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The Steward in Statesmanship: Taking Responsibility for the Most Important Things

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Even though the American Framers self-consciously designed a system of government that did not *depend* on an enlightened statesman being at the helm, this paper argues that they believed statesmanship was not only compatible with republican government, but that it could act as a kind of antidote to some of the ailments most likely to afflict it. Scholars today generally dispute this suggestion. They argue that statesmanship is, in several important respects, positively antithetical to important democratic ideals. Having surveyed those objections, this paper argues that the contemporary understanding is flawed because it rests on a misconception of democracy and the political regime more generally. A republic is more than a set of institutions and, in fact, depends on shared beliefs respecting the true and the just. Above all, statesmen preserve and perpetuate the regime's foundational opinions and ideals. A look at some of America's premier statesmen demonstrates that they were stewards of the most important things at critical junctures in the country's history: the principles and bonds of fellow feeling that give America its distinctive character and cohesion.

Key Words: Statesmanship, American Founding, Republicanism, Democratic Theory

Political leaders must attend first, and energetically, to the most important things for which they have responsibility.[1]

—William Bennett

The Framers of the American regime were acutely aware of the diseases most incident to popular government. In *Federalist 10*, Madison discussed the threat of faction, the source of which is in human nature itself. Because, Madison stated, "[E]nlightened statesman will not always be at the helm," and "the causes of faction cannot be removed," he proposed institutional

[1] William J. Bennett, The De-valuing of America: The Fight for Our Culture and Our Children (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994), 92.

arrangements to control the effects of faction. To reduce the reliance on statesman, however, is not to eliminate its advantage and need. In fact, in every branch of government the Framers acknowledged the need for men with statesman like qualities, such as merit, stable character, good judgment and knowledge of politics. In addition, Jefferson's *Rockfish Gap Report* of 1818 proposed an education, "To form statesman, legislators and judges on whom public prosperity and individual happiness are so much to depend." He assumed, like so many of the Framers, that statesmanship was not only compatible with republic government, but that it could act as a kind of antidote to some diseases of our constitutional government.

Today, however, statesmanship is not viewed as a remedy, but rather as a toxin to our government. Richard Ruderman observes that, "The antidemocratic nature of statesmanship is routinely assumed by writers who refer to it as 'full' or 'quasi guardianship'; or 'strong leadership'; or the work of a 'liberal commander' who threatens to become an 'imperious overlord.'"[2] It is denounced as incompatible with democratic deliberation and denigrated as undermining democratic participation. What was once viewed as a tonic for a healthy republican democracy is now a poison. How did this change happen? Is there still a place for statesmanship in our republic?

This paper argues that there is still a place for statesmanship in our democratic republic. It begins by identifying the contemporary objections to statesmanship and takes special notice of an underlying assumption about democracy that drives these objections. With the keen observation of Wilfred McClay, the paper then shows that that assumption of democracy is flawed and the promotion of a citizen-leader based on that assumption is potentially dangerous. A revised understanding of our democracy is offered which demonstrates a place for statesmanship. More specifically, it reveals the need for a distinctive feature of statesmanship, namely stewardship of the deep, animating principles of our republic. Drawing on historical examples, it then examines how statesmen act as stewards and why statesmanship, as opposed to the citizen-leader, is vital for the preservation of our republic and its most cherished principles..

OBJECTIONS TO STATESMANSHIP

Several problems prevent the recovery of statesmanship as an idea and practice in our democracy. Generally speaking, it appears to conflict with certain democratic sentiments. To begin with, it is considered an antiquated and elitist term. A thoughtful defender of statesmanship admitted that to many, "'[S]tatesmanship' is almost un-American" because it possesses an "elitist and

[2] Richard S. Ruderman, "Democracy and the Problem of Statesmanship," *The Review of Politics* 59, no. 4 (1997): 759-87.

obsolete ring."[3] We today are dedicated to the belief in the fundamental equality of all human beings. Born from this idea is a sense of political equality: all men are created equal and no one can claim a natural right to rule another without their consent. Yet, statesmanship appears to flout this sense of equality, for the term statesmanship invokes a sense of superiority. The statesman is thought to be superior in his ability to govern the state. What is more, the person who strives to be a statesman strives to set himself apart and above his peers. In *The Case for Greatness*, Robert Faulkner shows how Kant, Rawls, and Arendt have influenced us to view the ambition for greatness as immoral pride and a violation of our dedication to the absolute equality of all human beings.[4]

Statesmanship is also rejected because it is perceived to threaten peace and stability. Geoffrey M. Vaughan traces this rejection of statesmanship to Hobbes.[5] According to Hobbes, the statesman's virtue is the ability and power to act in the political sphere. It is this decisive action that Hobbes believes is intrusive to the political sphere. For Hobbes, stability and security are the goals of political life. In part, stability and security come from settled and common values. The virtues of flexibility, tolerance, modesty and willingness to listen are prized for keeping peace and order. By the statesman's decisive action, Hobbes argues, he disrupts peace and order and creates instability and disorder in the political sphere. Thus, according to Hobbes, the statesman's virtue is a threat to political stability.

Statesmanship's most vigorous contemporary objections come from Benjamin Barber and other deliberative democracy theorists.[6] Barber views strong leaders, such as statesman, as a direct threat to a healthy democracy. For Barber, statesmen weaken democracy in three ways. First, statesmen narrow the political participation by citizens. According to Barber, a strong democracy should encourage active participation by citizens in the daily concerns and issues of democratic life. Barber argues, however, that statesmen contract the sphere of political activity by making decisions regarding pressing political affairs. What statesmanship, and liberal democracy in general, does to citizens

[3] Herbert Storing, "American Statesmanship: Old and New," in *Active Duty: Public Administration as Democratic Statesmanship*, edited by Peter Augustine Lawler, Robert Martin Schaefer, and David Lewis Schaefer (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1998), 5.

[4] Robert Faulkner, *The Case for Greatness* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), see Chapter Seven.

[5] Geoffrey M. Vaughan, "Hobbes on Magnanimity and Statesmanship: Replacing Virtue with Science," in *Magnanimity and Statesmanship*, edited by Carson Holloway (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2008), 67-82.

[6] This paper will consider in particular, Benjamin Barber, "Neither Leaders nor Followers: Citizenship under Strong Democracy," in *A Passion for Democracy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 95-111.

is limit their participation to consent alone. Civic participation is reduced to a few days a year and only for the purpose of electing others to participate through representation. Thus, democracy is defined by the participation of leaders instead of the participation of citizens.

Second, statesmen restrict political deliberation and judgment by citizens. For Barber, our democracy should create conditions for and trust the citizens to deliberate together and make political judgments as much as possible. Statesmen, argues Barber, too often characterize political matters in technical terms and questions and thus confine them to political experts, such as themselves. By defining matters in this way, Barber believes the citizen is not trusted to deliberate and judge political matters. Barber contends that most political matters and judgments, are well within the range of citizens' capacity. Ronald Reagan did not need to know the nature of nuclear power to be able to judge the proper relations with the Soviets and neither do citizens. Citizens, on Barber's view, are quite capable of deliberating and judging complex, if not technically, political issues. The constraining of citizen deliberation and judgment on political matters leaves the citizen wholly reduced to debating private matters of personal choice and excludes them from the public.

Third, statesmen impair autonomy and self-government. According to Barber, "strong leaders have on the whole made Americans weak citizens."[7] The strong leader, by acting in place of the citizen, diminishes the role of the citizen to alien spectator. In short, statesmen turn electors into followers. Rather than empowering citizens for self-government, statesmen leave gaping holes between the leader and the citizen. Further, it encourages an attitude of deference to authority. Thus, the strong leader minimizes the realm and idea of self-government.

On Barber's view, a good democratic leader is a *facilitating leader.*[8] A facilitating leader empowers people and strengthens and reinforces citizenship. Such a leader is akin to, argues Barber, a teacher, judge, group therapist and town moderator—perhaps he would now add community organizer. Like a teacher, a good leader becomes superfluous. After the leader is finished leading, citizens are able to carry on without them. Like a judge, a facilitating leader facilitates the conditions to secure deliberation and judgment by citizens. Like a group therapist, a leader's success is determined by the degree to which the citizen is self-sufficient. In contrast, argues Barber, strong leaders leave the citizen perpetual hypochondriacs searching for a new leader. Finally, like the town moderator, which appears to be Barber's favorite description, a leader should provide conditions for the community to learn, interact, debate, listen, organize, deliberate together, and make an informed decision that does not exclude or alienate but allow all to live together. It is, however, not entirely

[7] Benjamin Barber, "Neither Leaders nor Followers," 97.
[8] Ibid, 103.

accurate to suggest that Barber is calling for a leader to lead. For, according to Barber, a healthy democracy does not need leaders, much less strong leaders like statesmen, only effective citizenship. In short, a good citizen is a facilitating leader.

Notice that the objection to statesmanship is premised upon an underlying assumption regarding democracy. For Barber famously advocates for a "strong democracy" which is defined by a government where all the people some of the time in some public affairs deliberate, participate and judge political matters.[9] The statesman interferes with this nearly direct democracy. In a "strong" democracy, citizens follow their own lead. Such a democracy trusts and enables citizens to perform civic functions and use public judgment on political matters. A democracy of this kind, argues Barber, fosters institutional and practical experimentation with participatory institutions. Indeed, Barber offers several different possible experiments, such as mandatory government service, local school districts, neighborhood watch groups, as examples.

IS AMERICA AN EXPERIMENT?

The notion of "experiment" is important here. We should pause to reflect on this idea of America as an experiment. Doing so, I believe, allows us to deepen our understanding of Barber's position. What is more, it affords us an opportunity to see the limitations of his position and its potential risk to the health of our republic. We are greatly assisted in our reflection on experiment by an essay, "Is America an experiment?," by Wilfred McClay.[10] Although he does not address Barber directly, his essay contextualizes Barber's position and aids our understanding of it.

Let us consider the claim that America is an experiment. Is this not a good thing? An experiment reflects individual liberty, a questioning spirit, and progress. Yet, McClay asserts that, "such statements beg the question of what an experiment is and of what it might mean to live in a country that embodies an experimental spirit."[11] What is the spirit of experiment? Is it the spirit of unbridled criticism? Is it the spirit of ceaseless questioning? Is it the project of overturning tradition? Is it, McClay asks, "the liberty to experiment, to declare independence from everything that has come before us, to discard the tried and embrace the untried—exercising our creativity even if it means reinventing the wheel?"[12]

[9] Benjamin Barber, *Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).
[10] Wilfred McClay, "Is American an Experiment?," *The Public Interest* (Fall 1998), 3-22.
[11] Ibid, 7.
[12] Ibid, 8.

If America is an experiment, then it must conform to the idea of an experiment. What is an experiment? After a review of dictionary definitions, McClay concludes that "in all three definitions, experiment is always related to some specific end, some well defined goal, some truth, hypothesis, pattern or principle to be confirmed or disconfirmed."[13] Thus, "the key to an effective scientific experiment lies in the careful definition of the problem, a definition that does not change in midstream and that always seeks to identify, understand and harness the laws of nature, not transform or obliterate those laws."[14]

According to McClay, then, in that sense of scientific experiment America *was* an experiment at the outset. McClay cites as an example *Federalist #1* where Alexander Hamilton stated, "It seemed to have been reserved to the people of this country, by their conduct and example, to decide the important question, whether societies of men are really capable or not of establishing good government from reflection and choice, or whether they are forever destined to depend for their political constitutions on accident and force."[15] Although the term "experiment" is not used, it is clearly implied in the statement. Moreover, McClay notes that the term experiment is used twenty-four times in the *Federalist* in a way parallel to this one. In these cases, experiment is meant in a practical way implying experiments fail and succeed.

The Framers generally held this view of experiment. McClay reminds us that George Washington echoed Hamiltons' view in his First Inaugural Address, stating, "The preservation of the sacred fire of liberty and the destiny of the republican model of government are justly considered, perhaps, as deeply, as finally, staked on the *experiment* instructed to the hands of the American people."[16] Consider also Jefferson's use in a letter to Governor Hall 1802, "We have no interests nor passions different from those of our fellow citizens. We have the same object: the success of representative government. Nor are we acting for ourselves alone, but for the whole human race. The event of our experiment is to show whether man can be trusted with self-government. The eyes of suffering humanity are fixed on us with anxiety as their only hope, and on such a theatre, for such a cause, we must suppress all smaller passions and local considerations."[17] In each of these cases, we can see

[13] Ibid, 10.

[14] Ibid.

[15] See *Federalist No. 1*, Avalon Project, accessed July 15, 2014, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/fed01.asp.

[16] See George Washington's Inaugural, National Archives and Records Administration, accessed July 15, 2014, http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/american_originals/inaugtxt.html.

[17] See Jefferson's letter to Governor Hall, Online Liberty Fund, accessed July 15, 2014, http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/757/87348

with McClay that here experiment is used as a "careful practical experiment, not an open-ended utopian experiment in human engineering or consciousness transformation."[18] Moreover, the ends are clear—"the preservation of liberty and the republican model of government." Like a good experiment, the problem is stable, the end is defined.

The Framers, though, were not the only ones to see the nation as an experiment. As many of us know, and as McClay reminds us, a young Abe Lincoln in his speech, "The Perpetuation of our Political Institutions," observed that the results of our "experiment" were in—America had been felt to be "an undecided experiment; now, it is understood to be a successful one."[19] Although successful in establishing a nation, Lincoln warned that success could provide its own obstacles. Lincoln cautions us, "This field of glory is harvested, and the crop is already appropriated. But new reapers will arise, and they, too, will seek a field. It is to deny, what the history of the world tells us is true, to suppose that men of ambition and talents will not continue to spring up amongst us. And, when they do, they will as naturally seek the gratification of their ruling passion, as others have so done before them."[20] We are successful in our experiment to this point, but Lincoln warns us that the experiment is not complete. We must, as Lincoln states, replace the "pillars of the temple of liberty...with other pillars, hewn from the solid quarry of reason."[21] McClay concludes, "In a sense, then, Lincoln saw a perpetuation of the spirit of experimentalism, and of experimental urgency, as a part of any effort to perpetuate our political institutions."[22] The Civil War, in that case, was a "testing" of this experiment.

While it may be the case, as McClay detects, that the scope and character of the experiment were slightly redefined and expanded beyond the Framers, it is the "distended language"[23] of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's First Inaugural Address, argues McClay, which begins to change the idea and use of experiment. Given the economic conditions of the day, Roosevelt stated that we needed "bold, persistent experimentation."[24] And Roosevelt was plain speaking. What did experiment mean? It meant, "take a method and try it: if it

[18] McClay, "Is American an Experiment," 11.

[19] See Lincoln's "The Perpetuation of our Political Institutions," Teaching American History. Org, accessed July 15, 2014, http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=157

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid., 12.

[23] Ibid., 13.

[24] Franklin Delano Roosevelt, "Oglethorpe University Address, May 22, 1932," in *The Two Faces of Liberalism: How* the *Hoover-Roosevelt Debate Shapes* the *21st Century*, edited by Gordon Wood (Salem, MA: M & M Scrivener Press, 2010), 69-75.

fails, admit it frankly and try another. But above all, try something."[25] In this case, McClay sees that, "[W]e are a long way here from the notion that the aim of the experiment is the cultivation of a regime built around ordered liberty."[26] Here, he continues, "Roosevelt's language was pointing toward the sense of experiment that we increasingly hear expressed today, one that is more than willing to entertain the transformation of the American people and nation into something radically different from what they are and have been."[27] We are continually remaking, reinventing and recreating our republic. Anything is possible.

As McClay observes, we see this understanding of experiment in Richard Rorty's *Achieving Our Country*.[28] But it is this understanding that is also operating in Barber's view of "strong" democracy. For him, our democratic republic is best understood as a promising experiment engaged in by a particular set of human beings. All political judgments are experiments based on considerations and judgments of the past, and they are in need of testing through scrutiny and deliberation. Democracy, this position assumes, is not founded upon absolute and eternal truths, such as the nature of man or reason or reality. Rather, commitment to a set of absolute and eternal truths as the foundations of democracy impedes the process of testing and deliberation upon judgments because it fosters an unwillingness to doubt.

For the democratic experiment to work, it needs citizens who not only possess the ability to doubt their own way of life but also doubt the political judgments and consensus of our democratic republic. The ability to doubt the beliefs, practices and traditions of our democratic republic, on this view, is necessary to prevent the formation of uncritical commitments to political judgments that could suspend the procedural nature of our democracy, i.e our democratic experiment. In addition to unrelenting social criticism, though, this position believes citizens need to be able to examine critically with others the needs of democratic life. Once doubt suspends the habituation to a political judgment, then, it is necessary to create an environment for ongoing dialogue in order to develop the next useful hypothesis for our society. Accordingly, citizens must be able to participate with each other in perpetual doubt coupled with endless critical reflection and provisional judgment to continue our democratic republic. Thus, the facilitating leader (a.k.a., the citizen) facilitates this ongoing conversation, perpetual doubt and endless provisional judgment.

THE DANGEROUS EXPERIMENT

[25] Ibid.
[26] McClay, "Is America an Experiment," 13.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid., 14.

"But," McClay remarks, "the question is whether everything is therefore to be open to transformation."[29] Or, stated differently, Is there something we cannot experiment with? In addressing this question, and in considering the variety of answers to it, we are exploring a perennial problem, which is to say that we are engaged with a matter that is constitutive of and inseparable from political life. Any particular polity must have begun. But the challenge of founding is not our central focus here. Rather, we are preoccupied with the significantly, but not entirely, different problem of preservation. A healthy polity is, among other things, one that effectively addresses the problem of its own preservation.

For Barber and his ilk, there is nothing free from experimentation. Echoing John Rawls' "reflective equilibrium," Barber contends that we must begin with our existing judgments. These judgments are revised in light of mutual, ongoing deliberation and judgment.[30] All principles or judgments are experimental. Nothing enjoys the status of non-experimental or non-arbitrary. Democracy is a procedural politics and does not require shared, non-experimental beliefs. In fact, it is precisely the demand that something be indubitable that is the primary threat to democracy. For, as Barber states, "democracy enjoins constant, permanent motion;" democracy is a journey without a destination.[31]

Here is where the idea of experiment in Barber's position begins to fail to capture our democratic republic. What is more, Barber's position on democracy, and his promotion of a facilitating leader, poses substantial risk to the perpetuation and health of our republic. The problem stems from a failure to grasp the nature of our republic and the nature of political life in general. In short, our democratic republic is not exhausted by process alone. His position misconceives the nature of our regime because it assumes that right actions (in the form of skepticism, inquiry, participation and judgment) are more important than right thoughts (in the form of opinions and beliefs). In so doing, he overstates the openness of our republic to and underestimates the effect of experimentation on our republic to the potential detriment of our regime.

Our regime rests on opinions. Our regime's fundamental opinions are most notably articulated in the *Declaration of Independence*. It is the "self-evident" truths stated in the *Declaration* that justify both the dissolving of relations with Great Britain and the founding of a new, separate, independent and equal regime. Our regime is founded on the propositions that: a) all men are created equal; b) all men are endowed with unalienable rights; c) governments are

[29] Ibid., 14.
[30] John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1971), pp. 20 and 46-53.
[31] Barber, "Foundationalism and Democracy," in *A Passion for Democracy*, 23.

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instituted by the consent of the governed to secure those rights; and d) the people have a right to revolt if they believe the government is failing to secure those rights. Each of these propositions is important and fundamental to the character of our regime. No less a student of our democracy than Abraham Lincoln reminds us, though, that the animating principle of equality in the *Declaration* is the "leading principle—the sheet anchor of American republicanism." Deep in the crisis of the Civil War, Lincoln reminded our nation of this anchor when in the *Gettysburg Address* he stated, "Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and *dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal*." According to Lincoln, it was this proposition about human nature that above all justified a government of the people, by the people and for the people. This is because the equality of men makes necessary the consent between men. As Harry Jaffa states, "[I]t was *because* men are by nature equal; *because*, that is, no man is by nature the ruler of another, that government derives its just powers from consent—that is, from the opinion of the governed."[32] When Barber conceives of our nation, he appears to elevate the notion of participation and process. This position, however, ignores the fact that participation and process rests on a prior *opinion* about human nature.[33]

The same is true for the conditions of freedom generally. Freedom is not guaranteed. There must be a shared conviction amongst the citizens that freedom be honored and protected. History is replete with examples where freedom has been thwarted. Without a kind of sacred support of the conditions of freedom, these conditions cannot be made secure, and thus freedom itself may not be protected in our regime. The conditions for freedom, such as the toleration of free inquiry, must be met in order that freedom may endure.

This misconception of democracy occurs because of a more general misconception of politics. A political regime is cognizant of its peculiar character (each individual regime is particular and distinct), grasps what is required for it to endure, and is willing and able to take the steps necessary to do so. Preservation depends on effectively responding to external threats. Even more important, however—not the least because effective response to

[32] Harry V. Jaffa, "'Value Consensus' in Democracy: The Issue in the Lincoln-Douglas Debates," in *Equality and Liberty: Theory and Practice in American Politics* (Claremont, CA: The Claremont Institute, 1999), 82.

[33] It is not entirely clear that the Framer's themselves supported a robust, participatory democracy. For the Framer's, democracy has a tendency to become overly factious and passionate resulting in weakened order and stability. See *Federalist* #9, #14 and #63. See also Jennifer Roberts, "The Creation of a Legacy: A Manufactured Crisis in Eighteenth-Century Thought," in *Athenian Political Thought and the Reconstitution of American Democracy*, edited by Peter Euben, John R. Wallach, and Josiah Ober (Cornell, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), 90.

external threats depends upon it—is the internal cohesion of the polity. In a healthy regime, individuals are bound together. This is the result of shared beliefs, especially beliefs regarding the true and just. Shared belief nurtures an identity. Together, by establishing that the ways of the polity are sanctioned and hence worthy, shared belief and the resulting sense of identity make possible the commitment and sacrifice needed to survive over time. Yet, Barber denies the need for deeply held convictions in politics in general and, specifically, in our democratic form of politics.

Ironically, then, Barber's position promotes the virtues that if practiced exclusively could destroy the conditions for the very virtues it intends to promote. Here is where Barber's position is most dangerous to our republic. If it is the case that foundations of some kind are needed for the establishment of our regime, and the conditions of freedom generally, then failure to protect these foundations could lead to our regime's demise. Yet, the systematic dissemination of doubt regarding our foundations and the conditions of freedom could place our regime in jeopardy. Incapable of taking anything seriously, our citizens would be incapable of supporting these needed foundations. Paraphrasing David Frum, it never seems to occur to those like Barber that a genuine questioning of "all beliefs" might overturn liberal-democratic idols.[34] This position naively assumes that jettisoning foundations, relying on common interest and common choice alone will necessarily lead to the upholding of our democratic tradition. The citizen who learns to abandon all commitments and traditions, though, will not necessarily uphold democratic commitments and traditions. Because our regime is an instance of politics, and politics cannot escape dependence on convention and opinions, to the degree skepticism destroys our fundamental opinions, Barber's position has limited usefulness for our regime. His position creates the potential for instability where we need a measure of stability for our regime to endure.[35]

[34] David Frum, "Book Review of *Cultivating Humanity*, by Martha Nussbaum," *The Public Interest* no. 131 (Spring 1998): 105-9.

[35] The problem identified here is more than an academic squabble over the nature of democracy and leadership. This view of democracy and leadership is spreading in institutions of learning. In the United States today, "leadership" is a popular idea. Whereas only a few books were published in the 1950s with leadership in the title, in the past several years there have been dozens of books published, several of which are bestsellers. Georgia Sorenson, Director of the Center for Advanced Study of Leadership at the James McGregor Burns Academy of Leadership, reports that "there were nearly 600 leadership development programs at American post-secondary institutions in 2000, more than double the number in 1996. The efforts range from single leadership resource centers to graduate degree programs in Leadership Studies." By and large, these leadership courses, programs and centers follow the view of democracy and leadership advocated by the likes of Barber. The perpetuation of this

A PLACE FOR STATESMANSHIP

What the foregoing remarks indicate is that while America is an experiment, it is not an "Experimental America."[36] There are vital principles that cannot be lost without the loss of our democratic republic. Given that we have overcome the difficult task of actualizing the principles asserted in the *Declaration*, what kind of leadership do we need to preserve them? Contrary to Barber, the facilitating leader is too dangerous. Here, I think, is a place for statesmanship. In place of the facilitating leader, we need to foster statesmanship, for statesmen act as stewards preserving our vital principles and, thus, the health of our republic.

In order to understand how statesmen act as stewards and why this is beneficial to our republic, it is helpful to recall the idea of steward and stewardship. From its etymological roots, a "steward" was a keeper of the ward; a kind of caretaker. What stewards care for may vary but what they care for is often something beyond their own private interest. Museum curators are stewards of historical or art objects; regents are stewards of institutions of learning; parents are stewards of children. Stewardship, then, "is a social role individuals adopt toward some other, a role sustained over time."[37] Moreover, it is the vigilant and responsible supervision of that other, be it an institution, object or person, entrusted to one's care. "To be a steward is to devote a substantial percentage of one's thoughts and efforts to maintaining or enhancing the condition of some thing(s) or person(s), not primarily for the steward's sake."[38] To expand on this point, it is helpful to recount the religious roots of stewardship. According to the Bible (*Psalm* 24:1), God has dominion over all, but he appoints humanity as the stewards of creation. In *Genesis* 2:15, it is stated that human beings are intended to serve the garden in which we have been placed. Within the religious notion of stewardship there are two dimensions. First is the dimension of protection or preservation. In *Psalm* 27:2, it suggests a need for preserving that which God has granted to us. In addition, the Old Testament contains the story of Joseph where he is depicted as a servant who oversees possessions, but does not own them, and predicts potential developments and creates ambitious proposals. Second is the dimension of progress or growth. In *Matthew* 25:14-30, there is a parable of "talents," which may refer to money or abilities. The parable suggests that people are accountable and responsible to God and that which is entrusted to

view in courses, programs and centers, then, heightens the potential danger to our republic and its cherished principles.

[36] McClay, "Is American an Experiment," 14.

[37] Jennifer Welchman, "The Virtues of Stewardship," *Environmental Ethics*, 21 (Winter 1999), 411-423.

[38] Ibid.

us should be improved; improved not only for us the stewards but for all of God's people. At the heart of stewardship, then, lies a responsibility for *protecting* and *developing* that which is entrusted to one's care.

How does this idea relate to statesmanship? Let's recall the idea of statesmanship. What is statesmanship? It is a kind of leadership. Leadership, though, is a broad term under which there are many different kinds of leadership depending on aim and context. For example, there is educational leadership, business leadership, political leadership, etc. Statesmanship is a form of political leadership. Its unique context is the political realm or the state. The statesman, though, is not a politician. The politician aims for his own good. He says and does what the electorate wants to hear and see so that he can be re-elected. The politician is self-interested rather than interested in the public good. The statesmen, however, aims for the public good; he aims for the good of the state. As a student of human nature and politics, he possesses the ability to discern it in the midst of particular circumstances and acts with prudence to acquire it. At times, statesmanship requires rising above the private passions of citizens, persuading them to do what the public good requires by prudently subjecting them to critical examination and, when appropriate, even resisting them. The statesmen's focus on the goal, namely the public good, makes him distinct from a manager. A manager is focused on process and organization. A manager oversees the process to ensure maximum efficiency. The goal, and the wisdom of the goal, is lost to the manager. The goal is always on the mind of the statesman. The statesman may engage in the management of details, but always with a sense of the higher goal in mind, namely serving the good of the state.

So, the statesman serves the state. But what makes a state a state? The essential character of a state is the "thing that belongs to all and yet which cannot be divided up and parceled out to each citizen. That public thing, that thing which is held truly in common, is a common view of the public good."[39] This common view helps integrate members into the beliefs, practices and traditions of the city. Rituals, literature, and codes of conduct all emanate from this central view of the public good and work to integrate citizens. To not feel the magnetic pull of the ideal is to be outside of the state. Yet, while this vision integrates, it also excludes. It excludes by defining those who do not feel its pull, who do not know the right thing without thinking, who do not share the values of this way of life as outsiders. A state, then, is this complex of values unified by an image or ideal of the public good that defines its way of life, its character.

Recalling our epigraph from William Bennett, the statesman's responsibility is to attend first, and energetically, to these underlying opinions

[39] Morton J. Frisch and Richard G. Stevens, *American Political Thought: The Philosophic Dimension of American Statesmanship* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), 7.

and ideals, which are the most important things. Put more succinctly, the statesman's duty is to care for the state's vital principles.[40] It is in fulfilling this duty that we find the steward in statesmanship. Like a steward, the statesman serves something other than his own private gain. Rather, as caretaker of the state, he cares first and foremost for the good of the state. His service, like the steward, has two dimensions. He *protects* the vital principles to preserve the constitution of the state. In addition, he *enhances* the state by warding off both external and internal threats and working to improve the conditions for the flourishing of the state's vital principles. That is, like a steward, the statesmen's responsibility is to preserve the state's vital principles and improve the conditions for their perpetuation.

A few brief examples illustrate the steward in statesmanship. A useful illustration is Abraham Lincoln during the crisis leading up to and during the Civil War. As a young man, Lincoln had won a place both in the Illinois legislature and U.S. congress. But by 1849, at the age of 40, Lincoln left politics to study law. For fifteen years, he remained out of politics and may have for the remainder of his life, but in 1854 he re-entered politics opposing the Kansas-Nebraska Act. What prompted him to return to politics was a deep concern that a, if not *the*, vital principle of our republic, namely that all men are created equal, was violated by this act. As we know, the act allowed the repeal of the Missouri Compromise which blocked the extension of slavery. The repeal meant the extension of slavery and possibly the perpetuity of inequality which in Lincoln's mind meant the continued violation of the principles asserted in the *Declaration*. For Lincoln, our experiment could not succeed without faithfulness to our vital principles. Lincoln thus rose up to challenge the degradation of our principles and through perseverance, prudence and remaining faithful to our *Constitution*, Lincoln served to preserve our Union through an intense, prolonged domestic crisis that threatened our continuation as a Union. In addition to preserving our principles, he also enhanced the conditions for principles to flourish. As he had stated in the Lyceum Address of 1838, the old pillars of liberty had fallen and we, the descendants of the Founders, must supply the temple of liberty with other pillars, "hewn from the solid quarry of sober reason." Through Lincoln's "cold, calculating, unimpassioned reason," he set forth a "new birth of freedom" which

[40] The statesmen's devotion to the state is what separates him from, say, the activist or advocate. The activist is less interested in the preservation of the state and more interested in particular issues like civil injustices. As Joseph Fornieri stated in a personal conversation, it is the difference between Lincoln and Frederick Douglass. Whereas Lincoln's priority was saving the Union, abolitionists, like Douglass, advocated for civil and political rights and were willing to go outside of the framework of the Union to achieve their goals. See Joseph Fornieri, *Abraham Lincoln, Philosopher Statesman* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2014).

strengthened our republic and its pillars of liberty. In these ways, Lincoln fulfilled his duty as a statesman by acting as a steward to both preserve and enhance our cherished principles.

In perhaps a less dramatic moment, Calvin Coolidge's speech on July 4, 1926 commemorating the 150th anniversary of the Founding illustrates a moment of stewardship of our vital principles.[41] During this period, a new progressive philosophy of human nature and politics, notably found in Woodrow Wilson, Oliver Wendell Holmes, John Dewey and others, was gaining in recognition and influence. In this speech, however, Coolidge reminded us all of our vital principles and cautioned us against rejecting them. He stated,

> About the Declaration there is a finality that is exceedingly restful. It is often asserted that the world has made a great deal of progress since 1776, that we have had new thoughts and new experiences which have given us a great advance over the people of that day, and that we may therefore very well discard their conclusions for something more modern. But that reasoning can not be applied to this great charter. If all men are created equal, that is final. If they are endowed with inalienable rights, that is final. If governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed, that is final. No advance, no progress can be made beyond these propositions. If anyone wishes to deny their truth or their soundness, the only direction in which he can proceed historically is not forward, but backward toward the time when there was no equality, no rights of the individual, no rule of the people. Those who wish to proceed in that direction can not lay claim to progress. They are reactionary. Their ideas are not more modern, but more ancient, than those of the Revolutionary fathers.

To those in the roaring twenties caught up in the growing materialism of the era, he stated,

> We live in an age of science and of abounding accumulation of material things. These did not create our Declaration. Our Declaration created them. The things of the spirit come first. Unless we cling to that, all our material prosperity, overwhelming though it may appear, will turn to a barren sceptre in our grasp. If we are to maintain the great heritage which has been bequeathed to us, we must be like-minded as the fathers who created it. We must not sink into a pagan materialism. We must cultivate the reverence which they had for the things that are holy. We must follow the spiritual and moral leadership which they showed. We must keep replenished, that they may glow with a more compelling flame, the altar fires before which they worshiped.

[41] See Calvin Coolidge's "Speech on the 150th Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence," accessed July 16, 2014, http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=41.

In both of these statements, Coolidge reminds us of our vital principles and encourages us to stay true to them. In this way, he acts as a steward preserving our principles that define us as a republic and will allow us to endure as a republic.

Another example *may be* Franklin Delano Roosevelt.[42] Like Lincoln, Roosevelt needed to demonstrate the viability of our democratic republic in a period of crisis. The circumstances, however, were different. First, there was the crisis of the depression. The economic crisis was unprecedented; there were massive dislocations in the economy. Coupled with this crisis, and what made this crisis distinct from Lincoln's, was an external threat by two alternatives in Communism and Fascism. In this case, America was tested not

[42] I state it "may be" an example because there is considerable controversy over what exactly Roosevelt preserved. He did preserve liberal democracy from its two alternatives, but at what price to our republic as limited government and self-government? We see this controversy played out during the years leading up and after the 1932 election between Herbert Hoover and Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Both men intended to be stewards of "Our American System," as Hoover put it, but their interpretations of that system and what to steward proved contentious. Hoover called for a return to our American system, by which he meant "a particular conception of self-government in which decentralized local responsibility is the very base. Further than this, it is founded upon the conception that only through ordered liberty, freedom, and equal opportunity to the individual will his initiative and enterprise spur on the march of progress." *Herbert Hoover, Campaign Speech, New York, October 22, 1928.* Indeed, Hoover stated in 1932 that his "first duty" was to "preserve unfettered that dominant American spirit which has produced our enterprise and individual character." *Hoover, Presidential Nomination Address, Sent to the Republican National Convention, Washington, D. C., 1932.* Franklin Delano Roosevelt also claimed to be perpetuating our American system, but his interpretation differed dramatically from Hoover. Whereas Hoover appeared willing to let individuals and markets alone respond to the economic crisis, Roosevelt called for unprecedented government involvement. With frequent references to Jefferson, Hamilton and the Constitution, Roosevelt claimed to be using government to march along the path of "real progress, of real justice, of real equality for all our citizens, great and small." *Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Presidential Nomination Address, Democratic National Convention, July 2, 1932.* When accused of suspending private enterprise, Roosevelt claimed he would use government intervention to seek the "guarantee the survival of private enterprise by guaranteeing the conditions under which it can work." *Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Address on the Survival of Private Enterprise, October 23, 1936.* In contrast to Hoover, Roosevelt believed that "a new idea has come to dominate thought about government, the idea that the resources of the nation can be made to produce a far higher standard of living for the masses of the people if only government is intelligent and energetic in giving the right direction to economic life." *Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Address on Constitution Day, September 17, 1937.* Both men, I believe, intend to be stewards of the American system; the problem emerges over what constitutes, in this case, the "American system." The controversy here between Hoover and FDR is still playing out in our current political context.

as a mere example of democracy in the world, but as "the very citadel of liberal democracy." The economic crisis called into question the very existence of liberal democracy as opposed to its two powerful alternatives that were growing in allegiance in the U.S. and throughout the world. Like Lincoln, Roosevelt was faced with a challenge to the perpetuation of our republic. To Roosevelt's credit, he won "allegiance of a restive democratic nation and, at the same time, moderated its extremist tendencies toward state corporatism on the one hand and the class struggle on the other."[43] Here too Roosevelt acted as a steward by preserving our republic against the threat of alternatives.

These brief illustrations demonstrate the steward in statesmanship. Each of these individuals to a greater or lesser extent is attempting to care for our republic. This task is absolutely critical for our perpetuation. If our principles and the conditions that support them are dissolved, "that bond of fellow feeling which fellow-citizens feel for each other is destroyed."[44] Citizens begin to wonder what binds them together; what makes them a public. Without this common, public good unifying the state, the state itself will evaporate.

STATESMANSHIP, STEWARDSHIP AND EDUCATION

Let us conclude reflecting on the steward in statesmanship by observing the critical role of education in perpetuating our republic. For the statesmanship to do his work, he must form and reform the character of the citizens by calling "forth from them a readiness to behave in way which is good for them and for the country as a whole."[45] The perpetuation of our republic is made difficult by a number of external and internal threats. The external threats, though serious, are not of most immediate concern. As Diana Schaub observes, we can identify our external threats by reference to only two days, September 11th and December 7th. Even after September 11th, no one really believes that our nation is threatened seriously by an external force. For example, as rapid as China is growing, they are just now obtaining their first aircraft carrier by retro-fitting an old Russian model.

As noted by Lincoln, it is the potential of internal threats that poses the most serious harm. And it is the prevention of these internal threats to our nation which is a statesmen's most immediate concern. Even before Lincoln, Tocqueville in *Democracy in America* worried about an excessive materialism that would rob us of our "most sublime faculties" and "spiritual views" that supported our republic.[46] In his *Lyceum* address, Lincoln identified "time" and

[43] Frisch and Stevens, *American Political Thought*, 16.
[44] Ibid., 7-8.
[45] Frisch and Stevens, *American Political Thought*, 8.
[46] Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Volume II, Part II, Chapter 15, accessed July 16, 2014, http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/etcbin/toccer-

"usurpation" as possible threats. In the first case, time deprives us of the living memory of the Revolution and that which it stood for. The principles that had been understood in the beginning are lost to sight, covered-over, distorted, repudiated and forgotten. In the second case, "the very passions that proved a pillar of liberty at the time of the nation's framing will, it later days, become instruments for demagogic manipulation and demolition." Usurpation occurs almost imperceptibly and slowly loosens public opinion dissolving that bond of affection to the public good.

In order for the statesmen to perform his duty as a steward and preserve our vital principles and, thus, the health of our republic, he must educate Americans in the meaning of their original charters. Failing to achieve this task, we risk the dissolution of the glue that binds us together. Barber does recognize the importance of education through schools and civic associations for our republic. The problem is that he furnishes our republic with citizens possessing the manners and morals of the university classroom. His educational scheme would cultivate the talking virtues. He argues that citizens need to possess a skeptical attitude and questioning spirit to help prevent extreme conformity and obedience. Citizens, on this view, need to exercise these virtues to ward off habituated thoughtlessness and blind allegiance which are potentially detrimental to our republic. The exercise of these virtues is critical to check the creeping conformism that could endanger our sacred rights and liberties.

The *exclusive* exercise of the talking virtues, however, is not enough for our republic, or any political regime. What Barber and others fail to understand is that the talking virtues are not enough because our republic is not solely based on practices and procedures. Rather, our republic is based on opinions which underlie the practices. Therefore, these principles themselves need support. Support does not come from excessive questioning and unbridled skepticism, but rather from a measure of loyalty and affection for our republic.

A political regime, including our own democratic regime, will need to exercise *political virtues* to some measure by some degree in our population. Political virtues are those habits and dispositions needed to sustain every political regime.[47] Political virtues aim to sustain the core principles, practices and traditions of a regime. For example, the political virtue of moral courage—"the willingness to fight on behalf of one's country"—will be needed to defend against the threat of an external foe.[48] By obeying the laws, citizens mold their behavior to hold up the regime's core ideals. Thus, the political virtue of law abidingness needs to be fostered in citizens. Self-restraint of passions, speech and actions is needed to ensure a degree of political stability. If passions, speech or actions are left completely unchecked, then they may attack and weaken the civic bonds that sustain the regime. If weakened, the regime is more likely to falter. There must be a kind of regulation against an internal threat to the regime and the political virtue of self-restraint may act as that regulator. In addition, "[L]oyalty—the developed capacity to understand, to accept, and to act on the core principles of one's society" is critical to motivating action on core beliefs and traditions.[49] Any consistent action, though, will require commitment. To be committed to something, such as a regime, requires a personal investment. A commitment will be forged when it becomes part of our identity. If we conceive of identity as the "way that a person organizes all the personal identifications, ideas and feelings that have continuing importance in the person's life," then, according to William Damon, it is important to foster a positive emotional attachment to a regime.[50] Only through a positive emotional attachment will consistent action occur. As Lincoln so aptly was aware, to prevent the dissolution of our experiment which we have so bravely and honorably fought for, we must "[L]et reverence for the laws be breathed by every American mother, to the lisping babe, that prattles on her lap." Let reverence for the laws "become a political religion."[51] Only if these virtues are cultivated in our citizens can we as a republic survive and flourish. In order for the statesmen to perform his duty as a steward, he must oversee the cultivation of these virtues to preserve and enhance our vital principles.

CONCLUSION

This paper began by taking notice of contemporary objections to statesmanship. These objections were largely premised upon a flawed

new2?id=TocDem2.sgm&images=images/modeng&data=/texts/english/modeng/parsed&tag=public&part=36&division=div2.

[47] For a broad discussion of political virtues see: J. Budziszewski, "Religion and Civic Virtue," *NOMOS* 34 (1992): 49-68; Amy Gutmann, "Democracy and Democratic Education," *Studies in Philosophy of Education* 12, no. 1 (1993): 1-9; Robert Audi, "A Liberal Theory of Civic Virtue," *Social Philosophy and Policy* 15, no. 1 (Winter 1998): 149-70; Russell Bentley and David Owen, "Ethical Loyalties, Civic Virtue and the Circumstances of Politics," *Philosophical Explorations* 4, no. 3 (2001): 223-39; Will Kymlicka and Wayne Norman, "Return of the Citizen: A Survey of Recent Work on Citizenship Theory," *Ethics* 104 (January 1994): 352-81; Herlinda Pauer Studer, "Liberalism, Perfectionism, and Civic Virtue," *Philosophical Explorations* 4, no. 3 (2001): 174-92; Mark Kingwell, "Defending Political Virtue," *The Philosophical Forum* 27, no. 3 (Spring 1996): 244-68; Victoria M. Costa, "Political Liberalism and the Complexity of Civic Virtue," *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 42, no. 2 (Summer 2004): 149-70.

[48] William Galston, *Liberal Purposes: Goods, Virtues, and Diversity in the Liberal State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 221-2.

[49] Ibid.

[50] William Damon, "Restoring Civil Identity Among the Young," in *Making Good Citizens: Education and Civil Society*, eds., Diane Ravitch and Joseph P. Viteritti (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001), 135.

[51] See Lincoln's "The Perpetuation of our Political Institutions."

understanding of our republic. As a result of this conception of democracy, a view of leadership for our republic was promoted, namely the facilitating leader, which on reflection posed a serious danger to us our continuation. With the keen assistance of Wilfred McClay, we recognized that our republic stands on underlying principles and that these principles must be preserved and enhanced for our continuation. On this view of our republic, a place for statesmanship emerged. Statesmen, acting like stewards, care for the state and its vital principles. Like Lincoln's statesmanship illustrates, they preserve and enhance our republic for the future. Especially through careful oversight of the education of citizens, and in contrast to contemporary objections, statesmen can help to maintain a healthy democratic republic.

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