A Moderate Communitarian Proposal

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A MODERATE COMMUNITARIAN PROPOSAL

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ON SOME OF THE long-debated issues between libertarians and communitarians, the two sides are narrowing—if not "settling"—their differences.[1] Recognizing this progress makes it possible to focus on the "remaining" issues that contain some rather challenging and less often discussed topics. Among the issues in which convergence is already progressing are the social nature of the person (an ontological issue), the relations between a community-based definition of virtue and ones provided by individuals (a normative issue), the need to balance individual rights with social and personal responsibilities, and the ways to defend against community majoritarianism. This essay focuses on two of the "remaining" issues: the source of values that contextuate communities and the implications of one's characterization of human nature for the issues at hand.

In this essay, I circumvent the customary review of the relevant literature on the grounds that such reviews have been carried out often and very well.[2] Instead, I proceed directly to a modest suggestion for a moderate communitarian position.

THE "I&WE" (THE ONTOLOGICAL ISSUE)[3]

Some communitarians take "community rather than the individual as their basic theoretical concept" (Daly 1994, ix). Phillips (1993, 175), in his appraisal of the communitarian position, criticizes Bellah, MacIntyre, Sandel, Taylor, and others for "ascrib[ing] supreme value to the community itself

AUTHOR'S NOTE: In drafting this essay, I benefited greatly from the comments of William Galston, Hans Joas, Daniel A. Bell, W. Bradford Wilcox, William Thomas, Daniel Doherty, and David E. Carney.

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rather than to its individual members." On the other hand, libertarians tend to ignore community or assign it secondary status as a derivative, the result of an aggregation of individual choices, transactions, or other such deliberate and voluntary acts.[4] Bentham wrote that "community is a fiction," while others from Sartre to Nozick consider "community" (or at least the claims of others) a burden if not a "hell." As Nozick (1974, 32-33) suggests, "There is no social entity. . . . There are only individual people, different individual people, with their own individual lives." Note that at issue here is a question of ontology, not normative issues of what is legitimate, what the combination ought to be.

The opposition between those who consider community a supreme social necessity and those who argue it is either superfluous or nonexistent is unnecessarily sharp. If one views the community as merely an aggregation of individuals joined for their convenience, one leaves out the sociological need for affective (nonrational) bonds as counterweight to centrifugal forces that seek to disperse communities. One also does not take into account the pivotal role of these bonds in sustaining common values that in turn provide criteria for community-wide shared decisions and policies.

> Persons are social beings who for that reason have obligations toward each other. Autonomy does not exist in a vacuum but is developed, enunciated, and ultimately exercised in our common life together. To deny the social nexus of autonomy is threatening both to the social nexus and to autonomy. Persons cannot truly be persons outside their social nexus or outside their community, and the community cannot exist, develop, thrive, and grow without the unique contributions of the individuals within it. (Loewy 1994, 123)

If, alternatively, one sees the community as the source of social order and authority and seeks to impose its behavioral standards on individuals for the sake of civil order, one leaves an insufficient basis for individual freedom and individual rights. Such a community would also be deficient in its innovative and creative capacity, and in its response to a changing world, by constricting the evolution of differing positions, which could in time replace the community's core values, thereby enhancing its adaptability to a constantly changing world. (It should be stated explicitly that I draw here on a modified functional theory, arguing that if the said needs for order, innovation, and so on are not provided for, then the society will be deficient. The main difference between this approach and traditional functional theory is that this approach does not expect that deficient societies will necessarily self-destruct; they may just function poorly with the nature of their dysfunctions to be predicted by their deficiencies.)

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This polarization of viewpoints would be superseded if one takes as the theoretical starting point—as the primary concept—the admittedly more complex concept of a self congenitally contextuated within a community, a view that accords full status to both individuals and their shared union. Following Buber's designation of the "I and Thou,"[5] I use the notation the "I&We" to capture the tensed but also inevitable bond between these two poles of social existence. The "I" stands for the individual members of the community. The "We" signifies social, cultural, political, and hence historical and institutional forces that shape the collective factor—the community. The concept of I&We highlights the assumption that individuals act within a social context, that this context is not reducible to individual acts, and, most significantly, that the social context is not necessarily imposed or derived from voluntary or conscious transactions among individuals. Instead, the social context is to a significant extent perceived as a legitimate and integral part of one's existence, as a "We" rather than a "They."

The I&We synthesis does not entail the kind of nirvana harmony, based on idealized "fraternal sentiments and fellow feeling" and an absence of the social conflicts associated with modern life, that some have ascribed to communities (Sandel 1982, 130; Greenhouse, Yngvesson, and Engel 1994, 184-85). Indeed, the concept of an I&We is predicated on a deep-seated, unexpungeable, often productive tension. The tension is the result of the tendencies of at least some individuals to seek to expand their realm of unprescribed behavior and to change the community to reflect more fully their values and interests while the community attempts to extend its social/ moral prescriptions and to reformulate the individual members in line with its values and genuine or perceived needs. While the tension can be excessive and wearing (having high personal and social costs) or even lead to wars among families or among clans, up to a point the tension is creative. The uncommunitized personhood is a source of creativity and change for the community and fulfillment for the person. The communitized part of the person is a source of service for shared needs and a source of stability and support for social virtues of the community.

If we enrich this view by examining the relationship in a historical perspective, we note that communities are continuously adjusting the relationship between the centrifugal inclinations of their members and the centripetal tendencies of the community.[6] If the communities pull too far in the centripetal direction (as they did in the Soviet Union), the historical role of social critics (intellectuals, the press, dissenters) is to enhance the centrifugal forces and vice versa.[7] If neither element gains ascendancy, and if the excesses of one are corrected by shoring up the other, a balanced, responsive

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community may be sustained. For this reason, communitarians in the United States, who see *excessive* individualism in American society, call for a return to community—not because community is more fundamental but because the I&We is out of balance after decades in which self-interest and individualism gained undue primacy.[8] Thus, while the I&We paradigm assigns both the individual and the community the same basic sociological, philosophical, and moral standing, the historical context indicates which element must be nourished within a given period and culture.

The discussion so far should not imply that the relation between the individualist elements and the collective ones is one of a zero-sum game. An anarchic (or anomic) social entity may be lacking in conditions that nourish both individuals and the community. Or, to put it differently, the relationship between these two core elements is not hydraulic in the sense that as one pumps up one side, one does not necessarily reduce the other; one may construct a large vessel that enriches both sides—or loses on both sides.

The concept of community used here has been criticized by those who equate the concept of community with the social and cultural communal structures of the past and their attendant characteristics. One stream of thought asserts that communities tend to be monolithic, conformist, oppressive, intolerant of minorities, and hierarchical, suggesting even that "[communitarians] want us to live Salem" (Gutmann 1985, 319). Others accuse communitarians of seeking a nostalgic return to an imagined past. Phillips (1993, 175) attacks communitarian thinking by outlining the shortcomings of the communities of ancient Athens, the Middle Ages, and the American colonial era, claiming that "given the general absence of community in the period they [communitarians] celebrate, there can be no 'renewal' or 'restoration' of community."[9]

However, communitarians (at least the more enlightened among them) favor new communities in which all members have the same basic moral, social, and political standing. In these communities, values are reformulated and policies evolve in a free dialogue and exchange in which ideally all participate and particular groups do not impose their values. Whereas traditional communities often were homogeneous, new communities seek a balance between diversity and unity. As Gardner (1991, 11) notes, "To prevent the wholeness from smothering diversity, there must be a philosophy of pluralism, an open climate for dissent, and an opportunity for subcommunities to retain their identity and share in the setting of larger group goals."

In short, the concept of I&We seems to offer a sound middle ground between those who stress the importance of community (especially affective attachments and shared core values) and those who see individuals as free-

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standing (even if they consider them able and inclined to form social unions based on their individual considerations). The concept assumes that both elements are presented congenitally (while their relative strength varies) because they are essential to the human existence and adaptability. The relations between the two basic elements are assumed to be tensed as a built-in tug of war exists between them. Finally, it is suggested that societies function best when both elements are well represented and balanced. Analytically speaking, one can refer to the two basic elements separately and compare their features abstractly; in societies, however, all we have are different mixes of the two elements.

THE I&WE (THE NORMATIVE ISSUE)

Even if one grants that some measure of We-ness is sociologically required for a civil society, one still needs to assess its moral standing. This is more than a theoretical exercise because, as I noted earlier, societies may survive with a relatively low level of normative and social bonds but suffer various deficiencies. If commonalities of the kind at issue would be morally unacceptable, a society may choose to accept the sociological costs. What is the moral standing of shared virtues based on shared bonds and commitments to core values rather than interpersonal transactions?

Libertarians argue that communities ought not define what is considered good but that all individuals should do so for themselves. This position is based on two key arguments, briefly restated: individuals have different notions of the good life; to choose one vision of the good life would prejudice the state's treatment of those who do not share it. They would be treated unequally. Hence the state must be neutral to all visions of the good life (Dworkin 1977). Put more strongly, acting on a public consensus about the good life can only result in oppression, because the United States is a highly pluralistic nation. The state needs to be neutral to avoid brutality and must rely on the procedural virtues of tolerance, reasonableness, and fairness that secure neutrality.[10] Although there are many nuances in formulations of this position, my purpose here is to highlight major convergences in the argument and move onto other issues.

Communitarians have countered that neutrality often presupposes an ethical commitment to one side of the debate. By permitting a practice—say, divorce—on the grounds that the state must be neutral about matters of marital intimacy, the state signals that divorce is morally acceptable.[11] One

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may add that libertarian neutrality, by failing to recognize the ontological role of community, also fails to see its moral implications. If individuals do not self-select their virtues but are deeply affected by the way their social environment is constructed, reconstructing it in line with values the community shares is morally sound.[12]

Moreover, communitarians argue that the state cannot be neutral and that the definitions of the common good are both needed and not antiliberal. The procedural virtues of tolerance, fairness, and reasonableness associated with neutrality (and which libertarians do endorse) are not sufficient to order the life of the republic. They provide a thin theory of the good that cannot sustain the seedbeds of virtue on which the republic depends. The state, however carefully, must ensure that it is pursuing policies that nourish these seedbeds because societies in which individual liberties are well defended depend on strong families, a rich web of voluntary associations and other mediating structures, a well-educated citizenry, and citizens who recognize their personal and social responsibilities and not merely their rights. True, this in turn assumes that communitarians will work to ensure that the shared virtues, and the public policies and social institutions that embody them, will be crafted to protect liberties and not merely order.[13]

Although public policy is important, the common good can best be served in the realm of civil society. This is a voluntary realm, and so libertarians need not be concerned, at least not if they cease to confuse society and state or to presume that societal consensus spills willy-nilly over into state coercion.[14] The opposite is true; the more communities are intact, the less the need for state-enforced order. At the same time, this is also a communal realm (in which the values and the social bonds that undergird them, which concern social conservatives, are found). It is in this realm that commitments to the common good are seeded, nourished, and allowed to flourish. The state's role, when it comes to normative matters, is as a last resort and not as the first. Thus America's changed attitude toward drinking and driving was first reflected in a moral education campaign led by Mothers Against Drunk Driving and revolved around slogans such as "Friends don't let friends drive drunk" and moral duties such as the concept of (and social approbation for) designated drivers. Those who heed none of these face the last resort in the fight against drunk driving—a traffic stop, a Breathalyzer, and a revocation of privileges—for the common good (and to protect the rights of all others on the road).

In short, social definitions of virtue do not merely exist but can be morally justified. They need not lead to intolerance or discrimination; in effect, the normative conceptions of tolerance and fairness or justice are themselves social virtues. There is not necessarily a contradiction between social virtues

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and individual liberties. Their implications for social responsibilities and individual rights are explored next.

INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The debate over whether one should champion individual rights or dedicate oneself to promotion of social duties is another reflection of the issues just covered. Here, too, the suggestions that libertarians are too preoccupied with individual rights and that communitarians are too preoccupied with social responsibilities unnecessarily polarize the dialogue. First, rights and responsibilities often are corollaries, one assuming the other. For instance, the right to trial by a jury of one's peers is unsustainable without a duty of peers to serve on the jury.[15]

Some have argued that animals and sand have rights, yet none can undertake responsibilities (Stone and Kaufman 1988; Stone 1974, 17). However, these are exceptions to the rule. Most social relations assume reciprocity either among the parties (the right of one person to free speech is based on the claim on others to restrain their desire to prevent such speech) or between the person and the community (if citizens have a right to governmental services, they must assume—as a community—the obligation to pay for them).

Once the basic complementarity of individual rights and social responsibility is granted, the discussion can turn to numerous challenging secondary issues that arise within this context. These range from the question of whether those with long-term disadvantages have entitlements but are exempt from social responsibilities to the question of under what conditions community needs (which often prescribe social responsibilities) take priority over some limited individual rights (e.g., drug testing of those who drive school buses). These issues are not further explored here.[16]

The basic point, though, remains: individual rights and social responsibilities, just like individual liberties and social definitions of the common good, are not oppositional but complementary—or at least they can be made to be.

NO MAJORITARIANS HERE[17]

Communitarians are charged with opening the door to majoritarianism. Critics argue that, by advocating that the community should have a say over what the course of the social entity ought to be, individual and minority rights

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will be shortchanged if not disregarded. Some fear that the community would, for example, ban books from public and school libraries if such books met with majority disapproval. Note that the concern is not that some local goon or national tyrant would take over but that ordinary citizens would instruct their duly-elected city council or school board to institute policies that violate basic rights.

Glasser claims, "Communitarian really means majoritarian" (Erlich 1990, 57). In a like manner, Derber (1993, 29) contends that communitarian consent is an expression of the majority opinion about values. Machan (1991, C4) believes that individual rights and community rights are oppositional. By defining community as an aggregate of people, he argues that a community's decision is majoritarian.

As Sandel writes, "The answer to that majoritarian threat is to try to appeal to a richer conception of democracy than just adding up votes" (quoted in Moyers 1989, 155). American society has both constitutional and moral safeguards against majoritarianism that communitarians very much respect. These safeguards basically work through differentiation, that is, by defining some areas in which the majority does not and ought not have a say and those in which it does and should have a say. The United States is not simply a vote-counting majoritarian democracy but a constitutional democracy; that is, some choices, defined by the Constitution, are beyond the realm of the majority.

Clearest among these protections is the Bill of Rights, which singles out matters that are exempt from majority rule and from typical democratic rule making. The First Amendment, in its protection of the right of free speech, is a prime example of an area in which individual and minority rights take precedence. Similarly, the majority may not deny any opposition group the right to vote; even Communists were not disenfranchised in the days when they were most hated and feared.

The Constitution and our legal traditions and institutions indicate clearly, however, that other matters are subject to majority rule. Thus majorities decide at what rate the government taxes Americans, on which side of the road to drive, and at what age young adults can vote. There is neither moral nor legal support for the notion—indeed it is inconceivable—that an individual could decide for herself how much tax to pay, on which side of the road to drive, and so on.

In short, majoritarianism is held at bay by recognizing the constitutional element of our democratic system and other core values more informally endorsed that set normative limits on the course a community may choose.

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A CHALLENGE: CONTEXTUATING VALUES

The preceding discussion rests on an assumption that not all communitarians have made as clearly as possible: communities are free to follow whatever value consensus they achieve but only as long as it does not violate a particular set of overarching values.[18] These values, most clearly reflected in the Constitution, and other society-wide shared values not reflected in the Constitution, such as a commitment to stewardship over the environment, do not answer the difficult question: what is the legitimacy of these values? This question sometimes is phrased in terms as to what is the "source" of these values; one should read this query not geographically but metaphysically. What is the standing, the basis for the moral claim, of these values? How is one to differentiate between those that have a valid claim on us and those that do not?

Some find the answer in religion; others find it in natural law. But these are sources that others do not find compelling and that require further justification. Some look for the answer in empirical social scientific findings that these values, such as "thou shalt not kill," are universally respected. However, this answer also provides questionable and unsecured ground because many values are not universally accepted and offer a rather meager defense. (Surely, burning books, and even killing their authors, is quite valued in some communities, for example, contemporary Iran.)

One answer may be found in a deontological position.[19] This often is referred to in this context as referring to classical liberals and their contemporaries (who I refer to as libertarians for reasons discussed in note 1) who base their positions on universal individual rights; this is seen as contradictory to the communitarian position, which is said to see values as anchored in particular communities. I focus here on another facet of the deontological ethical position, namely, the notion that actions are morally right when they reflect principles that appear to us as morally binding. Deontology stresses that the moral status of an act should be judged not by its consequences but by the "intentions" of the agent. For example, a person who sets out to defame another is acting immorally, whether or not the person succeeds in actually damaging the one he or she seeks to defame. More significantly, in this view certain moral values present themselves to us as compelling, as if they do not require extensive debate or deliberations. For instance, should we expect, morally speaking, that people under most circumstances tell the truth rather than lie, avoid sexual harassment, do not discriminate on racial grounds, and so on? For instance, no morally reflective individual would seriously contend that lying is morally superior to truth telling except possibly in some unusual

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("limited") circumstances. Likewise, no moral person would deny that treating others with respect is a compelling moral value, although the particular behaviors derived from this principle differ from person to person.

Some may find this response no more satisfactory—or, perhaps, even less so—than those offered by religion or natural law. However, without some accounting for the reasons that one holds one set of core values as compelling versus others, the communitarian position is not fully anchored and is left open to the charge of majoritarianism and even more to the danger of relativism: whatever the community favors is moral. Such a position is untenable.

The ultimate source of the values that provide the normative context for communities may spring from religion, natural laws, or deontological normative factors.[20] A communitarian philosophy is woefully incomplete unless it at least addresses the question: how is the commitment to core values justified in moral terms?

A CARDINAL CHALLENGE: HUMAN NATURE

As Wolfe (1995) indicates in his article "Human Nature and the Quest for Community," every social theory and philosophy contains an implicit or explicit theory of human nature. Libertarians, as different as Hayek and Rawls, assume that people are basically benign and rational and hence urge the government not to interfere with their choices and to allow individuals to set the personal and collective courses on their own. Libertarians typically blame the social structure for deviant or criminal behavior. Their most recommended treatment is to roll back the corrupting state or to change society rather than to blame the individual. Individuals need to be informed and empowered because they are inherently inclined to do what is right and benign.

By contrast, many social conservatives, from Hobbes to Hauerwas, assume that people are, if not nasty and brutish, at least governed by impulses and other irrational forces. While social conservatives seek to indoctrinate people with values, they tend to assume that human nature cannot be "perfected" and that hence there is a congenital need to "keep the lid on" by the use of public authorities.

Still other social philosophers and theorists make different assumptions about human nature, but it is difficult to complete a social philosophical position without an examination of its implications or explicit assumptions about the fundamental and given qualities of persons and societies. Communitarians assume that human nature is to a significant extent socially constituted. However, this position is insufficiently specified.

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One answer to the question "To what extent is human nature socially constituted versus given?" is offered by a range of postmodern philosophers who argue that people are fully "constructed"—that is, determined by their culture—or at least that views of human nature reflect assumptions and values (those drummed into people or implicit in the culture). It follows that human nature is rather unstable and malleable. Rorty (1989, 50), for example, has called for "a repudiation of the very idea of anything—mind or matter, self or world—having an intrinsic nature to be expressed or represented." In fact, few postmodern theorists even refer to "human nature," instead predicting the "death of man" or the demise of the Western humanist assertion of the primacy of a thinking individual with an underlying transcendental self.[21]

In addition, many contemporary social philosophers and social scientists refuse to accord human nature any inherent qualities. Some argue that once one assumes that there is a specific human nature, the next step is to argue that there are particular attributes that differentiate people by their nature—for instance, that men have a nature different from that of women (or that Blacks have a nature different from that of Whites). This, in turn, opens the door to various discriminatory positions. For instance, if women are "natural" mothers but men are not equally "natural" fathers, this may be used to urge that women should be relegated to parenting and discouraged from working outside the household. To guard against such a position, some feminists have argued that there is nothing "especially natural about women's relationships with each other, with children or with men" (Jaggar 1983, 130).[22]

The problem with proceeding in this way is that if human nature is conceived to be infinitely malleable, an assessment of human nature can play no role in social criticism or value judgments. As Iacobucci (1992, 12) argues in another context,

> At its crudest expression, one finds the argument that as there is no objective reality outside the knower, it is impossible to agree on any objective standards. "You have your opinion and I have mine. . . . Who's to say who is right and who is wrong?"

If this is the case, there is no Archimedian point where one can criticize social practices—slavery, racial discrimination, and so on—without being accused of ethnocentrism or insensitivity to the values of other communities.

It is true that the understanding of human nature is hindered because it is encountered only in specific cultural settings; most would agree that this significantly affects what is reflected in human behavior. (Those who assume that behind each specific behavior lies a specific gene may reach a fundamentally different position.) However, the fact that conclusions about human

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nature can be reached only indirectly does not mean that one cannot glean what it is and draw conclusions from what one is able to establish.

In my view, it is fruitful to assume that there is a universal set of basic human needs (that animals do not share), that have attributes of their own that are independent of the social structure, cultural patterns, or socialization processes.[23] *People*—men and women, Black, Brown, Yellow, White, and so on—*all are basically the same under all the layers that cultures foster and impose on persons*. To explicate the reasons these are universally found would require another essay, but briefly: if they are not present, a human nature does not develop. A great deal of evidence demonstrates that people of different eras, societies, and conditions exhibit the same basic inclinations (Inkeles and Smith 1974). Hence one cannot find in human nature a justification for viewing one group of people as inherently inferior to others or to treat them as such. This notion is well captured in the refrain "We are all God's children" and in the religious ideal of condemning the sin but reaching out to the sinner. Some acts are intolerable, but people are not. More significantly, it is these basic attributes that yield the productive tension between the individual and the community.

While one cannot directly observe a basic human nature because it is never encountered in a raw, unprocessed form, a variety of observations indirectly suggests its qualities. One main relevant finding is that when socialization and social control mechanisms slacken or break down, behavior tends to slide not randomly but in predictable directions that indicate the nature of human nature. Thus the fact that so many priests in diverse societies and eras in religious institutions that prohibit sex do indulge in one form of sexual expression or another informs us about human nature. So does the fact that religion, magic, and culture are irrepressible despite numerous attempts in Nazi Germany and the former Soviet Union to suppress them.[24]

Even in totalitarian societies that monopolized control of educational institutions, suppressed alternative sources of values, and maintained tight control of all forms of media and communication, combined with iron-fisted social and political control, these regimes were unable to sustain social cultures and institutions that were incompatible with the underlying human nature. Indeed, as these societies persisted in maintaining their unresponsive cultures, human nature asserted itself and contributed to the failure of these regimes.

The question has been raised as to whether the preceding observation applies to China. As I see the history of China, it is but one large sequence of rebellions, uprisings, and repressions—a cycle that, one sadly notes, has not yet ended. The same holds for numerous other authoritarian and totalitarian societies. Democracies are inherently more stable once they are fully

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established. For instance, whatever "uprisings" the United States experienced domestically did not involve a change of those in power at the national level by the use of force, which is common in undemocratic societies. (As these observations are post hoc, it might be useful to provide here a prediction of a series of future events: if the position advanced here is valid, then fundamentalist Muslim regimes, such as the one in Iran, also will prove to be unsustainable.) An examination of these regimes in comparison to those that did persist allows one to draw additional insights into the nature of human nature.

How does this view of human nature bear on the communitarian position? As human nature has immutable characteristics, the concept anchors the relationship between the individual and the community. If human nature were pliable, the tension inherent in the concept of the I&We could be dissolved by wholly merging the individuals into the culture premolded by the community.

A close observation of human nature provides a number of additional implications as well. There is a strong accumulation of evidence that people have a deep-seated need for social bonds (or attachments) and that they have a compelling need for normative (or moral) guidance. The evidence also suggests that they are unable to fulfill any of the conditions various libertarian models presume (such as capacity to render rational choices or to separate many of one's preferences from those that are culturally endorsed and so on).[25]

The observation that human nature has specific attributes does not mean that we need to approve of them or embrace them. For instance, the fact that people cannot make even a nearly rational decision may lead one either to seek systems that require less rational capacity, to develop knowledge technologies that will assist fragile humans, or to argue that decisions should be made by those who are most rational.

How should we respond to the basic human need for attachment and for values? Both are mixed blessings, but neither needs to be confronted directly. The need for attachment and normative guidance is at the foundation of families, neighborhoods, voluntary associations, communities, and many of the institutions that basically enrich human life (and potentially ennoble it) (Galston 1992, A52). We need to guard against excesses (e.g., conformism, fads, unjust notions that are implicit in the culture and that deserve critical and normative examination). However, none of these is severe enough or sufficiently resistant to amelioration that one should seek to do without a concept of human nature (let alone try to eradicate its basic features). In short, the communitarian self—part conformist, part creative and critical—is a rather empirically well-grounded concept and one on which a communitarian philosophy can build constructively.

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NOTES

1. The terms "liberals," "classical liberals," "contemporary liberals," and "libertarians" all have been used to characterize the critics of communitarians. These labels are confusing; for instance, many readers do not realize that the labels are not confined to or even necessarily inclusive of those who are called liberals in typical daily parlance. Most importantly, because the defining element of the position is the championing of the individual, "libertarian" seems both the least obfuscating term and the one that is substantively most appropriate.

2. For an overview of various strains of political thought that grapple with the issue of community, see Fowler (1991). See also Avineri and de-Shalit (1992). For detailed accounts of the works of several prominent communitarians including Sandel, MacIntyre, Taylor, and Walzer, see Mulhall and Swift (1992). Also of interest is Bell (1993), particularly the author's introduction.

3. For a prior discussion of this topic, see Etzioni's (1988) *The Moral Dimension*. Additionally, Strong (1990) proposes some similar analysis in the first chapter of *The Idea of Political Theory*.

4. Indeed, much of neoclassical economics, psychology, and important segments of other social science literature is reductionist; that is, it maintains that the explanatory factors are individual and either denies the need for collective concepts or depicts them as the result of aggregations of individual transactions. For a communitarian critique of liberalism on this count, see Sandel (1984). For an example of this kind of liberal community, see Gauthier (1992). Others who have faulted liberalism for its failure to acknowledge community include Unger (1975) and Taylor (1989).

5. See Buber (1937).

6. For a review of early communitarian ideas, see Iacobucci (1992). See also Price (1977), who argues that thinkers of the past, from Burke to Tocqueville to Durkheim, have stressed that no society will thrive in the absence of vital social bonds and ends.

7. This notion of balance is supported by a notation that often accompanies statements about Locke, Smith, and other classical liberals: they were writing during a period in which community was overpowering and, hence, dissent focused on individualism.

8. See Bellah (1985) and articles recently published in the communitarian quarterly, *The Responsive Community*.

9. McClain (1994, 1030) joins the refrain, observing that in "the new communitarian appeal to tradition, communities of 'mutual aid and memory,' and the Founders, there is a problematic inattention to the less attractive, unjust features of tradition."

10. See Rawls's (1971) *A Theory of Justice*. Rawls's writings are very opaque, and his thinking has developed over time on this issue. There is a small industry trying to interpret his position on the issue at hand. No attempt is made here to review the nuances of positions attributed to him.

11. For a further discussion of this topic, see Sandel's (1982) *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*.

12. Etzioni's (1988) *The Moral Dimension* presents a more detailed analysis of this topic.

13. Hollenbach's (1994-95) "Civil Society: Beyond the Public-Private Dichotomy" in *The Responsive Community* provides an analysis of this topic.

14. For an example of the confusion of society and state, see "The Politics of Restoration" (1994-95) in *The Economist* and the author's subsequent letter to the editor published in *The Economist* (Etzioni 1995).

15. During the highly individualistic period of the recent past, Americans have often claimed this right while rejecting the responsibility (Janowitz 1983, 8). For a more general discussion,

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see Oaks (1991) and Glendon (1991). For a popular nonacademic treatment of the subject, see Etzioni (1993).

16. For further exploration of the topic, see Etzioni (1991, 1993, esp. 163-91) and Glendon (1991).

17. For a more extensive treatment of the problem of majoritarianism, see Etzioni (1993, esp. 49-52).

18. For example, some communitarians have afforded individual rights insufficient legitimacy, raising the specter of oppressive communities in conflict with basic rights. MacIntyre (1984) claims that "natural or human rights . . . are fictions" (p. 70) and that "every attempt to give good reasons for believing that there are such rights has failed" (p. 69). Individual rights are left unprotected in Walzer's (1983, 312) theory of justice, as his treatment of personal autonomy (representing one type of individual rights) demonstrates: "Justice is relative to social meanings. . . . Every substantive account of distributive justice is a local account." Bound to the particular social meanings of the community, then, individuals may be unable to evaluate the moral standing of their community, which may deserve criticism.

19. See also Rawls (1980, 1992). Deontology is a major school of ethics akin to utilitarianism in its scope; it encompasses different subschools (e.g., act deontology vs. rule deontology) and has its share of internal differences (Beauchamp 1982). To do justice to but one of its leaders, Kant, would take us far afield. Instead of engaging here in a major digression on ethics, the discussion focuses on the one element of deontology used here (Charles Taylor, personal communication).

20. There is also a substantial school of thought, which addresses this issue, known as virtue ethics. For an examination of this position, the works of Nussbaum (1992) and Williams (1972, 1981) provide an excellent presentation.

21. Postmodernists take as their point of origin Nietzsche (1986, sec. 2), who criticized philosophers because they "involuntarily think of 'man' as an aeterna veritas, as something that remains constantly in the midst of flux, as a sure measure of things."

22. For a fuller explanation and excellent summary of the Socialist feminist position on human nature, see Jaggar (1983, 123-67); also see Regan (1993).

23. In "Human Functioning and Social Justice: In Defense of Aristotelian Essentialism," Nussbaum (1992) formulates an account of human functioning that she calls the "thick vague theory of the good." She begins her theory with two facts. First, "We do recognize others as human across many divisions of time and space. . . . Second, we do have a broadly shared general consensus about the features whose absence means the end of a human form of life" (pp. 214-15).

24. It must be noted here that the universality of basic values does not apply to secondary values, which can be created and maintained through socialization.

25. For a discussion of the issue and references to the literature, see Etzioni (1988).

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