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Foreword by James Davison Hunter and
John M. Owen IV

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making us ever more into the creatures that liberalism supposed was our nature in that "state of nature" that existed before the coming of civilization, law, and government. Ironically, but perhaps not coincidentally, the political project of liberalism is shaping us into the creatures of its prehistorical fantasy, which in fact required the combined massive apparatus of the modern state, economy, education system, and science and technology to make us into: increasingly separate, autonomous, nonrelational selves replete with rights and defined by our liberty, but insecure, powerless, afraid, and alone.

Liberalism's success today is most visible in the gathering signs of its failure. It has remade the world in its image, especially through the realms of politics, economics, education, science, and technology, all aimed at achieving supreme and complete freedom through the liberation of the individual from particular places, relationships, memberships, and even identities—unless they have been chosen, are worn lightly, and can be revised or abandoned at will. The autonomous self is thus subject to the sovereign trajectory of the very forces today that are embraced as the tools of our liberation. Yet our liberation renders us incapable of resisting these defining forces—the promise of freedom results in thralldom to inevitabilities to which we have no choice but to submit.

These tools were deployed to liberate individuals from the "givenness" of their condition, especially through "depersonalization" and "abstraction," liberalism's vision of liberty from particular duties, obligations, debts, and relationships. These ends have been achieved through the depersonaliza-

tion and abstraction advanced via two main entities—the state and the market. Yet while they have worked together in a pincer movement to render us ever more naked as individuals, our political debates mask this alliance by claiming that allegiance to one of these forces will save us from the depredations of the other. Our main political choices come down to which depersonalized mechanism will purportedly advance our freedom and security—the space of the market, which collects our billions upon billions of choices to provide for our wants and needs without demanding from us any specific thought or intention about the wants and needs of others; or the liberal state, which establishes depersonalized procedures and mechanisms for the wants and needs of others that remain insufficiently addressed by the market.

Thus the insistent demand that we choose between protection of individual liberty and expansion of state activity masks the true relation between the state and market: that they grow constantly and necessarily together. Statism enables individualism, individualism demands statism. For all the claims about electoral transformations—for "Hope and Change" or "Making America Great Again"—two facts are naggingly apparent: modern liberalism proceeds by making us both more individualist and more statist. This is not because one party advances individualism without cutting back on statism while the other does the opposite; rather, both move simultaneously in tune with our deepest philosophic premises.

Claiming to liberate the individual from embedded cultures, traditions, places, and relationships, liberalism has homogenized the world in its image—ironically, often fueled by

claims of "multiculturalism" or, today, "diversity." Having successfully disembedded us from relationships that once made claims upon us but also informed our conception of selfhood, our sense of ourselves as citizens sharing a common fate and as economic actors sharing a common world, liberalism has left the individual exposed to the tools of liberation—leaving us in a weakened state in which the domains of life that were supposed to liberate us are completely beyond our control or governance. This suggests that all along, the individual was the "tool" of the liberal system, not—as was believed—vice versa.

The most challenging step we must take is a rejection of the belief that the ailments of liberal society can be fixed by realizing liberalism. The only path to liberation from the inevitabilities and ungovernable forces that liberalism imposes is liberation from liberalism itself. Both main political options of our age must be understood as different sides of the same counterfeit coin. Neither Progressivism's faith that liberalism will be realized when we move forward toward the realization of liberalism's promise nor Conservatism's tale that American greatness will be restored when we reclaim the governing philosophy of our Constitution offers any real alternative to liberalism's advance.

The past can instruct, but there can be no return and no "restoration." Liberalism has ruthlessly drawn down a reservoir of both material and moral resources that it cannot replenish. Its successes were always blank checks written against a future it trusted it could repair. Conservatism rightly observes that progressivism's destination is a dead end, and pro-

gressivism rightly decries conservatism's nostalgia for a time that cannot be restored. Conservatives and progressives alike have advanced liberalism's project, and neither as constituted today can provide the new way forward that must be discerned outside our rutted path.

Nor does reflecting upon what follows liberalism's self-destruction imply that we must simply devise its opposite, or deny what was of great and enduring value in the achievements of liberalism. Liberalism's appeal lies in its continuities with the deepest commitments of the Western political tradition, particularly efforts to secure liberty and human dignity through the constraint of tyranny, arbitrary rule, and oppression. In this regard, liberalism is rightly considered to be based on essential political commitments that were developed over centuries in classical and Christian thought and practice. Yet liberalism's innovations—ones that its architects believed would more firmly secure human liberty and dignity—which consisted especially of a redefinition of the ideal of liberty and a reconception of human nature, have undermined the realization of its stated commitments. Moving beyond liberalism is not to discard some of liberalism's main commitments—especially those deepest longings of the West, political liberty and human dignity—but to reject the false turn it made in its imposition of an ideological remaking of the world in the image of a false anthropology.

A rejection of the world's first and last remaining ideology does not entail its replacement with a new and doubtless not very different ideology. Political revolution to overturn a revolutionary order would produce only disorder and misery. A better course will consist in smaller, local forms of resistance:

practices more than theories, the building of resilient new cultures against the anticulture of liberalism.

When Alexis de Tocqueville visited America in the early decades of the nineteenth century, he observed that Americans tended to act differently from and better than their individualistic and selfish ideology. "They do more honor to their philosophy than to themselves," he wrote. What's needed now is not to perfect our philosophy any further but to again do more honor to ourselves. Out of the fostering of new and better selves, porously invested in the fate of other selves—through the cultivation of cultures of community, care, self-sacrifice, and small-scale democracy—a better practice might arise, and from it, ultimately, perhaps a better theory than the failing project of liberalism.

servants and to relieve their distress. But the industrial aristocracy of our day, when it has impoverished and brutalized the men it uses, abandons them in their time of crisis to public charity to feed them. . . . Between workman and master there are frequent relations, but no true association."[8] The fracturing of time is embraced as a form of freedom, a liberation especially of personal obligations we have to those with whom we share a past, a future, and even—ultimately—the present itself.

A better way to understand culture is as a kind of collective trust. Culture is the practice of full temporality, an institution that connects the present to the past and the future. As the Greeks understood, the mother of culture—of the Nine Muses—was Mnemosyne, whose name means "memory." Culture educates us about our generational debts and obligations. At its best, it is a tangible inheritance of the past, one that each of us is obligated to regard with the responsibilities of trusteeship. It is itself an education in the full dimension of human temporality, meant to abridge our temptation to live within the present, with the attendant dispositions of ingratitude and irresponsibility that such a narrowing of temporality encourages. Preserved in discrete human inheritances—arts, literature, music, architecture, history, law, religion—culture expands the human experience of time, making both the past and the future present to creatures who otherwise experience only the present moment.

Liberalism as Nowhere and Everywhere

Liberalism valorizes placelessness. Its "state of nature" posits a view from nowhere: abstract individuals in equally abstract

places. Not only does liberalism rest on the anthropological assumption that humans are from no one—emerging, as Hobbes described, "from the earth like mushrooms and grown up without any obligation to each other"—but that we are from nowhere.[9] The place where one happens to be born and raised is as arbitrary as one's parents, one's religion, or one's customs. One should consider oneself primarily a free chooser, of place as of all relationships, institutions, and beliefs.

This is not to say that humans who are more firmly embedded within cultural settings don't sometimes set out for new pastures. But liberalism sets a distinctive and radically placeless "default" that begins as theory but eventually reshapes the world in its image. As Thomas Jefferson articulated in the Lockean tuneup that preceded his drafting of the Declaration of Independence, the most fundamental right defining the liberal human is the right to leave the place of one's birth.[10] Our default condition is homelessness.

This placeless default is one of the preeminent ways that liberalism subtly, unobtrusively, and pervasively undermines all cultures and liberates individuals into the irresponsibility of anticulture. No thinker has more ably discerned the deracinating effects of modern life than the Kentucky farmer, novelist, poet, and essayist Wendell Berry. An unapologetic defender of community in place, Berry regards community as a rich and varied set of personal relationships, a complex of practices and traditions drawn from a store of common memory and tradition, and a set of bonds forged between a people and a place that—because of this situatedness—is not portable, mobile, fungible, or transferable.[11] Community is more than a collection of self-interested individuals brought to-

gether to seek personal advancement. Rather, it "lives and acts by the common virtues of trust, goodwill, forbearance, self-restraint, compassion, and forgiveness."[12]

Berry is not hesitant to acknowledge that community is a place of constraint and limits. Indeed, in this simple fact lies its great attraction. Properly conceived, community is the appropriate setting for flourishing human life—flourishing that requires culture, discipline, constraint, and forms. At the most elemental level (in an echo of Aristotle, if an unconscious one), community is both derived from and in turn makes possible healthful family life. Absent the supports of communal life, family life is hard-pressed to flourish. This is because family life is premised, in Berry's view, on the discipline of otherwise individualistic tendencies toward narrow self-fulfillment, particularly erotic ones. He commends

> arrangements [that] include marriage, family structure, divisions of work and authority, and responsibility for the instruction of children and young people. These arrangements exist, in part, to reduce the volatility and dangers of sex—to preserve its energy, its beauty, and its pleasure; to preserve and clarify its power to join not just husband and wife to one another but parents to children, families to the community, the community to nature; to ensure, so far as possible, that the inheritors of sexuality, as they come of age, will be worthy of it.[13]

Communities maintain standards and patterns of life that encourage responsible and communally sanctioned forms of erotic bonds, with the aim of fostering the strong family ties and commitments that constitute the backbone of communal health and the conduit of culture and tradition. Communities thus chasten the absolutist claims of "rights bearers": for instance, Berry insists that they are justified in maintaining

internally derived standards of decency in order to foster and maintain a desired moral ecology. He explicitly defends the communal prerogative to demand that certain books be removed from the educational curriculum and to insist on the introduction of the Bible into the classroom as "the word of God." He even reflects that "the future of community life in this country may depend on private schools and home schooling."[14] Family is the wellspring of the cultural habits and practices that foster the wisdom, judgment, and local knowledge by which humans flourish and thrive in common and rightly claim the primary role in the education and upbringing of a given community's children.

Community begins with the family but extends outward to incorporate an appropriate locus of the common good. For Berry, the common good can be achieved only in small, local settings. These dimensions cannot be precisely drawn, but Berry seems to endorse the town as the basic locus of commonweal, and the region mainly in the economic and not interpersonal realm. He is not hostile toward a conception of national or even international common good, but he recognizes that the greater scope of these larger units tends toward abstraction, which comes always at the expense of the flourishing of real human lives. Larger units than the locality or the region can flourish in the proper sense only when their constitutive parts flourish. Modern liberalism, by contrast, insists on the priority of the largest unit over the smallest, and seeks everywhere to impose a homogenous standard on a world of particularity and diversity. One sees this tendency everywhere in modern liberal society, from education to court decisions that nationalize sexual morality, from economic

standardization to minute and exacting regulatory regimes.[15] The tendency of modern politics—born of a philosophy that endorses the expansion of human control—is toward the subjection of all particularities to the logic of market dynamics, exploitation of local resources, and active hostility toward diverse local customs and traditions in the name of progress and rationalism.

Modern politics, as Berry has pointed out, is impatient with local variety, particularly when it does not accept the modern embrace of material progress, economic growth, and personal liberation from all forms of work that are elemental or that forestall mobility and efficiency.[16] Berry is a strong critic of the homogenization that modern states and modern economic assumptions enforce.[17] He is a defender of "common" or "traditional" sense, that sense of the commons that often resists the logic of economic and liberal development and progress. Echoing Giambattista Vico, an early critic of the deracinated rationalism of Descartes and Hobbes, Berry defends what Vico named the *sensus communis*. Such "common knowledge" is the result of the practice and experience, the accumulated store of wisdom born of trials and corrections of people who have lived, suffered, and flourished in local settings. Rules and practices based on a preconceived notion of right cannot be imposed absent prudential consideration and respect toward common sense.[18] This is not to suggest that traditions cannot be changed or altered, but, as Burke argued, they must be given the presumptive allowance to change internally, with the understanding and assent of people who have developed lives and communities based upon those practices. There is then, in Berry's thought, a considerable respect

for the dignity of "common sense," a nonexpert way of understanding the world that comes through experience, memory, and tradition, and is the source of much democratic opinion that liberalism typically dismisses.

THE DEATH OF CULTURE AND THE RISE OF LEVIATHAN

While our main political actors argue over whether the liberal state or the market better protects the liberal citizen, they cooperate in the evisceration of actual cultures. Liberal legal structures and the market system mutually reinforce the deconstruction of cultural variety in favor of a legal and economic monoculture—or, more correctly, a mono-anticulture. Individuals, liberated and displaced from particular histories and practices, are rendered fungible within a political-economic system that requires universally replaceable parts.

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn clearly perceived the lawlessness at the heart of liberal orders—a lawlessness that arose most centrally from liberalism's claims to value "rule of law" as it hollowed out every social norm and custom in favor of legal codes. In his controversial 1978 commencement address at Harvard University, "A World Split Apart," Solzhenitsyn criticized modern liberal reliance upon "legalistic" life. Echoing the Hobbesian and Lockean understanding of law as positivistic "hedges" constraining otherwise perfect natural autonomy, liberal legalism is posed against our natural liberty, and thus is always regarded as an imposition that otherwise should be avoided or circumvented. Delinked from any conception of "completion"—telos or flourishing—and disasso-