

The Republican Narrative and American Political Culture:
*Wendell Berry, Christopher Lasch and the Great American Cultural
Conversation*

By: Ole Sneltvedt



A thesis presented to: The Department of Literature, Area Studies, and
European Languages

North American Area Studies Faculty of Humanities

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the MA degree in North American
Area Studies

Supervisor: Mark Luccarelli

UNIVERSITY OF OSLO Fall 2014

Copyright: Ole Sneltvedt

År: 2014

Tittel: The Republican Narrative and American Political Culture:

Wendell Berry, Christopher Lasch and the Great American Cultural Conversation

Forfatter: Ole Sneltvedt

<http://www.duo.uio.no>

Trykk: Representeren, Universitetet i Oslo

Abstract:

In this thesis I look at how the revitalization of the republican intellectual tradition since the late 1960's, and its narrative of the free, political and civil life in the well-ordered republic, enter into American political culture. To do so I look at two texts by, Christopher Lasch and Wendell Berry, and argue that their cultural critiques serve a dual purpose: the revival of a populist element within the republican narrative and subsequently its application in a critique of the liberal foundation of modern American culture. The investigation and analysis of the thesis revolves around a narrative theory of culture, which sees culture as involving an ongoing argumentative conversation where the interpretation and sequence of events are ordered into larger narratives that in turn are used as the primary means of communication. Lasch and Berry enter into this American cultural conversation through their use of the republican narrative, and utilize it to identify a crisis within the narrative of the predominate liberal tradition. I argue that they show how the republican narrative can be used as a way of pointing out, that a crisis of modern American culture cannot be separated from a crisis in its liberal tradition, which from the Progressive Era has provided the dominant way of interpreting and sequencing events in the American cultural conversation.

Takk:

En stor takk til min tålmodige veileder Professor Mark Luccarelli for diskusjoner og råd gjennom skriveprosessen. Takk til Siri Johnsrød Traneid for gjennomlesning og språkvask. Takk til Magnus Helgerud for utallige diskusjoner om løst og fast. Takk til min mor, Tone Arntzen og min far, Nils Terje Sneltvedt for all støtte i mine år som student. Og ikke minst tusen takk til min fantastiske samboer Maren Andrea Rønning for at du ikke har stukket av etter å ha hørt ordet “narrativ” hundre- tusenvis av ganger gjennom det siste året.

Contents

1	<u>Introduction</u>	1
1.1	Thesis Statement	3
1.2	Chapter Overview	4
2	<u>A Narrative Vantage Point and the American Liberal Tradition</u>	5
2.1	Narratives, Interpretation and Communication	5
2.2	Culture and Narratives, Cultural Narratives	8
2.3	Traditions and Culture	10
2.4	Deconstruction and Grand-Narratives	13
2.5	Epistemological Crisis and the Usable Past	16
2.6	The American Liberal Tradition from a Narrative Vantage Point	20
2.7	An Epistemological Crisis in the American Liberal tradition	22
2.8	Conclusion: Epistemological Process in the American Liberal Tradition	24
3	<u>The Republican Tradition: Origin and Argument</u>	28
3.1	Hartz vs. Pocock	28
3.2	Pocock's Machiavellian Moment	30
3.3	Epistemological Crisis in the Republican Tradition and Two Early Attempts of Reform: Federalism and Agrarianism	32
3.3.1	Republican Freedom and American Populism	36
3.3.2	American Populism and Power	39
3.4	Conclusion	43
4	<u>Christopher Lasch and The Culture of Narcissism</u>	45
4.1	Christopher Lasch: Historian of Radicalism, Radical Historian	45
4.2	The Progressive Era and the Foundation for <i>A Culture of Narcissism</i>	49
4.2.1	The New Elite, and the Rise of <i>The Culture of Narcissism</i>	51
4.2.2	Populism and <i>The Culture of Narcissism</i>	54
4.2.3	Communities of Competence, a Cure for <i>The Culture of Narcissism</i>	56
4.3	Conclusion: <i>The Culture of Narcissism</i> and the Republican Tradition	60
5	<u>Wendell Berry and The Unsettling of America</u>	61
5.1	Wendell Berry: Narrating <i>The Unsettling of America</i>	61
5.2	Two Worldviews and <i>The Unsettling of America</i>	62
5.3	Two Mentalities and The Unsettling of America	64
5.3.1	The Rise of the Specialist and <i>The Unsettling of America</i>	67
5.3.2	The Earthly Unsettled Paradise	69
5.3.3	Farming in the Earthly Paradise and <i>The Unsettling of America</i>	71
5.4	Conclusion: <i>The Unsettling of America</i> and the Republican Tradition	74
6	<u>Prospects of the Republican Tradition</u>	79
6.1	Lasch and Berry, Cultural Criticism and the Republican Tradition	81
6.2	The Republican Tradition, and America's Argumentative Conversation	85
7	<u>Conclusion</u>	90
	Bibliography	93

1 Introduction

This is a study concerning the broader purpose and importance of American studies and American political traditions. At the center of my concern is the culture of the United States of America and its character. This subject is by no means unexplored, and so before I proceed it seems appropriate to point to a series of questions regarding American culture that I will neither ask nor attempt to answer. I will not try to answer or posit a variation of Charles Bright and Michael Geyer's question, *where in the world is America?*¹ In other words, I will not address America's new position, or lack of repositioning, in a new and globalized world, nor will I assume that American history can only be visible from a global vantage point. Furthermore, unlike David W. Noble I will not assume the *Death of a Nation*, or the end of American history.² This does not imply a return to what Noble would describe as a "national romance."³ It does not suggest the reappearance of Seymour Martin Lipset's *American Exceptionalism*.⁴ I will not advocate, like Samuel P. Huntington, the reaffirmation of the American Creed.⁵ I will ask, however, a similar question to that asked by Huntington in his book *Who are We? America's great debate*, but the answer will not be that American culture is equivalent to Anglo-Protestant culture.⁶ The discussion of American culture below will not concern itself with the search for a synthesis or consensus of a national culture, but rather see it through a theory of conflict. That said, it will not be an analysis of American multiculturalism as a plurality of equally important sub-cultures, or the conflict between these. The view of culture taken below argues that Americans do indeed have something in common: a disagreement.

Definitions of culture often involve notions of shared beliefs, knowledge, and customs that are communicated, learned and applied by its members through symbols. Here we shall not dismiss such a view, but add to it a narrative theory of culture, which argues that culture can be seen as a shared conversation between its members, and that in this exchange they rely on narratives, stories with symbolic properties as the primary means of communication. This conversation can be seen as an argument over the answer to two primary questions: what does it mean to be an

¹ Charles Bright, and Michael, Geyer, , "Where in the World is America?" in *Rethinking American History in a Global Age*, ed., Bender, Thomas, (California, University of California Press, 200),

² David W Noble, *Death of a Nation. American Culture and the End of Exceptionalism*, (Minnesota, University of Minnesota Press, 2002),

³ Noble, *Death of a Nation*, 27

⁴ Seymour Martin, Lipset, , *American Exceptionalism: A double Edged Sword*, (New York, W.W.Norton, 1996),

⁵ Samuel P. Huntington,., *Who are We?: America's great debate*, (New York, Free Press, 2004), xvi

⁶ Huntington, *Who are We?: America's great debate*, xvi

American, and what is going on here, in America? One might of course argue that answers to these questions will vary from individual to individual. Here however, to reduce the complexity of the argument, we will say that Americans attach the stories of their own lives to larger narratives that provide them with a framework, a way to sequence events and actions towards a predetermined end. Such grand-narratives are found within two American traditions, one liberal and the other republican. I will argue that these traditions embody larger narratives that buttress smaller cultural narratives of the founding of the American republic, concepts of freedom, citizenship, role of government, the good life, law and virtue, and that they work towards a particular end, which provide a final answer to the two primary questions above. It is these answers that are principally applied in the cultural argumentative conversation, and due to their incommensurability they enter into a competition over the hegemony of the America cultural conversation. A competition over who can provide the best answer to what it means to be American, and what is going on here, in America?

I will argue that by end of the Progressive Era, the liberal tradition would provide the hegemonic narrative and thus the best answers to these questions within the American cultural conversation. The basis for this dominant position came from its bifurcation; maintaining the classical liberal narrative found in John Locke's philosophy, while creating a new progressive liberal narrative that could better interpret the events emerging out of the industrialization of American society. The liberal tradition split into two grand- narratives. One side included Locke, Adam Smith and Herbert Spencer, and the story of the minimal state, laissez- faire, and negative freedom. The other side involved the story of big government, Keynesian economics, and a progressive notion of freedom, and intellectuals such as John Stuart Mill, Thomas Hill Green and John Dewey. Those applying these narratives partook in the American cultural conversation and would diverge at many points regarding the role of government, liberty and property, but shared a common denominator of individual rights. The liberal tradition could be seen as *one* tradition with two internal grand- narratives, one Lockean and the other modern progressive, which share the same end to their stories, the state of atomistic social freedom.

By the end of the 1960's, historians like J.G.A Pocock and Gordon Wood would interrupt the dialogue between the two liberal grand- narratives by the reassertion of an alternative narrative springing out of the republican tradition. Following their historical accounts of the importance of classical republicanism and Machiavelli's thinking on the early formation of American social and political thought, a republican discourse would form. Through it, writers and

intellectuals tried to re-vitalize and re-interpret the republican narrative in light of modern conditions, and posit it as a counterargument to the liberal hegemony of the American cultural conversation. Communitarians and civic humanists would attempt to move the conversation away from the notion of individual natural or social rights, and towards concepts of political deliberation, civic virtue and community. This republican interruption in the liberal dialogue can be seen as ongoing, and thus I will not attempt to conclude on its success or failure. What I will do is look at two writers, Wendell Berry and Christopher Lasch, who often fall outside the mainstream of the discourse surrounding the republican tradition.

While Lasch's focus was set towards the developments and changes in American social life, Berry's attention is towards environmental degradation, farming and local communities. Despite their differences they meet and join forces in a lamentation of the rise of modern American culture. Andrew J. Bacevich included them as part of a group of American counterculture conservatives.⁷ Here I will argue that they are neither conservative nor countercultural. Their critiques do not come out, as Theodore Roszak would say, an "alarming appearance of barbaric intrusion", nor do they advocate or represent a static tradition.⁸ Berry and Lasch argue that America has become unsettled and that its culture is a culture of narcissism. They almost completely reject modern America, but do so in a way that seems neither intrusive nor barbaric. Their cultural critique, developed through symbols and narratives, appears as an internal argument, an American critique of the idea of America itself. Here I will argue that the reason for this appearance is that they enter the American cultural conversation via the republican tradition, and that they utilize its larger narrative in their cultural critique. The questions this thesis will try to answer are how and why?

1.1 Thesis Statement

There are two main questions that I will answer in this study. The first deals with how to place Wendell Berry and Christopher Lasch's writing within a republican tradition. The second deals with how to see this tradition, and their potential contribution to that tradition, in light of the theory that American culture entails an argumentative conversation. Specifically I will be concerned with how Wendell Berry's *The Unsettling of America* and Christopher Lasch's *The Culture of Narcissism*, fit into the larger discourse following the re-discovery of the importance

⁷ Andrew J., Bacevich, "Counterculture Conservatism", *The American Conservative*, (Jan/Feb issue 2013), Accessed 30.10.2014, URL: <http://www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/counterculture-conservatism-4001/>

⁸ Theodore, Roszak, *The Making of a Counter Culture*, (New York, Doubleday & Company, 1969),42

of the republican tradition on the formation of American social and political thought. But it is also important to see this work as part of a conversation in the form of a continuous argument, leading me to consider how the republican tradition generally, and Lasch and Berry's writing specifically, enter into this political and cultural conversation. In addition I will address a sub-question that can perhaps shed light on what the effect might be of a transformation in the America cultural conversation on politics and national identity, in other words: How does change in the cultural conversation influence national politics and identity?

My thesis is that, from the notion that the liberal tradition has provided the hegemonic way of sequencing the events of modern American culture, Wendell Berry and Christopher Lasch's cultural criticism in *The Unsettling of America* and *The Culture of Narcissism* can be seen as the identification of a crisis within the liberal tradition. They recognize this crisis and direct their critique from the vantage point of the republican tradition. In doing so they aspire to resurrect that tradition and subsequently furnish the American cultural conversation with a second argument, and a different way of answering the questions: what it means to be an American, and what is happening in America?

1.2 Chapter Overview

The answers to these questions will be discussed through five main chapters, starting with chapter two, and subdivided into three intertwined stages of argument. The first stage is the development of a narrative theory of culture, the second stage involves the application of this theory to look at the two dominant traditions of American culture, and the third stage will see Lasch and Berry's writing in light of the discoveries of the two previous stages.

In the first main chapter, chapter two, I will give an account of some of the key ideas within narrative theory. Next I will develop these theories toward a narrative view of culture, and apply this narrative vantage point to look at a test case, the American liberal tradition. In chapter three, I will continue this analysis but now focus on the tradition of primary importance in the overall argument, the American republican tradition. I will subsequently, in chapter four and five, attempt to use the findings of chapter two and three, to determine where and how Lasch and Berry's writing fit into this tradition, and if their use of it can shed new light on its content. In chapter six I will try to bring together Berry and Lasch's arguments to form a shared narrative, then look at this narrative in light of the republican tradition, and finally conclude with the final answers to the questions posited above.

2 A Narrative Vantage Point and the American Liberal Tradition

2.1 Narratives, Interpretation and Communication

Consider this admittedly facetious little example: you are walking along the sidewalk on your way to meet a friend. Suddenly you step in some dog shit. After trying to clean your shoe in the grass, you continue walking down the sidewalk until you meet your friend. You apologize for being late and explain by telling him about the incident. He replies with a bad joke about how shit happens. You decide to go and have a drink with some other friends at the local bar. Here, during conversation, the subject of urban decay becomes a discussion point. You retell your story about the unpleasant event earlier that day, and this starts a discussion about the ethics and behavior of dog owners in the city. This discussion leads to an internal disagreement in the group where one party argues that there are good reasons to pick up after dogs, while the other party argues that it is not against the law not to do so.

This waggish tale contains the key elements of the narrative theory. First there is a main event followed by a series of actions; then the story is told and retold and made into a larger discussion about the social world, effectively creating a public; finally there is division of the public into factions. When you told your friend about the incident you created a narrative. Your narrative was, as Barbara Czarniawska in *Narratives in Social Science Research* explains, “a spoken or written text giving an account of an event/action or series of events/actions, chronologically connected.”⁹ Why you chose to give this account might be seen in connection with Walter R Fisher’s theory of man as *Homo narrans* and that:

we experience and comprehend life as a series of ongoing narratives, as conflicts, characters, beginnings, middles and ends... I do not mean a fictive composition whose propositions might be true or false and have no necessary relationship to the message of the composition. By ‘narration’ I mean symbolic actions- words and/or deeds- that have sequence and meaning for those who live, create, or interpret them¹⁰

The small narrative made your late arrival and soiled shoe intelligible to your friend. In return he made a bad joke about how ‘shit sometimes happens’, and in doing so made a colloquial summary of Hannah Arendt’s notion in *The Human Condition* that “history is a story of events

⁹ Barbara Czarniawska, *Narratives in Social Science Research*, (Sage Publications, London, 2004), 17.

¹⁰ Walter R. Fisher, *Human Communication as Narration: Toward a Philosophy of Reason Value and Action*, (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina press, 1987), 24, 58.

and not of forces or ideas with predictable courses.”¹¹ To this one might reply that it was indeed the dog as the main actor in the story that in fact started the narrative. But as Arendt notes “even though stories are the inevitable results of action, it is not the actor but the storyteller who perceives and ‘makes’ the story”.¹² And thus the story pertains to your events and not the dog’s action.

When you first told your narrative to your friend you chose a way of telling it. If your soiled shoe was of the cheap kind, the story might have taken a light tone thereby giving the event a comic undertone. If, however, your shoe was of the expensive sort the tone might have been graver. This relates to Hayden White’s theory that stories, and therefore history itself, always comes in some form of “emplotment.”¹³ He identifies four *archetypal* narrative forms used to interpret historical events: romantic, comedy, satire and tragedy.¹⁴ Your short narrative above might not qualify as history yet, but if it at a later stage should turn out that it was part of a series of life changing events, you might agree with White that a “sequence of events fashioned into a story is gradually revealed to be a story of a particular kind.”¹⁵

When you re-told your story at the bar, the way you told it might have changed. In front of the others and as part of a larger discussion on urban decay, you made in Fisher’s words a public moral argument, a “contemporary moral argument intended to persuade a general audience the ‘public’.”¹⁶ Your discussion was perhaps not serious enough to be concerned with “ultimate questions – of life and death” but did address “how persons should be defined and treated, of preferred patterns of living” and the “style of life to which the government and society are publicly committed.”¹⁷

The discussion created two factions in the group that judged your argument in two different ways. One side considered your argument in light of what Fisher calls the narrative paradigm. They evaluated it in light of what they saw as “good reasons,” which “production and practice...is ruled by matters of history, biography, culture and character,” and whether they had experienced similar events themselves and could identify with your story.¹⁸ The other side

¹¹ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition: Second Edition*, (Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 252

¹² *Ibid.*, 192

¹³ Hayden, White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-century Europe*, Baltimore, (The John Hopkins University Press, 1975), 6

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 8

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 7

¹⁶ Fisher, *Human Communication as Narration*, 11

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 12

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 7-8,

applied what Fisher calls the rational world paradigm. They thus chose to ignore any notion of good reasons, and claimed, that “the conduct of argument is ruled by the dictates of situation” in this case law, and that “rationality is determined by subject-matter knowledge, argumentative ability and skill in employing the rules of advocacy in given fields.”¹⁹ In other words not what is good, but rather what is right. The former group thought that “the world as we know it is a set of stories that must be chosen among,” while the latter thought that “the world is a set of logical puzzles that can be solved through appropriate analysis and application of reason.”²⁰ Those who adopted the narrative paradigm can be seen as laymen, while those who adopted the rational world paradigm thought of themselves as being experts in the field of legal questions. Neither of the two factions could win the argument because their evaluative paradigms were incommensurable and because, as Fisher point out “the presence of ‘experts’ in public moral arguments makes it difficult, if not impossible, for the public of ‘untrained thinkers’ to win an argument or even judge them well- given the rational world paradigm.”²¹ One should be aware of the increasing incommensurability between these two ways of thinking. The narrative theory presented below adheres to the former narrative paradigm. This is because, in addition to being helpful in establishing a discussion surrounding the texts that will be analyzed in the thesis, the notion of good reasons and the narrative paradigm enables a specific way of looking at culture and narratives further explored below.

The narrative vantage point established above provides a way of looking at the story as a way of interpreting events by sequencing them in relation to other events and interpretations, and form a larger narrative that in turn provide their intelligibility. In addition it provides a way of seeing storytelling as a communicative strategy, in which the narrative is formed into, a narrative of a particular kind, and becomes a public moral argument meant to find resonance in its audience. This resonance is dependent on whether the audience addressed sees the world around them from a narrative or rational paradigm. As will be argued below, to be part of a culture implies the membership in a continuous argument over what it means to be part of that culture, and how to collectively interpret events. This cultural conversation or argument depends on the positing of good reasons, in form of narratives, and can thus not be seen in as applying a rational world paradigm. The narrative vantage point enables us to view American culture as a continuous argument, not a logical puzzle, over how to answer two seminal

¹⁹ Ibid., 59

²⁰ Ibid., 59, 63-65,

Jerome, Bruner, *Actual minds, possible worlds*, (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1986),99

²¹ Fisher, *Human Communication as Narration* , 12

questions: what does it mean to be an American, and what is happening in America?

2.2 Culture and narratives, Cultural Narratives

This is arguably one of several possible vantage points that can be applied within the broad definition of American studies. This study can be seen as a study of American culture and its history of ideas. What narrative theory provides, in addition to being a tool for the interpretation and communication of events explained above, is a way of looking at culture as containing a set of shared narratives applied within what can be seen as a cultural conversation. Czarniawska in *Narratives in Social Science Research* sees narrative theory as a tool for cultural analysis in its ability to “discover its repertoire of legitimate stories and find out how it evolved.”²² A culture then includes in this view a pool of available narratives that can be used, not just individually, but also collectively, in the interpretation of events. Narratives take on symbolic properties within culture and are used as a strategy for mutual communication. Robert Bellah, the co-author of *Habits of the Heart*, sees this communication as a core element in what it means to partake in a culture, and that “cultures are dramatic conversations about things that matter to their participants, and American culture is no exception.”²³ A study of American culture should then, in the view held here, be seen as a study of this, or parts of the constituent narratives involved in the dramatic conversation over what matters to Americans.

American culture is as Bellah mentions no exception, and the study of legitimate narratives within a culture’s dramatic conversation can be applied also to other cultures. What arguably makes American culture especially fitting to a narrative approach lies in its unique history. While the formation of national cultures in Europe had to work from the complex towards the simple, American culture could work from the simple towards the complex. Except for the American-Indians, early American culture, and its political expression of the republic, could develop without having to deal with a multitude of regional, religious or foreign cultures. The early hegemony of Anglo- American culture can arguably be seen as comprising of a set of English cultural narratives, political, religious or philosophical, performed within a new American context and argumentative conversation. The process of re-forming these narratives

²² Czarniawska, *Narratives in Social Science Research* 5

²³ Robert N. Bellah et al., *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life*, (New York, Harper & Row, Publishers, 1986), 27

to fit American conditions can be seen as the early formation of American culture. This means that, unlike most other cultures, American culture has a clear starting point in historical time, but arguably a less clear distinction between political, religious and philosophical narratives in relation to its dramatic conversation. One way to see this is through Alexis de Toqueville's *Democracy in America*, which is arguably a study of both religion, politics and philosophy, but most of all a study of American culture. In his argument, surrounding why the American republic had been a democratic success, two out of three reasons were the American's "peculiar and accidental situation" and "the manners and customs of the people."²⁴ Culture in other words was, for Tocqueville, the pillar of American society.

Through immigration and territorial expansion America would soon become increasingly complex. And, one might argue that this complexity leads to a further complication in the narrative view of American culture. A viable critique of this view of culture as containing an argumentative conversation, can be that it does not deal sufficiently with questions of ethnicity. What about those often defined as hyphenated Americans? Hispanic- Americans, Asian- Americans, African- Americans? The theory, both above and below, by no means reject the fact that these groups might behold their own culture, their own narratives, and their own interpretation of events. Despite this, we shall in this study not focus on what is before the hyphen, but rather what comes after. One might argue that most Americans have at one point belonged to two cultures, two cultural conversations and held different sets of narratives: the Anglo-Americans, American- protestants, American Calvinists etc... That of course does not mean that *American* is some sort of static entity. And, one might argue that each of the hyphenated cultures do bring in new narratives and thus enrich the cultural conversation. The theory above might as well be used to study such a phenomenon. The question here however does not deal with origin or ethnicity, or whether these enrich the cultural conversation. Rather it focuses on what unites and divides Americans regardless of exactly these factors. The emphasis is in other words on why someone who might hold a split cultural allegiance at the same time can clearly define oneself as adherent to liberalism, or republicanism, or conservatism, to believe in progress or technology, or not to. The fact that someone can be a Hispanic liberal, an African- American technocrat, or an Asian - American conservative cannot be fully analyzed only on the grounds of ethnicity or sub- culture. What we shall look for then

²⁴ Alexis, de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, (The University of Adelaide Library eBook, 2014), accessed 16.10.2014, ch17, part1.

is what enables people to adopt and utilize cultural narratives, including history and political philosophy, regardless of such factors

2.3 Traditions and Culture

Thus far, I have argued that American culture involves a wide array of legitimate stories from folklore to political philosophy and that these stories, to a larger degree than in older cultures, rose in conjunction with each other. This makes viewing American culture from the narrative vantage point, especially interesting. As argued above American culture has gone from the simple to the complex. This complexity thus requires the imposition of limitations by its students. One such limitation is to exclude the factor of sub-cultures, and instead focus on common cultural denominators found in larger ideological narratives. From the narrative theory and the notion of a cultural conversation above, I will introduce a theory, which provide a way of viewing the function of larger narratives within American culture. Subsequently I apply this theory to look at what can be seen as the two main traditions in American culture, liberalism and republicanism, and address how the narratives found in Lasch's *Culture of Narcissism* and Berry's *The Unsettling of America* relate to and apply the elements found in the larger narrative of the republican tradition.

Seeing American culture as neither consisting of a plurality of unencumbered sub-cultures, nor as a crucible melting these into one piece, leaves us with the question of how to account for a contextualization of cultural narratives. One way to see this is through Jean-Francois Lyotard's notion in *The Postmodern Condition* of meta- or grand-narratives. As the prefix *meta* implies, these narratives are applied to create order in what is complex by positing a larger narrative that encompasses several smaller ones. The concept of grand-narrative implies a "philosophy of history" that "is used to legitimate knowledge."²⁵ In this case, as a consequence of the narrative paradigm above, knowledge is concerned not with fact, but with good reasons. Grand-narratives can thus be seen as larger stories that go beyond the specific, seeking to incorporate narratives and events into its own emplotment, and most importantly to sequence them as part

²⁵ Jean-Francois, Lyotard, *The postmodern Condition: A report on knowledge*, (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1984),xxiv . It should be noted that Lyotard in *The Postmodern Condition* accounts for the incommensurability between scientific and narrative legitimation of knowledge as he treats them as "two very different language games", in which knowledge in the narrative paradigm concerns what is "good" and the scientific paradigm what is "true."(xxv) Here however we will apply the narrative paradigm and are thus not concerned with "The Pragmatics of Scientific Knowledge"(ch7), as science and truth must ultimately be transmitted and legitimized through narratives.(29)

of a larger story working towards its end. From the vantage point of the narrative paradigm we might see them as larger stories concerned with the legitimacy of smaller stories and events as good or bad in relation to their predetermined ends.

In this analysis we will see American culture and its history of ideas as consisting of two incommensurable and competing narrative endings that are applied in the larger conversation to unite and structure subsidiary cultural narratives and events. These are more often treated as ideologies, or political philosophies, here we will not deny such a fact, but instead focus on their function as cultural narratives and that both, in different ways, draw up larger stories that explain what it means to be an American, and what is going on in America? In American culture three such narratives stand out, two within the liberal tradition and one within the republican. First, they can be seen as different ways of interpreting and contextualizing American events. Thus the industrial revolution, or the Wall Street crash of 1929, can have two different interpretations, as sequenced into a larger, liberal or republican, story. Second, they can be applied to contextualize other cultural narratives, to interpret them as chapters or paragraphs in relation to a larger narrative. Thus both include smaller narratives, work from the same repertoire of American cultural narratives, of the importance of property, citizenship, freedom, the frontier, the role of market, the role of government, but also stories of the characters of the founding fathers and the frontiersman.

The most important aspect that set them apart is their incommensurable narrative endings. Both the classical Lockean and the modern progressive narrative within the liberal tradition seek to incorporate narratives and sequence events towards the final end of its story : *...and so they lived separately, but happily, with toleration and respect for each other's individual rights*. The republican narrative has the same function, but ends with the phrase: *...and so they lived together, for better or for worse, with active deliberation, sharing in the governing of each other*. This is of course a simplification as a way of revealing the narratives' essences. The point is that given their different endings they are competing for the ability to contextualize events and cultural narratives, or in other words attempting to provide the dominant schema for American culture. Going back to Czarniawska or Bellah, cited above, we might say that they compete, not over repertoire, but over legitimacy. They evaluate the quality of events, and their subsequent interpretative narratives as working with or against their final ends. In doing so they work from the same pool of available cultural narratives, but judge differently the legitimacy of such interpretations.

As a consequence of the main theorist applied in this thesis, Alasdair MacIntyre, the grand-narrative will be treated as existing within and as part of a tradition. This involves no substantial move away from the concept of grand-narratives. What it implies is that their narratives are “not-yet-completed.”²⁶ Or, in other words, despite working towards set ends, their narratives are not static but embody an internal argument over how to best reach those ends. The liberal tradition and the republican tradition are thus seen as each containing, in MacIntyre’s words, a “historically extended, socially embodied argument... about the goods, which constitutes that tradition.”²⁷ Both traditions aim at providing the American conversation, American culture, with the best schemata, the best argument, and the best way of sequencing events and making them intelligible. To do so they must internally revise their narratives, and so tradition in the MacIntyrean sense entail a process of constant revision and challenge.²⁸ A living tradition, in addition to internal conflict, also experiences external challenges, in the case of American culture, the republican and liberal tradition challenge each other.

There are three ways to see this dynamic. First, that American culture remains divided and that people include the narrative of themselves as part of this culture by way of the republican *or* liberal grand-narratives. Second, it can be seen as a dynamic of countervailing powers in which the republican and liberal tradition provide each other with a mutually beneficial opposition as checks and balances. In this thesis we shall adhere to a third way, in words sometimes attributed to Napoleon Bonaparte other times to Winston Churchill, that *history is written by the victors*. In this case to be read literally, that *one* tradition can become hegemonic in sequencing events and legitimizing smaller narratives as parts of a larger story. This cultural hegemony as Antonio Gramsci might have suggested encompasses the first and dismisses the second view above in that it does not reject the other tradition but rather makes it marginal. This implies that one tradition through internal and external revision can provide a grand-narrative so attractive in its interpretation of events that it almost completely overshadows the other.

²⁶ Alisdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue a study in moral theory*, (London, Duckworth, 1985), 223

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 222

²⁸ Alisdair MacIntyre, “Epistemological Crises, Dramatic Narrative and the Philosophy of Science”, *The Monist*, Vol. 60, No. 4 (OCTOBER, 1977), 461

The American cultural conversation, in the simplified view held above, could thus be seen as containing two key traditions with corresponding narratives that are applied in the argument over what it means to be American and how to sequence American events. Those who adhere to the republican or liberal tradition seeks to win the argument, and by doing so furnish American culture with their grand- narrative, their primary way of rendering events intelligible and a hegemonic voice in the American cultural conversation. This requires that they subject the narratives of their respective traditions to constant internal interpretation and revision, and that they meet the challenge of external traditions by providing a more attractive interpretation of events and smaller narratives as sequenced towards their respective ends. But what happens if the grand-narrative becomes static in its internal revision, what if it fails at making events intelligible, what if the other tradition creates a more appropriate narrative, a better way to sequence events.

2.4 Deconstruction and Grand-Narratives

The primary writers, Christopher Lasch and Wendell Berry, analyzed and discussed in this thesis, both speak of a crisis in modern American culture. In the narrative theory laid out above, culture is seen as shared legitimate stories, interpretive tools for the intelligibility of events assisting a shared dramatic conversation. In the context of American culture, this dramatic conversation is seen as dominated by a hegemonic tradition and that is challenged by a more marginal tradition. But what happens if the larger narrative within a tradition fails to sequence and interpret events, what if another narrative seems more plausible, what if its story no longer seem to progress towards its predetermined end?

In order to look at this we need a theory of dissonance, of the crisis or failure of such traditions in internally revising their narratives, or the external challenge to its hegemony. In order to develop such a theory and include it in the narrative theory above, two different theories will be discussed below.

Perhaps the most common way of seeing such a crisis is through Lyotard's theory of postmodernity as the "breaking up of the grand narratives."²⁹ In order to look at his theory we

²⁹ Lyotard, *The postmodern Condition: A report on knowledge*, 15

must temporarily suspend the notion of tradition. Lyotard sees in the postmodern a growing skepticism towards overarching narratives, and their scientific or narrative language games legitimizing knowledge, trying to encompass and explain all other narratives and events, as part of a reaction to and disenchantment with the myths of modern western culture. The primary function of these grand narratives is the legitimation of knowledge as epistemological paradigms, which gain their strength from the notion that “knowledge and power are simply two sides of the same question.”³⁰ In western culture these grand narratives may be seen as in all the main ideologies--Marxism, liberalism, fascism, republicanism, but also key modern ideas such as, enlightenment, democracy, industrialism, progress and capitalism.

In a specifically American context we might see them as: liberalism, republicanism, the idea of a homogenized national culture, Americanism, American exceptionalism or the notion of America as a city-upon-a hill. The “incredulity” towards such grand- narratives leads to a process of de-construction that results in a set of smaller, more specific narratives, which “refines our sensitivity to differences and reinforces our ability to tolerate the incommensurable,” but also leaves us with the difficult question of where to find legitimacy?³¹ Lyotard’s post-modern theory could provide a way of analyzing modern American culture from the vantage point of narrative theory. This would involve the notion that both grand-narratives of American culture were without “credibility” and that the cultural conversation consisted of a plurality smaller narratives separately interpreting and sequencing events.³² What this implies is a move away from large narratives and towards what Mikhail Bakhtin would call a “polyphonic’ narrative” comprised of narratives surrounding sub-cultures, marginalized groups and individuals.³³ Here however, to avoid a potential cacophony, we shall simplify the cultural conversation to that of an argumentative dialogue, which in turn require grand-narratives.

The reason for this lies in the view of culture as an argumentative conversation between its members, and one of the key premises of this thesis, that American culture indeed consists of two traditions both containing internally uncompleted narratives, and that they are both trying to equip American culture with the dominant hegemonic argument in its cultural conversation. Lyotard leaves out the possibility of this middle position of conflict, and thus the de-

³⁰ Ibid., 9

³¹ Ibid.,xxiv, xxv

³² Ibid., 37

³³ Peter, Burke, *History and Social Theory, second edition*, (Cambridge, Polity Press, 2005), 181

construction of American culture into pluralism and subsequently relativism is not sufficient for the later analysis. That said, Lyotard's theory is not simply dismissed as it does provide a helpful way of defining postmodernism as the skepticism towards grand-narratives. Implied in its dismissal of modern philosophies of history, ideologies, or grand-narratives it reveals its own view of history, viz. that there is no legitimate philosophy of history. What this in turn implies is that postmodernism require modern grand narratives to buttress this view of history.

The modern foundation of post-modern thought arguably suggests a view of history that does not see past the foundation of modern thought in the Enlightenment. We might say that Lyotard's postmodern thinking depends on a series of binary oppositions, modern vs. postmodern, structuralism vs. post-structuralism, foundationalism vs. anti-foundationalism. In other words it works from the modern to the postmodern—in effect, creating a new grand narrative by stealth, the grand-narrative of how there is no grand narrative. One might argue that a consequence of this dialectic is that the postmodern accepts one of the primary premises of the modern Enlightenment narrative, the rejection of tradition and history beyond its own.

Lyotard's theory arguably does not look past the modern. This implies that he sees modern culture as comprised of exclusively modern cultural narratives regardless of whether they are grand or small. This view seems incompatible with MacIntyre's notion of tradition above as containing a historically extended argument. If cultural narratives are created and later found within the history of a culture, and that history goes beyond what can be called modern, it invokes the question of how we can view cultural narratives beyond only what is modern?

A precursor to an answer to this question springs out of a certain view on history, what Van Wyck Brooks called the "usable past."³⁴ By seeing, as Brooks did, history as a pool of readily available narratives that can be used for the interpretation of present events or guide the way towards the future, we might differentiate and say that modern culture possesses both specifically modern narratives and historically preserved narratives preceding what is modern. This view of history, again implies a view of cultural narratives as extended arguments that both have a history and utilize narratives found in history, as the language of their conversation. So how do we join this view of history with narrative theory, grand-narratives and tradition? Is

³⁴ Christopher, Lasch, *The True and Only Heaven: Progress and Its Critics*, (New York: W.W Norton & Company, 1991), 353

there a way of addressing the crisis of grand- narratives without completely dismissing them? It is, perhaps surprisingly, a moral theorist that provides the best answer.

2.5 Epistemological Crisis and the Usable Past

In order to join this view of history with narrative theory we shall return to MacIntyre's notion of tradition above, and introduce a way of viewing the failure and crisis of traditions and grand-narratives without having to completely de-legitimize or de-construct them. In his essay from 1977 *Epistemological crises, Dramatic Narrative and The Philosophy of Science* and later in his book *After Virtue*, MacIntyre forms a narrative theory around the notion of tradition. In doing so he develops a synthesis of the narrative theory and the concept of the usable past.

Above I accounted for a theory, which posited the notion that traditions entailed “not-yet-completed” grand-narratives, whose function it was to legitimize and sequence events and smaller narratives as working towards its end.³⁵ In contrast to Lyotard, MacIntyre does not see traditions or their narratives as being static. In fact the opposite applies, and as far as they contain “prescriptions for interpretation” these prescriptions are in turn subjected to competing interpretations.³⁶ In addition he sees these narratives as working towards future ends “whose determinate and determinable character...derives from the past.”³⁷ In other words, the end goal of their stories derives their qualities from the past. MacIntyre's view of tradition and narratives involves neither dismissal of the past nor that conflicting interpretations render them invalid. For MacIntyre living traditions derive their vitality from “continuities of conflict.”³⁸ But, what is the nature and process of this conflict? How does the process of competing interpretations of a tradition work? To answer these questions we must return to the basics of narrative theory.

MacIntyre, as Fisher above, sees man as a *homo narrans* “in his actions and practice, as well as in fictions, essentially a story-telling animal.”³⁹ Similar to Bellah and Czarniawska, he argues that “there is no way to give us an understanding of any society, including our own, except through the stock of stories which constitute its initial dramatic resources.”⁴⁰ The individual relates to culture through a shared “schemata,” an arrangement of such stories, which renders

³⁵ Alisdair, MacIntyre, *After Virtue a study in moral theory*, (London, Duckworth, 1985), 223

³⁶ MacIntyre, “Epistemological Crises, Dramatic Narrative and the Philosophy of Science”, 454,460

³⁷ Alisdair, MacIntyre, *After Virtue a study in moral theory*, (London, Duckworth, 1985), 223

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 222

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 216

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 216

her actions and the actions of others intelligible.⁴¹ In other words “our own lives are generally and characteristically embedded in and made intelligible in terms of the larger and longer histories,” which are again found within traditions.⁴² The life of an individual does not constitute the beginning of a new narrative instead the individual “plunge in *medias res*” of a larger ongoing narrative.⁴³ It is the acknowledgement and identification of this larger story that in turn enables us to embed our own narrative into it, and understand events and the actions of others as part of it. It is from this starting point that MacIntyre provides a theory of failure and crisis of grand-narratives and tradition. In *Epistemological crises, Dramatic Narrative and The Philosophy of Science*, MacIntyre offer us two interrelated concepts of such failure: epistemological crisis and a subsequent epistemological process.

He uses Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* as the key example: Hamlet returns to Denmark from his studies and sees himself as part of a larger narrative pertaining to the tradition of his family and the kingdom of Denmark.⁴⁴ However, throughout the play and the quest to discover the truth about his father’s death, events and actions fall outside the framework provided by his traditional narrative. He fails to validate what is true, and struggles to find a different way of sequencing the ongoing events and actions as part of a larger narrative. This leads to an epistemological crisis in which he does not know what to treat as true or false evidence, good or bad reasons. His original way of interpreting action and events as part of a larger structure has collapsed. He has lost his identity as part of a larger narrative, and thus lost the interpretative framework that came with his traditional historical and social context. From a meta- perspective MacIntyre argues that the core of Hamlet’s epistemological crisis is his failure to answer the question of “what is going on in Hamlet?”⁴⁵

The response to this epistemological crisis, the failure to sequence events and actions as part of a larger narrative structure providing their “truth and intelligibility,” is to start up an epistemological process.⁴⁶ This process involves simply “the construction and reconstruction of more adequate narratives and forms of narrative,” which includes both how and why the former narrative failed at interpreting the events, and how the agent came to adopt the failed narrative

⁴¹ MacIntyre, “Epistemological Crises, Dramatic Narrative and the Philosophy of Science”, 453,454

⁴² MacIntyre, *After Virtue a study in moral theory*, 222

⁴³ Ibid., 215

⁴⁴ MacIntyre, “Epistemological Crises, Dramatic Narrative and the Philosophy of Science”, 455

⁴⁵ Ibid., 455

⁴⁶ Ibid., 455

in the first place.⁴⁷ It involves discovering another way of structuring events. This way is however never radically new, because the previous failed narrative is “made into the subject of an enlarged narrative.”⁴⁸ Hamlet, MacIntyre argues, is no Descartes because he admits that his previous way of sequencing events has failed. Hamlet enters no “contextless [sic] doubt” because his construction of a better narrative is done within the context of the failed narrative he set out with. This arguably shows how his own epistemological crisis also is “a crisis in the tradition” that has formed his previous narrative framework validating the truth and intelligibility of actions and events.⁴⁹ One might imagine that if Hamlet had survived the swordfight with Laertes, he would have continued to imagine himself as part of the tradition of the kingdom of Denmark. This tradition however would now consist of a heavily revised version of that previous narrative including, how it once provided him with a way of sequencing events and interpreting action, and how it later failed to do so.

What MacIntyre’s account of *Hamlet* posits is that the larger narrative within a tradition might indeed fail in its sequencing and thus prove unable to provide notions of truth and intelligibility. Most importantly however, it shows that despite such failure the whole narrative does not require, and should not undergo, de-legitimization or de-construction, but instead might be recycled to form the basis of a new reformed and improved narrative. MacIntyre puts emphasis on the notion that traditions gain their vitality from conflict and rival interpretations. The internal process of this conflict is arguably visible through his concepts of epistemological crisis and epistemological process.

It is this evolutionary view of traditions and grand-narratives that sets MacIntyre apart from Lyotard. His theory of tradition and narrative welcomes notions of failure and crisis, but replaces de- construction with an epistemological process. So instead of reducing the failure of grand- narratives to relativism or radical skepticism, he argues for the re-construction and re-arrangement of what is already internal to those narratives. Lyotard’s de-construction is in many ways a Cartesian doubt throwing everything at the fire at once and attempting to discover everything anew. MacIntyre, one might say, shares Lyotard incredulity towards the grand-narrative, but only if it exhibits a totalizing feature, that “it has contrived a set of epistemological defenses which enable it to avoid being put in question or at least avoid

⁴⁷ Ibid., 455, 456

⁴⁸ Ibid., 455

⁴⁹ Ibid., 459

recognizing that it is being put into question by rival traditions.”⁵⁰ Traditions and grand-narratives that avoid this epistemological entrenchment remain in constant change and reform, by constantly searching for the best possible answer to what it means to be part of that tradition.

From the various theories above we start to see the appearance of a theoretical framework that provide what might be seen as a way of looking at culture from a narrative vantage point. Fisher argued that we experience and understand our lives through narratives. These narratives consisted for Czarniawska as the sequencing of action and events. White argued that this framework was not neutral but always had some form of emplotment; that the story always came out as a story of some particular kind. Fisher extended the argument by suggesting that narratives also provided a way of communicating moral arguments through the form of a story. These narratives did not claim to posit facts but rather good reasons to be judged by how well they resonated to other people’s narratives. Furthermore Bellah argued that culture could be seen as a dramatic conversation between its participants. As far as seeing communication through a narrative form, the cultural conversation could be seen as applying narratives in its communication. We then expanded and simplified this conversation to include grand-narratives, which can be seen as the application of a rhetoric strategy within the cultural conversation. These larger narratives were utilized as a way of sequencing the smaller narratives into a larger structure as means to a larger end. From this view the American cultural conversation consisted of three grand- narratives, two within the liberal and one within the republican tradition. In MacIntyre’s theory we saw how these narratives could be seen as part of respective traditions who involved a continuous internal conflict, and whose success hinged on how well they could reform their narratives while maintaining their ends. This method of conflict and reform could be seen through the notions of epistemological crisis and process.

Below we shall look at the two traditions that this thesis sees as dominant in the American cultural conversation in light of the narrative theory above and especially MacIntyre’s theory of tradition, narratives and epistemological crisis and process. How have their embedded narratives evolved and reformed through American history and its cultural conversation? Have they put up epistemological defenses? How have they provided the best interpretation of American events, the best answer to what is going on in America, and what it means to be American?

⁵⁰ Ibid., 460

In addition we shall later look at two writers, Christopher Lasch and Wendell Berry, who may be understood as attempting to revitalize a stagnant republican tradition through an epistemological process, and thereby develop and provide it with a better narrative. From MacIntyre's point-of-view, the critique of a tradition "always requires the context of a tradition," we shall see how they in turn apply the republican tradition to challenge the hegemony of the liberal tradition by attempting to provide a better argument in the American cultural conversation.⁵¹ Before doing so, we shall now move on to a brief account of the tradition that is most commonly thought of as the hegemonic tradition in America, and analyze its rise and transformation through American history from the narrative vantage point and the theory of epistemological crisis and process.

2.6 The American Liberal Tradition from a Narrative Vantage Point

The most extensive account of the impact of classical liberalism on the formation of American culture and politics is arguably found in Louis Hartz' book *The Liberal Tradition in America*. In this study Hartz takes, according to Andreas Hess in *American Social and Political Thought*, a "comprehensive approach" to the study of American liberalism. This means that it is not seen as limited to the sphere of political philosophy but rather serves as a catchall in explaining "all facets of America's social and political life."⁵² In his study, Hartz traces the American liberal tradition back to the perhaps most important liberal thinker, John Locke, but not without a twist in the tale.

Locke, as part of his Enlightenment thinking, sought to debunk the myth of the divine right of kings: "the natural liberty of man is to be free from any superior power on earth, and not to be under the will or legislative authority of man, but to have only the law of nature for his rule."⁵³ This notion of freedom is often described as a negative form, the freedom from interference. For Locke the state of nature represented a state in which the individual was free to "order their actions and dispose of their possessions and persons, as they think fit, " only limited by laws of nature. These laws were to be found in "reason," and showed that "no one ought to harm

⁵¹ Ibid., 461

⁵² Andreas, Hess, *American Social and Political thought: A Concise Introduction*, (Cambridge, Polity Press, 2000), 37

⁵³ John, Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, Project Gutenberg EBook, accessed 16.09.2014, Chapter II, section 22.

another in his life, liberty, or possession.”⁵⁴ According to Hartz, the attraction of this idea in feudal Europe was that it “untangled men from the myriad associations of class, church, guild and place, in terms of which feudal society defined their lives.”⁵⁵ Thus the individual could be seen as unencumbered by traditions and social structures. Applied then to the European, especially English context, Locke’s idea can be seen as a normative theory of resistance. In the American context however his ideas would take on new meanings.

For Hartz the conditions that provided the twist in the tale, was exactly the lack of any feudal society, kings and the church in the American context. This meant that Locke’s theory changed from being normative to becoming descriptive and explanatory. American history took on a Lockean background. In the absence of a feudal social structure and with an uncultivated nature, Locke’s theory provided a way of interpreting American difference or particularity. The abundance of land at the frontier could thus be interpreted as “a veritable state of nature,” and the creation of social structures such as the Mayflower Compact could be seen as “veritable social contracts.”⁵⁶

Locke’s theory provided, according to Hartz, the base from where to start the construction of American society.⁵⁷ Thus his ideas went from being, normative to descriptive only to return, in revised form as a normative basis for American political thought. In addition to natural law and natural rights, seen in their Americanized form in the “unalienable rights” of “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” in the Declaration of Independence, it also impacted the role of the state as protector of these rights while at the same time limiting its actions in relation to its role as guardian. Most importantly for Hartz however, is that Locke provided “the master assumption of American political thought...:the reality of atomistic social freedom.” One should notice Hartz’ formulation that this atomistic social freedom is not simply seen as a key idea, but rather a key reality. There is in other words, for Hartz, no other way of interpreting American social and political life than through the liberal tradition.

⁵⁴ Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, Chapter II, section 4, 6,

⁵⁵ Louis Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in American*, In Andreas, Hess, *American Social and Political thought: A Reader*, (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2002), 158

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 158

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 159

The Civil War would further cement the notion of a liberal notion of freedom in the rejection of the illiberal tradition of slavery of the South.⁵⁸ But, it also marks a shift of weight within the liberal tradition. For Hartz, the role of the state in Lockean liberalism has two sides: one implicitly viewing the state as the protector of natural rights, and another explicitly limiting the state to only this function.⁵⁹ J.L Hill in *The Five Faces of Freedom in American Political and Constitutional Thought*, argues that the event of the Civil War marked the inversion of these two sides in relation to the primary principle of classical liberalism, the notion of negative freedom. With the introduction of the Fourteenth Amendment, the state transitioned from being an implicit protector of individual rights to a more explicit role, moving from the model of “limited government” to the more active model of guarantor of individual rights.⁶⁰ It also marked its dominant role in the American cultural conversation by challenging, and winning over the illiberal grand-narrative of the South. As Hess writes, “the South could not survive, as it had no liberal foundation.”⁶¹ The reconstruction following the Civil War can thus be seen also as a cultural reconstruction, which further marked the hegemony of the liberal tradition. What it does not exhibit however is an epistemological crisis in this tradition.

2.7 An Epistemological Crisis in the American Liberal tradition

During the Gilded Age and the second industrial revolution Americans came to experience a series of events that would radically change American society. Before the Civil War, American society consisted primarily of farmers, artisans, and merchants, small urban areas and a still expanding frontier to the West. After the Civil War however with the outgrowth of industrialization, coal mining, railways, urbanization, wage labor, the closing of the frontier, and scientific management, these traditional concepts would be either challenged or replaced. Not only did industrialism confront established ways of life, they also presented the liberal tradition with events that could no longer be interpreted simply through the Lockean liberal narrative. As Hartz notes, Locke provided the early American condition with an interpretative framework, a narrative, which did not come out as only normative, but also, for Americans, as “a sober description of fact.”⁶² After the Gilded age however this narrative did no longer

⁵⁸ Hess, *American Social and Political thought: A Concise Introduction*, 40

⁵⁹ Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in American*, 158

⁶⁰ J.L Hill, “The Five Faces of Freedom in American Political and Constitutional Thought”, *Boston College Law Review*, Volume 45, Issue Number 3, p. 535, accessed: 25/4 2014, <http://lawdigitalcommons.bc.edu/bclr/vol45/iss3/1>

⁶¹ Hess, *American Social and Political thought: A Concise Introduction* , 40

⁶² Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in American*, 158

provide this descriptive force. Two ways of, briefly, seeing this failure is through the discrepancy and internal paradox of two central concepts of classical liberal thought, property and freedom.

In the Lockean state of nature, given that “things of nature are given in common,” the notion of property arises only in conjunction with labor and to take more land than that which could be cultivated was seen as “useless, as well as dishonest.”⁶³ In other words it is the cultivation of land that gives the individual the right to that portion of land. And, the right to that land entails a freedom from interference from both other men and the state. Isaiah Berlin saw this negative concept of freedom as “the area within which the subject ... is or should be left to do or be what he is able to do or be without interference by other persons.”⁶⁴ Both these ideas became sidelined faced with the events of the rapid rise of industrial society. As farm workers migrated to urban areas to become wage- earners they not only to found themselves at the mercy of the *robber barons*, but also lost the autonomy necessary for the realization of the negative conception of freedom. On the other side the wealthy industrialists challenged the classical liberal view on property, owning more then his labor could cultivate.

On the other hand, the forces of the industrial revolution also found its necessary precursor in the classical liberal tradition’s notion of negative freedom in economic terms, *laissez- faire*. This idea, most notably found in the theories of Adam Smith, meant that the government should not only abstain from interfering in the life of the subject, but also in the market, consisting of persons trading in the excess from property. Thus the Lockean notion of negative freedom could be seen as having cleared the path for an industrial society that would come to undermine its own foundational notions of property and freedom. Its failure to render events intelligible rested on this internal paradox, that the notion of freedom as the absence of interference did in fact lead to increased interference and a decrease in freedom. This arguably provided the basis for its epistemological crisis.

⁶³ Locke, *Second Treatise of Government* , chapter 5, sect 45, 44, 51

⁶⁴ Hill, ”The Five Faces of Freedom in American Political and Constitutional Thought”, 507

2.8 Conclusion: Epistemological Process in the American Liberal Tradition

What has later become known as the Progressive era might well be understood as the answer to the liberal paradox of the Gilded Age. As part of an epistemological process, progressives sought to reinterpret liberalism by the “ construction and reconstruction of more adequate narratives and forms of narrative,” by better answering the question, how do we make these events intelligible? To answer this question the liberal tradition would require a new conception of freedom and role of government, while at the same time building on the core liberal ideas of reason, negative freedom and rights. In other words a new and better way of sequencing events, while still maintaining the end of the liberal narrative: *...and so they lived separately, but happily, with toleration and respect for each other’s individual rights.*

The Civil War had provided the foundation for the federal government to play a more expansive role as protector of individual rights. Public awareness of the ills of industrialization rose through personal experiences and the work of Muckrakers: writers and journalists such as Upton Sinclair and David Graham Phillips.⁶⁵ Subsequently a new profession of the social worker, as epitomized by Jane Addams, came to the rescue of the lost souls of industrial society. George D. Herron and Walter Rauschenbusch promoted the idea of the *Social Gospel* challenging older conceptions of Protestant self- reliance. And, simultaneously intellectuals such as John Dewey, Herbert Croly and George Herbert Mead developed a new sociology and political philosophy, in which the Lockean state of nature and its free individual became replaced by a state of powerful social forces working on and shaping the individual and her context.⁶⁶

This idea of social construction made way for a new conception of freedom. This new progressive freedom, according to Hill, rested on the classical conception of negative freedom “ but argued for a significantly broadened definition of constraint – one that includes social conditions, economic inequalities, and even personal incapacities.”⁶⁷ Freedom thus has its precursors in an egalitarian vision that involves the environment in which the character of the individual is formed by social, economic and educational factors. Human freedom depends on the ability to choose amongst various ends that can fulfill the individuals “potentialities.”⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Paul S. Boyer, , *The Oxford Companion to United States History*, Oxford,(Oxford University Press, 2001), Online version: 2004, Accessed: 15.10.2014, URL:<http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195082098.001.0001/acref-9780195082098-e-1254>

⁶⁶ Hill, ”The Five Faces of Freedom in American Political and Constitutional Thought”, 543

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 544

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 546

These potentialities, however, were not to be constructed by the individual. So if the individual finds that the self can only be fulfilled through being poor, or an addict or a criminal, these life choices would be seen as invalid given a preconceived definition of freedom. As Hill explains, in the strong version of progressive freedom, “freedom is defined by reference to someone else’s good,” while in the weak version choices are limited to a definite amount of options “closing off...those that are deemed destructive of human freedom in the long run.”⁶⁹

Although the progressive notion of freedom rested on Locke’s negative concept, one might argue that it signifies the demise of America as a symbol for Locke’s allegory of a state of nature. There is in other words no longer a possibility of being left alone, and the individual, once working his land for his own sake, is replaced by an individual, caught in a flux of new events and social forces. This new conception of freedom expanded the role of rights, but also an expanded role of centralized government. With the Sherman antitrust act and later Theodore Roosevelt’s *New Nationalism*, the federal government showed that big business requires the counterweight of big government. In addition social experts and professional managers sought to guide the individual through her self-realization amidst the new and confusing events. While the rights of classical liberalism sought to protect the property owner from intrusion, the progressive rights aimed at providing the wage-earner with a set of good options to choose among. The judgment of the quality of these options would however not be left to tradition, common sense or virtue, but rather to an antecedent of Locke’s notion of reason as natural law, namely scientific method.

Progressives, as the name implies, did not rely on the past for its inspiration. The outgrowth of industrial society did not lead to a longing for a simpler past in which the classical ideas of liberalism could regain its force. Although the Progressive Era contains much more complexity than what is accounted for here, one might say the major direction within it sought to ‘fight fire with fire’. In other words, technological progress and efficiency was to be countered by social, personal, economic, and scientific progress and efficiency. True to its origins of Enlightenment thinking, the progressive agenda rested on applying human reason to discover new natural laws, laws that, if managed correctly, would lead to, social, personal, economic growth, the final proof of efficiency. Corruption, a large problem during the Gilded Age, would be dealt with by instituting professional managers rather than elected officials. Similarly, progressives argued

⁶⁹ Ibid., 548

that professional social workers and city planners should manage poverty and urban slums.⁷⁰ Working from scientific method provided the means to discover scientific neutral fact, a revision of Locke's notion that man should only have "the law of nature for his rule," with the ambition that applying these laws would resolve the confusion set forth by the events of industrial society.⁷¹

The Progressive Era created the foundation for the modern welfare state and modern liberalism in America by adapting the narratives of the liberal tradition to a new American condition. The progressive notion of liberty, scientific neutrality, economic redistribution, social rights and efficiency came arguably as reformed classical liberal ideas of reason, constraint, individualism and property. After the Progressive Era, Franklin D. Roosevelt's *New Deal*, and John F. Kennedy's *New Frontier* would build on the foundation put down by Theodore Roosevelt's *New Nationalism* and Woodrow Wilson's *New Freedom*. Centralized government would become larger, more bureaucratic and play a larger role in managing the economy and citizens. Margareta Bertilsson in *The Welfare State, the Professions and Citizens* argues that this new role of government "has as its primary aim to *materialize* the formal rights of the classical period and extend them to cover a minimum material standard of well-being for all citizens."⁷² In doing so it creates a set of "compensatory...material laws" enabling the state to interfere "with the lives of citizens in order to retribute their social life-changes." And, "as administrator of welfare legislation, professional experts become mediators between the state (polity) and the citizens."⁷³ Freedom would come to rely on the right to choose amongst the ends found valid by these experts. Social minority groups would secure their rights against the tyranny of the majority. And, America would emerge from its role as an isolated city-upon a hill to become the normative superpower of the world. The American cultural conversation and argument would by the end of the Progressive Era consist of one hegemonic liberal tradition consisting of with two different grand- narratives, one classical and the other modern progressive, working towards the same end. Ironically as the individual would find itself more entangled and encapsulated than ever by a big market and a big state, supporters of the liberal tradition would continue to argue in the American cultural conversation that what was happening in America,

⁷⁰ Michael J. Sandel, *Democracy's discontent: America in search of a public philosophy*, (Cambridge, MA, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1996), 209

⁷¹ Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, Chapter II, section 22.

⁷² Margareta Bertilsson, *The Welfare State, the Professions and citizens*, in, McKewitt, David, Lawton, Alan, *Public Sector Management*, (Sage Publications, London, 1994), 238-239

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 239

was the gradual realization of its liberal end, the state of atomistic social freedom: ...*and so they lived separately, but happily, with toleration and respect for each other's individual rights.*

3 The Republican Tradition: Origin and Argument

In the previous chapter we saw, through the narrative vantage point and the theory of epistemological crisis, how the grand-narratives of the liberal tradition would become the primary way to interpret and contextualize events within American culture. Looking back on the formation of this tradition Hartz argued that there was simply no other way of answering the question of what it means to be American, and what is going on here in America. During the 1960's historians would start to challenge Hartz' view on the formation of the liberal tradition as hegemonic. Through this process a second, long dismissed tradition would re-appear: the republican tradition. In this chapter I will subject this tradition to the same treatment as the liberal tradition, and through the narrative vantage point and the theory of epistemological crisis, try to account for its short appearances throughout American history, its attempts at epistemological revision, and its attempts at key moments to provide the best answer to the questions above.

3.1 Hartz vs. Pocock

Many would say that John G. A. Pocock's *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition*, is to the republican tradition what Louis Hartz' *The Liberal Tradition in America*, is to the liberal tradition. Taking in consideration writers such as Bernard Bailyn, Gordon Wood and Felix Gilbert, one might agree with this assumption. There is however a major difference. Given his own emphasis on the hegemony of the liberal tradition in American political and social thought, Hartz's text can be seen to further cement his own view and in addition initiate a discourse in American social and political thought surrounding the role of liberalism in American culture. This discourse includes James P. Young's attempt at revising Hartz' work, John Rawls minimalist conception of liberalism and Judith Shklar's revision of Rawls, amongst others.⁷⁴

Pocock's writing on the contrary does not attach itself to an already dominant tradition, and thus marks itself in opposition to Hartz's work.⁷⁵ Pocock's primary goal is not to enter into Hartz' discourse, but rather to argue for the importance of classical republican or civic humanist ideas, regarding the formation of the American republic. His search for an American

⁷⁴ Hess, *American Social and Political thought: A Concise Introduction*, 36- 47

⁷⁵ J.G.A Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition*, (Princeton, N.Y, 1975), 509

Machiavellian Moment, thus marks an attempt at refocusing, through historic argument, the importance of republican language and ideas in the founding of the American republic, but also to explore the importance of these ideas throughout American social and political thought. The American republican tradition can thus be seen as containing a *Machiavellian Moment*, but more importantly it is the republican language introduced by this moment that serves as a confirmation of the republican tradition, and thus of a latent “paradigmatic legacy” which appear within American culture as “concepts of balanced government, dynamic *virtû*, and the role of arms and property in shaping the civic personality.”⁷⁶ Together with notions of self-government, civic virtue, political deliberation, and a republican concept of freedom, these ideas arguably form a larger narrative that has the ability to interpret events and actions radically different from the interpretation of the liberal tradition.

There seems to be no shortage of writers who apply this narrative to try to interpret or re-interpret modern American events. Preceding Pocock, Hannah Arendt mapped it out and applied it to Western modernity in the *Human condition*. In an American cultural context it has been applied, in parts or in whole, in Michael Sandel’s *Democracy’s Discontent- America in Search of a Public Philosophy*, Robert Bellah’s *Habits of the Heart*, but perhaps most importantly in the critique and discourse surrounding such work including: Quentin Skinner, Richard Rorty, Richard Sennet, Charles Taylor and Michael Walzer.⁷⁷

The revisionist history of an alternative grand-narrative, or ideology, in American social and political thought and its subsequent discourse, challenges the hegemony of the liberal tradition including both in its classical version typically found in libertarianism and in its progressive revision of classical liberalism. In addition, as the example of Arendt shows, it also comes out as a larger critique of modernity, whose events in the American context, have been narrated by the liberal ideology.

In this chapter we will further explore some aspects of the republican language, the origins of an American republican tradition, why it failed to include modern events into its narrative, and in the second half provide the foundation for a discussion of two writers who are seldom mentioned as part of the republican tradition but who arguably should be included: Christopher Lasch and Wendell Berry.

⁷⁶ Ibid., viii

⁷⁷ Hess, *American Social and Political thought: A Concise Introduction*, 117

3.2 Pocock's Machiavellian Moment

Pocock's narrative of an Atlantic republican tradition contains three key events. The first, as his title implies, is Niccoló Machiavelli's 16th century study of the history of the Roman republic. The second is its reappearance in 17th century English political philosophy represented by James Harrington writing. And finally, its journey from England via the American settlers and its reappearance in the language of the Founding Fathers in the 18th century.

For Pocock, one definition of the *Machiavellian moment* is that it can be seen as a “moment in conceptualized time in which the republic was seen as confronting its own temporal finitude, as attempting to remain morally and politically stable in a stream of irrational events conceived as essentially destructive of all systems of secular stability.”⁷⁸ The source of such events is found in Machiavelli thinking as the idea of *fortuna*, a concept akin fate by imparting a sense of agency, a fate that we partly make ourselves. Through Harrington the fortune of peoples was connected to corruption. The notion of *fortuna* was for Machiavelli the “mistress of one half our actions, and yet leaves the control of the other half, or a little less, to ourselves.” Bernard Crick in the introduction to Machiavelli's *The Discourses* interprets this concept not as chance or deterministic fatalism but rather a “piling up of social factors and contingent political events in an unexpected way.”⁷⁹ To retain some control over such events and *fortuna*, man must exhibit *virtù*. This notion can be seen as the capacity and competence to “dominate events and fortune.”⁸⁰ It is a concept which is not unrelated with the more common notion of virtue as connected to what is good, but differs in that it has more to do with the skill and courage to do what is necessary despite what is thought of as bad or evil. In Machiavelli and “the ideal of active citizenship in a republic,” *virtù* plays a key role of what it means to be an active citizen.⁸¹ That said, it is useless in relation to the free and civil way of life, without its antecedent of a well-ordered republic of civic virtue, and balanced self-government. This idea of the self-governing republic is found in Machiavelli's key notion of the *vivere civile e politico* or *vivere*

⁷⁸ Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, viii

⁷⁹ Niccoló, Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans., W.K. Marriot, *The Project Gutenberg EBook, Release Date: February 11, 2006.*, ch.25, Accessed 15.10.2014, URL: <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/1232/1232-h/1232-h.htm#link2HCH0025>,

Bernard, Crick, introduction to *The Discourses* by Niccoló, Machiavelli, (London, Penguin Classics, 2003),.58

⁸⁰ Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, 92

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 4

civile e libero.⁸² For Pocock, the Founding Fathers were aware of this Machiavellian paradigm. The American Revolution thus “appears to have been involved in a complex relation with English and renaissance cultural history and a tradition of thought.”⁸³ He finds evidence for this theory in the revised neoclassical language employed by the Founding Fathers as evident in their notions of virtue vs. corruption.

The appearance of an American *Machiavellian Moment*, can be seen in the piling up of social political events leading up to the American Revolution, in which the Crown was seen as corrupting the *vivere civile e libero*, the free and civil life, that the Americans had reimagined under their specific conditions.⁸⁴ In Britain “the funds, the army and the patronage- wielding executive were facts of life,” and its citizens needed to find a way of living within these conditions.⁸⁵ In the colonies on the other hand these were not facts of life as they experienced the old world from a distance. Thus the more removed they felt from the British government and the old world, the more they felt “that their virtue was their own.”⁸⁶ The feeling of no longer being British meant that the actions of this external government now felt like events they could no longer dominate. *Virtù* was lost as the older sense of virtue faded and *fortuna* became equal to the corruption of the old world.⁸⁷ In addition to this often-applied depiction of the American founding as an escape from the “old world”, it was just as much an escape from something new. The return to the Renaissance thinking of Machiavelli by Harrington could be seen as a reaction to “England’s emergence as Britain, a major commercial, military and imperial power” and an early critique of explicitly modern forces and events.⁸⁸ The corruption of the British could thus be seen in connection to a view that saw the possibility of a free and civil life impossible under a modern government comprised of a standing army, centralized power and a national bank.

These modern constructions did not fit well into their Machiavellian or Harringtonian paradigm. And, from a narrative vantage point we might say that the events could not be

⁸² Bernard, Crick, introduction to *The Discourses* by Niccolò, Machiavelli, 26-27, Crick argues that the terms *politico*, political, and *libero*, non-domination, function as synonyms. Due to Machiavelli’s notion of freedom as non-domination, freedom equals a political life i.e the practice of citizenship. From this point on I shall use the term *vivere civile e libero*, for the free, political and civil life of the healthy republic.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 506

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 507

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 508,509

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 509

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 509

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 423

rendered intelligible through the classical republican narrative of the free and civil life as the foundation for the stable republic. From this paradigm and narrative, the Founding Fathers could display their *virtù* in expelling the British, but also approach the founding of a new republic with an awareness that it would eventually also be threatened by internal corruption and instability.

For Pocock, the above refutes the more common emphasis on the Lockean paradigm, seeing the “Puritan covenant...reborn in the Lockean contract” and the frontier as a parable for the “foundation of a natural society.”⁸⁹ Rather, it “suggests that the republic- a concept derived from Renaissance humanism- was the true heir of the covenant and the dread of corruption the true heir of the jeremiad.”⁹⁰ This fundamentally challenges Hartz’ thesis, and the conception of liberalism as the only way to render early American events intelligible. It even challenges the foundation of the American liberal tradition. What it does not do however, is account for a republican tradition continuing on after this *Machiavellian Moment*.

3.3 Epistemological Crisis in the Republican Tradition and Two Early Attempts of Reform: Federalism and Agrarianism.

As Hartz points out, it was the early American circumstances that made Locke’s theory look descriptive and thus so successful in rendering events intelligible. The same cannot be said in relation to Machiavelli and Harrington’s republican theory. The republican paradigm included a notion of the *polis* a concept derived from Aristotle via the Italian city- states. This limited space provided the frame for the *res publica*, the place for active citizenship. Another key concept lay in the internal balance between an upper class and the populace, and that “all legislation favorable to liberty is brought about by the clash between them.”⁹¹ Both these notions would prove unfit for the interpretation of American conditions and events: first by the relatively unlimited space of the frontier, and secondly, by the absence of a clearly defined upper class or natural aristocracy. Nevertheless, Pocock argues that “the thesis and antithesis of virtue and corruption continued to be of great importance in shaping American thought.”⁹²

⁸⁹ Ibid., 545

⁹⁰ Ibid., 545

⁹¹ Niccoló, Machiavelli *The Discourses*, (London, Penguin Classics, 2003), 113, section 1.4

⁹² Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, 527

Agreeing with Pocock implies that the republican tradition might have failed, but still persisted as an available narrative in American culture. In other words the republican tradition and its narrative emerging from the framework of the *vivere civile e libero, homo politicus*, virtue, *virtù, fortuna* and corruption, went into an epistemological crisis shortly after the *Machiavellian moment* of the revolution but persisted as an available paradigm.

The first source of this crisis can be seen as what Gordon Wood calls the “end of classical politics” following the creation of the Federal Constitution.⁹³ The advent of Federalism arguably solved the two problems above regarding the frontier and natural aristocracy. The development of a system of representation meant that there was no longer a need for a defined space (the polis) for the active political life; clearly representative democracy was possible in all conditions, even those of an expansive nation developing along the frontier. At the same time the absence of a natural aristocracy and the equality of conditions meant that people were no longer “differentiated into diversely qualified and functioning groups,” that internally created a dynamic of checks and balances. This dynamic was now instead mediated via representation to an external system of checks and balances between the different government branches. From a distance this might seem like an American revision of republican theory, but also one removing it almost completely from its classical roots. Representation removed the possibility of the active political life of the citizen.⁹⁴ So that:

when men had been differentiated and had expressed their virtue in the act of deferring to another’s virtues, the individual had known himself through the respect known by his fellows for the qualities publicly recognized in him; but once men were, or it was held that they ought to be, all alike, his only means of self- discovery lay in conforming to everybody else’s notions of what he ought to be and was⁹⁵

This marks a shift away from what Hannah Arendt found to be the distinguishing feature of the American Revolution: political rather than social equality.⁹⁶ It marks a move away from the idea of the *polis*, from active citizenship, deliberation, and perhaps most importantly from the individual’s membership in the republic as a citizen. No longer engaged in active political life, the individual could no longer, nor did he need to, pertain himself toward a common good.⁹⁷ This move away from civic virtue meant that all “each man was capable of perceiving was his

⁹³ Ibid., 527

⁹⁴ Ibid., 518

⁹⁵ Ibid., 538, 537

⁹⁶ Hess, *American Social and Political thought: A Concise Introduction*, 34

⁹⁷ Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, 522

own particular interest, ” in other words a confirmation of Locke’s paradigm of atomistic social freedom.⁹⁸ It is clear that the creation of representation and the Federal checks and balances represented a move away from classical republicanism, but not a complete removal.⁹⁹

As becomes evident from Pocock’s final argument, the republican tradition went into a state of flux shortly after the ratification of the Constitution. Against James Madison’s Federalism and Alexander Hamilton’s ambitions of an American “commercial and military empire,” Thomas Jefferson’s Democratic-Republican party would form the continuation of the republican paradigm in revised form. Jefferson arguably held on to the basics of that paradigm. The republic should consist of the virtuous citizens vital to self- government, but the possibility of a confederation of American city-states was irredeemably lost and representation in a federal system had become a fact. The Machiavellian republican paradigm could no longer be applied consistently and Jefferson resorted to the reformed narrative of the agrarian republic.

Decentralized into wards, or at a minimum states, Jefferson hoped to retain the notions of civic virtue and the free and civil life. Virtue was to emerge in the yeoman farmer of the frontier, and his competence and independence would balance out the corruption of the modern cities and provide the stability of the American republic.¹⁰⁰ Later, as Pocock points out, Jefferson’s agrarian virtue would blend with the narrative of Andrew Jackson’s military prowess, seen as citizen *virtü*. Since the frontier had an internal dialectic of being “at once progressive and pastoral,” it was thought that it could absorb expansive forces of industry and commerce by the fact that it itself was expansive.¹⁰¹ This provided however only a temporary solution to the maintenance of civic virtue because the frontier could not expand forever. When the availability of land had run out, the escape from modernity would have ended and, as Jefferson admitted, “the process of corruption must be resumed; men will become dependent upon each other in the market economy and dependent on government in great cities.”¹⁰² Jefferson’s narrative of the agrarian republic could be seen as an attempt to resolve the epistemological crisis of the classical republican narrative found in the discord between the *vivere civile e libero*, of *homo politicus*, virtue, *virtü*, and corruption, and early American events like that of the advent of representation, the frontier and commerce. One might argue that he did in fact put

⁹⁸ Ibid., 522

⁹⁹ Ibid., 526

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 532, 533

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 539

¹⁰² Ibid., 541, 546

this narrative through an epistemological process and arrive at a new and more fitting narrative for rendering these events intelligible. However, this narrative also included, like that of classical republics, the anticipation of its own demise.

Federalism and the advent of representation marked a shift away from classical republicanism in the loss of the role of the active citizen and its emphasis on stability rather than growth. That said, its emphasis on checks and balances means that it can also be seen as a reform of the republican narrative to better fit the unique American conditions implicit in the equality of conditions and the lack of an inherited aristocracy. Jefferson's reply to this federal reform, in the form of Agrarianism, anticipates the loss of these unique conditions. For Jefferson the ultimate cause of stability rested not in institutional stability but in civic virtue. His agrarian thinking hinges on the fact that virtue formation takes place with the yeoman farmer at the frontier. Agrarianism as opposed to Federalism comes closer to the classical republican narrative. But its dependency on the availability of free land in relation to virtue formation means that it ultimately fails in developing a lasting American revision of a republican narrative and securing the importance of the republican tradition. Agrarianism might be seen as a failed attempt at putting the republican narrative through an epistemological process; to secure a new republican narrative to better interpret the unique American conditions. Jefferson writes his story of the American virtuous yeoman farmer as the foundational concept of an American *vivere civile e libero*, but his agrarianism would ultimately fail in "the construction and reconstruction of more adequate narratives and forms of narrative."¹⁰³

Pocock's narrative on the influence of the classical republican tradition in America ends with Jefferson and Jackson. The Federalist Party, the Republican Party and their ideological quarrel over what America should be would eventually fade out by the end of the first decade of the 19th century. By the end of that century the forces of modernity would have caught up with the yeoman farmer and mark, as Fredrick Jackson Turner's famous thesis argues, the closing of the frontier and thus the agrarian formation of civic virtue. By the beginning of the 20th century it would look as if Jefferson's largest enemy Alexander Hamilton would be proven right in depicting what America should become. Appetite, passion, and commerce formerly seen as forces of corruption would gradually become associated with *virtù*, the capacity and ability to act, and civic virtue would be reduced to national patriotism. But, a last attempt at interpreting

¹⁰³ MacIntyre, "Epistemological Crises, Dramatic Narrative and the Philosophy of Science", 460

these events would arise from the republican tradition. To analyze this attempt we shall continue to use Machiavelli's paradigm, but move beyond Pocock's historical account.

3.3.1 Republican Freedom and American Populism

By the second half of the 19th century those early American conditions and events, which had once posed a challenge to the republican minds of the founding fathers, would have disappeared and been replaced. The frontier and the absence of aristocracy had in the early days of the republic marked the unique conditions of social equality. By the Gilded Age, the closing of the frontier and a new aristocracy of wealthy industrialists would challenge the notion of social equality as a precondition for American political thinking. Gone was Locke's state of nature, which had once seemed so descriptive for American conditions and simultaneously troublesome with regard to the republican tradition. This could be seen as a good time to revitalize the republican tradition in order to come to terms with these new conditions. The republican reply would come through Populism.

As I have argued in the former chapter, the Progressive Era would come as the reaction to the Gilded Age. The liberal tradition would be re-formed from "classical" to modern liberalism and subsequently the liberal notion of freedom would transform from negative to a progressive. After the Progressive Era the liberal tradition, with both its new and better modern progressive and its older Lockean narrative, would become hegemonic in interpreting American events. What I did not argue however was that in the beginning of that era a serious contender would develop in the populist movement. In order to explore populism as part of a narrative and continuous argument within the republican tradition we must first return to the core of the republican narrative: self- government and the free and civil way of life.

At the center of the republican tradition and Machiavelli's free and civil republic are the interrelated concepts of self- government and liberty. Freedom cannot be detached from the notion of self-government. In Machiavelli's free and civil republic, freedom and self- government are intertwined and two phenomenon that appears in conjunction. The republican paradigm can be seen as a closed circuit in which every part is dependent on the other and in addition more than the sum of its parts. Freedom appears in the *res publica*, in the shared public sphere, as a consequence of self-government. Self- government on the other hand appears as a

consequence of the common ambition for moral and political stability against *fortuna*. This is only possible if the citizen is able to identify a common good, has the capacity of virtue, but just as important the ability and competence necessary to display *virtù*, being able to dominate unforeseen forces and events.

There are two main elements of this republican notion of freedom that sets it apart from its liberal opponent. First, it does not have a precursor in anything like natural law, it appears neither as a consequence of reason, nature, nor God. Second, it demands something more than simply being human. It requires some form of citizenship, an active membership, in which the individual has a stake in the common good.

Combined we might say that the citizen has only one right, the right to partake in the politics of the *res publica* and through this public sphere secure the laws that again secure the free and civil government, the absolute precursor for his freedom. But this process is neither passive nor servile as it holds a principle of a balanced conflict at its core. As Machiavelli himself puts it “all legislation favorable to liberty” is a consequence of a conflict between individual and group interest.¹⁰⁴ This conflict, as political activity, requires skill, competence and an overview displayed through virtue and *virtù*. Laws are not given as a consequence of natural or universal rights, but rather fought over through political participation and deliberation. Strangely enough, given that the republican citizen seems so encumbered by the common objective of the republic, this active political life also require a form of independence. Each group and each person within the republic must maintain his skills and power, as in *virtù*, to be applied and wagered in political conflict. Power is for Machiavelli the ability to dominate forces and events. This is the reason why Machiavelli dismissed the possibility of a standing army or mercenaries in the free republic, not because of its inefficiency, but rather for its concentration of physical power. So, while the groups of the upper class might have wealth, property and the power to control mercenaries, the militia of the lower classes has weapons and larger numbers.

The key to Machiavelli’s republican thinking is checks and balances, but in a different sense than that found in Montesquieu or in Madison’s federalism. The stability of the republic lies not in the equality of conditions, representation and institutional checks and balances. It lies in a political equality, individual, group and class power and ambition, and political conflict. In the

¹⁰⁴ Machiavelli *The Discourses*, (London, Penguin Classics, 2003), 113, section 1.4

stable republic, freedom and civil life may appear as a consequence, not a precursor, and it is always dependent on citizen virtue and *virtù*. In addition as Crick points out in his analysis of *The Discourses*, the active citizen must also be aware of his position of power both as individual and as part of a class.¹⁰⁵ Machiavelli's active citizenship differs substantially from Lock's natural sociability in that law and rights are not given through a natural state, but fought over in political conflict. Citizenship cannot be separated from identification with the common good, nor can it be discerned from citizen or group ability and power. Freedom is not given, but fought over and won. This conflict is the precursor to stability, and stability is the precursor to Machiavelli's conception of the good life, which is free and civil.

Power and ambition is however not found as equal in every citizen and every group. For Machiavelli the upper class aims to dominate the lower classes. The lower classes consisting of "common people" wish to forego domination.¹⁰⁶ Thus there is a consistent conflict between the people and an elite in the republic, and the survival of stability and freedom depends on the balance between the two groups. In order to not be dominated, the people must maintain the elements of power, ambition and ability, which provide a balanced conflict against the elite and their wish to dominate. Philip Pettit, in *Keeping Republican Freedom Simple: On a Difference with Quentin Skinner*, argues that the question of domination is the key to understanding the republican idea of freedom, "being dominated involves occupying a position where another can interfere on an arbitrary basis in your life."¹⁰⁷ This notion of freedom also include the absence of dependency and the presence of a position of power.¹⁰⁸

Machiavelli's conception of freedom thus appears in a state of conflict between citizens and groups that find themselves in various outweighing positions of power. This notion of freedom differs from Locke's liberal negative freedom and the absence of interference in that Machiavelli has no ideal of a state of nature. His worldview consists of power, ambition and conflict, and although there might appear conditions in which a group would be left alone, even the knowledge that domination might at some point occur would diminish the republican notion of freedom. Machiavelli's republican paradigm found in *The Discourses*, as I have tried to

¹⁰⁵ Crick, introduction to *The Discourses* by Niccolò Machiavelli, 46

¹⁰⁶ Machiavelli *The Discourses*, (London, Penguin Classics, 2003), 115, section 1.5

¹⁰⁷ Philip Pettit, "Keeping Republican Freedom Simple: On a Difference with Quentin Skinner", *Political Theory*, Vol. 30, No. 3 (Jun., 2002), 340- 341

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 341

argue above, contains not just an extensive definition of citizenship but also a clearly populist element.

For Machiavelli the republic consists not solely of citizens but of different groups divided into common people and elites. As John P. McCormick concludes in *Machiavellian Democracy: Controlling Elites with Ferocious Populism*: “the people should despise and distrust the elites, and they should be wary of and actively confront the injustices that elite governing inevitably entails,” and he adds on a more personal note, that there is no reason to suggest that the elite’s appetite for domination has changed much since Machiavelli’s time.¹⁰⁹ The republican paradigm, at least as it is drawn up by Machiavelli, contain an embedded theory of populism radically different from its more modern definitions connected often to notions of demagoguery. The people, and its various groups, must as the citizen maintain a position of power by the identification of virtue, and the practice of *virtù* in order to not to be dominated. If we assume that Pocock was right in stressing the importance of an republican tradition in the formation of American social and political ideas then the populist element should also be stressed as deriving partly from that tradition.

3.3.2 American Populism and Power

Revisiting Pocock’s main arguments accounted for above in light of Machiavelli’s republican populism, one might draw up a dichotomy: the people versus the elites, and ambition for domination versus ambition not to be dominated. People emigrated from Europe’s feudal elites to the American continent in order to no longer be dominated. In the American Revolution the people of the colonies wished no longer to be dominated by the British Empire. In Jefferson’s agrarianism the yeoman’s virtue and independence would secure him from the domination of the urban elites. And, in the populism at the early Progressive Era, farmers and artisans sought not to be dominated by the wealthy industrialists and their trusts.¹¹⁰

The most usual way to view American populism is in the short period that marks the breaking point between the Gilded Age and the Progressive Era. At the end of the nineteenth century it

¹⁰⁹ John P. McCormick, “Machiavellian Democracy: Controlling Elites with Ferocious Populism”, *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 95, No. 2 (Jun., 2001), 311

¹¹⁰ These are off course simplifications, but illustrate how one might think in republican terms of non-domination and power rather than in the liberal terms of non- interference and formalization of rights.

would become publicly visible in the People's Party, the Knights of Labor and the Farmer's Alliance. The farmers and artisans often associated with these organizations saw, similar to the later progressives, big government as the solution to bring what had by now become a big market under control. But while the progressives would later emphasize efficient government, a progressive notion of freedom and scientific management, populists would emphasize a large but also more democratic government and protection of the republican notion of citizenship.

Many historians have tried to come to terms with the short burst of populism at the beginning of the Progressive Era. Richard Hofstadter deemed populists to be anti- intellectual, nativist and that the outgrowth of modern events simply could not be interpreted by their "simpleminded 'yeoman myth'." As a consequence he saw them, together with James Green, as "retrospective and nostalgic."¹¹¹ In *The True and Only Heaven* Christopher Lasch would revise this common conception of the populist agenda. For Lasch populism entailed specific elements of: "producerism[sic]; a defense of endangered crafts (including the craft of farming); opposition to the new class of public creditors and to the whole machinery of modern finance; opposition to wage labor."¹¹² For farmers and artisans, new and modern conditions threatened not just the economic and social conditions of the local market and the local community, but more importantly their role as citizens and "the principle that property ownership and the personal independence it confers are absolutely essential preconditions of citizenship."¹¹³ This relationship lends itself to both Lockean liberal and republican interpretations. But seen through Machiavelli's paradigm one might argue that the changing conditions and events of industrialization, as much as wealthy elites, political corruption and the gold standard, fundamentally changed the position of power once held by the artisan and the farmer. The factory, wage- labor, mechanization and management were incommensurable with the republican notion of citizenship as it rendered their skills, *virtù*, and knowledge irrelevant. The combined loss of citizen power in conjunction with the rise of a new managerial elite implied a well-founded fear of domination. One might say that there was no longer a place for the independent farmer or the artisan in industrial society, nor was there any place for the active citizen of the republican tradition.

¹¹¹ Lasch, *The True and Only Heaven: Progress and Its Critics*, 221

¹¹² Ibid., 223

¹¹³ Ibid., 223

One might agree with Hofstadter and say that the failure of the yeoman myth coincides with Jefferson's anticipation that as soon as the frontier closed, "the process of corruption must be resumed."¹¹⁴ But the populist response cannot be reduced into anti-intellectual nostalgia, as Hofstadter would have us believe. In the *Omaha Platform* of 1892, the newly consolidated People's Party tried to raise the populist revolt to the political level. In its introduction they argued that in the current state "the fruits of the toil of millions are boldly stolen to build up colossal fortunes for a few, unprecedented in the history of mankind; and the possessors of those, in turn, despise the republic and endanger liberty." America was being crystalized into two classes: "tramps and millionaires." Populists felt that neither of the two parties did anything to manage these new forces, and seen through their inaction as willing to "sacrifice our homes, lives, and children on the altar of mammon."¹¹⁵

The populist response against this development became an attempt "to restore the government of the Republic to the hands of 'the plain people,' with which class it originated."¹¹⁶ A larger and more democratic government would re-empower the common man. They argued for a direct election of Senators, the abolition of a standing army, a gradual income tax, and government control over important infrastructure such as the telegraph and railroads.¹¹⁷ The People's Party, represented by their presidential candidate William Jennings Bryan and the *Omaha Platform*, enjoyed a short-lived and mostly unsuccessful campaign against the formation of America as an industrial society. Later, progressives would take up and push through many of the policies advanced in the *Omaha Platform*. But this time to protect the individual, to redistribute wealth for egalitarian purposes, workers rights and consumer welfare, not primarily to secure the democratic power of the farmer, artisan or the notion of the republican citizen. The populist movement of the second half of the nineteenth century would help cement the notion that a big economy required the balance of big government in the fight *against* the wealthy elite and *for* the importance of the citizen.

Paradoxically, by the end of the Progressive Era, it seems that the populist movement had also helped secure the conditions for the rise of a new elite of bureaucratic managers, social reformers and experts who were out to secure a minimum of material standard and individual

¹¹⁴ Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, 541, 546

¹¹⁵ *The Omaha Platform, The World Almanac*, 1893 (New York: 1893), 83–85. Accessed 15.10.2014 URL: <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5361/>

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 83–85

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 83–85

well-being rather than help resume the citizens position of power. The reformed liberal narrative of the Progressive Era searched for social rather than political equality. It cohered with the Lockean plan to find the source of freedom in reason, and sought to discover and secure individual rights on behalf of the citizens. Efficiency and growth in the factories and the economy would be countered by efficiency and growth not only in government and administration but also in social life and in man himself. Federalism had introduced the notion that the citizen did not need to participate directly in politics or the public sphere and thus taken a substantial step away from the republican tradition. The Progressive Era would introduce the notion that man could be represented also in civil society. Armed with the scientific method found in Taylorism and the notion of progressive freedom, social experts and reformers could enter into the private sphere and secure the efficiency of private life. Whereas political representation had in Pocock's words become "logically almost revers of participation," representation of "the people" by social experts, the common people, farmers, artisans, workers, women and poor, had in many ways reversed their participation in the civil society. Seen through the classical republican paradigm, big government following the Progressive Era did not mean a closing of the gap between the active citizen and government that the populists had hoped for. Instead big government would come to mean bureaucracy and management, experts and specialists taking on the burdens of fighting the wealthy elite and managing the efficiency of private life, while at the same time rendering the citizen powerless.

Through its emphasis on property rights, the American populist movement can be seen, as part of the liberal tradition. But, as I have tried to argue above, it is better seen as part of the republican tradition and Machiavelli's theory of domination, active citizenship and the conflictual relationship between people and elites. The populist movement tried to resurrect and revitalize this narrative to interpret the events emerging from the formation of industrial society. More democratic control of government, more government control over elites, meant a repositioning of the people to maintain a position of power. This marks itself as part of a continuous argument within the republican tradition, but also a continuous populist argument over the relationship between the common man and the elites in American culture. The populist reply to the industrialization of America would in the end fail, and help furnish a further disempowerment of the citizen. The republican tradition would maintain its quarrel with modernity and its unresolved epistemological crisis.

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter started with a short account of Pocock's revisionist history placing the republican tradition, derived from Machiavelli and Harrington, at the center of the formation of American political and social thought. Here we saw that the fathers of the American Revolution and the founding of the American republic were part of a *Machiavellian Moment* in which they interpreted these events through a classical republican "paradigmatic legacy."¹¹⁸ I further gave an account seeing this paradigm from different angles to explore its key concepts of virtue, *virtü*, *fortuna*, corruption and the *vivere civile e libero*. This narrative never really fit the conditions of the early republic and the republican narrative existed from very beginning in an epistemological crisis, as exemplified in Federalism, representation and the end of the notion of *Homo Politicus*. Gordon Wood called this 'the end of classical politics'. Pocock argued otherwise and saw a continuation of the republican tradition in Jefferson's agrarian thinking. I argued that agrarianism marked the first attempt to reform the republican narrative, to put it through an epistemological process, making it able to interpret the unique American conditions of the frontier and the lack of feudal structure while maintain its core concepts of virtue and the free and civil life. Jefferson's attempt, as he himself predicted, failed due to the narrative's dependency on the concept of an open frontier.

The next argument within the republican tradition came as a continuation of agrarianism and as a consequence of the closed frontier. Populism, despite its sometime classical liberal resonance, is better seen as part of a continuous argument within the republican tradition. This can be seen through the republican notion of freedom, which holds that freedom, non-domination, appears only in the balanced conflict between elites and the people. Populism then can be seen as part of Machiavelli's republican paradigm, but only through the notion of power. Maintaining a position of power was essential in balancing the ambition of the elites to dominate the common people. The farmers and artisans of the populist movement saw their positions of power as waning due to the changing conditions of industrial society and a new wealthy elite. The proposed cure was more democracy, more regulation and more government as seen through the *Omaha Platform* of the People's Party. The populist movement in the end failed in its mission only to clear the space for a new elite of government bureaucrats, social reformers, and managers, and subsequently yet another attempt at putting the republican narrative through an

¹¹⁸ Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, viii

internal revision had arguably failed. The liberal tradition and its reformed modern version would from the Progressive Era, throughout the depression and the New Deal, provide the hegemonic cultural and political narrative for the interpretation American events. The republican tradition and its various attempts of revision remained in an epistemological crisis in which it failed to provide the best answer to the questions of: what is going on here in America, and what does it mean to be American?

Here it seems the argument has gone full circle and we return to the historians that tried to revise the role and importance of republican thinking in American history. The republican tradition would re-appear by the 1960's in the historical revisionism of Wood, Bailyn and Pocock, but now more as a historical artifact rather than a new and improved cultural narrative. The republican tradition and its end in the *vivere civile e libero*, the free political and civic way of life, was neither dead nor alive, but in an unresolved state of epistemological crisis. Communitarians and civic humanists like Arendt, MacIntyre, Sandel, Walzer and Taylor would try to revitalize the republican tradition by putting it through an epistemological process, to find a new and better way of sequencing events, to revise and reform its grand- narrative while maintaining its end: *...and so they lived together, for better or for worse, with active deliberation, sharing in the governing of each other*. The success of this attempt remains unclear. What can be said is that the communitarian revision of the narrative of the republican tradition puts increased emphasis on the return of the concept of virtue and the appearance of a common good in modern American culture. In the next two chapters, concerning Christopher Lasch's *The Culture of Narcissism* and Wendell Berry's *The Unsettling of America*, I will try to account for a slightly different attempt at revitalizing the republican tradition, which puts more emphasis on Machiavelli's concept of *virtù*, as a precondition for both republican freedom and virtue. Or in other words and in modern terms, ability and competence as preconditions to dominate forces and events, and that the republican freedom as non-domination, is a consequence of the citizen's position of power.

4 Christopher Lasch and The Culture of Narcissism

This chapter will try to see Lasch's book *The Culture of Narcissism*, in light of the republican tradition, and the attempts made to reform and revitalize its grand-narrative within the American cultural conversation. I will consider how Lasch's writing can be identified as springing out of a republican tradition, and in what way it challenges the liberal hegemony in answering the questions of what is happening in America, and what it means to be American?

4.1 Christopher Lasch: Historian of Radicalism, Radical Historian

Christopher Lasch grew up in a suburb in Omaha, Nebraska with his father, an editorial writer for "embattled liberal papers", and his mother, a professor in philosophy.¹¹⁹ Lasch's early years were marked by a milieu of "middle Western progressivism, overlaid by the liberalism of the New Deal".¹²⁰ During his education in the early 1960's Lasch identified more and more with the left, and by the end of that decade he thought of himself "as a socialist."¹²¹ His first book *The American Liberals and the Russian Revolution* clearly marked his positioning to the left side of the ideological spectrum. Based on his PhD dissertation in history, the book was an "archivally[sic] based account of the progressive response to Bolshevism".¹²² His second book *The New Radicalism in America* would in retrospect mark the beginning of one of his main themes for the next 30 years "the problem of intellectuals."¹²³ During the 1970's, Lasch would gradually drift away from the left side of the political spectrum. One of the reasons was perhaps that he could never fully identify himself with the outgrowth of the movements of the new left at the time, and by the end of the 1960's he saw these movements as proponents of a "rampant sectarianism, an obsession with ideological purity, sentimentalization[sic] of outcast groups" presented by "clownish media freaks."¹²⁴

His 1977 book, *Haven in a Heartless World*, would mark his transition from an historian of radicalism to a radical historian. The book utilized an approach he later characterized as "Marx

¹¹⁹ Casey Blake and Christopher Phelps, "History as Social Criticism- Conversations with Christopher Lasch" *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 80, No. 4 (Mar., 1994),1310

¹²⁰ Lasch, *The True and Only Heaven*, 25

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 26-28

¹²² Christopher, Lasch, *Plain Style: A Guide to Written English*, Ed. Stewart Weaver, (Philadelphia, PA, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002),7

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 8

¹²⁴ Lasch, *The True and Only Heaven*, 2828,
Lasch, *Plain Style: A Guide to Written English*, 14

plus Freud” to analyze the demise of the importance of the family’s role in American culture. The reception it received would detach him not only from the left but the right as well.¹²⁵ The rest of Lasch’s authorship would elaborate on the themes above, the role of elites, social institutions, the new left, and progressivism, culminating in his seminal work *The True and Only Heaven*. This book marked in retrospect the core of all his later writing: a critique of modern American culture and the search for a new American populism.

The book explored in this thesis, *The Culture of Narcissism*, came out in 1979 and can be seen as a cultural critique of the role of the self within a culture in crisis. It presents a narrative and at the same time a contemporary public moral argument that can still be seen as part of a discourse surrounding American social life. Its narrative presents a sequence of modern events, the rise of modern bureaucracy, a new political and managerial elite buttressed by a therapeutic sensibility, which “prolongs the experience of dependency into adult life” and provides the ground for a narcissistic personality, a self in crisis.¹²⁶ These events revolve around one central theme, arguably present in all of Lasch’s work since *Haven in a Heartless World*, a dichotomy between middle- America, the common people, and the elites. Before exploring *The Culture of Narcissism* in more detail it seems pertinent to attempt to see it in light of Lasch’s authorship in order to fully understand its underlying ideas.

Lasch’s perhaps most important book, *The True and Only Heaven* has as its “unifying tread” a discussion of “ a sense of limits” against a progressive idea that “rests, at bottom, on a denial of the natural limits on human power and freedom.”¹²⁷ Lasch finds the basis of this idea not in a secular version of Christian teleology, but rather in a very modern concept of progress based not on “the promise of a secular utopia...but the promise of steady improvement with no foreseeable ending at all.”¹²⁸ Science, in its ability to provide an “unnerving but exhilarating expansion of our intellectual horizon,” has in this prospect of “self-perpetuating inquiry” an ability to “flourish in spite of the constant revision of particular findings” and thus provide both a measure of progress and an “open-ended improvement.”¹²⁹

¹²⁵ Casey Blake and Christopher Phelps, “History as Social Criticism- Conversations with Christopher Lasch”, 1328

¹²⁶ Christopher, Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations*, (New York: W.W Norton & Company, 1979), 231

¹²⁷ Lasch, *The True and Only Heaven*, 530, 17

¹²⁸ Ibid., 46, 47

¹²⁹ Ibid., 47, 48

Lasch's argument in *The True and Only Heaven* is far too long and complex to provide an extensive account of in this thesis. What we should take with us, nonetheless, is Lasch's conclusion. First he sees a tradition forming against the idea of progress represented by the short rise of populism at the end of the 19th century. This movement was exemplified by a "moral realism, its understanding that everything has its price, its respect for limits, its skepticism about progress."¹³⁰ In the populists, Lasch finds an authentic, although by no means uncontroversial, critique of the hegemonic idea of progress. Secondly he sees within this tradition an idea of hope as distinguished from the idea of optimism. While optimism "demand a belief in progress," hope "rests on confidence not so much in the future as in the past" an understanding of history preparing one for the worst whilst maintain a hope that it will turn out ok. "Limits and hope" are the central concepts of Lasch's argument in *The True and Only Heaven*, but also the idea of a new elite springing out of the progressive optimism he is critiquing through American populism.¹³¹

Picking up on the theme of his second book *The New Radicalism in America*, he argued that the progressive era and the following official programs of the New Deal and New Frontier had created a new class in American society. In *The True and Only Heaven* it amounts to the "knowledge class" of "professional managers."¹³² It became elitist in that it saw the progressive optimism above as perhaps a culmination of enlightenment thinking with a following belief in the "eventual triumph of critical intelligence over superstition, cosmopolitanism over provincialism, man over nature, and abundance over scarcity."¹³³ The collection of essays published after his death in *The Revolt of the Elites*, showed how Lasch continued more than ever pursuing a critique of a new elite. In *New Radicalism*, Lasch saw the descending of the intellectual from the sphere of politics to that of culture. Lasch took a step back from the language of the *True and only Heaven* admitting that it was difficult to "anatomize the 'new'...ruling...class."¹³⁴ What he did instead was to expand the idea of the subtitle of *The Revolt* namely of the intellectual as social type. Now he introduced Robert Reich's concept of "symbolic analyst" as no longer just the scientist or university professor, but a wide array

¹³⁰ Ibid.,17, Lasch says that he does not: "minimize the narrowness and provincialism of lower-middle-class culture; nor do I deny that it has produced racism, nativism, anti-intellectualism, and all the other evils so often cited by liberal critics"

¹³¹ Ibid., 81, 230

¹³² Ibid., 518,510

¹³³ Ibid., 528

¹³⁴ Christopher, Lasch *The Revolt of the Elites: and the Betrayal of Democracy*,(New York: W.W Norton & Company, 1995), 34

occupations from brokers and bankers to artists and writers.¹³⁵ It is in their roles as knowledge producers/interpreters that Lasch finds the basis for calling them a new class “in the sense that their livelihoods rests not so much on the ownership of property as on the manipulation of information and professional expertise.”¹³⁶ In addition their sphere of influence is not on a political level but rather on the cultural. Using Foucauldian language we might say that Lasch finds a new class at the center of the power/knowledge formation of modern American culture.

The primary target for critique in 19th century populism was the rise of industrial capitalism symbolically represented by the robber baron and urban bourgeois elites. Lasch’s populist critique could be seen as an adaptation of that critique to the 20th century and specifically to the rise of the information age, knowledge industry and cultural capital symbolically represented by the urban, modern and liberal social expert.¹³⁷ In addition it should be noted, as implied in the title *The Revolt of the Elites*, that Lasch places emphasis on this new class as a top down reformer. The title is lifted from Jose Ortega Y Gasset’s similarly titled book *The Revolt of the Masses* written in 1932 a time when such an event seemed very plausible. Lasch reverses the title, perhaps as a homage to Marxist theory, but also to argue that “in our time, however, the chief threat” to the “social order and the civilizing traditions of Western culture... seems to come from those at the top of the social hierarchy, not the masses. This remarkable turn of events confounds our expectations about the course of history and calls long- established assumptions into question.”¹³⁸ This turn of events is the rise of modern liberalism, “the therapeutic state” and with it a new class of professions maintaining it.¹³⁹ *The Culture of Narcissism* is for Lasch the outcome of this development.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 34

¹³⁶ Ibid., 34

¹³⁷ There is no space for a more in-depth analysis in this thesis surrounding the effects of technological events and development with respect to cultural transformation. Industrial capitalism cannot be seen as separate from technological forces and events, neither can the demise of the artisan or the farmer. Populists was, as Bruce Palmer argues in his *A critique for Industrial Capitalism*, in William F. Holmes *American Populism*, not opposed to technology in general(Luddite), but rather as Lewis Mumford would say opposed to *authoritarian technics* as apart from *democratic technics* .

¹³⁸ Lasch *The Revolt of the Elites: and the Betrayal of Democracy*, 25

¹³⁹ Ibid., 6

4.2 The Progressive Era and the Foundation for *A Culture of Narcissism*.

In *The American administrative State: Wilson and the Founders*, Paul Van Riper accounts for a development in American government from, a first to a second version of the administrative state.¹⁴⁰ The first version, operative from the founding of the American republic to the Progressive Era, consisted mainly of a “basic administrative framework for the ‘conduct of the official business of the new government’.”¹⁴¹ This basic framework was eventually found insufficient as a framework to manage modern forces. Throughout the Progressive Era a second administrative state would start to develop. Van Riper sees this as originating in Theodore Roosevelt’s *New Nationalism* and later Woodrow Wilson’s *New Freedom*. From these government programs a second version of the administrative state would develop, which “unlike the first...was guided by conscious theory... scientific observation and experimentation” and its “main trust was provided by the doctrines of classical management, specifically those emphasizing line and staff relationships, functionalism, and the old principles of administration, all to the ends of economy and efficiency.”¹⁴² It is this second administrative state that marks the starting point for Lasch’s critique of *The Culture of Narcissism*.

After WWII, America experienced two eventful decades marked by cultural optimism and economic growth. The war had been gentle on the continent, except for Pearl Harbor. The industry in Europe was shattered while in America it was running like never before. Economic security gave an expansion of the middle-class, the growth of the suburb and leisure time. A time that could be filled by watching, the now readily available, television, reading Playboy magazine or going to a baseball match. America was *de facto* the sole superpower and it looked as if it would indeed be an “American century.”¹⁴³

According to Lasch by the mid 1960’s this image would start to break up due to a series of events. As he himself puts it “those who recently dreamed of world power now despair of governing the city of New York. Defeat in Vietnam, economic stagnation, and the impending exhaustion of natural resources have produced a mood of pessimism in the higher circles,

¹⁴⁰ Paul, P, Van Riper, *The American administrative State: Wilson and the Founders* in... : Chandler, Ralph Clark, *A Centennial History of the American Administrative State*, (The Free Press, New York 1987), 9

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 11-12

¹⁴² Ibid., 14-15

¹⁴³ Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations*,, xiii

which spreads through the rest of society as people lose faith in their leaders.”¹⁴⁴

Disenchantment with the total system of modern administration had given rise to the new left, postmodern critique, and the SDS. But, despite the “cultural revolution” of the 1960’s, away from what was now seen as “the repressive conditions of the past,” as Peter Drucker noted on Van Riper’s final stage of the administrative state in 1969:

We are rapidly moving to doubt and distrust of government, and, in the case of the young, even a rebellion against it. We still, if only out of habit, turn social tasks over to the government. We still revise unsuccessful programs over and over again, and assert that nothing is wrong with them that a...competent administrator will not cure.¹⁴⁵

In *The Culture of Narcissism*, Lasch sees the rise of a narcissistic personality type in American culture. This development comes as the consequence of the rise of two intertwined events, American welfare liberalism and the emerging of a new elite. These two events form the foundation for the narrative in *The Culture of Narcissism*. As Lasch notes, “having overthrown feudalism and slavery and then outgrown its own personal and familial form, capitalism has evolved a new political ideology, welfare liberalism, and with it came “a new ruling class of administrators, bureaucrats, technicians, and experts has appeared...” an elite and an ideology “which absolves individuals of moral responsibility and treats them as victims of social circumstance.”¹⁴⁶

For Lasch, reliance on this therapeutic elite had become a habit because of a “new paternalism...in the second half of the nineteenth century, found political expression in the progressive movement and later in the New Deal, and gradually worked its way into every corner of American society.”¹⁴⁷ In addition, or perhaps in conjunction with, this bureaucratic paternalism was the development, perhaps culmination of, a series of social and cultural events: “the proliferation of images, therapeutic ideologies, the rationalization of the inner life, the cult of consumption...and changing patterns of socialization.”¹⁴⁸ After the public and political uprising of the sixties, Lasch argues, there was no large transformation in the social order, but rather a “sense of ending” followed by a set of survival strategies, “the cult of expanded

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., xiii

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., xv,

Van Riper, Paul, P, *The American administrative State: Wilson and the Founders* 27

¹⁴⁶ Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations*, 218, 223.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 222

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 32

consciousness, health, and personal 'growth'." ¹⁴⁹ The uprisings of the sixties might be seen in light of Francois Lyotard's theory of the post-modern collapse of these grand narratives, but perhaps better as an epistemological crisis of the specific grand narrative of modern liberalism including its emphasis on progress. What Lasch focuses on then, in his narrative of cultural narcissism, is the rise of a group of non-believers in both the past and the future, the cult of the present, and subsequently the failure of modern liberalism, its political expression seen in the second administrative state, to interpret the events of the 1960's.

4.2.1 The New Elite, and the Rise of *The Culture of Narcissism*.

The rise of modern liberalism and the second administrative state had for Lasch led to a new relationship between the state and the individual. Having rejected both the classical liberal and republican notion of citizenship, the welfare state and therapeutic bureaucracy aspired to bring "the 'whole' man under social control" including "leisure time...social and personal hygiene."¹⁵⁰ This gave rise to a new kind of paternalism. The merging of the therapeutic mentality and growth of the welfare state, led to the outgrowth of the two main characters in Lasch's narrative. First, the social expert as part of the bureaucracy of the welfare state and its subsequent "health and welfare industries." And, secondly, the "individual dependent on the state" or these industries.¹⁵¹ The narcissistic personality and the narcissistic culture would arise as phenomenon in the meeting of these two characters.

The archetypal character of the narcissist in *Culture of Narcissism* is, for Lasch, exemplified in the former political radicals of the sixties, which in the seventies would give up their political engagement and "embrace the therapeutic sensibility," characters like: Abbie Hoffman, Jerry Rubin and Rennie Davis.¹⁵² These were members of what Lasch sees as the development from the political new left of the 1960's to the *Awareness Movement* in the 1970's. At this point it is important to have in mind that Lasch to a large degree throughout his narrative tones down the extremes exemplified in these archetypes. He expands, we might say, their language, their search for self-fulfillment and character into a social pathology that can be used as a vehicle for cultural critique. His narrative and critique is never directly concerned with the *Awareness Movement*, but rather with how its members can be seen as symptomatic, and serve as symbols

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 4

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 7, 229, 224

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 10

¹⁵² Ibid., 14

for a larger therapeutic sensibility within American culture in general. They have, along with large parts of American culture, developed a set of everyday narcissistic traits characterized by:

dependence on the vicarious warmth provided by others combined with a fear of dependence, a sense of inner emptiness, boundless repressed rage, and unsatisfied oral cravings...pseudo self-insight, calculating seductiveness, nervous, self-deprecatory humor...intense fear of old age and death, altered sense of time, fascination with celebrity, fear of competition, decline of the play spirit, deteriorating relations between men and women.¹⁵³

These traits form as a consequence of an emphasis on a radical form of individual freedom combined with a view of the world as a “dangerous and forbidding place.”¹⁵⁴ It represents for Lasch a resigned outlook on life, in which the individual aims to survive with the minimum amount of “trouble and pain.”¹⁵⁵ In the search for freedom and comfort they retract from the world as a coping mechanism. This retraction can be seen as a reaction against a feeling of powerlessness and incompetence in dealing with life’s increasing complexities.

In *The Culture of Narcissism* there are several ways to view the relationship between this narcissistic personality, therapeutic bureaucracy and the notion of competence. First that ordinary competence and common sense, as portrayed by the earlier ideal of rugged individualism, vanishes because of the increased cultural and technical complexity of modern society. Second, that competence and common sense is done away with by the truth claims of experts within various fields connected to education and social legitimacy of education. And, finally that modern individualism disables common agreement in general.¹⁵⁶ Lasch seemingly opts for the second notion that “the new professions themselves invented many of the needs they claimed to satisfy.”¹⁵⁷

One of Lasch’s examples of this dynamic is found in the relationship between the family and modern society, and that “the family’s dependence on professional services over which it has little control represents...the erosion of self-reliance and ordinary competence...by...giant corporations and of the bureaucratic state.”¹⁵⁸ Here we are talking about the role of the family as a social institution, but also comprising of two individuals who under the complexity of modern society, individual anxiety and bureaucratic intrusion, fail to validate their own lives

¹⁵³ Ibid., 33

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 51

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 49

¹⁵⁶ See: MacIntyre, *After Virtue*

¹⁵⁷ Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations*, 228

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 229

separately and to agree on common guidelines for raising their children.¹⁵⁹ What we see is a negative synergy, between social experts and individuals or social institutions, in which dependence and thus narcissism emerges as intertwined into the social order. Parents find it increasingly hard to raise their children without help from experts because the knowledge of how to best raise children, and how raising children the wrong way can have detrimental effects, is found externally from the private sphere and the family as a unit within the extended family or tradition. This again furnishes the parents sense of incompetence, but also introduces a constant fear of doing something wrong, making them even more reliant on external guidance.

Lasch finds the “professional elite of doctors, psychiatrists, social scientists, technicians, welfare workers and civil servants” not only within the governmental part of the bureaucratic welfare state but also within the corporations.¹⁶⁰ Thus, what Lasch calls the new paternalism, is not limited to government but is exemplified in the general growth of modern management. This sort of management differs from traditional management in that it, following the demise of economic man, aims at managing not simply public affairs, property or nature, but enters private life as well. Here it is difficult to draw a decisive line in his argument. What we can see is a connection between the therapeutic mindset that “absolves individuals of moral responsibility, and the treatment of individuals as victims of social circumstance,” where victim turns into “patient” subsequently bringing the individual under social control.¹⁶¹ Similarly the individual absolved from the responsibility of his physical condition, surrenders his technical skills and traditional knowledge for the role of happy consumer.

To sum up, there is reciprocity between the events and characters in Lasch’s argument. The therapeutic bureaucracy of the welfare state creates a dependent individual that in turn develops narcissistic traits. Rendered incompetent by the separation between handwork, brainwork, common sense and tradition, the narcissist is unable to “validate his self-esteem,” and turns to others around her including the professional therapist, social scientist or any certified expert for constant validation of her efforts.¹⁶² These professions see the person as a patient, unable to best decide what is her own good, and they aim at socially reconstructing her by applying social control. The individual is seen as the victim of social circumstance and cannot be fully

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 226

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 234

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 218

¹⁶² Ibid., 10

responsible for his actions. Being an object of knowledge means she is discouraged from shaping her social circumstances. She can only turn inwards and becomes self-absorbed in a quest to find her *self*. This retracts her from public life, and further undermines her ability to partake in private life. This further amplifies the inability to affect her surroundings, and she again turns inward on a quest for “psychic self-improvement.”¹⁶³ This quest renders her even more incompetent, and further validates the need for the therapeutic bureaucracy of the welfare state.

4.2.2 Populism and *The Culture of Narcissism*

For Lasch, history is employed as a vehicle for social and cultural critique. It becomes a public moral argument, which rests on a populist reply to modernity. There are clear similarities between 19th century populism and Lasch’s critique of experts in *The Culture of Narcissism* in its disdain for elitism, radical view on democracy and critique of capitalism. Lasch applies the concept of a usable past both implicitly and explicitly throughout his argument, which corresponds with his specific view of history: “far from regarding it as a useless encumbrance, I see the past as apolitical and psychological treasury from which we draw the reserves...that we need to cope with the future.”¹⁶⁴ This attitude towards the past is in itself part of the argument against the modern rejection of the past as “a sentimental illusion.”¹⁶⁵ But most importantly it enables him to utilize history as part of his argument and to draw parallels between various mechanisms and phenomenon then and now.

As a consequence of this view of history, Lasch develops a new argument building one of the central problems populism faced in the Gilded Age. Then, a large issue was the need to reform government making it more democratic and less corrupt, enabling it to oppose the emerging elites, trusts and an expanding market. Now, under modern conditions, marked by the convergence between state and market, including the co-narration of modernity by modern liberalism, mixed economy and industrialization, Lasch finds the elite to be part of a larger group concerned with a more general management of everything and everyone. Experts, the

¹⁶³ Ibid., 4

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., xviii

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., xvii

“professions” as the populists would have called them, have taken over the place of both old elites and government officials of the 19th century.

While the populist movement stood at the brink of modernity, Lasch’s re-affirmation of its ideas are posited at its end, in the post-modern. The central events narrated in Lasch’s cultural critique are not radical shifts in production, technological innovation or scientific discovery. Rather they are consequences, externalities, of such developments. What Lasch fears is not the collapse of an agrarian economic order, but rather the onset of a cultural malaise. This was perhaps also the underlying fear of the 19th century populists. Lasch expands the notion of dependence as a precursor for domination, which is so central to the republican conception of liberty, from the physical to the psychological realm. In some ways he treats the physical dependence as a given, but not irrelevant precursor to psychological dependence exemplified by the phenomenon of narcissism. Just as the industrial society and the *robber baron* radically changed the relevance and power of the farmer or the artisan’s competence, the therapeutic bureaucracy of the welfare state “has eroded everyday competence...and...made the individual dependent on the state, the corporation, and other bureaucracies.”¹⁶⁶ Lasch then, out of the notion of the usable past, draws up a parallel between the perceived elites of the nineteenth century and those of the twentieth. Lasch expands the notion of an elite against the people found in both the classical republican narrative and in its reformation found in nineteenth century populism. In doing so he tries to revitalize and reform a populist narrative within American culture.

For the artisans and farmers of the populist movements, the rise of industrialism formed a threat against their conceptions of property and competence as sources of power so vital to the republican conception of citizenship. *The Culture of Narcissism* adds to and re-frames these notions in relation to the postmodern idea that knowledge is power. Competence can be seen as knowledge that is contextualized. Traditional knowledge required a traditional context in order to be seen as competence. In Lasch’s cultural critique both knowledge and its context has been taken over by a new elite of social experts operating within a therapeutic bureaucracy. Competence and independence has thus taken a psychological turn away from its more traditional physical and political context, and entered the realms of social and private life.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 10

4.2.3 Communities of Competence, a Cure for *The Culture of Narcissism*

Lasch's cultural critique in *The Culture of Narcissism* can be seen as part of a larger populist critique forming throughout his authorship, but offers no clear alternative to modern liberalism and its progressive notion of freedom. For Lasch, the individual's sense of incompetence grows in relation to the externally created knowledge by professional expertise. This in turn renders the individual more dependent on such expertise. *The Culture of Narcissism* should be seen as a descriptive account and offers no all-encompassing normative framework. For a solution, Lasch points only in a general direction, and argues that:

In order to break the existing pattern of dependence and put an end to the erosion of competence, citizens will have to take the solution of their problems into their own hands. They will have to create their own "communities of competence". Only then will the productive capacities of modern capitalism, together with the scientific knowledge that now serves it, come to serve the interests of humanity instead¹⁶⁷

This seems perhaps as a toothless idea compared to the stark critique above of the expert and modern society. Lasch's argument is intended as a reminder of populist ideas built on the republican discourse on liberty, and help furnish a "a distrust of experts," which "may help to diminish the dependence on experts that has crippled the capacity for self-help."¹⁶⁸

Communities of competence revolve around the notion of the resurrection of a "common sense," a democratic popular epistemology.¹⁶⁹

This notion of common sense is explored later in *The True and Only Heaven* by an account of the discussion between Walter Lippmann and John Dewey. Their argument was in many ways similar to the critique of the expert offered above, revolving around notions of whether "officials would be guided either by public opinion or by expert knowledge" and subsequently whether "participatory democracy had to give way to distributive democracy."¹⁷⁰ In *The Culture of Narcissism*, Lasch develops his argument on a more individual level. Those oppositions found in Dewey and Lippmann underline his narrative, but instead of using Dewey's demise of the public he invokes Richard Sennett's fall of public man. Sennett argued that a "romantic cult of sincerity and authenticity tore away the masks that people had worn in

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 235

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., xv

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 235

¹⁷⁰ Lasch, *The True and Only Heaven: Progress and Its Critics*, 365,366

public” and thus disintegrated the “shared...common fund of public signs.”¹⁷¹ This further implied the inability to take part in public discussion without revealing “personal anxieties.”¹⁷² For Lasch, Sennett accounts for an early precursor and consequence of an awareness movement connected to his narcissistic culture, namely 19th century romanticism. He seemingly agrees with Sennett up to a point and then turns his theory on the head.

Instead of following Sennett’s theory of the demise of the public, Lasch argues that “it is the devastation of personal life, not the retreat into privatism [sic] that needs to be criticized.”¹⁷³ In other words, it is the disintegration of what is private that creates the eclipse of the public, not the shared public signs. Lasch concludes that “in our own time, this invasion of private life by the forces of organized domination has become so pervasive that personal life has almost ceased to exist.”¹⁷⁴ If private life is lived in a relationship with social signs and socially valid knowledge, the invalidation of the latter invalidates the former. Returning to the discussion between Lippmann and Dewey we might say that, under the conditions Lasch identifies, there are no longer any opposition between public opinion and expert knowledge, because through a progressive notion of liberty the individual is socialized, not through a common fund of social signs, but by social experts. The individual does not retreat from a public sphere to a private sphere but to a semi- private sphere permeated by a new paternalism. Unable to co-construct social signs or knowledge collectively or independently without the assistance of social experts, the question does not come down to the demise of the public, but to the demise of the creation of private opinion, validation and in turn their sum in socially held common sense. In this argument, Lasch might be seen as drawing on C. Wright Mills notions of mass and public. According to Mills, the rise of mass society was characterized by:

(1) far fewer people express opinions than receive them; for the community of publics becomes an abstract collection of individuals who receive impressions from the mass media. (2) The communications that prevail are so organized that it is difficult or impossible for the individual to answer back immediately or with any effect. (3) The realization of opinion in action is controlled by authorities who organize and control the channels of such action. (4) The mass has no autonomy from institutions; on the contrary, agents of authorized institutions penetrate this mass, reducing any autonomy it may have in the formation of opinion by discussion¹⁷⁵

¹⁷¹ Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations*, 28

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 28

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 27

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 30

¹⁷⁵ C.Wright, Mills, *The Power Elite*, (London, Oxford University Press, 1970), 304

For Mills the organization and control of the mass originated in a “power elite” consisting political, economic, and military men.¹⁷⁶ Despite the many similarities to his own arguments, Lasch seldom mention Mills’ account of the rise of mass society and power elites vs. the public, and the ability to socially construct valid knowledge. The reason behind this might be that Mills sees the powerful elite in a too limited sense, the metropolitan 400; the corporate rich etc. Lasch on the other hand does not share this limited notion of the elite. He identifies not just an “old” elite of professional politicians or corporate rich colonializing the public sphere, but more importantly a new elite of social professionals colonializing the private sphere. In other words, not a cosmopolitan upper class, but a new class of bureaucrats and administrators who cannot be described only through notions of real or social capital. Lasch’s frustration derives from the failure of the counterculture of the 1960’s. A movement that in unsuccessfully dismantling Mills power elite, lead to the culmination of a new paternalism of social control and a new elite who derived their power not from capital but from systemic function.

Another way to see Lasch’s thesis of the waning of the private sphere is in light of Hannah Arendt’s theory of “the submersion of both...the private and public realms...in the sphere of the social.”¹⁷⁷ Arendt’s theory is represented by an allegory of the social as that of the household, and it is politically represented in modern society by “the most social form of government...bureaucracy.”¹⁷⁸ The household concerned itself with “the maintenance of life,” once connected to the private sphere. It has, according to Arendt, expanded into the social “a kind of ‘collective housekeeping’...organized into the facsimile of one super-human family...we call society and its political form ...called nation.”¹⁷⁹ This household is ruled, as Lasch would say by a “paternalism without father,” not by an authoritarian elite, but rather a therapeutic elite, symbolically represented by the emotive organization of maternalism.¹⁸⁰ The economy of the household includes as its means, instruments “natural” and “self-made conditions,” but also man, individuals, to reach its goal of efficient survival.¹⁸¹

Through this scientific administration of the household of the nation based on concepts of

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 276

¹⁷⁷ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 69

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 40

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 29

¹⁸⁰ Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism*, 229

¹⁸¹ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 29, 9

efficiency and growth, modern society aims at distributing goods to ensure social equality. This corresponds with a progressive view on liberty, that individual freedom can only be reached under a condition of social equality. For Arendt the function of the private sphere was that it enabled the citizen to step out into the public sphere where he could be free “from the inequality present in rulership and to move in a sphere where neither rule nor being ruled existed.”¹⁸² This can be seen in direct relationship with the idea of freedom, as non-domination, found in classical republicanism. Lasch never reaches such a stark divide between public/private and republican liberty, but focuses instead on the potential for freedom within the social household. In *The Human Condition* this amounts to the “sphere of intimacy” which develops from the individual’s “inability to be either at home in society or to live outside it.”¹⁸³ Lasch translates in many ways, the social household of Arendt, into the therapeutic bureaucracy, and the sphere of intimacy and “radical subjectivism” into the narcissistic personality.¹⁸⁴ Like a teenager who is unable to move away from home, the narcissist is unable to reach full maturity and can only venture upon an inner quest towards intimate fulfillment.

While Sennet and Dewey saw the vanishing of public shared symbols and the public sphere, Lasch sees in addition the demise of the private sphere. It is then arguably only by first enabling a private sphere that we might resurrect the public. The private sphere entails a common sense and “communities of competence,” as both an alternative and revolt against the parental administrator of the household.¹⁸⁵ The counterculture of the sixties, which takes up so much of Lasch’s narrative, can in many ways be seen as an adolescent rebellion similar to what Theodore Roszak in *The Making of a Counter Culture* would call a revolt against a technocracy. But, instead of creating a “distrust of experts” and subsequently moving out of, or dismantling the household, members of these movements moved instead out of its room and into the basement to find the meaning of life.¹⁸⁶ The new left failed on its quest against the *technocracy* and its repressive authorities and elites. Instead, according to Lasch, it paradoxically cleared the path for a new therapeutic elite that had been growing since the Progressive Era.

¹⁸² Ibid., 33

¹⁸³ Ibid., 39

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 39

¹⁸⁵ Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations*, xv

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., xv

4.3 Conclusion: *The Culture of Narcissism* and the Republican Tradition

The Culture of Narcissism is for Lasch the result of an American culture that is increasingly dominated by a modern liberal narrative, and subsequently the idea of social management and control. The narcissistic personality type is the result of a waning of private life, as social experts, bureaucrats and therapists start making their way into the private sphere. Lasch's critique makes use of the former populist narrative of the people against the elites, in which the elites seek to dominate, while the people seek not to be dominated. By way of this populism, Lasch enters the republican tradition. The farmers and artisans of the earlier populism experienced a growing interference and dependence on industrialists, wage-labor and urban elites. Lasch's modern individual surely experience the same interference and dependence on larger market structures. But, in addition an increasing interference from a new elite that, in their goal of social efficiency treat individuals as victims and patients. The outgrowth of the narcissistic character is the result of the feeling of incompetence in dealing with private life. The result is even more dependence on social experts and therapists, and this symbiotic relationship results in a downward spiral rendering the individual powerless when faced with the elite's ambitions to dominate. The only proposed antidote to this development, is to re-contextualize knowledge and thus regain a sense of power and resistance by establishing communities of competence. The re-gaining of the private sphere is the precondition for a well functioning public sphere. It is by this return of private ability and competence, the refusal to be used as a means toward the end of social efficiency, that the individual may gain a position of power and the possibility of regaining the earlier conception of citizenship and freedom found in the republic tradition. From the notion that knowledge is power, the return of common sense means the return of individual *virtù*.

Throughout his authorship Lasch attempts to re-vitalize the American populist narrative and thus implicitly a part of the republican tradition. However he cannot be said to draw it out of its epistemological crisis. He does take a first step in acknowledging why it has failed to answer the question of what is happening in America. But, he does not fully develop a new narrative. The closest he gets is the notion of communities of competence, and later in *The True and Only Haven* a return to natural limits. His most important contribution is arguably the diagnosis of the ills of modern American culture generally, and the modern liberal narrative in particular. Lasch's cultural crisis is a crisis of citizenship, private life and traditional institutions, but it is also a reflection on the failings of the modern liberal narrative and its dream of freedom turned toward mechanisms of social control.

5 Wendell Berry and The Unsettling of America

In this chapter I will try to see Wendell Berry's book *The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture*, in light of the republican tradition, and the attempts made to reform and revitalize it as a competing grand-narrative within the American cultural conversation. In what ways can Berry's writing be identified as springing out of a republican tradition? How does he challenge the liberal hegemony in answering what is going on in America, and what it means to be American?

5.1 Wendell Berry: Narrating *The Unsettling of America*.

Wendell Erdman Berry is perhaps best defined as an American man of letters. Born in 1934, Berry grew up in Newcastle, Kentucky on his family's farm.¹⁸⁷ After finishing an M.A in English at the University of Kentucky, he went on the Wallace Stegner writing program at Stanford University and later took a teaching position at New York University.¹⁸⁸ After just two years in New York, Berry decided to return to Kentucky and bought his farm in Port Royal where he has lived since. His first published work was the novel *Nathan Coulter* (1960) followed by a collection of poems in *The Broken Ground* (1964) that marked the start of an extensive authorship consisting of poems, novels and essays, still active today.¹⁸⁹ *The Unsettling of America*, explored later, can be seen as typical of Berry's work as it surrounds the theme of agriculture, culture and place. It is also fairly representative when it comes to form and perhaps best seen as a collection of essays and poems bound together to form a narrative that comes out as a sober cultural critique. In another thesis Berry might as well have been placed amongst American nature writers or as part of an American environmental discourse. Here we shall try to see his ideas and especially the *The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture*, as a reformed agrarianism connected to an epistemological process within the republican tradition and as a platform to critique the liberal foundation of modern American culture.

¹⁸⁷ "National Endowment for the Humanities": URL: <http://www.neh.gov/about/awards/jefferson-lecture/wendell-e-berry-biography> Accessed: 20/2 2014

¹⁸⁸ "National Endowment for the Humanities": URL: <http://www.neh.gov/about/awards/jefferson-lecture/wendell-e-berry-biography> Accessed: 20/2 2014

¹⁸⁹ Wendell Berry has over 60 published works for an extensive list see: <http://brtom.typepad.com/wberry/works-chronological.html> visited 20/2 2014

At the center of Wendell Berry's thought and writing is the theme of the demise and hopeful prospect of a resurrection of: place, community, a healthy environment and "good farming," or in his own words, "farming as defined by agrarianism as opposed to farming as defined by industrialism: farming as the proper use and care of an immeasurable gift."¹⁹⁰ Berry's way of writing about these themes can often be seen as unorthodox. The argument in *The Unsettling of America*, revolves around everything from official government programs to biblical proverbs, extensive lists, poetry, history and direct observation. Because of his unique style, reading his work and attempting to situate his argument as part of a larger ongoing argument within the republican tradition is in no way straightforward.

The obvious observation, given his emphasis on farming, is that his thinking is agrarian. But, his agrarianism is not simply that found in Jefferson's ideas in the 19th century. The farm and the farmer are connected to a relationship between agriculture and virtue, but also serve as symbols in a much larger critique of modern American culture and its underlying worldview. His arguments about farming and agriculture are discussions of exactly that, while at the same time transcending agricultural or environmental discourses, positing the farm, and its context in American culture, as an allegory of a much larger modern development. Berry's argument oscillates between allegory and concrete argument. The narrative of the gradual "unsettling" of the rural lands of America is at once symbolic and at the same time very real, and Berry traces a series of events, worldviews and mentalities throughout this process, which is both physical and cultural. In exploring this narrative we shall focus on these concepts as oppositions to each other: a mechanical vs. organic worldview, the mentality of the exploiter vs. the nurturer, but also as interrelated concepts: competence and specialization, agriculture and agribusiness.

5.2 Two Worldviews and *The Unsettling of America*

All of Berry's thinking surrounds, in some way or another, farming. Agriculture provides the master metaphor, in which the world is like a farm and the farmer is man. This results in an organic worldview where man is placed as the caregiver and cultivator of nature, but also part of its "natural cycles of birth, growth, death and decay."¹⁹¹ In this worldview there is a reciprocal relationship between, men, but most importantly between man and nature. This

¹⁹⁰ Berry, Wendell, "The Agrarian Standard", Orion Magazine,(Summer, 2002), accessed 09.11.2014, Online version, URL: <http://www.orionmagazine.org/index.php/articles/article/115/>

¹⁹¹ Wendell, Berry, *The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture*, (San Francisco, CA, Sierra Club Books, 1977), 56

worldview was for Berry once dominant, but has in modernity been replaced by a mechanical worldview that puts man in charge of nature. This Enlightenment idea radically transformed the relationship between man and nature, but also the relationship between men.

The mechanical worldview rests on the master metaphor “that the world and all its creatures are machines.”¹⁹² It allows man to discover its parts, to gain mastery and ultimately perfect its efficiency. This worldview is seen in conjunction with the rise of what Berry refers to as the “Modern World” and it’s underlying goal of the creation of an “Earthly Paradise” a garden of Eden that would be built and completely controlled by man.¹⁹³ Its agricultural expression comes in the form of agribusiness and “agribusinessmen” who manage the farm from with a mechanical worldview.¹⁹⁴ The agricultural metaphor and the organic worldview on the other hand, place the farmer as part cultivator and caregiver within a larger organic structure. The agribusiness metaphor, and the mechanical worldview place the agro-businessman, the agricultural expert, in charge of a machine and its ultimate efficiency.

The mechanical worldview, not only informs a man/nature dichotomy, but in addition a sociology and perhaps most importantly an epistemology. Berry characteristically posits this argument in form of a list that clarifies the relationship between the mechanical worldview, its epistemology that divides people and experts, and how it views the traditional farm:

- 1.If the world and all its creatures are machines, then the world and all its creatures are entirely comprehensible, manipulable and controllable by humans.
- 2.The humans who have this power are experts.
- 3.Experts are made by education.
- 4.Education only happens in schools.
- 5.Experts are smarter than other people
- 6.Thinking is best done by experts in offices and laboratories.
- 7.People who *do* work cannot be trusted to think about it.
- 8.People who work would prefer not to work.
- 9.Human workers are inefficient machines, encumbered by extraneous needs and desires, and they should be replaced by more efficient machines or by chemicals.
10. In general, the human machine is better at consumption than production.
11. A farm is or ought to be a factory in which plant and animal machines serve the economic machine in the most efficient way.

¹⁹² Ibid., 230-231

¹⁹³ Ibid., 55

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 20

12. Efficiency has nothing to do with human or biological needs and desires.
13. Farm bankruptcy increases agricultural efficiency.
14. All farmers actually dislike farming and are secretly glad when they go bankrupt, because it gets them out of the sticks and into the bright lights where they have a chance to become experts.
15. Conventional agricultural science (like all conventional science) is disinterested and objective and serves no interest other than the advancement of human knowledge.¹⁹⁵

One appreciates Berry's irony here, his agrarian worldview marks itself as the complete opposite of these precepts of "mechanical" thinking. Human beings for Berry are not a machine, nor animal but human. Knowledge is derived from practice, not discovered, manipulated and applied with disinterest by experts. Berry argues that this way of thinking not only destroys traditional communities, but also leads to a belief in a deterministic modern worldview in which "every *bad* thing that happens is inevitable" and everything good thing "comes from politicians, scientists, researchers, governments and corporations."¹⁹⁶ This informs a relationship between the farmer and the agricultural expert, but most importantly it serves as an allegory for a larger development within modern industrial culture and the growth of a mentality that further supports the mechanical worldview.

5.3 Two Mentalities and The Unsettling of America

Berry's main characters in his narrative of *The Unsettling of America* are paired in binary oppositions according to the two worldviews above: conquistadors and settlers, exploiters and nurturers, experts and farmers, Cortés' and Thomas Jefferson. They serve as symbolic characters in a story that sees the rise of one mentality and the demise of another throughout American history.

Berry's narrative starts at the very beginning of American history, with the event of "white race's" first "presence in America."¹⁹⁷ Here he finds two symbolic characters that serve as exponents of two key mentalities the exploiter and the nurturer. First, the "conquistadors" or explorers "looking for gold...always further on," and secondly the Indians and their "relation to place...based upon old usage and association, upon inherited memory, tradition, veneration."¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 230-231

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 231

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 3

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 3, 4

It was not just the Indians, but also later the yeoman farmer, that had this nurturing mentality, which made them able to say: “no farther, this is the place.”¹⁹⁹ Although the first mentality is dominant in relation to the latter, at this time in history, Berry emphasizes that in early American history there were those who chose to “establish agricultural settlements rather than quest for gold or exploit Indian trade.”²⁰⁰ The historical accuracy of Berry’s narrative of Indians and conquistadors might be questioned. It serves best as an allegory, a historical lesson of two mentalities embedded in American culture.

What is central here is that Berry draws a parallel between these two mentalities then and now. In the relationship between the exploiter and the nurturer, “time after time, in place after place...conquerors have fragmented and demolished traditional communities, the beginnings of domestic culture.”²⁰¹ He sees this process and mentality as a persistent throughout American history, and in addition sees these two mentalities as consistent within American culture. The conquistadors, after having accomplished his mission with regards to territory and nature would turn their attention and exploitive mentality towards “the industrial marketplace.” This would in turn marginalize the Indians and later the yeoman farmers, “those who intended to remain and prosper where they were,” and outcompete their nurturing mentality.²⁰²

Berry expands and adapts these two mentalities to the conditions of modern American culture. The exploiter, once the conquistadors, are now in modern terms the specialist or expert whose end goals are “efficiency...money...organization,” and who “thinks in terms of hard facts.”²⁰³ The nurturer once the Indian, are now the traditional farmer within established communities who in modern terms represents “a human order... that accommodates itself both to order and to mystery...land, household, community, place,” a mentality that emphasize “character, condition, quality, kind.”²⁰⁴ The former mentality represented by the character of the expert has grown out of, and in conjunction with, an “exploitive economy” and the mechanical worldview.²⁰⁵

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 4

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 4

²⁰¹ Ibid., 4

²⁰² Ibid., 4

²⁰³ Ibid., 7-8

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 7-8

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 11

Berry applies the theory of the closing frontier and the exploitive mentality, to a new economic frontier that is marked “no longer so much by expansions of territory...but by the calculated outdating, outmoding and degradation of goods and by the hysterical self- dissatisfaction of consumers.”²⁰⁶ The capitalist economy has thus integrated the exploitive mentality of efficient gain, while subsequently marginalized the nurturing mentality. The vision to build a mechanical garden of Eden has led to an idealized view of a future in which “science will have solved all our problems, gratified all our desires; when we will all live in perfect ease in an air-conditioned, fully automated womb.”²⁰⁷ What follows this vision is a view that practical and physical work, as that done on the farm, is “beneath human dignity.”²⁰⁸ The rise of this exploitive mentality in conjunction with the modern mechanical worldview has with “high-toned patriotism...fantasy and avarice” led America to “invade foreign lands and the moon,” but most importantly for Berry been turned inward onto our environment and ourselves.²⁰⁹ Opposed to the organic worldview and the mentality of the nurturer, the exploiter sees his surround as raw material to be ordered and used efficiently. By applying this mentality to nature, as part of the project to reach the state of comfortable conspicuous leisure and absence of work, we have made it our slave to work on our behalf. Berry sees no rigid divide between people and nature. In other words the destruction of nature is the destruction of “the world that is our common heritage and bond we have returned to making niggers of people: we have become each other’s niggers”.²¹⁰ In other words, we have reached a modern condition in which we have come to dominate each other by proxy of environmental degradation.

This modern condition, led on by the mentality of exploitation, is for Berry both “morally repugnant,” and at the same time aesthetically “ugly.”²¹¹ As culture becomes increasingly aware of the predicament of its own condition, Berry warns of the inclination to remedy these ills using the same means ultimately responsible for its rise. How do we rectify the situation, Berry asks. And, answers that “we will not find those answers in Washington DC, or in the laboratories;” in other words not with more experts and more central planning, or further exploitation, but rather by returning to the core cultural narrative that the physical condition of the early American republic entailed, that:

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 11

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 57

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 12

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 3

²¹⁰ Ibid., 12

²¹¹ Ibid., 12

as many as possible should share in the ownership of the land and thus be bound to it by economic interest, by the investment of love and work, by family loyalty, by memory and tradition.²¹²

The return of the mentality of the nurturer and the organic worldview means a return of an American foundational narrative that stress the importance of “intensive work, local energies, care, and long- living communities,” a cultural equivalent to what Thomas Jefferson saw as “the surest safeguard of democratic liberty... the independent, free-standing citizenry.”²¹³ The surest safeguard of a condition that is morally acceptable and aesthetically beautiful involves a cultural narrative that is embedded in both the nurturing mentality and the organic worldview. Once faced with the consequences of the exploitive mentality and the mechanical worldview, Berry argues that we must return to the story of the healthy community, the importance of work, to mystery, quality and proper care of both life and nature, not only for its own sake, but to resist the conquistador, the expert and the exploitive mentality.

So far we have accounted for the two binary oppositions, of the mechanical vs. the organic worldview and the exploitive vs. the nurturing mentality, in *The Unsettling of America*. It is now time to turn to the more concrete manifestations of these notions within modern American culture: specialization and dependence.

5.3.1 The Rise of the Specialist and *The Unsettling of America*

For Berry, modern American culture involves a series of absurd but at the same time rational paradoxes. One such paradox became clear when journalists in 1975 discovered that The Sierra Club had invested in companies like Exxon, General Motors and Tenneco.²¹⁴ At one end they were concerned with the conservation of nature while at the other hand involved with the very same companies that were responsible for its degradation. This absurdity serves for Berry only as an example of a larger phenomenon within modern society, where factories that pollute can have “asthmatic executives” and where companies making pesticide can have “vice-presidents

²¹² Ibid., 13

²¹³ Ibid., 13,

For more on American foundation narratives see: David E Nye, *America as Second Creation: Technology and Narratives of New Beginnings*, (Cambridge, MA, The MIT Press, 2003),

²¹⁴ Berry, *The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture*, 17

whose children are dying of cancer.”²¹⁵ The source of such inconsistencies can be found in the modern phenomenon of specialization.

Specialization can be seen as a continuation and consequence of the exploitive mentality and the mechanical worldview above. It’s main feature is a process of compartmentalization that “produces specialists- people who are...trained *to do one thing*.”²¹⁶ Berry acknowledges that it might indeed at first glance “seem desirable enough... to see that the responsibilities of government, law...etc, are given into the hands of the most skilled,” but it comes at a great cost.²¹⁷ The cost resonates with Jefferson’s agrarianism, and the notion that in order to partake in the process of governing, citizens must be independent. Berry notes that the “system of specialization requires the abdication to specialists of various competences and responsibilities that were once personal and universal.”²¹⁸ When the individual citizen accepts the idea of specialization as the foundation of the social system, he at the same time renders himself totally dependent on specialists, and at the same time his universal competence irrelevant. He liberates himself from the toil of providing for his sustenance, his health, education of himself and his children and caring for his environment.²¹⁹ This leaves the citizen left with only two concerns, “making money and entertaining himself.”²²⁰ Most likely he will earn this money working as some sort of specialist, while allowing the specialists of the entertainment industry to provide his entertainment. The cost of comfort and efficiency is an almost complete loss of independence.

Another cost is that the individual feels morally exempt because by being occupied with only a small area at the time loses any sense of a complete picture. Any bad effects of his own life or the system of specialization are seen as “part of the cost.”²²¹ The individual does not feel responsibility and thus loses any sense of responsible involvement. In the system of specialization, a void appears between the individual and his surround. People, place and culture are for Berry “images of each other and inseparable from each other.”²²² The specialist however sees himself as a separate island amongst these and as a consequence loses the language needed for eventual cooperation. This liberal ideal of atomistic social freedom is seen

²¹⁵ Ibid., 18

²¹⁶ Ibid., 19

²¹⁷ Ibid., 19

²¹⁸ Ibid., 19

²¹⁹ Ibid., 20

²²⁰ Ibid., 20

²²¹ Ibid., 18

²²² Ibid., 22

as a freedom to pursue individual ends, but stuck with one competence the individual has to rely on both the toleration and help of other specialists and is thus completely free and completely dependent at the same time.

This paradox between freedom and dependence means that the individual feels free but is at the same time always a “potential victim” of the random will of others. Despite the attraction of this narrative that sees the individual as separate from his environment, the individual is for Berry not separate, but rather increasingly entwined in a society that is becoming more complex and at the same time less coordinated, more “organized, but less and less orderly.”²²³ The outcome is an individual who, perhaps unconsciously, feels anxious due to the unintelligibility of lived experience and his failure to engage in the creation of coordination and order.²²⁴ Stuck with *one* competence, the modern individual lives at the mercy of others, who like himself are unable to place themselves within any larger notion of culture or place. The dependency formerly articulated by Jefferson in the notion of wage slavery entailed at least, we might argue, a sense of intelligibility of the individual’s role within industrial capitalism, as the dependent worker. In Berry’s modern system of specialization, on the other hand, the individual, himself a specialist, can neither direct his frustrations to anything beyond himself nor co-develop with others, different cultural or collective ends. He is at the mercy of the end goal indented in his role as specialist, the complete mastery of his *one* area, of his maximum efficiency as *one* part of the project of complete mastery of the world.²²⁵

5.3.2 The Earthly Unsettled Paradise

Berry’s argument surrounding “the growth of what is called the Modern World” draws on a connection between the mentalities and worldview discussed above and the narrative of a future in which man has gained total control.²²⁶ Modernity is thus for Berry marked by a merging of the mentality of exploitation, the mechanical worldview and the system of specialization, but also a vision of the future that employs the metaphor of the human sovereignty “placing the human will in charge of itself and of the universe.”²²⁷ This vision of the future as an “era of

²²³ Ibid., 21

²²⁴ Ibid., 21

²²⁵ Ibid., 55

²²⁶ Ibid., 55

²²⁷ Ibid., 55

absolute human sovereignty” grew in conjunction with the mechanical worldview, and demanded limitless progress and specialization. The vision of transcending “the orders of Creation” meant a transcendence of the old organic worldview and nurturing mentality that placed man in-“between the natural and the divine.”²²⁸ Displacing this view and usurping “the whole Chain of Being” implied a return to the Garden of Eden by instilling man with powers once attributed to God and bypassing the question of the divine altogether. Given the mechanical worldview and the newfound demi-godlike independence of man, “this new Paradise was to be invented and built by human intelligence and industry.”²²⁹ The primary attraction of this narrative rests on the unquestioned belief “that the future will inevitably be ‘better’.”²³⁰ It takes on a mythic character, which posit that “the modern mind longs for the future as the medieval mind longed for Heaven.”²³¹ Just as heaven once provided the medieval mind with teleology, a final end, the dream of total control and complete efficiency is what provides modernity with its, arguably unreachable, end.

It is thus by the complete mastery, by way of specialization, of inner and outer nature that modern humankind hopes to transcend the human condition. Placing man at the center of the universe, means that all apart from man are “natural resources” to be judged by its use-value.²³² Given that mastery is equivalent to perfect efficiency, the specialist enters this future narrative as the character responsible for the efficiency of mastery. Due to the modern idea of the sovereignty of the human mind these specialists employ their reason and knowledge, not with regard to a specific place and context, but in what is thought of as an empty space, the similar “modern condition of being away from home” visible in explorations of the earlier conquistadors.²³³ Hannah Arendt in *The Human Condition* makes a similar claim that the escape from “the human condition” entails an “Archimedean” vantage point in which “we have found a way to act on the earth ... as though we dispose of it from the outside.”²³⁴ Berry’s perhaps most important point then is that the loss of place or context means that the specialist can apply his reason as a tool for unraveling, controlling and perfecting a world that is seen

²²⁸ Ibid., 55

²²⁹ Ibid., 55

²³⁰ Ibid., 56

²³¹ Ibid., 56

²³² Ibid., 54, 56,

²³³ Ibid., 52

²³⁴ Arendt, *The Human Condition* 262, 2

through the metaphor of the machine. To control both inner and outer nature as part of reconstructing an “Earthly Paradise”, whose only end goal is complete efficiency.²³⁵

The un-contextualized reasoning found in Berry’s specialist or expert, resembles the critique offered by Theodore Adorno and Max Horkheimer in *the Dialectic of Enlightenment*, and their notion of instrumental rationality: of reason working as an instrument “of domination” over both nature and other men.²³⁶ What Berry adds is the emphasis on the importance of place, coming out of his ideas of community. It is the allegory of the farm that provides the originality of his critique of the specialist. The farm is a product of good farming, of knowledge contextualized and practiced in a particular place. The end product of good farming is not efficiency or mastery, but rather the ‘good farm’. Proper farming does not involve domination, but rather cooperation that build on mutual respect rather than altruistic motives or pity. Similarly, for Berry, a community entails a human bond that is the effect of a shared experience of a place, and a sense of being a creative part of the contextualization of that space. We might say, that for Berry it is the rejection of community and place is what enables reason to become instrumental as it rids modern life and knowledge of an intelligible context. So we might read Arendt in the most obvious manner. The Archimedean point is located in a space, not “outside the earth,” but rather in the un-contextualized space of modern society.²³⁷ The cost of specialization, as the means to fulfill the dream of a paradise on earth, is both the loss of universal competence and loss of a particular place. The result Berry claims, is “probably the most unhappy average citizen in the history of the world” and a vision of the future as an “industrial Paradise”, which exists only as a “fantasy in the minds of the privileged and the powerful” but that in “reality is a shambles.”²³⁸

5.3.3 Farming in the Earthly Paradise and *The Unsettling of America*

Within Berry’s organic worldview, the farm provides the center of society as the symbol of the symbiosis between man and nature, but also the symbiotic relationship between the farm, the community, the culture and the knowledge that exists in relation to a specific place. No place then is the ambition of creating a new order of creation and its failure more exemplary than in the relationship between traditional and modern farming.

²³⁵ Berry, *The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture*, 55

²³⁶ Theodor W. Adorno & Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, (London, Verso, 1997) 37,xii

²³⁷ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 262

²³⁸ Berry, *The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture*, 20, 56

The scientific and technological positivism that underlines the dream of the industrial paradise is for Berry signified by two intertwined phenomenon, the notion that work is below human dignity and the overreliance on machines. This results in the vision that in the future, “all the work will be done by machines so sophisticated that they will not only clothe, house, and feed us, but think for us, play our games, paint out pictures, write our poems.”²³⁹ This vision returns in the modern view of agriculture as “agribusiness.”²⁴⁰ As the name implies land no longer serves in conjunction with cultivation or culture, but rather in combination with business. The goal of modern farming is, like that of the vision of an industrial paradise, total control and ultimate efficiency, while for the modern farmer, as for the specialist, the end goal is money and entertainment. The development from traditional to modern farming has been implemented in stages where each stage of industrialization has promised less work and more machines. Farmers have taken part in this process only to experience that it has not lead to “shorter hours or greater ease or less worry.” Instead it has initiated a move towards bigger and fewer farms, less farmers, more machinery and chemicals in the constant search for greater efficiency.²⁴¹

This development is viewed as the complete success of agribusiness. In the article *The revolution in American agriculture*, Jules. B Billard’s accounts for the accomplishments of modern agriculture: “strawberries in January, fresh oranges and lettuce all year round...tomatoes bred for machine harvesting...labor savers make it possible for one man to take care of 1000,00 broilers.”²⁴² While Billard’s article talks about the progress so far, the “dream farm” imagined by a group from South Dakota State University is a vision of the future. Here livestock will be kept in skyscrapers equivalent to Le Corbusier’s vision of towers in the park, a completely mechanized environment with no need for human involvement.²⁴³ The end goal of this modern farming is efficiency by proxy of total control. Berry sees no account analyzing the potential externalities of these prospects.²⁴⁴ However most importantly he sees this vision of farming as an example that “perfectly empowers the machine metaphor” in which the farmer is left standing as a specialist controlling the farm from his “bubble-topped control tower.”²⁴⁵ The farmer is to be replaced with the agricultural specialist or businessman, and the

²³⁹ Ibid., 57

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 65

²⁴¹ Ibid., 57, 58

²⁴² Ibid., 61

²⁴³ Ibid., 67

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 61-67

²⁴⁵ Ibid., 73

mentality of nurturing with that of exploitation, and the only goal being efficiency. The modern dream farms of the future does not account for the externalities of this development. Larger farms mean fewer farms, and fewer farms mean less farmers and the disintegration of farming communities. More machines means less jobs. Most importantly the production of food will be in the hands of the few, and the citizen, as long as he will still eat in the future, will be completely dependent on these specialists.

Modern farming and its visions for the future points to a specific development within agriculture, but just as importantly serve as an allegory for modern industrial culture and its envisioned future. Just as this future will provide comfort and abundance, mastery and efficiency, it will also reduce the amount of choices and even the progressive notion of freedom, as people:

...will not live where they work or work where they live. They will not work where they play. And they will not, above all, play where they work. There will be no singing in those fields. There will be no crews of workers or neighbors laughing and joking, telling stories, or competing at tests of speed or strength or skill. There will be no holiday walks or picnics in those fields because, in the first place, the fields will be ugly...and, in the second place, they will be dangerous. Very few people, more likely none of them, will own those farms...They will have nothing to say about how the land is used...The people will eat what the corporations decide for them to eat...They will have become...consumptive machines, which is to say, the slaves of producers.²⁴⁶

Berry's vision of what the citizen will not be free to do in the "nation-of-the-future that will be fed by these farms-of-the-future" reaches the core of his larger argument.²⁴⁷ Efficiency, specialization and mastery not only destroys communities and traditional farming, but has the capacity to put the providing of fundamental human needs in the hands of the few. By removing people of any sense of universal competence it renders them completely dependent on specialists operating within the market or the state. With the notion of "agripower," food has become a weapon. Berry shapes an argument that has strong connotations to Michel Foucault's notion of bio-politics.²⁴⁸ Whether applied as an instrument of domination or not, the farm of the future will have the potential to serve as such an instrument of power. The waning of the mentality of nurture and the organic worldview is not just a move away from a traditional form

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 74

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 74

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 59

of society, but also a move away from a notion of freedom that holds competence and independence as the source of power to resist domination as seen in the republican notion of freedom.

5.4 Conclusion: *The Unsettling of America* and the Republican Tradition.

Berry's argument is connected to the republican tradition but also its American revision and continuation of that tradition found in Thomas Jefferson's Agrarianism and its late 19th century expression in populism. What distinguishes Berry's agrarian thinking from these earlier expressions is that he finds himself not in a breaking point between the industrial and the agrarian, between tradition and what is thought of as modern culture, but rather in an increasingly post-industrial and post-modern view of American culture. While Jefferson anticipated and feared the implications of the closing of the frontier and the rise of industrialism on the formation of civic virtue, Berry's ideas and critique is formed in retrospect of such events. While Jefferson feared the wage-slavery of the factory worker, Berry fears a complete separation between work and life, creating an idle and anxious citizen who is completely comfortable and dependent at the same time.²⁴⁹ Berry's story of American society and culture entering late modernity include Jefferson's fear of industry and commerce, and moves beyond. America has indeed become unsettled, but is also in an ongoing process of unsettlement. *The Unsettling of America* is not a historical account, but a contemporary cultural critique.

This critique is not simply directed at industrial farming, urbanization, industrialism or metropolitan culture, but at the progressive notion of freedom found in modern liberalism. For Berry, the American agrarian tradition has at its core, a narrative that he sums up like this:

Agrarians value land because somewhere back in the history of their consciousness is the memory of being landless... Most of our American ancestors came here because they knew what it was to be landless; to be landless was to be threatened by want and also by enslavement.²⁵⁰

Land and property provides the source of independence and position of power necessary for both the Lockean social contract and the Machiavellian notion of republican citizenship. One might thus argue that Berry's thinking can be seen as taking shape within both a classical

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 79

²⁵⁰ Berry, Wendell, "The Agrarian Standard", Orion Magazine, (Summer, 2002), Online version, URL: <http://www.orionmagazine.org/index.php/articles/article/115/>

liberal and classical republican tradition. However, seen as a whole, *The Unsettling of America* should be read as an agrarian and populist argument within the republican tradition. The main argument supporting this statement is that he sees the rise of a mechanical worldview, the mentality of exploitation, specialization and human mastery, through the republican definition of freedom as non-domination. Through these developments, the individual and especially the local community have been rendered more and more dependent on externally defined end goals of efficiency and mastery. Most importantly however they have as a consequence of this dependency been left in a powerless position, completely vulnerable to external domination from both market and government elites.

A second argument in favor of defining Berry's ideas as republican lies in his proposed solution and counterweight to the process above. Through his writing Berry re-defines the notion of land as a source of liberty, revising agrarianism to meet the conditions of modern industrial society. In doing so he is not out to devalue the importance of farming or the importance of property. To be landed, in Berry's neo-agrarian thinking, "means being connected to a home landscape from which one may live by the interactions of a local economy and without the routine intervention of governments, corporations, or charities."²⁵¹ These routine interventions emerge in conjunction with the growth of federal government and the modern liberal progressive concept of liberty of securing social rights through material well-being. The community, just like the farm, provides the modern individual and citizen with a frame and context for both his life and his knowledge. Through the connection between a community and the individual, knowledge is contextualized and enables the appearance of a more general, un-specialized, competence. As far as knowledge can be seen as a source of power, this implies the empowerment of both individual and community. And, as far as contextualized knowledge equals competence, and competence in turn involves practice, the connection between individual and community also involve certain way of life. Berry's community is what Lasch would call: a community of competence.²⁵² A stronghold against a system of specialization that works towards total control, in which people have surrendered their "vital functions and responsibilities to salesman and agents and bureaus and experts of all sorts."²⁵³ Regaining or resisting this development implies an epistemological shift, a new and better narrative, where reason and knowledge no longer works towards the dream of complete mastery, but is re-contextualized as an instrument

²⁵¹ Berry, "The Agrarian Standard",

Wendell Berry, *The Art of the Commonplace*, ed. Norman Wirzba, (Berkeley, CA, Counterpoint, 2002), 86

²⁵² Lasch, *Culture of Narcissism*, 235

²⁵³ Berry, *The Art of the Commonplace*, 84

towards the end goals of the nurturing and health of a place, a farm and a community. The notion of health requires more than mere belief and principles, it requires practice and good practice requires competence. The specific conditions of a place, a farm or a community refute the modern Archimedean vantage point. This means that knowledge becomes contextualized and reformed into the knowledge and competence of a particular place. This competence becomes can be seen as what Machiavelli calls *virtù* the ability to act and dominate forces and events.

In Jefferson's agrarian thinking, the virtuous yeoman tied together the citizen and the republic. As Berry is read here, the community appears as a mediator between the two, a role previously held by the frontier. Individual virtue and *virtù*, competence, appears only in conjunction with the common good and cooperation of the community. The community again works toward the common good of the republic. Freedom is the consequence of the healthy community, not its prerequisite. It is difficult to draw a clear line between Jefferson and Berry's agrarian thinking on liberty and self- government. The clearest connection is in the shared ideal of context and proximity. As Rahe writes, Jefferson "sought to minimize the responsibilities of those governments set at a distance from the people and maximize popular vigilance by fostering popular control of local affairs."²⁵⁴ Berry applies the similar idea, but adds a cultural dimension to the argument. Due to the scale and complexity of modern society, he sees the traditional notions of: public, private, republic and citizen, as necessary but "not adequate for the shaping of human life."²⁵⁵ "Community alone, as principle and as fact, can raise the standards of local health (ecological, economic, social and spiritual)."²⁵⁶ Berry expands the notion of popular control over local affairs by emphasizing that vigilance and the power of resistance exist at a cultural level in the community that "lives and acts by the common virtues."²⁵⁷ The community being based on the interdependence between people in the context of a place, exercises power on a cultural level through the knowledge of "what works and what does not work in a given place" mediated through local narration and the continuous argument over what it means to be part of that community.²⁵⁸

Berry's narrative can be seen, as a revised form of agrarianism within the republican tradition.

²⁵⁴ Paul A Rahe, *Republics Ancient and Modern: Classical Republicanism and the American Revolution*, (Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 720

²⁵⁵ Wendell Berry *Sex Economy, Freedom and Community*, (New York, Panthenon Books, 1992), 119

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 119

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 119

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 120

His narrative includes a critique of both modernity and modern American culture, but his proposed remedy is not marked by nostalgia or a romantic view of a return to a pre-modern farming society. It is no secret that Berry might idealize the yeoman farmer, the farming community and simpler times, but he is not an idealist. The return to an organic worldview and the mentality of the nurturer does not imply an organic Garden of Eden, a natural earthly Paradise. It is a return to, acknowledgement of and engagement with “spatial, material, moral, spiritual” limits.²⁵⁹ His critique of modern American culture is substantial, however his solution is not: big problems require small solutions, because big solutions lead to big problems.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁹ Berry, *The Art of the Commonplace*, 222

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 219

6 Prospects of the Republican Tradition

From the analysis above we can extract a set of events sequenced into a larger story line by Berry and Lasch. It is primarily a description of how America has become physically and psychologically unsettled. From MacIntyre's notion, that in order to challenge or critique a tradition, such critique must itself come from within that or another tradition, I have argued that Berry and Lasch posit their critique from a populist strain within the republican tradition. Their critiques, while showing the weak spots and failure of the liberal narrative, at the same time exhibit a reassertion of parts of the republican narrative. In other words their critiques are not only descriptive as they also implicitly include a normative element. Below is a further analysis of how and why, but first I will attempt to synthesize their two narratives into one larger story:

In the period from the civil war to the great depression Americans would experience a series of new forces and events that would radically disrupt traditional ways of describing and answering, what it meant to be American. For farmers and artisans, the industrialization of American society would dislocate them from their traditional ways of life and simultaneously challenge their conceptions of citizenship, property and freedom. Citizenship required them to have a stake in a common good. The independence provided by the private life and property of the farm or the local shop, provided this stake and enabled participation in the public sphere. Through this political participation and deliberation they could secure the freedom from domination. This notion of liberty was not the freedom from interference with their natural rights, but more importantly a freedom from being dominated.

Industrialization, the growth of the market, and subsequently the growth of a wealthy elite, implied that the playing field was no longer level. As a consequence of the national and international market aided by an increase in infrastructure, mechanization, and wage labor, the local market would become marginalized. Subsequently, farmers and artisans feared the domination by the wealthy elite; this meant the end of their independence and the marginalization of their stake in the common good and their feeling of freedom. During the Progressive Era, attempts would be made to limit the power of the industrial elite by way of more democracy and larger government. This strategy would ultimately fail, resulting in a big market and a big state.

By the mid-20th century, as a continuation of the ambitions of the Progressive Era, government would grow as it aimed not only at securing natural rights but also to formalize these rights on behalf of the citizen. Government would still guarantee individual natural rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, but now in addition to defining what it meant to live, be free and happy, it saw to it that people were so endowed. This would in turn lead to the growth of a second administrative and therapeutic elite that became employed to secure the efficiency of a new social sphere, the efficiency of life, freedom and happiness.

The modern American citizen now faced the possibility of domination from both a moneyed and bureaucratic elites. By way of this dual domination individuals would experience the loss of a common sense, of local communities, the traditional family structure, the local shop, the artisan, traditional farming, a nurturing mentality, the loss of the self, and the disappearance of the private sphere. However, despite this increase of domination and decrease of individual power, Americans would continue to imagine themselves one step closer to the liberal end, in which they *lived separately, but happily, with toleration and respect for each other's individual rights*. The liberal foundation of American culture had provided the foundation for American modernity, but also its externalities: economic inequality, bureaucracy, mass society, environmental degradation and surveillance. Despite this paradox the liberal tradition was not dismissed because in the end the liberal narrative turned out to be the allegory in America's cave, the shadow of a white whale. It was not rejected because Americans, like Narcissus, had drowned in their own beauty. This marked the final stage of America's unsettling. But, all hope was not lost because within American culture there was a latent tradition, which had existed there since its foundation. This tradition did not amount to an external intrusion, not some eastern philosophy, no radical doubt, and no de-construction of American culture.

The re-settling of America would mean the return and reform of a republican tradition that had been attempted before but never fully completed. Jefferson tried it; then it was the turn of farmers and artisans of the populist movements. It was a tradition that did not promise life, liberty or happiness, but rather saw these as consequences of a healthy republic that gained its strength from the able and competent citizen, the balance of power between elites, common people and the identification of a common good. Unlike the previous attempts to bridge the gap between the citizen, the republic and virtue, under modern conditions we face the gradual disappearance of the private sphere. To regain it means to once more establish it as the realm of necessities and to include it into communities of competence that play by its own rules. This

implies a re- contextualization of knowledge in that it is removed from the universal, and resurrected in the particular, in relation to a family, a place, a community. The resurrection of the private and the particular forms the modern preface, the precondition, for the republican narrative, and the notion that what it means to be an American, and what is going on in America is the *co-existence of citizens, for better or for worse, with active deliberation, sharing in the governing of each other.*

6.1 Lasch and Berry, Cultural Criticism and the Republican Tradition.

Both Christopher Lasch's *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in An Age of Diminishing Expectations* and Wendell Berry's *The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture*, draw inspiration from the republican tradition to criticize modern American culture and its liberal tradition. That said they do diverge somewhat from each other regarding their internal themes. Lasch posits his arguments in reference to American social and institutional development. Berry on the other hand posits his arguments within a nature discourse, and perhaps later an environmental discourse. That does not mean that their writing does not at times intersect, but that they cannot initially be seen as part of the same discourse. In the previous chapters we tried to see their books in light and as part of a republican tradition within American culture. Here it is time to add to that by attempting to see their republican traits in relation to each other.

The Culture of Narcissism and *The Unsettling of America*, as argued in the previous chapters, enter the republican tradition through two earlier attempts, agrarianism and populism, to reform and revitalize its grand-narrative to better serve as the key interpretative paradigm for American conditions and events. As argued in chapter three, the central feature of that tradition was the notion of the free and civil life as a consequence of citizen virtue, *virtū* and the balance between the people and the elites. It is in the implicit use of these concepts that Lasch and Berry's critiques become intertwined, despite their different topics.

Their implicit use of a republican paradigm or narrative, and their explicit use of agrarianism and populism have a dual function in their writing. First, it provides a framework that enables the description of what they see as symptoms of a culture in crisis. Second, it provides a normative framework that provides suggestions of how to resolve this crisis. As argued above this first function is dominant to the latter. *The Culture of Narcissism* and *The Unsettling of*

America are primarily cultural critiques, and do not form large-scale solutions, a new public philosophy, or a new and improved republican narrative. From the narrative view of epistemological crisis and process established in chapter one, they do not complete an epistemological process within the republican tradition. But, this should not devalue their critiques as part of the larger epistemological process of American culture and its ongoing argument over what is going on in America, and what it means to be American.

From this view, and the notion that the narratives of the liberal tradition, both modern and classical, have served as the key interpretative paradigms of the rise of modern American culture, the cultural crisis identified in their writing might well be seen as the identification of an epistemological crisis within the liberal tradition. That said, Berry and Lasch does not attempt to internally revise the liberal narrative, but rather to challenge it by drawing inspiration from the republican tradition. They do not seek the revision of the notion of freedom as absence of interference and securement of natural rights, nor freedom as preconditioned by the securement of social equality. Their ambition is for the return of the republican notion of citizenship, and freedom as non- domination found in the republican tradition and its historical expressions found in agrarianism and populism.

A general disdain for elites, both new and old, unites Berry and Lasch. Modern American culture, they argue, has given rise, first to an industrial, later corporate moneyed elite, and secondly, in the attempt to harness the power of this elite, a bureaucratic elite of social managers and experts. The result is the demise of the republican citizen and the rise of a dependent, anxious and incompetent citizen, who is easily dominated by both the market and the state. The demise of the virtuous and competent citizen has collectively resulted in what C. Wright Mills would identify as mass society.²⁶¹ Most vividly it marks the demise of the balanced conflict found in Machiavelli's republican paradigm between the people and the elites. The citizen is for Berry reduced to an individual completely dependent on the system of specialization and thus always a "potential victim."²⁶² For Lasch the reaction to this dependency and powerlessness is a "radical subjectivism," of the narcissistic personality type.²⁶³ Their diagnosis of the modern American citizen does not have its final cause in dependence or interference, but in domination.

²⁶¹ C. Wright, Mills, *The Power Elite*, 304

²⁶² Berry, *The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture*, 21

²⁶³ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 39

Their somewhat underdeveloped cure to this phenomenon is twofold. First, the individual must withdraw her trust in these elites. Second, she must co-create a community of competence that can develop a common sense and contextualize knowledge in relationship to a shared end goal. Berry is the one of the two who further develops the second notion as he imagines these communities centered on the health and nurture of specific places or localities. Lasch is the one who advances the first notion in his use of earlier cultural narratives of self-help and rugged individualism. Where they both again meet, is in the idea that is not usually discussed in relation to republicanism, the private sphere. There is little doubt that both Lasch and Berry would like to see the rise of more democratic deliberation and a well functioning public sphere within American society. In *The Culture of Narcissism* and *The Unsettling of America*, this is however not the prime concern. Instead they argue for the resurrection of private life and the private sphere.

Berry's system of specialization and Lasch's new elite, are comprised of experts who meddle with private life. The involvement of the agricultural expert or the "helping professions" in this realm, devalues and invalidates the knowledge found in the smallest communities of competence, the family and the farm.²⁶⁴ The demise of private life and the rise of what Lasch refer to, as "paternalism without the father" is arguably the same development as that identified by Arendt as the key traits of modern society.²⁶⁵ She saw, like Machiavelli and the founding fathers, the private sphere as the necessary precondition for the public participation and citizenship: "without owning a house a man could not participate in the affairs of the world because he had no location in it which was properly his own."²⁶⁶ For Arendt, in the earliest forms of the *polis*, the household of the private sphere lived by the notion of necessity. The modern phenomenon of the entering of housekeeping as the rationale for the public realm is the entering of the notion of necessity as the foundation for politics.²⁶⁷ Berry and Lasch's notion of a new elite enter this relationship, as the housekeepers managing the efficiency of the household providing the modern citizen with his or her necessities. Their prospect of communities of competence seeks to reverse this development by re-establishing the private sphere as the sphere of housekeeping. The dismissal and distrust in expertise, implies the return

²⁶⁴ Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism*

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 218,

Arendt, *The Human Condition* 45

²⁶⁶ Arendt, *The Human Condition.*, 30

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 45

of the family and the farm as private communities of competence. And, the knowledge contextualized within these communities is what provides the citizen with the means to not be dominated. In other words the private sphere is what empowers the citizen and preconditions his participation in the public sphere.

The community of competence and the return of the private sphere imply the return of individual virtue and individual competence and ability. But this cannot be read as a return to the virtue of national patriotism. Virtue and competence is contextualized within smaller units, a place, the family, the farm, and the community. At first it might seem that the aggregate of these smaller communities is civil society, and that their growth and independence means the growth of civil society. If we, like Jürgen Habermas, equate civil society with the public sphere we see that this is not the case.²⁶⁸ Communities of competence are not non-governmental interest groups representing the people, nor the process of lobbying. The aggregate of the smaller communities of competence is the return of Machiavelli's notion of *the people*. Not to be confused with *a* people, but a plurality of communities and individuals with the shared ambition not to be dominated by *the elites*.

What in the end unites *The Culture of Narcissism* and *The Unsettling of America* is their renewed form of the populist element found in the republican tradition. Berry applies this narrative within an environmental discourse. Lasch applies it within a social discourse. The environmental crisis, the crisis of social life, and the more general cultural malaise, has a shared origin in a modern American culture represented by the liberal tradition, and in particular for Berry and Lasch, by the new elite that attaches itself to the modern liberal narrative. The solution comes in form of the return to the notion of citizenship preconditioned by virtue and ability. The return of private life, the dismissal of external expertise, and the contextualization of knowledge, should provide the citizen with a position of power. This should not be seen as abstract, but occurring in actual places: a farm, a family, a community. It does not exist in a virtual space, it is not online, and cannot be worked on from an Archimedean point. In addition Lasch and Berry sees the American republic as neither a community, nor a household, nor set in a specific place. It is a republic, which entails that it includes a variety of interest and ambition under one rule of law. And, that "all legislation favorable to liberty" is found in the balanced relationship of power between these various ambitions.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁸ Burke, *History and Social Theory, second edition*, (Cambridge, Polity Press, 2005), 79

²⁶⁹ Machiavelli *The Discourses*, (London, Penguin Classics, 2003), 113, section 1.4

There are arguably several ways, some more probable than others, to see how this idea might materialize in American culture. One less probable way is to imagine a return of the local community, the Jeffersonian ward comprising of family farms and the local artisans. That said there are strong cultural narratives, including Jeffersonian republicanism, that emphasize the notion that government should exist in close proximity to the citizens. This local government would certainly increase the possibility of placing the citizen in a position of power, but is unlikely as long as the economy is national and/or global. Another, perhaps no more probable way, is the return of a populist notion of civil society resembling some version of guild socialism. So that while the Lockean liberal narrative advocates a big market, minimal state, and non-interference, and the modern liberal narrative advocates a big state, big government and formalization of rights, the republican populist narrative might advocate checks and balancing between big market, big state and big civil society and thus the potential for freedom as non-domination. This would however only be possible if civil society is completely rid of market and state intrusion, in form of their respective elites.

Below we shall look at what is arguably the most probable way, for Berry, Lasch and others advocating similar reforms of the republican tradition, to influence the character of American culture through a revival of the ongoing argument over what it means to be American, and over what is going on in America.

6.2 The Republican Tradition, and America's Argumentative Conversation

As argued in chapter one, the American cultural conversation has since the Progressive Era been dominated by the liberal tradition and the oscillation between its classical Lockean and modern progressive narratives, including the negative and the progressive notions of freedom. The historical rediscovery of the republican tradition by Pocock and Wood in the 1960's, and the following discourse trying to revitalize that tradition has marked itself in opposition to the liberal hegemony. Lasch and Berry enter this discourse through their cultural critique. By stressing the populist elements of the republican tradition they differ somewhat from the more mainstream approach of communitarianism. This does however not influence the general ambition of using the republican tradition to engage in the continuous argument over what it means to be American. In light of McIntyre's theory of epistemological crisis and process their ambition, and the general ambition to challenge the liberal hegemony can be seen as twofold.

First, as shown above, the discourse surrounding the importance of the republican tradition in the shaping of American social and political thought, can be seen as an attempt to put that tradition through an epistemological process, which explains why that narrative has previously failed and to develop a new and better grand- narrative to interpret modern events. The most explicit attempt to do so is arguably found in Michael Sandel's *Democracy's Discontent*, a book that Nancy L. Rosenblum appropriately critiqued of being a proponent of "fusion republicanism."²⁷⁰ Berry and Lasch do not come out as the strongest voices in this discourse perhaps because they emphasize the importance of private life rather than the common good.

That said as cultural critics they serve an important function in that they point out the deficiencies of the liberal tradition in providing an interpretation of the increasing amount of externalities, both social and environmental, which have their final cause in modern American culture. Attempts to reform the republican narrative is similarly an attempt to render these events intelligible, and to make a better argument than that posited by the liberal tradition. If the republican narrative could provide a better answer to what is going on in America, and what it means to be American, it would simultaneously remove the hegemony of the liberal tradition.

A second way to view the revitalization and reform of the republican tradition is as a third voice in America's cultural conversation. The rationale behind this would be that if American culture is in a state of crisis, and the liberal tradition is hegemonic within its conversation, the liberal narrative has failed its interpretative task. The entering of a third voice might re-invigorate the conversation without gaining hegemony. This voice could perhaps begin by asking a question that seems long overdue about why classical republicanism disappeared from the conversation after the Progressive Era.

One of the classic questions in the study of modern American culture has been Werner Sombart's *Why is there no Socialism in The United States?* A much more relevant question however is, why has there been so little republicanism in The United States? Why has American culture and politics diverged so radically from its *Machiavellian Moment*? These questions have been posited in the republican discourse, and have the propensity to spur discussions surrounding the role of citizenship, freedom and role of government. In answering

²⁷⁰ Nancy L. Rosenblum, *Fusion Republicanism*, , In Hess Andreas, *American Social and Political thought: A Reader*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2002, 412

the question of why socialism did not establish itself in America, one might reply that it did not resonate with American cultural narratives, especially those regarding political equality. It seems much harder to answer why there has been so little republicanism in America, exactly because of its emphasis on political rather than social equality.

A recent Pew Research report on *Political Polarization in the American Public*, found that Americans were becoming increasingly ideologically divided.²⁷¹ Conservatives are becoming more conservative and liberals more liberal. This divide was also reflected in their choice of communities.²⁷² As far as conservatives can be identified with the Lockean liberal narrative, and liberals with the liberal progressive narrative, this report shows how the liberal tradition is becoming increasingly bifurcated, both ideologically and physically. In the midst of this polarization, polls indicate the growth of voters who identify with views outside this increasingly left- right divide. A recent Gallup survey shows that a “record-high 42% of Americans identify as independents.”²⁷³ Another Pew report on *Party Identification* shows that identification with third parties increased consistently throughout the 20th century, and that within the generation often referred to as *millennials*, the majority identified with views outside those held by the main parties.²⁷⁴ In addition it also showed how the relationship between liberal and conservative ideological views had changed little. This phenomenon points perhaps to a culture in search of ideological alternatives outside the two liberal narratives, one of which might be found in the republican tradition.

The ambition to reform and revitalize the republican tradition, and its narrative of the free and civil life, freedom as non-domination and balancing of power between the people and the elites, can be seen as a challenge to the hegemony of the liberal tradition in the American cultural conversation. Whether it will rise to hegemony, or renew its previous role as an ideological alternative, remains uncertain. Grand-narratives are inherently descriptive and their success hinges on how well events fit into their stories. What Berry and Lasch point to in their cultural critiques, is that the events of modern American culture do not fit neatly into the classical or the modern liberal narrative. They argue that the American citizen is not experiencing less

²⁷¹ Pew Research, *Political Polarization in the American Public*, June 12, 2014, accessed: 15.10.2014, URL: <http://www.people-press.org/2014/06/12/political-polarization-in-the-american-public/>

²⁷² Pew Research, *Political Polarization in the American Public*

²⁷³ Gallup, *Record-High 42% of Americans Identify as Independents*, accessed: 15.10.2014
URL: <http://www.gallup.com/poll/166763/record-high-americans-identify-independents.aspx>

²⁷⁴ Pew Research, *Trend in Party Identification*, June 1, 2012, accessed: 15.10.2014, URL: <http://www.people-press.org/2012/06/01/trend-in-party-identification-1939-2012/>

interference, nor is she experiencing more social equality. The American citizen is in their view becoming less free according to both the liberal notion of freedom and to the view held by the republican tradition. The citizen is increasingly becoming dominated by government and market elites, while the power to resist such domination simultaneously decreases. The republican narrative marks a move away from rights, both natural and social, and towards political deliberation. The republican narrative does not include a promise of natural rights, or a guarantee of a free and happy life. It includes the promise of conflict and hopefully a balance of ambition. The free and civil life is a consequence of the health of the republic, and its health is a consequence of the virtue and *virtù* of its citizens. The republic cannot be separated from its citizens, and just like its citizens it is subjected to limitations in both space and time. It emerges in a specific place and it does not live forever. That entails limits, membership and contextualized space and knowledge. Its story is not one of endless progress, but of the finite struggle of a body of citizens against the forces of *fortuna*.

In what might be called a globalized age, Americans face, as they have many times before, the “piling up of social factors and contingent political events in an unexpected way.”²⁷⁵ In times of *big data*, global warming and global markets, the various attempts to sequence these events might be seen as the return of the grand- narrative. In the midst of this, the liberal tradition again appears to provide the key narratives, which both end in a state of limitless growth and individual rights. On one side the story of the free global market, the free Internet and its minimal government. On the other side the story of the attempt to govern such markets and communication through global governance. Corporations and government are increasingly seen as being everywhere, while most people still invariably live out their lives in particular places. Those adhering to the republican tradition will perhaps posit questions regarding, how a global government will relate to its citizens and the public? What about the American republic, they might ask. How will urban or rural communities, local factories or small farms, fit into the free global marketplace? What about private life? In the midst of this, however, it appears as if Americans still believe in the story of more growth and more rights supported by a strong sense of optimism, which invariably ends with more individual freedom and more happiness. This arguably further elucidates the liberal paradox, that the growing set of externalities and risks that American’s currently face can be seen as having their final cause in this story, which provide the liberal foundation of modern American culture.²⁷⁶ The republican tradition would

²⁷⁵ Bernard, Crick, introduction to *The Discourses* by Niccolò, Machiavelli, (London, Penguin Classics, 2003),.58

²⁷⁶ For more on risks, externalities and modernity see: Beck, Ulrich, Bonss, Wolfgang and Lau, Christoph,

perhaps provide Americans with a different way of sequencing and interpreting such events. As Berry and Lasch point out, it would involve a return, to the private sphere as the realm of necessities, limits, nurture and hope, as distinguished from an optimistic blind faith in progress, and the notion that the fight against *fortuna* is done by someone, somewhere not everywhere by everyone. But, admittedly it would offer no compromise with the global age, no global market, no global government, no endless progress and no optimism.

“The Theory of Reflexive Modernization: Problematic, Hypotheses and Research Programme” ,(*Theory Culture Society* 2003 20: 1), accessed 25.04.2014, URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0263276403020002001>

7 Conclusion

The primary concern of this thesis has been to examine the republican intellectual tradition, and, to consider how and why this tradition has persisted into our own time. To do this I have explicated texts by Wendell Berry and Christopher Lasch to show how they employed elements from that tradition by way of revitalizing it. In a sense, I argue, the republican tradition's persistence and revitalization since the 1960s indicates a prolonged crisis in the predominate and rival liberal tradition.

Before engaging in the analysis of this thesis and the answers to the questions above, I established a foundation for this discussion by establishing a narrative theory of culture. The first main chapter posited a series of narrative theories, which claimed that individuals understood their lives and communicated such experience through the use of narratives. This led to a view of culture as involving a continuous argumentative conversation over what it meant to be part of that culture. This cultural conversation was expanded by introducing the notion of grand- narratives, and finally complemented by a theory of epistemological crisis and process within their respective traditions. In the latter part of that chapter this theoretical foundation was applied to the liberal tradition. The result of that analysis was that the liberal tradition, during the Progressive Era, would become bifurcated into one classical Lockean and one modern progressive grand- narrative, both of which applied the same end to their story of America as the place where people *lived separately, but happily, with toleration and respect for each other's individual rights*.

In Chapter Three I applied the same narrative view of culture to look at the republican tradition. It started with an account of Pocock's revision of American history that placed the republican tradition derived from Machiavelli and Harrington at the center of the early formation of America social and political thought. From the account of the historical rediscovery of the republican tradition I accounted for a deeper analysis of Machiavelli's paradigmatic legacy including his core concepts of virtue, *virtù*, *fortuna* and the *vivere civile e libero*. Within that legacy was the story of the establishment of a balance of power between the common people and the elites. I then traced this populist element of the republican tradition through some of its appearances in American history, and its last presence in the failed populist movements of the early Progressive Era. The chapter ended where it started with Pocock's revival of the republican tradition in the middle of the 20th century, and it finally posited the notion that Lasch

and Berry might well be seen as adherents to the populist element within the republican tradition.

In Chapter Four I analyzed Lasch's book *The Culture of Narcissism* in light of the republican tradition. First, I gave an account of Lasch's authorship in general and specifically the argument made in *The Culture of Narcissism*. Second, I saw that narrative in light of the populist element found in the republican tradition. Lasch saw the narcissistic culture as the result of a waning of private life set in motion by the outgrowth of the modern individual's dependence upon a new elite of bureaucrats, social and therapeutic experts. He attached this development to the advent of modern liberalism and the progressive notion of freedom during the Progressive Era. From his narrative, a populist dichotomy between the people and the elites appeared that attached itself to the republican narrative found in the Machiavellian legacy. Lasch's proposed solution to rectify this problem was to establish some sort of community of competence that had the propensity to diminish the domination of the new elite, restore private life and individual independence.

In Chapter Five I gave an account of Berry's narrative of *The Unsettling of America*. Similar to Lasch he saw the emergence of a new elite through the character of the specialist and the modern mechanical worldview combined with a mentality of exploitation. In his debasement of the future as an industrial Earthly Paradise, Berry argued that this vision would involve the complete dependence of the individual upon the specialist. By reasserting the agrarian narrative he attached his narrative to that found in the republican tradition. Similar to Lasch he advocated a notion of community connected to a specific place, the farm, and the family that would hopefully counteract the domination of specialists and experts. Such a community would also involve a notion of good practice derived from a contextualization of knowledge to meet the specific conditions of that community.

Chapter Six began with an attempt to unite the stories found in *The Unsettling of America* and *The Culture of Narcissism* into one larger narrative, and to show how Berry and Lasch shared a similar way of sequencing a series of modern events. I argued that their contribution to the republican discourse was to re-emphasize the importance of the private sphere as the necessary precondition for the public sphere. Their larger narrative entered the republican tradition through a populist strain going back to Machiavelli's relationship between the people and the elite. The return of private life meant an active distrust in expertise, but also establishing communities of competence and thus the return of a common sense. The re-empowerment of

the citizen would further furnish the people's fight against the elite's ambition to dominate them. Finally I discussed some potential ways that the republican tradition in general might function as a critique and alternative to the liberal hegemony of the American cultural conversation.

The conclusion to the questions posited at the beginning of this study, is that Lasch and Berry's arguments in *The Culture of Narcissism* and *The Unsettling of America*, can be seen as entering, the discourse surrounding the re-discovery of the importance of the republican tradition on the formation of American social and political thought, through a populist strain within that tradition. They further utilize its grand-narrative of the *vivere civile e libero* to propose a possible solution to what they see as the failure of the liberal tradition, the broken promise of atomistic social freedom. Berry and Lasch are more concerned with critiquing the liberal tradition than attempting a complete reform of the republican grand- narrative. However their writing can be seen as one contribution to this larger, still ongoing, process. The reform and revitalization of that narrative and its tradition could radically change the American cultural conversation and thus provided a very different way of answering its argument over what it means to be an American, and what is happening in America?

Bibliography:

Primary Sources:

Berry, Wendell, *The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture*, San Francisco, CA, Sierra Club Books, 1977

Lasch, Christopher, *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations*, New York: W.W Norton & Company, 1979

Locke, John, *Second Treatise of Government*, Project Gutenberg EBook, 2010, URL: <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/7370/7370-h/7370-h.htm>, accessed 16.09.2014

Machiavelli, Niccoló, *The Discourses*, London, Penguin Classics, 2003

The Omaha Platform, The World Almanac, 1893 (New York: 1893), 83–85. accessed 15.10.2014 URL: <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5361/>

The U.S. “Bill of Rights”, URL:

http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/bill_of_rights_transcript.html, accessed 13/3 2014

The U.S ” Declaration of Independence”,

URL:http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration_transcript.html accessed 13/3 2014

Secondary Sources:

Adorno, Theodor W. & Horkheimer, Max, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, London, Verso, 1997

Arendt, Hannah, *The Human Condition: Second Edition*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1998

Arendt, Hannah, "The Conquest of Space and the Stature of Man," *The New Atlantis*, Number 18, Fall 2007, pp. 43-55

Bacevich, Andrew J., "Counterculture Conservatism", *The American Conservative*, (Jan/Feb issue 2013), Accessed April 25, 2014, URL:

<http://www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/counterculture-conservatism-4001/>

Berry, Wendell, *The Art of the Commonplace*, edited by Norman Wirzba, Berkeley, CA, Counterpoint, 2002

Berry, Wendell, *Sex Economy, Freedom and Community*, New York, Panthenon Books, 1992

Berry, Wendell, "The Agrarian Standard", *Orion Magazine*,(Summer, 2002), Online version, URL: <http://www.orionmagazine.org/index.php/articles/article/115/>

Berry Wendell, "God, Science and Imagination", *Sewanee Review*, Volume 118, Number 1, (Winter 2010),

Bellah, Robert N. and Madsen, Richard and Sullivan, William M. and Swidler, Ann and Tipton, Steven M., *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life*, New York, Harper & Row Publishers, 1986

Bell, Daniel, "Communitarianism", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2013 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL: <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2013/entries/communitarianism>. Visited 24/4 2014

Beck, Ulrich, Bonss, Wolfgang and Lau, Christoph, "The Theory of Reflexive Modernization: Problematic, Hypotheses and Research Programme" ,*Theory Culture Society* 2003 20: 1, accessed April 25, URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0263276403020002001>

Boyer, Paul S, *The Oxford Companion to United States History*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001, Online version: 2004, Accessed: 15.10.2014, URL:<http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195082098.001.0001/acref-9780195082098-e-1254>

Blake, Casey and Phelps, Christopher, "History as Social Criticism- Conversations with Christopher Lasch" *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 80, No. 4 (Mar., 1994),

Burke, Peter, *History and Social Theory, second edition*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2005

Bright, Charles and Geyer, Michael, “Where in the World is America?”, in *Rethinking American History in a Global Age*, ed., Bender, Thomas, , California, University of California Press, 2002

Bruner Jerome, *Actual minds, possible worlds*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1986

Bertilsson Margareta, *The Welfare State, the Professions and citizens*, in, McKewitt, David, Lawton, Alan, *Public Sector Management*, Sage Publications, London, 1994

Chandler, Ralph Clark, *A Centennial History of the American Administrative State*, New York, The Free Press, 1987

Czarniawska Barbara, *Narratives in Social Science Research*, London, Sage Publications, 2004,

Crick, Bernard, introduction to *The Discourses* by Niccoló, Machiavelli,p.15-69, London, Penguin Classics, 2003

Dreher Rod, “Crunchy Cons Picking up organic vegetables in your National Review tote bag”, *National Review*, September 30, 2002, Accessed April 25, 2014,URL:
<http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/214320/crunchy-cons/rod-dreher>

Fisher, R Walter, *Human Communication as Narration: Toward a Philosophy of Reason Value and Action*, Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina press, 1987

Gallup, *Record-High 42% of Americans Identify as Independents*, accessed: 15.10.2014
URL:<http://www.gallup.com/poll/166763/record-high-americans-identify-independents.aspx>

Giddens Anthony, “Risk and Responsibility”, *The Modern Law Review*, Volume 62, No,1, (Jan 1999), pp1-10

Hess Andreas, *American Social and Political thought*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2000

Hess Andreas, *American Social and Political thought: A Reader*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2002

Hartz,Louis, *The Liberal Tradition in American*, In Hess Andreas, *American Social and Political thought: A Reader*, 155-161, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2002

Hill J.L, "The Five Faces of Freedom in American Political and Constitutional Thought", *Boston College Law Review*, Volume 45, Issue Number 3, accessed: 25/4 2014, URL: <http://lawdigitalcommons.bc.edu/bclr/vol45/iss3/1>

Holmes, William F. Ed. *American Populism*, Lexington MA, D.C Heath and Company, 1994

Huntington, Samuel P., *Who are We?: America's great debate*, New York, Free Press, 2004

Lasch, Christopher, *The True and Only Heaven: Progress and Its Critics*, New York: W.W Norton & Company,1991

Lasch, Christopher, *The Revolt of the Elites: and the Betrayal of Democracy*, New York: W.W Norton & Company, 1995

Lasch, Christopher, *Plain Style: A Guide to Written English*, Edited by Stewart Weaver, Philadelphia, PA, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002

Lasch, Christopher, *The Minimal Self: Psychic survival in troubled times*, London, Pan Books, 1985

Lipset, Seymour Martin, *American Exceptionalism: A double Edged Sword*, New York, W.W.Norton, 1996

Lyotard Jean-Francois, *The postmodern Condition: A report on knowledge*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1984

Mills, C.Wright, *The Power Elite*, London, Oxford University Press, 1970

MacIntyre Alisdair, *After Virtue: a study in moral theory*, London, Duckworth, 1985

MacIntyre, Alisdair "Epistemological Crises, Dramatic Narrative and the Philosophy of Science",
The Monist, Vol. 60, No. 4 (OCTOBER, 1977), 453-472

Marshall John S. "Aristotle and the Agrarians", *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (Jul., 1947), 350-361 John

McGowan John, "The New Tory Radicals", *Soundings: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, Vol. 72, No. 2/3, (Summer/Fall 1989), , pp. 477-500

McCormick, John P., "Machiavellian Democracy: Controlling Elites with Ferocious Populism", *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 95, No. 2 (Jun., 2001), pp. 297-313

McClure Kevin, "Resurrecting the Narrative Paradigm: Identification and the Case of Young Earth Creationism", *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, 39:2,2009

Machiavelli, Niccoló, *The Discourses*, London, Penguin Classics, 2003

Machiavelli, Niccoló, *The Prince*, trans., W.K. Marriot, *The Project Gutenberg EBook, Release Date: February 11, 2006*, Accessed 15.10.2014, URL:
<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/1232/1232-h/1232-h.htm#link2HCH0025>

National Endowment for the Humanities: <http://www.neh.gov/about/awards/jefferson-lecture/wendell-e-berry-biography> visited 20/2 2014

Noble, David W, *Death of a Nation. American Culture and the End of Exceptionalism*, Minnesota, University of Minnesota Press, 2002

Nye, David E., *America as Second Creation: Technology and Narratives of New Beginnings*, Cambridge, MA, The MIT Press, 2003

Nash, Christopher, *Narrative in Culture*, New York: Routledge, 1990

Onuf, Peter S., *Jeffersonian Legacies*, Charlottesville, VA, University Press of Virginia, 1993

Pettit, Philip, ” Keeping Republican Freedom Simple: On a Difference with Quentin Skinner”, *Political Theory*, Vol. 30, No. 3 (Jun., 2002), pp. 339-356

Pew Research, *Political Polarization in the American Public*, June 12, 2014, accessed: 15.10.2014, URL: <http://www.people-press.org/2014/06/12/political-polarization-in-the-american-public/>

Pew Research, *Trend in Party Identification*, June 1, 2012, accessed: 15.10.2014, URL: <http://www.people-press.org/2012/06/01/trend-in-party-identification-1939-2012/>

Pocock, J.G.A., *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition*, Princeton, N.Y, 1975

Peterson, Merrill D, *The Jefferson Image in the American mind*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1960

Rahe, Paul A., *Republics Ancient and Modern: Classical Republicanism and the American Revolution*, Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 1992

Rosenblum, Nancy L., *Fusion Republicanism*, , In Hess Andreas, *American Social and Political thought: A Reader*, 412-416 , Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2002

Roszak, Theodore, *The Making of a Counter Culture*, New York, Doubleday & Company, 1969,

Sandel, Michael J. , *Democracy's discontent: America in search of a public philosophy*, Cambridge, MA, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1996

Tocqueville, Alexis de, *Democracy in America*, translated by Henry Reeve, The University of Adelaide Library eBook, 2014, URL: <https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/t/tocqueville/alexis/democracy/index.html>, accessed 16.10.1014

Turner Stephen , "What is the Problem with Experts?" , *Social Studies of Science*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (Feb., 2001) 123-149.

Van Riper, Paul, P, *The American administrative State: Wilson and the Founders* in.. : Chandler, Ralph Clark, *A Centennial History of the American Administrative State*, The Free Press, New York 1987, pp 3-37

Wilson, Woodrow "The Study of Administration" , *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (Jun., 1887), pp. 197-222

White, Hayden, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-century Europe*, Baltimore, The John Hopkins University Press, 1975

