behave. We obviously fall far short of the democratic ideals we espouse, on any reasonable interpretation of their substance. The ideal of equal voice, in particular, is hardly consistent with the dominant role that big money now plays in politics. Yet we continue to demand reasons from one another when deciding on institutional arrangements and political policies. We still make some attempt to hold our leaders responsible to the rest of us. We at least complain that fat cats and bigwigs have the influence they do; and we are pursuing remedies that have some hope of surviving judicial review. It is not on ceremonial occasions alone that we invoke our norms. We use them to call one another to account and in deciding what to do.

In the ancient world, democracy meant rule by a particular class, the commons. For us, its strictly political referent is a form of government in which the adult members of the society being governed all have some share in electing rulers and are free to speak their minds in a wide-ranging discussion that rulers are bound to take seriously.[3] The public deliberation that is essential to this form of government is conducted at various levels. The most prominent of these is that of the people's elected representatives in a congress or parliament. As Oliver O'Donovan has pointed out, it is crucial that the people's representatives play a role in modern democracy distinct from that played in an earlier era by a monarch's council. A council was expected to advise the ruler on how to achieve his or her goals; its term of office could be terminated at the ruler's whim; its representative function was minimal. A congress or parliament, in contrast, serves at the people's pleasure, and is expected to deliberate "not on its own behalf but in response to a wider context of deliberation, open to all, to which it must be attending carefully."[4] This reference to a wider context of deliberation provides the link between democracy in its strictly political form and democracy as a broadly cultural phenomenon in the modern world. By highlighting the significance of public deliberation, democratic political arrangements bring to light their symbiotic relationship to a surrounding culture in which the shared discursive practices of the people are of primary importance.

By engaging in these practices we participate in a common life, a life that both needs to be made "more perfect" and needs to be defended against those who attack it for being morally vacuous or evil. This book concerns a tradition of democratic reasoning, dispositions, and attitudes that the people have in common. My primary aim is to make plain what this adhesive element in our sociality involves. My conception of the civic nation is pragmatic in the sense that it focuses on *activities* held in common as constitutive

of the political community. But the activities in question are not to be understood in merely procedural terms. They are activities in which normative commitments are embedded as well as discussed. The commitments are substantive. They guide the discussion, but they are also constantly in dispute, subject to revision, and not fully determinate. They are initially implicit in our reasoning, rather than fully explicit in the form of philosophically articulated propositions. So we must be careful not to reduce them to a determinate system of rules or principles. Because they evolve, we need the historical category of "tradition" to bring them into focus.

In commending this pragmatic conception of democratic sociality, this book addresses readers in their capacity as citizens. It seeks a public, as opposed to a narrowly professional, audience. This is not so much a matter of the size of the audience I expect to reach, a topic on which it is pointless to speculate, as it is a matter of the point of view I am inviting my readers to adopt while reading. The point of view of a citizen is that of someone who accepts some measure of responsibility for the condition of society and, in particular, for the political arrangements it makes for itself. To adopt this point of view is to participate in the living moral tradition of one's people, understood as a civic nation. It is the task of public philosophy, as I understand it, to articulate the ethical inheritance *of* the people *for* the people while subjecting it to critical scrutiny. In inviting readers to adopt the point of view of a citizen, I am also inviting citizens to reflect philosophically on their common life. This is a demanding activity, as is all true philosophizing. It has almost nothing in common with "popular philosophy," a genre that tries to make philosophy accessible by leaving out the arguments—that is, the philosophy.

The people I am addressing, the people whose ethical inheritance I hope to comprehend and assess, are my fellow Americans. Much of what I have to say would apply equally well, however, to other societies animated to some significant extent by democratic attitudes and appeal to democratic norms. When I speak of democratic societies, I do not mean groups that fully live up to such norms, for in that sense there are no democratic societies. But I do mean groups whose members invoke such norms habitually when holding one another responsible for what they say and do and are.

What norms in particular? For example, those expressed in the Bill of Rights, like the freedom to speak one's mind in public, the guarantee of due process, and the prohibition of cruel and unusual punishment. But also norms agreed on only more recently, such as those implicit in the Emancipation Proclamation and the Nineteenth Amendment, in Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address and Sojourner Truth's "Ain't I a Woman?" And also norms still in the process of being hammered out by people who sense that democracy has unrealized implications for families, churches, corporations, and other forms of association.

The continuing social process of holding one another responsible is chiefly what I have in mind when I refer to the ethical life or inheritance of a people. Central to democratic thought as I understand it is the idea of a body of citizens who reason with one another about the ethical issues that divide them, especially when deliberating on the justice or decency of political arrangements. It follows that one thing a democratic people had better have in common is a form of ethical discourse, a way of exchanging reasons about ethical and political topics. The democratic practice of giving and asking for ethical reasons, I argue, is where the life of democracy principally resides. Democracy isn't all talk. Now and then there is also a lot of marching involved, for example. But there is no form of ethical life that generates more talk on the part of more people than does modern democracy. It is in democratic discourse that the claims and reasons of marching protestors get expressed. Protestors rarely just march. They also carry signs that say something. They chant slogans that mean something. They sing songs that convey a message. And they march to or from a place where speeches are given.

The political vision expressed in this book can be summed up in two thoughts from the writings of John Dewey. The first is his twist on a familiar slogan:

> The old saying that the cure for the ills of democracy is more democracy is not apt if it means that the evils may be remedied by introducing more machinery of the same kind as that which already exists, or by refining and perfecting that machinery. But the phrase may also indicate the need of returning to the idea itself, of clarifying and deepening our apprehension of it, and of employing our sense of its meaning to criticize and remake its political manifestations.

Dewey continues by saying that the "prime difficulty . . . is that of discovering the means by which a scattered, mobile and manifold public may so recognize itself as to define and express its interests. This discovery is necessarily precedent to any fundamental change in the machinery."[5] The other thought is that democracy is a "social idea" as well as a system of government. "The idea remains barren save as it is incarnated in human relationships."[6] As feminist theologian Rebecca Chopp has put the point, "democracy is never just a set of laws about equal and fair treatment. Rather it is an ongoing interpretation of itself, an ongoing production of new practices and narratives, of new values and forms of social and personal life that constitute a democracy."[7] By combining these thoughts Dewey hoped to encourage both active identification with democratic practices and an ambitious but realistic program for their improvement. "Only when we start from a community as a fact, grasp the fact in thought so as to clarify and enhance its constituent elements, can we reach an idea of democracy which is not utopian."[8]

Our fellow citizens are going to go on disagreeing with one another about how to rank highly important values no matter what we do. And none of us knows how to bring racial antagonism, poverty, misogyny, and mistrust to an end. We had better work hard, nonetheless, to keep the democratic exchange of reasons going, for that is the best way we have of holding one another responsible. While we should try in various specific ways to raise the quality of our common discourse, we would be foolish to expect it to produce convergence on common conclusions at each point where we now disagree. We should also recognize, however, how disastrous it would be—in an era of global capitalism, corporate corruption, identity politics, religious resentment against secular society, and theocratic terrorism—if most citizens stopped identifying with the people as a whole and gave up on our democratic practices of accountability altogether.

The ethical inheritance of American democracy consists, first of all, in a way of thinking and talking about ethical topics that is implicit in the behavior of ordinary people. Secondly, it also consists in the activity of intellectuals who attempt to make sense of that way of thinking and talking from a reflective, critical point of view. Either of these things, when considered in the dimension of history, may plausibly be termed a "tradition." I believe there is enough continuity between the projects of Dewey and those of various other public intellectuals I admire to warrant speaking of a tradition of democratic thought, but I have to admit that this continuity has sometimes been hard to discern. One set of reasons for this has to do with dubious assumptions about what traditions are, assumptions I will address directly in this work. But another set of reasons has to do with the rhetorical habits of democratic thinkers themselves. Any tradition born in suspicion of deference, and which honors as a cardinal virtue in a thinker what William Hazlitt called mastery of one's own mind and Emerson called self-reliance, may be fated to have a shaky grasp on its own history.

Think of the Zen master who, at the very moment when his pupil is virtually overwhelmed by feelings of piety toward him, insists on being slapped in the face. Acknowledging one's dependence on an exemplar-guide whose help has been a necessary condition of spiritual growth, while also being able to achieve the independence of mind that the exemplary thinker exemplifies, is a high and rare spiritual achievement. Most traditions settle for a more subservient, and therefore more obvious, form of piety in order to have piety at all. This heightens one's sense of belonging to a tradition, but at the expense of a spirit of independence. Many of the great practitioners of democratic criticism have valued independence over the more deferential forms of piety. Their consciousness of their own tradition tends in consequence to be undeveloped. They are too busy slapping one another in the face to dwell for long on what they owe to whom. I am nonetheless persuaded that there are real paths of influence, commentary,

and allusion linking later writers to earlier ones within the tradition I have in mind. In any event, my aim at the moment is not to offer a scholarly exposition of a tradition's origins and development, but rather to acknowledge an affiliation, or a bias, that informs my work.

Dewey inherited much from predecessors like Emerson and Whitman. All three stood self-consciously within modernity. They were not appealing to the authority of a premodern tradition, and then imagining themselves to be messengers from a betrayed past. Nor were they identifying themselves with a postmodern future, gesturing vaguely beyond the horizon to something wholly other than the culture in which they lived. They acknowledged that they belonged to the age they were thinking about even in the moments when they found it most despicable and worrisome. They were determined to identify, and identify with, forces within the age that could be bent toward its betterment or made to sustain democratic hope. This critical activity cultivated the ground on which they stood and with which they selectively identified. They did not promise to adhere to the given loyalties or allegiances of a people, but they did actively identify normative sources within their own society that were worthy of their endorsement. Whitman and Dewey belong to the tradition of independent essaying that writers like Hazlitt and Emerson helped create in English-speaking countries. Later writers, like Meridel Le Sueur, James Baldwin, Ralph Ellison, and Bill Holm eventually found a niche in the same tradition. Many of the most important democratic thinkers have found their footing there. Few of them are philosophers.

My predicament is enough like those of the democratic writers I admire to make their precedents instructive. That is as far as I will go; my admiration stops well short of hero-worship. Like Emerson, I call attention to the lapses and limitations in all my favorite authors to keep my pieties within bounds.[9] I claim only that there is moral and intellectual sustenance to be gained from such thinkers, along with much of interest to argue with and reject. Every generation needs to survey the prospects of democracy with its own eyes (and without cant about the past). Whitman exemplifies the expressive vocation of democratic thought most fully when he teaches the necessity of straying from him.

Whitman and Dewey aimed to give expression to the intimations of democracy in their own culture. Their task as intellectuals was to articulate the substance of democratic commitments in a way that would allow such commitments to be held self-consciously and self-critically. The point of doing so was in part to counter the image of democracy as an essentially destructive force with no ethical life or cultural substance of its own. Whitman was writing as a democrat when he posed "the important question of character" to the American people. He called for what amounted to a democratic theory of the virtues—a theory designed "not for a single class

alone," a theory compatible with "the perfect equality of women." As I argue in part 1, the question of character is no less important today. Whitman was right to insist that democracy should pose that question to itself, but in its own terms. And Baldwin and Ellison were right to pose it again, a century later, when they spoke of the need to achieve or discover our country.

Our democratic aspirations coexist, however uneasily, with our hatred, cruelty, sloth, envy, greed, and indifference to the suffering of others. The emergence of new elites has combined with various forms of vice, bigotry, arrogance, deference, and fear to deform democratic practices in all societies we loosely label democratic. Justice, as democracy conceives of it, has always and everywhere been a virtue in short supply. But if this judgment applies to us, and not merely to societies that lack free elections and constitutionally protected rights, why continue to trust our fellow citizens and the leaders who represent them? And if one has no good reason to do this, why remain committed to membership in a democratic society at all? These questions arise nowadays in debates over racial injustice, over the separation of church and state, over the moral limits to be observed when defending the people from terrorist attacks, and in many other contexts.

American discussions of character have focused largely on three virtues, all of which are commonly interpreted in religious terms.[10] The first of these, piety, looks toward the past. It concerns proper acknowledgment of the sources of our existence and progress through life. The second, hope, looks toward the future. It concerns our capacity for ethical and political striving when success appears uncertain or unlikely. The third, love or generosity, can be directed to past, future, and distant objects, but it mainly binds us to those with whom we share our time and place. It concerns our capacity to respond appropriately to our fellows, as no less worthy of being cared for and cared about than we are ourselves. The primary aim of part 1 is to take note of what a few influential American thinkers have said about these topics, thus reminding ourselves of a conversation in which we can see our commonalities as well as our differences in play. I give more attention to piety than to hope and generosity because that has generated more controversy throughout our history.

Part 2 takes up a conflict that has emerged over the last several decades between secularist and traditionalist interpretations of our political culture. Here, too, we must come to terms with the implications of deep religious differences among the people. It would be unrealistic to expect membership in religious groups to have no influence on democratic decision making and debate, for one function of religious traditions is to confer order on highly important values and concerns, some of which obviously have political relevance. Yet some prominent political theorists and philosophers are suspicious of individuals who use religious premises when arguing pub-

licly for a political proposal. They ground their suspicion in the notion that reasoning on important political questions must ultimately be based on principles that no reasonable citizen could reasonably reject. I find this notion extremely implausible as an account of what we could conceivably have in common, but here I am less concerned with proving it wrong than with developing an alternative understanding of public reasoning. All democratic citizens should feel free, in my view, to express whatever premises actually serve as reasons for their claims. The respect for others that civility requires is most fully displayed in the kind of exchange where each person's deepest commitments can be recognized for what they are and assessed accordingly. It is simply unrealistic to expect citizens to bracket such commitments when reasoning about fundamental political questions.

Religion is not essentially a conversation-stopper, as secular liberals often assume and Richard Rorty has argued explicitly. Neither, however, is religion the foundation without which democratic discourse is bound to collapse, as traditionalists suppose. The religious dimensions of our political culture are typically discussed at such a high level of abstraction that only two positions become visible: an authoritarian form of traditionalism and an antireligious form of liberalism. Each of these positions thrives mainly by inflating the other's importance. They use each other to lend plausibility to their fears and proposed remedies. Each of them needs a "force of darkness" to oppose if it is going to portray itself as the "force of light."

The result of such posturing is the Manichaean rhetoric of cultural warfare. The pundits would have us believe that we are all embroiled in an essentially two-sided conflict over the culture of democracy. Academics have done remarkably little to correct the resulting forms of paranoid fantasy. The debates, over issues like abortion and same-sex marriage, that do nowadays occasionally erupt into uncivil behavior are more accurately described as marginal skirmishes than as warfare, at least when viewed in historical or cross-cultural perspective. There is some danger, however, that a dualistic picture of our cultural situation, if accepted by enough people, will *become* true. To the extent that believers and nonbelievers accept the caricatures and exclusive choices now on offer, they become more likely to retreat into separate camps that are incapable of reasoning and living peaceably with one another.

It is true that the expression of religious premises sometimes leads to discursive impasse in political debate. But there are many important issues that cannot be resolved solely on the basis of arguments from commonly held principles. So if we are going to address those issues meaningfully, we had better find a way to work around the impasses when they arise. One name for the way I propose is conversation. By this I mean an exchange of views in which the respective parties express their premises in as much

detail as they see fit and in whatever idiom they wish, try to make sense of each other's perspectives, and expose their own commitments to the possibility of criticism.

The bulk of part 2 aims to demonstrate the value of carrying on a public conversation of this kind with religious traditionalists. My conversation partners in these chapters are prominent Christians. I have selected them in part because they represent the religious tradition to which most American citizens are committed. It should be obvious that similar forms of traditionalism have proven attractive to some Jews and Muslims. The broader conversation I hope to instigate would include them—and others as well. But one cannot converse seriously with everyone at once, and in this book I have chosen to converse mainly with versions of traditionalism that the Christian majority in the United States has found tempting.

Traditionalists are right, I believe, to argue that ethical and political reasoning are creatures of tradition and crucially depend on the acquisition of such virtues as practical wisdom and justice. They are wrong, however, when they imagine modern democracy as the antithesis of tradition, as an inherently destructive, atomizing social force. I could have made the latter point in a different way by focusing on Christians who are openly fighting to make their tradition more democratic, such as Lisa Cahill, Rebecca Chopp, James Forbes, Peter Gomes, Mark Jordan, Susan Frank Parsons, Rosemary Radford Ruether, Andrew Sullivan, and Garry Wills. This would have had the advantage of diversifying the range of Christian voices under consideration. But a book on those figures would make no impression on readers who are attracted to the new traditionalism. So I have decided to focus my critical attention in chapters 4–7 on the most influential of the new traditionalists: Hauerwas, MacIntyre, and Milbank. My criticisms of them are in some large measure feminist in inspiration, and incorporate points made before by Gloria Albrecht and Susan Moller Okin. I also try to challenge the traditionalists in another way, however, by contrasting their positions with those of theologically conservative but politically progressive thinkers like Calvinist philosopher Nicholas Wolterstorff and Barthian theologian George Hunsinger.

One of my central claims is that modern democracy is not essentially an expression of secularism, as some philosophers have claimed and many theologians have feared. Modern democratic reasoning is secularized, but not in a sense that rules out the expression of religious premises or the entitlement of individuals to accept religious assumptions. Those who lament our failure to agree as a nation on the sanctity of embryonic life and on issues relating to sexual conduct and family life are free to offer their reasons to the rest of us. Some hope ultimately to place a sacred canopy over what Father Richard John Neuhaus calls "the naked public square," thereby rescuing ethical discourse from the perils of secular liberalism. In

practice this proposal turns out to be either unacceptable or unrealistic—unacceptable if it employs the coercive power of the state to reverse the secularization of public discourse, unrealistic if it does not. Equally important, it tends to misconceive what the secularization of public discourse involves.

Traditionalists claim that democracy undermines itself by destroying the traditional vehicles needed for transmitting the virtues from one generation to another. Because traditionalists see democracy as an essentially negative, leveling force—as the opposite of a culture—they tend to underestimate the capacity of democratic practices to sustain themselves over time. Because they suspect that moral discourse not grounded in true piety is actually a form of vice, they are tempted to withdraw from democratic discourse with the heathen. Some traditionalists actively foster alienation from the citizenry's public discussion of divisive ethical questions while promoting identification instead with premodern traditions and religious communities. I argue that this move represents an unwarranted form of despair over the current condition of ethical discourse and that it tells a largely false story about the kind of society we live in.

Whether the citizenry can transform itself into a community that more fully warrants the trust essential to democratic practices remains an open question. We had better hope that the answer is yes, because the only alternative is grim. The rhetoric of the new traditionalists and Black Nationalists, to take two examples, implies that they have already given up on democracy. They declare the civic nation or modernity itself innately vicious, and then, having no place else to go, identify strictly with communities distinct from democratic society as a whole. But this message has largely made matters worse. There are practical reasons for resisting it, especially today.

Democratic norms are initially implicit in what we do when we demand reasons for some actions, commitments, and arrangements, while treating others as acceptable by default; or when we treat some reasons as sufficient and others as insufficient; or when we respond unreflectively to something by admiring or deploring it. But norms can also be made explicit in the form of principles and ideals, as they are in our founding documents and in the speeches of eloquent citizens. Our political culture traffics heavily in appeals to explicitly stated norms. This is the most obvious way in which we hold our leaders, as well as our fellow ordinary citizens, accountable to the people. From a pragmatic point of view, the function of moral principles with respect to the ethical life of a people is essentially expressive, a matter of making explicit in the form of a claim a kind of commitment that would otherwise remain implicit and obscure. Public philosophy as I conceive of it is an exercise in expressive rationality.[11] Part 3 attempts to clarify what this conception of public philosophy involves. It argues that a

kind of pragmatism can transcend the current standoff between secular liberals and the new traditionalists—and do so by borrowing crucial insights from both sides.

For Whitman, articulating the ethical life of democracy was mainly a poetic task, and he took his understanding of the poet mainly from Emerson.[12] The young Dewey learned from Emerson's essays and from Hegel that the task belonged as much to philosophers as it did to poets. His mature pragmatism was largely an attempt to translate Hegel's philosophical expressivism into the ordinary language of Americans who had no use for the Hegelian logic of identity. One thing he learned from Hegel was that the project of rational self-criticism and the project of bringing the ethical life of a people to self-conscious expression were best understood as two phases or dimensions of a single project. This project is Socratic in its commitment to self-examination and in aiming for self-perfection, but it is carried out simultaneously on an individual and a social scale—as a public philosophy. Dewey's pragmatism sought to explain, in terms a plain-speaking citizen could find intelligible, how one could reasonably aim to make explicit, and then to criticize, the ethical life of one's culture without claiming (dishonestly, self-deceptively) to rise above the perspective of a situated, committed participant in that culture's practices.

Many early champions of modern democracy, influenced by Enlightenment philosophy, had portrayed themselves as the heralds of a complete break from the past; "tradition" was a name for what they opposed; "reason" and "modernity" were names for what they championed. Many of them were revolutionaries who sought to turn the world of pomp and privilege upside down. Their rhetoric implied that they owed nothing to the past. In retrospect, we can see the conceptual continuities that linked them with their predecessors and opponents. There is much to be gained by abandoning the image of democracy as essentially opposed to tradition, as a negative force that tends by its nature to undermine culture and the cultivation of virtue. Democracy is a culture, a tradition, in its own right. It has an ethical life of its own, which philosophers would do well to articulate. Pragmatism is best viewed as an attempt to bring the notions of democratic deliberation and tradition together in a single philosophical vision. To put the point aphoristically and paradoxically, *pragmatism is democratic traditionalism*. Less paradoxically, one could say that pragmatism is the philosophical space in which democratic rebellion against hierarchy combines with traditionalist love of virtue to form a new intellectual tradition that is indebted to both.

Part of the democratic program is to involve strangers and enemies, as well as fellow citizens, in the verbal process of holding one another responsible. This means taking norms that originated in one tradition and applying them across cultural boundaries, in the hope of drawing undemocratic indi-

viduals and groups into the exchange of reasons. Philosophers make the task look easier than it is when they claim that all human beings already share a common morality, *the* common morality, simply by virtue of being human. From my point of view, such a claim seems like wishful thinking. It ignores the essential role that traditions play in shaping human thought.

Among the central theses of part 3 are an expressivist conception of norms and the claim that being justified in believing something is a contextual affair. While these two ideas can surely be attributed to Dewey, there are so many points at which I depart from Dewey's specific formulations that it would be tedious for me to spend much time explaining the details. Instead, I draw directly on what I take to be the most important recent developments in pragmatic philosophy. My most obvious departure from Dewey is my claim that truth is not an essentially relative concept. This is a notion that many readers of my previous writings have found hard to square with what I say in praise of Dewey's doctrines on other topics. But I maintain that emphasizing the priority of social practices in the way pragmatism does need not prevent us from thinking of ethical discourse as an objective endeavor in which full-fledged truth-claims play an essential role. A central challenge for pragmatism as a public philosophy is to overcome the suspicion that it cannot adequately distinguish truth from concepts like warranted assertibility and justified belief. Otherwise pragmatism appears to undermine or eliminate essential features of the ethical and political discourse it purports to articulate and defend.

The difficulty this book poses to the nonphilosophical reader rises in chapters 3 and 8–12. These are the places where I spend more time discussing distinctions that have been drawn by philosophers who write mainly for other philosophers. A public philosophy is addressed to the public, and it takes public life as its subject matter, but it is still philosophy. So it ought to hold itself responsible to what philosophers say among themselves. I therefore need to move back and forth, as Dewey did, between explaining ideas honed in academic philosophy and addressing moral, political, and religious concerns that ordinary citizens discuss in public every day. Of course, the professionalization of philosophy since the days of classical pragmatism has widened the gap between the two languages that public philosophy attempts to link together, perhaps to an extent that casts doubt on the bridging I am undertaking here. But I have plunged ahead, in the hope that others have created an audience for the sort of mixed genre to which the present work contributes. In this way, I hope, the ethical heritage of modern democracy can be made more intelligible to at least some of those who have been shaped by it.

I would like to think that a reader who took the time to go through the entire discussion carefully could emerge with an improved understanding of what has been going on recently in the disputed territory where philo

sophical, political, and religious thought intersect. My argument is addressed to readers—above all young ones—who are struggling to make sense of the social criticism, philosophy, and theology currently in circulation. My objective is to awaken in them a sense of new ethical, political, and intellectual possibilities.

My focus throughout is on democracy in America. I would have written a different book if I had been living elsewhere, hoping to influence some other society. As an act of social criticism, this book is necessarily a somewhat parochial affair. But as a contribution to comparative ethics, it also takes part in a global conversation in which every society with democratic aspirations will need to be heard from on its own terms. If democracy is nowhere fully realized and everywhere in jeopardy, we all have much to learn from particular cases.

RELIGIOUS REASONS
IN POLITICAL ARGUMENT

RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY, like racial diversity, has been a source of discord throughout American history. Most Americans claim to be religious, but their convictions are hardly cut from the same cloth. Given that some of these convictions are thought to have highly important political implications, we should not be surprised to hear them expressed when citizens are exchanging reasons for their respective political views. Secular liberals find the resulting cacophony deeply disturbing. Some of them have strongly urged people to restrain themselves from bringing their religious commitments with them into the political sphere. Many religious people have grown frustrated at the unwillingness of the liberal elite to hear them out on their own terms, and have recently had much to say against the hypocrisies and biases of secularism. Freedom of religion now strikes some prominent theologians as a secularist ruse designed to reduce religion to insignificance. Part 2 of this book tries to make sense of this controversy.

Freedom of religion consists first of all in the right to make up one's own mind when answering religious questions. These include, but are not limited to, such questions as whether God exists, how God should be conceived, and what responsibilities, if any, human beings have in response to God's actions with regard to them. Freedom of religion also consists in the right to act in ways that seem appropriate, given one's answers to religious questions—provided that one does not cause harm to other people or interfere with their rights. Among the expressive acts obviously protected by this right are rituals and other devotional practices performed in solitude, in the context of one's family, or in association with others similarly disposed. More controversial, however, is a class of acts that express religious commitments in another way, namely, by employing them as reasons when taking a public stand on political issues. What role, if any, should religious premises play in the reasoning citizens engage in when they make and defend political decisions?

The free expression of religious premises is morally underwritten not only by the value we assign to the freedom of religion, but also by the value we assign to free expression, generally. All citizens of a constitutional democracy possess not only the right to make up their minds as they see

fit but also the right to express their reasoning freely, whatever that reasoning may be. It is plausible to suppose that the right to free expression of religious commitments is especially weighty in contexts where political issues are being discussed, for this is where rulers and elites might be most inclined to enforce restraint. Any citizen who chooses to express religious reasons for a political conclusion would seem, then, to enjoy the protection of two rights in doing so: freedom of religion and freedom of expression. And these rights not only have the legal status of basic constitutional provisions, but also hold a prominent place in the broader political culture. Otherwise, the framers of the U.S. Constitution would not have had reason to affirm them explicitly in the Bill of Rights.

I have no doubt that the expression of religious reasons should be protected in these ways. Indeed, I would encourage religiously committed citizens to make use of their basic freedoms by expressing their premises in as much depth and detail as they see fit when trading reasons with the rest of us on issues of concern to the body politic. If they are discouraged from speaking up in this way, we will remain ignorant of the real reasons that many of our fellow citizens have for reaching some of the ethical and political conclusions they do. We will also deprive them of the central democratic good of expressing themselves to the rest of us on matters about which they care deeply. If they do not have this opportunity, we will lose the chance to learn from, and to critically examine, what they say. And they will have good reason to doubt that they are being shown the respect that all of us owe to our fellow citizens as the individuals they are.

Of course, having a right does not necessarily mean that one would be justified in exercising it. Clearly, there are circumstances in which it would be imprudent or disrespectful for someone to reason solely from religious premises when defending a political proposal. But some philosophers hold, more controversially, that such circumstances are more the exception than the rule. Richard Rorty, the most important contemporary pragmatist, has claimed that reasoning from religious premises to political conclusions is nowadays either imprudent, improper, or both. The late John Rawls, the most distinguished political philosopher of our time, at first defended a similarly restrictive view. He later made a concession to free expression by qualifying that policy somewhat, but still considered it improper to introduce religious reasons into public discussion of matters of basic justice unless those reasons are redeemed in the long run by reasons of a different kind. In this chapter, turning first to Rawls and then to Rorty, I will explain why their arguments for these positions fail to persuade me. The point is not to refute them, but to provide a rationale for approaching the topic differently.

RELIGION AND PUBLIC REASON

In a religiously plural society, it will often be rhetorically ineffective to argue from religious premises to political conclusions. When citizens are deeply divided over the relevant religious questions, arguing in this way is rarely likely to increase support for one's conclusions. Sometimes such reasoning not only fails to win support, but also causes offence. Reasoning from religious premises to political conclusions can imply disrespect for those who do not accept those premises. For example, such reasoning can be calculated to convey the undemocratic message that one must accept a particular set of religious premises to participate in political debate at all. In the United States, such a message is now often reserved for atheists and Muslims, but Jews and Catholics can still occasionally sense it in the air. Therefore, there are moral as well as strategic reasons for self-restraint. Fairness and respectful treatment of others are central moral concerns.

Rawls begins with such concerns, arguing as follows. Political policies, when enacted in law, are backed by the coercive power of the state. To be recognized as a free and equal citizen of such a state is to be treated as someone to whom reasons must be offered, on request, when political policies are under consideration. The reasons that are demanded are not just any reasons. Each citizen may rightfully demand reasons why *he or she* should view the proposed policy as legitimate. It does not suffice in this context to be told why other people, on the basis of their idiosyncratic premises and collateral commitments, have reached this conclusion. It is not enough for a speaker to show that he or she is entitled to consider a proposal legitimate. The question on each concerned citizen's mind will rightly be, "Why should *I* accept this?" Fairness and respect require an honest effort, on the part of any citizen advocating a policy, to justify it to other reasonable citizens who may be approaching the issue from different points of view.

So far, so good. Proper treatment of one's fellow citizens does seem to require an honest justificatory effort of this sort. When proposing a political policy one should do one's best to supply reasons for it that people occupying other points of view could reasonably accept. I wholeheartedly embrace this ideal when it is phrased in this (relatively weak) way. But Rawls goes much further than this.

He argues that citizens should aspire to fulfill a much more demanding ideal of public reason. The unqualified version of this ideal, put forward in the original clothbound edition of *Political Liberalism*, held that our reasoning in the public forum should appeal strictly to ideals and principles that no reasonable person could reasonably reject.[1] By agreeing to abide by such principles and to rely solely on them when reasoning in the public forum,

citizens enter a social contract. The contract specifies the fair terms of social cooperation in the form of justice as fairness. According to this conception of justice, the principles of the social contract are those we would select as a basis for social cooperation if we were behind a "veil of ignorance." Behind the veil, we would not know such facts about ourselves as our race, gender, medical condition, intellectual capacities, religious commitments, or comprehensive moral outlook. In ignorance of these facts, but still looking out in a reasonable way for our interests in the resulting system of social cooperation, we would be bound to select fair principles. Political liberalism does not put forward this conception of justice as a component of a comprehensive moral outlook, whether religious or secular. This conception of justice is not premised on a doctrine of what our true good ultimately consists in, on a view of the meaning of life, or even on the full-fledged Kantian liberalism Rawls had defended in *A Theory of Justice*. It is a "free-standing political conception," put forward in the hope that it can become and remain the object of a stable "overlapping consensus" among reasonable persons holding conflicting comprehensive doctrines. As such, it gives priority to the rightness of fair social cooperation, insofar as this might conflict with some idea of the good.

Many of Rawls's religious readers have been prepared to grant that some version of the veil of ignorance would be useful in fleshing out a defensible notion of fairness. A principle designed to regulate economic life, for example, should be chosen from a point of view in which we don't know whether we will end up being among the least well-off. A principle regulating discrimination in hiring should be chosen from a point of view in which we feign ignorance of our gender and racial identities. Fair enough. But Rawls's critics have long expressed doubts about similarly excluding knowledge of one's comprehensive religious and philosophical commitments. Rawls allows those behind the veil of ignorance to have access to a "thin" conception of the good, but his critics hold that in drawing the line between a thin conception and their own comprehensive doctrines, he is begging the question in favor of his own liberal views. For this is the move that underwrites two key components of Rawlsian liberalism: the priority of the right over the good and the conception of public reason with which we are concerned here. The critics protest that neither of these key ideas can meet the high standard Rawls proposes for judging such matters: these are both notions that a reasonable person could reasonably reject.

Public reason, Rawls says, "is public in three ways: as the reason of citizens as such, it is the reason of the public; its subject is the good of the public and matters of fundamental justice; and its nature and content is public, being given by the ideals and principles expressed by society's conception of political justice, and conducted open to view on that basis" (PL,

213). The limits of public reason are meant to apply to deliberation on essential constitutional provisions and matters of basic justice, not to political deliberation on lesser matters (PL, 214). The ideal of circumspection pertains not only to the reasoning of legislators and other officials, but also to the reasons citizens use when arguing for candidates for public office and when deciding how to vote "when constitutional essentials and matters of basic justice are at stake" (PL, 215). These are the sorts of contexts Rawls has in mind when he refers to the public forum. He classifies reasoning expressed in other contexts, such as a university or church colloquium, as private (PL, 220). All of these points are essential from Rawls's point of view. Neglecting any of them makes the ideal of public reason seem much more restrictive than he intends it to be.

Now consider the crucial notion of ideals and principles that no reasonable person could reasonably reject. What is a "reasonable person"? As Rawls sees it, "knowing that people are reasonable where others are concerned, we know that they are willing to govern their conduct by a principle from which they and others can reason in common" (PL, 49 n. 1). What public reason requires of citizens is that they be reasonable in the Rawlsian sense. And this means being willing to accept a common basis for reasoning that others, similarly motivated, could not reasonably reject. In short, to be reasonable is to accept the need for a social contract and to be willing to reason on the basis of it, at least when deliberating in the public forum on basic constitutional and political matters. This definition implicitly imputes *unreasonableness* to everyone who opts out of the contractarian project, regardless of the *reasons* they might have for doing so. "Persons are reasonable in one basic aspect when, among equals say, they are ready to propose principles and standards as fair terms of cooperation and to abide by them willingly, given the assurance that others will likewise do so. Those norms they view *as reasonable for everyone to accept and therefore as justifiable to them*" (PL, 49; emphasis added). "By contrast, people are unreasonable in the same basic aspect when they plan to engage in cooperative schemes but are unwilling to honor, or even to propose . . . any general principles or standards for specifying fair terms of cooperation" (PL, 50). It is clear from the context that the general principles or standards at issue in the last quoted passage are those that meet the requirement I have italicized in the previous one. Notice that someone can count as unreasonable on this definition even if he or she is epistemically entitled, on the basis of sound or compelling reasons, to consider the quest for a *common* justificatory basis morally unnecessary and epistemologically dubious. To count as reasonable, in the sense of "socially cooperative," Rawls assumes that one must find his contractarian quest for a common justificatory basis plausible. My problem is that I don't find this quest plausible. Or more mildly: I am not

persuaded that it is going to meet with success. For this reason, I want to explore the possibility that a person can be a reasonable (socially cooperative) citizen without believing in or appealing to a free-standing conception of justice.

Rawls is quick to move from imagining the basis on which citizens "can reason in common" to concluding that *only* by conducting our most important political reasoning on this basis can we redeem the promise of treating our fellow citizens fairly in matters pertaining to the use of coercive power. And this conclusion leads, in turn, to a restrictive view of the role religious reasons can play in the public forum. It is clear that, in our society, religious premises cannot be part of the basis on which citizens can reason in common, because not all citizens share the same religious commitments, and nobody knows how to bring about agreement on such matters by rational means. Religion is a topic on which citizens are epistemically (as well as morally and legally) entitled to disagree. If so, it follows from the considerations just mentioned that using religious premises in our reasoning on basic political issues conflicts with the ideal of public reason as originally stated by Rawls. If the point of the social contract is to establish a basis on which citizens can reason in common, and religious premises are not part of that basis, then introducing such premises in the public forum automatically fails to secure the legitimacy of whatever proposal this basis was meant to support.

This conclusion strikes me as extremely counterintuitive, given that it seems so contrary to the spirit of free expression that breathes life into democratic culture. As Nicholas Wolterstorff says, "given that it is of the very essence of liberal democracy that citizens enjoy equal freedom in law to live out their lives as they see fit, how can it be compatible with liberal democracy for its citizens to be *morally restrained* from deciding and discussing political issues as they see fit?"[2] Rawls seems to be saying that while the right to express our religious commitments freely is guaranteed twice over in the Bill of Rights, this is not a right of which we ought make essential use in the center of the political arena, where the most important questions are decided. Is it always wrong for citizens in the public forum to reason solely on the basis of religious premises, at least when considering matters of basic justice and constitutional essentials?

Rawls implied as much in the first, clothbound edition of *Political Liberalism*, but amended his position in the "Introduction to the Paperback Edition" in 1996 and in his paper, "The Idea of Public Reason Revisited."[3] His amended view is that reasonable comprehensive doctrines, including religious doctrines, "may be introduced in public reason at any time, provided that in due course public reasons, given by a reasonable political conception, are presented sufficient to support whatever the comprehensive doctrines are introduced to support" (PL, li–lii). According to this

"proviso," a citizen may offer religious reasons for a political conclusion, but only if he or she eventually supplements those reasons by producing arguments based in the social contract. The amended Rawlsian view is that religious reasons are to contractarian reasons as IOUs are to legal tender. You have not fulfilled your justificatory obligations until you have handed over real cash. I find this version of the position slightly more plausible than the original, simply because it is less restrictive. It makes a bit more room for such instances of exemplary democratic reasoning as the religiously based oratory of the Abolitionists and of Martin Luther King, Jr. But Rawls confesses that he does not know whether these orators "ever fulfilled the proviso" by eventually offering reasons of his officially approved sort (PL, lii n. 27). So, strictly speaking, from a Rawlsian point of view the jury is still out on these cases.

I see it as a strong count against Rawls's current position that these particular speakers will barely squeak by on his criteria, if they manage to do so at all. The alleged need to satisfy the proviso in such cases suggests to me that something remains seriously wrong with the entire approach Rawls is taking. Two main types of reason-giving are to be found in the relevant speeches, but Rawls classifies both of them as private, because they do not appeal to the common justificatory basis. In the first type, which Rawls calls "declaration" (CP, 594), the speakers express their own religious reasons for adopting some political proposal. In the second type, which Rawls calls "conjecture" (CP, 594), the speakers engage in immanent criticism of their opponents' views. As immanent critics, they either try to show that their opponents' religious views are incoherent, or they try to argue positively from their opponents' religious premises to the conclusion that the proposal is acceptable. What they do not do is argue from a purportedly common basis of reasons in Rawls's sense. Rawls does not examine these forms of reason-giving in any detail. He merely classifies them as private and moves on. He does not show why a speaker who combines them when addressing fellow citizens on constitutional essentials, like the right to own slaves and who gets to vote, needs eventually to offer argument of some other kind.

Rawls is similarly ambivalent and therefore unpersuasive on Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address, perhaps the highest ethical achievement of any political speaker in U.S. history. What gets Lincoln barely off the hook is that "what he says has no implications bearing on constitutional essentials or matters of basic justice" (PL, 254). I am not certain that this is true. The speech is about the question of how a nation at war with itself over slavery can remain a union. Lincoln's answer, in effect, is that it can do so only if, at the moment when one side wins the war, the people and the state representing them behave "with malice toward none; with charity for all." This includes behavior intended to "achieve and cherish a just and lasting

peace," which in Lincoln's view obviously includes taking the right stand on constitutional essentials and matters of basic justice. In any event, suppose he had addressed such matters directly and at greater length, continuing the theme, introduced earlier in the speech, of two parties that both read the same Bible and pray to the same God, whom they believe to be a just judge of wrongdoers. Suppose he had spelled out his immanent criticisms of the self-righteous religious views, the moralistic dualisms, that both sides were then preparing to enact politically. Would the religious content in Lincoln's speech then have been improper? Would he be engaged in private speech, despite speaking as the president to the people on a very public occasion? Something is deeply wrong here. The speeches of King and Lincoln represent high accomplishments in our public political culture. They are paradigms of discursive excellence. The speeches of the Abolitionists taught their compatriots how to use the terms "slavery" and "justice" as we now use them. It is hard to credit any theory that treats their arguments as placeholders for reasons to be named later.

I do not intend to go very far into the details of the debate between Rawls and his critics.[4] My purpose in this section and the next is rather to determine what it is in his contractarian starting point that leads Rawls and others to say such counterintuitive things. If my diagnosis is correct, then the amended version of his position, while it is less paradoxical than the original, does not overcome the basic difficulties in his approach to the topic. My conclusion will be that we ought to reframe the question of religion's role in political discussion in quite different terms.

The trouble is at least partly a matter of epistemology. I suspect that Rawls has overestimated what can be resolved in terms of the imagined common basis of justifiable principles, and has done so because at this one point in constructing his theory he has drastically underestimated the range of things that socially cooperative individuals can reasonably reject. He has underestimated what a person can reasonably reject, I suspect, because he has underestimated the role of a person's collateral commitments in determining what he or she can reasonably reject when deciding basic political questions. What I can reasonably reject depends in part on what collateral commitments I have and which of these I am entitled to have. But these commitments vary a good deal from person to person, not least of all insofar as they involve answers to religious questions and judgments about the relative importance of highly important values. It is naïve to expect that the full range of political issues that require public deliberation—issues on which we need *some* policy—will turn out to be untouched by such variation. Rawls would grant this. Indeed, it may be part of his reason for viewing "the diversity of reasonable comprehensive religious, philosophical, and moral doctrines found in modern democratic societies" as a central problem for political liberalism to address (PL, 36). The ques-

tion is why constitutional essentials and matters of basic justice are not also affected, for it is reasonable to suppose, when discussing such elemental issues, that the relative importance of highly important values—a matter on which religious traditions have much to say—is a relevant consideration. Rawls might wish to deny this on the basis of his doctrine of the priority of the right over the good, but this doctrine also strikes me as the sort of thing over which epistemically responsible people have good reason to disagree.

I am tempted to put the point by saying that this doctrine is the sort of thing *reasonable* people would be *entitled* to disagree over. For the moment, let me use the term "reasonable" in a way that departs from Rawls's definition. In this sense, a person is reasonable in accepting or rejecting a commitment if he or she is "epistemically entitled" to do so, and reasonable people are those who comport themselves in accord with their epistemic responsibilities.[5] I do not see how the same epistemology can consistently (a) declare the people holding various comprehensive views to be reasonable in this sense, and (b) declare the people who dissent from the social contract not to be reasonable in the same sense. To make (a) turn out to be correct, one would need to assume a relatively permissive standard of reasonableness. But if one then applies the same permissive standard of reasonableness to those who dissent from the social contract, (b) is going to be very hard to defend. According to my epistemology, the more permissive standard seems to be the right one to apply in both instances. But if we link the term "reasonable" to epistemic entitlement and apply the term in a relatively permissive way, it will be very hard to make those who reject the contractarian project *on epistemological grounds* qualify as unreasonable.

This appears to be why Rawls has a stake in introducing his definition of reasonableness. The point of doing so is to guarantee that a reasonable person will be committed to the contractarian project of trying to find, and abide by, a common basis of principles. But this move only begs the question of why the contractarian project of establishing a common basis is itself something no one can reasonably reject in the sense of epistemic entitlement. We still need an answer to this question. There appear to be sound *epistemological* reasons for rejecting the quest for a common basis, reasons rooted in the permissive notion of epistemic entitlement that lends plausibility to the doctrine of reasonable pluralism in the first place.

Rawls gave an interview to *Commonweal*, a liberal Catholic journal, in 1998 (reprinted in CP, 616–22). In it he asks how we are to avoid religious civil wars like those of the sixteenth century without adopting his position. "See, what I should do is to turn around and say, what's the better suggestion, what's your solution to it? And I can't see any other solution." He continues: "People can make arguments from the Bible if they want to. But I want them to see that they should also give arguments that all reasonable

citizens might agree to. Again, what's the alternative?" (CP, 620) Let us see whether we can find one.

Rawls's amended position entails that it would be inherently unfair, when speaking in the public forum on questions of basic justice, to rely solely on religious premises. This would hold, presumably, even in a case where my epistemological suspicions were realized and it proved impracticable to reason on the basis of a principle that all reasonable citizens could reasonably accept. But suppose this did turn out to be impracticable—for the simple reason that some epistemically responsible people who desire social cooperation have reason for rejecting each candidate principle. Must we then not consider the matter at all? Must we remain silent when it comes up for discussion? How could a requirement of silence in such a case be deemed *reasonable*—that is to say, justified?

For that matter, how could it be deemed *fair* in a society committed to freedom of religion and freedom of expression? I do not see how it could be. As Wolterstorff argues:

> It belongs to the *religious convictions* of a good many religious people in our society that *they ought to base* their decisions concerning fundamental issues of justice *on* their religious convictions. They do not view as an option whether or not to do so. It is their conviction that they ought to strive for wholeness, integrity, integration, in their lives: that they ought to allow the Word of God, the teachings of the Torah, the command and example of Jesus, or whatever, to shape their existence as a whole, including, then, their social and political existence. Their religion is not, for them, about *something other* than their social and political existence; it is *also* about their social and political existence. Accordingly, to require of them that they not base their decisions and discussions concerning political issues on their religion is to infringe, inequitably, on the free exercise of their religion.[6]

It might be thought that offering religious reasons, without supplementing them by appeal to the social contract, is inherently disrespectful. But why need this be a sign of disrespect at all? Suppose I tell you honestly why I favor a given policy, citing religious reasons. I then draw you into a Socratic conversation on the matter, take seriously the objections you raise against my premises, and make a concerted attempt to show you how *your* idiosyncratic premises give *you* reason to accept my conclusions. All the while, I take care to be sincere and avoid manipulating you (CP, 594). Now, I do not see why this would qualify as a form of disrespect. Yet it does not involve basing my reasoning on principles that no reasonable citizen could reasonably reject.

The conception of respect assumed in the objection seems flawed. It neglects the ways in which one can show respect for another person in his or her particularity.[7] The reason Rawls neglects these ways is that he fo-

cuses exclusively on the sort of respect one shows to another individual by appealing to reasons that *anyone* who is both properly motivated and epistemically responsible would find acceptable. Why would I be failing to show respect for X if I offered reasons to X that X ought to be moved by from X's point of view?[8] Why would it matter that there might be other people, Y and Z, who could reasonably reject those reasons? Suppose Y and Z are also part of my audience. If I am speaking *as* a citizen *to* fellow citizens, unconstrained by expectations of confidentiality, they might well be. This is all I would mean by "speaking in public." Does my immanent criticism of X then show disrespect to Y and Z? No, because I can go on to show respect for them in the same way, by offering *different* reasons to them, reasons relevant *from their point of view*. Socratic questioning is a principal tool of justificatory discourse as well as a way of expressing respect for one's interlocutor as a (potential) lover of justice and sound thinking. But it does not proceed from an already-agreed-on, common basis.

It appears that Rawls is too caught up in theorizing about an idealized form of reasoning to notice how much work candid expression and immanent criticism—declaration and conjecture—perform in real democratic exchange. Immanent criticism is both one of the most widely used forms of reasoning in what I would call public political discourse and one of the most effective ways of showing respect for fellow citizens who hold differing points of view. Any speaker is free to request reasons from any other. If I have access to the right forum, I can tell the entire community what reasons move me to accept a given conclusion, thus showing my fellow citizens respect as requesters of my reasons. But to explain to them why *they* might have reason to agree with me, given their different collateral premises, I might well have to proceed piecemeal, addressing one individual (or one type of perspective) at a time. Real respect for others takes seriously the distinctive point of view *each* other occupies. It is respect for individuality, for difference.

Rawls builds strong assumptions about the nature of discursive sociality into his conception of a "reasonable person." Such a person is by definition someone who is prepared to play by the discursive rules of the imagined common basis on all essential matters. But why not view the person who takes each competing perspective on its own terms, expressing his own views openly and practicing immanent criticism on the views of others, as a reasonable (i.e., socially cooperative, respectful, reason-giving) person? Why limit oneself in the Rawlsian way to the quest for a *common* basis, given the possibility that a common basis will not cover all essential matters? I do not see any convincing answers to these questions in Rawls's writings or in the works of other contractarian theorists. These questions reveal, I think, that the social contract is essentially a substitute for communitarian agreement on a single comprehensive normative vision—a poor

man's communitarianism. Contractarianism feels compelled to reify a sort of all-purpose, abstract fairness or respect for others because it cannot imagine ethical or political discourse *dialogically*.[9] Its view of the epistemological and sociological dimensions of discursive practices is essentially blinkered.

Wolterstorff puts the point in a slightly different way:

> So-called "communitarians" regularly accuse proponents of the liberal position of being against community. One can see what they are getting at. Nonetheless, this way of putting it seems to me imperceptive of what, at bottom, is going on. The liberal is not willing to live with a politics of multiple communities. He still wants communitarian politics. He is trying to discover, and to form, the relevant community. He thinks we need a shared political basis; he is trying to discover and nourish that basis. . . . I think that the attempt is hopeless and misguided. We must learn to live with a politics of multiple communities.[10]

My qualm about this way of putting the point I want to make is that it concedes too much to group thinking. We do have multiple communities in the sense that the points of view many citizens occupy fall into recognizable types. And some of these communities work hard, for legitimate reasons, at reaching consensus on topics that matter deeply to them. But the differences that set off one such community from another are not the only differences that make a difference in political debate. There are also differences that set off individuals from the communities in which they were raised or with which at some point they became affiliated. Respect for individuals involves sensitivity to the ways in which they can resist conformity to type. Wolterstorff calls for a "consocial" (114) model of discursive sociality for a democratic society. By envisioning a multitude of discursive communities exchanging reasons both within and across their own boundaries, such a model advances well beyond the social-contract model Rawls employs. But we need another layer of complication to make the picture fully realistic.

On my model, each individual starts off with a cultural inheritance that might well come from many sources. In my case, these sources included the training I received in Bible school, the traditional stories my grandmother told on Sunday afternoons, and the example of a pastor committed passionately to civil rights. But they also included an early exposure to Emerson, Whitman, and Thoreau; the art, novels, and music brought into my home by my bohemian older brother; and countless other bits of free-floating cultural material that are not the property of any group. And they included interactions with hundreds of other people whose racial and religious backgrounds differed from mine. It would simply be inaccurate to describe my point of view as that of my family, my co-religionists, or my race. One would fail to show me respect as an individual if one assimilated

my point of view to some form of group thinking. The consocial model still fails to do justice to the kinds of individuality and alienation that modern democracies can promote.

Rawls derives his idea of public reason from conceptions of fairness and respect that are in fact to be found in the political culture of modern democracy. But he develops this idea in a way that brings it into tension with conceptions of free expression and basic rights that also belong to the same culture. It is not clear why this tension should be resolved by adopting a Rawlsian conception of public reason.[11] It seems more reasonable to suppose that one should try to argue from universally justifiable premises, whenever this seems both wise and possible, while feeling free nonetheless to pursue other argumentative strategies when they seem wise. This would be to treat the idea of public reason as a vague ideal, instead of reifying it moralistically into a set of fixed rules for public discussion. The truth in the contractarian argument for restraint is that it would indeed be *ideal* if we could resolve any given political controversy on the basis of reasons that none of us could reasonably reject. But it has not been demonstrated that all important controversies can be resolved on this sort of basis, so it seems unwise to treat the idea of public reason as if it entailed an all-purpose principle of restraint. The irony here is that the contractarian interpretation of the idea of public reason is itself something that many epistemically and morally responsible citizens would be entitled, on the basis of their own collateral beliefs, to reject.

The contractarian position has a descriptive component and a normative component. The descriptive component is an account of what the norms of democratic political culture involve. It distills a rigorist interpretation of the idea of public reason out of various commitments that are found in that culture. The normative component endorses a principle of restraint as a consequence of that interpretation. I worry that religious individuals who accept the descriptive component of contractarianism as a faithful reconstruction of what the norms of democratic political culture involve will, understandably, view this as a reason for withdrawing from that culture. Why should one identify with the democratic process of reason-exchange if the norms implicit in that process are what the contractarians say they are? I believe this thought is in fact one of the main reasons that antiliberal traditionalists like Stanley Hauerwas, Alasdair MacIntyre, and John Milbank have largely displaced Reinhold Niebuhr, Paul Tillich, and the liberation theologians as intellectual authorities in the seminaries, divinity schools, and church-affiliated colleges of the wealthier democracies.

We are about to reap the social consequences of a traditionalist backlash against contractarian liberalism. The more thoroughly Rawlsian our law schools and ethics centers become, the more radically Hauerwasian the theological schools become. Because most of the Rawlsians do not read

theology or pay scholarly attention to the religious life of the people, they have no idea what contractarian liberalism has come to mean outside the fields of legal and political theory. (There are a few Rawlsians in religious studies, but they are now on the defensive and vastly outnumbered.) One message being preached nowadays in many of the institutions where future preachers are being trained is that liberal democracy is essentially hypocritical when it purports to value free religious expression. Liberalism, according to Hauerwas, is a secularist ideology that masks a discriminatory program for policing what religious people can say in public. The appropriate response, he sometimes implies, is to condemn freedom and the democratic struggle for justice as "bad ideas" for the church.[12] Over the next several decades this message will be preached in countless sermons throughout the heartland of the nation.

Rawls found it frustrating that Hauerwas and his allies tend to ignore the careful distinctions he draws between liberalism as a comprehensive moral doctrine and the strictly *political* liberalism he had been trying to perfect in his later years. His *Commonweal* interviewer asked whether he denied that he was "making a veiled argument for secularism." He responded by saying, "Yes, I emphatically deny it. Suppose I said that it is not a veiled argument for secularism any more than it is a veiled argument for religion. Consider: there are two kinds of comprehensive doctrines, religious and secular. Those of religious faith will say I give a veiled argument for secularism, and the latter will say I give a veiled argument for religion. I deny both" (CP, 619f.). But nobody is charging Rawls with giving a veiled argument for religion. The charge being made by his secular and religious critics alike is that he is wrong to expect everybody to argue in the same terms, which just happen to be a slightly adjusted version of the same terms dictated by his comprehensive secular liberalism. The critics doubt the need for the kind of decorum the liberal professor wants to impose on the discussion. And they doubt that a reluctance to adopt justice as fairness as a common basis for discussion makes someone unreasonable. These suspicions would not subside, it seems to me, even if Rawls's critics took full measure of all the distinctions and qualifications he has added to his theory. From the vantage of the religious critics, in particular, the complications would still seem both ad hoc and excessively restrictive.[13]

In a later chapter, I will question whether Hauerwas's critique of liberal democracy exemplifies the ideals of Christian charity and Aristotelian friendship that he himself embraces as alternatives to contractarian liberalism. In doing so, I will offer him reasons for embracing the democratic struggle for justice, reasons that ought to carry weight from his point of view, not merely from my own idiosyncratic point of view as an Emersonian perfectionist. They are not reasons that derive from the social contract, however. They do not belong to the common basis. They are reasons

rooted in *his* theological commitments, which, needless to say, are not universally shared. I intend the exercise as a demonstration of respectful, sincere, nonmanipulative, immanent criticism.

I have heard that Hauerwas expressed the religious reasons for his criticisms of U.S. militarism in public, before a religiously mixed gathering of citizens in the nation's capital, not long after September 11, 2001. In my view, it was good that he did, regardless of whether he intends to satisfy Rawls's proviso. Hauerwas's audience on this occasion presumably included people who were concerned about such basic questions as whether states have a right to fight wars of self-defense and whether the constitutional provision requiring Congress to declare war continues to apply. These citizens were anxious to hear the arguments of a highly influential pacifist and also to hear those arguments subjected to public criticism from other points of view. Democracy would not have been better served, it seems to me, if these reasons had been circulated only behind the closed doors of churches and religiously affiliated schools, where they would be somewhat less likely to face skeptical objections. Especially given that Hauerwas now enjoys wide influence among American Christians, he ought to be encouraged to speak in public so that the citizenry as a whole can inform itself about the content and strength of his arguments.[14] And if he someday chooses to address a congressional committee or speak on behalf of political candidates, so much the better.

One factor to keep in mind when considering the new traditionalism is that Hauerwas and his allies accept the descriptive component of contractarian liberalism. That is, they take this form of liberalism at face value as an accurate account of what the ethical life of modern democracy involves. It is because they view it as a faithful reflection of our political culture that they are so quick to recommend wholesale rejection of that culture. I hold that the contractarians have distorted what this culture involves by wrongly taking a sensible, widely shared, vague ideal to be a clear, fixed, deontological requirement built into the common basis of our reasoning. If I am right about this, the new traditionalists are wrong to reject that culture as implicitly committed to the contractarian program of restraint—what Hauerwas calls "the democratic policing of Christianity."[15] Rejecting what contractarianism and the new traditionalism have in common will permit us, I hope, to reopen the entire question of the role of religious reasoning in public life.

BETWEEN KANT AND HEGEL

The contemporary contractarian version of the question is, "What moral constraints on the use of religious premises in political reasoning are implied by the common basis of reasoning affirmed in the social contract?"

The sought-for principles might not turn out to be Kant's exactly, but the requirement that they be conceived in terms of a common justificatory basis on the model of a social contract is recognizably Kantian in lineage, self-consciously so in Rawls's formulation. Rawls does depart from Kant in a number of ways, and at some points appears to be conscious of his debts to the expressivism of both Hegel and Dewey. These latter debts are most obvious in his theoretical aspiration to make explicit the central elements of the shared political culture and in his closely related doctrine of reflective equilibrium. On both of these points, Rawls is borrowing ideas from the expressivist tradition in an attempt to transform "Kantian constructivism" into a "political constructivism" tailored to the needs of political liberalism. The theoretical aspiration is a version of Hegel's notion that the task of philosophy is to comprehend its own age in thought. The doctrine of reflective equilibrium articulates a Hegelian conception of dialectical reasonableness. But in his commitment to the metaphor of the social contract and in the definition of the "reasonable person" he uses to explicate that metaphor, Rawls remains a Kantian. From an expressivist point of view, his departures from Kant improve on the work of his distinguished predecessor, but they leave him in an untenable position—in effect, halfway between the coherent alternatives of Kant and Hegel.

Norms, according to an expressivist conception, are creatures of the social process in which members of a community achieve mutual recognition as subjects answerable for their actions and commitments. It is the business of reflective practices to make norms explicit in the form of rules and ideals and to achieve reflective equilibrium between them and our other commitments at all levels of generality. The social process in which norms come to be and come to be made explicit is dialectical. It involves movement back and forth between action and reflection as well as interaction among individuals with differing points of view. Because this process takes place in the dimension of time and history, the beliefs and actions one is entitled to depend in large part on what has already transpired within the dialectical process itself. Hegel considered Kant's preoccupation with universally valid principles epistemologically naïve, and was suspicious of the adequacy of the social contract when construed in expressivist terms as a model of rational commitments implicit in the shared political culture. Rawls briefly discusses Hegel's criticisms of social-contract theories in *Political Liberalism* (285–88), claiming that while these criticisms might be effective against some versions of the social contract, they do not tell against his. I am not persuaded, however, that Rawls takes Hegel's full measure in this response, for he focuses too narrowly on Hegel's explicit commentary on the social contract, without exploring the implications of Hegel's philosophy, taken as a whole. Rawls discusses Hegel at greater length in *Lectures on the History of Moral Philosophy*. But in focusing primarily on Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*

and in his understandable attempt to steer clear of Hegel's metaphysical doctrines, he ends up paying too little attention to Hegel's epistemology and his account of concepts, both of which figure heavily in his critique of Kant.[16]

Consider any art, science, or sport you please.[17] It should be clear that the norms of the practice at a given time constrain the behavior of those who participate in it by supplying them with reasons not to do certain things they are physically able to do. Behavior within the social practice is open to criticism in terms of the norms as they have come to be. But conformity to the norms opens up the possibility of novel performances, which have the dialectical potential to transform the practice, thus changing its norms. In the possibility of novel, practice-transforming performances one catches sight of what Brandom calls "the paradigm of a new kind of freedom, *expressive* freedom" ("Freedom," 185; emphasis in original). By foregrounding the dialectical process in which social practices, and the norms implicit in them, evolve over time, Hegel was both borrowing from Kant and moving beyond him. Kant had drawn the crucial contrast between constraint by norms, which he calls freedom, and constraint by causes. Hegel was able to extend the Kantian conception of freedom as constraint by norms by setting it within his dialectical account of norms. For if norms are creatures of social practices, then the sorts of free expression made possible through constraint by norms will vary in accordance with the social practices under consideration and with the dialectic of normative constraint and novel performance unfolding in time.

Once this point is fully understood, it is no longer clear why we need to tether our social and political theory to the search for a common basis of reasoning in principles that all "reasonable" citizens have reason to accept. The principles that one might have reason to reject will depend on one's dialectical location—on the social practices one has been able to participate in and on the actual history of norm-transformation they have undergone so far. Among these practices will be religious practices, which carry with them their own styles of reasoning, their own vocabularies, and their own possibilities of expressive freedom. If the thoroughly dialectical view of epistemic entitlement is correct, why expect all socially cooperative, respectful persons to have reason to accept the same set of explicitly formulated norms, regardless of dialectical location? It is of course possible that they will, and they may indeed do so for a time, but the substance of a common ethical life, according to Hegel, does not reside in the explicitly formulated abstract norms that arise from the dialectical process in which we strive for reflective equilibrium. It resides in the myriad observations, material inferences, actions, and mutually recognitive reactions that constitute the dialectical process itself. This changes at least a bit with every discursive move that is made by every interlocutor. The abstract norms are often mis-

leading or inadequate attempts to make explicit what is implicit in the ethical life of the people. Moreover, they are typically a full step behind the dialectical process—because the Owl of Minerva takes flight at dusk.

We can get at this from another angle by considering the two quite different paradigms of the reasonable person that one finds in the Kantian and expressivist traditions. The Kantian paradigm of the reasonable person is the individual who is prepared to agree to rules that everyone else, acting on the same motivation, would have compelling reason to accept. The Hegelian paradigm is rather the individual who is prepared to engage in discursive exchange with any point of view that he or she can recognize as responsibly held. As the expressivist sees it, the series of exchanges need not operate on a single common basis, tailored to all, but might well involve improvisational expression of one's own point of view and ad hoc immanent criticism of one's interlocutors. The expectation is that different improvisations and different immanent criticisms—indeed, different vocabularies—might well be called for in response to each interlocutor. The one thing upon which a reasonable person can more or less count is the need to transcend whatever set of rules and concepts a distinguished philosopher has described as demanded by our common use of reason.

The point of the contractarian program of restraint was to provide us with security against illegitimate forms of coercive interference on the part of rulers and fellow citizens. This is a matter of *negative* freedom, freedom *from* something. We still have ample reason to concern ourselves with this sort of freedom when assessing the political arrangements that are open to us. But there is also another sort of freedom to nurture and protect, namely, expressive freedom. And this ought to make us hesitant to embark on a Rawlsian program of restraint. Expressive freedom is *positive*, the freedom *to* transform both oneself and one's social practices through a dialectical progression of novel performances and their consequences. To take expressive freedom seriously is to see our capacity to engage in reasoning, including ethical and political reasoning, as something that cannot be captured definitively in the mere application of rules that no reasonable person could reasonably reject. For a reasonable person, in the Hegelian sense, is someone who is always in the process of transforming the inferential significance of the normative concepts at his or her disposal by applying them to new situations and problems.

The social-contract metaphor is too static to serve as an apt model for this process. What contractarianism seems to be looking for is a way of identifying the norms of social cooperation that fixes their inferential significance in advance, so that discursive exchange can be conceptually (and socially) stable. The norms are then taken to be settled and in need only of application in the approved procedures of deliberative discourse. This approach is analogous to what Hegel, in his critique of Kant's theoretical

philosophy, calls the faculty of the understanding (*Verstand*), whereas Hegel prefers the more flexible, pragmatic, improvisational faculty of reason (*Vernunft*), which he plausibly associates with the concept of spirit (*Geist*). Brandom develops the contrast between Verstand and Vernunft as follows:

> Understanding concepts in terms of the categories of the Understanding is treating them as fixed and static. It allows progress only in the sorting of *judgments* into true and false, that is, in the *selection* from a repertoire fixed in advance of the correct concepts to apply in a particular instance. But Hegel wants to insist that if one ignores the process by which concepts *develop*—what other concepts they develop out of, and the forces implicit in them, in concert with their fellows, that lead to their alteration (what Hegel calls their "negativity")—then the sort of content they have is bound to remain unintelligible.[18]

I am saying that this idea is also at work in Hegel's worries about Kantian practical and political philosophy. Social-contract theory is an attempt to tame the concepts of ethical and political discourse in the interest of stabilizing the social order. It hopes to settle the basic question of the fair terms of social cooperation so that deliberative discourse can proceed within a stable "contractual" framework. It imagines itself as an alternative to two threats: the communitarian threat to individual autonomy, which achieves stability but in the wrong way, and the anarchic threat of a war of all against all, which does not achieve stability at all. Social stability is to be achieved by fixing the *terms* of social cooperation, the conceptual framework implicit in the notion of the reasonable person. The practical expression of social-contract theory is, unsurprisingly, a program of social control, an attempt to enforce moral *restraint* on discursive exchange by counting only those who want to reason on the basis of a common set of fixed rules as *reasonable*. It is no wonder that the result sits uneasily with the aspirations of expressive freedom. Hegel wants to avoid this outcome by redefining "reasonable" in terms of the dialectic of expressive freedom.

It should now be clear why a democratic expressivist would never be tempted to discount Abolitionist oratory, Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address, and King's sermons as mere IOUs. For such an expressivist sees democratic discourse as an unfolding dialectic in which the paradigmatic instances of "reasonableness" involve either dramatically significant innovations in the application of an entrenched normative vocabulary or especially memorable exemplifications of discursive virtue. They are paradigmatic because they move "reasonableness" forward, thus exercising some (defeasible) authority over future applications of the relevant concepts.[19] For this reason, we cannot tell the story of the unfolding dialectic without giving them a prominent place in it. Any view that makes them appear marginal or something less than paradigmatic instances of "reason-

ableness," simply because they do not conform to an abstract account of discursive propriety, deserves rejection.

According to Brandom, "Kant tells a *two-phase* story, according to which one sort of activity *institutes* conceptual norms, and then another sort of activity *applies* those concepts. First, a reflective judgment (somehow) makes or finds the determinate rule that articulates [a] concept. Then, and only then, can that concept be applied in the determinate judgements and maxims that are the ultimate subjects of the first two Critiques."[20] It is this two-phase story that Hegel rejects, and he rejects it when it appears in Kant's account of empirical concepts, in his moral philosophy, and in his social-contract theory. Hegel's alternative, dialectical story implies that contractarianism is incorrect in thinking that something like the social contract is *needed* as the basis of social cooperation. Our normative concepts are not instituted at the contractual level and then applied on the basis of the constitutive contract. They are instituted in the process of mutual recognition in which individuals hold one another responsible and implicitly impute to others the authority to keep normative track of one another's attitudes. This process does not *need* the social contract to get going or to get along.[21] The process of exchanging reasons is already a system of social cooperation; it needs no help from the formal structure of the social contract to become one. But if the social contract is unnecessary, if our norms are instituted in a different way, then why define a "reasonable person" as someone who is motivated to forge and live by the principles of the social contract? Why not count anyone as a "reasonable person" who participates responsibly in the process of discursive exchange which has reflective equilibrium as its ever-evolving end? Why not see this process as the way in which democratic citizens strive, at least in their better moments, to become a more perfect union of responsible, socially cooperative selves?

There are at least three commitments that a pragmatist sensitive to these Hegelian concerns would want to bring together in an acceptable self-understanding of democratic practices. Implicit in our way of treating one another is a conception of ourselves as citizens who (a) ought to enjoy *equal standing* in political discourse; (b) deserve respect *as individuals* keeping track of the discussion from their own distinctive points of view; and (c) have a personal and perhaps religious stake in the exercise of *expressive freedom*. Given (a) and (b), we have reason to accept an ideal according to which it would be appropriate, much of the time, to reason from widely justifiable premises in the political arena. But given the emphasis in (b) on the distinctive points of view from which individuals keep track of the discussion, a pragmatist will not be tempted to construe this ideal as an absolute requirement to reason only from a common basis of principles. If we then interpret (c) in terms of the dialectic of normative constraint and novel performance, it seems reasonable to expect that various sorts of hard

decisions will have to be made *as the dialectic unfolds*. By applying normative concepts, participants in the process of reason-exchange effectively decide which social and political constraints to accept in the hope of enhancing, among other things, the expressive religious freedom of the citizenry.

Pragmatic expressivists accept the Kantian insight that there need to be constraints if there is to be freedom. But they reject the two-step procedure of social-contract theory—that is, the notion that to have any constraints, we must first *fix* the terms of social cooperation contractually and then simply abide by the agreed upon rules. They also see the central problem to be addressed in social and political deliberation as the question of which forms of expressive freedom we, as individuals and as a group, wish to promote and enjoy. There are infinitely many possible forms of expressive freedom. We opt for some over others not by signing a social contract but rather by promoting some social practices at the expense of others, both through our direct participation in them and the institutional arrangements we make for them. But as Brandom says, the expressivist way of framing the central problem of social and political deliberation does not "even begin to settle questions about the trade-offs between different varieties of negative and positive freedom."[22] For this reason, expressivism has been the preferred idiom of starkly incompatible forms of resistance to contractarian liberalism. On the all-important questions of which social practices to promote and how to promote them, expressivists divide sharply, with Emersonians at one end of the spectrum and traditionalists at the other. Emersonians, who place high value on the possibilities of novel expression, are inclined to use the freedoms afforded by the First Amendment as an institutional framework for promoting nonstandard social practices and the forms of spirited individuality they foster. Traditionalists, however, have argued on expressivist grounds for a much less permissive vision of social life. They have claimed that the higher forms of ethical and religious self-cultivation are possible only within the normative constraints of a relatively strict regimen of established communal practices. Expressivists of this sort have sometimes been willing to impose fairly severe restrictions on the expression of religious dissent in order to reap the rewards of expressive freedom and spiritual excellence they take to be possible only within a religiously unified community.

In the United States, such proposals have not made much headway, but milder versions of them, which involve shrinking the divide between church and state instead of eliminating it entirely, are gaining ground. One thing counting against traditionalist proposals in the American context is that relatively strict church-state separation and ample freedom of religious expression comport well with a political culture that was shaped in large part by immigrants in flight from restrictive religious orthodoxies. Another count against traditionalism is the sheer extent of religious diversity in this

society. Members of minority traditions—including those who join me in seeing Emerson, Whitman, and Thoreau as among the greatest spiritual exemplars of expressive freedom yet produced by America—have every reason to oppose restrictions on the public expression of religious dissent against majority views. One can hope that they will do so successfully for the foreseeable future.

My version of pragmatism endorses major themes from Hegel's critique of Kant. It then combines Hegel's dialectical normative expressivism with the Emersonian conviction that the most substantial spiritual benefits of expressive freedom are to be found in a form of social life that celebrates democratic individuality as a positive good. One can see this combination of ideas initially come together, I believe, in Whitman and Dewey.

The Hegelian component of my pragmatism has a number of things in common with the most plausible forms of the new traditionalism. These include an emphasis on the importance of self-cultivation as an exercise of expressive freedom and an understanding of the dialectically social basis of norms. On Hegelian grounds, I sympathize with the traditionalist's distaste for the contractarian liberal's program of restraint. But I do not see resentment of contractarians as a reason for alienating myself from democratic hopes and freedoms. The traditionalist story that a particular religious tradition in fact functions as a community of virtue over against the sinfulness of the surrounding social world strikes me as extremely dubious as well as exceedingly prideful. I do not propose to replace the contractarian program of restraint with its traditionalist counterpart—a different set of restrictions, typically designed to maintain a patriarchal orthodoxy, instead of a liberal professor's idea of discursive decorum.

Finally, I oppose the contractarians and the new traditionalists on the most important point they share. For they both hold, as I do not, that the political culture of our democracy implicitly requires the policing or self-censorship of religious expression in the political arena. If Rawls is right, contractarian theory may require this. But the descriptive component of his contractarianism is only one competing account of what the ethical life of democracy involves. If its picture of our culture is distorted, then we are not already implicitly committed to the social contract featured in that picture. The picture neither supports the contractarian argument for restraint, nor provides a reason for the traditionalist to reject the political culture it depicts. In this one respect, our political culture is a nobler thing than its leading theoretical defenders and detractors make it out to be. Judging by how the members of our society behave, they are more deeply committed to freedom, and to a more substantive, positive kind of freedom, than the theorists suspect. For historically they have not restrained themselves in the way contractarians have proposed. That is why Rawls has trouble corralling his historical examples. The Abolitionists did not re-

strain themselves in this way. Abraham Lincoln did not. Martin Luther King, Jr., did not. Dorothy Day did not. Rosemary Radford Ruether does not. Wendell Berry does not. Furthermore, many members of our society would resist with considerable fury any traditionalist attempt to establish an orthodox alternative to freewheeling democratic exchange. More power to them.

Let me now sum up how I would want to construe our implicitly recognized norms for employing religious premises in political reasoning. First, I would insist that the ideal of respect for one's fellow citizens does not in every case require us to argue from a common justificatory basis of principles that no one properly motivated could reasonably reject. Second, I would recommend the mixed rhetorical strategy of expressing one's own (perhaps idiosyncratic) reasons for a political policy while also directing fair-minded, nonmanipulative, sincere immanent criticism against one's opponent's reasons. Arguing in this way is not only extremely common, but also easily recognizable as a form of respect.

Third, I would refer, as the new traditionalists do (and as a liberal like Stephen Macedo also does), to the importance of virtues in guiding a citizen through the process of discursive exchange and political decision making. There are people who lack civility, or the ability to listen with an open mind, or the will to pursue justice where it leads, or the temperance to avoid taking and causing offense needlessly, or the practical wisdom to discern the subtleties of a discursive situation. There are also people who lack the courage to speak candidly, or the tact to avoid sanctimonious cant, or the poise to respond to unexpected arguments, or the humility to ask forgiveness from those who have been wronged. Such people are unlikely to express their reasons appropriately, whatever those reasons may be. When it comes to expressing religious reasons, it can take a citizen of considerable virtue to avoid even the most obvious pitfalls. I know of no set of rules for getting such matters right. My advice, therefore, is to cultivate the virtues of democratic speech, love justice, and say what you please.[23]

Is Religion a Conversation-Stopper?

The contractarian program of restraint is a moralistic one. Richard Rorty's argument for restraint in "Religion as Conversation-Stopper" is pragmatic.[24] He claims that the public expression of religious premises is likely to bring a potentially productive democratic conversation grinding to a halt. "The main reason religion needs to be privatized is that, in political discussion with those outside the relevant religious community, it is a conversation-stopper." When someone does introduce a religious premise into a political discussion, Rorty says, "the ensuing silence masks the group's inclination to say, 'So what? We weren't discussing your private life; we

were discussing public policy. Don't bother us with matters that are not our concern' (PSH, 171). Assuming that we want to keep the conversation going, we have good reason for excluding the expression of religious premises from public political discussion.

Rorty sounds a bit like a contractarian when he endorses what he calls the "Jeffersonian compromise that the Enlightenment reached with the religious" (PSH, 169) and an epistemology he associates not only with Dewey and C. S. Peirce, but also with Rawls and Habermas (PSH, 173). The content of the Jeffersonian compromise, he says, is that we should limit conversation to premises held in common, thereby excluding the expression of religious premises. But he does not go on to theorize about universally valid principles, about which he has expressed doubts on other occasions. So the Jeffersonian compromise implies the same program of restraint that the social contract does without having the same purported epistemic status and without being expressed in the same moralistic tone. Why Rawls and Habermas emerge as model epistemologists in this context remains unclear. Rorty does not say that employing religious premises in public conversation violates a universally justifiable principle of respect; he says that doing so is in "bad taste" (PSH, 169).

This argument is hardly Rorty's most rigorously developed contribution to public life, but it is, I think, a more accurate reflection of our political culture than is the Rawlsian argument. There are in fact many situations in which the introduction of religious premises into a political argument seems a sign of bad taste or imprudence on the part of a speaker. This is what I was getting at near the end of the previous section when I referred to the need for practical wisdom and tact. The reason that relying on religious premises is often imprudent when debating matters of public policy is not, however, that it violates a compromise supposedly reached between "the Enlightenment" and "the religious." It is rather that, in a setting as religiously divided as ours is, one is unlikely to win support for one's political proposals on most issues simply by appealing to religious considerations.

Is it true that religion is essentially a conversation-stopper? I would have thought that the pragmatic line should be that religion is not *essentially* anything, that the conversational utility of employing religious premises in political arguments depends on the situation. There is one sort of religious premise that does have the tendency to stop a conversation, at least momentarily—namely, faith-claims. We can understand why faith-claims have this tendency if we describe them in the way Brandom does. A faith-claim, according to Brandom, avows a cognitive commitment without claiming entitlement to that commitment.[25] In the context of discursive exchange, if I make a faith-claim, I am authorizing others to attribute the commitment to me and perhaps giving them a better understanding of why I have undertaken certain other cognitive or practical commitments. I am also

making the claim available to others as a premise they might wish to employ in their reasoning. But I am not accepting the responsibility of demonstrating my entitlement to it. If pressed for such a demonstration, I might say simply that it is a matter of faith. In other words, "Don't ask me for reasons. I don't have any."

It should be clear how this common sort of discursive move tends to put a crimp in the exchange of reasons. If, at a crucial point in an argument, one avows a cognitive commitment without claiming entitlement to that commitment, and then refuses to give additional reasons for accepting the claim in question, then the exchange of reasons has indeed come grinding to a halt. But there are two things to keep in mind here. First, a claim can be religious without being a faith-claim. It is possible to assert a premise that is religious in content and stand ready to demonstrate one's entitlement to it. Many people are prepared to argue at great length in support of their religious claims. So we need to distinguish between discursive problems that arise because religious premises are not widely shared and those that arise because the people who avow such premises are not prepared to argue for them.

Second, as Brandom points out, faith is not "by any means the exclusive province of religion" (AR, 105). Everyone holds some beliefs on nonreligious topics without claiming to know that they are true. To express such a belief in the form of a reason is to make what I have been calling a faith-claim. One would expect such claims to be fairly common in discussions of especially intractable political questions. When questions of this kind get discussed there are typically hard-liners on both sides who not only propose answers, but also claim to know that their answers are right. Yet there is typically a group of people in the middle who are prepared to take a stand, if need be, but would never claim they knew that they were right. The abortion debate is like this, and so is the debate over the problem of dirty hands in the fight against terrorism. In fact, the phenomenon of nonreligious faith-claims is quite common in political discourse, because policy making often requires us to take some stand when we cannot honestly claim to know that our stand is correct. That is just the way politics is.

It is important in this context to recall the distinction between being entitled to a belief and being able to justify that belief to someone else. Even in cases where individuals do plausibly claim to be epistemically entitled to religious premises, they might still be unable to produce an argument that would give their interlocutors reason to accept those premises. To assert such a premise would not qualify as a faith-claim in the strict sense that I have just defined, but it would create a potential impasse in conversation. Yet here again, the same sort of difficulty arises for all of us, not only for religious believers, when we are asked to defend our most deeply engrained commitments, especially those that we acquired through

acculturation instead of through reasoning. We are normally entitled to hold onto commitments of this kind unless they prove problematical in some way—for example, by turning out to be either internally incoherent or too hard to square with newly acquired commitments that strike us as highly credible. If the reason for excluding the expression of religious commitments is that they create this type of discursive impasse, then the only fair way to proceed is to exclude the expression of many nonreligious commitments, as well. But if we go in this direction, Rorty's view will require silence on many of the most important issues on the political agenda.

As Rorty grants, many citizens in fact affirm political conclusions that are influenced in some way by their religious commitments. Such commitments typically have a bearing on how one ranks highly important moral concerns. When President Truman was deciding what strategy to pursue in bringing World War II to an end, for example, he had to come to terms with two conflicting moral concerns. One of these had to do with his hope to minimize the number of deaths resulting from his strategy. The other had to do with his qualms about dropping atomic weapons and firebombs on civilian targets. When the question arises of how we should instruct our future leaders to act when they face a similar conflict, citizens are free to speak their minds. If a group of citizens deems the latter concern more important than the former, or vice versa, they should feel free to say so. But when they do, they are likely to be pressed for reasons. Suppose their actual motivating reasons are religious ones not widely shared among their fellow citizens, and it is clear that some citizens, employing their own reasonably held collateral commitments as premises, would be entitled to reject them. In that case, there appear to be three options: (1) to remain silent; (2) to give justifying arguments based strictly on principles already commonly accepted; and (3) to express their actual (religious) reasons for supporting the policy they favor while also engaging in immanent criticism of their opponents' views.

I see nothing in principle wrong with option (3), especially in circumstances that tend to rule out option (2). It could be, for example, that option (2) is difficult or impossible to pursue because the principles that supposedly belong to the Jeffersonian compromise, when conjoined with factual information accessible to the citizenry as a whole, do not entail a resolution of the issue. It is plausible to suppose that the problem of dirty hands has been hard to resolve precisely because some reasonable citizens are justified in rejecting one solution of the problem, while other reasonable citizens are justified in rejecting the opposite solution. But even if this is not granted, it is clear that there are other issues that cannot be resolved solely on the basis of commonly accepted principles. Kent Greenawalt argues persuasively that the debates over welfare assistance, punishment, military policy, abortion, euthanasia, and environmental policy all fall into this category.[6]

It appears, then, to be a consequence of Rorty's argument for restraint that we should leave a long list of important political issues both unresolved and, even more implausibly, unaddressed.

In *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, Rorty has this to say:

All human beings carry about a set of words which they employ to justify their actions, their beliefs, and their lives. These are the words in which we formulate praise of our friends and contempt for our enemies, our long-term projects, our deepest self-doubts and our highest hopes. They are the words in which we tell, sometimes prospectively and sometimes retrospectively, the story of our lives. I shall call these words a person's "final vocabulary."[27]

Rorty then explains this term as follows: "It is 'final' in the sense that if doubt is cast on the worth of these words, their user has no noncircular argumentative recourse. Those words are as far as he can go with language; beyond them there is only helpless passivity or a resort to force." What Rorty is describing here is the sort of discursive commitment one can be entitled to even though one would not know how to defend it. I can imagine no way of banning the use of final vocabularies, in this sense, from political discussion, even if it were a desirable thing to do, which it plainly is not. What makes some people religious is that the vocabularies in which they tell the stories of their lives—including their stories of our common political life—have religious content. Like Rorty, they tend to be speechless when pressed for linear reasons for adopting their final vocabularies. But unless those vocabularies become severely problematical, what reason would they have for abandoning them?

Rorty grants that there is "hypocrisy involved in saying that believers somehow have no right to base their political views on their religious faith, whereas we atheists have every right to base ours on Enlightenment philosophy. The claim that in doing so we are appealing to reason, whereas the religious are being irrational, is hokum." He is also realistic enough to admit that "religious beliefs, or the lack of them, will influence political convictions. Of course they will" (PSH, 172). So his point in endorsing the Jeffersonian compromise appears to be simply that it is always wise, pragmatically speaking, to confine the premises of our political arguments to commitments held in common. Religious premises are to be excluded not because they involve faith-claims and not because they involve vocabularies that cannot be defended without circularity, but rather because they are not held in common. He seems to mean *actually held in common*; he is not referring, as the contractarians do, to what all *reasonable* persons *would* accept. But the problem remains the same. Reasons actually held in common do not get us far enough toward answers to enough of our political questions. The proposed policy of restraint, if adopted, would cause too

much silence at precisely the points where more discussion is most badly needed. The policy would itself be a conversation-stopper.

Suppose you are debating an issue of the type Greenawalt highlights, and you are still trying to argue your case solely by reference to commonly accepted principles and generally accessible information. Imagine that one of your interlocutors, sensing that you are not fully disclosing your own premises, says, "But what's your actual reason? What really moves you to accept this conclusion?" Now you must either dissemble or choose between options (1) and (3). But why not choose (3)? There are many circumstances in which candor requires full articulation of one's actual reasons. Even if it does lead to a momentary impasse, there is no reason to view this result as fatal to the discussion. One can always back up a few paces, and begin again, now with a broader conversational objective. It is precisely when we find ourselves in an impasse of this kind that it becomes most advisable for citizens representing various points of view to express their actual reasons in greater detail. For this is the only way we can pursue the objectives of understanding one another's perspectives, learning from one another through open-minded listening, and subjecting each other's premises to fair-minded immanent criticism.

Like the contractarians, when Rorty discusses the role of religion in politics, he completely neglects the potential benefits of ad hoc immanent criticism in overcoming momentary impasses. But he does, in other contexts, recognize the value of carrying on a discussion at this level. His name for such discourse in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* was "conversation."[28] There Rorty suggested that "*conversation* [be seen] as the ultimate context within which knowledge is to be understood" (389; emphasis in original). What he meant by conversation was a kind of discursive exchange in which "Our focus shifts . . . to the relation between alternative standards of justification, and from there to the actual changes in those standards which make up intellectual history" (389f.) The role of edifying philosophy, as Rorty presented it in that book, is to keep discursive exchange going at those very points where "normal" discourse—that is, discourse on the basis of commonly accepted standards—cannot straightforwardly adjudicate between competing claims. Conversation is a good name for what is needed at those points where people employing different final vocabularies reach a momentary impasse. But if we do use the term "conversation" in this way, we shall have to conclude that conversation is the very thing that is not stopped when religious premises are introduced in a political argument. It is only the normal discourse of straightforward argument on the basis of commonly held premises that is stopped. The political discourse of a pluralistic democracy, as it turns out, needs to be a mixture of normal discourse and conversational improvisation.[29] In the discussion of some issues, straightforward argument on the basis of commonly held standards carries

us only so far. Beyond that, we must be either silent or conversational. But we can be conversational, in the spirit of Rorty's most edifying philosophical work, only by rejecting the policy of restraint he endorses.

I came of age ethically, politically, and spiritually in the Civil Rights movement, where I acquired my democratic commitments from prophetic ministers. In college, when I moved rapidly down the path that leads from Schleiermacher to Feuerbach, Emerson, and beyond, I found myself collaborating mainly with dissenting Protestants, secular Jews, and members of the radical Catholic underground in the struggle against U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War. I have known since then that it is possible to build democratic coalitions including people who differ religiously and to explore those differences deeply and respectfully without losing one's integrity as a critical intellect. This book is offered in the hope that similarly diverse coalitions and equally full expression of differences remain possible in democratic culture today, if we can only summon the will to form them.

Chapter 5

THE NEW TRADITIONALISM

ALASDAIR MACINTYRE and Stanley Hauerwas have already entered these pages a number of times as representative critics of the political culture of modern democracy. As I have already suggested, their influence is especially strong in the seminaries, where the term "liberal" is nowadays as unlikely to be used in praise of someone as it is in the arena of presidential politics. Their writings are clearly one source of the animus against secularism discussed in the previous chapter.[1] I want now to look closely at the form of traditionalism MacIntyre and Hauerwas espouse. Its most troublesome feature, from the perspective of this inquiry, is its tendency to undermine identification with liberal democracy. In MacIntyre's account of modernity, the term "democracy" scarcely appears. But all things liberal come in for much abuse in his writings, and he obviously has liberal democracy as well as totalitarianism in mind when he dismisses "modern politics itself" as something anyone "who owes allegiance to the tradition of the virtues" must reject. As MacIntyre sees it, modern democracy is merely "civil war carried on by other means."[2] And on each of these points, Hauerwas not only pronounces MacIntyre correct; he ups the ante, outbidding MacIntyre in a rhetoric of excess.

Friends of democracy therefore have reason to be concerned about the influence these writers enjoy, especially in quarters where the fine print is likely to be ignored. But there is also a serious intellectual challenge here that democratic thinkers need to address. For MacIntyre and Hauerwas have done more than any other recent writers to confront us with a crucial question. Do we have reason to be happy with the kind of people we have become under the influence of modern ideas, practices, and institutions? The traditionalist answer to this question, of course, is no. We are exactly what the market and the liberal state have made us—namely, self-interested individualists, out to get what we want. As the traditionalist prefers to put it, we simply lack the virtues required to sustain an admirable way of life. Because we are not bound together by commitment to a single shared tradition we cannot take very much for granted when conversing with one another. As a result, our public ethical discourse is a cacophony of disparate claims. The function of such discourse is merely to express how we feel, so we should not be surprised that nothing gets resolved.

There must be something to these charges; otherwise, the new traditionalism would have trouble garnering attention, let alone followers. Its pic-

ture of modern ethical discourse is sufficiently disturbing, and perhaps sufficiently plausible at first blush, to require a seriously considered response. It seems to me, however, that many of those who have been attracted to MacIntyre and Hauerwas have some lingering democratic sentiments that are either discounted or neglected in the new traditionalism. For example, these readers would not in fact be willing to join a traditional community in which women lacked the rights that men enjoy or in which a king denied his subjects the freedom to speak openly on political questions. They would find premodern forms of trial and punishment deeply revolting. And they would rebel against the prospect of a marriage arranged for them by their parents. Such people are therefore acting in bad faith, or with a divided heart, whenever they use traditionalist categories to express their misgivings about our society while leaving their democratic sentiments unvoiced and unexplained.

The categories that most obviously require scrutiny in this context are the matched pair, *tradition* and *modernity*. Traditionalism needs to define these concepts dichotomously; otherwise, it cannot impose the sharp and simple partition it uses to justify rejection of "modern politics itself." The half-conscious thought at work in this dichotomy is that genuine modernity, being in essence antitraditional, does not have traditions. Modernity—specifically, modern democracy—is something that brings about the demise of tradition, and leaves us *after* virtue. We will see that MacIntyre and Hauerwas sometimes trade on this thought in a way that consigns much of modern ethical discourse to invisibility. Among the varieties thus rendered invisible, I would argue, are both the strand of Romantic traditionalism to which the new traditionalists owe their basic tropes and the strand of Emersonian thinking carried forward in the work of Whitman and Dewey. As I tried to show in chapter 1, the latter is a form of self-consciously modern thinking that is no less concerned with the virtues than the traditionalists are. One thing that makes it different from traditionalism, however, is its interest in reconceiving the virtues in democratic terms. The upshot of my analysis will be that the new traditionalism tells a largely false story about modern ethical discourse. I will begin, in this chapter, by examining several different versions of the story as MacIntyre has told it, and then turn, in the following two chapters, to Hauerwas's variations on the same themes.

THE PROBLEM OF POINT OF VIEW

MacIntyre published *A Short History of Ethics* more than three decades ago.[3] He has been rewriting it ever since: resolving problems in the structure of his narrative, making explicit various assumptions on which his account of our predicament depends, defining and redefining his allegiances, chang-

ing his mind about some details, filling in many others, but never deviating from profound discontent with liberal society. Already in 1966, MacIntyre was saying that "the acids of individualism have for four centuries eaten into our moral structures" and that "we live with the inheritance of not only one, but of a number of well-integrated moralities" (SH, 266). The book was more ambitious than the introductory textbook it might have seemed, for it set out to explain both how modern moral philosophy had reached an impasse through neglect of its own history and how moral discourse itself had been fragmented in the course of the same history.

"Conceptual conflict," he wrote, "is endemic in our situation, because of the depth of our moral conflicts" (SH, 268). He now often puts it the other way around, with conceptual conflict explaining the depth of moral conflict. But the resulting choices are equally pressing either way: "Each of us therefore has to choose both with whom we wish to be morally bound and by what ends, rules, and virtues we wish to be guided. These two choices are inextricably linked" (SH, 268). How is the choice of a vocabulary to be made? This depends on whether one stands within a coherent community, already committed to its outlook, its practices, and its modes of reasoning. "Speaking from within my own moral vocabulary, I shall find myself bound by the criteria embodied in it. These criteria will be shared with those who speak the same moral language" (SH, 268). But if I do not already stand within a coherent community, committed to its standards of judgment, how can my choice of a vocabulary be more than an expression of arbitrary preference or will?

MacIntyre's first book, *Marxism*, appeared in 1953, when he "aspired to be both a Christian and a Marxist." By the mid-1960s, however, he had grown "skeptical of both" outlooks and accordingly revised the book under the new title *Marxism and Christianity*.[4] Neither Christian nor Marxist any longer, he had not moved closer in the meantime to liberalism. What, then, was he? He seems to have found himself outside of the moral traditions he had once tried to integrate, still alienated from the broader society in which he found himself, yet unable to affiliate himself in good conscience with another identifiable community or tradition. These words from *A Short History of Ethics* thus take on a certain poignancy: "And I must adopt some moral vocabulary if I am to have any social relationships. For without rules, without the cultivation of virtues, I cannot share ends with anybody else. I am doomed to social solipsism. Yet I must choose for myself with whom I am to be morally bound. I must choose between alternative forms of social and moral practice" (SH, 268).

Poignant these words may be on a personal level, but they also raised a problem of theoretical consistency for *A Short History of Ethics*, as MacIntyre later acknowledged. I have called this the problem of point of view. A

narrative that explains in moral terms how morality has disintegrated, and pronounces this outcome disastrous, leaves one wondering from what point of view the verdict could have been reached and how that point of view is itself to escape the implied condemnation. If MacIntyre did not already occupy an identifiable and defensible normative point of view, the tragic tone of his historical narrative and the various evaluations expressed in it would be groundless. Yet in this period he was prepared to take his stand only *against* the self-images of the age.[5] The ground on which he had taken that stand remained invisible.

MacIntyre therefore set himself the task of elucidating the point of view from which he had been writing his history and expressing his discontents. This task involved making previously unacknowledged assumptions explicit, correcting and extending them through systematic reflection, and locating them within a suitably revised narrative of the history of ethics. *After Virtue*, the most influential theoretical expression of the new traditionalism, merely begins the task of elucidation. The reasoning that led to the writing of *After Virtue* seems to have gone more or less as follows.

If MacIntyre hoped to justify a sweepingly negative verdict on the moral discourse of the age, he would have to articulate a point of view that belongs to the age he condemns but does not share the incoherence he ascribes to it. In his scathingly critical 1970 book on Herbert Marcuse in the Modern Masters series—the main thesis of which seems to have been that Marcuse did not deserve inclusion among the modern masters—MacIntyre pronounced Marcuse's most famous book deficient on precisely these grounds: "The central oddity of *One-Dimensional Man* is perhaps that it should have been written at all. For if its thesis were true, then we should have to ask how the book came to have been written and we would certainly have to inquire whether it would find any readers. Or rather, to the extent that the book does find readers, to that extent Marcuse's thesis does not hold."[6] The same criticism can be raised against *A Short History of Ethics*. MacIntyre could sidestep the criticism, while maintaining his condemnation of the age, only by locating himself in a marginal position, taking a point of view in the age but not of it.

What point of view might that be? It should, first of all, be consistent with rejection of liberal individualism. It should also, however, disown various forms of modern radicalism, including Marxism, which MacIntyre views as symptoms of the diseases they aim to cure. It should, furthermore, be sufficiently coherent and complex to provide defensible criteria of rational choice—criteria that would justify MacIntyre's criticisms of the age. Otherwise, the moral critic will be condemned to mere assertion. Finally, it should, if possible, allow the critic to share ends with at least some of his contemporaries, thereby avoiding social solipsism and political impotence.

The Rhetoric of *After Virtue*

If we assume that MacIntyre was reasoning in roughly this way, we can see why he felt a need to affiliate himself openly with a particular "well-integrated" moral tradition. One way to discover such a tradition would be to leaf back through the chapters of his moral history and locate the point at which premodern moral tradition begins to be displaced by liberal modernity. And this is what MacIntyre did in *After Virtue*. His name for the tradition that suffered rejection at the outset of our era was "the tradition of the virtues." He intended to show, above all, that this tradition, although largely rejected and isolated in our age, now deserves to be revived and, in light of its misfortunes, reformulated. Writing as an advocate of this tradition, he believed he had finally resolved the problem of point of view, but he now had to recast his history of ethics accordingly. For the narrative had acquired not only a self-conscious point of view, but a new protagonist. The villain of course remained the same.

I do not think that any critic has done full justice to *After Virtue*'s imaginative power. I have in mind, first of all, the striking imagery with which the book begins. We are asked to imagine "that the natural sciences were to suffer the effects of a catastrophe," with the consequence that the current practitioners of science "have largely forgotten what it was," while possessing only "fragments" of a once-coherent empirical practice and theoretical discourse. This imagery of catastrophe belongs to the collection of tropes used since Longinus as indicators of sublimity. MacIntyre uses his imaginary tale about science to introduce his main thesis, which is that ethical discourse now lies in ruins analogous to the condition of scientific discourse in his tale. The image of ruin strives to reveal the energies of mind and heart that were, on his interpretation, concentrated in the practices of a previous epoch, and MacIntyre measures the height of that epoch's achievement by the sharpness of the break.[7] In the bolt of light cast by the opening paragraphs of *After Virtue*, our familiar patterns of discourse take on the uncanny appearance of fragmentary ruins—in Hazlitt's phrase, "stupendous . . . structures, which have been suffered to moulder into decay."[8] In introducing his major thesis in this strongly figurative way, before his reasons have been offered, he somehow manages not to call attention to the artifice of the rhetoric. The uncanniness of those paragraphs consists in the sense that we have learned something we already knew but have kept hidden.

It is with the stage thus set that MacIntyre introduces, in chapter 2, his account of "The Nature of Moral Disagreement Today and the Claims of Emotivism." Here he attempts the boldest of figurative reductions. We are meant to see the essence of our contemporary culture as condensed in of all things—the emotivist moral philosophy of C. L. Stevenson. This

vision startles ethical theorists, in part because they know that no more than a few contemporary philosophers believe that Stevenson's moral philosophy is true. This audacious synecdoche is accomplished primarily through the use of three examples of modern ethical debates. These examples are meant to license an inference to the conclusion that modern ethical discourse itself lies in virtually complete fragmentation. That is a lot to show on the basis of three examples sketched in a total of only two pages: the debates over war, abortion, and economic justice. MacIntyre counts on his readers to know these debates by heart. They are the very stuff of every newspaper's editorial page and of the "moral problems" courses currently being taught in our colleges. MacIntyre says that "it is their typicality that makes them important examples here" (AV, 8). What they typify, he adds, is the interminability of moral debates in our culture. This, he argues, is to be explained by appeal to the incommensurability of the premises from which the participants in modern ethical discourse argue their cases. Once we see this, he concludes, we will realize that the arguments, although cast in the form of impersonal appeals to reason, actually function only to vent and manipulate emotions. That is why we live in the age of Stevenson, for it was his emotivism that explained how our ethical discourse really functions, despite pretenses to the contrary on the part of those of us who engage in the debates.

Well, these are ethical debates, and it is true that they have yet to end. This shows neither that they are interminable nor that the interminability they allegedly exemplify is characteristic of our ethical discourse as such. Any ethical debate now going on is a debate that has not yet ended. This goes without saying. Are there no examples of ethical debates in our culture that have come to an end? MacIntyre does not ask this question. Suppose we go back to mid-nineteenth-century America. What is the most impassioned ethical debate of the day? Clearly, it is the debate over the abolition of slavery. This is not, I am happy to add, an unfinished debate. It would be foolish to pretend that it was settled solely by reasoning, but it would also be foolish to think that the reasoning it involved can be explained away as nothing more than Stevensonian hot air. In the meantime, we have had great debates over whether women should be permitted to vote, whether alcoholic beverages should be banned in a society that cares about the virtue of temperance, and whether blacks should be allowed to sit in the front of the bus. Each of these more recent debates, so far as I can tell, is now over. They were settled, moreover, without massive bloodshed. Incommensurable premises did not prevent our fellow citizens from reaching a high level of consensus on them by exchanging questions and reasons with one another. No doubt, each of these debates seemed interminable at the height of public controversy on the issue in question. Each of them produced great examples of ethical discourse, both religious and secular in

inspiration, that deserve to be preserved in historical memory. Yet they are entirely missing from MacIntyre's account.

After Virtue takes many twists and turns before it reaches its memorable conclusion, in which MacIntyre assembles his readers once again among the sublime ruins to initiate a quest for forms of "community in which civility and the intellectual and moral life can be sustained through the new dark ages which are already upon us" (AV, 263). The book exerts its persuasive power through an intricate interweaving of argumentation and historical narrative unlike anything else in twentieth-century moral philosophy. It is hard to imagine a book less like Rawls's *Theory of Justice* in form or content than this one.

Beyond *After Virtue*

MacIntyre stressed that his history of ethics was "a work still in progress" (AV, 278) and immediatedly promised a sequel, which appeared in 1988 under the title *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*[9] Nobody would think of calling *Whose Justice* a short history of ethics. Perhaps it needed to be a long and intricate book, given the problems remaining to be solved in MacIntyre's position. The most obvious of these was that *After Virtue* had not expounded or defended its pivotal assumptions about the dependence of rationality upon tradition. If those assumptions cannot withstand scrutiny, the necessity of affiliating with a single "well-integrated" tradition of thought and practice is called into question. I shall return to this problem later. It will suffice for the moment to note that his recognition of this lacuna in his previous work explains MacIntyre's preoccupation with the theme of practical rationality and the concept of tradition in *Whose Justice?*

Another relatively obvious problem was that *After Virtue's* historical narrative had achieved its dramatic effect by focusing our attention on sharp contrasts and major transitions. This meant deferring the detailed discussion of specific figures and of scholarly counterargument that would, in the end, be required to sustain the narrative's central claims. The sequel, in contrast, offers finely drawn portraits of a wide range of figures from ancient Greece, medieval Christendom, and eighteenth-century Scotland. It concentrates not on the shifting fortunes of "the virtues," but rather on those of two virtues in particular, justice and practical wisdom, and this requires MacIntyre to enter more deeply into the writings of the figures he discusses. The book also works much harder than its predecessors did at vindicating its interpretations over against alternative views in the scholarly literature. If the interest of most readers is bound to flag ten pages into an account of Sir James Dalrymple of Stair or ten paragraphs into a dialogue with John Cooper's reading of Aristotle on the practical syllogism, those of us who lament the dearth of good ethical historiography are bound to

feel deeply in MacIntyre's debt. As a work of historical scholarship, *Whose Justice?* has hardly silenced expert critics, but it is easily MacIntyre's most impressive accomplishment to date.

Since I have argued on previous occasions that *After Virtue's* historical narrative is inadequate, I want to take this opportunity to point out several respects in which *Whose Justice?* does better.[10] The first of these has to do with my charge that "the tradition of the virtues" championed in *After Virtue* is too amorphous to play the role assigned to it. Upon close inspection, it becomes clear that this tradition, although presented in such a way that Aristotle can be its principal spokesperson, was meant to include anyone who gives sufficient prominence to "the virtues" and "the good" in ethics. Because it was arrived at initially in a quest for an all-purpose "Other" in comparison to which liberal modernity could be seen as hopelessly divided and incoherent, it gathers together people with vastly different tables of virtues and conceptions of the good. These include many people who would want to dissociate themselves from a tradition in which Aristotle could be cast as the central figure. Any tradition so diverse could not supply the wanted contrast with liberal modernity, nor could it satisfactorily resolve the problem of point of view. To do those things, MacIntyre would have to commit himself to a particular conception of the good life and a correlative table of the virtues.

Whose Justice? speaks of four distinct traditions: Aristotelianism, Augustinianism, the Scottish Enlightenment, and liberalism. And MacIntyre brings his spiritual autobiography if not full circle, at least homeward bound, by identifying himself openly with the Thomistic strand of Augustinian Christianity. This confession does indeed clarify the position MacIntyre intends to occupy while criticizing liberal society and reworking his account of Western culture's allegedly downward slide. It helps us see, furthermore, which of the "local forms of community" vaguely alluded to in the concluding pages of *After Virtue* MacIntyre wants us to inhabit while the "new dark ages" are upon us. It also, of course, underlines the significance of the role religious traditions have played and continue to play in our moral history.

A second criticism I had made of *After Virtue*—one I had made on another occasion when discussing *A Short History of Ethics*—was that its neglect of the religious traditions seriously vitiated its historical reconstruction of our past.[11] In the postscript to the second edition of *After Virtue*, MacIntyre acknowledged the validity of this charge and promised to do better in the sequel. The ample space given in *Whose Justice?* to Augustinian tradition and to the influence of Calvinism on eighteenth-century Scottish culture redeems that promise. What, then, is gained from such additions, aside from mere comprehensiveness?

One benefit emerges clearly in the new account of Aquinas, which is not only much longer than the corresponding section of *After Virtue*, but also vastly more adequate. I had complained that *After Virtue* read Aquinas through the eyes of his later scholastic interpreters, thereby overestimating the place of natural law in his thought and underestimating the place of Aristotelian practical wisdom. The result, I claimed, was a highly misleading picture of Aquinas as a rigid system-builder partly responsible for the lamentable demise of Aristotelian practical wisdom in Western culture. The picture was also designed to highlight what MacIntyre then took to be Aquinas's inability to account for moral tragedy, and here I suggested that MacIntyre's case was at best radically incomplete.[12] The interpretation of Aquinas in *Whose Justice?*, however, includes none of these deficiencies. The assertion that Aquinas is unable to account for moral tragedy has been withdrawn. MacIntyre has converted. More to the point, he has broken free from scholastic Thomism's reading of Aquinas and given not only a more detailed but a more accurate reading of the relation between Aristotelian, Stoic, and Augustinian elements in the *Summa Theologiae*. Where he had expressed suspicion of Aquinas's attempt to produce a total system, he now emphasizes, rightly, that the system is self-consciously unfinished in form and that its mode of inquiry is dialectical in nature.[13]

Upgrading his assessment of Aquinas in these ways does, however, have its costs. *After Virtue* had explained the misfortunes of Aristotelian tradition after Aquinas in part by declaring its view of moral tragedy deficient and its metaphysical commitments excessive. Now that MacIntyre has changed his mind on these matters, the explanation will have to take a different shape. It also will need to show why metaphysical commitments once thought excessive, and thus a source of weakness for the Aristotelian tradition as it entered the modern age, are now essential.

Augustinian liberals, recognizing that these commitments are not generally shared by the citizenry as a whole, are content to factor them into their own moral thinking without expecting fellow citizens in the earthly city to do likewise. MacIntyre shows no signs of becoming that kind of Augustinian, but he has thus far done little to clarify the role he envisions for theological assumptions in public life. His position appears to be that ethical discourse cannot be sustained as a coherent rational process without taking some such assumptions for granted. Another of my criticisms of *After Virtue* bears directly on this issue. I had said that by neglecting the role of religious traditions, and thus of religious conflict, in moral history, MacIntyre had simultaneously neglected one of the reasons that public discourse in many modern settings has become secularized, in the sense defined in the previous chapter. When high levels of agreement on metaphysics or on a complete theory of the good life could not be achieved through rational argument, some parties used coercion (often in the form of armed force or

torture) to compel acceptance of theological presuppositions. Others, however, tried to hammer out a way of thinking and talking about ethical issues that did not presuppose theological agreement. Both alternatives were tried repeatedly in early modern Europe. The bloodshed, unrest, and spiritual misery caused by the former made the latter increasingly attractive.

Whose Justice? uses a similar hypothesis, albeit somewhat tentatively, to repair MacIntyre's explanation of the rejection of Aristotelianism:

> That [the] coexistence of Aristotelianism in the moral sphere with a variety of Augustinian theologies and with increasingly anti-Aristotelian modes of theorizing in the sciences should have proved fragile is scarcely surprising. But what most profoundly finally moved the largest part of Europe's educated classes to reject Aristotelianism as a framework for understanding their shared moral and social life was perhaps the gradual discovery during and after the savage and persistent conflicts of the age that no appeal to any agreed conception of *the* good for human beings, either at the level of practice or of theory, was now possible. (WJ, 209; emphasis in original)

Needless to say, from my point of view this change promises to improve the account considerably. Yet MacIntyre neither integrates this hypothesis into the narrative as a whole nor allows it to influence his appraisal of liberal society. So despite his admission that the facts of pluralism may have been the most important factor in the rejection of Aristotle, the rest of the book shows no traces of this thought. In particular, MacIntyre does not grapple with the apparent implication that the educated classes of early-modern Europe may have had good reason to tailor their institutions and vocabularies to accommodate diverse reasonable perspectives on theology and the good.

How Not to Discuss Liberalism

This failure of integration becomes especially problematic in a chapter called "Liberalism Transformed into a Tradition." Of the four traditions treated in *Whose Justice?*, only liberalism is dispensed with in a single chapter. The beginning of the chapter concludes the discussion of Scotland begun more than a hundred pages earlier, leaving only barely more than a dozen pages on liberalism as such, at the end of which MacIntyre acknowledges the need to do much more. Why didn't he do more here? Perhaps he feared the book was getting too long as it was, but he also knew that because he was still writing *against* liberalism, he could not do without some account, however cursory, of its salient features. The result is utterly unsympathetic caricature at the very point where the narrative most urgently requires detailed and fair-minded exposition if it means to test its author's preconceptions with any rigor at all.

MacIntyre once criticized Marcuse for "his way of lumping together very different thinkers under a common label for purposes of either castigation or commendation" (HM, 84). Yet castigation-by-lumping is the main function performed by the label "liberalism" in both *After Virtue* and *Whose Justice?* So the plentiful proper names that filled out the chapters on Greece or Scotland give way here to such oversimplifying abstractions as "the liberal system of evaluation" and "the liberal self," as well as heavy reliance on the passive voice. Readers will be hard-pressed to discover just who is being discussed. After asking why it matters that Marcuse's version of the history of philosophy is highly selective, MacIntyre said this in 1970: "The answer is that by omitting so much and by giving a one-sided interpretation of those authors whom he does invoke, Marcuse is enabled to exaggerate, and in some instances to exaggerate grossly, the homogeneity of the philosophical thought of a given age" (HM, 15). Similarly, MacIntyre complained about Marcuse's "willingness to rely upon abstractions" instead of talking about particular people (HM, 18), of his tendency "too much to read the history of culture through the lenses provided by his own version of the history of philosophy" (HM, 15–16), and of his contentment with "incidental illustrations of his theses" where he should have offered "evidence in a systematic way" (HM, 14). All these criticisms apply to MacIntyre's chapter on liberalism in *Whose Justice?*

My point is not that MacIntyre had higher and better standards back when he had not yet gone traditionalist. The standards he applied to Marcuse are built into his current theory of rationality, which requires members of traditions in crisis to meet challenges from their opponents by learning alien languages and engaging in reasoned debate with competing traditions, while leaving open the possibility of refutation. The same standards are reflected in his praise of Aquinas's attempt to overcome the conflict between Augustinian and Aristotelian traditions. Such conflicts, MacIntyre says, achieve resolution only when they move through at least two stages: one in which each tradition describes and judges its rivals only in its own terms, and a second in which it becomes possible to understand one's rivals in their own terms and thus to find new reasons for changing one's mind. Moving from the first stage to the second "requires a rare gift of empathy as well as of intellectual insight" (WJ, 167), a gift Aquinas's writings exemplify. MacIntyre shows great empathy for ancient Greeks and for the religious tradition from which he was once alienated but none whatsoever for liberal modernity. After three major books and half a dozen minor ones, his dialogue with liberalism has yet to reach the second stage.[14]

The chapter on liberalism does include a promising, if grudging, concession. The section in which the concession is made begins with a familiar and unpromising claim "that the project of founding a form of social order in which individuals could emancipate themselves from the contingency

and particularity of tradition by appealing to genuinely universal, tradition-independent norms was and is not only, and not principally a project of philosophers. It was and is the project of modern liberal, individualist society" (WJ, 335). Here MacIntyre identifies liberalism with an antitraditionalist quest, one that seeks to rise above all tradition to the vantage point of universal reason and that is expressed in both liberal thought and liberal practice. It is *the* project of liberal society as such. But MacIntyre immediately goes on to say that the history of this project, and in particular the interminability of its debates over supposedly universal principles, demonstrates that liberalism is in fact one tradition among others. Liberalism, then, is a tradition, but one whose necessarily frustrated project is to cease being what it is.

This line of reasoning has often been used, by Hauerwas as well as MacIntyre, to dispense with liberal society as the embodiment of an obviously incoherent project. In *Whose Justice?*, MacIntyre stops just short of that conclusion. He clearly intends to make the idea of "liberalism transformed into a tradition" strike the reader as paradoxical, and he thinks liberals have reason to feel embarrassed by this transformation, but he also makes a concession when he adds that:

> increasingly there have been liberal thinkers who, for one reason or another, have acknowledged that their theory and practice are after all that of one more contingently grounded and founded tradition . . . unable to escape from the condition of a tradition. *Even this, however, can be recognized without any inconsistency* and has gradually been recognized by liberal writers such as Rawls, Rorty, and Stout. (WJ, 346; emphasis added)

It can indeed be recognized without any inconsistency, and even without a slight air of paradox or embarrassment, but only if we reject MacIntyre's definition of the liberal project. The idea of "liberalism transformed into a tradition" remains a paradox or an oxymoron only if liberalism is initially defined as MacIntyre has defined it. What should we do if we reject MacIntyre's definition? Let me consider two options.

The first is to replace his definition of the liberal project by another one. MacIntyre's new account of the rejection of Aristotle in early-modern Europe suggests a candidate at once. We can say that the liberal project was simply to tailor the political institutions and moral discourse of modern societies to the facts of pluralism. Saying this would supply an answer to the question MacIntyre poses in *Whose Justice?*: "What kind of principles can require and secure allegiance in and to a form of social order in which individuals who are pursuing diverse and often incompatible conceptions of the good can live together without the disruptions of rebellion and internal war?" (210). Speaking in this way allows us to view the quest for a standpoint above all tradition and the attempt to abstract entirely from

consideration of the common good as two, but only two, possible expressions of the liberal project. We are free to declare them completely discredited without abandoning that project in the least. Notice that one can, on this view, remain a liberal while abhoring virtually everything MacIntyre identifies with liberalism in *Whose Justice?*, including not least of all "the liberal self" and "the liberal system of evaluation."

The second option is to drop the notion that there is something worth calling *the* liberal project. We might then use the phrase "liberal society," if at all, simply as a name for the configuration of social practices and institutions we in the United States and certain other countries happen to be living with right now. We might add that any such configuration is too complicated to be explained as the expression of a single project. We might insist, with this in mind, that social criticism is not well served by sweeping pronouncements either for or against liberal society, but rather by balanced and detailed commentary on its various features and prudent counsel on how one or another of them should be changed. We might even come to think of "liberalism" as the name for a particular kind of obsolete ideology whose critics and defenders thought there was something worth calling *the* liberal project and who therefore engaged in fruitless debates over whether it was a good or a bad thing.

Both options have advantages. I advocate the second, and in this book have steered clear of the term "liberalism" whenever possible. (That is why I feel slightly uncomfortable when MacIntyre refers to me as a liberal writer.) Reading his chapter on "liberalism" reconfirms my suspicion that the very term may at this point be blocking the path of inquiry. He may respond, however, by charging that my use of the phrase "liberal society" implicitly concedes the central contention of *After Virtue*, that our society is too fragmented and incoherent to sustain rational moral discourse. *Whose Justice?* defends this contention by describing the metaphysically austere "internationalized languages of modernity" as the result of attempts to abstract discourse from "all substantive criteria and standards of truth and rationality" (WJ, 384). The intended implication seems to be that the languages in fact being used in liberal society make rational moral discourse impossible. Users of such languages, like the social solipsist mentioned at the end of *A Short History of Ethics*, can make choices but not rational ones, for they lack any framework of criteria and standards within which reasons for action might be found.

I say that this *seems* to be the implication MacIntyre intends, but at the end of the chapter in which he gives his account of the "internationalized languages of modernity," he adds a qualification:

the condition which I have described as that characteristic of the late twenti eth century language of internationalized modernity is perhaps best under

stood as an ideal type, a condition to which the actual languages of the metropolitan centers of modernity approximate in varying and increasing degrees, especially among the more affluent. And the social and cultural condition of those who speak that kind of language, a certain type of rootless cosmopolitanism, . . . is also ideal-typical. (WJ, 388)

MacIntyre's ideal-types are caricatures by another name. Caricatures have legitimate uses. They can draw attention, by means of exaggeration and abstraction of actual traits, to significant truths. They do not take the place of realistic portraiture. What we need to know if we are to judge the rationality of our moral discourse by MacIntyre's theory, and what he has not yet shown, is the precise degree to which the "languages-in-use" in our society approximate the extreme that his dystopian ideal describes.

In the final chapter of *Whose Justice?*, MacIntyre grants that few of us are social solipsists, "alien to every tradition of enquiry" we encounter and utterly deprived of the resources of rational traditions (WJ, 395–96).

Most of our contemporaries do not live at or even near that point of extremity. . . . Instead they tend to live betwixt and between, accepting usually unquestioningly the assumptions of the dominant liberal individualist forms of public life, but drawing in different areas of their lives upon a variety of tradition-generated resources of thought and action, transmitted from a variety of familial, religious, educational, and other social and cultural sources. (WJ, 397)

Here the term "liberal" is applied only to those features of our society that MacIntyre finds contemptible. The "tradition-generated resources of thought and action" are admitted to be present in our society, but they are made out to be residues of something nonliberal or preliberal.

This way of speaking, like his use of ideal-types, allows MacIntyre to depict anything he approves of in our society as inessential to it. He is then free to discount apparent counterevidence to his claims about "liberal society" as beside the point. The counterevidence merely shows that there are forces and tendencies not yet crushed under the foot of the liberal project. We are not meant to be thankful to liberal democracy for allowing "tradition-generated resources" of *various* kinds to survive the early-modern war of all against all. I refer once more to MacIntyre's critique of Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man*:

He holds that there are forces and tendencies in society which run counter to the tendency that his book describes. He asserts that *One-Dimensional Man* is concerned with these counterforces and tendencies also; but they do not, except for one or two paragraphs, appear in his book until the penultimate page, and then no great hope is attached to their prospects. Marcuse's pessimism . . . is only very loosely supported by an appeal to evidence. (HM, 70)

MacIntyre's pessimism about "liberal society" analogously depends upon rhetorical devices in which, first, that society is identified with an essentially antitraditionalist project and, second, any counterforces within it are dissociated from the vacuous and rootless condition toward which it aspires.

It therefore comes as no surprise when MacIntyre condemns not only the few social solipsists in his midst, but also the majority of his contemporaries, who live "betwixt and between": "This type of self which has too many half-convictions and too few settled coherent convictions . . . brings to its encounters with the claims of rival traditions a fundamental incoherence which is too disturbing to be admitted to self-conscious awareness except on the rarest of occasions" (WJ, 397). But this harsh judgment against both his contemporaries and the somewhat younger man who wrote *A Short History of Ethics, Marxism and Christianity*, and *Herbert Marcuse: An Exposition and a Polemic* has not been established. To establish it MacIntyre would have to do two things he has not yet done. He would have to show, first of all, the precise point at which eclectic diversity of "tradition-generated resources of thought and action" becomes mere fragmentation, thereby condemning most members of a society to "fundamental incoherence." And he would also have to show that our society has already passed that point. The theory of rationality defended in *Whose Justice?* fails to perform the first task. His caricature of liberal society could hardly perform the second.

MacIntyre deploys these same devices in a slightly different way in his 1990 book, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*.[15] Here he sets out to debunk two major modern alternatives to his own Thomism. One position, which he labels "genealogy," is exemplified in the writings of Friedrich Nietzsche, Paul de Man, Gilles Deleuze, and Michel Foucault. The other, which is meant to suggest what became of Enlightenment liberalism in the course of its nineteenth-century decline, is exemplified in the Ninth Edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. *Three Rival Versions* does have the virtue of associating liberalism with the writings of particular people. MacIntyre mentions a number of proper names: J. G. Frazer, Henry Sidgwick, and Edward Burnett Tylor, among others. He offers an analysis of the ethos that the contributors to the Ninth Edition shared. The analysis is much more detailed and substantive than anything in the corresponding chapter of *Whose Justice?* But suppose we grant that MacIntyre has adequately characterized the men who put together the Ninth Edition. Grant, further, that MacIntyre is right to declare the encyclopedists the losers in the debate he has arranged for them with the representatives of genealogy and tradition. Assume, in other words, that the form of liberalism they represent really does lie in shambles by book's end. What does this dialectical exercise teach us about modern people who neither collaborated on the Ninth Edition, nor subscribed to the ethical and philosophical premises of those who did?

MacIntyre clearly intends the encyclopedists to represent something larger than themselves. But why let Sidgwick and his fellow encyclopedists stand for Whitman or Dewey or, for that matter, T. H. Green? There is an undefended principle of selection at work here—one that serves only to reinforce the sharp dichotomy between tradition and modernity. MacIntyre has interesting and effective criticism to offer of the works he discusses, but he does nothing to vindicate his selection of opponents. Why suppose that Sidgwick, Nietzsche, and Pope Leo XIII represent an adequate sampling of late nineteenth-century ethical inquiry? In *After Virtue*, the choice presented to the reader was given in the title of chapter 9, "Nietzsche or Aristotle?" This assumed, of course, that the "Enlightenment project" had already been dismantled in earlier chapters, after having been exposed to Nietzsche's relentless criticism. In *Three Rival Versions*, the encyclopedists stand in for the likes of Hume and Kant. Nietzsche retains his previous role. And the Thomism of Pope Leo XIII represents Aristotelian ethics in its latter-day, Augustinian form. So the choice we are being offered remains essentially the same.[16] But, as before, MacIntyre has given us no reason to suppose that modern ethical discourse can be reduced so easily to a small handful of theoretical options.

At one point in *After Virtue* (243), MacIntyre describes William Cobbett, along with Jane Austen and the Jacobins, as one of the last great representatives of the tradition of virtue ethics. This is a bold and provocative claim, for which MacIntyre gives no support. Is it true? Only, I think, if we define "virtue ethics" very narrowly, so that only a form of ethical discourse conforming closely to an Aristotelian or Thomistic framework qualifies. Loosen up the definition a bit and look in the right places, and you will find discourse on the virtues permeating the ethos of modern democratic culture. Cobbett himself was a towering, ethically ambiguous, transitional figure, with one foot in medievalist nostalgia and the other in modern democracy. His writings are almost as important as Thomas Paine's and Mary Wollstonecraft's for anyone who wants to understand the relations among religion, critical thought, and the emergence of democratic culture in Britain and America. As E. P. Thompson has shown, Cobbett's journalism played a major role in creating a mass audience for social criticism in Britain in the decades after the French Revolution.[17] Another historian, Christopher Lasch, assigned him an equally important role in the development of modern populist thought.[18] Cobbett's debunking *History of the Protestant Reformation* is a major modern source of antiprogressivist nostalgia for medieval times.[19] He also set in motion those forms of modern radicalism that take their inspiration from an image of premodern communities and virtues. *Rural Rides* inaugurates the kind of observational (eye-witness) social criticism that twentieth-century readers might associate with works like Orwell's *Road to Wigan Pier* or Agee's *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*.[20]

Cobbett's *Thirteen Sermons* and the countless issues of the weekly magazine, the *Political Register*, which he not only edited but wrote almost single-handedly for years, were among the most widely read texts of the period.[21] In short, Cobbett is far more important than MacIntyre implies, and mainly for a reason that MacIntyre's history cannot easily make room for, which is that so many strands of modern ethical discourse can be traced directly to his influence. Once it dawns on us that the heirs of Cobbett's observational social criticism include Orwell and Agee, among many others, we ought also to begin suspecting that MacIntyre's examples of ethical discourse after Cobbett are either arbitrarily or self-servingly chosen. If Cobbett is, as MacIntyre suggests, an exemplary social critic, and if other exemplary social critics were in fact inspired by his example, then modern ethical discourse begins to seem somewhat less bankrupt, even by MacIntyre's own standards.

Wendell Berry may be the best contemporary example to use in making this point. Berry, who works by day as a farmer in Kentucky, is a gifted practioner of observational social criticism. Much of his work has the rural flavor and antimetropolitan animus of *Rural Rides*. The themes of tradition, community, and the virtues (in the plural) are also much in evidence in his writing. His work is not properly described, then, as antitraditional or "after virtue." It is, however, very much a product of democratic culture. Hazlitt, Thoreau, Emerson, and Whitman all appear in his quotations, and one can sense their influence on his prose style as well as his normative commitments. Berry's work, not MacIntyre's, is the closest thing to Cobbett's that we have from a living writer. It is, by my lights, a more honest and rigorously conceived body of work than MacIntyre's. And it has three sizeable advantages over MacIntyre's: first, by virtue of expressing in a quite beautiful style a profoundly spiritual sensibility; second, by doing so, for the most part, without resorting to cant or posturing; third, because it includes both *The Unsettling of America* and *The Hidden Wound*, respectively the most important book on environmental ethics ever written and the best book on race that I know of by a white writer.[22] The point to draw attention to here, however, is that Berry's work, with its open embrace of both traditionalist and democratic elements, exists at all, or rather that it exists *in democratic modernity.*

But then so does MacIntyre's. Because MacIntyre's traditionalism itself belongs to modern ethical discourse, and could not have sprung out of nowhere, it is bound to have trouble accounting for itself without abandoning its contention that Cobbett and Austen were without modern heirs. In *Three Rival Versions*, MacIntyre does acknowledge indebtedness to the Thomists among his modern predecessors, but the rhetorical patterns we have already identified in *After Virtue* cannot be accounted for by this acknowledgement alone. For one thing, writing *After Virtue* was part of the

path that led MacIntyre to rediscover his Thomist forebears. The Thomistic destination, which appears not to have been foreseen in advance, cannot be used to explain his movement down the path. For another thing, the connection to Thomism would not fully explain the rhetorical use of the sublime to which I have already drawn attention. In point of fact, the book belongs to a prominent strand of Romantic ethical discourse that has never been far to find in the modern period and has always relied, in just the way MacIntyre does, on the rhetoric of ruin and fragmentation. It is a very modern form of ethical discourse, but also a form that has a stake in not being able to recognize itself as belonging to the setting against which its criticism is directed.

Tradition and Rationality

I will take the liberty of referring to both traditionalism, from Burke and Coleridge to MacIntyre and Hauerwas, and modern democratic thinking, from Emerson and Whitman to Nancy Fraser and Cornel West, as traditions. By speaking in this way, I am able to locate Berry in an area where two traditions interact. All I mean by the term "tradition" in this context is a discursive practice considered in the dimension of history. No general criterion for individuating traditions is assumed in this way of speaking, and so I shall offer none. I am content to let pragmatic considerations settle the question of individuation on a case-by-case basis. On another day, with a different purpose in view, one might have reason to refer to the likes of Coleridge and the likes of Emerson as embraced by a single, larger, looser tradition. MacIntyre sometimes uses the term in roughly the way I use it, but he also uses it in a narrower, normatively charged way. Susan Moller Okin, in her incisive feminist critique of MacIntyre, rightly observes that he equivocates between two senses:

> In spite of MacIntyre's persistent use of gender-neutral language, it is clear that most women, as well as men who have any kind of feminist consciousness, will not find in any of his traditions a rational basis for moral and political action. Where, then, do we stand? Are we outside all traditions and therefore, in MacIntyre's view at least, "in a state of moral and intellectual destitution"? Can one be anything *but* an outsider to a tradition that excludes one, and some of the things one values most, from what it regards as the best human life? . . . [H]e gives conflicting accounts of what a tradition *is*. At times he describes it as a defining context, stressing the authoritative nature of its "texts"; at times he talks of a tradition as "living," as a "not-yet-completed narrative," as an argument about the goods that constitute the tradition.[23]

Okin goes on to point out that feminism, though not a tradition in the sense of being defined by deference toward authoritative texts, is a tradition

in the second sense. I am proposing that the second sense be explicated in terms of the concept of a discursive social practice viewed diachronically.

MacIntyre uses the second of Okin's two senses of tradition to gain credibility for the notion that rationality as such depends on tradition, which it surely does, if all we mean by a "tradition" is an enduring discursive practice. He uses the first, narrower sense to create the impression that unless we identify with a discursive practice of a very particular kind, we necessarily place ourselves outside the bounds of rational discourse itself. The kind of discursive practice he takes to be essential to the exercise of rationality involves deferential submission to authoritative texts and authoritative interpreters of texts, though this requirement does not, he assures us, preclude the ability to make large-scale revisions of inherited commitments when faced with epistemological crises. Equally essential to the rationality of a practice, according to MacIntyre's account, is its embodiment in institutions that are capable of securing agreement on a doctrine of the human good (presumably, by means of catechism directed at newcomers and a combination of magisterial suasion, discipline, and excommunication directed at dissenters).[24] Once tradition is identified with *traditionalist* practice (and the hierarchical institutional structure that goes along with it), it becomes possible to argue that modern democracy, because its ethical discourse is obviously not governed by a tradition *in this sense*, is nothing more than a scene of conceptual fragmentation. Yet once the ambiguity of the term "tradition" is made plain, it becomes obvious that the debate over the new traditionalism is best construed not as a debate between traditional and modern varieties of ethical discourse, but rather as a debate involving at least two traditions or strands of modern ethical discourse: a tradition dedicated to a very narrow conception of how traditions ought ideally to operate and a tradition dedicated to the project of loosening up that conception democratically and dialogically. It is also possible, of course, to identify a third tradition involved in this debate— namely, the Cartesian one I once described as the tradition that would rather not be a tradition at all.

Earlier in this chapter, I tried to show what mischief MacIntyre causes by defining liberal modernity reductively as the social expression of the Enlightenment project's antitraditionalism. Here I simply want to call attention to the existence of multiple strands of ethical discourse in modern societies and to point out the dangers of confining our attention to ethical traditions in the narrow sense. MacIntyre has not demonstrated that traditions of the kind he favors are uniquely capable of fostering rational discourse, so he has not shown that such traditions are the only ones *worthy* of study or allegiance. Furthermore, if we study only the rigid kind of tradition that Coleridge stood for when he called for the creation of a virtuous clerisy as an antidote to modern fragmentation, we will not be able to hear

both sides of the debate in which Coleridge was himself participating. Indeed, we will not be able to do justice to the complexities of the modern debate over traditionalism at all. This debate has been going on now for two centuries. The relatively loose kind of tradition represented by the patterns of influence that lead from Wollstonecraft, Hazlitt, and Emerson to their contemporary heirs is essential to understanding what modern ethical discourse has been like outside of the institutional settings in which clerisies exercise power. It should not be surprising to find that some writers, anxious to avoid being dominated by such a clerisy, have sought to distance themselves from it by denouncing "tradition" itself. What such rhetorical moves imply, in context, is often hard to make out, but the same writers have often had the agility to elude hyperbole on other occasions and acknowledge indebtedness to a discursive practice that evolves from one generation of discoursers to the next. Emerson and Whitman are perhaps the best examples of this. MacIntyre's prose is not the only place where the term "tradition" slips back and forth between two senses.

Of the thinkers who first reflected on the opposition between the Enlightenment and traditionalism, it was Hegel who understood most fully the importance of overcoming the assumption that moderns must choose between reason and tradition if they wish to escape the rule of arbitrary will. MacIntyre flatly rejects the likes of Thomas Paine under the heading of the "Enlightenment project." He denounces the traditionalist Edmund Burke as a shoddy theorist, a turncoat, and an "agent of positive harm."[25] Burke's most important theoretical error, according to MacIntyre, was his failure to overcome the Enlightenment opposition between reason and tradition, a failure that required him to embrace an irrationalist type of traditionalism if he wanted to resist the intellectual and political consequences of antitraditional reason. This is a sound criticism. It was, however, not only fully appreciated by both Wollstonecraft and Hazlitt, but articulated at the highest level of philosophical theory by Hegel. In books like *Marxism and Christianity* and *Against the Self-Images of the Age*, one can sense MacIntyre's continuity with, and dependence on, Hegel's overcoming of this dualism. Consciousness of this continuity may be part of what kept him on course, in those days, as a radical social critic sensitive to the sources of his own thinking. His writings of the 1960s already embodied an exercise of critical reasoning that was conscious of its own dependence on an unfolding dialectic.

In one of the best critical discussions of *After Virtue*, Richard Bernstein concludes that "there is very little in MacIntyre's critique of the Enlightenment project that was not stated or anticipated in Hegel." Bernstein laments, however, that after a brief reference to what "Hegel called philosophical history" (AV, 3), MacIntyre proceeds to discuss modern society and ethical theory as if Hegel never existed. "This is a curious omission considering the array of thinkers MacIntyre does discuss, the sensitive un-

derstanding of Hegel exhibited in MacIntyre's earlier writings, and espe-cially because of the relevance of Hegel to MacIntyre's central concerns." MacIntyre seems to have lost all awareness of how much he "himself appro-priates from this tradition in his critical reconstruction of the virtues."[26] It would not take much to bring MacIntyre's theoretical reflections on tradi-tion and rationality into line with the commitments of a Hegelian pragma-tist like Bernstein or me. One need only eliminate the arguments that de-pend on equivocating between Okin's two senses of "tradition" and then eliminate all traces of the unwittingly Burkean assumption that all tradi-tions worthy of the name are traditionalist. But larger corrective measures are required to set straight his history of modern thought and society. For at the time he wrote *After Virtue*, his long-standing hatred for all things liberal combined with his loss of faith in Marxism in a way that seems to have occluded his historical memory. The *modern* intellectual traditions to which he owes the most receive no acknowledgment whatsoever. This peculiar form of amnesia has everything to do with his grim conclusion that the exhaustion of Marxism "is shared by every other political tradition within our culture" (AV, 262).

MacIntyre was not a less rational man at mid-career than he is today. He could by now write the modern analogue of Augustine's *Confessions*. The story of his reasoned movement betwixt and between the various traditions with which he has affiliated himself is itself strong evidence against a theory according to which rationality can be exercised at its best only within highly coherent and "well-integrated" traditions. MacIntyre has for many years been one of our most interesting and thought-provoking social critics. Even his mistaken arguments often instruct; even his caricatures often advance the debate. But he has performed a valuable service to his culture precisely by being the sort of person his current theory of rationality frowns upon.

What kind is that? It is the kind who, from time to time, finds it necessary to abandon a morality so well integrated that it suffocates thought, who has the courage to take a stand for which there is not yet a convenient label or easily defined lineage, and who has the practical wisdom to fashion a critical language for himself out of materials borrowed from many sources. All of this can be done without engaging in *the* liberal project, aspiring to be a citizen of nowhere, or ceasing to be one of us. One of the things I most like about our society, despite its many horrors and injustices, is that it breeds such people and occasionally rewards them, justly, by buying their books, debating their ideas, and sometimes even offering them distin-guished professorships. When MacIntyre complains that one of the "most striking facts" about our society is its lack of "institutionalized forums within which ... fundamental disagreements can be systematically ex-

plored and charted" (WJ, 2), I have trouble squaring his complaint with the facts of his career or the existence of the various journals and presses he and I have used to express our disagreements with each other. By the same token, when I consider his traditionalist theory of rationality and the story he wants to tell about modernity, I cannot help suspecting that he may himself be the best case against his own central claims.

Democracy and Tradition

Jeffrey Stout

CONCLUSION

In you whoe'er you are my book perusing,
In I myself, in all the world, these currents flowing . . .²¹

e import of this answer is that we should not imagine the life-giving
urces on which we depend as something essentially alien to American
nocratic modernity. That stream is in us and of us when we engage in
r democratic practices. Democracy, then, is misconceived when taken to
a desert landscape hostile to whatever life-giving waters of culture and
dition might still flow through it. Democracy is better construed as the
dition might still flow through it. Democracy is better construed as the
me appropriate to the currents themselves in this particular time and
ice. In *North Star Country*—a "history of the people of the Midwest, told
m their dimension in their language"—Meridel Le Sueur imagines the
ople as

a river that winds and falls and gleams erect in many dawns; lost in deep gul-
leys, it turns to dust, rushes in the spring freshet, emerges to the sea. The
people are a story that is long incessant coming alive from the earth in better
wheat, Percherons, babies, and engines, persistent and inevitable. The people
always know that some of the grain will be good, some of the crop will be
saved, some will return and bear the strength of the kernel, that from the
bloodiest year some survive to outlive the frost.²²

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. For defenses of the doctrine of neutrality, see John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971) and Ronald Dworkin, *A Matter of Principle* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985). It is interesting that many of the critics of this doctrine describe themselves as liberals. See Amy Gutmann, *Democratic Education* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987); Stephen Macedo, *Liberal Virtues* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990); Joseph Raz, *The Morality of Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968); and George Sher, *Beyond Neutrality: Perfectionism and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) . I discuss the reason-tradition dichotomy in *Ethics after Babel*, expanded ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), pt. 2.

2. I explain all of this Rawlsian terminology and give the relevant references to Rawls's works in chapter 3 (page 65 and following).

3. Notice that I do not define modern democracy simply as rule by the people. Nor do I place emphasis primarily on the electoral process. "The heart of the matter is a principle about access to public deliberation" (Oliver O'Donovan, *The Desire of the Nations: Rediscovering the Roots of Political Theology* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996], 269–70).

4. O'Donovan, *Desire of the Nations*, 270.

5. John Dewey, *The Public and Its Problems* (Athens, Ohio: Swallow Press, 1927), 144, 146.

6. Dewey, *The Public*, 143.

7. Rebecca S. Chopp, "From Patriarchy into Freedom: A Conversation between American Feminist Theology and French Feminism," in *The Postmodern God: A Theological Reader*, ed. Graham Ward (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), 237.

8. Dewey, *The Public*, 149.

9. On Emerson's deliberate use of this tactic in *Representative Men*, see Robert D. Richardson, Jr., *Emerson: The Mind on Fire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 415.

10. The conception of religion I am taking for granted here and throughout part 1 is indebted to George Santayana, *The Life of Reason* (Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 1998), and to the excellent exposition of Santayana in Henry Samuel Levinson, *Santayana, Pragmatism, and the Spiritual Life* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992).

11. For an explanation of what I mean by "expressive rationality," see Robert B. Brandom, *Making It Explicit: Reasoning, Representing, and Discursive Commitment* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 105–11, 130. This usage differs from George Lindbeck's use of the term "expressivism" in *The Nature of Doctrine: Theology and Religion in a Postliberal Age* (Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox Press, 1984). Lindbeck distinguishes "propositional," "experiential expressivist," and "cultural linguistic" theories of religion. The last of these types approximates the form

of expressivism one finds in Wilfrid Sellars and Brandom, neither of whom is an expressivist in Lindbeck's sense. The form of expressivism Lindbeck has in mind is the essentially subjectivist form associated with the Romantics; it views religious language as the expression of a prelinguistic dimension of human experience. The Sellars-Brandom form of expressivism began to take shape in Hegel's reaction against precisely this aspect of Romantic antirationalism, which he diagnosed as "*Begeisterung und Trübheit*" (ardor and muddiness) early in the preface to *The Phenomenology of Spirit*.

12. Whitman was also influenced to some extent by Hegel, as Richard Rorty points out in *Achieving Our Country: Leftist Thought in Twentieth-Century America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 20–21.

CHAPTER 1
CHARACTER AND PIETY FROM EMERSON TO DEWEY

1. Walt Whitman, *Democratic Vistas*, in *Whitman: Complete Poetry and Collected Prose*, ed. Justin Kaplan (New York: Library of America, 1982), pars. 15, 14. Hereafter cited as "DV," with paragraph number.

2. Harold Bloom, *The American Religion: The Emergence of the Post-Christian Nation* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), 22–25.

3. Montanus, who lived in the second century, claimed that the Holy Spirit spoke through him during his trances. His followers advocated more spontaneous liturgical celebration and emphasized that the Spirit might speak through anyone. The Montanist heresy was their claim that speech directly inspired by the Holy Spirit possessed more authority than the official pronouncements of any church official or even the scriptural record of Christ's teachings. Pelagius was a British monk who argued that if God holds human beings responsible for their sins, they must be free to behave responsibly. Augustine argued against the Pelagians that we are always already in a state of sinfulness, a condition for which we are nonetheless accountable as the result of our choices and from which only God's grace can save us. See William Placher, *A History of Christian Theology: An Introduction* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983), 50–51, 115–20.

4. Michael Lind, *The Next American Nation* (New York: Free Press, 1995), chaps. 4 and 5.

5. Of course, Robert Bellah and many others pose it in terms borrowed from Tocqueville. For an extended treatment of Bellah and his associates, see *Ethics after Babel*, expanded ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), pt. 3.

6. Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, ed. J.G.A. Pocock (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987), 79.

7. Augustine of Hippo, *City of God*, trans. Henry Bettenson (London: Penguin Books, 1984), bk. 19, chap. 4.

8. Stanley Cavell, *Conditions Handsome and Unhandsome: The Constitution of Emersonian Perfectionism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

9. Cavell borrows the term "perfectionism" from John Rawls, who uses it to name a position rejected in *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971). But Cavell appears not to mean by it what Rawls does. For Rawls, perfectionism is committed to arranging political institutions so as "to maximize

the achievement of human excellence in art, science, and culture" (325). Cavell sees the achievement, enjoyment, and respect of excellence as values that matter deeply to a democratic sensibility, but he does not set out to maximize them in a consequentialist spirit. In this respect, his position is closer to the one Robert Merrihew Adams defends in *Finite and Infinite Goods: A Framework for Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), chap. 14, than to what Rawls calls perfectionism. Adams adopts Rawls's usage, and so rejects perfectionism in this restricted sense. I will employ the term in Cavell's looser sense—according to which perfectionism need involve neither the consequentialist aim of maximizing excellence nor the notion that there is a fixed goal of perfection that all human beings should aspire to attain.

10. Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Emerson: Essays and Lectures*, ed. Joel Porte (New York: Library of America, 1983), 458; emphasis in original.

11. Emerson, "The Divinity School Address," in *Emerson: Essays and Lectures*, 83. By "the gift of tongues," he meant the inspiration to stand up and speak eloquently for oneself, not "as the fashion guides."

12. Consider this sentence from Whitman's "Letter to Ralph Waldo Emerson": "To me, henceforth, that theory of any thing, no matter what, stagnates in its vitals, cowardly and rotten, while it cannot publicly accept, and publicly name, with specific words, the things on which all existence, all souls, all realization, all decency, all health, all that is worth being here for, all of woman and all of man, all beauty, all purity, all sweetness, all friendship, all strength, all life, all immortality depend" (*Whitman: Poetry and Prose*, 1335). This is the language of pious acknowledgment of dependence, but the topic he is discussing is sex.

13. Preface to the 1855 edition of *Leaves of Grass*, in *Whitman: Poetry and Prose*, 24.

14. Ibid., 233.

15. Ibid.

16. John Dewey, *A Common Faith* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1934), 53. Hereafter cited as "CF."

17. Emerson, *Emerson: Essays and Lectures*, 88, 302, 268. These words come from "The Divinity School Address," "Compensation," and "Self-Reliance," respectively.

18. A more plausible story is the one Robert McKim tells at the beginning of *Religious Ambiguity and Religious Diversity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001): "Once upon a time the religious traditions were distanced from each other, both geographically and mentally. The typical member of the typical tradition would learn about other traditions from travelers' tales, for example. There was us and there was them. Now they are our neighbors, and we are no longer at a distance. If they are our neighbors, and we are no longer distanced from them, then what can we do but try to find out what they think? What can we do but ask what is the appeal of their point of view?" But this, as McKim says, is the rub: "Taking other traditions as seriously as they ought to be taken may shake one's tradition to the core: in particular, it may require a different attitude toward one's own beliefs" (vii). McKim hopes for the emergence of "some awareness that the traditions represent a number of honest attempts to grapple with something obscure" (viii), but he wisely makes no predictions.

19. "Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents" (1770), in *The Works of the Honourable Edmund Burke*, vol. 1 (Boston: John West and O. C. Greenleaf, 1806), 388.

23. See especially his contribution to Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and Cornel West, *The Future of the Race* (New York: Knopf, 1996), which is entitled, "Black Strivings in a Twilight Civilization." For a much more hopeful book and one more in keeping with my democratic instincts, see Roberto Mangabeira Unger and Cornel West, *The Future of American Progressivism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1999), where the authors invoke what they call "the American religion of possibility," and leave out the extreme highs and lows of West's prophetic Christian rhetoric. I believe this is easily West's best book so far, but given that the book is coauthored, it is hard to tell how fully it expresses his own perspective on the grounds for democratic hope. The book is also commendable for its elegant style, the specificity and imaginativeness of its practical proposals, and for allowing the rhetoric of reform and democracy to displace West's early rhetoric of revolution and socialism.

24. I started thinking seriously about Ellison while reading West's first book, *Prophesy Deliverance!* (Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox Press, 1982), where Ellison functions as a moral hero.

25. Emerson, "Man the Reformer," in *Emerson: Essays and Lectures*, 145. He adds: "But I think we must clear ourselves each one by the interrogation, whether we have earned our bread to-day by the hearty contribution of our energies to the common benefit? and we must not cease to *tend* to the correction of these flagrant wrongs, by laying one stone aright every day" (emphasis in original).

CHAPTER 3
RELIGIOUS REASONS IN POLITICAL ARGUMENT

1. John Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993; paperback ed., 1996). Hereafter cited as "PL." For a detailed account of the social contract as a set of principles "that could not reasonably be rejected, by people who were moved to find principles for the general regulation of behavior that others, similarly motivated, could not reasonably reject," see Thomas M. Scanlon, *What We Owe To Each Other* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 4 and passim.

2. Nicholas Wolterstorff, "The Role of Religion in Decision and Discussion of Political Issues," in *Religion in the Public Square: The Place of Religious Convictions in Political Debate* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 1997), 94; emphasis in original.

3. John Rawls, *Collected Papers*, ed. Samuel Freeman (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 573–615. Hereafter cited as "CP."

4. For useful criticism, see Kent Greenawalt, *Religious Convictions and Political Choice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988) and *Private Consciences and Public Reasons* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); and Wolterstorff, "The Role of Religion," 67–120. The most thorough and powerfully argued treatment of the general topic is now Christopher J. Eberle, *Religious Conviction in Liberal Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). See also Ronald F. Thiemann, *Religion in Public Life: A Dilemma for Democracy* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1996).

5. Wolterstorff briefly discusses the relationship between entitlement and the Rawlsian sense of "reasonableness" in "The Role of Religion," 91.

6. Wolterstorff, "The Role of Religion," 105; emphasis in original.

7. Wolterstorff makes a related point about respect and particularity in "The Role of Religion," 110f.

8. Notice that even on the amended version of Rawls's position, this would not be enough.

9. For illuminating remarks on the importance of attending to the "concrete" other, see Seyla Benhabib, *Situating the Self: Gender, Community, and Postmodernism in Contemporary Ethics* (New York: Routledge, 1992), esp. chap. 5. In chapter 7, I will discuss this theme in Benhabib's work. In chapter 12, I will clarify what a dialogical model involves by discussing Brandom's distinction between "I-we" and "I-thou" conceptions of sociality.

10. Wolterstorff, "The Role of Religion," 109.

11. I am not addressing the distinctive issues surrounding the roles of judge, juror, attorney, or public official.

12. I will consider Hauerwas's arguments and give relevant references to his works in chapters 6 and 7.

13. One could also reasonably complain that the now rather baroque theory is simply too complicated to serve its intended public purpose as an action guide. If these scruples were to be followed by the masses, we would all need catechetical instruction from the Rawlsians.

14. The term "public" is to be understood here in its ordinary sense. Hauerwas was not speaking at a campaign rally or before a congressional committee. So Rawls might say that this case does not involve the "public forum," and that his scruples would therefore not apply. But why should this matter? Suppose another Christian pacifist did speak at a campaign rally for a political candidate representing the Green Party. Wouldn't it be good, all things considered, for her arguments to circulate publicly? How can we know in advance that they won't be persuasive? Suppose the speaker resists translating her arguments about the sanctity of human life into a Rawlsian vocabulary. Must we then condemn her for failing to satisfy the proviso?

15. The phrase appears as the title of chapter 4 in Stanley Hauerwas, *Dispatches from the Front: Theological Engagements with the Secular* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), where Hauerwas portrays Walter Rauschenbusch and Reinhold Niebuhr as complicit in "the exclusion from the politics of democracy of any religious convictions that are not 'humble' " (104). Hauerwas asks: "Does that mean I do not support 'democracy'? I have to confess I have not got the slightest idea, since I do not know what it means to call this society 'democratic'. Indeed, one of the troubling aspects about such a question is the assumption that how Christians answer it might matter" (105). In this book, I am trying to say what it might mean to call this society "democratic" and why it might matter how Christians answer that question.

16. John Rawls, *Lectures on the History of Moral Philosophy*, ed. Barbara Herman (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000), 329–71.

17. In the next several paragraphs, I will be relying on Robert Brandom, "Freedom and Constraint by Norms," in *Hermeneutics and Praxis*, ed. Robert Hollinger (South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985), 173–91. Brandom mentions arts and sports on 187.

18. Robert Brandom, "Some Pragmatist Themes in Hegel's Idealism: Negotiation and Administration in Hegel's Account of the Structure and Content of Con

ceptual Norms," *European Journal of Philosophy* 7, no. 2 (1999): 164–89; emphasis in original.

19. Brandom, "Some Pragmatist Themes," 179.

20. Ibid., 166; emphasis in original.

21. These expressivist considerations explain why Wolterstorff is right to say that we do not need a political basis of the kind that Rawls is seeking: "We aim at agreement in our discussions with each other. But we do not for the most part aim at achieving agreement concerning a political basis; rather, we aim at agreement concerning the particular policy, law, or constitutional provision under consideration. Our agreement on some policy need not be based on some set of principles *agreed on* by all present and future citizens and *rich enough* to settle all important political issues. Sufficient if each citizen, for his or her own reasons, agrees on the policy today and tomorrow—not for all time. It need not even be the case that each and every citizen agrees to the policy. Sufficient if the agreement be the fairly gained and fairly executed agreement of the majority." ("The Role of Religion," 114, emphasis in original.)

22. Brandom, "Freedom and Constraint," 189.

23. Compare Wolterstorff, "The Role of Religion," 112f.

24. Richard Rorty, "Religion as a Conversation-stopper," in *Philosophy and Social Hope* (London: Penguin Books, 1999), 168–74. Hereafter cited as "PSH."

25. Robert B. Brandom, *Making It Explicit: Reasoning, Representing, and Discursive Commitment* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994), 228; *Articulating Reasons: An Introduction to Inferentialism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000), 105; hereafter cited as "AR."

26. Greenawalt, *Religious Convictions*, chaps. 6–9.

27. Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 73.

28. Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979).

29. Johanna Goth made a similar point in her senior thesis for the Department of Philosophy at Princeton University (spring term, 2000).

CHAPTER 4
SECULARIZATION AND RESENTMENT

Personal correspondence, quoted with permission of John Bowlin.

1. From the introduction to *Radical Orthodoxy*, edited by John Milbank, Catherine Pickstock, and Graham Ward (London: Routledge, 1999), 1, 14, 3; hereafter cited as "RO." See also John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990); hereafter cited as "TST."

2. Richard John Neuhaus *The Naked Public Square: Religion and Democracy in America*, 2d. ed. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1995), 25, 80, 82; emphasis removed.

3. Christopher Hill, *The English Bible and the Seventeenth-Century Revolution* (London: Penguin Books, 1994), 413. Hereafter cited as "EB."

4. See EB, 407–9, 420.

5. See Stout, *Ethics after Babel* expanded ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), chap. 3.

6. In this context, the term "liberal" does not imply that the society in question is committed to a version of "liberalism," which is a philosophical view.

7. I do think that it is dangerous to bring religion into political discourse in countries where religious hatred is severe, but the United States is no longer such a place.

8. Victor Anderson opens his book, *Pragmatic Theology* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), by attributing to me the claim that theology is essentially obsolete, a casualty of secularization, a lost cause. The epigraph of his first chapter is a passage from my *Ethics after Babel*, 165, that appears to commit me to this claim. But Anderson omits two crucial sentences from that passage in which I make clear that "the language spoken in the public arena" is "compatible with belief in God." So he ends up attacking a position I do not hold. In *Wilderness Wanderings: Probing Twentieth-Century Theology and Philosophy* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1997), Stanley Hauerwas complains that, according to *Ethics after Babel*, "no good reason can be given in 'our' kind of world for holding [religious] beliefs" (108). But I explicitly reject this view on 187 of that book. I did once argue for a negative conclusion on the rationality of modern religious belief, but *Ethics after Babel* withdrew both the argument and the conclusion. The old argument had two major flaws. First, it wrongly posited modernity as a more or less uniform megacontext in which all modern persons should be assessed epistemically. Thus it ignored many factors, of the sort typically mentioned in spiritual autobiographies and conversion narratives, that separate one individual's epistemic context from another's, even in the same epoch. Religious differences need not be explained by saying that only one group is justified in believing what they believe, while the others are not. This bears on the second flaw in the old argument. For my early work employed an implausibly rigorist standard of justification, which did in effect stack the deck against the possibility that a modern individual could be epistemically responsible in holding religious beliefs.

9. William T. Cavanaugh, "The City: Beyond Secular Parodies," in Milbank, Pickstock, and Ward, *Radical Orthodoxy*, 182–200; I am quoting from 190.

10. For a spirited refutation of the standard form of secularization theory, see Mary Douglas, "The Effects of Modernization on Religious Change," in *Religion and America: Spirituality in a Secular Age*, ed. Mary Douglas and Steven M. Tipton (Boston: Beacon Press, 1982), 25–43.

11. I owe this phrasing to John Bowlin.

12. See especially R. A. Markus, *Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St. Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970). Milbank argues his case against Markus in *Theology and Social Theory*, chap. 12. For excellent critical discussions, see John R. Bowlin, "Augustine on Justifying Coercion," *The Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics* 17 (1997): 49–70, and James Wetzel's paper on Milbank and Augustine, forthcoming in the *Journal of Religious Ethics*.

13. I have learned much about Ruskin and about the limitations of Milbank's interpretation of him from David Craig.

14. George Hunsinger, *Disruptive Grace: Studies in the Theology of Karl Barth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 74–75.

15. Hunsinger, *Disruptive Grace*, 80.

16. I am quoting directly from Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, I/1, trans. G. T. Thomason (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1936), 60; hereafter cited as "I/1." Hunsinger quotes this line in *Disruptive Grace*, 80.

17. George Hunsinger, *How to Read Karl Barth: The Shape of His Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 234–80. Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, IV/3, trans. G. W. Bromiley (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1961), 3–165. Hereafter cited as "IV/3."

18. Hunsinger, *How to Read Karl Barth*, 279.

19. Recall that I am not using the terms "expressive" and "expressivist" as some theologians do. As I explain in note 11 to the Introduction to this book, what I am saying here does not put me at odds with what George Lindbeck calls a "cultural-linguistic" approach.

20. Cass R. Sunstein, *Republic.com* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

21. On the connection between the small group and rituals of this kind, see Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology* 2d ed. (London: Routledge, 1996), chap. 7.

22. The nostalgic note is struck in the first paragraph of the first chapter of Milbank's *Theology and Social Theory*: "Once, there was no 'secular'. And the secular was not latent, waiting to fill more space with the stream of the 'purely human', when the pressure of the sacred was relaxed. Instead there was the single community of Christendom, with its dual aspects of *sacerdotium* and *regnum*. The *saeculum*, in the medieval era, was not a space, a domain, but a time" (TST, 9). The utopian note is especially prominent in Cavanaugh, "The City: Beyond Secular Parodies," 182, 194–98.

23. See John Milbank, "Postmodern Critical Augustinianism: A Short *Summa* in Forty-two Responses to Unasked Questions," in *The Postmodern God: A Theological Reader*, ed. Graham Ward (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), 269.

24. See William Werpehowski, "Ad Hoc Apologetics," *The Journal of Religion* 66, no. 3 (July 1986): 282–301.

25. Barth, *Church Dogmatics* I/1, 61.

26. Hunsinger, *Disruptive Grace*, 86–87.

CHAPTER 5
THE NEW TRADITIONALISM

1. Milbank, whom I have described in the previous chapter as the leading proponent of radical orthodoxy, refers to chapter 11 of TST, as "a temeritous attempt to radicalize the thought of MacIntyre" (327).

2. *After Virtue*, 2d ed. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), 253, 255. Hereafter cited as "AV." Neuhaus refers to the line about modern politics as a form of civil war no fewer than four times in *The Naked Public Square*, 21, 99, 111, 163.

3. Alasdair MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics* (New York: Macmillan, 1966). Hereafter cited as "SH."

4. *Marxism and Christianity* (New York: Schocken, 1968).

5. I allude of course to another of MacIntyre's books from this period, *Against the Self-Images of the Age* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, repr. 1978).

6. *Herbert Marcuse: An Exposition and a Polemic* (New York: Viking, 1970), 70. Hereafter cited as "HM."

7. In the remainder of this paragraph, I am echoing David Bromwich's discussion of the sublime in *Hazlitt: The Mind of a Critic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 191.

8. William Hazlitt, *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt*, ed. P. P. Howe (London: J. M. Dent, 1930–1934), vol. 4, 124–25.

9. Alasdair MacIntyre *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988). Hereafter cited as "WJ."

10. For my earlier criticisms of the narrative, see Stout, *Ethics after Babel*, expanded ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), chaps. 9–10, and "Virtue among the Ruins," *Neue Zeitschrift für systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie* 26, no. 3 (1984): 256–73.

11. In a review of George Forrell's *History of Christian Ethics*, vol. 1, *Ethics* 91, no. 2 (1981): 328–29.

12. Stout, "Virtue among the Ruins," 267–68.

13. I do not mean to imply complete agreement with MacIntyre's reinterpretation of Aquinas. For example, I believe he is overly impressed by Aquinas's rigorist account of truth-telling. He is overly impressed, I suspect, because he is insufficiently attentive to differences between Aquinas's approach to that topic, where "natural law" influences predominate, and his approach to such topics as violence, where he is more nearly Aristotelian. To describe these differences properly, MacIntyre would have had to give a more detailed account of Aquinas's conception of practical reasoning, especially his account of the moral species of an act, and then ask whether Aquinas adhered to that conception in treating truth-telling and sexuality. The person who first drew my attention to these differences was Victor Preller.

14. This difficulty mars his treatment of anything English and especially of Scottish and Irish thinkers, like David Hume and Edmund Burke, who acquired sufficient empathy with English modes of thought to adopt them as their own and raise them to new heights. Consider, for example, the long quotation from Roy Porter that MacIntyre uses to smear the English social order (WJ, 215), and ask yourself whether it shows a rare gift of empathy. Or, review the sentences I have already quoted about the "savage and persistent conflicts of the age," and ask yourself whether Hume's views on religious fanaticism and enthusiasm are given a fair hearing (WJ, chaps. 15–16).

15. Alasdair MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopedia, Genealogy, and Tradition* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990). I discuss this book in more detail in the postscript to the Princeton edition of *Ethics after Babel*.

16. MacIntyre's most recent book, *Dependent Rational Animals: Why Human Beings Need the Virtues* (Chicago: Open Court, 1999), is refreshingly free of his usual rhetoric about liberalism and liberal society. But the contrast between Aristotle and Nietzsche with which it ends echoes the partition first introduced in chapter 9 of

AV. And his criticisms of both "recent social and political philosophy" and "the modern state" (130–31) show that he has not changed his mind on these points.

17. E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Vintage, 1966), 746–61.

18. Christopher Lasch, *The True and Only Heaven* (New York: Norton, 1991), 181–84.

19. William Cobbett, *A History of the Protestant Reformation in England and Ireland* (London: C. Clement, 1824).

20. William Cobbett, *Rural Rides* (London: Dent, 1913; originally published in 1830).

21. William Cobbett, *Thirteen Sermons* (New York: John Doyle, 1834).

22. Wendell Berry, *The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture* (San Francisco: Sierra Club, 1986) and *The Hidden Wound* (San Francisco: North Point, 1989).

23. Susan Moller Okin, *Justice, Gender, and the Family* (New York: Basic Books, 1989), 60–61; emphasis in original.

24. MacIntyre is, at this point, clearly assuming the need for what Brandom calls an "I-we" model of discursive rationality. The "we" in this case is constituted by a traditional consensus on the good. I will discuss Brandom's alternative to such models in the final section of chapter 12 below.

25. WJ, 8, 217–18, 353. To MacIntyre, Burke essentially sold out his Irish compatriots by becoming complicit in English imperial rule. Politically and socially, he personifies what MacIntyre has always tried not to be. But for Burke to play this role in the story being told here, MacIntyre needs to omit reference to his writings on the Irish question, on the wisdom of conciliation with the American colonies, and on the misdeeds of Warren Hastings. Before we discard Burke too quickly and without ambivalence, it may be worth recalling what the radical critic William Hazlitt wrote of him in 1807: "It has always been with me a test of the sense and candour of any one belonging to the opposite party, whether he allowed Burke to be a great man."

26. Richard Bernstein, *Philosophical Profiles* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986), 138, 140.

CHAPTER 6
VIRTUE AND THE WAY OF THE WORLD

1. Stanley Hauerwas, *A Better Hope: Resources for a Church Confronting Capitalism, Democracy, and Postmodernity* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2000), 10. Hereafter cited as "BH."

2. Hauerwasian perfectionism resembles Emersonian perfectionism in that both are rooted in a reaction against austere forms of Protestantism in which justification eclipses sanctification. And to a large extent, these two forms of perfectionism propose similar remedies in emphasizing excellence, virtue, self-cultivation, the value of exemplary figures and spiritual guides in the ethical life, and a conception of sanctification according to which individuals are swept up into some kind of divine abundance. But these parallels are not merely coincidental. Emerson and his followers were self-consciously radicalizing the kind of sanctification and virtue

centered Protestantism that Wesley and various others had set in motion. Historically, these forms of perfectionism represent two phases in the development of religious Romanticism. The Emersonian phase, of course, moves outside the ambit of Christianity.

3. The dissertation eventually appeared in revised form as *Character and the Christian Life: A Study in Theological Ethics* (San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 1975). Chapter 2 discusses Aquinas and Aristotle. Chapter 5 explicates the doctrine of sanctification.

4. Personal conversation.

5. In addition to the published dissertation, see two highly influential essay collections: Stanley Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue: Essays in Christian Ethical Reflection* (Notre Dame: Fides, 1974) and *Truthfulness and Tragedy: Further Investigations into Christian Ethics* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977). Hereafter cited as "VV" and "TT," respectively.

6. Edmund Pincoffs, "Quandary Ethics," in *Revisions: Changing Perspectives in Moral Philosophy*, ed. Stanley Hauerwas and Alasdair MacIntyre (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983), 92–112. The quotation is from 104.

7. For the purposes of argument, I am not going to dispute Hauerwas's interpretation of Yoder. But Scott Davis has persuaded me that Yoder probably had a more subtle position on justice than Hauerwas thought he did. See John Howard Yoder, *The Original Revolution* (Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1972), 76–84. When I speak of Yoder in the remainder of this chapter, I mean Yoder as understood by Hauerwas.

8. Stanley Hauerwas, *A Community of Character: Toward a Constructive Christian Social Ethic* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), and *The Peaceable Kingdom: A Primer in Christian Ethics* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983). Hereafter cited, respectively, as "CC" and "PK."

9. See Stanley Hauerwas, *Against the Nations: War and Survival in a Liberal Society* (Minneapolis: Winston Press, 1985), and *Dispatches from the Front: Theological Engagements with the Secular* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), esp. chap. 4, "The Democratic Policing of Christianity."

10. Stanley Hauerwas, *Christian Existence Today: Essays on Church, World and Living In Between* (Durham: Labyrinth Press, 1988), 3–21. Hereafter cited as CET.

11. Oliver O'Donovan, *The Desire of the Nations: Rediscovering the Roots of Political Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 216.

12. See Stanley Hauerwas, *After Christendom? How the Church Is to Behave If Freedom, Justice, and a Christian Nation Are Bad Ideas* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991), 45. Hereafter cited as "AC."

13. For an example of a book that sets out such reasons in detail, see Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Until Justice and Peace Embrace* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983). It is a pity that Hauerwas chooses to focus his critical remarks so often on Rawls rather than on Wolterstorff, whose theologically conservative but politically radical Calvinist outlook offers a more challenging alternative to his own position. In *A Better Hope* (26–27), he discusses Wolterstorff briefly, but only for the purpose of borrowing from Wolterstorff's critique of Rawls. But see also Nicholas Wolterstorff, "Christianity and Social Justice," *Christian Scholars Review* 16, no. 3 (March 1987): 211–28; Stanley Hauerwas, "On the 'Right' to be Tribal," *Christian Scholars Review* 16, no. 3 (March 1987), 238–41; and Nicholas Wolterstorff, "Response to Nash,