

The American Political System and White Racial Discourse

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In the recent mid-term elections (this is being written in December of 2022), Democrats, apparently with a good amount of success, charged Republicans with being no less than a threat to American democracy. My goodness—I guess hyperbole goes over big in this text-and-Twitter-depth age. Whatever its success as a campaign tactic, a great deal has been said and written about democracy these past few months. For instance, this in *The New York Times*, which naturally finds that the threats to democracy come from conservatives:

[The] United States today finds itself in a situation with little historical precedent. American democracy is facing two distinct threats, which together represent the most serious challenge to the country’s governing ideals in decades.

The first threat is acute: a growing movement inside one of the country’s two major parties — the Republican Party — to refuse to accept defeat in an election. . . .

The second threat to democracy is chronic but also growing: The power to set government policy is becoming increasingly disconnected from public opinion. The run of recent Supreme Court decisions—both sweeping and, according to polls, unpopular—highlight this disconnect. Although the Democratic Party has won the popular vote in seven of the past eight presidential elections, a Supreme Court dominated by Republican appointees seems poised to shape American politics for years if not decades. And the court is only one of the means through which policy outcomes are becoming less closely tied to the popular will.

“We are far and away the most countermajoritarian democracy in the world,” said Steven Levitsky, a professor of government at Harvard University and a co-author of the book “How Democracies Die,” with Daniel Ziblatt. . . . In a recent poll by Quinnipiac University, 69 percent of

Democrats and 69 percent of Republicans said that democracy was “in danger of collapse.”¹

I’ll use the democracy-under-siege talk so prominent lately as a springboard to a consideration of the America’s political system from the perspective of White racial advocacy. This writing can be viewed as a follow-up to an article of mine in 2020 called “A Suggestion to American White Advocates: Root Your Arguments in This Country’s Core Political and Cultural Ideals.”² You might want to check out that article to put this one in better context, although it’s really not necessary; this piece stands on its own. To give you an organizer for what’s coming up, my basic take is that from the perspective of Whites’ wellbeing, rather than democracy being under threat, democracy *is* the threat.

To begin, as a matter of fact, we don’t have a democracy in this country. Our form of government is a republic. We pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the *republic* for which it stands. Our political system is grounded in the Roman republican form more than many realize. President, congress, and senate are all Roman terms.³ Unlike in a democracy—say a Greek democracy, Athens—citizens seldom vote on matters themselves. Instead, they select individuals to take on that task. In the Federalist Papers which justified the political system the Founders had created, James Madison underscored this key distinction between a republic and a democracy: “In a democracy the people meet and exercise the government in person; in a republic they assemble and administer it by their representatives and agents.”⁴

It is important to note that these representatives are not merely doing the electorate’s bidding. The Founders of the American nation wanted decisions of state guided by the wisdom of those who held positions in government and not by the immediate impulses of the citizenry. In Madison’s words, “The public views should be refined and enlarged by passing them through the medium of a chosen body of citizens, whose wisdom may best discern the true interests of their country, and whose patriotism and love of justice will be the least likely to sacrifice it to temporary or partial considerations”⁵

Within our republican political system, there are many departures from simple majority rule. In the beginning, senators weren’t directly elected but rather chosen

by state legislators, and the President still isn't (the Electoral College). States with small populations like Wyoming have as many senators as New York and California. The Supreme Court is appointed. The President can veto legislation. Indeed, in the early years of this country, the distinction between a republic and a democracy was an important one. John Adams declared, "There is no good government but what is republican."⁶

And more than simply a republic, America is a *constitutional* republic. The federal constitution puts a brake on what can legitimately be a matter of collective determination. The Constitution sets up a separation of powers and checks and balances that prevent majorities in one branch of government—perhaps dominated by powerful factions (the old term for interest groups)—from wielding control. The Constitution's first ten amendments, called the Bill of Rights, spell out protections of individuals from the totality as represented by the federal government. They give explicit acknowledgment of the view that individual citizens have *inalienable rights* — the term used in the Declaration of Independence. These are rights possessed by all humans, and they can't be taken away. These rights are not up for a vote.

To be sure, our form of government reflects democratic principles and includes democratic practices. The government does not have arbitrary power over people and operates at their consent. Citizens have the opportunity to participate in the political process. There are open and free elections and referenda. All this is democratic. But still, while the people are heard and wield power, the republic does not require, in the words of the Federalist Papers, the "unqualified compliance to every sudden breeze of passion of a popular majority."⁷

In the last century and as it continues now, democracy has taken on the quality of a religious law worth killing and dying for. World War II was portrayed as a war for democracy. In recent decades, the Americans talking loudest and slickest at harnessing power have beaten the drums for a crusade to convert other countries to democracy by blowing them up and exterminating their citizens. In earlier times, however, that justification for conquest and bloodshed wouldn't have played, because democracy wasn't sacred. Major figures in the first century of this country's existence were not sanguineous about it:

- James Madison noted democracies “have ever been spectacles of turbulence and contention; have ever been found incompatible with personal security or the rights of property; and have in general been as short in their lives as they have been violent in their deaths.”⁸
- Alexander Hamilton: “The ancient democracies in which the people themselves deliberated never possessed one feature of good government. Their very character was tyranny; their figure deformity. When they assembled, the field of debate presented an ungovernable mob, not only incapable of deliberation, but prepared for every enormity.”⁹
- The writer James Fennimore Cooper saw democracies as tending “to press against their proper limits, to convert political equality into economic leveling, to insist that equal opportunity become mediocrity, [and] to invade every personal right and privacy; they set themselves above the law; they substitute mass opinion for justice.”¹⁰
- Highly respected French observer Alexis de Toqueville as early as the 1830s foresaw democracy was inevitable, but he expressed reservations about that prospect. He worried about a perversion of society “into a sea of anonymous beings, social droplets, deprived of true purpose.”¹¹ He noted that democracy promotes antipathy toward eccentricity or any manifestation of defiant individuality.¹² “Democracy,” de Toqueville wrote, “encourages a taste for physical gratification; this taste, if it becomes excessive, soon disposes men to believe that all is matter only; and materialism, in its turn, hurries them on with mad impatience to these same delights; such is the final circle within which democratic nations are driven round. It were well that they see the danger and hold back.”¹³

The American republic was conceived as being comprised of individuals not groups. The Bill of Rights, for instance, protects individuals not groups. This is important to keep this in mind in a time preoccupied with group identities. In our time, the idea of individualism, this mindset, carries a negative connotation, including within White racial discourse, as it is linked to selfishness and lack of concern for others and the common welfare. However, this wasn’t the case at this country’s beginning. Back then, it was assumed that individuals would, and should, focus on serving their private wants and needs and it wasn’t assumed that this would run counter to a concern for, and service to, the needs of the whole. The ideal earlier in our history—let’s say prior to WWII—was that individuals would conduct themselves in a way that the more they served themselves the more they were capable of, and motivated to, serve others.

Republican citizenship was not a matter of always looking out for oneself, nor was it deferring to the common good in every instance. Rather, it was striking a balance between the private and public dimensions of one's life. That balance was central to the concept of a true individualist, and it was the predominant view in the beginning that the American political experiment depended on true individualists to make it work.

Benjamin Rush, a physician and signer of the Declaration of Independence, wrote an essay entitled "Thoughts Upon the Mode of Education Proper in a Republic" that relates to this consideration."¹⁴

While Rush used the word republic or some variant of it seven times in his essay, including in the title, the word "democracy" appears not once.

Also striking about the Rush essay is his stress on liberty, referring to it as "the object and life of all republican governments." Time and again, Rush writes about freedom, along with his worry that government tyranny will rob people of it. At its core, the American republic is a test to see what will result if individual people, free from governmental dictates, are given the opportunity and the charge to make a good life for themselves and theirs and at the same time be good for other people and look out for the political arrangement. The inherent tension between democracy and personal freedom and self-determination did not escape the Founders. At heart, democracy is a method of social coercion, a way to direct and limit the actions of individuals, since those who aren't on the side of the majority have to do things the victors' way.

Throughout his essay, Rush wrote about virtue, linking it to the preservation of freedom — "without virtue there can be no liberty." To Rush, virtue meant the personal traits of self-denial, brotherly kindness, character, honor, and physical discipline. In the beginning, it was assumed that the welfare of the republic depended on the virtue of its individual citizens. Virtue referred to such qualities as a strong work ethic, self-sufficiency, love of country, an austere style of living, strict observance of a moral code, and willingness to sacrifice private profit for the public good.¹⁵ In his farewell address, George Washington declared virtue to be "a necessary spring of popular government."¹⁶

Rush's essay emphasized the importance of strong loyalty to state and nation. About the education of a child: "He must be taught to love his fellow

creatures in every part of the world, but he must cherish with a more intense and peculiar affection the citizens of Pennsylvania and the United States.”¹⁷ Allegiance to a geographic entity was considered vitally important for the success of the American political experiment.

More to be said, but you get the basic idea.

The big contention in this context is that Whites have fared very nicely under the American constitutional republican arrangement and the ideals and ways inherent in it—personal freedom and responsibility, virtue, and so on. A republic is particularly suited to White people, and while those involved in setting up the American political system didn’t go to any great length to punch up that fact, I have the sense that they were well aware of it; they knew what they were doing.

Similarly, those currently engaged in pulling the props out from under the Founders and this country’s political heritage — including referring to it as a democracy — know what they are doing. Unhindered by constitutional restraints—the notion of a “living constitution,” etc.—democracy serves the interests of Whites’ adversaries. It takes power away from individuals and puts it in the hands of the collective, which is increasingly non-White — or better, those who can control the collective by managing the information and idea flow and throwing money around and making people pay who get in their way. Democracy politicizes everything: whatever it is, anything and everything, is put up for a vote and the majority (or again, whoever controls the majority, and in this day and age it is increasingly people surreptitiously and openly hostile to Whites, males in particular) wins the day. Ironically given how it is pitched as putting the masses in charge of their fate, democracy paves the way for minority control (among the possibilities: resentful, revengeful, and exploitive anti-White ethnic and racial organizations; self-anointed media elites: kowtow-to-me gripers and grievors; I’ll-handle-it managers and bureaucrats; paid-off and intimidated politicians; and bullshitters). Bottom line, a republic serves White interests; a democracy works against them.

With that being the case, what follows for White racial discourse—its content, topics? These six things come to mind:

1. Give consideration to the connection between the republican political form and White interests. How does a republican system measure up against authoritarian, democratic, aristocratic, elite-managed, and Big Boss (Trump’s image just popped into my head) arrangements?

2. Make room for American voices — Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, and (I'm thinking out loud) Emerson and Thoreau and Mark Twain and Edgar Rice Burroughs (the Tarzan author) and Teddy Roosevelt and H.L. Mencken and . . . oh, I don't know, just somebody besides Julius Evola, you know? American thinkers, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Walt Whitman, Teddy Roosevelt, Ernest Hemingway, somebody.

3. Ease up on badmouthing individualism; look for its positive aspects, and there are some. And generally, be conscious of the downside of dichotomous, either-or thinking — there's this thing and that thing and this thing is better than that thing, universalism is better than individualism, etc. Libertarianism, ugh. Carl Jung's concept of *enantiodromia* comes to mind: the idea of positive development and the achievement of wholeness resulting from the integration of opposites (the example above: citizenship in a republic involving both selfishness and selflessness).

4. Do a word count in White racial dialogue and debate: how often do the words "freedom," "liberty," and "self-determination" appear? How about if it is more often?

5. Pay more attention to the relationship between what individuals are made of and what goes on collectively? I'm reminded of Madison Grant's observation over a century ago that Nordics, as he called them — Americans of northern European heritage — were becoming characterized by "base desires, passions, and behaviors, and becoming less dignified and honorable."¹⁸ The Founders had it pegged: virtue, character, personal worth, however you want to talk about it, matters greatly; it's not just about large forces and systems.

6. Give more attention to the connection between nationalism—identification with, affinity for, commitment to, a particular country—and White wellbeing. Do Whites tend to do better within the context of strong nation states? A non-American example, would Whites living today in Hungary be better off if they saw themselves in the first instance as White Hungarians or as White nationalists? Would White Americans be better off focusing their energies on getting their country back, or would they be better off if they viewed themselves as White nationalists and seceded from the U.S.? Do current-day American White advocates— representative of, by far, the largest segment in this country, whose ancestors created and developed it — see themselves as part of *us* in the U.S.? Or have they internalized the notion from their adversaries that they are *them* here: fringe, right wing, dissidents? Looking into American nationalism could surface the need for those who argue for Whites to examine presumptions and ideas that limit them.



1. David Leonhardt, "‘The Crisis Coming’: The Twin Threats to American Democracy," *The New York Times*, September 17, 2022.
2. Robert S. Griffin, "A Suggestion to American White Advocates: Root Your Arguments in This Country’s Core Political and Cultural Ideals," *The Occidental Observer*, online, posted June 13, 2020.
3. Richard Brookhiser makes this point in his book, *Founding Father: Rediscovering George Washington* (Free Press, 1996) p.122.
4. James Madison, "An Objection Drawn from the Extent of Country Answered," *Federalist Paper Number 14*, in Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay, *The Federalist Papers* (New American Library, 1961), p. 100.
5. As quoted in Lance Banning, *The Sacred Fire of Liberty: James Madison and the Founding of the Federal Republic* (Cornell University Press, 1995) p. 203.
6. As quoted in Nathan Tarcov, "The Meanings of Democracy." In Roger Soder, ed., *Democracy, Education, and the Schools* (Jossey-Bass, 1996) p.25.
7. Tarcov, p.28.
8. See Robert Westbrook, "Public Schooling and American Democracy," in Soder, p. 128.
9. Ibid.

10. Russell Kirk, *The Conservative Mind*, seventh revised edition (Regnery, 1986) p.200.
11. Kirk, p. 12.
12. Ibid., 155.
13. Ibid., p. 211.
14. Benjamin Rush, "Thoughts Upon the Mode of Education in a Republic," in Steven Tozer, Paul Violas, and Guy Senese, *School and Society: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, Second Edition (McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1995) pp. 40.
15. Ibid, p. 24.
16. George Washington, George Washington's Farewell Address (Applewood Books, 1999).
17. Tozer, Violas, and Senese, p. 42.
18. Grant's observation comes up in my article, "'What If?' Thinking: Imagining Alternative Histories as a Way to Know," *The Occidental Observer*, online, posted December 3, 2021.