Human beings value freedom to live their lives as they see fit, not even as God commands. They rebelled against God with the price of depriving themselves of the heavens to do that. They also like appreciation of their freedom by others, hence, cherish welcoming and open arms, an amazing twine of freedom and openness. The American experience seems to be the most successful in combining “freedom and openness,” no doubt with many moments of disastrous failure.

Anonymous

The third and final example of civitas for this book examines a civilized context within the other major worldview that humanity has imagined, namely “human-immanence.” The enormous transformation in the material and non-material spheres of human lifeworld since the Renaissance (c. 1300) has caused and strengthened the development of this worldview. Almost everyone refers to this process as the coming of modernity, secularity, secularization, and the secular ethos. Even Charles Taylor, with whom I have enormous affinity and who says he has struggled with the notion of “secular” (2007: 14), in the end uses the notion of secularity, calling his influential work A Secular Age. The contents of this book make clear that what distinguishes our self and social self-understanding presently relates to the issue of the presence of the divine, in that modern society is defined by its “move away from a society where belief in God is
unchallenged” (Ibid.: 3), or even more aptly, “in contrast with the divine foundation of society” (Ibid.: 192).

For me, that very distinction suggests that I should not use the notion of secularity. This concept is a derivative of Latin saecularis, which means “of an age, occurring once in an age.” As we have encountered the notion here in this book, the worldview of human-immanence has appeared before, in India, China, and most famously in ancient Greece as Sophism. In other words, it is not limited to one time period, but now it has gained currency, so much so that it has become the dominant paradigm across the world. On the other hand, in a striking way, this worldview resembles that of divine-immanence, with the important difference that human beings have replaced the gods. Just as in the divine-immanence world, where everything had to be justified and explained in terms of the gods and their will, the human-immanence worldview requires justification and will of human beings. In theory, ordinary human beings, free from the burden of race (superiority or inferiority of blood), gender (superiority or inferiority of sex), ethnicity (superiority or inferiority of tribe), and culture (superiority or inferiority of history, language, or artistic imagination), figuratively replace the gods. The depiction by Peter Berger et al. is very apt and revelatory: “The concept of naked self, beyond institutions and roles, as the ens realissimum [the most real of all things] being of human being, is at the very heart of modernity” (1973: 213).

The idea of the naked self began to take hold in the Renaissance, but when it found political expression and the centrality of human agency were recognized, it came into its own. Its political expression came in the principle of: “Cuius regio, eius religio” (whose realm, his religion, or the religion of the prince becomes the religion of the polity). This was debated and accepted at the peace of Augsburg in 1555, which ended major armed conflicts between Catholics and Protestants. Henceforth, the will of the polity would determine the fate of religion, that is “the official religion,” not state religion. Once again, having a state religion is a dangerous and destructive enterprise, while not having an official or civic religion deprives society of robust moral boundaries to support personal self and social self-definitions. For this reason, one should not assume that modernity is against religion, as some have. Taylor’s insightful observation is accurate both theoretically and historically: “Modernity is secular, not in the frequent, rather loose sense of the word, where it designates the absence of religion, but rather in the fact that religion occupies a different
place, compatible with the sense that social action takes place in profane time" (2004: 194).

The full meaning and global implications of this apparently local occurrence only became clear during the gathering for the Peace of Westphalia in the two German cities of Osnabrück and Münster in 1648 (15 May–24 October). There is now a consensus among scholars of modern political thought and international relations that this date marks the birth of the modern nation-state, with the collective will of the people as its sovereign. From the point of view of presence in the political, I should attend to the notion of the nation-state, the great signifier for the civitas of modernity and the worldview of human-immanence. The modern theater belongs exclusively to the nation (the voice of the people) and symbolizes the sovereign. The nation decides the borders of the territory that the members of the nation call their homeland and decides the form of state organization the members choose for their governance. The constitutive elements of this new unit are, in order of significance, sovereignty, the people (nation), boundaries (territory), and government (constitution). This unit has been given the German name “staat” (stand firm) or “state” in English, and as a new paradigm, unlike its previous counterparts, it has captured the world over. The nation-state has become a global phenomenon, and today (2020), there are 195 such units, symbolized by the United Nations, while some, such as the Palestinians, are still fighting for or awaiting their “sovereignty.”

It took centuries for the state to make its way from Westphalia to the United Nations. Historical landmarks in the process include the 1688 “Glorious Revolution” in Britain, which strengthened the supremacy of parliament over the authority of the king; the American Revolution of 1776 (July 4) with its Declaration of Independence and the inauguration of its constitution in 1789 (April 30), which institutionalized the notion of “we the people,” and their “inalienable” rights, that is not granted by any divine commandment; and the French Revolution of 1789 (July 14), which ended the legitimacy of the sacred power of the king by bringing the modern constitution as the manifestation of the consent of the people, or the social contract, as the foundation of the modern polity. These are momentous events, but there are still battles to be fought for the civitas of modernity, such as equal rights, women’s franchise, intellectual rights, and multiculturalism. The saga continues.

As to the main and substantial promise of the modern civitas, the ideas of “the naked self, social contract, and national state” have made the
presence in the political of the civitas within the worldview of human-immanence a possibility. The key to that possibility is in two notions of freedom and openness. I discussed freedom in the first section as a combination of negative, affirmative, and assertive liberties that collectively allow human beings to imagine without limits, or in the words of American philosopher Allan Bloom (1930–1992), the freedom “of legislating to himself and to nature… without guidance from nature” (Bloom 1987: 180). Openness means the acceptance of the creativity, spontaneity, and ingenuity that comes with that legislation. Or it is the willingness of the national state as the theater of the people to be open to any person or any idea that wishes to make a presence and further guarantees the possibility for the innate freedom and potential of the naked selves to manifest themselves, at least in theory. The ideals of modernity accommodate both in theory, and its civitas opens the space for their manifestation.

Now, there is a choice to be made about which contemporary civitas might serve as a good example. It is safe to argue that modernity is taken as synonymous with the rise of the West, yet the West is not monolithic. Certainly, today in the age of globalization and multiculturalism, the contemporary West serves as a generous host for diverse views, cultures, ethnicities, and peoples. It is not surprising that it is common to speak of modernity in the plural, using the concept of modernities. This obvious fact makes it hard to determine which parts of the West or the world truly represent the culture and civilization of modernity. If we stay within the regions where modernity first appeared, should the choice therefore be in Europe? For instance, should one have a historical lens and concentrate on Italy where the whole process of modernity began with the Renaissance in the fourteenth century and produced geniuses like Da Vinci and Machiavelli, considered the father of modern political science? Should one choose England, which peacefully transformed itself from the worldview of divine-transcendence to that of modernity and produced Thomas Hobbs and John Locke, considered the fathers of the “social contract” theory of government? Should one focus on France, which had a truly “modern” revolution, opening the gates of citizenship to ordinary people and producing Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who focused on the general will and the will of the people? Should one focus on Germany, where the real battles between the followers of divine-transcendence and human-immanence in the form of religious reforms took place, producing thinkers like Martin Luther, the father of religious reform, and Georg Hegel, the father of modern political thought? Or
should one look beyond Europe to places where modernity has developed further? What about concentrating on New Zealand and Australia, who are immigrant-friendly? What about the Americas? There are even more candidates as well, but here I have chosen to concentrate on the United States for the following reasons.

First and foremost, I feel the Founding Fathers of America instituted their polity with the goal of a civitas based on the ideals of the worldview of human-immanence more than any other polity that has taken shape in modernity. I would even dare say, despite recent setbacks beginning with Ronald Reagan and now culminating in Donald Trump, that the United States is the only polity that has managed to combine freedom and openness, and to remain free and open. Secondly, for now, the United States is the core state of the civitas of modernity, even though it has not always lived up to the responsibilities of its position (see, e.g., Bacevich 2008; Niebuhr 1952; Williams 1959). It is still the only state where the social contract, namely the rule of law, can check the arbitrary tendencies of an unruly official, including the highest officer of the land, that is, the president. Thirdly, despite the moral crisis of 2008 and the cultural deadlock of recent years (2010s), the United States is still the most productive unit comprehensively, concomitantly, and convivially. In other words, each of these regions in the examples I gave above contributed in its own way, but each only in one specific area: Italy, the Renaissance of thought and art; Britain, the Industrial Revolution, the social contract, capitalism, and mercantilism; France, political revolution and national sovereignty; and Germany, German Idealism and its critiques. These amazing developments coalesced together, however, on the North American continent, especially in the United States, and to some extent in Canada. There, they blossomed into a concomitant, comprehensive, and convivial production of the civitas of modernity. Locke, one of the main architects of the social contract theory, has an insightful comment that may offer the best justification for concentrating on America in his *Two Treatises of Government*: “in the beginning, all the world was America” (II: chapter 5, “of property”). America offered a *tabula rasa* for humanity to test a new order.
In terms of presence, like all other civitates before it, the American civitas expects adherence to the dictates of its social imaginary. I will elaborate upon what those dictates are in the next section under “ethos,” but suffice it to say here that they amount to whatever “elevated and alone” (Bloom 1987: 180) human beings have desired and considered good, which has been expressed in the motto of “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” In a sense, then, the role and the duty of each member are to own and uphold, modify, or change these values. Everyone should act as an officer of the good, defined as ethos. As in the two previous chapters, I will focus on two heroes, one as the initiator of the polity/civitas or the conqueror with a vision and the other as a statesperson who strengthened and enhanced the civitas by his vision.

For the first category, there is a host of characters to choose from, collectively known as the Founding Fathers. Many of these leaders display the character of a conqueror with a vision, including George Washington, Benjamin Franklin (1706–1790), Thomas Jefferson, and Alexander Hamilton (1755 or 1757–1804). I could concentrate on any one of them, even though some straddle the line between conqueror and statesman, but the one who truly stands as the crème de la crème is Washington, who considered himself American before this polity had even become a reality. As the American journalist and historian Brookhiser puts it, “When American used the term ‘father of the country’ in the singular, it always, and only, meant Washington” (2014: 26). For a statesperson with a vision, whether actively as an officeholder or as a public intellectual, I also have choices from the following list that I think stand out: John Fitzgerald Kennedy (1917–1963), Martin Luther King Jr. (1929–1968), Abraham Lincoln (1809–1865), Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1882–1945), and Anna Eleanor Roosevelt (1884–1962). King and Lincoln emerged as my two top choices, and I had to think carefully to choose between them, but in the end, hesitatingly I settled on Lincoln. The first reason for this is the link between him and Washington: He was fascinated with the Founding Fathers, particularly Washington. In some ways, he looked up to Washington as a model of citizenship and devotion to the polity. It is not surprising that a recent biography of Lincoln is titled Founders’ Son. As a boy, Lincoln had read Parson L. Weems’s popular biography of Washington and was intrigued by it (Brookhiser 2014: 27).
The life story of Washington shaped his understanding of America itself. Here is Lincoln’s own impression of the book, which he offered in an address to the New Jersey State Senate on February 21, 1861:

I remember all the accounts there given of the battle fields and struggles for the liberties of the country... I recollect thinking then, boy even though I was, that there must have been something more than common that those men struggled for; that something even more than National Independence; that something that held out a great promise to all the people of the world to all time to come; I am exceedingly anxious that this Union, the Constitution, and the liberties of the people shall be perpetuated in accordance with the original idea for which that struggle was made, and I shall be most happy indeed if I shall be an humble instrument in the hands of the Almighty, and of this, his almost chosen people, for perpetuating the object of that great struggle.

The second reason relates to Lincoln’s difficult childhood: He grew up in poverty, without access to education, and with no sense of family until his stepmother joined the family. His ascent to political power strikes me as a manifestation of the idea of naked person in promise of modernity and in American theater of it as a land of equal opportunity promulgated by Washington. In this sense, Lincoln took up and implemented Washington’s ideal. Of course, Dr. King would later address the limitations in practice to those ideals of equality, in Washington’s time and his own and unfortunately persisting into our time period too. But the final and deciding reason relates to the career of Lincoln who made a great presence in the political while grappling with the dilemma of the perennial tension between order (security and preservation of the polity) and justice (equality and fairness). Dr. King could afford to concentrate mainly on justice. Tragically though, both men lost their lives for their ideals in the end.

To capture the career of George Washington the conqueror, I will concentrate on three topics: (1) his role as wealthy landowner (2) his acquiring of socio-political status, and (3) his role as a revolutionary who fathered a nation. His acquisition of land came easily: He was born the first of six children to rich landowning Virginians who had immigrated from England. Although he did not have much formal education, he did learn mathematics, trigonometry, and land surveying, receiving a certificate from the College of William and Mary. For some time, he worked as a surveyor in the Shenandoah Valley. In addition to inheriting land
from his father, he also bought land in the Valley. As a recent biogra-
pher puts it: “He never stopped accumulating acreage and by age twenty
had assembled 2,315 acres in the Shenandoah Valley. For a young man
who could not afford corn for his horse a year earlier, it was a startling and
nearly dreamlike elevation in status” (Chernow 2010: 23). When his half-
brother Lawrence died in 1752, Washington leased his property, Mount
Vernon, from his widow, which he inherited from her when she died
in 1761. “Lawrence’s death provided another bonanza for George, on
whom windfalls showered at the most implausible moments” (Ibid.: 26).
This appetite for land grabbing displays the conquering mentality that
led the Native American leader Tanacharison (c. 1700–1754), known by
Europeans as the Half-King, to call him “the village devourer.” In 1752,
Washington joined the Virginia militia, hoping to gain a British military
commission. He was part of the militia for seven years, participating in
early stages of the French and Indian War of 1754–1763. In January
1759, then 26 and retired from the militia, Washington married Martha
Dandridge Custis, a widow who had inherited a large plantation. She had
two children, whom Washington adopted and raised; he did not have
children of his own.

Washington’s land acquisition facilitated his acquisition of social status.
While he was respected as a military hero, his role as a large landowner
was seen as more significant socially. Indeed, the two roles were related:
He acquired more land under the rubric of land bounties for the volun-
teer militias of the French and Indian War (Ibid.: 184). Apparently,
after securing the land for the militias from the government, Washington
turned around and bought it from them cheaply and that is why some of
them felt they had been had (Ferling 2002: 137). At the same time, he
began a political career by pursuing local office and was then elected to
the Virginia provincial legislature in 1758 and seems to have put stock in
his increasing socio-political status. By the late 1760s, when he had made
the Mount Vernon estate his place of residence, he led a generous and by
some reports lavish social life, entertaining people of status in the thou-
sands. But while he enjoyed the lifestyle of British high society, he had a
reputation for standing up to the British. For example, even though Wash-
ington imported many luxury goods from London, in 1769, he persuaded
the Virginia Assembly to impose an embargo against British commodities
(Ibid.:74).

As for as being a conqueror through revolution, by the dawn of the
American quest for independence in the mid-1770s, Washington had
emerged as a major figure who stood in opposition to England. His shift from pro-British politics came with the 1765 Stamp Act. Up until this point, Washington had mostly striven to please his royal masters in London (Ibid.: 138). He was a delegate in the first Continental Congress (1774–1789), yet he kept active in the military by training militias in Virginia, so by the time the revolutionary war began in April 1775, he was among the top leadership candidates. In the end, he was chosen as the commander not only due to his military experience but because it was felt that he could keep his ambition in check far better his main rival for the post, John Hancock (1737–1793). He accepted the position without salary, asking only that his expenses be paid. From April 1775 until April 1783, when the war came to a victorious end, he displayed an enormous degree of bravery, perseverance, dedication, and hard work. War, however, is a temporary measure: Citizenship is much more important.

It is said that Washington’s most magnanimous act was his resignation as the commander of chief and his return to civilian life, an important paradigm shift in the role of the civil-military relationship in the political sphere. Nowhere, this is stated more eloquently in Washington’s farewell address to the military on November 2, 1783. The way the address is constructed is interesting. He speaks in third person on behalf of the Commander (which was of course he himself) and the Congress. He first acknowledges the sacrifices the soldiers had made and the hardships that they endured, “presenting them with the thanks of their Country for their long, eminent and faithful Services.” He also reminds them that their hardships were in service of a great cause, the creation of a new home for the free. Then, he moves on to the important task of acknowledging that the war was not an end, but the means to create space for presence in the political, which for the modern person takes the form of citizenship. Thus, he recommends that the soldiers make this transition and welcome their new role as citizens: “The Commander in Chief conceives little is now wanting to enable the Soldier to change the Military character into that of the Citizen,” and they can do so with the same “steady and decent tenor of behavior, which has generally distinguished” them in the battlefield. He ends the address by saying that is what “the Commander” himself is going to do: “And being now to conclude these his last public Orders, to take his ultimate leave, in a short time, of the Military Character, and to bid a final adieu to the Armies he has so long had the honor to Command—he can only again offer in their behalf his recommendations to their grateful Country, and his prayers to the God of
Armies.” His final words set the iron wall that has persisted in the United States as a functional division between the military and civilians: “With these Wishes, and this benediction, the Commander in Chief is about to retire from service- The Curtain of separation will soon be drawn- and the Military Scene to him will be closed forever.”

To me, the last phrase establishes Washington as a “conqueror with a vision.” In particular, three items demonstrate that Washington is a person with vision: (1) his attention to his own “civilizing process”; (2) his attitude about the future political regime in the United States; and (3) his attitude toward slavery. As to the first, I have borrowed this phrase from the German sociologist Norbert Elias’s (1897–1990) book The Civilizing Process; Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigation (2000, originally 1939). Elias’s central point is that major changes in the Western civitas, from a transformation in personal mind-sets, habits, and behavior to the formation of the modern state and international society, have resulted from gradual but relentless incremental etiquette changes in our daily conduct. Washington exemplifies this thesis. The etiquette handbook Washington’s Rules of Civility and Decent Behavior in Company and Conversation (1888) is attributed to him, and its editor says the following: “While the authorship of these rules or maxims of civility and decent behavior in company is not positively known, it may be inferred with reasonable certainty. They are found in the handwriting of George Washington when he was quite young” (1888: 5). It is also certain that “quite young” meant 13, so that Washington was conscious of a particular vision of civil life that he wanted to project, and of course he succeeded in displaying this vision, given that witnesses attest that he thoroughly mastered them himself.

In total, the book contains 110 rules. Here is the first one: “Every action done in company, ought to be with some sign of respect, to those that are present” (Toner 1888: 11). This rule immediately reminded me of the words of Albert Schweitzer that I began this book with, suggesting that civilization is about conducting oneself with “reverence for life” (1987). Along the same lines, Washington states in rule 39 the following: “IN writing or Speaking, give to every Person his due Title According to his Degree and the Custom of the Place” (capitalization as in the original). Or note rule 89, which is short and sweet, but contains a large idea: “Speak not EVIL of the absent for it is unjust.” This is a categorical imperative, and not based on expediency or utilitarianism. But it seems
Washington has saved the pinnacle of his vision for the last rule: “LABOR to keep alive in your Breast that Spark of Celestial fire called Conscience.”

As to the second aspect of his vision, Washington had a clear image of the future polity and the form of its regime for the United States. By the time the Founding Fathers were planning the future regime, Washington had emerged as its obvious leader. There is a rumor that after the Battle of Yorktown (September 28–October 19, 1781), which turned the tide toward American victory, the creation of a monarchy with Washington as king was proposed, but he did not accept, and thus, America developed a federalist state. Washington was reluctant even to accept the role of president, clearly expressing doubt about his ability to perform the job both publicly and privately in his diary. Here is how he responded to Charles Thomson (1729–1824), the Secretary of the Continental Congress on April 14, 1789, when the latter came to announce Washington’s unanimous election to the job:

I am so much affected by this fresh proof of my country’s esteem and confidence that silence can best explain my gratitude. While I realize the arduous nature of the task which is imposed upon me, and feel my own inability to perform it, I wish, however, that there may not be reason to regretting the choice, for, indeed, all I can promise is only to accomplish that which can be done by an honest zeal. (Cited in Mackie 2006: 93, n. 14)

Washington showed the same humility when he delivered his First Inaugural address on April 30, 1789. He began with the following phrase: “Among the vicissitudes incident to life, no event could have filled me with greater anxieties than that of which the notification was transmitted by your order, and received on the fourteenth day of the present month.”

The third aspect of Washington as a conqueror with a vision relates to his attitude toward slavery. It is true that he owned slaves on his own plantation, but it seems that in principle, he wished he could do away with the practice. The following passage in one of his letters is important to note: “I never mean (unless some particular circumstances should compel me to it) to possess another slave by purchase; it being among my first wishes to see some plan adopted, by the legislature by which slavery in this Country may be abolished by slow, sure, and imperceptible degrees” (Letter to John Francis Mercer, September 9, 1786, Mount Vernon).
Apparently, people knew about Washington’s opposition to slavery in principle, but it is also a fact that he justified continuing to own slaves out of claims of necessity. The ambiguity of this position seems demonstrated in part in a poem entitled “To His Excellency General Washington,” written by an enslaved African American, Phyllis Wheatley (1753–1784). Wheatley depicts him as a freedom-fighting hero, rather than as a slave owner who limited the freedom of others. Indeed, the poem’s subject is the “the cause of freedom” and Washington is its hero. Such a perception may reflect Wheatley’s knowledge of Washington’s personal sympathy for the fate of enslaved people. Washington’s response to her is filled with respect, including, *inter alia*, the following phrases: “But a variety of important occurrences, continually interposing to distract the mind and withdraw the attention, I hope will apologize for the delay, and plead my excuse for the seeming, but not real, neglect. I thank you most sincerely for your polite notice of me, in the elegant Lines you enclosed; and however undeserving I may be of such encomium and panegyric” (Letter to Phillis Wheatley, February 28, 1776, Cambridge).

The most obvious sign of his sympathy for slaves is found in his will (George Washington’s Last Will and Testament, July 9, 1799). It is important to note that the first item deals with his debts, which are, in his words, “none of magnitude.” The second item leaves his estate to his wife. Next comes the fate of the slaves on his plantation. Here are his exact words:

Item. Upon the decease of my wife, it is my Will and desire that all the Slaves which I hold in my own right, shall receive their freedom. To emancipate them during her life, would, tho’ earnestly wished by me, be attended with such insuperable difficulties on account of their intermixture by Marriages with the dower Negroes, as to excite the most painful sensations, if not disagreeable consequences from the latter, while both descriptions are in the occupancy of the same Proprietor; it not being in my power, under the tenure by which the dower Negroes are held, to manumit them. And whereas among those who will receive freedom according to this devise, there may be some, who from old age or bodily infirmities, and others who on account of their infancy, that will be unable to support themselves; it is my Will and desire that all who come under the first and second description shall be comfortably clothed and fed by my heirs while they live; and that such of the latter description as have no parents living, or if living are unable, or unwilling to provide for them, shall be bound by the Court until they shall arrive at the age of twenty
five years; and in cases where no record can be produced, whereby their ages can be ascertained, the judgment of the Court, upon its own view of the subject, shall be adequate and final. The Negros thus bound, are (by their Masters or Mistresses) to be taught to read and write; and to be brought up to some useful occupation, agreeably to the Laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia, providing for the support of orphan and other poor children. and I do hereby expressly forbid the Sale, or transportation out of the said Commonwealth, of any Slave I may die possessed of, under any pretence whatsoever. And I do moreover most pointedly, and most solemnly enjoin it upon my Executors hereafter named, or the Survivors of them, to see that this clause respecting Slaves, and every part thereof be religiously fulfilled at the epoch at which it is directed to take place; without evasion, neglect or delay, after the crops which may then be on the ground are harvested, particularly as it respects the aged and infirm; seeing that a regular and permanent fund be established for their support so long as there are subjects requiring it; not trusting to the uncertain provision to be made by individuals.

This provision not only includes negative freedom of the removal of restraints, but also affirmative freedom in providing some means for maintaining that freedom. Whether they exercised assertive freedom, history does not tell us. What history does show, however, is that a limitation on Washington’s more progressive attitude on slavery was that his family did not share his views, at least not as enthusiastically or vigorously.

As I have mentioned, the second figure in my discussion of the American civitas is Abraham Lincoln. Unlike Washington, he did not come from a well-established family, let alone an affluent one. In some ways, Lincoln was the perfect manifestation of the “naked self” that Berger calls the modern soul and even “the elevated and alone” person that Bloom has described. He lived up to the promise of modernity, i.e., that the ordinary and average person can realize his or her potential. Lincoln was a self-made man, beginning with his self-education: The total of his formal education amounted to less than one year. His mother introduced him to reading; his father told stories that Lincoln emulated enthusiastically; and his stepmother inculcated in him a love of reading that continued through his life. Indeed, he read everything he could find, from the Bible to the great works of literature and works related to his professions of law, politics, and for a while the military; he also read and re-read the classic of American political thought, The Federalist Papers. The Library of Congress has a record of the books he borrowed, including books
on war and strategy. He also found in reading an emotional outlet that calmed his unsettled soul.

The author of an eloquent short book entitled *Lincoln, the Literary Genius* begins aptly with the following words: “A great man of the past is hard to know, because his legend, which is at best a friendly caricature, hides him like a disguise” (Barzun 1960: 1). When a person is as great as Lincoln was, there is not a single legend about him but many competing ones. For me, the feature he shares with other giants of human history is that he was a statesman with a vision, the same vision I hope to have captured in Darius of ancient Iran and Akbar of medieval India, men who displayed enormous presence in the political and played human in their personal as well as public lives. As I have mentioned repeatedly, playing human relates to all aspects of the life of a human being, whether one acts in a personal capacity or is performing a social, cultural, political, or even artistic role. The author cited above, who concentrated on Lincoln’s vernacular, rightly speaks of an “artistic genius” accompanied by hard work and a crafty attitude toward the texts he used: “When we speak of the artist’s craft, we mean quite literally that he is crafty.” Lincoln’s craftiness by concentrating on “the only two ways known to man—reading and writing” (Ibid.: 26). He even wrote poetry, showing the soft part of his soul.

Lincoln was a hard-working man, used to physical labor. Although he lacked the refinement of Washington, he married Mary Todd (1818–1882), who was very refined herself and appreciated the distinctions that lay beneath his rough exterior. They were also bound together by their passion for public life, which led to Lincoln’s involvement in local politics and the issue of slavery, which not only consumed his life but led to his death.

In speaking of Lincoln as a statesman with a vision, there are many angles one might take, but I feel it serves well to concentrate on the way he talks about himself and the way he handled the American Civil War—an event that almost destroyed the American polity—while managing to uphold and pursue the ideals of the American constitution. Lincoln believed that saving the Union that the founding father considered so significant as a polity and ending the slavery would have met their approval and caused their admiration. I contend that Lincoln introduced this broad objective in the Cooper Union Address on February 27, 1860, the speech that historians think secured his nomination for presidency by the Republican Party a few months later. The issue of slavery—and if I
may generalize as the issue of how to deal with “the other”—dominates
the speech, a dilemma that still haunts the United States of America, as
well as all societies premised on the promises of modernity. I will deal
with this shortly, but what is significant for me in the speech comes at
the very end, when Lincoln seems to offer an intellectual paradigm for
humanity, a framework he himself lived by all his life:

…let us stand by our duty, fearlessly and effectively. Let us be diverted by
none of those sophistical contrivances wherewith we are so industriously
plied and belabored - contrivances such as groping for some middle ground
between the right and the wrong, vain as the search for a man who should
be neither a living man nor a dead man - such as a policy of “don’t care” on
a question about which all true men do care…. Neither let us be slandered
from our duty by false accusations against us, nor frightened from it by
menaces of destruction to the Government nor of dungeons to ourselves.
Let us have faith that right makes might, and in that faith, let us, to the
end, dare to do our duty as we understand it.

To be able to achieve this, and in my vocabulary, to play human in his
role as a speechmaker, Lincoln was crafty and exercised artistic genius.
As his law partner William Herndon noted in his biography of Lincoln,
“No former effort in the line of speech-making had cost Lincoln so much
time and thought as this one” (2015, volume II: chapter 5). Appar-
etently, he took meticulous care in everything he uttered. Even as a boy,
he had “uncommon determination to express his thoughts in the best
way” (Barzun 1960: 15). In all modes of communications, whether court
defenses, political letters, speeches, or addresses on utterly important
national issues, he displayed “precision, vernacular ease, rhythmical virtu-
osity, and elegance” (Ibid.: 48). Above all, he was a master at combining
brevity and wholeness. He was aware of this skill, and he might have seen
it as the reason for his success: “This is not a long letter, but it contains
the whole story” (Cited from Ibid.: 28). One great motivator was his
ambition. As he puts it himself: “Every man is said to have his peculiar
ambition.” His was to be “truly esteemed by my fellow men. By rendering
myself worthy of their esteem” (cited from Brookhiser 2014: 44).

For Lincoln as a statesman with a vision, the issue of slavery was
directly linked with saving the Union not for reasons of state, but
rather because of his reading of the views of the American Founding
Fathers, who for him had created a polity dominated by a combination of
“freedom and openness.” This in turn directly related to debates about whether non-white people were fully human. In his words, it really:

\[\text{depends upon whether a Negro is } \text{not or is } \text{a man. If he is } \text{not} \text{ a man, why in that case, he who is a man may, as a matter of self-government, do just as he pleases with him. But if the Negro } \text{is} \text{ a man, is it not to that extent, a total destruction of self-government, to say that he too shall not govern } \text{himself? } \ldots \text{ When the white man governs himself that is self-government; but when he governs himself, and also govern } \text{another} \text{ man, that is more than self-government—that is despotism. (Cited from Brookhiser 2014: 115, italic in the original)}\]

For Lincoln, the link between the meaning of America and what the Founding Fathers stood for, and what he felt his generation must now stand for, was contained in the message of the Declaration of Independence. He thought the issue of slavery put that message to the test and that his generation was failing to handle it properly. Note the following passage, which not only indicates his position, but displays his civility also:

\[\text{I do oppose the extension of slavery because my judgment and feelings so prompt me; and I am under no obligation to the contrary. If for this you and I must differ, differ we must.... Our progress in degeneracy appears to me pretty rapid. As a nation we began by declaring that "all men are created equal." We now practically read it, "all men are created equal, except negroes." When the Know-Nothings [an anti-immigrant political group of the time] get control, it will read, "all men are created equal, except negroes and foreigners and Catholics." When it comes to this, I shall prefer emigrating to some country where they make no pretense of loving liberty—to Russia, for instance, where despotism can be taken pure, and without the base alloy of hypocrisy. (Letter to Joshua Speed, Springfield, Illinois, August 24, 1855)}\]

To me, though, the pre-eminence of his statesmanship shows itself in his famous “Gettysburg Address” (delivered on November 19, 1863), which, precisely due to his brevity, captures the complete message and ideals of not only Lincoln, but also modernity and the worldview of human-immanence:

\[\text{Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth, upon this continent, a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that "all men are created equal."}\]
Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of it, as a final resting place for those who died here, that the nation might live. This we may, in all propriety do. But in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow, this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have hallowed it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here; while it can never forget what they did here.

It is rather for us the living, we here be dedicated to the great task remaining before us -that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they here gave the last full measure of devotion -that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain, that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth.

According to Lincoln, those who lost their lives did not do so “in vain” but rather for the sake of a “new birth of freedom,” like the first freedom in the Declaration of Independence not just for Americans, but for humanity and for the creation of a land of “hope and new life,” and in his own words: “for all coming time—not only for the millions now in bondage, but for unborn millions to come” (cited from Harris and Tichenor 2010: 335). This speech also summarized his understanding of the Founding Fathers’ intentions, which had led to the establishment of freedom, while now the civil war was threatening it. I agree with his recent biographer that “Lincoln’s Founding Fathers… were lawgivers. They believed in sheet anchors and axiom: they had laid down the law of liberty, based on human nature” (Brookhiser 2014: 142). One can particularly observe and appreciate Lincoln’s nuanced understanding of the human rights of slaves in his Peoria Speech of October 16, 1854. He opposed the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854, which mandated “popular sovereignty” for the settlers of any territory make decisions for themselves, not based on “national or general interest” but on local or collective concerns. He opposes slavery because it is contrary to moral laws, but also because it is contrary to the very spirit on which the United States is founded. He offers a summary outline of American history until his time to demonstrate his point. It is a long speech; I would like to highlight a few key sentences:
I particularly object to the NEW position which the avowed principle of this Nebraska law gives to slavery in the body politic. I object to it because it assumes that there CAN be MORAL RIGHT in the enslaving of one man by another.... I object to it because the fathers of the republic eschewed and rejected it. The argument of “Necessity” was the only argument they ever admitted in favor of slavery.... Thus, we see the plain unmistakable spirit of that age, towards slavery, was hostility to the PRINCIPLE, and toleration, ONLY BY NECESSITY.... Let no one be deceived. The spirit of seventy-six and the spirit of Nebraska, are utter antagonisms; and the former is being rapidly displaced by the latter. (Capital words are in the original)

It is interesting to note that Lincoln repeatedly refers to the Founding Fathers and recounts the events of American history to shape his argument about the threat of war and calamity. He sought to preserve the Union while also fighting for the liberation of the slaves because both projects served the human condition. The end of this speech is also insightful, sobering, and yet sad because of the persistence of those who deny the human condition. He claims that some Americans behave as though “we do not know that we ever had a revolutionary war, or such a chief as Washington. To deny these things is to deny all human axioms or dogmas and frustrates all logical arguments. If a man will stand up and assert, and repeat, and re-assert, that two and two do not make four, I know nothing in the power of argument that can stop him.”

As stated before, modernity mandates that each of us takes part in deciding what we consider the good or our value system to be, including the existence or non-existence of God and the implications for society. The main reason is that we are the authors of and sole players in the civitas of modernity. This is what modern political and philosophical thought has expounded over the past few centuries. But Lincoln eloquently expressed modernity’s message in the last phrase of this important speech of fewer than 250 words and less than three minutes’ duration: “we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain, that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth” (italic added). I was not surprised to see him described in a recent biography as follows: “Socially, he [Lincoln] belonged to the democratic mass, and the life he had chosen to pursue was climbing the ladders of democratic politics and litigation” (Brookhiser 2014: 4). The centrality of law (the social
contract) and democratic politics (peoples’ presence) comprise the very basic tenets of modernity’s civitas.

One final aspect of Lincoln’s statesmanship relates to the thing he did not say and the measures he did not take. The best example is his frustration with General George G. Meade (1815–1872). He wanted to fire him; he wanted to say things to him. He refrained, however, because he knew this would make the General resign, which would have been detrimental to the national interest at the time, as he understood it. So, he contemplated what he wanted to say and composed a letter, but neither signed it nor sent it. Among other things, he wrote:

You fought and beat the enemy at Gettysburg; and, of course, to say the least, his loss was as great as yours—He retreated; and you did not; as it seemed to me, pressingly pursue him; but a flood in the river detained him, till, by slow degrees, you were again upon him. You had at least twenty thousand veteran troops directly with you, and as many more raw ones within supporting distance, all in addition to those who fought with you at Gettysburg; while it was not possible that he had received a single recruit; and yet you stood and let the flood run down, bridges be built, and the enemy move away at his leisure, without attacking him…. Again, my dear general, I do not believe you appreciate the magnitude of the misfortune involved in Lee’s escape—He was within your easy grasp, and to have closed upon him would, in connection with our other late successes, have ended the war—As it is, the war will be prolonged indefinitely. (July 18, 1863, Lincoln, never sent, nor signed)

In short, Washington made the union of the United States of America and Lincoln saved that union. It is not surprising that Washington was honored by titles like “godlike,” “first in everything,” and “the father of the nation,” and Lincoln as “honest Abe,” “Christ in miniature,” “God’s instrument,” “purer than Washington,” and “the savior of the union.” Just note how the verb “to save” appears five times in the following important and short famous passage from Lincoln:

If I could save the Union without freeing any slave I would do it, and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone I would also do that. What I do about slavery, and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save the Union; and what I forbear, I forbear because I do not believe it would help to save the Union. (Letter to Horace Greeley, 22 August 1862)
In the Gettysburg address and in the passage above, we see a man who focuses on his role as an officer of the political, but then as an officer of civitas he showed his true self, particularly in the second inaugural address. Here, the war is moving toward victory for the Union, he has achieved emancipation, and in a way, he is a victor, yet as we read in the following passage, he is the embodiment of a humble guardian and manifestation of presence:

With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation’s wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan- to do all which may achieve and cherish a just, and a lasting peace, among ourselves, and with all nations…. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God’s assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men’s faces; but let us judge not that we be not judged. (March 4, 1865)

This passage not only captures Lincoln’s role as the savior of the polity and civitas, it summarizes the transformation of a shy man who alternated between exuberant self-confidence and deep depression and displayed traces of racism, into a person of presence. When Lincoln discovered he had a talent for public life, he used it to perform human in the arts of honesty, forbearance, humility, steadfastness, and unpretentiousness. Through self-discipline, he developed the crafts of reading, writing, speaking, law, military science, strategy, and above all patience. Charnwood’s evaluation is strikingly accurate: “Lincoln… grew to his task [from] … a man who started by being tough and shrewd and canny and became very strong and very wise, started with an inclination to honesty, courage, and kindness, and became, under a tremendous strain, honest, brave, and kind to an almost tremendous degree” (1917: chapter 7: 147).

**Ethos: Libertatis, Isonomy, Novus Ordo Saeclorum**

What lies at the core of the ethos, social imaginary, rules of the game in the union that Washington created, and Lincoln saved? The immediate phrase that comes to mind is “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.” The second paragraph of the Declaration of Independence states it plainly and clearly, as follows:
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. That, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That, whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government. (Italic added)

The triumvirate of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness precisely captures the ethos of not only the United States but the modern civitas itself. The first item, life, signals the shift from the holiness of being into the secular or human-immanence world, by sanctifying ordinary life. This is a result of what Max Weber calls disenchantment in his classic essay “Science as a Vocation.” In his words, “The fate of our times is characterized by rationalization and intellectualization and, above all, by the ‘disenchantment of the world.’ Precisely the ultimate and most sublime values have retreated from public life either into the transcendental realm of mystic life or into the brotherliness of direct and personal human relations” (1946: 155).

Taylor describes this occurrence as “the great dis-embedding,” a revolution that turned humanity in a completely opposite direction. Humanity must no longer look for “the path,” as discussed in Chapter 5, attuning itself to it and living within its bonds, but rather can devise and formulate its own parameters and make its own lifeworld. Ironically, one of the main contributors to this change was the religious reformation that encouraged Christians to find the “holy…within ordinary life itself” instead of in lives devoted “supposedly to ‘higher’ vocation of the monastic life.” The main objective of life became the “affirmation of the value of life, of succouring life and sustaining it” (Taylor 2007: 369–370). In other words, the question worth considering is now humanity itself, and in a sense, humanity has become a question for itself. This view is better known as the philosophy of secularity and modernity, and in my words “human-immanence.” In this new condition, “we feel a new freedom shorn of the sacred, and the limits it set for us, to re-order things as seen best…. A great energy is released to re-order affairs in secular time” (Ibid.: 80). The Renaissance, the Enlightenment, the Religious Reforms, and the Industrial Revolution changed humanity’s mode of life production from cultivation of the resources of nature “to making” almost ex nihilo, not creatively in the way God creates, but in the sense of creating something
new that was not there before. The more the new mode became dominant, the more this new artificial surrounding formed a human earthly condition where even an educated person has a hard time understanding the devices used in their daily life. This represents a paradigmatic shift in human mythology, from divine to human. The American scholar of mythology Joseph John Campbell (1904–1987) argues how in the age of modernity Libido triumphed over Credo. For him, Libido means a strong impulse for secular life. This accentuates the human individual, in contradistinction to the monolithic features of a divinely transcendent world. The opposite condition is “no-life,” in which one has not lived and experienced according to individual desire and will.

The novel *Babbitt* by the American novelist, short story writer, and playwright Harry Sinclair Lewis (1885–1951) offers relevant insights. It depicts the life of a real estate agent called George F. Babbitt. Unlike George, his son has become a modern soul, deciding for himself what he wants to do with his life in the world and in secular time. While other people object to this, Mr. Babbitt not only supports it but encourages his son to dare to follow his bliss and do what he wants, unlike himself. The novel ends with the following advice he gives to the son:

```plaintext
... I've never- Now, for heaven's sake, don't repeat this to your mother, or she'd remove what little hair I've got left, but practically, I've never done a single thing I've wanted to in my whole life! I don't know if I've accomplished anything except just get along. I figure out I've made about a quarter of an inch out of a possible hundred rods. Well, maybe you'll carry things on further. I don't know. But I do get a kind of sneaking pleasure out of the fact that you knew what you wanted to do and did it. Well, those folks in there will try to bully you, and tame you down. Tell'em to go to the devil! I'll back you. Take your factory job, if you want to. Don't be scared of the family. No, nor all of Zenith. Nor of yourself, the way I've been. Go ahead, old man! The world is yours!
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The last phrase captures the spirit of modernity and of honoring life in American ethos; the world is yours and you have one life to live, so make it into what you want it to be. This is the key concept. The verb “to

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1 A warning is in order. If one is not vigilant, then the world decides that one must be for the world. Who are the most revered people? In the past, they were the royalty and aristocracy; now, they are the rich and the popular, i.e., the successful mercenaries of popularity and wealth! Some of the most talked about names in the first decades of the
make” emerged as the central notion for the age of revolution against the old order. The presupposition was that humanity does not need to conform to any a priori set of standards; it can and should create its own world. This requires a new definition of the self and its relation to itself, to the other, and to the world. In Taylor’s words, “we experience our world and the human condition ... as autonomous subjects, beings who revel in choice, as citizens among others in a sovereign people, as potentially in control of history” but of course “in the context of the great cultural changes new understandings of self, agency, time, society which western modernity has generated” (2007: 573).

In other words, this phenomenon has been applied to all spheres of the human lifeworld. Comprehensive, concurrent, and convivial process of civilization has become a global occurrence. Its comprehensiveness not only applies to the various areas of human material production but includes humanity the world over. Unlike the pre-modern civitates that were local or at most regional, the new one is global. In the words of Kenneth W. Thompson, “Universal patterns of modernity are affecting all mankind. Modernization spans diverse values, institutions, traditions, and religions” (1966: 92). Or as he puts it elsewhere: “Man, who for millennia was confined to his tribe or neighbourhood, has broken through boundaries of locality, sates and nation” (1981: 43). The centrality of ordinary life thus is truly a global phenomenon, both geographically and in its subject matter. While its initial spark was in Europe, nowhere has it become as much a part of the creed of the ethos as in the United States, where a good portion of the world’s population has wanted to migrate to for the sake of a better life!

In fact, I should note that the triumvirate of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness is a deliberate modification of a phrase that appears in a different form in the major works of the pillars of “Social Contract Theory.” For example, in Locke’s work The Two Treatises of Civil Government, it is “Life, Liberty and Property.” Here, we read: “The state of nature has a law of nature to govern it, which obliges every one: and

new millennium include Oprah Winfrey, Tiger Woods, and Bill Gates; that is, the highest celebration is of worldly success rather than affirming of ordinary life as experienced by the individual. The Bible attributes to Jesus the notion that believers “are not of the world, just as I am not of the world” (John 17:16). This applies to the modern soul, in that if the cosmological persons “belonged” to God, the modern souls “belong” to themselves and not the world.
reason, which is that law, teaches all mankind, who will but consult it, that being all equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty, or possessions” (1988, Book II, chapter 2, Section 6). One can easily deduce how these natural laws, understood by reason, were transformed in the mind of Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826) and were reflected as self-evident truths in the Declaration of Independence to the effect “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.”

One very important point is that this modification should not be taken as minor. Considering the spirit of modernity, with its great disenchanting and dis-embedding “that gave an unprecedented primacy to the individual” (Taylor 2004: 50) or advocated a “naked self” (Berger et al. 1973: 213), it is more accurate to insist on the individual “pursuit of happiness.” Property as a category, and I would even say as a social and political institution, has long been with humanity. I can authoritatively confirm the sacrosanct and public status of this institution in Muslim history and political thought (Rodinson 1973), but it is common knowledge that it is well regarded and even publicly guarded in most traditions (Bethell 1999). Once again, for the Founding Fathers, particularly Jefferson, who had lived in France in a crucial time (August 1784–September 1789) and observed the Third Estate’s vote on May 5, 1789, that marked the beginning of the revolution, the “pursuit of happiness” can include any public concern; property may or may not be a component of it. Now, the issue of the desirability of happiness in ordinary life lies beyond the scope of this book, but thankfully it has been addressed elsewhere (see, e.g., Sandel 2012). For the rest of my account of the civitas of modernity, I will explore how this triumvirate has manifested itself in the American ethos.

To promote, to maintain, to uphold, and to endure ordinary life requires imaginative ideas and workable and institutional pillars. Within the American context, I contend that the three pillars of “Liber-tatis, Isonomy, and Novus Ordo Seclorum” so far have been relatively successful. They constitute a practical triumvirate formulated by Founding Fathers as the ethos and improved by later statesmen. As just one example beyond Washington and Lincoln, one could think of the “civil rights” bills passed by the 37th president of the United States, Lyndon Johnson (1908–1973).
I will begin my parsing of this triumvirate with Libertatis, starting with Patrick Henry’s (1736–1799) immortalized phrase “give me liberty or give me death.” Henry was a lawyer, planter, politician, and delegate to the Second Virginia Convention, which opened on March 20, 1775, where he gave a fiery speech that was effective in encouraging Virginia to participate in the revolutionary wars. What is impressive to me is that he was motivated not by antagonism or animosity toward Britain, but by the fight for freedom. In his words: “Has Great Britain any enemy, in this quarter of the world, to call for all this accumulation of navies and armies? No, sir, she has none.” He continues: “Sir, we have done everything that could be done to avert the storm which is now coming on. We have petitioned; we have remonstrated; we have supplicated; we have prostrated ourselves before the throne and have implored its interposition to arrest the tyrannical hands of the ministry and parliament. Our petitions have been slighted; our remonstrances have produced additional violence and insult; our supplications have been disregarded; and we have been spurned, with contempt, from the foot of the throne!” So, he concludes that the only course remaining was active resistance. In the last few phrases of his speech, he comes to his core, life-changing idea: “What is it that gentlemen wish? What would they have? Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!”

Here is the key question. What does liberty mean or, rather, what did the Founding Fathers mean by it? The French diplomat, political scientist, and historian, Alexis de Tocqueville (1805–1859) was a keen observer of the American ethos and experience. His observation about freedom best describes the Founding Fathers’ understanding of it: They “loved it because they loved the pleasure of being able to speak, to act, to breathe unrestrained, under the sole government of God and the laws. He who seeks freedom for any thing, but freedom’s self is made to be a slave” (Tocqueville 1856: 204). It seems that the Founding Fathers understood freedom as something that, in Arendt’s words, “could exist only in public; it was tangible, worldly reality, something created by men to be enjoyed by men rather than a gift or a capacity, it was man-made public space” (Arendt 1990: 120).

The second aspect of the American ethos relates to notion of “isonomy,” that is, equality of all people in their relationship toward one another, and most importantly, their equality before the social contract
or the law. This is different from innate equality or inequality. Obviously due to the uniqueness of each human being and the presence of free will, or what I have referred to as “open software,” human beings cannot be equal. The notion of isonomy suggests instead an artificial condition of equality. Isonomy combined the Greek *isos*, meaning equal, and *nomos*, meaning law or custom, and thus as a combined concept mean equal standing before the law. Hannah Arendt is correct to say that the public sphere, whether in the ancient polis or in today’s state, is distinguished because it knows only “equals” (1958: 32). And this equality has no qualification. The Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset (1883–1955) has an apt point when he claims that the most significant transformation of the twentieth century has been *The Revolt of the Masses* (1993), by which he means that “ordinary people” have become players and citizens in the public sphere. I think Lincoln understood this well when he expressed his understanding of the Declaration of Independence and the intention of Founding Fathers, particularly when speaking about equality between and for all people:

I think the authors of that notable instrument [The Declaration] intended to include *all* men, but they did not intend to declare all men equal in *all respects*. They did not mean to say all were equal in color, size, intellect, moral developments, or social capacity. They defined with tolerable distinctness, in what respects they did consider all men created equal: equal in ‘certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.’ This they said, and this meant. They did not mean to assert the obvious untruth, that all were then actually enjoying that equality, nor yet, that they were about to confer it immediately upon them. In fact, they had no power to confer such a boon. They meant simply to declare the *right*, so that the *enforcement* of it might follow as fast circumstances should permit. They meant to set up a standard maxim for free society, which should be familiar to all, and revered by all; constantly looked to, constantly labored for, and even though never perfectly attained, constantly approximated, and thereby constantly spreading and deepening its influence, and augmenting the happiness and value of life to all people of all colors everywhere. The assertion that ‘all men are created equal’ was of no practical use in effecting our separation from Great Britain; and it was placed in the Declaration, not for that, but for future use. (Speech at Springfield, June 26, 1857, in response to Stephen A. Douglas’s speech on the Kansas-Nebraska Act, two weeks earlier, italic in the original)
The movement that captured isonomy has been known in America since 1920s as the struggle for an Equal Rights Amendment, and not natural equality or for its own sake, let alone any special privileges for any group. Even in his famous speech, former slave, writer, and the abolitionist, Frederick Douglass (1818–1895) is asking for affirming “the equal manhood of the Negro race” (delivered on July 4, 1852). The struggle for this status continues with its message of opening equal opportunities in all spheres of the political (education, economy, employment, politics, culture, and society), all relating to “human dignity,” or what Thompson has called “the ultimate justification of democracy,” because democracy “is the one political system that seeks in a comprehensive way to institutionalize human dignity—politically and spiritually as well as materially and socially” (1981: 210). He laments, however, that it may have become a lost horizon (Ibid.: 119–137). The recent movement, “Black Life Matters” (2020) to me, precisely objects to the fact of the blindness of the police and the systemic racism to the isonomy of the Black people.

The central aim that American polity seems to be the guardian of the civitas of modernity relates to its aims contained in both triumviri of “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” and “Libertatis, Isonomy, and Novus Ordo Saeclorum.” Note how the following passage of Lincoln’s message to Congress about how he understood the meaning of the civil war captures this meaning:

This is essentially a people’s contest. On the side of the Union it is a struggle for maintaining in the world that form and substance of government whose leading object is to elevate the condition of men; to lift artificial weights from all shoulders; to clear the paths of laudable pursuit for all; to afford all an unfettered start and a fair chance in the race of life. Yielding to partial and temporary departures, from necessity, this is the leading object of the Government for whose existence we contend. (July 4, 1861)

The promises enumerated there still resonate with the people who migrate to the United States from all over the world, even walking on foot northward from Mexico and South and Central America and southward from Canada, despite recent, dare I say, “un-American” measures against immigrants and newcomers. The good news is that these waves of hostility are
part of the saga of the American ethos, as against the Irish, Catholics, and others in the past, but I have confidence that even this shall pass away.²

The third aspect of the American ethos relates to “Novus Ordo Saeclorum,” one of two mottoes on the Great Seal of the United States. Charles Thomson, a Latin expert and secretary of Congress who was involved in the design of the Seal, translated the phrase as “a new order of the ages.” But what does this mean? “Exceptionalism” is a notion that is often applied to the United States, which in the context of the conversation about the civitas of modernity suggests that it is truly an exception in human history. I have mentioned that the worldview of human-immanence has had historical examples, but it has never become a dominant ethos for any polity, let alone a civitas, but now in the United

²The poem “Even This Shall Pass Away” by American poet Theodore Tilton (1835–1907) is a good reminder:

Once in Persia reigned a king; Who upon his signet ring; Graved a maxim true and wise; Which, if held before his eyes; Gave him counsel at a glance; Fit for every change and chance; Solemn words, and these are they; “Even this shall pass away.

Trains of camels through the sand; Brought him gems from Samarkand; Fleets of galleys through the seas; Brought him pearls to match with these; But he counted not his gain; Treasures of the mine or main; “What is wealth?” the king would say; “Even this shall pass away.”

Mid the revels of his court; At the zenith of his sport; When the palms of all his guests; Burned with clapping at his jests; He, amid his figs and wine; Cried, “O loving friends of mine; Pleasures come, but do not stay; ‘Even this shall pass away.”

Lady, fairest ever seen; Was the bride he crowned the queen; Pillowed on his marriage bed,; Softly to his soul he said: “Though no bridegroom ever pressed; Fairer bosom to his breast; Mortal flesh must come to clay—Even this shall pass away.”

Fighting on a furious field; Once a javelin pierced his shield; Soldiers, with a loud lament; Bore him bleeding to his tent; Groaning from his tortured side; “Pain is hard to bear,” he cried; “But with patience, day by day; Even this shall pass away.”

Towerin in the public square; Twenty cubits in the air; Rose his statue, carved in stone; Then the king, disguised, unknown; Stood before his sculptured name; Musing meekly: “What is fame?; Fame is but a slow decay; Even this shall pass away.”

Struck with palsy, sore and old; Waiting at the Gates of Gold; Said he with his dying breath; “Life is done, but what is Death?;” Then, in answer to the king; Fell a sunbeam on his ring; Showing by a heavenly ray; “Even this shall pass away.”
States, it has become the ethos of a polity that has extended its ethos as a truly global phenomenon. Although I have expressed my disagreement with Fukuyama about his claims about the “end of history,” the fact that it is being debated at all is a major achievement of the secular worldview.

In the end, the Constitution of the United States came to embody a new order, focusing on protecting the people, republicanism, and liberty. Its principles have been reiterated and explained by presidents in their inaugural addresses and other public pronouncements. Here is how Washington worded it in his first Inaugural address: “the preservation of the sacred fire of liberty, and the destiny of the Republican model of Government, are justly considered as deeply, perhaps as finally staked, on the experiment entrusted to the hands of the American people” (April 30, 1789). Jefferson calls it “the voice of the nation” and describes it as “a wise and frugal Government, which shall restrain men from injuring one another, shall leave them otherwise free to regulate their own pursuits of industry and improvement, and shall not take from the mouth of labor the bread it has earned” (March 4, 1801). And in his third inaugural address, Roosevelt echoes and indeed cites Washington’s words, adding that “America has been the New World in all tongues, to all peoples, not because this continent was a new-found land, but because all those who came here believed they could create upon this continent a new life—a life that should be new in freedom” (January 20, 1941). On March 4, 1861, almost on the eve of the Civil War (April 12, 1861—April 9, 1865), Lincoln offered a comprehensive explanation of the new order, in which again the people, the federal system, and liberty are emphasized:

I shall take care, as the Constitution itself expressly enjoins upon me, that the laws of the Union be faithfully executed in all the States. Doing this, I deem to be only a simple duty on my part, and I shall perform it so far as practicable unless my rightful masters, the American people, shall withhold the requisite means or in some authoritative manner direct the contrary.... All the vital rights of minorities and of individuals are so plainly assured to them by affirmations and negations, guaranties, and prohibitions, in the Constitution that controversies never arise concerning them. (italic in the original)

I would like to emphasize again that this ethos has taken form within the context of an official religion, but not a state religion. The phrase “one nation under God” is recursing across all levels of government and
politics in American history. Like the kings of the Achaemenids, American presidents have all expressed their reverence for God, seeing him as having granted America its success. This passage from Washington is typical: “Every step, by which they have advanced to the character of an independent nation, seems to have been distinguished by some token of providential agency” (April 30, 1789). It might be useful to remember here Taylor’s assessment of the place of religion in the civitas of modernity: “This is the new space for God in the secular world. ... [T]he disappearance of an ontic dependence on something higher can be replaced by a strong presence of God in our political identity” (2004: 193).

THEATER: THE NATION, THE CITIZENS, THE ENTREPRENEURS

I have already referred to the theater of modernity’s civitas as the state, comprised of “Sovereignty, People (nation), Boundaries (territory), and Government (constitution).” Here, I want to rely on one of the intellectual fathers of modernity, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, to re-emphasize this:

The public person... formed by the union of all other persons was once called the city and is now known as the republic or the body politics. In its passive role it is called the state, when it plays an active role it is the sovereign and when it is compared to others of its own kind, it is power. Those who are associated in it take collectively the name of a people, and call themselves individually citizens, insofar as they share in sovereign power, and subjects insofar as they put themselves under the laws of the state. (The Social Contract, Chapter 6, italic added)

I would have edited the last phrase to “insofar as the rules of the game in the state protect and afford them opportunities to appear in the political.” Spatial and temporal circumstances afford opportunities differently. I concern myself with the case of the United States, and I have found Arendt’s On Revolution insightful for understanding the way its federalism has taken form.

The first aspect of the new polity of modernity relates to “national sovereignty,” combining the first two elements of the modern state. The new state is free from any other worldly (tradition, elders, and so on)
or meta-worldly (metaphysical) authority because it represents the will of the nation. Unfortunately, state is sometimes used synonymously with popular sovereignty, which convolutes the issue. National sovereignty results from the politics of public consent because of a grand dialogue among all people, while popular sovereignty results from the politics of plebiscite and populism. I have already mentioned Lincoln’s stance against the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 mandating “popular sovereignty” of the settlers of a territory. National sovereignty decides the fate of the political regime, which for the United States was a federalist system comprised of the distinct yet interrelated branches: legislative, executive, and judicial. To me, the process of the election of the President of the Republic shows the difference between “national sovereignty” and “popular sovereignty.” On the surface, there is a lengthy, open, and transparent campaign culminating in a direct vote that determines who will assume the role. The Electoral College, however, a sophisticated and by some accounts confusing institution, has a mitigating effect, ensuring that popular sovereignty does not compromise national sovereignty. Another indirect function of this institution is the peaceful transfer of power, a regular and routinized function.

The will of national sovereignty in the hands of the Founding Fathers was to create a constitution, which appeared to be the product of the American Revolution, but was simply the inauguration of the old idea of the social contract into a pact that now serves as the locus of the polity. For national sovereignty, the social contract became the framework of the new constitution or, in short, the rule of law. Hannah Arendt captures the idea fully: “The notion of constitutional government is of course by no means revolutionary in content or origin; It means nothing more or less than government limited by law, and the safeguard of civil liberties through constitutional guarantees, as spelled out by the various bills of rights which were incorporated into the new constitutions and which are frequently regarded as their most important part, never intended to spell out the new revolutionary powers of the people but, on the contrary, were felt to be necessary in order to limit the power of government even in the newly founded body politic” (1990: 143). On the surface, the new constitution imposed limits, but in reality, it empowered all to be active in generating more power for themselves, hence the prominence of ideas of competition and balance of power.

James Madison (1751–1836), the fourth president, devoted Federalist 51 to the idea of the power checks and balance between the various
powers with the new polity. One principle of any society that functions horizontally relates to reverence for the power of people. The system functions to preserve the integrity of each part and their working together. As Madison wrote, in such a system “The interest of the man, must be connected with the constitutional rights of the place.” Thus, Madison writes in *Federalist* 14: “Were it proposed by the plan of the convention, to abolish the governments of the particular states... [and] if they were abolished, the general government would be compelled, by the principle of self preservation, to reinstate them in their proper jurisdiction.” But the opposite is true as well, in that in a horizontal context, each may harm the other, and so he wrote in later part of *Federalist* 51: “It is of great importance in a republic, not only to guard the society against the oppression of its rulers; but to guard one part of the society against the injustice of the other part.”

What worked in favor of the new constitution was the concrete and practical experience of early colonies like Connecticut, whose Fundamental Orders of 1639 evolved into “the Civil Constitution of this State” and still functioned as an “Act containing the Abstract and Declarations of the Rights and Privileges of the people of this State.” The first section of the act declares its content as “the Civil Constitution of this State under the sole authority of the people thereof, independent of any King and Prince whatever” (italic added). The sole authority of the people came to mean the government “of, for, and by the people,” as has been immortalized by Lincoln. And for Lincoln, the logical conclusion was to insist that the government and its officers are the servants of the people: “I freely acknowledge myself the servant of the people, according to the bond of service—the United States Constitution; and that, as such, I am responsible to them” (letter to James C. Conkling, Washington, August 26, 1863, to be read in the meeting of the Union supporters Springfield, Illinois, on September 3, 1863).

This conviction was not new; Lincoln held it before assuming the role of the highest officer of the constitution. Consider his “Lyceum Address” of January 27, 1838, which he delivered as a lawyer in the aftermath of the mob burning of a Black man two weeks earlier. He uses that tragedy to compare constitution and law with mob. “Turn, then, to that horror-striking scene at St. Louis.... A mulatto man, by the name of McIntosh, was seized in the street, dragged to the suburbs of the city, chained to a tree, and actually burned to death; and all within a single hour from the time he had been a freeman, attending to his own business, and at
peace with the world. Such are the effects of mob law.... There is no grievance that is a fit object of redress by mob law.” Then, he engages in a discussion of how the Founding Fathers formulated the constitution to preserve the “pillars of freedom” and ends his speech with the following words, that not only point out the significance of the constitution, but serve as a fitting conclusion to this section:

Reason, cold, calculating, unimpassioned reason, must furnish all the materials for our future support and defence.—Let those materials be moulded into general intelligence, sound morality, and in particular, a reverence for the constitution and laws: and, that we improved to the last; that we remained free to the last; that we revered his name to the last; that, during his long sleep, we permitted no hostile foot to pass over or desecrate his resting place; shall be that which to learn the last trump shall awaken our WASHINGTON. (italic and capital letters in the original)

Now, if national sovereignty owns the polity and conducts its affairs, individual citizens are masters in the social sphere, where civil rights, civil societies, and civic cultures enjoy freedom and protection. It is important to note that in modernity the definition of citizen has sometimes expanded to include everyone by the mere birth of a person in the legal borders of modern polity. In the United States, along with some other countries, this has meant that even children born to non-citizens are automatically citizens and enjoy its privileges and should bear its responsibilities.

The first two amendments to the constitution guarantee the free and open society that I have described as central to the civitas of modernity. The First Amendment prohibits Congress from ratifying any law that might restrict freedom of conscience (religion), freedom of speech, press and publication, peaceful assembly, and petitioning against the government of the day. The second amendment protects the right to keep and bear arms. While national sovereignty has the authority to impose laws that may limit citizens for the management of the affairs of the polity, it does not have the authority to disarm them, because “the right to revolt” is one of the innate rights of the nation. Here, the distinction between the hierarchical society of non-modern civitates and the horizontal context of modern civitates confronts each other. We have seen how in the civitates discussed in the last two chapters, hierarchical social classes shaped
each society, but each citizen, at least in theory, is the center of existence. The relation of each to the center of artificially set institutions and organizations is equidistant and also maintains direct access.

In Taylor’s words: “A purely secular time-understanding allows us to imagine society horizontally. … This radical horizontality is precisely what is implied in the direct access society, where each member is ‘immediate’ to the whole” (2004: 157). To guarantee that horizontality, freedom, and openness must become concrete principles, this in turn requires practical measures such as meritocracy, transparency, and formalized and impersonal relationships. Again, in Taylor’s words: “Each of us is equidistant from the centre…. We have moved from a hierarchical order of personalized links to an impersonal egalitarian one” (Ibid.: 158).

The sense of equidistance applies to the economy as well. If in the political sphere the main player is the sovereign nation, at the sociocultural level, citizens assume that role in the economic sector and individuals with entrepreneurial spirit should be the main players. “Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” have economic manifestations in the form of entrepreneurship. The constitution must cater to it, encourage it, and sustain it.

In an influential book entitled An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States (original published in 1913), the American historian Charles Austin Beard (1874–1948) argued that American federalism is an economic machine for the protection of the interests of the wealthy Founding Fathers who wanted a system to protect and uphold their wealth and social status. In his words: “The movement for the Constitution of the United States was originated and carried through principally by four groups of personality [sic] interests which had been adversely affected under the Articles of Confederation: money, public securities, manufactures, and trade and shipping” (2004: 324). There may be some truth to this thesis, but I think it is too narrow reading of “the new order of ages” and its pillars life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, because understanding them within the sanctification and even glorification of ordinary life logically leads putting emphasis on the economy. This philosophy has created the most prosperous economy in human history, containing layers from every innovative wave. Capitalizing on industrial changes, the powerful agricultural sector transformed itself to focus on industrial cultivation, and recently, following the advent of the information revolution, the farming of information, so to speak, has become the primary economic activity. In terms of production, the American economy
is agrarian, industrial, and now digital and computerized. In terms of trade, it is a commercial economy combining those three layers. This is not surprising, given that since World War II, “a great transformation,” in the words of the economic historian Karl Polanyi (1994), has made the American economy the master of society instead of its servant. The dis-embedded soul, the naked self, and the free modern demand an economic system that satisfies the necessities of the body and the ever-increasing desires of the mind. Entrepreneurship provides a system where the individual entrepreneur is the true actor and player, whether personally or in corporate form. Consider how at the peak of the power of the auto industry in the United States, Charles Erwin Wilson (1890–1961) made the following statement, demonstrating my point: “For years I thought that what was good for our country was good for General Motors, and vice versa. The difference did not exist” (italic added). In 2020, the owner of Amazon.com could make similar claim. Thus, also it was no surprise that during the economic crisis of 2008, America saved the most successful entrepreneurs of the time, with the logic being that they were too big for America to sustain their failure, even if it meant spending trillions and not billions. The theater, then, is the arena for the naked self as a free economic entrepreneur, a free political player, and a free socio-cultural citizen, able to pursue, maintain, and expand their life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness.

While re-reading this chapter, I thought about how I might conclude it, but unlike my process in the other two chapters, I did not imagine or daydream. I did not need to: I undertook graduate studies in the United States from mid-1970s to mid-1980s; I have traveled to the States as a scholar participating in many conferences, lectured in American graduate classes from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s, and have been closely observing American politics and society from Ottawa, Canada, since the mid-1990s. I witnessed the resignation and then pardoning of a president—Richard Milhous Nixon (1913–1994)—while a graduate student of Political Thought and Political Science and I have observed two impeachments—William Jefferson Clinton (b. 1946) and the presidency of Donald John Trump (b. 1946), particularly the bizarre way of his leaving office in 2021—and have observed how in those cases expediency almost inhibited the correct course of action.
It has been challenging to remain as objective, calm, and distant as I was when assessing the other two civilizations. One reason is precisely because of those familiarities, which positioned me too close to the American civitas. A more immediate reason relates to the fact that I am writing these words when America is in the grip of three striking crises: Accidentally, in my judgment, someone has assumed the office of president who lacks both the patriotism and personal attachment to America of Washington or that of Lincoln. In the first section of the book, I made a distinction between capitalism and mercantilism. President Washington was a capitalist and remained one even while he was the highest officer of the land and in fact employed his capitalism at the service of his office. In contrast, President Trump is a mercantilist who is using the office at the service of his mercantilism. Meanwhile, the United States is in the grip of the COVID-19 pandemic without proper leadership, which has led also to its greatest economic hardship, which might ultimately be even worse than the Great Depression. What has kept it going thus far has been the enormous economic boom of the information revolution, which has made America the richest polity on earth. Thirdly, the country is also in the grips of a cultural divide in terms of race relations, ironically during and in the aftermath of the election of Barack Hussein Obama (b. 1961), the first Black president in American history (in office for two terms, 2009–2017). I am finishing this chapter during the week of the murder of George Floyd, an innocent Black man who died of asphyxiation from sustained pressure when his neck and back were compressed by Minneapolis police officers during his arrest on May 26, 2020. In fact, I have just finished watching the evening news report about demonstrations not only in more than 140 cities in the United States but in many places throughout the world against this injustice. Could I ignore all these, rise above these accidents, and draw some general observations about the American civitas? I would try my best!

I would like to repeat what I mentioned before: The American experience is an enormous human achievement and for me the pinnacle of the civitas of modernity, yet it is not free from the dangers of the reductionism of modernism and the threat of being overtaken by the appetite for power and dominance, which is endemic to the very idea of modernity. The French philosopher Michel Foucault, who voices the generally accepted view that modernity revived the heritage of Greece and Rome, attributes this to different sources: “One should not forget that, generally speaking, the Roman model, at the Enlightenment, played a dual role: in
its republican aspect, it was the very embodiment of liberty; in its military aspect, it was the ideal schema of discipline" (1995: 146). I think, however, he has failed to see the danger of the very message of modernity for sanctifying and even glorifying the “ordinary life,” thus tending to overplay the needs of the body (labor) and the want of the mind (work) at the price of underplaying the aspirations of the soul (action). The heroic action of humans to atone for the disasters of the past and initiate new beginnings that encourage presence in the political is reduced to spectacles of human appearance, popular context, and the highest number of “likes” on Facebook or Twitter.

Indeed, due to an overemphasis on power, prosperity, and popularity, modernity has created monstrous injustices. The following observation by Schweitzer is strikingly prescient, given that at the time he wrote, modern civilization has not yet displayed the atrocities that followed, such as World War II, Holocaust, long wars and destruction in Bosnia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and other places: “Who can describe the injustice and cruelties that in the course of centuries they [the people of color] have suffered at the hands of Europeans?… If a record could be compiled of all that has happened between the white and the colored races, it would make a book containing numbers of pages which the reader would have to turn over unread because their contents would be too horrible” (Schweitzer 1923: 199).

I am aware that in its best moments, modernity has enhanced “life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness.” This, however, is only arbitrated by and measured against human dignity secularly defined, the freedom of others, and pragmatism that is directed at increasing efficiency and the bottom line. It is not surprising that the most prevalent trends of thought and practice in the modernity and the United States strive to guarantee negative freedom, utilitarianism, and pragmatism. In other words, the dominant impulse is to resist restraints on the “naked self,” even if warranted by the latest scientific findings, whether about the environment (pollution and the carbon footprint) or human health (e.g., pandemics). The goal is the highest pleasure for the highest number of people and the least pain for smallest number of people, which means pursuing measures that lead to efficiency. Consider how President Gerald Ford (1913–2006) pardoned Nixon for the sake of expediency, even though the legal system had proved him guilty of breaking the sanctity of his office, and how in the impeachment of President Trump, Congress has been guided by expediency and not pragmatism, despite the fact that it is obvious that
the highest office of the land has been compromised and misused. I understand expediency as a last resort for dire circumstances, always shortsighted. If Lincoln were motivated by expediency, he would never have delivered the “House Divided Speech” of June 16, 1858, when accepting the Senate nomination in the Republican State Convention. As was his practice, Lincoln read the speech to his law partner William H. Herndon (1818–1891) before delivering it. Herndon considered Lincoln morally courageous but politically incorrect, but Lincoln delivered the speech, nevertheless. As Herndon predicted, it cost him the election, but he did the right thing, and doing the right thing was the principle at stake. Lincoln was guided by conviction and reason, not expediency: “I have told them that a house divided against itself cannot stand, and Christ and Reason say the same.”

Now, could I imagine myself living in and being part of the success story that is the United State? I am afraid for as far as making my home there might go, I could not, but as a visitor, I will always be honored to experience a place made so amazing by the working together of “openness and freedom.” I have been lucky enough to visit many times over the past few decades, and I hope to do so again. I have had the honor of participating in the great conversation about the human condition and of experiencing the great minds the modernity civitas has produced in highly significant institutions of learning and research from Cambridge (Harvard University) in the East to Los Angeles (University of California) in the West, and from Chicago (the University of Chicago) in the North to Austin (the University of Texas) in the South, along with many other great places in between. For me, these exemplify the spirit of the modern civitates that is the United States of America.

In the final analysis, my main objection here is not so much against the impressive and admirable American experience as it is against the process of modernity, with the stains such as Holocaust, Nazism, mental health, and human loneliness, which stem from its reduction of humanity and the

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3 This speech is also significant in that Lincoln shows the distinction between “pragmatism” (prudence) and “expediency” (opportunism). The first demands that one be a realist, which means weighing all aspects of existing resources and shortcomings, while the second sees only short-term gains and scoring of points. Realism is different from what I call factualism. Factually, the United States is the richest nation, but COVID-19 has shown that when reality sets in, this does not mean much. Modernity works successfully and in balance if one is a realist; if not, then it is reduced to modernism and ideology of turning modernity into instrument of power.
world into mechanical processes, instruments and success. Commenting on the experience of slavery in the modern world, Braudel points to “indifferent to human sacrifice, operating by the almost mechanical logic of” the world economy of modernity, so dominated in the United States (1981, Volume 3: 393).

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