

A stylized, light blue globe with white latitude and longitude lines is positioned on the left side of the cover, partially overlapping the text.

MIXED

NEWS

**THE
PUBLIC /
CIVIC /
COMMUNITARIAN
JOURNALISM DEBATE**

JAY BLACK, EDITOR

Mixed News

The Public/Civic/Communitarian Journalism Debate

Jay Black, Editor

 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group
New York London

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Preface

This project originated in 1994, with a request to the Ethics and Excellence in Journalism Foundation in Oklahoma City, to support a series of public lectures on a controversial topic that was starting to emerge within daily journalism. The grant request was somewhat narrow; the grant proposal sought support to explore:

... one of the central ethical issues of journalism today: To what extent is the ethical journalist an isolated “individualist,” and to what extent is he/she a “communitarian” or a committed member of the wider community? This issue has generated a great deal of discussion and debate within newsrooms and classrooms, and much confusion in the general community. Traditional journalists advocate avoiding any real or apparent conflicts of interest, which many take to mean journalists should refrain from membership in community groups and even refrain from voting. Contemporary (often market-driven) journalists approve closer involvement in their communities, often as an “image building” technique. Some philosophers advocate the ethics of independence and individualism for “professional” journalists, and others insist upon “communitarianism” and commitment to local and generalized “communities” as a prerequisite for citizenship. Some say involvement is fine for publishers and editors, but not for reporters; others say everyone is and should be a stakeholder. There’s been a lot of shouting about the issue. Is it any wonder there is confusion?

Fortunately, the Ethics and Excellence in Journalism Foundation board agreed that this narrow issue should be systematically examined in a series of public lectures and, later, in published form. Even more fortunately, the speakers invited to the University of South Florida’s St. Petersburg campus had the good sense to broaden the subject matter to cover the expansive territory found within these pages. All of them—and a couple of others, who were drafted into service for contributions to the book but missed out on the chance to visit sunny St. Petersburg (a situation that shortly will be rectified)—addressed the independence/interdependence issue. However, they all had the professional and academic insight to identify the issues much more fully.

Individually and collectively, the contributors to this project addressed such topics as the nature and needs of the individual vs. the nature and needs of the broader society; theories of communitarianism vs. Enlightenment liberalism; independence vs. interdependence (vs. co-dependency); negative vs. positive freedoms; Constitutional mandates vs. marketplace mandates; universal ethical values vs. situational and/or professional values; traditional values vs. information age values; ethics of management vs. ethics of worker bees; commitment and compassion vs. detachment and professional “distance;” conflicts of interest vs. conflicted disinterest; and “talking to” vs. “talking with.”

All of the former topics are interesting in their own right, but become much more fascinating when applied to the frenetic field of daily journalism. As more than one of the authors herein maintains, journalism operates at a pace and under a set of professional standards that all but preclude the careful, systematic examination of its own rituals and practices. (That isn’t just academic talk; look at chapters 8, 10, and 11 for evidence that three veteran journalists, with a century of practical experience among them, share the concern that all too often the journalistic life is left unexamined.) The examination herein should advance the enterprise, and help student and professional observers to work through some of the most perplexing dilemmas to have faced the news media and public in recent times.

To a person, the contributors to this project recognize that journalism is important to democracy, that things are not going as well as they should be, that some new techniques and theories are being tried out, that some of them are better than others, and that along the way we’d better not lose sight of journalism’s fundamental missions and mandates. Beyond that, they differ enormously in their assessment of how serious the problems are and how valid are the industry’s responses to them.

With all due respect to our valued colleagues Clifford Christians, John Ferré, and Mark Fackler, whose seminal work on communitarian journalism was titled *Good News: Social Ethics & the Press* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), the title chosen for the present volume and lecture series was *Mixed News: The Public/Civic/Communitarian Journalism Debate*. That title was selected not only because the jury was still out on whether the current ferment in journalism is good news or bad news or something in between, but also because there seems to be little agreement on what the movement “is.” As we see in the following chapters, and in the massive annotated bibliography, the nascent movement has gone by various names: public journalism, civic journalism, communitarian journalism, community journalism, even good-journalism-done-the-way-it-ought-to-have-been-done-all-along. (A couple of our contributors debate why the “thing” needs a name at all; editor Buzz Merritt

and academic Jay Rosen once agreed that they ought to just call it “banana” and get on with it.)

Semantics notwithstanding, *Mixed News* attempts to bring some cutting edge voices to bear on a significant contemporary issue in public life. Unlike previous books and monographs, which have tended toward unbridled enthusiasm about public journalism, and trade press articles, which have tended toward pessimism, *Mixed News* offers strong voices on several sides of the complex debate. Better yet—if it works as anticipated—it will help professional and lay readers reach common ground on the issue.

The Book’s Chapters

Jim Carey, one of our most thoughtful commentators on journalism and public life, argues that community, public, and journalism are inextricably linked. He explores the dilemma of community that has always disbelieved Americans, whom he describes as people who are always building a city on a hill and then promptly trying to figure out a way to get out of town. He asks us to consider what values we try to articulate and express through the word *community* that seem to be available to us nowhere else, and what the place of journalism should be in establishing and maintaining community.

Clifford Christians, a noted scholar whose works on media ethics are passionate and theologically informed, explores journalists’ need to understand the “common good” in these days of rampant individualism. He urges public spirited journalists to recognize that they and their communities may gravitate toward self-interest; therefore, to be truly ethical, they should take universal values into account, and do their utmost to facilitate discourse that mitigates against isolationism.

Lou Hodges, an interdisciplinary ethicist, analyzes several fractures in contemporary society, and journalism’s role in fomenting and cementing them. He proposes relying on communitarian/liberal democratic frameworks and the biblical notion of the “kingdom of God” as a general guide for journalists who have not resolved the question of how humanity can be simultaneously individual and social.

John Merrill, author of more than thirty books on journalism, ethics, and international communication, maintains that the communitarianism espoused by press critics is a vague rhetorical—but dangerous—war against Enlightenment liberalism and the fundamental foundations of a free press. Long a spokesperson for individualism, Merrill argues that pleas for a responsible press are in reality pleas for a weak, monolithic, and eviscerated press.

Ralph Barney, whose chapter titled “A Dangerous Drift? The Sirens’

Call to Collectivism" leaves little doubt as to his thinking on the matter, joins Merrill in a serious critique of communitarianism and the public journalism movement. Barney, who has worked extensively in media ethics and in communication of developing countries, worries that collective thinking is eliminating self-determination in journalism, at a serious cost to truth, First Amendment freedoms, and democracy.

Rob Anderson, Bob Dardenne, and Mike Killenberg, co-authors of the 1994 book *The Conversation of Journalism: Communication, Community, and News*, take a pragmatic middle ground, showing how the public journalism movement is a natural response to the communications crises wrought by out-of-touch media. The three authors wonder why most political theorists overlook the newspaper's potential as the most natural vehicle for reestablishing connections among a community's stakeholders; they propose numerous examples of how to enable a "conversational commons."

Ted Glasser, director of Stanford University's graduate program in journalism, and Stephanie Craft, a veteran journalist and PhD candidate at Stanford, ponder the irony of a public journalism movement in an industry that, despite its Constitutional protections, remains "private, closed, and generally unexamined." A good overview of the public journalism movement is followed by an examination of the newspaper's editorial voice and a plea for the sort of openness and public accountability the press demands of other democratic institutions.

Herbert Altschull, who toiled in the vineyards of newspaper, radio, television, wire service, and magazine journalism before joining the academy, analyzes the news industry's "crises of conscience," and asks whether community journalism provides an answer. Altschull wonders whether some of the illusions that have accompanied journalism to this point in history ought to be tossed overboard; among those he questions are unbiased and objective news media whose reporters and editors are supposed to maintain a non-political stance in their own communities. The motive of "Big Money" perplexes Altschull, who says one vehicle to consider is good, old-fashioned, low budget talk radio.

Bob Steele, who directs the ethics programs at the Poynter Institute for Media Studies, brings his academic and media insights to bear on the ethics of the civic journalism movement. Rather than polarize such issues as detachment and involvement, he suggests placing the "buzz words" on a continuum and seeing whether debates over public journalism can be based on common ground. The ethical principle of journalistic independence becomes problematic, but if carefully considered should help news media serve society as intended, Steele maintains.

"Buzz" Merritt, the Wichita, Kansas editor who more than any other working journalist has led the public journalism bandwagon, insists that

public journalism, independence, and civic capital are three ideas in complete harmony. The author of *Public Journalism & Public Life* worries that many critics and some practitioners of public journalism have not taken the philosophic journey necessary to understand the movement; weakly articulated and badly executed practices have added fuel to the critics' fires. Merritt's base line: Journalism should be done in ways calculated to help public life go well; it should engage citizens in public life.

Paul McMasters, First Amendment Ombudsman for the Freedom Forum and, like Merritt and Altschull a working journalist for three decades, suggests we all take a closer look at history before tossing in the towel and giving up on our Constitutional heritage. He sees public journalism as a natural outgrowth of contemporary concerns over slippage in press credibility and influence. He says journalism should not voluntarily relinquish its First Amendment rights, but it should also never forget that the press garners its support by exercising its responsibilities, not its freedoms. In some of the book's most poignant passages, he offers eight "cautions" to those who would embrace public journalism.

Lee Wilkins of the University of Missouri combines her research and teaching interests in media ethics and environmental communications in an essay that demonstrates how the communitarian philosophy is a natural fit for journalists interested in the broadest community—the environment. Environmental journalism calls on a different set of values than is routinely employed by news reporters, Wilkins says. She notes that those values tend to be nurturing and feminist in nature, so a "woman's moral universe" is applied to significant issues of public concern. Why, she asks, should not the same be true of other forms of journalism?

Deni Elliott, of the University of Montana, draws from her work in the ethics of journalism, health care, and other professions to make a strong argument against what she calls "compassionate journalism." In an essay whose theoretical focus bridges those of Merrill, Barney, Steele, and McMasters, she notes that journalists have unique professional duties that are too readily compromised by public claims for attention and support. The best journalism, she maintains, tells people what they need to know so they can participate in self-governance. That means news media should not participate in institutional unfairness such as occurs when they use their influence to advance the cause of one needy or sick individual while ignoring others in similar situations.

In other words...

Other voices inform the debate. A series of "Voices," journalistic interviews with practitioners and critics of public journalism, is interspersed

Preface

throughout the text. (It might be noted that some of the practitioners are among the movement's most strident critics.)

At the conclusion to each essay is found a series of quotes from a wide variety of sources; "In other words..." augments each chapter by adding ideas and insights that support and contradict the points raised by each chapter author.

Finally, we offer an extended annotated bibliography of books, monographs, academic and trade articles, and reports and speeches on public/civic/communitarian journalism.

Acknowledgments

The primary benefactor of this project has already been singled out. Again, however, a special thanks goes to the Ethics and Excellence in Journalism Foundation for its willingness to support the lecture series and book preparation.

University of South Florida graduate students in journalism deserve special recognition, particularly Lee Peck, Rick Kenney, Lynn Waddell, and Eric Eyre. All four are veteran newspaper reporters who returned to graduate school to answer some of their vexing questions about their chosen profession. All received prestigious Poynter Fellowships to support their graduate studies.

Lee Peck, who has gone on to join the faculty at Colorado State University, did a masterful job wading through thousands of pages of materials to prepare the annotated bibliography. When she left campus in the summer of 1995, Lynn Waddell picked up the task, and updated the bibliography until the spring of 1996, when the deadline overtook us all. Meanwhile, Lynn conducted several interviews and drafted the "Voices" segments to which her byline is attached.

Rick Kenney, who completed his masters degree studies and moved on to doctoral work at the University of Georgia, also contributed to the "Voices" segments. His major task, which he assumed with talent and energy, was tracking down elusive references and changing the many creative citation styles offered by our contributors into a more consistent APA style. Eric Eyre did likewise.

Credit for the design and layout of *Mixed News* goes to Molli Gamelin, who has worked with talent, grace, and good humor under a heavy deadline.

Appreciation is expressed to Jennings Bryant of the University of Alabama, communications series editor for Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, for convincing Kathleen O'Malley, LEA's acquisitions editor, that this project was worthy of publication, and to Ms. O'Malley for helping see it through to completion.

Finally, a thanks to The Ethics Center and the community of scholarship and civility that attracts many voices and many citizens to public lectures on the University of South Florida's St. Petersburg campus.

Jay Black

p.s.: An irony that cannot be ignored: Despite all the talk of interdependence and community, this manuscript has been prepared on a portable laptop computer in a cedar-lined study at an isolated log cabin nestled deep in the scenic mountains of northern Utah, linked to the outside world by an 80-year-old single-wire telephone line that is grounded by four million trees and that shorts out whenever the wind blows . . . the only place this particular writer seems to be able to escape from humanity long enough to commit to the craft. Quirks of style and oversights or mistakes of substance may be attributed to the folly of believing oneself to be independent. My wife, Leslie, and English Setter, Ginger, constitute an ideal nurturing community, and deserve public thanks for their tolerance and support.

Contributors

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Lee Wilkins is professor of journalism at the University of Missouri and co-author of *Media Ethics: Issues and Cases*. A former newspaper reporter and editor in Michigan, Oregon, and Colorado, she has done extensive research on environmental disasters and environmental risks. Her PhD in political science was earned at the University of Oregon.

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Community, Public, and Journalism

James W. Carey
Columbia University

Community is one of the most difficult, complex, and ambiguous words in our language. It is a contested concept, one that represents or gathers to it contradictory, mutually exclusive images, meanings sacred and profane by turn. For many, community has a positive image—blessed community: the restoration or creation of an ideal way of life and a redemptive form of social relations. Community names a way of life where something more and other than the values of the market—“the almighty dollar,” in common expression—holds sway. However, while community is for many a beacon of hope, it is for others, perhaps many more, a sign of despair, desperation, and despondency.

To some, and not only economic conservatives and libertarians, community is the nightmare word of the twentieth century. Press the word very hard and it yields images of communism, collectivism, and the oppressive power of the state—all the totalitarianisms of our time. However well intentioned and noble, the invocation of community yields a vector that runs from its utterance to Orwell’s (1949) *Airstrip One*, a world of total surveillance, the pitiless diremption of all forms of privacy and individuality, a world of total conformity. At the opening of 1984, Winston Smith struggles to find a space out of eyeshot and earshot of Big Brother and the omnipresent two-way television screen where “the last man in Europe” might escape the community and hold on to his dignity by making entries into that most personal thing, a written diary. All he wants is private space and a notebook, yet he finally discovers that even at such moments he is under observation from the state. At the end of the novel a transformed Winston sits mindlessly staring at the television screen in the Chestnut Tree Cafe, shorn of every defense by which the self might ward off the invasive power of the state. The Last Man in Europe, the last figure of European civilization before it was ground out in a wave of state sponsored domination, is without love, honor, reason, or conscience, the virtues that must give way to the total community. The architect of that community is O’Brien, the *intellectual* apparachik, who is

clearminded concerning the final destination of the “quest for community.”

In Orwell’s world of socially sanctioned cruelty, the only recognizable life is lived in the pubs among the proletariat, a group now rendered harmless. It is only in the pub that Winston hears anything resembling conversation, the only place it is possible to talk to anyone without surveillance. Even in the upper room, the site of Winston’s idyll with Julia, he is unknowingly under the gaze of the state. In *Airstrip One*, there is no private life, but there is no public life, either.

Community has another image in our time, equally satanic, though more benign in its typical rendition: the oppressive suffocating enclosure of the small town, Main Street, the babbity of everything we have spent a lifetime trying to escape. This is the small town of peeping ears and peeping Toms, a world of gossip, innuendo, and ostracism for all who resist its strict mandate of conformity. Such small worlds may exist even

within the largest city, for they represent everything that suppresses and suffocates us, keeps us under the perpetual surveillance of our neighbors. This suffocating image of community is brought forward each time nostalgia for the world we have lost, for the world before our fall and loss of innocence, is held out as an ideal. Community is made to represent the provincial life we have been trying to exit and to which, paradoxically, we are romantically, magnetically drawn. We are, as I have put it on other occasions, a people who are forever creating new communities and then promptly trying to figure a

We apparently want a virtual community rather than a real one . . . one that simulates or imitates qualities of a common life and a common culture without the physical or emotional geography of the small town, the centralized power of the state, or the exclusive dominion of the market.

way to get out of town. The City on the Hill that names the national aspiration also names the national nightmare.

Given these dominant images of community in the twentieth century, why does the word hang on in the language as a hope and aspiration, a

national romance? Presumably none of us aspires to the world of Orwell or Sinclair Lewis (1920), but they are the inevitable endpoints, or so it seems, to which we are dragged against our will by the invocation of community. If it is the case that none of us are looking for community, what is it we do want? We apparently want a virtual community rather than a real one, something less than a community as it has been historically understood but containing remnants of community life. A virtual community is one that simulates or imitates qualities of a common life and a common culture without the physical or emotional geography of the small town, the centralized power of the state, or the exclusive dominion of the market. And, a virtual community is one based on certain virtues, the virtues identified with the long tradition of civic humanism: tolerance, fellow-feeling, reason, public engagement existing alongside genuine privacy. But is it possible to pursue this image of a virtual community and still escape the fate of Winston Smith and Babbitt? That is the minefield we have to navigate.

Defining "Community"

As Robert Fowler (1991) has deftly outlined, there are a number of concepts of community currently at work among us. We inherited from the politics of the 1960s a image of the *participatory* community, a life of endless democracy in which we are fully devoted to the engagements of citizenship, participating not only in politics but in economics and all the institutions of social life. Others are searching for a community of *roots*, something that will withstand the blinding obsolescence that infects all objects and social relations. Today, the metaphor for roots is the family, though new "families" based on race, gender, and ethnicity are represented as symbols of new rooted communities. The ideal of a *religious* community, formally united in sanctified and shared belief, has, if anything, gained in adherents in recent decades, although it has always played a major part in the American imagining of the very meaning of the country. In recent years, at least since we have grown accustomed to seeing "spaceship earth" photographed via satellite from "out there," a new conception of an *ecological* community, a global community uniting everyone in shared fate of survival on a unitary planet, has taken up residence in popular imagination. Finally, and paradoxically the most potent vision of community among us is the anti-communal image of the independent self, the community of *one*. The self who has absorbed all the necessary resources of living into private capital is perhaps the most viscous and illusory of the dreams of reason that animate the nation.

I do not have much truck with any of these conceptions of community, for they all pretty much are based on a utopian vision shorn of history.

The dreams of a community of one or a community of endless participation, a fully private or fully public life, must have a common ending in totalitarianism. An ecological community is too broad and devoid of solidarity to be useful, and a religious community too narrow and exclusive to do much other than damage. A virtual community models, then, a middle way, a balance point where we can avoid the tyranny of extremes toward which we are pulled as in a gravitational field in which one pole is anchored in the market and the self and the other in the state and the social. To give this image a name, if only to provide a stick with which others can beat it, let us call it the image of a republican community.

The Republican Community

If the notion of a republican community is to avoid the nightmare world for which many would find it predestined, what meanings does it have to recover? Put differently, what does the notion of a republican community attempt, however artlessly, to express?

First, "community" attempts to hold on to and express the truism that,

however disguised by the conditions of modern living, we live fully interdependent lives. The notion of the self-sufficient individual, the self that contains within his or her own person the resources necessary to a full life, is the single most pervasive image and myth of our time. The interdependency of the self is masked by virtually all the facts and images of modern life. Put differently, modern life disguises our interdependence. It cultivates quite systematically the notion that we can live by our possessions and that our possessions include our opinions, our values, our language, our capacity to deal with trauma and tragedy, our economic means, and our political existence.

The word "community" attempts to make vivid the interdependency of all life, in war and peace, and the fact that we inevitably share a common life boat and, therefore, owe one another the terrible loyalty of passengers on a fragile craft.

economic means, and our political existence.

To live in a community is to be aware that one's life depends on the uncoordinated decencies and actions of others; that life would constantly fail without the invisible contributions of others who with us inhabit the

polity and the economy. In modern life interdependency only becomes apparent when the technology fails, the electric power goes off, the garbage workers go on strike and we are threatened by suffocation in our own filth, or, interestingly enough, in times of war, those anti-modern interludes such as World Wars I and II, when our mutual dependencies are rendered transparent by the need to consciously work toward common goals. The word “community” attempts to make vivid the interdependency of all life, in war and peace, and the fact that we inevitably share a common life boat and, therefore, owe one another the terrible loyalty of passengers on a fragile craft.

A Flawed Economic Model

In addition to this “fact” concerning our common life, the word community attempts to recover a philosophical point as well concerning the limits of individualism. Perhaps those limits can be explored indirectly through a brief but common example from economics. Classes in elementary economics almost inevitably begin by illustrating the laws of supply and demand. The teacher dutifully demonstrates how the demand curve slopes down to the left (more is demanded as the price goes down) and the supply curve upward to the right (more is supplied as the price goes up). Equilibrium between supply and demand occurs at the price where the two curves intersect. The teacher then summarizes the analysis using the two most elementary equations of the discipline: the demand equation stating that the quantity demanded of any commodity is inversely proportional to its price, and the supply equation stating that the quantity supplied of any commodity is directly proportional to its price. What is sometimes, but not always, mentioned by the teacher is that truth of these equations depends on certain assumptions that precede and support the analysis of supply and demand. The two crucial assumptions are, first of all, that, in the language of my student days, all of us are rational and, second, that tastes and preferences are given or exogenous. So stated the assumptions sound innocent enough—but what do they mean?

The assumption that all of us are rational makes a largely technical point. It states that individuals are rational in the sense that they are adept at figuring out the most efficient, economical, or costless means of getting what they want. The assumption says nothing about the rationality of ends, of what people desire; in fact, it allows that people desire the most harebrained and thoughtless sorts of things—power, prestige, emotional satisfactions of all kinds—that we rarely think of as rational. Again, the assumption merely says that once people have found an object of desire they are quite capable of calculating the most efficient, least

costly way of getting what it is they want. All people can calculate to their own advantage, and so rationality means little more than observing a contest over whose ox will be gored.

The second assumption completes the groundwork of the analysis, for it tells us that not only are people's desires, the objects of their wants, beyond the scope of reason, but every person's desires are independent of every other person's. This is what it means to state that tastes and preferences are given or exogenous to the system: To analyze the conditions of supply and demand you simply have to assume there is no logic or reason to people's tastes and preferences and each individual's desire is independent of that of every other. I like poetry, you like baseball. We will both figure out how to get what we want in the most efficient manner, at the lowest cost in terms of time, effort, and dollars. But we are otherwise unrelated to one another: You may be a means to my end and I may be a means to your end, but there is otherwise no presumed membership in a community—no desires in common, no cooperation necessary, no shared rationality except that of calculation.

Economics achieves its precision, then, at a very high price, for it paints a picture of a society without community, unless one chooses to call the market a community. It assumes people have no need for community and, furthermore, they have nothing in common with which to form a community: no common needs, no common values, no common investments in the future. When Margaret Thatcher (Rankin, 1996, p. 154) remarked a few years back at the height of her reign that "we have no need for society," she was testifying to the power of elementary economics: We only have need for individuals aggressively pursuing their own self-interest. And, if we have no need for society or, for that matter, government, we certainly have no need for that more intense and conscious form of society represented in the word community. The only necessary institution is the invisible hand of the market which, in coordinating all our disconnected needs and desires, supplies whatever community is necessary.

Insights From Social Theory

Virtually all of the major figures in the classical tradition of social theory revolted against this economic outlook. The arguments of Marx are well known. Emile Durkheim (1965) in one book, *The Division of Labor in Society*, pointed out that you could not have any economic activity without formal contracts. However, a contract presumes a common culture. In other words, without elementary particles of trust and mutual understanding, loyalty, and mutual regard, it would prove impossible to efficiently operate economic institutions in which individuals entered into

contracts with one another. Why would I enter a contract unless I presume you will fulfill your obligations without the omnipresent enforcement of the law? In a later work, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, Durkheim (1995) emphasized the necessary role that collective representations—shared beliefs and their manifestation in common symbolic forms—were to all social order. Like Durkheim, Max Weber (1974) emphasized the role religion played in providing the substratum of meanings, motivations, and mutual outlooks—the so-called Protestant ethic—on which rational economic activity was based. And even more disturbingly, he characterized a world in which instrumental reason—the kind celebrated in the economics of calculation and exchange—held sway as the iron cage of rationality: a world of Kafka rather than Adam Smith. This nightmare version of economics and politics without community has reappeared again and again in our literature most tellingly, as mentioned earlier, in Orwell's *1984*. For us, for we Americans, that is, the last word on the sustainability of economics without community, individuality without a common culture, goes to De Tocqueville (1961):

As social conditions become more equal, the number of persons increases who, although they are neither rich enough nor powerful enough to exercise any great influence over their fellow-creatures, have nevertheless acquired or retained sufficient education and fortune to satisfy their own wants. They owe nothing to any man, they expect nothing from any man; they acquire the habit of always considering themselves as standing alone, and they are apt to imagine that their whole destiny is in their own hands. Thus not only does democracy make every man forget his ancestors, but it hides his descendants, and separates his contemporaries, from him; it throws him back for ever upon himself alone, and threatens in the end to confine him entirely within the solitude of his own heart. (p. 120)

De Tocqueville's emphasis on democracy and equality ought not to mislead us. The habits of the heart of which he speaks were cultivated by an entire culture which had at its base the assumptions of individuality, rationality, and desire outlined earlier. Therefore, opposing the view of individualism embedded in economic theory and, through economics, the culture as a whole, is but a prelude to asserting an alternative and hopefully more humane view of culture and community which might contain the divisive force of individualism and technical reason. In this alternative view, reason is more than a property of the means we calculate to arrive at our ends—it is a capacity we humans possess to determine the shared ends of action. Rather than emphasizing the "givenness" of our tastes and preferences, it emphasizes how such tastes and desires

are formed within, though not determined by, the structure of community life. It asserts that from the outset we are born into human communities; that we are made human by those with whom we share common membership. The figure of Robinson Crusoe, which inspires so much of

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economics, the figure of a person wholly self-sufficient and complete unto himself, a self who has need for the labor but not the companionship of Friday, is a literary myth and a social monstrosity. All that we are, good and bad, is created, actively created, within the structures of community, which means within the structures of culture. The playwright Eugene O'Neill caught this in just about the right tones when he remarked in "The Great God Brown" that far from being self-sufficient individuals "Man is born broken. He

lives by mending. The grace of God is glue!" (O'Neill, 1959, p. 370).

I take this to summarize, however obliquely, the outlook of John Dewey (1954) on which I here so much depend, an outlook Oliver Sacks (1985) has renamed "Romantic Science." Outside of culture we are not rationally calculating creatures but characters from *Lord of the Flies* (Golding, 1964). Our most important resource in living, language, is wholly a social and collective product, and even our brains, which assumed their present biological form within culture, are incapable of functioning without the input from that culture.

Highlighting the Ordinary

The word community then, beyond its sheer romance, does some heavy-duty conceptual work. It highlights the necessary interdependence of all human living and action and, philosophically, calls into question the spiritual individualism on which American culture is based while juxtaposing that individualism to the human need for community and culture as the ground conditions for our functioning as a species.

The word community, with its linguistic roots in the common, the ordinary, the vernacular, the vulgate, the vulgar, also has the social task of cultivating respect for the intelligence and capacity of ordinary men and women.

When the émigré historian John Lukacs (1984) came to the United States following World War II, he was struck, like earlier European observers, by the tendency of Americans to overestimate the ability of ordinary men and women. He stood in a long line of European intellectuals who criticized the country because it expected ordinary people to have political capacities as citizens, moral capacities as neighbors, and intellectual capacities as students and learners that were simply beyond them. He concluded, fifty years later, that American institutions in the interim reversed themselves and now systematically underestimated the capacity of ordinary men and women whether in education or politics or cooperative work. While it is perhaps always unwise to mis-estimate the ability of people, it is far better to overestimate their abilities than to underestimate them. The word community calls us to this overestimation; it assumes that inevitably there is more wisdom in a community of tradition, in the shared and pooled intelligence of people, than there ever can be in any individual or small group, however elite.

These, then, are the criteria the notion of community must satisfy: it must express and value interdependence without sacrificing individuality; it must militate against the bias of individualism; it must cultivate respect for the capacity of ordinary people and create the institutions which call forth and nurture these capacities. This is the political work of a republican conception of community and, not so incidentally, a republican conception of the press.

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Social and Political Dimensions

In contrast to other conceptions of community, a republican community does not presume common roots or a common religion; it does not use the metaphor of the family and familial relations to conceive of community; it does not demand universal, incessant and obligatory participation; and, finally, it does not await a realization of the unity of man and nature or a universal brotherhood to realize its goals. The republican community is no more than the name of our desire, but that desire has two dimensions, one social and one political.

Socially, a republican community is organized around the principle of common social space in which people mingle and become aware of one another as inhabiting a common place. On the social side, a republican community opposes segregation, the artificial separation of people by class and function, and an exclusive emphasis on private life and the provision of all human needs, including sociability, within that private life. In itself this notion of community is hard to create and satisfy within American life, which is organized around the private dwelling and the provision of services, electronically and otherwise, to that private space.

We have witnessed over the last century a decline in public space, in space easily and freely accessible for common activity, including that most important activity, idling. The "malling of America," the corporatization of space, is perhaps the most important example of this phenomenon. Similarly, we have witnessed a widespread revolt of families against the city, to use Richard Sennett's (1970) phrase, a withdrawal of people into private space as protection against what they see as the disorder, moral as well as physical, of public space. The crucial importance of this lies in the withdrawal from public life by those with the power and income to support the provision of private luxury and services. It is best symbolized, technologically and architecturally, by those high-rise dwellers of the city whose connection to public life is mediated by glass: smoked windows through which they gaze out at the city below, smoked automobile windows through which they are simultaneously present and absent from the life of the city, smoked cathode ray tubes through which they connect to public life and keep it safely imprisoned, at a distance, beyond physical contact.

But for the purposes of this essay, the most important aspect of a republican community is on its political side. When Benjamin Franklin told the Philadelphia citizens awaiting news of the completion of the Constitution that they had a new form of government, a "republic if you can keep it," he was testifying to the both the fragility and suprisingness of what the convention had created. Republican forms of government were and still are odd and aberrant occurrences in history. The natural

state of humankind is domination; submission is the natural, our natural, condition. Political communities founded on civic ties rather than blood relations or bureaucratic rule are rare creatures of history; they have a definite beginning, a point of origin in historical time and, therefore, they presumably have an end. After all, there had been few republics in history, and they had been short-lived. To create such a political form was to act against history and experience and it was to place demands on citizens that were both new and extraordinary.

The foundation of a political society, a republic, unites it in space and time. The art of political creation is to lay a foundation that will make citizens into patriots and patriots into citizens. Only when that is achieved will it be possible to deliver republican government, public life, against all the vicissitudes of history down unchangeable to posterity.

First Amendment Considerations

The way we think about politics, public life, has been deeply shaped by the economic assumptions previously outlined. Similarly, our understanding of the press has been shaped by these same assumptions. We think of both the press and politics as a marketplace in which we and others possess rights against one another but in which we longer have a social relation within a republican community. Politics is a market in which we satisfy our individual desires through the purchases negotiated with a vote. When our purchase goes awry, when the product is defective, we want to return it for full satisfaction, for the fault is not in ourselves but in the state which exists to coordinate desire and satisfy wants. Similarly we understand the First Amendment as a bundle of rights we possess in the same way we possess a body. We are a people who have rights. We do not constitute a people in any other sense. So, the press constitutes a marketplace of ideas from which we buy what we need. We have the rights of buyers, the press has the rights of sellers. When the market fails, when our needs are unsatisfied, we turn to the

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