

## - EDITED TRANSCRIPT -



# NATIONAL AFFAIRS

## THE 2011 BRADLEY SYMPOSIUM

# “True Americanism”

## What It Is and Why It Matters

MAY 11, 2011 • 9:30 TO 11:30 A.M.

In an age of increasing cultural diversity at home and of increasing globalization abroad, questions are being agitated about what it means today to be an American. How, in fact, do we identify ourselves, both as individuals and as a people? To what larger community and ideals are we attached and devoted?

The 2011 Bradley Symposium, hosted by Hudson Institute’s Bradley Center for Philanthropy and Civic Renewal and *National Affairs*, featured a discussion about these questions, led by Hudson Institute Senior Fellow **Amy A. Kass**, AEI Madden-Jewett Scholar **Leon R. Kass** and Loyola College professor **Diana Schaub**.

### Program and Panel

9:30 ~ Welcome by **Yuval Levin**, *National Affairs*

9:35 ~ Introduction by **Amy A. Kass**

9:40 ~ Panel discussion

**Sen. Lamar Alexander**, (R - Tennessee) and Chairman of the Senate Republican Conference

**Robert P. George**, McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence, Princeton University

**Frank Hanna**, CEO, Hanna Capital

**Daniel Henninger**, Deputy Editorial Page Editor, *Wall Street Journal*

**Amy A. Kass**, Hudson Senior Fellow and Co-editor, *What So Proudly We Hail*

**Leon R. Kass**, Co-editor, *What So Proudly We Hail*

**Charles Krauthammer**, Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist

**Harvey Mansfield**, Harvard University Professor

**Wilfred McClay**, Senior Fellow, Ethics and Public Policy Center

**Diana Schaub**, Co-editor, *What So Proudly We Hail*

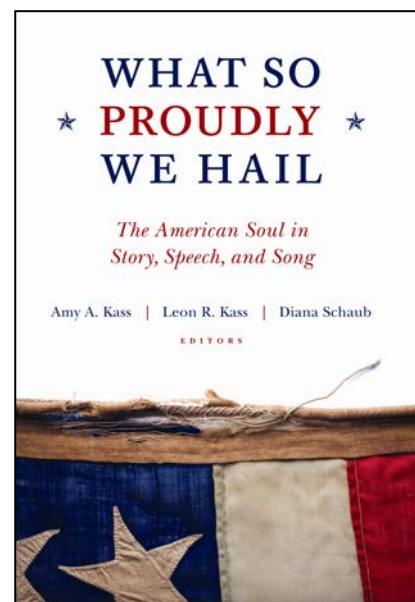
**Paul E. Singer**, Founder of Elliott Associates

**Juan Williams**, Journalist and Fox News political analyst

11:00 ~ Question-and-answer session

11:30 ~ Adjournment

To request further information on this event or the Bradley Center, contact Kristen McIntyre at (202) 974-2424 or [kmcintyre@hudson.org](mailto:kmcintyre@hudson.org).



YUVAL LEVIN: Good morning everybody. Thank you all for coming. I am Yuval Levin. I'm the editor of *National Affairs*, and I am here to welcome you to the 2011 Bradley Symposium entitled, "True Americanism: What Is It and Why It Matters." *National Affairs* is very pleased to once again be co-hosting the symposium this year, together with the Hudson Institute's [Bradley Center for Philanthropy and Civic Renewal](#).

A few very quick words of thanks before we get started. First of all, to Bill Schambra and Kristen McIntyre at Hudson Institute, who have done the real work of making this happen. Also to Cheryl Miller at the [American Enterprise Institute](#) (AEI), and above all, to [The Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation](#), which supports so many important projects aimed at advancing American ideals and our understanding of American life. We are very honored this morning to have with us so many of the Bradley Foundation's board members and their families, as well as the Foundation's staff members. Many thanks go all of you, and we are particularly grateful to Dan Schmidt of Bradley for his guidance and wisdom in helping to set up this event.

Our subject today flows naturally from the Bradley Foundation's longstanding interest in civic education and American identity, one product of which was *E Pluribus Unum*, the [Bradley Project on America's National Identity](#), which produced a [report](#) in 2008 that I would highly recommend to anyone interested our subject this morning. However, beyond that general interest, the occasion for taking up the question the way we will today is the publication of an important and quite wonderful new collection of readings entitled, [What So Proudly We Hail: The American Soul in Story, Speech and Song](#), edited by Amy Kass, Leon Kass and Diana Schaub, all of who are with us this morning, and I see that a lot of you have copies of the book with you. The book is a collection of short stories, speeches and reflections that all in one way or another get at the question of American identity, of who we are and what we are about as a nation. It is about America's character and creed, about the place of the law, of courage and sacrifice, of civility and republican virtues in our civic life. It is about the enormously difficult challenges of assimilation and integration in American life, of building and sustaining our impossibly complex society. And it is a collection that, as the subtitle suggests, speaks not just to the mind but to the heart and soul.

One of the things that it captures especially well is the way in which American patriotism has always simultaneously addressed itself to the hearts and to the minds of American citizens. Our creed has always been part philosophy and part poetry. That has always made American civic education especially complicated and challenging, and the aim of our symposium today is to take up a portion of that challenge. As the form of this book suggests, the best way to do that is through a conversation, grounded in a particularly rich and engaging text, and ideally helped along by wise teachers.

We are fortunate to have with us this morning a panel of people perfectly suited for just such a conversation. The people on the stage here hardly need much of an introduction. So all I really need to do is tell you who they are and let them get started. With us, as you see, are Lamar Alexander, Senator from Tennessee and Chairman of the Senate Republican Conference. Robert George, the McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence at Princeton University. Frank Hanna, the CEO of Hanna Capital. Daniel Henninger, deputy editorial page editor of the *Wall Street Journal*. Charles Krauthammer, the great Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist. Harvey Mansfield, the William Kenan Professor of Government at Harvard University, and I should add, also one of

the winners of the 2011 Bradley Prizes, which will be given out tonight. Wilfred McClay, Professor of History at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, and a senior fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center. Paul Singer, the founder of Elliot Associates. Juan Williams, a journalist and Fox News political analyst. Diana Schaub, Professor of Political Science at Loyola College in Maryland and co-editor of this new volume. Our conversation will be guided by Diana's two other co-editors and two of America's greatest teachers for decades at the University of Chicago and now with us here in Washington, Amy Kass, who is now at the Hudson Institute, and Leon Kass at the American Enterprise Institute. Amy will get us started this morning. So with no further ado, Amy Kass. [APPLAUSE]

AMY KASS: Thank you, Yuval. At one point in his essay, "[True Americanism](#)", soon to be discussed, Theodore Roosevelt asserts that Americans who choose to live in Europe never really become Europeans. They only cease being American and become, he says, "nothing." Over a century later, in a class at the University of Chicago, I saw Roosevelt's assertion turned upside down. Just a few weeks after 9/11, on the first day of the course "Human Being and Citizen", I began by asking the 28 eager freshmen to identify themselves by name and to say a few words about who they were. The following ensued. Student one, "I'm Korean-American." Student two, "I'm Hispanic-American." Student three, "I'm Catholic-American." And so it went until one student said, "I'm, well, well, I'm just American, which I guess means I'm nothing." His classmates silently but sympathetically concurred. [LAUGHTER]

Familiar with the posturing of undergraduates, I would usually have dismissed the student's speech as well as the class's reaction. But this was just after 9/11, when 3,000 of their fellow citizens had been killed merely for being just Americans. In what country, I wondered, did these students, United States citizens all, think they were living? Ten years later, what it means to be an American remains troublingly unsettled. We increasingly celebrate diversity and multiculturalism at home and globalization and internationalism abroad. Many of our most privileged young people regard themselves mainly as citizens of the world. Among intellectuals, the very idea of national identity is under challenge. Spontaneous displays of patriotism often provoke moral critiques from opinion leaders. Regarding immigration, we no longer hear of the melting pot.

It has been years since serious public figures spoke about the American way of life. What then do Americans have in common and what unites us as Americans? How do we Americans identify ourselves as individuals and as a people? What do we look up to and revere? To what larger community and ideals are we attached and devoted? For what are we willing to fight and to sacrifice?

Making its public debut today, our new anthology, [What So Proudly We Hail](#), speaks directly to these questions. Informed by the conviction that making citizens is as much a matter of the heart as it is of the mind, it seeks to exploit the soul shaping possibilities of American short stories, political speeches, and songs to promote self-reflection and thoughtful patriotism. The selections are grouped in six chapters, each addressing a crucial issue. The chapters include – National Identity, The American Creed, The American Character, Toward a More Robust Citizenry: The Virtues of Civic Life, The Goals of Civic Life, and Making One Out of Many.

Theodore Roosevelt's speech, "[True Americanism](#)", which appears in our final chapter on immigration and assimilation, makes it clear that creating an American *unum* out of our variegated *pluribus* is hardly a new difficulty. Written in 1894, when both the legacy of the Civil War and the great waves of European immigration provoked concerns about national unity and national identity, Roosevelt insists on the necessity of undivided civic loyalty and national attachment to the American Republic. Our panel this morning will use Theodore Roosevelt's essay as the point of departure for considering the meaning and significance of Americanism today. They have all read the essay. Many of you probably have not. To make it possible for everyone here and those watching on C-SPAN to follow the conversation, we will give Theodore Roosevelt the first words, as Leon will read some excerpts from his essay.

LEON KASS: I won't try to impersonate the bully pulpit. [LAUGHTER] But I'll try to read it with some gusto. These are just excerpts, longish excerpts, but to get it all out before us.

We Americans have many grave problems to solve, many threatening evils to fight, and many deeds to do, if, as we hope and believe, we have the wisdom, the strength, the courage, and the virtue to do them. Yet there is one quality which we must bring to the solution of every problem, – that is, an intense and fervid Americanism. We shall never be successful over the dangers that confront us; we shall never achieve true greatness, nor reach the lofty ideal which the founders and preservers of our mighty Federal Republic have set before us, unless we are Americans in heart and soul, in spirit and purpose, keenly alive to the responsibility implied in the very name of American, and proud beyond measure of the glorious privilege of bearing it.

There are two or three sides to the question of Americanism, and two or three senses in which the word "Americanism" can be used to express the antithesis of what is unwholesome and undesirable. In the first place we wish to be broadly American and national, as opposed to being local or sectional. We do not wish, in politics, in literature, or in art, to develop that unwholesome parochial spirit, that over-exaltation of the little community at the expense of the great nation, which produces what has been described as the patriotism of the village, the patriotism of the belfry. The patriotism of the village or the belfry is bad, but the lack of all patriotism is even worse.

It may be, that in ages so remote that we cannot now understand any of the feelings of those who will dwell on them, patriotism will no longer be regarded as a virtue, exactly as it may be that in those remote ages people will look down upon and disregard monogamic marriage; but as things now are and have been for two or three thousand years past, and are likely to be for two or three thousand years to come, the words "home" and "country" mean a great deal.

At present, treason, like adultery, ranks as one of the worst of all possible crimes. One may fall very far short of treason and yet be an undesirable citizen in the community. The man who becomes Europeanized, who loses his love for his native land is not a traitor; but he is a silly and undesirable citizen. Nothing will more quickly or more surely disqualify a man from doing good work in the world than the acquirement of that flaccid habit of mind which its possessors style cosmopolitanism. [LAUGHTER]

It is not only necessary to Americanize the immigrants of foreign birth who settle among us, but it is even more necessary for those among us who are by birth and descent already Americans not to throw away our birthright, and, with incredible and contemptible folly, wander back to bow down before the alien gods whom our forefathers forsook.

The third sense in which the word “Americanism” may be employed is with reference to the Americanizing of the newcomers to our shores. We must Americanize them in every way, in speech, in political ideas and principles, and in their way of looking at the relations between Church and State. We welcome the German or the Irishman who becomes an American. We have no use for the German or Irishman who remains such. We do not wish German-Americans and Irish-Americans who figure as such in our social and political life; we want only Americans, and, provided they are such, we do not care whether they are of native or of Irish or of German ancestry. We have no room in any healthy American community for a German-American vote or an Irish-American vote, and it is contemptible demagoguery to put planks into any party platform with the purpose of catching such a vote. We have no room for any people who do not act and vote simply as Americans, and as nothing else. Moreover, we have as little use for people who carry religious prejudices into our politics as for those who carry prejudices of caste or nationality.

We stand unalterably in favor of the public-school system in its entirety. We believe that English, and no other language, is that in which all the school exercises should be conducted. We are against any division of the school fund, and against any appropriation of public money for sectarian purposes. But we are equally opposed to any discrimination against or for a man because of his creed. We demand that all citizens, Protestant and Catholic, Jew and Gentile, shall have fair treatment in every way; that all alike shall have their rights guaranteed them.

More than a third of the people of the Northern States are of foreign birth or parentage. An immense number of them have become completely Americanized, and these stand on exactly the same plane as the descendants of any Puritan, Cavalier, or Knickerbocker among us, and do their full and honorable share of the nation’s work. But where immigrants, or the sons of immigrants, do not heartily and in good faith throw in their lot with us, but cling to the speech, the customs, the ways of life, and the habits of thought of the Old World which they have left, they thereby harm both themselves and us. It is an immense benefit to the European immigrant to change him into an American citizen. To bear the name of American is to bear the most honorable titles; and whoever does not so believe has no business to bear the name at all, and, if he comes from Europe, the sooner he goes back there the better. We freely extend the hand of welcome and of good-fellowship to every man, no matter what his creed or birthplace, who comes here honestly intent on becoming a good United States citizen like the rest of us; but we have a right, and it is our duty, to demand that he shall indeed become so.

Americanism is a question of spirit, conviction, and purpose, not of creed or birthplace. A Scandinavian, a German, or an Irishman who has really become an American has the right to stand on exactly the same footing as any native-born citizen in the land, and is just as much entitled to the friendship and support, social and political, of his neighbors.

We Americans can only do our allotted task well if we face it steadily and bravely, seeing but not fearing the dangers. Above all we must stand shoulder to shoulder, not asking as to the ancestry or creed of our comrades, but only demanding that they be in very truth Americans, and that we all work together, heart, hand, and head, for the honor and greatness of our common country. [APPLAUSE]

AMY KASS: The panel has been asked to discuss three topics, which we will consider in turn. First, Roosevelt's view of the nature of "True Americanism." Second, and more important, our own views of the meaning of Americanism today. And third, why it matters. We are going to proceed not by prepared speeches, but it is to be hoped by a genuine conversation, which Leon and I will try to keep on track and keep moving forward.

So we begin with Roosevelt. As you have heard, Theodore Roosevelt approaches true Americanism negatively in terms of three antitheses. It is opposed to narrow, local, and parochial institutions or attachments. It is opposed to overbroad global attachments and cosmopolitanism. It is opposed, both for immigrants and for our electoral politics, to ethically or religiously hyphenated identities. In a word, we should all regard ourselves and one another simply and unqualifiably as Americans. But what is the positive content of American identity and attachment? What exactly, according to Roosevelt, does true Americanism consist of? What are, to use his terms, "its common spirit, convictions, and purposes"? So who would like to begin? If you're shy, I'll just call on you. [LAUGHTER] Robbie.

ROBERT GEORGE: Amy, if Americanism is a question of, "spirit, conviction, and purpose," as Roosevelt says, and I certainly agree with that, then the question is, what is the conviction? From the conviction we should get a sense of the spirit and the purpose. The conviction, I think, we draw from the Declaration of Independence. It captures it so perfectly. Interestingly, the great second sentence of the Declaration doesn't appear in the speech. I'm referring, of course, the sentence that says, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

What Lincoln called the "American proposition", and which he referred to time and time again in defending the nation and the context of the Civil War. I'll venture a thought, Leon (Kass). If we can use that old principle of Aristotle's method of inviting, and social science's method of identifying the focal case of a thing, and then identifying less focal cases by reference to the central or focal case, it would seem to me that the focal case of an American is a person who identifies himself as an American. Where his sense of identity is rooted in precisely that conviction, the belief that it's just true that all men are created equal and that they are endowed by their creator with certainly inalienable rights. These are rights that did not come from the government. They did not come from presidents or parliaments or legislatures, from no human power, and therefore cannot be taken away by any merely human power. Rather it is the duty of all human political authority to protect those rights and to honor them themselves.

LEON KASS: Diana?

DIANA SCHAUB: Why do you think there is no mention in his speech of the American principles? What I get from this speech is that Americanism is mostly a matter of energy, courage, struggle, and material prosperity. I guess it strikes me that Roosevelt's presentation is a pretty inadequate or truncated version of Americanism. What he admires are the empire builders, whether in the realm of politics or commerce. Everything that he mentioned is put in the context of conquest. So I mean, on the basis of what Roosevelt presents, I don't see how the greatness of the American Republic would differ from the greatness of the Roman Republic, except for the fact that we speak English and insist on speaking English. I mean, I would agree with you about my definition of Americanism, but I don't really get that from the Roosevelt speech.

AMY KASS: Senator.

SEN. LAMAR ALEXANDER: I think perhaps he just assumed in 1894 that everybody knew what it meant to be an American. That you have a common culture that came from, people used to say in Tennessee, 'An old farmer said, 'If I read the Bible, the Farmer's Almanac, and the Commercial Appeal, that's about all I need.' People knew the same things. Roosevelt said what he was against, but it seems to me that we are looking for definition.

It is simply that we pledge allegiance to the creative beliefs that unite us as a country. That is our greatest accomplishment. You can't become Chinese. You have to become American if you want to be a citizen. I suspect he just figured we knew that there were a few common principles, not just equal opportunity, but liberty, rule of law, and a few others. And then there are some that you might put under character, like anything is possible. That we all knew that and what we should do is be that instead of what we used to be.

Then throw in the common language. During his presidency it became necessary for every new citizen to learn English. That was in 1906. Robert Putnam has written a lot about the large number of Americanizing efforts that were going on in 1894. For instance, the Kohler Company in Wisconsin would bring in a lot of German immigrants, and they'd spend time teaching them what it meant to be an American. The Kiwanis Clubs, the Boy Scouts, the civic clubs and all these organizations would do that. So I suspect they just all thought they knew what it meant.

AMY KASS: So why the heavy emphasis on hardihood, courage, and the things that Diana (Schaub) was referring to?

SEN. LAMAR ALEXANDER: That was just Roosevelt. [LAUGHTER]

HARVEY MANSFIELD: I would say that that was his manliness. I'm an expert on manliness. [LAUGHTER]

He likes to set himself off against others. He likes to make himself dramatic. He likes to think that he finds himself in the horrible situation, and there is no solution from that, except to assert himself. So he does that, and he likes to make great distinctions and divisions among us. I guess he reminds us, I would say, that if it is true that patriotism is a matter of heart as well as of mind, just as Yuval Levin said, the heart is also the seat of not just love, but also anger. And maybe anger is closer to politics than love is.

CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER: I think the way to look at it, to make it sort of sharp, would be to say that Roosevelt's idea of Americanism has to do with energy or manliness, and I would say that our idea has to do with liberty. After all, manliness and energy are not anything unique to the United States, as Diana (Schaub) was saying. All of the republican virtues – courage, rule of law, etc. – we have in common with Rome. What makes us different from all the other republics, from, say, all the other nations in the West, we're the only one, and this is unique in human history, founded on a document. Our day of independence is the day on which it was signed. The French's is the storming of the Bastille that would lead to some kind of victory, either in revolution or battle.

This dedication to an idea, to a principle, is that from which President Roosevelt was talking about, since we are dedicated to liberty and to the rule of law within a specific, almost sacred document. Our presidents swear to defend the Constitution, not the people, not the vote, not the state, not the government, and not the land, the Constitution. That is a very unusual idea, and that is what unites us.

It revolves around liberty to an extent that I don't think exists in any other country. If you walk around Washington, you will see, which I think is unique in capital cities in the world, that there are statues all over the city dedicated to the liberators of other countries. On Constitution Avenue you have statues to Bolivar and all the Latin Americans. There is a huge Ukrainian monument within a mile of here. On Massachusetts Avenue you've got Gandhi and Thomas Masaryk 100 yards apart looking at each other. In no other city would we be celebrating the idea of liberty as expressed through other countries in the capitol. That is what makes us different.

I would say that our idea of liberty is what distinguishes us. It is about dedication to a proposition. That is what brings us to the idea that we do not want to see this kind of ethnic separatism that was in that speech, and that we see proliferating today, because it negates the entire idea of people being American as a result of this allegiance to a Constitution and to a principle, rather than allegiance to clan, tribe, race, or an ethnicity.

FRANK HANNA: The line that troubled me most was when he said that patriotism of the village is bad. I thought to myself that the core of the village is a family, so I felt he was bifurcating my allegiances. As a human being, we all have competing claims on us.

I actually prefer to look at the Preamble to the Constitution, as opposed to the Declaration of Independence, because I think it is for the Constitution that we as Americans sign onto in a manner of covenant with one another. So certainly my covenant with all of the Americans in this room is something to which I should have a lot of allegiance and loyalty, but it is not preeminent. It is not preeminent to the covenant I made with my wife, to the covenant I have with my children, and to the faith I have. I got the feeling that Roosevelt was trying to shove us into saying that our covenant as Americans is superior to all else, and I don't know that that is healthy for us, or is natural for us as human beings.

AMY KASS: Well, would you want to say that your covenant with your family makes you American?



FRANK HANNA: No, not per se. I think there are wonderful families in every country, and families have loyalty to one another. I think the liberty that Americans strive to provide for one another and to provide to domestic tranquility and to ensure common defense, all those things that are in the Preamble, I think that helps my family. I think it can help make my family healthier. But the covenant with my wife or with my family is not an American thing.

WILFRED MCCLAY: I just want to elaborate on that a little bit. I was uncomfortable from the beginning with the notion of “Americanism,” which sounds like an ideology. It seems to me that it would lead us in the wrong direction. I mean, Americanism is not like Marxism or positivism or something like that. But it is perfectly consistent with everything else we know about Roosevelt; his overly nationalistic view of national identity and his belief that local affiliations are dangerous.

Now part of that is the context of the post-Civil War era, in which those kinds of local affinities are very much on his mind. That is why he mentioned Mark Twain and Joel Chandler Harris. But he is at pains to sort of include the South. He doesn’t in 1894, two years before Plessey versus Ferguson, include African Americans, and I think that is a notable omission that has to be counted.

On the question of family and local affiliations in some way detracting from the nation, I think he misunderstands the nature of American national feeling. It has been the genius of American national sentiment to allow local affiliations to lead into larger ones. Tocqueville observed this very thing, that if you let a man have control over his property and his locality and have a voice in local governance, then it will stir his sentiments of patriotism for the nation as a whole. So I think setting these two in opposition is quite wrongheaded, although it’s very consistent with Roosevelt. If you look at his new nationalism speech in 1910, it is very much privileging the nation over all other things. It seems the states and localities are mere administrative units.

PAUL SINGER: I disagree, to some degree with, Wilfred (McClay) and Frank (Hanna) on this topic. I think Roosevelt calibrated, took the zoom lens and twisted it just about right when he rejected both multiculturalism and the world view that we are citizens of the world. He also rejected the primacy of the tribe and the sectarian group. What I think he did when he made that calibration was create something very robust, because tribalism is not just a dysfunctional tribalism harming the creation and maintenance of the critical mass to provide economic security, military security, and keep the whole growing peacefully and prosperously. He got it just about right. To this day, tribalism, sectarianism, and allegiances to groups smaller than America are going in the wrong direction, going the opposite direction. So I think he created a very robust calibration of primary allegiance, without taking away, of course, the allegiance to the family, to the spouse, and to the close knit group.

WILFRED MCCLAY: I don’t entirely disagree with you about that, but let me give an example that may help flesh out what I mean a little better. Consider Thanksgiving, which is a holiday that many in other countries simply do not understand. For Americans, it’s probably our most uncontroversial holiday. Thanksgiving is a remarkable thing when you think about it, because it brings together families. But there is also a sense that this is a national rite that we all perform together, even if we don’t believe in something to give thanks to. We sort of overlook that for the moment and have an attitude of generic gratefulness for the things that we have. But my

point is that this is something that the entranceway is through the life of the family, but it radiates out and ramifies out into loyalties and affinities and loves that are much larger in scope.

PAUL SINGER: It's very interesting to mention Thanksgiving. I'd like to throw out a different observation about a different holiday and how it reflects some of the distinctions that Roosevelt made. He didn't just have a cold analytical view of Europe in opposition to America and Americanism. It was revulsion. I mean, revulsion leaps off the page. He says that the man who becomes Europeanized "is a silly and undesirable citizen" and "over-civilized, over-sensitive, over-refined." I think he, 104 years before the formation of the common currency, the Euro, he had a sort of prescience about that.

But let's talk about the Fourth of July. The Fourth of July, which in America is called Independence Day, is a local holiday, locally expressed, but we have a military history. We have a martial history. We have had expansionist and imperialistic phases in our history. So there it is all over America, hamburgers and balloons and little fire trucks and little mini parades. Go to Paris on Bastille Day and see how they celebrate. I think it's an analogous holiday. There are never ending military parades along the Champs Elyse, and that's what they do, and that's the way they see themselves, falsely of course. [LAUGHTER]

CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER: And the kids play with mini guillotines. [LAUGHTER] Can I make one point? I didn't read the first objection in the speech as one against the family. I saw it as being anti-regional. Regionalism was obviously a problem in the post-Civil War era, and of the three objections in this speech, it is the least relevant today. If anything, we are lamenting the loss of regionalism, with a national culture, a mass media where accents, cuisine, local customs are overcome and almost wiped out. Everybody says you go to another city, you go down the strip mall, and it could be any city. So if anything, we have solved the regionalism issue. If anything we have overdone it. It created a mass culture, which suppresses the charm and the attractiveness of regionalism.

However, he is very acute and prescient in the other objections about internationalism, and he's right that it is silly. It's not pernicious. It is naïve and idiotic, rather than being evil or malicious. It is simply an idea of the lion and the lamb happening in our lifetime, which is obviously adolescent and childish.

But the last, I think, is the most interesting, the one where he objects to this ethnic separatism, not to regional or local, geographic separatism. That isn't an issue, but it wasn't this separatism which occurs in different parts of the country, but among common ethnicities, which he saw as a threat. I think it was extremely prescient and acute. The difference is that in his day, the federal government and the national ethos wanted to suppress that separatism. But the reason there is such an epidemic today is because the political class, the universities and the media celebrates this separatism, so that if you want to oppose it, you are going against the conventional wisdom. And that makes it all the more difficult to overcome in our day. That is why I say that it is our problem.

FRANK HANNA: Just to clarify. I do understand that he did not condemn the family, but he did unequivocally say that patriotism of the village and of the belfry are two negative things and

I don't think we can gloss over that. When you say unequivocally something is bad, and you look at the core of what the village or the belfry is --

LEON KASS: We don't pledge allegiance to the great city of Atlanta.

DANIEL HENNINGER: So the question is, why did he do this? Why did he say these things? I think what Leon's (Kass) excerpts and this conversation has made clear is that Roosevelt's speech is literally exclusionary. And Roosevelt was an intelligent person, so I think he probably was well aware of the harshness of some of the things he was saying. Why then was he doing it? It seems to me that Roosevelt was wrestling with tensions and a problem that is always present when trying to come to grips with the United States. It was the same tensions that existed in 1789. The country had fought the Revolutionary War, come together, freed ourselves from the British, and then we arrive in Philadelphia, and we know what the obvious tensions were there. This is a country whose nature is diverse. It is a big country that is centrifugal. And the question was, how do you hold it together? What idea do you try to look for to hold all of these different kinds of people together?

I'd like to align Roosevelt with someone else who was addressing this subject back then, and that was Frederick Jackson Turner, the historian. Interestingly enough, Roosevelt's speech was given in 1894. Turner in 1893 gave a very famous speech to the American Historical Association, and it was on the idea of the American frontier. I'm going to read a quick excerpt from it, because to me it is kind of astonishing how much it tracks what Roosevelt was saying. Turner said he admired that, "practical, inventive turn of mind, quick to find expedients; that masterful grasp of material things, lacking in the artistic but powerful to effect great ends; that restless, nervous energy; that dominant individualism, working for good and for evil." He said that these, "are the traits of the frontier." Certainly in my mind, he describes Teddy Roosevelt. And I think it was Roosevelt, as with Turner, trying to find an idea of America that was different. And I think it resides in the idea of the frontier that pulls a diverse people together for a common purpose. In Roosevelt's time, in 1894, with the Industrial Revolution the country was just in ferment with all of these new immigrants coming in. So I think the sense of brutality in Roosevelt's speech was intended to try to push to the side these threats to the basic American idea that all is under these centrifugal tensions.

HARVEY MANSFIELD: There is something to be said, too, for energy. It's true, I think, that our Americanism derives from the proposition that all men are created equal. However at the end of the Declaration of Independence you have the signers pledging their lives for our fortunes and their sacred honor, to which someone once said, "In the beginning of the Declaration it says that all men are created equal, especially the undersigned." [LAUGHTER] So that creates a difference between the beneficiaries of the principle of equality and those who actually promote it and who use energy to sustain it, such that you might say that there are levels of true Americanism.

At the weakest level it would be any human being, because any human being is potentially an American, if the principle says all human beings are created equal. But then, stronger than that, there would be the believers in the principle that all men are created equal, and stronger still than that would be the practitioners of it. And I think this is where energy comes in, and especially the energy of self-government.

Our country is not only devoted to liberty as a principle, but we practice it and we've practiced it successfully. Our Constitution has enabled us to do it successfully. It is the first republic that works. I think the framers of the Constitution understood that this Constitution had to overcome all the defects, difficulties, and ills of republics that had existed before, including the Roman Republic, which after all turned into an empire. So how could you resolve that problem? You had to have a new kind of constitution in which people practice their liberty. What is great about America is that it practices what it preaches.

DIANA SCHAUB: But wouldn't you then make an argument on behalf of the locality as the place where that energy of self-government is really felt most? In other words, he seems to want to direct everything, really, to a few, those who were going to expand it, or were going to turn it into an empire, as opposed to those who are more conservative and remain in their villages, but really do undertake the task of governing themselves.

CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER: I don't see energy as uniquely American. I think it was Kissinger who once said that Russia expanded by the equivalent of Belgium every year for 200 years. That's energy. [LAUGHTER]

It seems to me that the idea that all men are created equal is the fundamental axiom. But the operative political phrase in the Declaration is, "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." The Constitution's intent is to create a structure that will protect that. I grew up in Canada where the founding Constitution, the British North America Act of 1867, defines the purpose of that Constitution as peace, order, and good government. Think of how different that is from life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, which is kind of a trinity expressing aspects of the same ideas. It is all about liberty and that is what makes us different from every other country.

LEON KASS: Juan (Williams), do you want to get in on this? I would like to then move the conversation, as it is already moving on its own, leaving Teddy Roosevelt behind, but begin to talk about what we ourselves think Americanism is today, no longer the day of the frontier. Please.

JUAN WILLIAMS: I think it is important to point out that the context in which Roosevelt wrote this was during a surge in terms of immigration, and that he was not speaking specifically to the family. He was speaking to the idea that people would become locked into localities or regional tastes and attitudes, especially in the aftermath of the Civil War. But the key, I suspect, was the surge in terms of immigration, and in picking up on something that Amy (Kass) said earlier, this is really why this document matters so much to us today.

Today you have a situation in which the demographers, especially after the 2010 census, no longer speak of the great American melting pot, but instead talk about things like the great American mosaic, in which there are people of all sorts of variety and colors making up America. However what I think is even more troubling is the great American salad bowl, in which you have very distinct pieces and parts, like the tomatoes, the lettuce, the carrots, and retain their distinct identities, even as they're working together to make the American experience one. I guess you could think of me as some sort of fuzzy headed carrot sitting up here. [LAUGHTER]

But to me, it is essential that you say very clearly, and I think this was one of Roosevelt's points, that the idea is that you would become American. And the reason I think this is so highly relevant, and the context is important in terms of immigration, is that we are experiencing another surge in terms of immigration today. The example that Amy gave of her class of young people who identified themselves as so called "hyphenated Americans," is because it is chic these days to insist that you are retaining your national or native identity. 'I was born somewhere else, and I retain that identity.' 'I retain that language.' 'I retain that attitude.' Rather than giving myself up, giving myself over, and in terms of marriage almost, to becoming an American, to assimilation.

Assimilation has become a dirty word in so many quarters in this country today. The idea is that why would you give up who you are, and that who you are authentically is not to be dedicated to the American ideal. And I happen to agree with Roosevelt in terms of conviction and purpose. I think it is very clear that if you adopt an American mindset, it is about conviction and purpose and determination, and this idea of equality.

Now, I say this as a black person. And I think this is very critical, because he is writing as if black people don't exist in his document. He is really writing to the Irish. He is writing to the Germans. I think he may be writing to the Italians, but I'm not even sure whether the Italians were included in his document. If you look at the recent census numbers, what they indicate is that the heart and soul of growth in this country today is largely Hispanic. I think it's the case, if you look at where the areas of growth have taken place, that about 80 percent of the population surge has been Hispanic or black. It is minority growth, even throughout the South. I am not just talking California and New York. I'm talking about places like Senator Alexander's Hamlin County in Tennessee being 10 percent Hispanic, or if you go to Minneapolis, known for its homogeneity of white people, and then all of a sudden there you have Somalis, and you say, 'Oh my gosh, how did these communities become not only so large, but often times cloistered?'

You go into those communities, and here is something that I find terribly concerning to me, is that in the Mexican households, the Dominican Republican households, you're getting to the point where 90 percent of them don't speak English at home. They speak Spanish. And it's also true if you go into some Asian communities in San Francisco and the like, they don't speak English at home. When they are at home, when they're relaxed, when they consider themselves their true or authentic selves, they are not identifying with America. They've got calling cards to call back home. They've got the Internet to reach back home. In so many ways, this complicates the task of assimilation.

This is so different than Roosevelt's day. Obviously all these mechanisms did not exist. But I think this is what he is writing to. He is saying, 'You have to agree.' To my mind, the American who goes overseas and becomes intoxicated with being a cosmopolitan and European, I think that's almost secondary. I think the heart and soul of the USA is about the need to say, I am an American and I identify with America, and I identify with its precepts and with the Declaration of Independence, and I especially identify with the idea that we hold some exceptional role, and I am wed to it and willing to fight and defend it and speak and advocate for it.

SEN. LAMAR ALEXANDER: I don't think we should get too distracted by Roosevelt's emphasis on the national government as opposed to the community. I think we work community by community. He might have liked the strong central government we have today. I think the essence of what he talked about was what he was against, which is what politicians often do. It is a lot easier to talk about what you're against than what you are for. And if you're moving on to what it means to be an American, building on what Juan (Williams) said, the essence of our national identity is that you must become an American if you want to be a citizen. You can't become French. You can't become Chinese.

So how do you become American? You become American one way, by pledging allegiance to a creed of beliefs that most of us hold in common. Now, most of our politics, Samuel Huntington said, was about conflicts among those beliefs and dealing with the unrealized aspirations that we have. But we pretty well agree on what the principles are. Equal opportunity, liberty, rule of law. We define in our law, and we have ever since the revolution, what it means to be an American. A million new citizens every year take an oath that starts out by saying, 'I hereby declare, on oath, that I absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state, or sovereignty of whom or which I have heretofore been a subject or citizen.' That is the beginning of the oath that George Washington and his men took at Valley Forge, and that a million new citizens take today. We have required in the law since 1906 that you must speak English. There are 100 questions on the citizenship test, and they're mostly about the Declaration and the Constitution, that you must answer.

So there is a pretty good understanding that what makes us exceptional is a single thing, that we are united by a set of ideas and that is what it takes to become an American. Then after that, what we do best, and what your book seems to do, is to promote spontaneous patriotism, the best example of which are flags after 9/11. Perhaps reading your book, reading the letters from revolutionary soldiers, going to a naturalization ceremony in a federal courthouse, just discovering what it means to Americans. But it is defined in the law what it means to be an American, and we are united by a creed. And if we don't have that, we are a United Nations instead of the United States of America.

WILFRED MCCLAY: I was going to talk about a specific topic, but still along the lines that you're talking about. And that is the public schools. Roosevelt strongly, completely, unambiguously, categorically endorses public schools as the ideal existed in his day. I suspect that you could probably divide this room down the middle as to whether people would concur in that view, even if they concurred otherwise in everything that Juan (Williams) said so well. The problem being, we don't have a consensus anymore about what it means to be an American, and we have no confidence that the public schools will convey that consensus, if it existed.

To me, it is epitomized by the fact that the county of Los Angeles, California, which also has one of the worst school systems in the country, has instruction in over 100 languages. So the requirement of the use of English is out, and with it, I think, a particular understanding of what it means to be an American. The credibility of the public schools as a means of inculcating that is also gone.

So is the liberty that is part of our fundamental makeup as a nation. Does it involve the right to educate your children any way you please, including vouchers, private schools, and a mix of

various things? Or is it the move back towards this much more robust notion of public education that Roosevelt seems to be advocating?

LEON KASS: It is very clear that the question of what it means to be an American is either contested or ignored. And while it is true, as the Senator (Lamar Alexander) says, that all new immigrants who undergo the naturalization ceremony take this oath of allegiance, the children of the native born don't do so. The Constitution on the subject of citizenship simply defines us as those who were born in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction of the United States or a particular state and subject to the jurisdiction of the laws. There is no criterion for citizenship and no duties of citizenship mentioned. It seems to me, for this panel of intelligent, thoughtful, people who care about the subject, to undertake a little bit of work to see if we could pull together some of the things that have been said in our own name, leaving Teddy Roosevelt to the side, and see what we can make of this.

Robert (George) began with the Declaration of Independence, as Robbie so often does. Charles (Krauthammer) prefers the Constitution. Not necessarily saying that those two documents are in tension with each other, but he (Krauthammer) prefers that which we have covenanted to agree with. Harvey (Mansfield) reminds us that a lot of people could agree with those principles. Some people might even endorse them, but it is more than a cognitive matter to choose to live by them; that it requires commitment, energy, and matters of the heart and spirit. Dan Henninger points out that there is a tension in the United States going back to the beginning about making one out of many, partly because the country is so big and there are multiple and rival interests and different religions. In a certain way, as Bill (McClay) reminds us, the very liberty to pursue your individualistic notions of happiness also has a centrifugal tendency.

Ultimately the question is, does it matter if all of us go about minding our own business, but we don't think of ourselves in any rich way or any robust way as Americans, as opposed to South Siders of the city of Chicago who root for the White Sox? I wonder if we could try to address some of these different strands and see whether we could do a little more in our own name.

AMY KASS: Not the question of why it matters?

LEON KASS: Not yet why it matters, but what it is.

PAUL SINGER: I'd like to explore the issue in a little bit of detail by looking at the impact of our economic freedom and this magnificent founding principle that all men are created equal. But also the migration into, perhaps not what it means to be an American, but the characteristics of Americans, focusing on a couple of industries.

The Internet. Many people remember that in the 1970s France came up with an online service called Minitel. It was going to take over the world; it was an expression of French grandiosity. However, it kind of didn't work. It was completely useless, didn't develop, and now if you have one, I'm sure it's going to be a terrific museum piece. It is not just that the Internet was and is an American invention, but I believe it only could have been an American product – a product of the meritocracy, the product of an imperfect meritocracy, but the envy of the world. The Internet has transformed the world and continues to do so.

But I mean more about the industry of which I'm a part, the hedge fund industry, because it illustrates many of the same principles. I am a lawyer by formal training, and when I formed a hedge fund in 1977 there was a history of hedge funds, but not of running a hedge fund. What the hedge fund industry is is a pool of basically unconstrained, but subject to rules and regulations about accounting standards and fraud, and subject to the control of lenders, but unconstrained, meaning you are not part of a herd. You're not part of a group that measures success by losing 20 percent when the world loses 30 percent or a failure when you make 20 and the world makes 30. You have your own money alongside investors.

Most of the people who run hedge funds are the product of middle class backgrounds. Many of them, including myself, went to public schools and send our kids to public schools. And from this, the growth of this unconstrained free form investing style, has come a new rank of people who are involved in policy, politics, and entrepreneurial philanthropy. And I think the hedge fund industry, as well as the Internet, illustrates something that is very closely related, because of the need for America to bounce back from its problems and the self-imposed, self-made problems of the last 30 and 40 years, some of them cultural and many of them Robbie (George) has been writing about for a long time.

But to generate the prosperity in a world in which our folks in general are paid a lot more than people in emerging economies, it is a product of the openness, the meritocracy, the rule of law, and the basic fairness of the American system. It's not a corrupt system. The police force in most places is not corrupt. But I think all of this that I'm discussing is a product of something deeper than just people happening to be in this location. It's part of an idea. And America, of course, was founded on an idea, and one of the ideas was freedom, economic freedom, private property, and individual responsibility. I think it's worth giving some thought into what is the connection between that ability of Americans to do these remarkable things and to keep this prosperity going, and what it means to be an American.

DANIEL HENNIGNER: I would just like to, in terms of what it is, align myself. I think the fellow who has put his finger on it is Harvey Mansfield when he said that America practices its liberty. There is such a thing as abstract mathematics and there is applied mathematics. And liberty can be discussed in abstractions to be sure. But I think Harvey's right, that the defining characteristic is that every day the United States practices its liberty, and it does it within the context of both the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

Everybody knows the phrase, "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." We were given this extraordinary template by the Founders, and almost every day one can think how really lucky we were that those guys were who they were back in those times. America just lucked out with an incredible group of men who gave us this template, within which we, at the local level, in school boards, in local elections, state and national elections, within the framework of the Constitution, constantly practice our liberty. It is done within a structure that they gave us. And I think that just of its nature, the Founding Fathers have allowed us to be pulled forward in this habit, which is wholly constructive.

FRANK HANNA: Senator Alexander, I appreciated you reading the words from the oath that the new citizens take. I went to a naturalization ceremony of a friend recently, and it was really a



beautiful and moving reminder of what we are as Americans. Leon, you pointed out that those born here do not take that oath.

AMY KASS: Right.

FRANK HANNA: Given what we're talking about in terms of desiring, to what Juan (Williams) spoke about, common agreement about who we are as Americans and what we're dedicated to, is it worth considering whether when you register to vote you agree to take that oath? I mean, do we as Americans want to give the right to vote to someone who we would not grant citizenship, since we won't grant citizenship to someone who comes from a foreign land if they won't take that oath. Ought we to demand that for someone to vote?

SEN. LAMAR ALEXANDER: I wonder if I could just take 60 seconds. I was at a meeting of educators one time and Edward Malloy, who was the head of Notre Dame, asked, "What is the rationale for a public school?" And Albert Shanker, who was the former head of the American Federation of Teachers, says the public school was created to teach immigrant children reading, writing, arithmetic, and what it means to be an American, with the hope that they would go home and teach their parents. So the only real rationale for public schools was to help the children learn what it meant to be an American. Otherwise they could all be private.

ROBERT GEORGE: Well, not just on this point, but more broadly. We are in the midst right now of a big debate in this country, not so much about true Americanism, but rather the question, not unrelated, of what is the true America? We are in a debate about whether America should be modeled on the social democracies of Europe or whether America should aspire to be a kind of libertarian utopia, where we each just go about pursuing our individual aims, and laws should be restricted to just keeping us from bumping into each other or violating each other's rights. This is a very big debate and this might be a very good context in which to address it.

LEON KASS: I wouldn't rule it out of court, Robbie, but it seems to me that there are always going to be large political differences between liberals and conservatives about which way the government or which way America should go on particular policy question and even on larger visions. Yet there is a sense that those debates take place within a context of somehow shared commitments, shared beliefs, and shared attachments. I think it would be better, at least for present purposes, to try to think about what those things in common are, recognizing that, in fact Roosevelt at the end of his speech talks about people working together to solve these problems, not expecting that there would be a unanimous opinion about how to do those things. So I mean, rather than get into the current policy debates, I would prefer, if you wouldn't mind, to stay, really, with --

ROBERT GEORGE: I'm not so much interested in addressing the policy debates here as the ideals that we should be committed to.

LEON KASS: Please.

ROBERT GEORGE: I think the basic American proposition, as expressed initially in the Declaration of Independence and then fleshed out in the Constitution, establishes the institutions by which we hope to effectuate the ideals that are put forth in the Declaration. The basic

principles of government that would respond to those ideals are principles of limited government, of liberty, and of personal responsibility. They also, though, require a kind of public spiritedness, because it a republican regime. Self-government does mean that we need citizens who are concerned with not only pursuing their own individual aims, but also with pursuing something substantive by way of the common good.

Now, we can have all sorts of debates about what that requires as far as policy is concerned, how the pension system should be set up, how Social Security should be reformed, and so forth and so on. But I think one problem is that you have major threats to these ideals, such as limited government and personal responsibility, because the rejection of them by large segments of the most influential people in the culture, especially the intellectual culture. They are rejecting the legitimacy of some of those ideals. And this is why I think that multiculturalism, which rejects a program of assimilation as illegitimate and unjust, is a real threat. This is why cosmopolitanism, which holds patriotism in contempt, is such a real threat. And you find that strong multiculturalist and cosmopolitan sentiment, I would argue, in an ascendant position in the intellectual culture, and increasingly in the public and private schools.

One of my children went to a very good private school where I struggled valiantly to get him excused from a mandatory class in American Studies, because the sole text in the mandatory class was Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States*. I actually wouldn't have objected to the book being used, had something been said on the other side of these great questions. But since it was the sole text, it looked to me like an indoctrination in anti-Americanism, rather than a course on American studies. But that such a thing would be a problem we would have to address in a very good suburban private school, and of course, in the public schools, I think should give us grave concern.

CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER: You're years ahead of me. My son also went to private school. You have an easy time in simply trying to get your son out of a class in a very tony private school. I spent the five years on the education committee of my son's school trying to introduce American history before the ninth grade. He had two courses on the Incas. [LAUGHTER] I thought he would end up speaking Inca by the time he got to high school. [LAUGHTER] It took me five years to introduce a course in the eighth grade on American history. And then I'm sure after I left, that they probably used Zinn as a text. But I was already gone and retired.

I just want to make one point of terminology. I think "Americanism" is a rather quaint term. It was one that you'd use 100 years ago. I think the reason we don't use it now is because it had an unfortunate adolescence, in which it was used by nasty people to destroy lives. That's why I think in the general culture it is a difficult word, because of the baggage of its history on the House Un-American Activities Committee.

To me it is the equivalent of American exceptionalism. I think that it is our way of saying the same thing. Americanism as an -ism is what we mean when we talk about American exceptionalism; what makes us different from Europe, from Rome, from Greece, from other democracies, other industrial societies. So I think what we are having is a discussion about American exceptionalism, but perhaps there are other views of this.

HARVEY MANSFIELD: There is something American about it, so as to prevent it from being cosmopolitan. It's true, I think, that the idea of a citizen of the world is silly. But why? We need to have some --

CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER: For the same reason Esperanto is silly. [LAUGHTER]

HARVEY MANSFIELD: Right. So you can't have high level conversation with a primitive language that simplifies everything.

CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER: I think Esperanto was a primitive idea; that you could somehow transcend nationality, ethnicity and heritage and create out of sheer rationality a universal language. I find it amusing, but in the same way that I find this internationalism that we have today, where there is this idea that the UN's edicts carry a kind of a moral authority that American decisions don't. We have to rely on the Security Council or the UN Human Rights Commission in deciding what to do and what not to do abroad is also a silly idea. I just think that that is less of a problem than the division within our country that Theodore Roosevelt was talking about – being torn apart by this sort of ethnic separatism – which I think is now intrinsic in our culture and getting worse.

DANIEL HENNINGER: Leon, if I can try and tie a few points here together. I think that an unavoidable contemporary political issue has been raised by this discussion, and it is the one that Diana (Schaub) talked about at the outset, which was that Roosevelt, in the way he's speaking, is clearly talking about a country somewhat like imperial Rome. In 1894, if I can try to give a fair reading of his mind, I think that Roosevelt understood that the United States was on the verge of becoming a very great and powerful nation, which in fact it did. It became what we now call a "super power." We have had debates for a long time about whether the status is appropriate or not, but it's real. That is the way it is, and after World War II there was no denying that it was real. And Roosevelt understood that a country that was heading in that direction was going to need a lot of sustained effort in order to maintain that status.

I think what Roosevelt was talking about was the point that Charles (Krauthammer) raised, which was energy. How do you sustain the economic, the spiritual and the physical energy to keep America a great nation? And the reason this is a political issue, and we're going to get partisan here now, is that we just had this interesting, much talked about [article](#) in the *New Yorker* about the Obama Administration's foreign policy. The key of the article was in the final paragraph, in which the writer says that in talking with the Obama Administration's foreign policy advisors, two ideas emerged. One of the ideas was the unspoken belief that, "the relative power of the U.S. is declining, as rivals like China rise." And as this spokesman said, this is "at odds with the John Wayne expectation of what America is in the world, but it is necessary for shepherding us through this phase."

This is absolutely the antithesis of what Teddy Roosevelt was talking about. It implies all of these other things that we're talking about that go into what makes America strong. At this point in time, you've got a school of thought that clearly is, explicitly or not, aligned with the cosmopolitanism that Roosevelt so abhorred. And I think that was the reason he abhorred it. He knew it would weaken the United States relative to the rest of the world.

ROBERT GEORGE: I think that is part of the reason. However, he refers to the nation as a “federal republic”, and I think he does that more than once. To go back to Harvey’s (Mansfield) point, one of the things about America is that self-government is one of our ideas. We want to be a self-governing people. There are conditions for self-government. Self-government is possible in a federal republic. I don’t know how self-government is possible on cosmopolitan terms. In the cosmopolitan world, it seems to me, we are back to rulers and subjects.

Now, the rulers might not be kings. We have different names for them, but they will be in places like Belgium and The Hague. The rest of us will be subjects, and we are expected to be happy if they make life for us soft and comfortable. And Roosevelt certainly isn’t interested in soft and comfortable. He is interested in a self-governing people and that means it is going to have to be in the context of a federal republic.

HARVEY MANSFIELD: Yes, I think that is perfectly correct that America does mean self-government. But it comes from the principle of the equality of men, you could say. However, America also is something particular. It’s an attachment. It is a particular country.

ROBERT GEORGE: Oh, sure, with a history and a culture and traditions.

HARVEY MANSFIELD: And that works against the universality of our principles. Somehow we have to combine the universal love of self-government and our recommendation of it to other peoples, because we don’t think that it is just good for us. Our great principle tells us that it is not because we are American that we have a special right and gift to practice self-government. No, we recommend it to others. They can imitate us. But I think that reveals a constant difficulty of a kind of imperialism. Because it is a universal principle, we think that others should practice it too. We don’t just live our principles, but we tout them to the rest of the world. So something like the imperialism that America was on the edge of and that Teddy Roosevelt had a hand in, well, is a constant temptation. So we have to show how it is that a self-government can also be a limited government; limited in its ambitions, as well as in its republicanism.

DIANA SCHAUB: Isn’t it limited because it relies on the consent of the people? So we can provide an example of self-government, but we can’t impose it, because it is up to their consent to secure it for themselves. In other words, it seems to me that if you properly understand the original principles, there is a limitation upon that kind of imposition on the world.

CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER: And yet ironically, we imposed it on the Japanese and the Germans, and it took.

JUAN WILLIAMS: To my mind, you have to at some point in defining what it is, look at the people from around the world who continue to flock to these shores. They want to get into this country any and every way that they can. And maybe a simple way to address this question of what it is, is to simply say, ‘Well, why are you coming here in such great numbers? Why are you dying to get in here? Why do you do anything to send your children here?’ I think then the answer becomes rather clear, that people still greatly value the idea of freedom from oppression, and that the idea that rule of law is extremely valuable. I think people love the idea of social stability without reference to tribalism.

We talked about these hyphenated kids, but if you get outside of some of the big cities that is not the rule of the day. That is not the way that people order themselves in our society. Of course, upward mobility, those public schools in addition to being vehicles for assimilating young people, really gives you an opportunity in the ideal sense to exhibit merit. That in the United States you can come here as a poor child, and if you exhibit merit through hard work, determination and persistence, you can achieve and you can rise. People mock the idea that anybody can become President. But you know, it's true that if you look at not only Bill Clinton, but Barak Obama, you say, 'That's amazing that that person became President of any country', and it is inspiring.

Now I regret that part of this conversation went political, because it seems to me to take Teddy Roosevelt totally out of context. We live in such a different world than his; than the world that the document was written for. The expansion of the American military, the way that we intervene, not only in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the idea that the terrorists would come here, and that we would have something to say about events in Libya and Syria – this is way outside of what Roosevelt is imagining as he is writing here. And the idea that we would have NAFTA, GAAT, and a global economic structure --

AMY KASS: Or an Internet.

JUAN WILLIAMS: Yes. So to me, you are acting as if we should flock quickly back to days of yore. I am glad to honor them, but I don't think that it is relevant to this. I think the idea that you would talk about multinational coalitions and agreements in some negative way, I don't think it is relevant.

SEN. LAMAR ALEXANDER: Charles mentioned something I think was especially interesting. We imposed what we are talking about on the Japanese and the Germans, but that didn't make them Americans. We imposed a great deal. So it seems to me that what is exceptional about America is that we are united by a set of principles, instead of by race, creed, color, or other factors. That is unique. That is our greatest accomplishment.

Then the next thing is, which principles? Liberty, equality, rule of law, a few of them derived from these few documents. And that's about it. After that we discovered it for ourselves, but the single thing that is unique and exceptional is that we are united by a handful of principles, instead of something else.

LEON KASS: I am putting these two comments together and formulating a question. I don't think anybody on the panel, Juan, was nostalgic for Teddy Roosevelt's time. I don't think I've heard any comments. But there is an attempt to see whether some of the questions he raised are still questions for us, notwithstanding the large differences of the times. I was very struck by this phrase, "spirit, convictions, and purposes." Intellectuals and professors are very good on convictions and principles. Harvey Mansfield is good on that and other things besides, so he talks about spiritedness and so on. But it is a funny thing to wonder in the present age, with American power what it is. Could we speak about American national purpose? Does it matter whether we have one? Harvey Mansfield suggests that we not only practice liberty, but with

Diana's important qualification, we advertise it and recommend it to others because we believe it is good.

I was going to ask Harvey whether he thought that is now America's national purpose. It is not imperialism, except of a way of life and an encouragement that others follow it. But it makes sense to ask the question of a mighty nation, what are you about? The question seems to ask of the citizens, what is the guiding spirit as well as what abstract propositions do you hold? And it seems to be worth a few minutes on that, and then I feel --

ROBERT GEORGE: When the nation was at its gravest risk, during the Civil War, the question was whether people who had lived to see the nation born would still be alive when it died. Lincoln told us what our national purpose was when he said that the war was about was whether a government of the people, by the people, and for the people, in other words, a republican government, would perish from, now there he didn't say the North American landmass. He said, "would perish from the Earth."

The national purpose of the United States was to show that despite the historical failures of republican government, and the temptation to believe that republican government simply was a nice idea but it could never work and that it would be eternally the fate of human beings to be ruled by accident and force, that it was America's national purpose to show that it could work.

AMY KASS: Robbie, that's fine, and Juan, when you spoke about what Americanism is, you referred to some of the same things; some of the principles that we hold dear and have held dear since the Declaration of Independence. But the question that I think is implicitly raised by what Dan (Henninger) was saying, as well as what several other people were saying, is that there have been waves and waves of immigration, arguably more in the past four decades than ever before, from every corner of the globe. And unlike before, hyphenated Americans do exist, and they do seem to want to retain two different loyalties. Now, even though they have to pledge that they will give up loyalty to one, they seem to recognize themselves as two. So the question that I think Leon was asking, and that I think we should ask more sharply, is do we really live in different times? Do we need a different answer to the question of what is the spirit, the conviction, and the purpose of America?

ROBERT GEORGE: I don't see how that changes anything. I mean, our fundamental problem today is not that immigrants from the Ukraine will retain their loyalty to the Ukraine. I don't see that as our problem. The question is, when we educate immigrants and their native born children to be Americans, what are we teaching them? Are we teaching them that Howard Zinn's America is the true America? Or are we teaching them a different vision and understanding of America? And I think that's the whole ballgame. It seems to me that our intellectual class has largely taken one side on that. That's the Howard Zinn side on that and I personally don't think that is the right side to take. So what I perceive as part of my own mission is to make the argument for the other side.

JUAN WILLIAMS: I think that it's not the case, Robert, that you can ignore inequities in American life and try to say that we are engaged in propagandizing in order to indoctrinate our young people to be more American. To the contrary, and Roosevelt spoke about this. He talked about people who would use our inequities to try to belittle the United States, and it is even

worse than to try to belittle the idea of the United States of America. That is not the goal. But you could not speak to me and say, 'Oh, America is without flaw.' 'America knows nothing of slavery, nothing of segregation.' You cannot speak to a Jewish person and say America knows nothing about glass ceilings and acting as if you are less than fully human. This is not true.

So to me, part of the glory of America is that we work through these things, that people absolutely continue to aspire to this idea that you spoke about in the second line of the Declaration of Independence, that all men are created equal, and that we really see this, and we really pursue it, and that we really hold each other to account in a very public way. Senator Alexander can campaign, but he must also acknowledge that there are people who are living in poverty in Appalachia, that there are black people who are not many generations removed from slavery in his constituency. This is all part of America. But it makes us very different than so many other lands where they don't acknowledge this, where they continue to lie about who they are, or try to persuade people that they don't have problems. That's not us.

ROBERT GEORGE: Juan, you don't disagree with me, because there is no argument from me or from anyone on the panel that would say that America's failures or inequities, whether current or past, should be glossed over or hidden. We want people to know the whole story. We want our children, whether immigrant children or children of native born Americans, to know the whole story. And that does include some very dark moments that we should be ashamed of. But you're also right that our confronting them, our working always toward realizing our ideals is part of the story.

I mean, even the story of the public schools, if we are going to tell the true story of the public schools then we have got to tell the story of anti-Catholicism. It's no accident that the bishops responded by creating a system of Catholic schools, because there were people who wanted to use the public schools, not everyone, but there were people who wanted to use the public schools to strip Catholic immigrants' children of their religion, because they saw it as incompatible with America. Well, that has got to be told too. But I think what we all want is a fair, objective telling of the story. We do want to lay before our young people the vision of America that our founders had, and that they embodied in the Declaration of Independence. We don't want people to think of that as just an artifact of the past.

SEN. LAMAR ALEXANDER: I think we are moving from what it means to be an American into politics here. We can agree, I believe, that we are united by principles instead of race. We can agree, I believe, that there are a few important principles, such as rule of law and equal opportunity. We could agree there are also a few other characteristics of Americans. Anything is possible. After that, it is up to the politicians, the philosophers, the professors and the debates to apply those principles and come up with competing versions.

Lincoln stated the purpose at the time, built upon those principles. Juan and Robert might have two different visions of America's future, or Robert and I might, but built upon the same principles. Our politics is mostly about conflicts among people based upon the same principles, or dealing with the disappointment in not realizing the aspirations, such as that all men are created equal, that we all agree with.

LEON KASS: Paul (Singer), and then we're going to move very soon to open it up for some questions from the audience.

PAUL SINGER: Theodore Roosevelt's historical context was interesting, because in 1894 he was one generation removed from this Civil War experience and what he was looking back at was this long period of European hegemony and very advanced civilization compared to the United States. And you can't say that he saw in any direct or precise way the two incredible episodes of mass murder about to not only descend upon Europe, self-imposed, of course, but to completely reshuffle the global deck and tilt it in favor of America.

I haven't read much else of Theodore Roosevelt's views on these matters, but there are hints here that what he did feel was that we should not be like Europe. Let's not be like Europeans in a lot of different ways and in a lot of different vituperative language. One could only guess whether, and I believe it was, that he felt that part of it was not just our geographic isolation, that the oceans protected and would protect America and tilt the landscape, but that it was something about America and American principles and something about Europe and European principles.

Therefore, I am very sympathetic with Robbie's view that what we have today is actually not that much different in terms of a very powerful set of choices. There is the drift towards internationalism, a deference to foreign law, being more like Europe, and that it is more than whether it is socialized this or socialized that. One feels that it is part of the principles of, perhaps dividing America and Europe, self-reliance versus the collective rule by elites, decisions by elites versus rule by the common man.

LEON KASS: Two final comments Frank and Harvey, and then I think we're going to throw it out there.

FRANK HANNA: I'll make mine brief. To the question of why it matters, part of the Preamble is, to form a more perfect union. I think it is worth our realizing that one of our most fundamental human needs is communion with one another. When we have common union with a friend, with a spouse, with a neighbor or with anyone; I have common union with the people in this room, because my guess is 98 percent are probably American citizens. And that more perfect union that the Constitution speaks of makes my life better.

In the Aristotelian sense politics is how we order ourselves. So the fact that politics enters into it, I don't think that it is a dirty thing or something to avoid. It is how we order ourselves. But these issues go to the most fundamental need we have as human beings, and that is, this union with one another. When we have it, it is something that is almost transcendent, because it is not material. It is something we share in our hearts, and it can be a very profound thing. I think what maybe we all sense is that some of that has been lost, and we miss it.

HARVEY MANSFIELD: I hesitate to open my mouth here; I'm so delighted to hear the word Aristotle pronounced. [LAUGHTER] But I think our national purpose should be to be proud salesmen of democracy and of the republic. We are good at being salesmen, we Americans. But to be a salesman isn't by itself a proud occupation. You're trying to suck up to your customer a little bit. That we shouldn't do. But we should be proud of what we have done. What we've done is to be the first to make a republic that works.



AMY KASS: Let's open this to the audience.

LEON KASS: Please state your name, and let us request that we have questions, comments if they're very brief. No long speeches please, because there are other people who also want to ask a question.

Q: I'm Roger Scruton, the last surviving patriotic Englishman. [LAUGHTER] I wanted to say something to Frank Hanna's original point about patriotism of the village, because I think this is something which has been slightly overlooked, that maybe the kind of patriotism that Roosevelt is talking about is actually compatible with the patriotism of the village. I've been living in rural Virginia the last six years as a kind of visiting anthropologist, and my main observation was that this was a society which is totally constituted by volunteers. We had a little village of 400 people, six churches, 40 little societies, and a volunteer rescue squad.

Everything was done by the people's initiative at the local level, and this, to me, is what American patriotism actually consists of. It is not incompatible with the noble ideals that Robbie referred to. In fact, this is the thing that seemed to me to renew those ideals. And it is what we've lost in Europe. We don't actually have that society of volunteers anymore. Maybe the panel would want to talk to this, the extent to which American patriotism can exist without renewing things at the local level, getting to know your neighbors, and doing things without interference from government.

CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER: That is why I would say that this definition of Americanism is also a political issue. It is an argument between the left and right, because it is only if you have a government of enumerated powers, a government that limits itself, a government that does not pronounce itself sovereign over every action of the citizen. If I could be a little parochial, that doesn't impose a requirement on an individual entering into a contract with an insurance company on pain of incurring a fine. It is only if you actually have the architecture of the Constitution that you allow the space for the voluntary associations which you're talking about, and which Tocqueville talked about so famously.

That is why I think it is, when Robbie raised the issue of, do we want to be more of a social democracy, as we see in Europe, or do we want to be more the exceptional, unusual individualistic democracy that we have traditionally been, it is getting to the essence of Americanism. That is about American exceptionalism. We are different in that way because of our history, because we're a younger country, and because we had this miraculous emergence of a class of geniuses on a fringe of the developed world in the late 18th century, who gave us a gift. It reaches almost a sacred level. It's empirically demonstrated as the most successful document probably in human history when organizing society. And to jeopardize its unique principles would mean we'd be giving up something that makes us exceptional and unique, exactly as demonstrated in your example of the society that operates with the voluntary associations. It is not something that emerges out of Virginia. It survives because the government is required to step back.

Q: Hello. I was surprised that one of the founding creeds that we haven't talked about much is the idea of religious liberty and church/state relations, which was referred to a little bit in

Roosevelt's piece that you read. So I think that people recognize that that is an element of Americanism, a very core element, and yet we have very strong disagreements in our political life today about how to apply those principles. I would be interested in hearing that discussed a little bit.

LEON KASS: Anyone on this subject? Bill.

WILFRED MCCLAY: I am glad that you brought that up. I think it is an important point. I was reminded when Robbie was talking a minute ago that the term "Americanism" was very current in the 1890s in another context, and that is as a perceived heresy by Pope Leo XIII, who we mainly know through his social teachings. I don't know for certain, but it would not surprise me at all if Roosevelt was in part addressing himself to precisely that language of, that is, Americanism was a heresy in treating separation of church and state as absolute. There was a lot of nervousness about this in the Vatican.

It would not surprise me at all if Roosevelt was addressing that, although he also says that there is no place for know-nothing-ism in the speech. So there is a little bit of both. But he could not be more clear in declaring himself for the rigorous separation of church and state, which in those days often had an anti-Catholic undercurrent to it. So there is an interesting tension there in Roosevelt himself, but I certainly would see religious freedom as part of the liberty that is enshrined in the Declaration itself.

LEON KASS: Looking past Roosevelt, would you say that Americanism or its better equivalent today, is or should be neutral to the distinction between religion and atheism? In other words, does it matter?

WILFRED MCCLAY: I don't think it can be entirely, because of the nature of the rights that are viewed as inviolable are grounded in something transcendent, God or nature's god, whatever that means. So I think that the notion that these rights can be grounded in somewhere where human beings can't get at them, can't meddle with them, and cannot undermine them is fundamental.

Q: I'm Roger Clegg with the Center for Equal Opportunity. I wanted to suggest that there is some overlap between what Americanism is and what characteristics Americans must have for our country to work. And fortunately for you all, in a column for National Review Online, I listed what I thought those ten characteristics were, and I was hoping you all could comment on them. Just briefly – don't disparage anyone else's race or ethnicity, respect women, learn to speak English, be polite or civil, don't break the law, don't have children out of wedlock, don't demand anything because of your race or ethnicity, don't view working and studying hard as acting white, don't hold historical grudges, and be proud of being an American.

LEON KASS: The Ten Commandments? [LAUGHTER]

ROBERT GEORGE: Probably everyone in the room could think back to their own immigrant grandparents or great-grandparents. Of course, the African American case is a different because of slavery. But think back, those of you who are not African American to your grandparents. When I think of my own, the thing that really strikes me and that I remember so vividly about

them was their gratitude to this country. That was in a certain sense the key to their Americanism, is the gratitude they felt for opportunity and liberty.

One set had come from Southern Italy for economic opportunity, not for political reasons. The other set came from the old Ottoman Empire, definitely for political liberty. But they had in common, although they never learned to speak English very well, was that they wanted their kids to be Americans. And in part because of their gratitude to this country. I'll tell you what they absolutely didn't have, something that would be poisonous to gratitude, and that is an attitude of entitlement. I think if we communicate to immigrants or anyone that the proper posture to take toward the country is a posture of entitlement, I think that undermines the gratitude that is part of the key to Americans, especially immigrant Americans, becoming true Americans.

Now, Juan, that doesn't mean that we don't need a safety net. It doesn't mean that we shouldn't have a proper debate about where the state should step in and where private initiative or voluntary initiative should be stepping in to helping people in need. The poor will be with us always, as Jesus says, and they've got to be taken care of. I'm not proposing here the libertarian Utopia by any means. But I do think that that doesn't mean we should just drop into an attitude of entitlement, because I think that does kill gratitude.

CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER: If I could just add one word to that. If you combine economic liberty and political liberty, which I think is a fine way to summarize the source of the gratitude, which in fact I saw in my parents; I'm a second generation American. You put them together and they constitute what we call the "American Dream." There is no other country on Earth for which the word dream follows the name of the country. I've never heard of a French dream. Well. [LAUGHTER] I don't think I should have gone there. [LAUGHTER] A Russian dream. A Russian dream, I suppose, is yet another Belgium this year. [LAUGHTER] American Dream, everybody understands it, and it is opportunity and liberty. That is why, as Juan said, why does everybody come here? It is precisely for that reason. And again, it is unique to us. Democracy is unique in America. That is what I think is the essence of what you're calling Americanism, and what we call American exceptionalism.

ROBERT GEORGE: I really think an appreciation of the value of our ideals and of our institutions comes out of that gratitude. Even if people didn't come because they think we have got great institutions or great political ideals, the opportunity given to them and to their children I think inspires this devotion to American liberties, and enables people, even immigrants to be proud when their children fight for the United States in the military, as so many immigrant children do. Their parents are proud. They understand that their children are abroad and in harm's way fighting for their country. It really is their country, even though they're immigrants. It is their country that their children are fighting for.

Q: Robert Woodson from the Center for Neighborhood Enterprise. My question goes to Roger Scruton's comment about civic institutions. It has been argued that capitalism and democracy are but empty vessels into which we pour our values as a nation, and that these values are best preserved in civic institutions. So the question that I have is why do we hear such little conversation about those civic institutions that the founders believed are the only place that we could preserve our values?

SEN. LAMAR ALEXANDER: While I think you don't hear it in Washington, you do hear it in communities. I really think it is an essence of our country that we work community by community. As the anthropologist from Great Britain said [LAUGHTER] that in our communities, the conversation is incessant about civic institutions, about churches and clubs and fire departments and organizations, and that's really a very distinguishing aspects of what we do and what we can do from here to create environment in which that can succeed, which is with limited government.

ROBERT GEORGE: This is also related to the American principle of dispersion of power versus the European principle of concentration of power. And it's not just the states versus the federal government. It's a private power, private philanthropic power, as well as civic institutions in the community.

CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER: If I could add one more point. Senator Alexander, you talked earlier, you were steer us away from the debate about left and right as important or at least essential to a definition of Americanism. But you were emphasizing, and you did earlier, the importance of the civic local institutions, the volunteer organizations. However, isn't it legitimate to say that as the state expands in its power, as it takes over roles that traditionally it didn't have, it displaces, supplants, and marginalizes precisely these local voluntary civic institutions on which the republic stands. In fact, we are seeing this play out in Europe as an empirical example. It's not just a theoretical argument. It is one where there is an empirical history to back it up. Therefore a debate about the essence of America and what makes it unique, exceptional and so valuable has to include a debate over the size, the reach, and the scope of government, because of its effect on these institutions, the civic institutions which are so fundamental, as you yourself said.

SEN. LAMAR ALEXANDER: Yes is the answer to the question. But I think the way that works out in our politics, though, is that we have these principles, such as limited government and liberty stacked up on one side, and someone might stack up equal opportunity on the other side, and make an argument within an American context to say the government needs to add this program to create equal opportunity so these people can get to the starting line. Now, I'd be over here on the right side. Someone else might be on the left side with a larger program based on equal opportunity. But I think we're both Americans. We're debating arguments based upon American principles.

CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER: I would agree. But rather than questioning the Americanism of your opponent on the left, couldn't you just point out that as a historical consequence of overemphasizing equal opportunity, you would undermine the basic idea of limited government, in which case if you did that, it would undermine the entire idea of Americanism.

SEN. LAMAR ALEXANDER: I precisely agree with that. I think that that is the correct way to have a political debate, not to question someone's Americanism. I was actually trying to acknowledge the Americanism of his argument. But to say I thought he was wrong, because my emphasis would be on the two other principles.

CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER: It's not a question of motive. It's a question of consequence. I understand.

LEON KASS: Is there one last question? Please.

Q: Hillel Fradkin of the Hudson Institute. At the very beginning, if I recall correctly, Amy (Kass) described the aim of Americanism as being philosophy and poetry. It seems to me that we have the philosophy in common, but we're not sure about the poetry. Furthermore, that the phenomenon that you are talking about with hyphenated names is a sign that people see the poetry of their lives in those ethnic or religious attachments. So I'm wondering where that poetry would come from.

It seemed to me that at least two or three things were laid out by the panel. It would come from something that would have to be essentially our poetry. It would have to be something that unites all of us as Americans. Harvey (Mansfield) suggested somehow selling ourselves to others. That could be a common purpose. Juan Williams suggested somehow our common purpose is aspirational, or to use Charles's term, a dream, that is, what has been poetic about us has been this aspiration to do best for ourselves, to improve ourselves, to live up to certain ideals, and sometimes, and especially with someone like Roosevelt, to take that to the world. My question really is, what does the panel think about the possibility of those things as the source of poetry? Also, how would they work together? I mean, one is inward looking and one is outward looking.

FRANK HANNA: I think both are inevitable. I'll give you a line of political poetry that we are all familiar with, and that is, "the shining city on a hill", as well as the American Dream. Men have tried since at least the time of ancient Athens, Aristotle, to come up with a workable political model for organizing a nation. I think we're in agreement here that we have a pretty darned good one and we are trying to figure out what the elements of it are. The world or nations have a terrible tendency to try to implode from time to time and disintegrate. When that happens, it is a very difficult and horrifying situation, and it is in America's interest, I think, not to have nations elsewhere disintegrating and imploding, as indeed they are in many parts of the world now.

So we have an outward moving interest in maintaining the American model for those who would like to imitate it. I think Harvey (Mansfield) is right, that we should make an effort to sell it. That doesn't mean lock, stock and barrel. It means in terms of the kinds of ideas and principles that are being discussed here. They work. It would not be a bad thing if other nations struggling to organize themselves adopted some of the ideas and principles that worked. And poetry has its place in doing that, I think.

DIANA SCHAUB: I would just add maybe one more source for that poetry, and that is Lincoln and everything Lincoln said and wrote. In Lincoln, what we really get is philosophy made poetic, and it seems to me it combines both of those two elements that Hillel mentioned, the aspirational element, the new berth of freedom, and once you secure that new berth of freedom, then we really do stand forth as an example to the world. So that our task today is to get back to Lincoln's task of the perpetuation of our political institutions, and to figure out in what ways we have departed from those institutions and how they might be revived and restored.

LEON KASS: Last word to Bill McClay.

WILFRED MCCLAY: Well, first of all, I'll say Aristotle, just to be in good stead with Professor Mansfield. [LAUGHTER] I'm a little suspicious of the notion of national purpose, but that is another discussion. I think one element of the poetry of national purpose ought to be the concept that Dan Henninger brought up, and that is the notion of the frontier. This is one element of Roosevelt that I think is enduring and timeless, and I'd be very critical in many ways, but he was a friend of Turner's, and there was mutual influence between the two men. So it is not at all coincidence that he should mention them.

But let me put it this way. It is very interesting that in Europe, the word "frontier" or its equivalents is a negative term. In America, it is a positive term. I think that is a kind of exceptionalism. It's very hard to translate abstract concepts, but it has something to do with opportunity and something to do with the ability of the individual person to realize his or her possibilities, creativity, and potential, irrespective of the conditions of their birth and other incidentals. Maybe if you have to put it in a phrase, it would be equality of opportunity rather than equality of result. But at any rate, I think it is not for nothing that politicians repeatedly have tried to revive the notion of the frontier, most notably John F. Kennedy and the notion of the space program as a frontier. This is part of our national makeup, I think, that relates to principles, but is not reducible to them, as a kind of story, a kind of mythos.

AMY KASS: In closing, let me say first of all, poetry is found in some of the stories and songs that we have included in this volume. But more important, I want to thank the panelists. I want to thank the Bradley Foundation, and I want to thank you all for coming. [APPLAUSE]