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Democratic Alienation

Jeremy Engels

. . . every language and every society are constituted as a repression of the consciousness of the impossibility that penetrates them.

Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe[1]

Breathing in the boasts of new beginnings filling the air, John Adams thought big thoughts in his popular 1776 pamphlet *Thoughts on Government*. He asked his readers: "When! Before the present epocha, had three millions of people full power and a fair opportunity to form and establish the wisest and happiest government that human wisdom can contrive?"[2] Though victory in the internecine conflict with the mighty British juggernaut was no sure thing, Adams was already pondering the postwar architecture of a new government. Adams's leap beyond the present to a future "election of government" was a common move in the heady days preceding the Revolutionary War, for Adams and other colonists believed they could begin the world anew. Thomas Paine asked his readers in the *Pennsylvania Journal* if America could be happy outside of the British umbrella and answered in the affirmative: "As happy as she please; she hath a blank sheet to write upon."[3] America could indeed be happy, for as Paine wrote in *Common Sense*: "We have it in our power to begin the world over again. A situation, similar to the present, hath not happened since the days of Noah until now."[4] Thomas Jefferson echoed Paine by invoking the philosophical doctrine of the tabula rasa to explain not the mind but society itself.[5] This was thus one of those rare historical moments of rupture when the world was turned upside down (to use a popular phrase from the time), and when dreams became almost tangible.

A pressing question, then, was what would the movers and shakers of the American Revolution invent? Though there was heated debate, there was little question in elite circles that there would be no postwar democracy, a synonym at the time for popular anarchy and political suicide.[6] The antidemocratic bent of the power elite clashed with popular sentiment, however, meaning that there was a basic tension at the heart of life in the United States. The Revolutionary War was waged in the name of "the people," creating the expectation for some that the new nation would be a democracy. With a motley crew of sailors, slaves, free blacks, artisans, merchants, farmers, and elites shooting, hollering, and dying together to achieve independence, the Revolutionary War was an intimately democratic event.[7] One of the Revolutionary War's first histori-

Jeremy Engels is Assistant Professor of Communication Arts and Sciences at Pennsylvania State University in University Park.

ans, Mercy Otis Warren, reported in her 1805 *History of the Rise, Progress, and Termination of the American Revolution* that the war represented an "experiment of leveling of all ranks and destroying all subordination."[8] Democratic *topoi* were as integral to the revolutionary effort as democratic practice. The revolutionaries leaned heavily on the words of the Levellers of the 1640s and the "Country" polemicists of the 1720s.[9] The Declaration of Independence claimed that "all men are created equal," and to ensure that monarchy would never again rear its ugly head in America, Paine told his readers to smash the King's crown and distribute the pieces among themselves.[10] Complaints about taxation without representation implied that citizens should have a direct voice in government, and during the ratification debates of the 1780s, claims about the sovereignty of "the people" were commonplace. The Revolutionary War gave democracy a popular legitimacy; when they looked in the mirror and saw their self-image, many Americans saw a democratic people.

Americans found persuasive arguments for democracy not only in England's history but also in their own. "Proper *Democracy* is where the people have all the power in themselves, who choose whom they please for their head for a time, and dismiss him when they please; make their own laws, chose all their own officers, and replace them at pleasure."[11] Thus declared the essayist "Spartanus" in the first of three articles published in the *New-York Journal* in May and June 1776. As the movement for independence gained speed in Philadelphia, and as the soon-to-be revolutionaries were drafting and debating the Declaration of Independence, Spartanus defended democracy.[12] He based his case on a lengthy disquisition on the social contract that situated democracy as the government most capable of satisfying the natural human yearning for equality. According to Spartanus, the social contract demanded democratic government because the alternatives (monarchy and aristocracy) replicated the raging inequalities of the state of nature where the strong and brave ruled the weak and fearful. "We should assume that mode of Government which is most equitable and adapted to the good of mankind," Spartanus wrote, concluding that "there can be no doubt that a well regulated Democracy is most equitable." If humans were born free but were everywhere in chains, as Rousseau famously claimed, Spartanus and many political thinkers believed the culprit to be bad structures as much as bad people. Hence, Spartanus argued that only democracy could deliver the equalities and protections that persuaded humans to form societies in the first place.[13]

Yet Spartanus did not leave it at that. Having trumpeted the cause of democracy, Spartanus took the next step and outlined the attitudes and rhetorical gestures that must accompany democratic government. For Spartanus, the greatest danger to democratic governments is corruption, because "[t]here are always a number of men in every state, who seek to rise above their fellow creatures."

"Let them have their way," the essayist predicted, "and they will soon again subject you to British Tyranny, or to a Tyranny and oppression among ourselves." Spartanus hence called on his fellows to ask tough questions of their representatives and leaders:

> Do you ask how you shall know these men? Ask yourselves what these men were three years ago? What were then their views of Government? What were their pursuits? Who were their friends? What party were they of? Whose favour were they seeking? Did they then appear true friends to the country and the common people? Are they not men that are brought to the freedom this country is coming to, with the greatest reluctance? And will you now believe that they are so soon become friends? Can you now trust them to form your Government and make your laws? Can you be so credulous? Can you believe the professions of these men? Open your eyes, act for yourselves, trust men that are well known for a long time to have been friends to their country. Be upon your guard, and take the advice of those that are known to be true friends; act for yourselves at every election.[14]

More than simply being the basis for a much needed contemporary civics lesson, this list of questions forms the foundation of Spartanus's "democratic style," which is premised on the presupposition of unequal power relations and consequently on the consequent questioning of an authority that is always seeking to pull one over on the little guy.[15] For Spartanus, it is not dialogue but questioning that is the defining aesthetic resource of democratic citizens. This author hence situates style alongside critique, thereby acknowledged that democracy is more than a formal procedure—it is a *Weltanschauung*, a way of life, an attitude of questioning, and making demands on the government.[16]

Spartanus paints a picture of democratic style that resonates with our most optimistic, heroic professor-selves, with the part of us that believes that teaching rhetorical criticism makes a difference in our students' lives. If faith creates its own verification, as William James often claimed, then this optimism is an important resource for educators. Yet so too is a steely resolve to confront the obdurate; thus, we cannot forget that democratic style occurs in, interacts with, and is shaped by a social and material context. Acknowledging the situated-ness of style forces us to engage the deeply compromised trajectory of Spartanus's democratic style as instantiated in the United States. Though Spartanus talked about, and advocated for, a "proper," that is, direct democracy, he recognized that democracy in America would be enacted through a system of representation—in other words, that the new nation would be a representative democracy.

Of course, the terms "republic" and "democracy" are not necessarily antithetical; Robert Hariman argues that "successful democratic polity depends in

part on its practitioners' competency within . . . the republican style."[17] Nor is pointing out Spartanus's republicanism meant to downplay how forward-looking this writer and others were for championing a system of representation in which representatives were actually accountable to their constituents.[18] There was some validity to Spartanus's claim that "[a] truly popular government has, I believe, never yet been tried in the world."[19] Yet Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri point out the simple but oft overlooked fact that a system of representation fundamentally alters democracy by transferring sovereignty from one class of people (the demos) to another (their representatives), hence raising the second class above the first. Hardt and Negri argue that representation is a "disjunctive synthesis" that works against democracy by simultaneously connecting citizens to government while cleaving them from it.[20] Systems of representation compromise democracy by taking the reins of government out of the hands of citizens and concentrating sovereignty in the hands of elected representatives. Further, the system of electing representatives is not inherently democratic, making the couplet "representative democracy" (which Spartanus and others at the time embraced as logical) problematic if not oxymoronic.

Though my first impulse is to praise Spartanus as an early champion of democratic style, then, on closer inspection I see these editorials as indicative of *democratic alienation.* One must exercise care with a term like "alienation," which has multiple philosophical uses; my discussion builds on a triad of understandings of the term. In *The Essence of Christianity* (1841), Ludwig Feuerbach argues that humans are alienated from life in this material world by their fears and expectations of life in the next spiritual world. Religion, specifically Christianity, is the agent of alienation. Alienation for Feuerbach is thus *spiritual.* Though Karl Marx retains Feuerbach's hostility toward organized religion, he revises Feuerbach's reading of alienation by rendering it in economic terms in the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* and in *Capital* (1867). For Marx, capitalism doubly alienates workers. First, capitalism sucks the surplus value from humans, who are alienated from the products of their labor. Second, capitalism separates workers from the means of production, forcing them to labor for a wage and abdicate control over their bodies. Alienation for Marx is thus *material.* Unlike Marx and Feuerbach, Jacques Lacan claims that alienation is a necessary condition for human subjectivity. For Lacan, alienation "represents the instituting of the symbolic order . . . and the subject's assignation of a place therein."[21] In childhood, children engage in a struggle (which Lacan describes in terms echoing the Hegelian battle between bondsman and master) with the symbolic order only to lose. By submitting to the Other, children gain access to the world of symbols; they also submit to having their thoughts and desires defined in language that is not their own. Language hence comes to live inside the split subject, which is never completely

itself but is always an other. Alienation for Lacan is thus *discursive.* These thinkers, in turn, provide a foundation for understanding democratic alienation, which is discursive, material, and spiritual.

Discursive Alienation

Democratic alienation is *discursive* because Americans have been constituted as a democratic people.[22] Though we sing the Battle Hymn of the Republic, and though we pledge allegiance to the flag and to the Republic for which it stands, Americans are raised to believe that democracy is the only acceptable form of government. Moreover, we are told we are a democracy—this is the ideal image (the "ideational representative," to use Freud's terminology) that Americans internalize and carry around in their day-to-day lives. Democracy is, in short, the core of our existence. We do not recognize ourselves but to the extent that we believe ourselves a democracy. Democracy is our modus operandi and final cause; it is the defining characteristic of American-ness and the United States' reason for existence.[23] The contemporary American belief in democracy is often uncritical and unequivocal; Loren Samons goes so far as to label our faith in democracy "a kind of national delusion."[24] In public discourse, democracy is a rhetorical trump card deployed by politicians to justify policy, to praise the United States, and to blame its enemies. By appealing to democracy, politicians shut down the types of disagreement, conflict, and debate that are the hallmarks of democracy. When politicians claim democracy as their own, they can in turn paint adversaries as enemies of democracy—and if it appears that someone does not cherish this core value on which our nation is founded, or even worse, that they threaten it, they will be ignored, shamed, and persecuted. To act democratically and then be smacked with the big stick of "democracy" is alienation. Tellingly, President Bush explained the horrors of 9/11 in terms of democracy—terrorists targeted us because "[t]hey hate what they see right here in this chamber—a democratically elected government."[25] Democracy, in short, does a tremendous amount of rhetorical work in our society, constituting Americans as a democratic people while simultaneously making democracy difficult and masking the difficulties of democracy.

Material Alienation

Democratic alienation is *material,* for the United States is a republic, not a democracy—as we saw very clearly in 2000, when the candidate elected to the presidency won less than half of the popular vote. Moreover, if democracy is understood as "the rule of all by all based on relationships of equality and freedom," as Hardt and Negri write, then Americans are alienated from the means

of governing.[26] Here we can do well to return to Marx's theory of alienation. Just as workers for Marx are alienated from the products of their labor, so too are Americans alienated from the products of their popular will—from the laws, rules, and other dictates of the representatives they elect and infuse with the authority of popular sovereignty. Though Spartanus claimed that "the good of the people is the ultimate end of civil Government," and though all power was believed to be derived from the people in the period in which our Constitution was written,[27] today representatives more often than not view themselves as accountable only on election day. And just as for Marx, workers are forced to behave and, more strongly, to *be* in certain ways by the overarching system of capitalism, so too are Americans constituted and compelled to behave and to live in certain ways antithetical to democracy by our system of republicanism, which is premised on a culture of deference to elected officials.[28]

To be "properly" democratic, representative democracies must be democratic in voting and in office-holding. Anyone, no matter what social class, race, or sex, could be elected to the highest offices. This is simply not the case. Here I am reminded of one of my favorite epistolary moments from the early Republic. One of the most frequently cited letters from this period is Thomas Jefferson's October 28, 1813, letter to John Adams, in which he characterizes the uniqueness of the United States. For Jefferson, the United States is special because it is ruled by a "natural aristocracy" not of money or birth but of talent. Not often mentioned is Adams's acerbic reply. Though Jefferson drew a line between "natural" and "artificial" aristocracies, Adams exposed this idealistic distinction as one of Jefferson's characteristic daydreams.[29] The natural aristocracy is a story we tell ourselves, a fiction that the democracy needs. But it is just that: fiction. With stinging candor, Adams asked, "What chance have Talents and Virtues in competition, with Wealth and Birth? and Beauty?"[30] Adams understood that to be born into the United States is hence to be born into a democracy that is a democracy only in name.

Spiritual Alienation

Democratic alienation is *spiritual* because citizens put off the immediate need for democracy in the name of higher ideals of democratic progress. Democracy is something the people are promised, a carrot dangled in front of the hardworking middle and lower classes. President Bush develops the perfect rationale for extending democratic alienation in his Second Inaugural Address of 2005, where he graphs Francis Fukayama's argument in *The End of History* onto world events and forwards a liberal democratic eschatology. According to the president, the world is (like the United States) gradually becoming more democratic because, he implies, this is the will of God. His speech, which sets the

tone for his second term but is perhaps more strongly his attempt to define his legacy, is driven by teleology but also enacts a temporal displacement—those that are not yet democratic will soon be democratic; they need only wait and heed the call to freedom.[31] When Americans complain about the frustrating obduracy of inequality or a lack of meaningful political efficacy, they are told they have more democracy than most. They are chided for being ungrateful and branded uncivil even though the markers of nondemocracy (such as the Electoral College) are all around.[32] American democracy is thus about forestalling—about putting off the desire to overturn the present order with the certainty that God will grant change in a future life.

These admittedly brief comments are the product of a mood, an angst I feel that our democratic reality is in fact a carefully crafted symbolic construction that disciplines, regiments, and subjectifies. Perhaps such frustration is the *sine qua non* of foment, activism, and rebellion—the feeling of lack that produces a hunger for change.[33] However, I suspect that such alienation is, as Lacan suggests, not an accident but instead a necessary condition for subjectivity. It might very well be the case that democratic alienation is a presupposition for the perpetuation of the political system itself. American political discourse then becomes about covering over and repressing democratic alienation; about smoothing it out so it does not become a contradiction that leads to revolution. The discourses of citizenship in turn are concerned with defense—for, as Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe write, "If the subject is constructed through language, as a partial and metaphorical incorporation into a symbolic order, any putting into question of that order must necessarily constitute an identity crisis."[34] The result of democratic alienation is that the democratic subject develops a series of defense mechanisms to cope with its alienated subjectivity.

Though Spartanus offers one praiseworthy iteration of a democratic style, then, another grows out of the tensions found in his essays, which move quickly from direct democracy to representative democracy, from the power of the people to the power of the people's keepers. In fact, I believe that much of what we might consider to be democratic style is a set of rhetorical conventions developed to cope with democratic alienation. One potential source of discovery for those interested in theorizing democratic style hence becomes Anna Freud's work on ego-defense mechanisms.[35] *Sublimation* is a vital component of democratic style, as the desire for democracy is channeled into other more socially acceptable desires, including the urge to spend, consume, and accumulate. "Of arms and the man the spectacle does not sing, but rather of passions and the commodity," writes Guy Debord.[36] As is *displacement.* Here I think of Kenneth Burke's "cult of the scapegoat," for rhetorical scapegoating, which has played such an elemental role in American democracy, allows for

catharsis as any frustration at the government is channeled at an expendable figure.[37] Though there is no space for a detailed discussion, here we can list other coping mechanisms, including *projection*, *repression*, *dissociation*, *humor*, *denial*, and the like. These coping strategies become vital to living with democratic alienation. The problem for those who desire "proper democracy," as Spartanus did (and as Laclau and Mouffe, Hardt and Negri, and the participants in this forum do), is that democratic style becomes a tool for reinforcing the status quo. Perhaps, then, one place to better understand democratic style is at the locus of the tension within Spartanus's essays, insofar as it is a tension that is located at the heart of democracy in America—the friction between democratic style as criticism of power and democratic style as accommodation to immovable power structures, contradictions, frustrations, impossibilities, and dashed hopes.

NOTES

1. Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics,* 2nd ed. (1985; rpt., London: Verso, 2001), 125.
2. John Adams, *Thoughts on Government: Applicable to the Present State of the American Colonies. In a Letter from a Gentleman to His Friend* (Boston: John Gill, 1776), 16.
3. Thomas Paine, *Pennsylvania Journal*, April 24, 1776, in *The Complete Writings of Thomas Paine*, 2 vols., ed. Philip S. Foner (New York: The Citadel Press, 1945), 2:82.
4. Thomas Paine, *Common Sense* (1776), in *The Thomas Paine Reader*, ed. Michael Foot and Isaac Kramnick (New York: Penguin, 1987), 109.
5. Thomas Jefferson to John Cartwright, June 5, 1824, in *Thomas Jefferson: Writings*, ed. Merrill D. Peterson (New York: The Library of America, 1984), 1491.
6. Russell L. Hanson, *The Democratic Imagination in America: Conversations with Our Past* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985), 56–57; Paul Gilje, *The Road to Mobocracy: Popular Disorder in New York City, 1763–1834* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987); Joseph M. Bessette, *The Mild Voice of Reason: Deliberative Democracy and American National Government* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); and Alexander Keyssar, *The Right to Vote: The Contested History of Democracy in the United States* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 1–25.
7. For a helpful discussion of the struggle for democracy during the Revolutionary War, see Elisha P. Douglass, *Rebels and Democrats: The Struggle for Equal Political Rights During the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1955). For discussions of the democratic radicalism of the Revolutionary War, see Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000); and Gary B. Nash, *The Unknown American Revolution: The Unruly Birth of Democracy and the Struggle to Create America* (New York: Viking, 2005). For a compendium documenting this radicalism, see Ray Raphael, *A People's History of the American Revolution: How Common People Shaped the Fight for Independence* (New York: Perennial, 2002). For studies of how common people participated in and influenced the Revolutionary War, see Alfred F. Young, *The Shoemaker and the Tea*

Party: Memory and the American Revolution (Boston: Beacon Press, 1999); and *Masquerade: The Life and Times of Deborah Sampson, Continental Soldier* (New York: Knopf, 2004).

8. Mercy Otis Warren, *History of the Rise, Progress, and Termination of the American Revolution: Interspersed with Biographical, Political, and Moral Observations*, 2 vols., ed. Lester H. Cohen (1805; rpt., Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1988), 1:145–46.
9. On the Levellers, see Linebaugh and Rediker, *Many-Headed Hydra*, 104–42. On the "Country" influence on the Revolutionary War, see Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (1967; rpt., Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992). For arguments that the split between Federalists and Republicans in the early Republic was reminiscent of the "Court-Country" divide in England, see Lance Banning, *The Jeffersonian Persuasion: Evolution of a Party Ideology* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980); and Drew R. McCoy, *The Elusive Republic: Political Economy in Jeffersonian America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980). For a treatment of conceptions of representation during the Revolutionary era, see John Philip Reid, *The Concept of Representation in the Age of the American Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989).
10. Thomas Paine, *Common Sense* (1776), in *The Thomas Paine Reader*, ed. Michael Foot and Isaac Kramnick (New York: Penguin, 1987), 92. Of course, it is important to note the limits of the American Revolution, which are highlighted by historian Jack Greene, who argues that the Declaration of Independence's "all men are created equal" should be read literally and in the context of late eighteenth century definitions of "men." For Anglo-Americans, men were white, men owned property, and men had dominion over others, including women, children, and perhaps slaves or servants; thus, as Greene notes, there was a "deep and abiding commitment of the Revolutionary generation to political inequality." In spite of its rhetorical heroism, the Declaration of Independence was a deeply compromised document that refused to condemn slavery and accused King George of having "endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages." Further, though the Revolutionary War was waged in the name of "the people," citizens would be the governed and not the governors. Jack Greene, *Imperatives, Behaviors, and Identities: Essays in Early American Cultural History* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1992), 238.
11. Spartanus, "The Interest of America, Letter 1," *The New-York Journal, or the General Advertiser*, May 30, 1776, 1.
12. Philadelphia's movement is captured beautifully in Stephen E. Lucas, *Portents of Rebellion: Rhetoric and Revolution in Philadelphia, 1765–76* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1976). The best work on the Declaration of Independence is Stephen E. Lucas, "Justifying America: The Declaration of Independence as a Rhetorical Document," in *American Rhetoric: Context and Criticism*, ed. Thomas W. Benson (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1989), 67–130.
13. Spartanus, "The Interest of America, Letter 2," *New-York Journal*, June 13, 1776, 1.
14. Spartanus, "The Interest of America, Letter 3," *New-York Journal*, June 20, 1776, 1–2.
15. And thus it is an early forebear of "critical rhetoric" as enumerated in Raymie E. McKerrow, "Critical Rhetoric: Theory and Praxis," *Communication Monographs* 56 (1989): 91–111, which might itself be seen as a prescription for democratic style.
16. This insight perhaps reaches its fruition in John Dewey's work; see, for instance, his 1939 essay "Creative Democracy—The Task before Us," in *The Later Works of John Dewey*, vol. 14, ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1988), 224–30.
17. Robert Hariman, *Political Style: The Artistry of Power* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), 95.

18. For a discussion of how radical such demands were in the 1770s, see Gordon S. Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776–1787* (1969; rpt., Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 162–96.
19. Spartanus, Letter 2.
20. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (New York: Penguin, 2004), 241–47.
21. Bruce Fink, *The Lacanian Subject: Between Language and Jouissance* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 52. My reading of Lacan is propped by Fink's commentary here and in *Lacan to the Letter: Reading Écrits Closely* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004).
22. Here, I build on the work of Michael Calvin McGee, "In Search of 'the People': A Rhetorical Alternative," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 61 (1975): 235–49; and Maurice Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric: The Case of the *Peuple Québois,*" *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 73 (1987): 133–50.
23. For one telling of how democracy came to assume this role, see Sacvan Bercovitch, *The Rites of Assent: Transformations in the Symbolic Construction of America* (New York: Routledge, 1993).
24. Loren J. Samons II, *What's Wrong With Democracy: From Athenian Practice to American Worship* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 5.
25. President George W. Bush, Address to Joint Session on Terrorist Attacks, September 20, 2001, available online at *http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/gwbush911jointsessionspeech.htm* (accessed May 2008).
26. Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 67.
27. Spartanus, Letter 2.
28. For a discussion of how democracy was consumed by, and then reemerged from, elite demands for deference following the Revolutionary War, see Gordon S. Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (New York: Vintage, 1991), 57–77, 179–80, 271–86. For a historical consideration of theories of deference, see J. G. A. Pocock, "The Classical Theory of Deference," *American Historical Review* 81 (1976): 516–23.
29. Thomas Jefferson to John Adams, October 28, 1813, and Adams to Jefferson, November 15, 1813, in *The Adams-Jefferson Letters: The Complete Correspondence between Thomas Jefferson & Abigail & John Adams*, ed. Lester J. Cappon (1959; rpt., Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 388, 400.
30. Adams to Jefferson, September 2, 1813, in *The Adams-Jefferson Letters*, 371.
31. Here, see my reading of President Bush's Second Inaugural Address in "President Bush and the End of History: A Meditation on the New Eschatology," in *In Search of the Rhetorical Legacy of George W. Bush*, ed. Thomas R. Burkholder (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, forthcoming).
32. Here, see the brilliant discussion of how the discourses of civility serve to displace issues of inequality and injustice in Benjamin DeMott, *Junk Politics: The Trashing of the American Mind* (New York: Nation Books, 2003), 4–19. Perhaps the problem here is the movement from noun to verb—translating the discourses of democracy, which seem to be discourses of action, into discourses of possession, as though one can ever *have* democracy.
33. Ernesto Laclau, *The Populist Reason* (London: Verso, 2005).
34. Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, 126.

35. Anna Freud, *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense* (1936; rpt., New York: International Universities Press, 1946); see also Joseph Sandler and Anna Freud, *The Analysis of Defense: The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense Revisited* (New York: International Universities Press, 1985), which chronicles conversations that took place in 1972–1973.
36. Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (1967; rpt., New York: Zone Books, 1995), sec. 66. The best work on this type of sublimation is Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons (1904–5; rpt., Los Angeles: Roxbury Publishing Company, 1998), and "The Protestant Sects and the Spirit of Capitalism," in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, ed. and trans. H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), 302–22. For Freud, sublimation is the only healthy defense mechanism; George E. Vaillant echoes Freud by labeling it "mature" in *Adaptation to Life* (Boston: Little Brown, 1977), and the *DSM-IV*, which closely follows Vaillant's schematization of defense mechanisms, lists it as "highly adaptive," that is, healthy.
37. Kenneth Burke, *Language as Symbolic Action: Essays on Life, Literature, and Method* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 8; the definitive work on scapegoating is René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, trans. Patrick Gregory (1972; rpt., Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979).