



Beyond Tocqueville, Please!

Jacqueline Stevens; Rogers Smith

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BEYOND TOCQUEVILLE, PLEASE!

Rogers Smith in "Beyond Tocqueville, Myrdal and Hartz: The Multiple Traditions in America" in the September 1993 issue of this Review argues that ascriptive inequalities (e.g. racism, sexism, nativism) are neither mere deviations from liberalism nor only symptoms of liberalism. Rather, multiple ideologies coexist in uneasy tension. Jacqueline Stevens criticizes Smith for failing to attend to the work of W. E. B. Du Bois and others—whose descriptions of American ideological history, she says, provide the same insight that Smith claims as his own. She goes on to discuss how defining a "mainstream" of scholarship shapes inferences as to what counts as knowledge and further suggests that liberalism and exclusion betray an underlying consistency. In his reply, Smith recognizes the contributions of Du Bois and others, but argues that although they do foreshadow his work, they do not offer the same critique or do the same job. And he asserts that the linkages between liberalism and ascriptive inequality are political, economic, social and psychological—not logical—ones.

COMMENT

Rogers Smith's "Beyond Tocqueville, Myrdal, and Hartz: The Multiple Traditions in America" (1993) both speaks to and embodies several deficiencies in the explication of American political thought. The most troublesome problems are the implicit and sometimes explicit claims to originality. Similarly, by virtue of publishing this as a lead article, the *American Political Science Review* signals that its authors do not have to be responsible for a full spectrum of relevant political writings, but only those that dominate Hartzian-inspired reading lists. Smith's silence on others who have preceded him suggests epistemological missteps, not simple bibliographical ones. I want to be clear that while Smith is the immediate focus of my attention, I see the article as symptomatic of far broader difficulties in the construction of knowledge and history. For tacitly urging what I shall argue is a politically constituted "mainstream" into different avenues of inquiry, however, Smith is to be commended.

As I read the essay, Smith is claiming that all scholarship in American political thought makes one of two mistakes. First, racism and sexism are regarded as deviant sidesteps in the otherwise forward march of liberal ideas in America's political culture. This is the fault of Alexis de Tocqueville (1969), Gunnar Myrdal (1944), Louis Hartz (1955), and anyone who takes their claims seriously. Smith's article begins, "Since the nation's inception, analysts have described American political culture as the preeminent example of modern liberal democracy, of government by popular consent with respect for the equal rights of all" (1993, 549). Second, in contradiction to his first claim, Smith notes books in which racism and sexism are treated as central aspects of American political culture, but these works wrongly suggest that inegalitarian ideologies are of a piece with the liberal nation-state: the "recurring admixture" of racist, sexist, and liberal values "does not

prove that ascriptive inegalitarian outlooks have been logically compatible with liberal democracies" (p. 556, emphasis original).¹ Although some writers do recognize that racism is a crucial feature of American politics (e.g., writers in Critical Race Studies) and recognize that this is not at one with liberal aspirations, these texts are "rare and do not yet extend to explicit critiques of Tocquevillian frameworks or to any developed alternatives" (ibid.). Smith offers to prove for the first and definitive time that racism and sexism are a part of this country's political culture and so is liberalism and that the ideologies are incompatible. Smith labels this theoretical insight the *multiple traditions thesis*: "At its heart, the multiple traditions thesis holds that the definitive feature of American political culture has been not its liberal, republican, or 'ascriptive Americanist' elements but, rather, this more complex pattern of apparently inconsistent combinations of the traditions, accompanied by recurring conflicts" (p. 558).

Smith's expository discussions as well as his thesis misinform. First, sweeping claims about the hegemony of Tocqueville, Hartz, and Myrdal are naive and wrong, as Smith himself illustrates in his use of both historical and political theory texts that specify how the narratives of his troika are incorrect. So why is Smith saying that analysts tell a Pollyanna-ish version of our country's history when his own references, published under the imprimatur of university presses, falsify this claim? At the heart of the error is the status of what Smith calls *mainstream approaches* (or "conventional narratives" or "recent major works" [1993, 550, 556]), which are defined only implicitly, and circularly at that: Tocquevillian approaches are mainstream and mainstream approaches are Tocquevillian. This is the unconquered terrain that justifies his expedition. Smith never explains the formation of this mainstream scholarship or its relation to credible but nonmainstream thought. So Smith is never prompted to consider why his intervention will be a mainstream one, while other scholarship making similar points is not. Yet this

distinction is really at the crux of his article, which offers no significant original arguments, but offers old ones to a mainstream (i.e., white, male-dominated) forum. Smith's essay is not published in the *APSR* because it is innovative to the mainstream (lots of people have made Smith's critique, and far more persuasively, including some of those Smith cites). Rather, his ideas are innovative to the mainstream because they appear in the *APSR*.

"Analysts" do not write a monolithic narrative of American political culture, as Smith's introductory paragraph implies (1993, 549). Rather, some people write some things, and some people write other things. For some reason, Smith and mainstream scholarship choose not to discuss the views of American political culture held by W. E. B. ("The-problem-of-the-twentieth-century-is-the-problem-of-the-color-line") Du Bois. Smith refers to Du Bois just once, to say that he was a Lamarckian (p. 562). Smith's silence on Du Bois, who engages in precisely the kinds of analyses Smith believes are absent, is disturbing. What would we make of an article on the scholarship of American political culture that mentioned Tocqueville only to say that he believed aristocrats innately superior? In any case, although at times Du Bois discusses the relation between the "soul" of a people and its bloodlines, the source of this is more Hegelian than Lamarckian.² And Du Bois's insistence on the social determinations and manifestations of race becomes more pointed over time. In *The Negro* ([1915] 1975b) he writes that race is not a scientific category (1975b, 13). In *Dusk of Dawn* ([1940] 1992), after Du Bois destroys all conventional definitions of race, the composite interrogator, Van Dieman, asks, "But what is this group; and how do you differentiate it; and how can you call it 'black' when you admit that it is not black?" Du Bois responds, "I recognize it quite easily and with full legal sanction; the black man is a person who must ride 'Jim Crow' in Georgia" (1992, 153). Unless the giraffe is the animal that under legal sanction must eat from tall branches, Smith's allusions to Lamarckianism mislead.

Throughout his career Du Bois was especially attentive to the fluctuations and paradoxes of American political culture, albeit many of his earlier writings (though not all) suggest a more optimistic *telos* than that which Smith holds. However, in *Dusk of Dawn* (1992 [1940]), one of his more widely read books, Du Bois restates his 1905 announcement of the formation of the Niagara movement, which describes the "new American creed: fear to let black men even try to rise lest they become the equals of the white. And this is the land that professes to follow Jesus Christ" (1992, 90). At the point at which Du Bois is setting down this memoir, he has concluded that the White World is shot through with antonymies, which pose a "dilemma" for the White Man (153–54, 160). After laying out the contradictory "codes" of the Christian–Gentleman–American–White Man, Du Bois writes:

The trouble was, however, that when my friend tabulated all of the codes which he at once and apparently

simultaneously was to put in action, he found a most astonishing reality and here it is:

<i>Christian</i>	<i>Gentleman</i>	<i>American</i>	<i>White Man</i>
Peace	Justice	Defense	War
Good Will	Manners	Caste	Hate
Golden Rule	Exclusiveness	Propaganda	Suspicion
Liberty	Police	Patriotism	Exploitation
Poverty	Wealth	Power	Empire

Looking them over he doesn't know what on earth to do. It is not only a dilemma, it is almost a quadri-lemma. (pp. 164–65)

Du Bois here recognizes the tenacious survival of analytically separate ideologies in the United States. Clearly and self-consciously, Du Bois neither privileges one column as "truly" American (the move for which Smith faults Tocquevillians) nor adduces any ultimate coherence of this ideological system. Instead, his interlocutor says: "It's all both reasonable and impossible. Take each column alone and it is to me absolutely convincing. I believe in it" (p. 165). The Christian–Gentleman–American–White Man goes on simply to restate the content of each column, conceding that their dynamics are "not logical, correct, compelling" (p. 167). The "quadrilemma" just *is*. It is not surprising that the terms of this dilemma were popularized by Gunnar Myrdal (1944), whose *American Dilemma* includes more references to Du Bois than to any other single individual.³

Earlier in this chapter, Du Bois, again prefiguring Smith, describes the ascriptive norms producing the incompatible codes, in which racism seems to have gotten the upper hand over liberalism. This is expressed, he writes, in the "deep convictions of myriads of men that *congenital differences* among the main masses of human beings absolutely conditioned the individual destiny of every member of a group" (1992, p. 139, emphasis mine; see also p. 137). Du Bois distinguishes the values of liberalism and democracy from those of ascriptive norms of exclusivity and exploitation. The columns do not map exactly onto Smith's explication (e.g., Du Bois equates "American" with strictly racist and militarist ambitions), but the effort to locate ascriptive inequality and inclusivity in the same "contradictory" tradition provides an obvious (but perhaps nonmainstream?) alternative to the Tocquevillian narrative—one that clearly foreshadows the spirit of Smith's project.⁴ Instead of writing that "leading accounts of American political culture are inadequate" because they overlook Smith's insight that "America has never been completely liberal" (1993, 550), Smith might attend to Du Bois and then explain how it is that this interpretation of political history—and those of other prominent American radical writers such as Emma Goldman (1970), Randolph Bourne (1977), C. Wright Mills (1956), Howard Zinn (1980), and Angela Davis (1981)—have gone unrecognized and uninstitutionalized by people such as himself. But these accounts of political culture and history have not gone unwritten, as the first sections of Smith's article would suggest.

My intention is not to issue a pious plea for researchers of race and gender politics to incorporate and evaluate academic contributions from members of the groups they study (as the list of the non-mainstream authors above makes clear). If Smith were to undertake a critique of ascriptive inequalities, there would be no reason to begin with the work of Angela Davis, rather than the practices and institutions he would like to study. However, Smith does not pursue such an inquiry but presumes to criticize the country's *intellectual* tradition. And here the systematic exclusion of a good portion of that tradition is academically indefensible and only reinforces racist, sexist, and Hartzian ideas about which texts are worthy of intellectual scrutiny.

Smith's survey of the ideological terrain at the country's founding suffers a similar limitation. He overstates the case when he writes that the "comparative moral, material, and political egalitarianism that prevailed at the founding among moderately propertied white men was surrounded by an array of other fixed, ascriptive systems of unequal status, *all largely unchallenged by the American revolutionaries*" (1993, 549, emphasis mine). Historian John Hope Franklin describes the efforts to include anti-slave-trade and antislavery language in the Declaration of Independence and writes, "As the colonists saw in England's new colonial policy a threat to the economic and political freedom that they had enjoyed for several generations, they also seemed to realize a marked inconsistency in their position as oppressed colonists and slaveholders" (1967, 126–27). Abigail Adams wrote her husband, "It always appeared a most inequitable scheme to me to fight for ourselves what we are daily robbing and plundering from those who have as good a right to freedom as we" (quoted in Franklin 1967, 128–29). This is a theme that is also pursued by Winthrop Jordan (1968, 386). Smith does not explain why he finds Franklin and Jordan's evidence unconvincing. Obviously whatever challenges were made at this point were unsuccessful, but this does not mean that they were not offered. The descriptions of these arguments by Franklin and Jordan—mainstream historians—do not allow even for the weaker claim, that inegalitarian positions were "largely" unchallenged.

Smith's second mistake is a methodological one: he encourages political theorists to parrot the superficial inconsistencies of what they study. Criticizing Michael Rogin's book on Jacksonian democracy (which Smith inexplicably characterizes as "postmodernist"), he maintains that racism and sexism are strictly antithetical to liberal egalitarian ideals.⁵ He never actually argues this point but uses the observation that "people operate for long periods while holding contradictory beliefs" as evidence for his claim that this is what is happening in the case of American history. Had Smith reviewed the historical and theoretical literature on the relation among democratic practices and those of inequality and exclusion, beginning with Thucydides' *Peloponnesian War* and other studies of the colonialist, slave, and dem-

ocratic institutions of ancient Greece, he would have discovered that his own intuitions are not dispositive. Carl Schmitt makes the case that democracies especially require norms of exclusions, in order to make the equality that they offer meaningful: "The more equal a country is, the more it seeks to exclude those who do not belong to the state" ([1923] 1984, 12). Hannah Arendt writes of the *paradox* (not *contradiction*) of the Rights of Man emerging at the same moment as the particularist nation-state (1958, 291). Numerous historians have argued that the national unity of the United States was *furthered* (not undermined, as Smith suggests) by its racial exclusions. For instance, Rubin Weston writes that the "reconciliation of the North and South" occurred at the "expense of a dissimilar race" as both united in opposition to disenfranchised blacks and colonized populations in the Philippines and elsewhere (Weston 1972, 32). And Alan Dawley writes: "It was no accident that state-sanctioned racial exclusions [e.g., the Exclusion Act of 1882] went hand-in-hand with formal equality before the law. Although these exclusionary practices obviously violated the liberal creed of open competition on one level, in a deeper sense exclusion by race was its logical concomitant" (1991, 30).⁶ Dawley argues that the exclusions of race legitimated domestic inequality and that this internal racism served to solidify the country as a nation-state both internally and for purposes of imperialism. Dawley does what any good scholar does: he lifts the shroud of what even Smith terms "*apparently inconsistent*" dynamics to explore a deeper logic (Smith 1993, 558, emphasis mine). Now it very well may be the case that Rogin, Thucydides, Schmitt, Arendt, Rubin, and Dawley are wrong (although I don't happen to think so), but they are not so obviously wrong that Smith can simply ignore these arguments and expect us to believe that inegalitarian and exclusionary practices are inconsistent with democratic values just because Smith says so.

Finally, Smith's account of the status of Critical Race Studies is an odd one. The single paragraph on this literature refers to one article by one scholar and then quotes one phrase to serve as a proxy for a diverse, complicated field. Why say that "these arguments are rare" (Smith 1993, 556) when numerous prominent legal scholars at prestigious law schools make them to our next generation of legal scholars,⁷ when they appear regularly in prestigious law review journals, and when they are circulated in widely read books? Harvard University Press's customer service department says that Patricia Williams's (1991) *Alchemy of Race and Rights*, unmentioned by Smith, has sold over 41,000 copies in its first four years—a blockbuster by academic standards and hardly symptomatic of a field that is weak or marginal.

Smith believes that Critical Race Studies arguments do not accomplish the task that he sets forth because they do not "yet extend to critiques of Tocquevillian frameworks or to any developed alternatives" (1993, 556). Leaving aside the last part of the sentence (which implies that these scholars are writing in a

vacuum), we find Smith dissatisfied with accounts of race that do not explicitly critique Tocqueville. Smith never explains why a critique of "Tocquevillian approaches" is more disruptive of a corrupt intellectual tradition than a radical account of American politics undertaken through the lens of, for instance, slavery. If people are making arguments inconsistent with, and without regard for, the ones Smith associates with Tocqueville, Myrdal, and Hartz, then a fair conclusion is that parts of the academy are immune from their inroads. Again, this suggests that his narrowing of what counts as the "mainstream" artificially restricts the scope of academic inquiry. Had Smith fully acknowledged the accounts of American history that do not inform the vast majority of articles in the *American Political Science Review*, but are the bedrock of analyses in journals such as *Black Scholar*, *Phylon*, *Feminist Studies*, *Signs*, and the *Journal of American Studies*, then it would be clear that the problem is not a dearth of scholarship but a dearth of insight within a particular readership.

Smith is telling a very specific audience that they ought to wake up and smell the coffee. This is a political injunction, not an academic one: many people have been smelling this coffee for a long time. Smith's silence on the distinction between what is "mainstream" and what is said, his dismissive treatment of the complicated relation between liberal democratic traditions and liberal exclusionary and inegalitarian ones, and his disregard of studies by those who have pursued these questions reiterate the narrow vision of American history held by those Smith presumes to educate. The real conundrum is not that American history contains two heretofore unrecognized and conflicting traditions but that American scholarship pursues two approaches to this history: one explores the tensions of racism, sexism, and egalitarianism in American politics; another follows the mainstream.

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RESPONSE

Jacqueline Steven's critique of my 1993 article is driven by an appropriate concern. She believes that because my article does not refer readers to various related critiques of American political culture and intellectual history, it will reinforce beliefs that those critiques—by authors like W. E. B. Du Bois, Emma Goldman, C. Wright Mills, Angela Davis, and others—need not be read. Thus she thinks my essay exemplifies and compounds the failings of the "mainstream" scholarship I purport to correct. I confess I do not find her argument regarding this "mainstream" wholly clear. At times she seems to say that I am guilty of defining the "mainstream" too narrowly; at others, she seems to be arguing that the

"mainstream" is in reality too narrow. But I take her point to be that too many people well positioned in our discipline define the "mainstream" in ways that are both too narrow, in that they include the views only of people like themselves, and too influential.⁸ This claim seems right to me. I also concede that nonetheless, I did not, in my essay, explicitly urge readers to turn to the sorts of critical writers Stevens invokes. If I thereby authorized the inference that they could be ignored, this warrants the correction Stevens has provided.

Beyond this point, however, Steven's critique is unpersuasive. Given the severe constraints of journal-length articles, I chose to devote my essay first to criticizing my main targets—"conventional" Tocquevillian, Myrdalian, and Hartzian accounts of American political culture—and then to laying out my own *multiple traditions* view. As I indicated then and elaborate here, these sorts of accounts merit extensive critique, because they are still cited as authoritative by a wide range of scholars and their premises are often echoed even in works that appear to present quite different views.

Focusing on these tasks meant that my essay could only summarily contrast its multiple traditions account with those of the many scholars who have also analyzed racism, sexism, ethnocentrism, and other forms of ascriptive inequality in America. Stevens thinks my emphases unjustified on the grounds that there was no "originality" in the case I made, so that I should have paid more attention to those who had anticipated my views, if I chose to write at all.

I thought and still think that I was offering a distinctive position that merited development in its own right. I am grateful for the chance to say a little more now about how my view differs from the scholarship Stevens rightly commends. But in doing so, I do not mean to deny that these authors merit reading—as much or more than anything I write.

I wish I had made that point more clear; and Stevens' inaccurate summary of my article persuades me that I failed to make other key aspects of its argument clear, at least to her. She reads me as saying (1) that "all scholarship in American political thought" treats "racism and sexism as deviant side-steps"; (2) that I deny that "inegalitarian ideologies are of a piece with the liberal nation-state"; (3) that writers who recognize racism as a crucial feature of American politics are "rare" and that their work has not "extended to critiques of Tocquevillian frameworks or to any developed alternatives"; and (4) that the truth is that racism, sexism, and liberalism are all part of American culture and that "the ideologies are incompatible." Points 1 and 2 misrepresent what I said; points 3 and 4 are correct but must be understood in light of further aspects of my argument that Stevens fails to acknowledge.

Concerning point 1, I shall forevermore be wary of shaving qualifiers to save space. I do think that much Tocquevillian scholarship defines "racism and sexism as deviant sidesteps," a practice to which I object. But Stevens assumes when I wrote that "analysts" had

described American political culture in these terms, I meant "all analysts." She then triumphantly accuses me of contradiction when I recognize that some have not. I did not, however, say "all analysts"; and I did not expect to be so construed, precisely because I then specified the analysts I was criticizing and made it clear there were "many others" whose work had "greatly enriched understanding" of racial, ethnic, and gender issues in ways to which my argument was indebted (1993, 555). I nonetheless did not feel anyone had put forth the full case I was making.

Point 2 presents much more important misunderstandings that involve the basic elements of my argument which Stevens overlooks. I do hold that America has been centrally constituted by inegalitarian ideologies that are not simply forms of liberalism (as Hartzians contend) or recognized to be irrational prejudices (as Myrdal argued). And I do offer a thesis about the relationship of America's liberal and democratic traditions to traditions of ascriptive inequality, including racism, sexism, and nativism among others.⁹ However, that inegalitarian ideologies are not "of a piece with" the liberal nation-state is not that thesis.

Rather, my thesis is that even though many principles of these traditions are inconsistent with one another as a matter of formal logic, Americans have always blended them together, because they have distinctive intellectual, psychological, and political attractions (Smith 1993, 550, 558). This thesis does not deny that there are linkages between liberal democratic policies and practices and ascriptive inequalities and exclusions in America. On the contrary, I not only recognize how liberal market systems generate class inequalities (p. 556), but I also repeatedly insist that it is "normal, not anomalous" for the pursuit of liberal democratic policies to generate political, economic, social, and psychological conditions that foster the periodic resurgence of traditions of ascriptive inequality (pp. 550, 554, 558–59, 562–63).

My view, then, is not that it is wrong to say that liberalism, democratic republicanism, and ascriptive inegalitarian systems have been in *some* sense "of a piece" in America. It is that the linkages should be described as political, economic, sociological, and psychological, rather than as "logical" entailments. It is precisely because I see these traditions as *all too deeply* linked that I object to describing the United States simply as a "liberal democracy." I see its inegalitarian ascriptive traditions as also deeply constitutive of American national identity.

Stevens seems just not to get all this. She refers to "the liberal nation-state," apparently privileging American liberal elements, the very habit I am challenging. She goes on to contend, without citation, that my insistence on the logical incompatibilities between liberal and ascriptive ideologies means that I believe the "national unity of the United States" has been "undermined," not "furthered," by "racial exclusions." But my argument was *precisely* that the "political and psychological appeal" of ascriptive

traditions have been of great value in fostering certain kinds of "national unity." I simply insisted that they were illiberal kinds that excluded many on racial and ethnic grounds and allowed others to be only second-class members of the "national union." I did observe that these inequalities have often been the sources of the country's deepest political conflicts. Repeatedly, however, I underscored that those struggles have often resulted in relatively enduring forms of political union, albeit ones constructed along ascriptive inegalitarian, not purely liberal, lines (1993, 550, 554, 557–59, 562–63).

After missing all these contentions, Stevens culminates this part of her critique by citing Alan Dawley's argument that "exclusionary practices obviously violated the liberal creed . . . on one level." She insists (along with Dawley, Carl Schmitt, and others) that even so, liberal democracy has been connected with "inegalitarian and exclusionary practices" as a matter of "a deeper logic."

Good point—but it doesn't contradict mine. My only quarrel with Dawley's formulation is that I think calling the linkages a matter of "deeper logic" is vague and confusing. I think it more precise to spell out how and why—despite the "obvious" logical contradictions Dawley and others perceive—liberal democratic ideas and practices can generate conditions favorable to ascriptive inegalitarian ideas and practices. To term those sorts of linkages *logical* (as Dawley and Michael Rogin do), rather than political, sociological and psychological, is misleadingly to suggest that the linkages are primarily at the level of shared *formal principles*. I believe that their analyses, like mine, better support the view that at the level of principle, the ideologies are contradictory in important ways: their connections are primarily at different levels of lived experience.

Moreover, I see my particular account of the linkages as preferable to many others, because I identify common factors that explain why diverse inegalitarian ascriptive traditions of American identity can be and often are politically linked, even though doctrines like white supremacy, male superiority, and Anglo-Saxon manifest destiny are far from identical.¹⁰ In contrast to liberalism, democracy, and civic republicanism, which advance the threatening view that political identities are the products of alterable human choices, these traditions all offer powerful assurances that people's political statuses are instead ordained as part of a meaningful transcendental divine or natural order. Such doctrines often are more effective than liberal democratic ones in warding off change by justifying the privileges of the powerful and making the suffering of the disadvantaged seem less arbitrary, maybe even less unbearable to the disadvantaged themselves (Smith 1993, 550, 558, 562).

Perhaps because Stevens simply ignores these "linkage" arguments, she also gives short shrift to my further contentions that the distinctive attractions of America's ascriptive inegalitarian traditions lead to their periodic resurgence in American life after periods of liberalizing, democratizing reforms and that

we are in such a period right now. Neglecting those points is a serious omission. Since I wrote the article, the appearance of widely noted books explicitly urging the genetically based intellectual inferiority of blacks (Herrnstein and Murray 1994) and the desirability of keeping America a white nation bound by ties of blood (Brimelow 1995), along with mounting antiintegration, antifeminist, and antiimmigrant political tides, have abundantly confirmed those depressing but important contentions.

When these arguments are kept in view, I think it is clear that my essay says much more than that American culture includes incompatible ideologies of racism, sexism, and liberalism. I also believe that though the various parts of my argument have been suggested to some extent by other scholars, no one has put them all together in this manner, nor has anyone used them to issue the explicit challenges to Tocquevillian/Hartzian accounts that occupy the bulk of my essay. This claim brings us back to point 3, my alleged contention that accounts treating racism as central to American politics are "rare." Since her key criticism is that I wrongly present my view as original, this point is pivotal.

There are certainly many books that insist on the pervasiveness of racism and sexism in American life. There are also many Americans, white and especially black, for whom the reality of white commitments to principles of racial superiority is part of their everyday experience, as are beliefs in gender, ethnic, and religious superiority. My aim was to do something more. I tried to provide an account of American political traditions that directly and explicitly corrected all too widespread academic depictions that either failed to encompass these realities of many Americans' experience or wrongly characterized their relationship to other American values. As I showed by canvassing a number of contemporary scholars, it is "rare" even for academic works focused on inegalitarian doctrines to contend that racism, for example, cannot be fully understood either as just a form of liberalism or as an ugly byproduct of liberal capitalism and liberal ideology (1993, 554-59). Among Critical Race Studies scholars, only Kimberlé Crenshaw has, in my view, clearly made an argument like this; hence I singled out her article.¹¹ Patricia Williams (1991) has sold many books, true enough; but *Alchemy of Race and Rights* simply does not address the relationship of "racism" and "liberalism" as scholars in the Hartzian tradition have portrayed it.

Other leading figures in Critical Race Studies do treat racism's relationship to liberalism but in a clearly Hartzian manner. Derrick Bell's justly famous casebook on racism in American law, for example, accepts Myrdal's claim that the "American creed" has been violated by white Americans not because of any rival "values and morals" but out of "white self-interest." Bell does depart from Myrdal's optimism on the future of race relations, but not because he sees racism as a principled American ideological tradition. Rather, he embraces "contemporary Marxist ac-

counts" and kindred analyses that stress the enduring "functional utility of racism within a capitalist economy," despite its *violation* of American ideals. Hence, rather than highlighting tensions between American racist ideals and American ideals, Bell endorses Jennifer Hochschild's very Hartzian formulation. Racial problems reflect a "fundamental problem of reconciling liberalism with democracy," a tension between the self-interested desires of the white democratic majority and principled liberal commitments to minority rights. Ironically, in so doing, even Bell manages to describe America's "fundamental problem" in terms that do not explicitly mention racism (1992, 46-49, 60-61).¹²

Another leader in Critical Race Studies, Richard Delgado, has recently cited both Tocqueville and Myrdal on behalf of the view that in America, the nation's "higher, official" values endorse racial equality, while racism is manifested chiefly in informal contexts. The protagonist of his dialogues then argues, in good Hartzian fashion, that it is Enlightenment values favoring the "light" over the "dark" that have spawned racism. Thus "liberal democracy and racial subordination go hand in hand, like the sun, moon, and stars" (Delgado 1994, 726-30, 737, 756). All these formulations reiterate older narratives in which racism is not an American ideology in its own right but just a grim consequence of the nation's core liberalism.

The Hartzian cast of the work of these prominent scholars is far from unusual. Since my essay appeared, Charles Mills has similarly contended that although most of his fellow "black philosophers recognize that white supremacy exists," they "have not, for the most part, constructed it as a theoretical object, a political system in its own right." He argues, much as I do, that "the normative moral and political theories, and the juridical rules, which assign moral standing to, and codify the legal status of, the inhabitants of this society, cannot be understood in terms of an abstract liberalism, even a flawed one. Instead they must be seen as the organic outcome of this peculiar hybrid system," a "white-supremacist liberalism" in which both components are deeply constitutive (Mills 1994, 863).

But though in recent scholarship the article by Crenshaw (1988) I noted and the more recent essay by Mills (1994) come closest to my view, both deal only with the relationship of liberalism to racism, not with inegalitarian ascriptive ideologies generally. Moreover, neither they nor any of the writers Stevens alludes to overtly criticize the Tocquevillian accounts of American culture that are my essay's central target. Therefore, they do not specify how their views differ from such accounts. Those absences were the point of my claim that writers in Critical Race Studies have not offered "explicit critiques of Tocquevillian frameworks" nor elaborated their views as "alternatives" to them. Perhaps Stevens believes the critical implications of their work for Tocqueville, Hartz, and Myrdal are so clear as to make such elaboration unnecessary. But much of her essay makes me think

my criticisms need, if anything, to be made more fully, for she provides repeated proof that their implications escape her.

She objects, for example, to my criticism of Michael Rogin by insisting that he does not contend that liberal egalitarian values are primary in America and that his fine 1975 book did not make "world historical claims" but addressed only "the specific role liberalism played in the Westward expansion of White settlers." However, this American analysis is what I criticized, and it does present liberalism as the nation's ideological core. Rogin's opening chapter, "Liberal Society and the Indian Question," characterizes the United States (and also "the modern age") in terms explicitly derived from Tocqueville and Hartz. Rogin writes that "liberalism—to identify the modern impulse by its name in political thought—transformed European societies"; but it "operated on a state of nature in America," because "Americans were, in Tocqueville's phrase, 'born equal.'" Thus "the Europeans who settled America were confronted with no alternatives to liberal uniformity save the psychically charged presences of the 'black race within our bosom [and] the red on our borders. . . . Nevertheless, the country lacked the historical bases for political alternatives to liberalism. . . . Liberalism reached everywhere in white America; the resistance it encountered came from within"—in support of which familiar propositions, Rogin cites familiar authorities: Tocqueville and Hartz (1975, 7–8 and 319, n. 20). Even so, Stevens apparently would have us believe that all this really represents an implicit rejection of Hartzian claims for the primacy of liberal values in America. Perhaps obtusely, I still read it as a loyal rehearsal of them.¹³

It is also not reassuring when, after maintaining that my primary flaw is lack of originality, Stevens claims I "overstate" the case by saying that "an array of . . . fixed, ascriptive systems of unequal status" was "largely unchallenged by the American revolutionaries." I meant, especially, that the national revolutionary leadership made no serious official efforts to end slavery or the second-class status of free blacks and women. I stand by that claim. The fact that a few like Jefferson tried unsuccessfully to include opposition to the international slave trade in the Declaration of Independence (while still believing blacks inferior) does not mean that the revolutionary leadership as a whole can be credited with challenging the institution where it was entrenched. Certainly the Articles of Confederation and the Constitution they went on to adopt did not. And it is, to put it very mildly, quite a stretch to present Abigail Adams' letter to her husband as evidence that revolutionary leaders in positions of power seriously considered transforming the status of all those to whom they were denying equal freedom. Stevens is urging us to focus on failed efforts to dispute illiberal institutions in the revolutionary era, rather than the massive official support for those institutions. Her admonitions read like weak attempts to restore, not challenge, Hartzian portraits of early America.

Stevens' primary piece of evidence against me, however, is W. E. B. Du Bois's (1940) wonderful essay, "The White World."¹⁴ I wish I had thought to cite this piece, which indeed "foreshadows the spirit" of my project. That is all it does, however; it cannot do the work that Stevens is trying to make it do. Du Bois tells an anecdote about a white friend who embraced four codes, "Christian, Gentleman, American, White Man," which were in many ways contradictory; nor did the white friend privilege any one of them over the others consistently. The parallels to my argument are real; but it is simply not possible to read these four codes as identical to my map of *liberal egalitarian, democratic republican, and inegalitarian, ascriptive Americanist* traditions—a point Stevens reluctantly concedes. Showing these parallels, moreover, is a long way from arguing that this essay by Du Bois provides the critique of Tocquevillian/Hartzian/Myrdalian accounts that my article emphasizes or the explanations of the linkages of the ideological traditions and the ensuing patterns of reform and reaction in American politics that I advance. In his voluminous writings, Du Bois refers to Tocqueville only occasionally but always favorably, and neither he nor anyone else Stevens cites makes anything like my critique of Myrdal.

One might think any reader of "The White World" would make that critique anyway, rendering my argument superfluous. The best evidence that this is not so is provided by Stevens herself. She contends that Myrdal's *American Dilemma* was heavily influenced by this essay and Du Bois in general, a point I do not question. Yet as I argued at some length, Myrdal nonetheless claimed that Americans' higher values embraced freedom and equality for all while denouncing "differences made on account of 'race, creed or color'" (Smith 1993, 551). He contended that Americans saw inegalitarian ascriptive beliefs as "irrational" biases that they had trouble shedding, not elements of an equal but opposing "code." If Myrdal relied as heavily on Du Bois as Stevens contends, then Myrdal apparently did not grasp Du Bois's implicit rejection of such "higher/lower values" formulations. And if Stevens, who does not directly dispute my critique of Myrdal, can nonetheless invoke Myrdal as properly relying on Du Bois, then I must suspect that Stevens has not grasped my explicit rejection of Myrdal's "higher/lower" formulation.

Thus, far from sustaining her claim that many have said everything my article said, Stevens' critique reveals considerable resistance to perceiving, much less accepting, some of its central contentions. Since Stevens is an accomplished scholar, I can only presume that she has repeatedly misrepresented some of my arguments and ignored others because of her overwhelming sense of the importance of the writers she wishes to call to our attention. Again, I commend that sense; and if the upshot of this exchange is that many readers turn to Du Bois, Williams, Rogin, and others to see if they have really said all I have said

and said it better, then I will regard Stevens' critique, despite its errors, as worthwhile.

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Notes

Stevens wants to thank Eileen McDonagh for organizing a roundtable discussion on Rogers Smith's article. She also thanks Cathy Cohen and Don Herzog for comments on an earlier draft. Smith's thanks go to Cathy Cohen, Andrew Koppelman, Adolph Reed, Jr., Ian Shapiro, and Mary Summers for comments on earlier drafts of his response.

1. Smith, in reply to this criticism, claims that by discussing "ascriptive inegalitarian" ideologies his is a broader account than, and hence different from, those of the particular dynamics of "racism" and "sexism"; specifically, Smith adds the categories of "nativism" and the "doctrines of inherent religious superiority," as well as "homophobia" (Smith 1994). My own belief is that at root "nativism" is a form of racism (Balibar and Wallerstein 1991) and "homophobia" (not mentioned in his article) a manifestation of the sex/gender system (Rubin 1975). The inclusion of beliefs in inherent religious superiority as doctrines of ascriptive inequality baffles me, since Smith is surely aware of the Christian abolitionists in the United States and England who used religion against ascriptive inegalitarianism (Jordan 1968, 361-62, 364)—not to mention the suffragists who did the same (Greene 1983). It is true that many Protestants thought themselves superior, but the relation between this and ascriptive inegalitarianism is not as straightforward as Smith implies.

2. Adolph Reed, Jr. (Smith's source for his Lamarckianism claim) believes that Du Bois' thoughts on race changed and that "by 1904 he had begun revising his thinking about race in ways that were incompatible with the neo-Lamarckian resonances surrounding the double-consciousness idea" (1992, 137). Smith's own source on this point suggests that Du Bois did not hold Lamarckian assumptions for most of his intellectual career. Also, Reed's article does not make the inferences about a hereditary "Talented Tenth" that Smith ascribes to it. I disagree, by the way, with Reed's identification in Du Bois of an early Lamarckianism, followed by a break in his thought. The work up to 1904 and subsequently can be understood in its entirety as expressing Hegelian insights (and Hegelian confusions) about the ways that *Geist* works through nature, as well as through the state, to institutionalize a Black Volk. On the Hegelian strains in Du Bois, see Gilroy 1993; Lewis 1993; Williamson 1984.

3. My source for this claim is the index to *An American Dilemma* (Myrdal 1944). In addition, Myrdal includes several references to the "recent autobiography *Dusk of Dawn*" (p. 601). Ironically, Du Bois was unable to complete his Encyclopedia of the Negro project because of the Carnegie Endowment's commitment of funds to Myrdal's work (Jackson 1990, 265, 429). On the reaction among various groups to Myrdal's study, see also David Southern's (1987) *Gunbar Myrdal and Black-White Relations*.

4. Readers interested in Du Bois's views of America's contradictory traditions of democracy and racism might also turn to Du Bois (*The Suppression of the African Slave-Trade*), [1896] 1973, 198-99; idem 1982 ("The Present Outlook for the Dark Races of Man"), [1900] 1982, 75-78, in which Du Bois accounts for the backsliding of egalitarian reforms (see Smith 1993, 550); idem 1975a (*The Gift of Black Folk*) [1924] 1975, 139, 258.

5. Smith misrepresents Rogin, who does not claim that "'liberal egalitarian' values are primary in America" (Smith 1993, 556). Rather, Rogin writes, "Jackson's negative, *laissez-faire*, paternal state made the logical marriage of paternal authority to liberal egalitarianism" (1975, 279). Rogin does not claim that either is "primary" on the page that Smith cites or

anywhere else in the book, to the best of my recollection. Also, Rogin is not making world-historic claims about liberalism or expansionist ideologies. Rather, *Fathers and Children: Andrew Jackson and the Subjugation of the American Indian* offers a theoretically informed account of selected aspects of Jackson's life and times. Thus Smith's observation that "colonial British Americans pursued practices of racial and gender domination long before they embraced the types of liberal republican ideologies and institutions that came to play prominent roles in America" (1993, 556) does not undercut Rogin's thesis about the specific role that liberalism played in the Westward expansion of white settlers, for instance, during the reign of Andrew Jackson.

6. For a similar point about French racism in the aftermath of the Revolution, see Barzun 1965.

7. Among the most established writers in this field are Derrick Bell at New York University, Angela Harris at Boalt Hall, Kenneth Karst at UCLA Law School, Mari Matsuda at Georgetown Law School, Mark Tushnet at Georgetown Law School, and Patricia Williams at Columbia University Law School.

8. Stevens complains further that I never explain "the formation of this mainstream" Tocquevillian/Hartzian scholarship. If her concern is simply to indicate that white male elites, including academics, too often pay attention only to themselves, I agree that the problem exists.

Stevens' criticism may also be that I do not explain when and why Hartzian accounts became so influential. I think those sorts of characterizations were far more extensively qualified and contested in American thought prior to World War II and the Cold War than since. In those war eras, as I suggested briefly, most American white elites decided that explicitly racist institutions had become political liabilities (1993, 562-63). Thus they insisted more unanimously that our liberal traditions had always been our only "true traditions." Leftist critics like Hartz (1955), who wished to trace all American ills to a hegemonic liberalism, were only too happy to agree. Only a small subset of conservatives remained willing to articulate racial conceptions of "Americanism." But Brimelow (1995) presents the history of American national identity in ways that resemble my argument, except that he *applauds* racially and ethnically based exclusions. His book suggests that the Right is now feeling freer to advance racially ascriptive "Americanist" conceptions once more.

9. Stevens says that my assertion that "beliefs in inherent religious superiority" can be "doctrines of ascriptive inequality" baffles her, because abolitionists used religion against ascriptive inegalitarianism. True, but slaveholders used religion to justify slavery. Religious doctrines have been invoked across the political spectrum in America, which is all I said: "Religious elements are better seen as bound up with all three of the traditions identified here. When they are taken as grounds for denying citizenship, as in Protestant nativism, they are closest to ascriptive Americanism; but religion is not the only source of Americanism, nor can Americanists claim to be the 'authentic' voices of American religiosity" (1993, 564). I must assume that in reading me as treating religious beliefs only as forms of inegalitarian ascriptive ideology, Stevens overlooked these sentences.

10. Stevens endorses Balibar and Wallerstein's (1991) view that nativism is a form of racism and Rubin's (1975) that homophobia is a manifestation of gender inequalities. I agree; but it remains true that these authors do not stress the common appeal of the whole range of ascriptive inegalitarian traditions that I consider.

11. Though Stevens does not acknowledge it, my essay also discusses the work of Kenneth Karst (1993), whom she identifies with Critical Race Studies.

12. In case this "reconciling liberalism with democracy" formulation makes Bell appear warm toward liberalism, let me add that Bell sees the selfishness of the white majority as driven by a capitalist economy structured in accord with liberal principles. I do not deny economic motives for white racism but think it is not reducible to them; nor has white economic selfishness always been "capitalistic." Bell's posi-

tions here resemble those of the influential African-American historian Barbara Fields, whom, instead of Bell, I chose to critique in my article (1993, 556). Stevens ignores the presence of that critique as well.

13. Stevens also fesses that I wrongly call Rogin a "post-modernist." Rather, I said that his work draws on "post-modernist" arguments concerned with the political and psychological sources of "otherness" (1993, 556). That theme is recurring in Rogin, though his 1975 book explores it via reliance on Freud rather than the more "postmodern" focus on the subversion of oppositions through "doubling" imagery that is a leading motif of his more recent essays (e.g., Rogin 1992).

14. Stevens also taxes me for saying that at the time of his attack on Booker T. Washington, Du Bois embraced neo-Lamarckian views of hereditary racial characteristics. She prefers to see his view then and thereafter as Hegelian. But for Du Bois (as for many other intellectuals in the 1890s), Hegelian and Lamarckian views dovetailed, so one could easily embrace them both. In his essay "The Concept of Race," which precedes "The White World" in *Dusk of Dawn*, moreover, Du Bois (1940) describes himself as initially persuaded by "scientific" evolutionary accounts of racial differences. Later, especially in Germany, Du Bois heard race instead presented as "a question of comparative culture" in Hegelian fashion. But Du Bois describes himself as "in revolt" against these presentations, on his way to seeing racial theories as rationales for economic exploitation (pp. 98–101, 129). Du Bois's description of himself as first more persuaded by late-nineteenth-century evolutionary doctrines and then as later changing his views does not fit Stevens' description of his thought as "in its entirety" expressing "Hegelian insights." For that claim, Stevens cites only secondary sources. In any case, I merely used the Du Bois of the 1890s to exemplify how in this period inegalitarian ascriptive ideas were embraced by a wide range of American thinkers (1993, 562). Despite her critical tone, Stevens does not dispute this general contention.

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