

Tocqueville's Visions of Democracy

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Tocqueville's Visions of Democracy

By George W. Pierson

Mr. President, distinguished visitors, citizens of New Haven, and friends of the American experiment: It is an honor to speak on this most appropriate and yet very surprising occasion. It is appropriate, it surely is fitting on our two-hundredth anniversary to look back to the man who understood us best and wrote about us what has been called "the greatest book ever written about one country by a citizen of another." On our Bicentennial, Alexis de Tocqueville and his *Democracy in America* most naturally come to mind. And it is also naturally interesting to be able to examine some of the materials—some of the human materials and some of the intellectual materials—that went into the making of his oft-quoted book. And for that we are indebted to Professor James T. Schleifer and also to the Beinecke Research Librarian, Marjorie Wynne. I would like to thank them for a most imaginative and intriguing exhibit.

Yet I say this is not just appropriate, it is also startling that we should think of celebrating the Bicentennial in such a fashion, with that kind of exhibit or this kind of address. Fifty years ago our fathers would not have done this: it would have astonished them to see us do it. Seventy-five years ago they would not have done it. A hundred years ago, in 1876 at the Centennial, they might have thought of it, but they probably would not have done it, for most of them would have said that Tocqueville was *passé*. And as for the little pocket diaries that he left, or the letters that he wrote home, or the essays Americans wrote for him, or the sketches and river scenes his companion Gustave de Beaumont drew, or Beaumont's letterbook of letters home to his family, or the notes and working drafts of the *Democracy in America*, or Beaumont's own book about American slavery and the tragedy of the Indians, or their joint book on American prisons and penitentiaries: all these wouldn't have been here (or anywhere) to be seen.

Today, 1976, thanks to these materials in our Tocqueville-Beaumont collection, we can recapture Jacksonian America as Tocqueville and Beaumont glimpsed it. We can hear the way our

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fathers talked to the two young French visitors. We can spot the men they learned most from, and identify the books that they read. We can even begin to reconstruct the painful evolution of Tocqueville's thinking, almost from day to day and from thought to thought—as my successor *Tocquevillien* Jim Schleifer is now doing. More than that, in the *Democracy* we can once again share with our children what Tocqueville decided about us and predicted would happen to us today, and hinted might happen to us tomorrow. Yet all this is new and even startling. For it has only come about because of a series of unexpected discoveries and a chain of accidents, mostly happy accidents.

Let us begin with the book, the story of Tocqueville's great book. In 1835 there appeared in Paris two little volumes—the first two little volumes—of *De la Démocratie en Amérique*. They were quickly translated by Henry Reeve and published in London; and three years later, 1838, an American edition of the Reeve translation was published with an introduction by the Canandaigua lawyer John C. Spencer. We Americans were stunned but also charmed, for here was a friendly description of our country and a really fine analysis of our political institutions, by a foreigner, and a Frenchman at that. “De Tocqueville,” as the English and we at first called him, “De Tocqueville” seemed to approve of our republican experiment. “De Tocqueville” had taken the pains to analyze its machinery. “De Tocqueville” showed that *we* knew what democracy was all about. American society was “the wave of the future,” this young Frenchman seemed to say.

At this point—though I've been officially retired from teaching, and for cause—I cannot refrain from a mini-lecture. Gentlemen, ladies, the name is Tocqueville. You may call him Monsieur de Tocqueville, Alexis de Tocqueville, Comte de Tocqueville, but if you leave out the titles or the first name, it is plain Tocqueville; you don't put in the “de,” just as we said Beaumont, not de Beaumont. This is the French rule, which is now being observed occasionally in England and more and more over here. It has one exception, one major exception. If, and I will finish my lecture in a moment, if it is a one-syllable name then you use the “de”—and you knew that: you speak of de Gaulle but you say Lafayette. So I return to Tocqueville and his book.

Two years after the American edition, five years after the first

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French volumes, two more volumes came off the Paris press, and they were instantly republished in England and the United States, republished and devoured. But much less eagerly over here, for this new French authority now seemed to be talking more about equality than about democracy, and more about French egalitarianism than about the constitution and character of the United States. So we published the first two volumes and published them and published them and published them, and eventually got out special editions for use in the schools. And in 1872 William Graham Sumner assigned Tocqueville to his Seniors in Yale College, briefly. But volumes three and four were forgotten; we neglected them; after all they didn't apply to us. And then in 1888 James Bryce published his *American Commonwealth*, and even volumes one and two of Tocqueville went out. For Tocqueville's descriptions were now badly out of date. He had neglected industrialism, and now we were the world's greatest producers. He'd seen only some small cities, and said little about them, but Bryce was up to date, he gave much attention to our cities. Bryce talked about machine politics, he pointed out the corruption in politics, and he even paid some attention, friendly attention, to our rising universities. So in 1888 Bryce replaced Tocqueville as our favorite European interpreter—and in his turn went through edition after edition after edition, for thirty years. And then the whirligig of time caught up with Bryce and he was out of date, and his descriptions no longer exactly applied. And the interest in Tocqueville revived.

For Tocqueville, we discovered, had a gift for prophecy. He had said democracies might have troubles, and had suggested why. He seemed to understand their innermost anxieties, and their secret instincts. In short, he paid attention to the psychology of the masses. He was "the prophet of the mass age," it has been well said, the mass age at which all the West has now finally arrived. So from the 1930s forward we began to read Tocqueville again, and especially the third and fourth volumes. And today no commentator on the American character or democratic society can afford to neglect him. But the reason is that Tocqueville had this *third* vision to offer us. Originally, he had given us a beautiful description of our restless middle-class society and what it looked like. To this he had added a brilliant analysis of our political institutions, our federal system, our decentralized checks-and-balances government, our local home rule,

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our jury system and our courts, our freedom of the press, our freedom of religion, and our indispensable voluntary associations which to this very moment do so much for the quality of life in New Haven. So Tocqueville had not only looked at our outsides but analyzed our vital organs and our intermediate ligaments. But we now discovered that he also talked about the psychology of democracy. About the jealous bullying instincts of the democratic masses. About the loneliness and helplessness of the individual lost in the crowd. The "lonely crowd" is, as it were, a paragraph out of Tocqueville. Let me remind you of the quiet way in which he wrote about the individual overwhelmed by the tyranny of opinion:

When the inhabitant of a democratic country compares himself individually with all those about him, he feels with pride that he is the equal of any one of them; but when he comes to survey the totality of his fellows and to place himself in contrast with so huge a body, he is instantly overwhelmed by the sense of his own insignificance and weakness. . . . The public, therefore, among a democratic people has a singular power, which aristocratic nations cannot conceive; for it does not persuade others to its beliefs, but it imposes them and makes them permeate the thinking of everyone by a sort of enormous pressure of the mind of all upon the individual intelligence.

(*Democracy in America*, Bradley ed., 1945, II, 10-11.)

And again, a page or two later, he wrote,

In the principle of equality I very clearly discern two tendencies; one leading the mind of every man to untried thoughts, the other prohibiting him from thinking at all. . . .

Tocqueville talked also about the problems of quality in a quantity society; about the selfishness of the atom individualist; about how to stay free *though equal*—or how to preserve the person in the mass age. So Tocqueville had seen us with an inner eye. He had had three visions of us, not two, and he had reported all three: what he had seen with his traveler's eye; what he had seen with his student's eye in the Constitution and the Federalist Papers, in Kent and Story, and in the conversations of the lawyers; and what he began to see when he went home and thought about what might happen, what perhaps had to happen, in a society of human ants, a society of egalitarian workers without aristocratic traditions or elite leadership. So in our time of troubles, when we began to feel the pressure

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of the masses, in the Great Depression and after, we turned back and read Tocqueville again for what he had sensed or feared might happen to us.

I will come back to this third vision, this inner foresight of his, but now I want to switch from Tocqueville's book and tell you a quite different story: the story of a series of unexpected discoveries which also contributed to the Tocqueville revival that we have today. It is the story of how the Tocqueville and Beaumont writings on America were found and many of the papers, in the original or in copy, came to Yale.

This story goes back to World War I, and to a young Yale instructor in history, Paul Lambert White. White was an enthusiastic Francophile and, finding himself in Paris after World War I, decided he wanted to dedicate himself to history and, in history, to Franco-American relations. He seems to have said to himself: "Who are the great connecting links between America and France? Lafayette? Oh, no, too much, too common. . . . Alexis de Tocqueville . . . I wonder . . . could he have left any papers?" Probably it was too much to hope, since he had no children. But then White found that Alexis had had two brothers. And so presently there was the young Yale instructor sitting down on the terrace outside the old turreted chateau in Normandy, near Cherbourg, with Comte Chrétien de Tocqueville, the great-nephew of Alexis, and talking about White's enthusiasm and Franco-American relations, and what he hoped to be able to do, and weren't there papers and wouldn't he be allowed to use them? White undoubtedly put his best eloquence into this. Minutes went by and the Comte was polite but totally uninterested. At the end of the hour, out from under the great triple arch of the stables, a groom led a horse for the Comte's morning constitutional and Paul White took a look at the horse and said, "What a magnificent animal!" "Hein? You are interested in horses? Would you like to come ride with me?" So they went riding together and, after the second hour, White had access to the Tocqueville papers, access into the tower *chartrier* where Tocqueville had worked.

He found there a lot of American diaries, little pocket diaries. He found there also Tocqueville's letters home, and a variety of reports and documents. He translated a little piece called "24 Hours in New Orleans" (since lost). Then he set to work to make a cata-

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logue of what he had found in the way of American papers, and also a catalogue of some of the other Tocqueville papers, and he persuaded Comte Chrétien to arrange for the local schoolmaster of the elementary school, a Monsieur Bonnel, to copy the American manuscripts into school copybooks. This was before the days of manuscript photography or photo-reproduction. Then White went back to Paris, for he knew there was a journalist working on a biography of Tocqueville in Paris, and the Comte had told him that this man had some other papers that had been loaned for the purpose. So White touched base there, and then found another copyist—the very man who was supervising the copying of our diplomatic documents in the *Affaires Etrangères*—and a second series of copies was started, this time on folio sheets. Then White, full of enthusiasm, came home to New Haven, wrote an article for the *Yale Review* describing the kind of thing he meant to do, began teaching classes, got appendicitis . . . and died. End of a dream.

A year or two later, the first of the little copybooks that Bonnel, the local *instituteur* at Tocqueville, had been making, arrived at Yale—and that great teacher and lover of France, John M. S. Allison, took them in charge. He had helped advise White and he scraped together a little bit of money to keep paying the schoolteacher to keep copying Tocqueville's scribbled and almost indecipherable writings, and he waited for someone who might perhaps be able to put these papers to some scholarly use. And one of John Allison's disciples came along and Professor Allison asked me whether I would be interested in Tocqueville. I think I choked—and I'm sure I said "de Tocqueville!"—but I had the wit to reply that I would like to do a little homework. So I went and did a little homework and came back: "Yes, it sounded interesting. Could I see the copies that had been sent over?" And they were in bundles deposited in the rare book room of the old Linsly-Chittenden Library which, those of you who go back that far will remember, was a comparatively limited space next to the office of Librarian Andrew Keogh. There were the schoolmaster's copybooks—and I looked at them—and I found that some of the diaries were alphabetical, or arranged by topic rather than by date, while some of the others were chronological. It was very hard to make head or tail of this mess of copybooks, so I did a very naive thing. I went and bought, at a local hardware store, a great roll of brown paper at least three feet wide,

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a tremendous roll, and put books to weight down the top of it, and as I unrolled I drew long columns down and started to write in them, with the dates on the left-hand side, then diary notes, then letters, then newspaper notices—whatever I could find for each date—and let the story build itself, to tell me where Tocqueville and Beaumont had gone in the United States and what they had done. It would have been almost impossible to disentangle their notes by just reading one copybook and then another copybook. By this curious method I was able to fill in the outline of their extraordinary travels in this country, and I learned all sorts of fascinating things.

I discovered that Beaumont had played a very large role in this trip and that he and Tocqueville had exchanged thoughts and ideas and discoveries and often it wasn't possible to tell who had first had an idea. I found that Beaumont and Tocqueville had even planned to write a joint work to start with, and the journey was almost over before one begins to see signs—with never a clear indication—that Beaumont had now got so interested in the plight of the Negroes and of the Indians that he would probably write about them rather than about American society as a whole, and would do it separately, which he finally did. I found that they came here—this was known, but I had to learn it—they came here as prison commissioners, to study American penitentiaries. We had the two most advanced penitentiary systems in the world at that time (how we have fallen!). And they went and visited the prisons, studied and even interviewed the prisoners, talked with the wardens, learned the principles that ran these penitentiary systems and wrote a very important report when they got back home. That was the first thing they did when they got back home. The penitentiary reform movement had been the excuse for their American mission, but they gave it full attention—and I thought I ought to, too. So I wrote to the prisons they had visited and, sure enough, there in the prison diaries were the records of the two French Commissioners. The names were often spelled wrong, but there they were on the right dates, and so I thought I had to go see the prisons, too. So I went to the Eastern State Penitentiary in Philadelphia and to Auburn and to Charlestown in Massachusetts and finally to Wethersfield. I have been in more prisons than all my ancestors put together, I trust.

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And when the hospitable warden of Wethersfield prison (which happily no longer exists), when the warden invited me to lunch and in with the soup came "the institutional smell," I almost threw up my Ph.D. Somehow I struggled back to New Haven and got to work again, and then began to find newspaper notices of their travels here and there, began to find people like Francis Lieber and Edward Everett and Philip Hone recording that they had met the French Commissioners, and began to add a few American materials to the story of their trip. And I learned so many things I could talk about them for a week.

Allow me one story as an illumination. It explains perhaps why Tocqueville didn't say anything about American colleges. In our exhibit you'll see an empty sleeve for education with Tocqueville's notation that he'd found too many other things to write about. We'll discover another reason presently. He came to New York and he met the President of Columbia—an impressive but not an overwhelming man. He then, by and by, found himself in Boston and met President Josiah Quincy, and they went to the college in Cambridge. Then he and Beaumont came across to Hartford to visit Wethersfield Prison, and they also made a very special visit to Julia Brace, a phenomenal deaf-and-dumb person who was being educated in the Gallaudet Institute there. And from Hartford they meant to come down to New Haven. And if Tocqueville had come to New Haven he would have found the largest college in the country and perhaps the most successful: a college that had just decided to raise the Centum Millia Fund, a \$100,000 fund which for its day was at least as daring as our attempt to raise \$370 million today. And he would have found the Faculty which had just issued its great report on the curriculum—and a student body just brimming with energy and mischief—and of course he would have seen the flowering of industrial New Haven, with Eli Whitney's progeny, as it were, building a new kind of urban industrialism. And I'm sure he would have been impressed, by Yale and by New Haven. But what happened? He and Beaumont discovered that there was a night boat from Hartford to New York! And they made what I choose to regard as a serious mistake.

In the upshot, these papers for the first time have given us much of the picture of Tocqueville and Beaumont's American trip and

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enabled us to fill in some of the personal experiences that lay behind their writings. But there was also a second accident which I'll mention even though it may sound a touch immodest.

White had got into touch with the Beaumont heirs; but that was all. Presently I went over under the shepherding of Professor John Allison and we wrote to the Beaumont family and they sent an emissary, the great-granddaughter of Gustave de Beaumont, whose name was Madeleine de Larminat. Madame de Larminat came to look at us, because they weren't quite sure. And I can remember the Hotel du Quai Voltaire, with its dusty red curtains; it's still vivid in my mind. Well, she looked at us and apparently thought it was worth a try, so I received an invitation and an appointment to go down to the Beaumont chateau in the Sarthe. I went down there by train, and I had the most awful cold, I coughed my head off, I was "like to die"; and her mother, Madame de Beaumont-Hennocque was the granddaughter of Gustave and his wife, Clémentine de Lafayette, granddaughter, herself, of Lafayette. Clémentine, her grandmother, had been a very warm-hearted, generous person, and so was Madame de Beaumont-Hennocque. And she took one look at me, and I was apparently just about the age of her two sons who had been killed in World War I, and I was dying. She took me right into her heart. We became affectionate friends almost immediately and so, naturally, I went up to the library on the second floor and there, going through the books, I found lots of painters' albums—it was a painting family—and finally Beaumont's album of drawings that he'd made on the trip—and right next to it Beaumont's letterbook. And they introduced me to their cousins, and I found another album with one family and a few more letters. We've been close friends to Madame de Larminat ever since. But the old folks have died and the chateau-farm has been sold and the family survivors are scattered. So we have acquired or been given the Gustave de Beaumont materials that survive, and Yale is the inheritor of that half of the treasure.

There was still a third accident, less benign but perhaps useful. In World War II the Tocqueville chateau in Normandy was bombed. I have never dared ask, but I am afraid it may have been by American planes. Comte Jean de Tocqueville, the son of Chrétien de Tocqueville, who had been a young bachelor when I had come to work there in the early thirties, Comte Jean had himself

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married and now he would have two daughters to marry off but also the chateau tower and roof to repair—all expensive operations. He brought in workmen, and they started to rebuild the tower, but they were careless and there was a fire, and that damaged the chateau even more. First and last, Jean de Tocqueville didn't have the money he had to have. So he decided to try to sell the working manuscript of the *Démocratie* in this country, and I heard about it and (after trying a classmate or two) I went to Yale's new Librarian, James T. Babb. And Jim Babb talked to Louis Rabinowitz, no Yale graduate, but a great lover of books and supporter of Yale—and Mr. Rabinowitz bought this manuscript for us, this working manuscript with its rough drafts. At this point I would like to express my personal thanks to John Allison, to Andrew Keogh, to Jim Babb and Louis Rabinowitz, to "Fritz" Liebert who soon proceeded to buy every Tocqueville item that came on the market for the Beinecke collection, and even also to Louis Martz, who is being trained as to how librarians should act.

There was finally a fourth accident. Two of the diaries and a number of the letters and quite a few of the other materials—including some of the rough drafts for the *Democracy*—have disappeared, since we copied them longhand, inaccurately, painfully into folio sheets or school copybooks. I think some of these manuscripts got lost between Paris and the chateau. I suspect that some others may have been borrowed by a man who wrote a dissertation on Tocqueville, and became librarian of the Bibliothèque Nationale, and put on a Tocqueville exhibit, but then fell on hard times, got into family trouble, and jumped off a train. We don't know what's happened to a good many papers: the originals we simply can't find. I saw some of them, once. White saw still more of them. But the only testimony we now have are these handwritten copies. So these copies have acquired a value that they would not ordinarily possess. And the Yale collection is a mixed collection—yet the greatest in the world on the American trip, and on the making of the *Democracy* beyond compare. As for the *Système Pénitentiaire* and for Beaumont's life and books, there are no rivals. So in this Bicentennial exhibit the Beinecke can give us some glimpses of a collection that in many ways cannot be duplicated today on either side of the Atlantic.

But what's the meaning of it? I come back now, if you will al-

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low me, to the third view that Tocqueville had of us. He gave us by his diaries and letters, of course, that first fresh traveler's glimpse, that he and Beaumont had, just at the moment when we Americans were converting our Republic into a successful Democracy, just at "our cock-crowing and morning star" (as an English critic quotes Emerson). And this vision has unusual interest because there were two observers, not one, and they were two in a million. They traveled all over, they talked with so many of our leading men, and they wrote down what they saw and heard and speculated. So we have here in our library not only the raw materials for their books and the materials that we and the French editors have since published,¹ not only those things but a store of still unpublished materials. This is an unexhausted mine, as yet.

Next, we have here a second kind of evidence, a second vision, the vision of the political scientists and social structuralists that they were. For we can now know what parts of their analysis of our government came from the Federalist Papers, or from Story and Kent or the Town Officer, or from special papers written for Tocqueville and Beaumont by Jared Sparks or Samuel Galpin or Joseph Coolidge or others, or what came from the curious conversations they had with John Quincy Adams in Boston, with Edward Everett or Francis Lieber or Albert Gallatin or Joel Poinsett, or John C. Spencer the lawyer, or Sam Houston on his way to fame in Texas. We can even find the traces of the European books that they bought and read about us in Paris, and identify some old European currents of thought. And we can do one thing more, we can see in one of the copybooks and in the margins of the Tocqueville working manuscript the comments and criticism of Tocqueville's family and friends—asking him to explain this or elaborate that—questioning both his phrases and his ideas.

Finally we can now share more largely in Tocqueville's third vision. For we can see now how, back in France, Tocqueville studied his notebooks, studied the books that had been written about us, and then studied us. Thinking about us and then about democracy in general and about egalitarianism and the psychology of the crowd and of the individual lost in the crowd.

1. Notably, *Alexis de Tocqueville: Journey to America*, ed. J. P. Mayer, and *Gustave de Beaumont: Lettres d'Amérique*, ed. by A. Jardin and G. W. Pierson; also Pierson, *Tocqueville and Beaumont in America*, and J. T. Schleifer, "The Making of Tocqueville's *Democracy*" (Ph.D. dissertation in microfilm).

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I still never dip into Tocqueville without being surprised and impressed all over again. I just noticed, for example, that he had something interesting to say about impeachment, in that early day. And there is a beautiful description of the presidential elections and what happens. I'll quote a few lines:

For a long while before the appointed time has come . . . the President . . . is absorbed by the cares of self-defense. He no longer governs for the interest of the state, but for that of his re-election; he does homage to the majority, and instead of checking its passions, as his duty commands, he frequently courts its worst caprices. As the election draws near, the activity of intrigue and the agitation of the populace increase; the citizens are divided into hostile camps . . . the election is the daily theme of the press, the subject of private conversation, the end of every thought and every action, the sole interest of the present. It is true that as soon as the choice is determined, this ardor is dispelled, calm returns, and the river, which had nearly broken from its banks, sinks to its usual level; but who can refrain from astonishment that such a storm should have arisen?

(*Democracy in America*, I, 135-36.)

Tocqueville saw the American presidency, of course, when it was weak, and he wasn't much impressed with Andrew Jackson, but he pointed out that, weak as the president was, once we had neighbors, once we had a foreign policy, and once we had an army, the American president was likely to be stronger than any king!

Again he pointed out that the only way to neutralize the risk of freedom of the press was by competition or by multiplying the number of journals. If he could return today and look at our great media, especially our television and radio monopolies, his eyebrows would rise. Tocqueville was human: he could and did make mistakes. I could talk at length about some of the things in which most of us think he was mistaken. But let me rather steer you to one observation that surprised me when I stumbled on it. In an age when we Americans had no army at all, Tocqueville thought about democratic armies. In former times, in aristocratic ages, he reflected, the aristocratic officers may have liked to play games of war, but they soon tired of their exercises and wanted to get back to their estates, whereas the hired soldiers found themselves suddenly unemployed. So it had been the foot soldiers who had been the professionals of war. In egalitarian societies, on the other hand, it was the trained

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officers, the generals and especially the young non-commissioned officers, who had a continuing interest in war whereas the drafted citizens just couldn't wait to get home. And so it has proved with our GIs again and again, after World War I, after World War II, and after Korea and Vietnam. But just lately we have acquired a volunteer army! So both halves of our military establishment now have a professional interest in fighting! It can give you a chill, reading Tocqueville again.

Tocqueville saw other hazards, too, in democratic warfare. "There are two things that a democratic people will always find very difficult, to begin a war and to end it," he said.

Again, if war has some peculiar advantages for democratic nations, on the other hand it exposes them to certain dangers. . . .

No protracted war can fail to endanger the freedom of a democratic country. Not indeed that . . . the victorious generals will possess themselves by force of the supreme power, after the manner of Sulla and Caesar; the danger is of another kind. War does not always give over democratic communities to military government, but it must invariably and immeasurably increase the powers of civil government; it must almost compulsorily concentrate the direction of all men and the management of all things in the hands of the administration.

(*Democracy in America*, II, 268-69.)

We should be surprised? Tocqueville still teaches us what we might have anticipated but have chosen to learn instead the hard way. I have one final quotation I'd like to make—I resolved not to smother you with readings, but here's one that all mayors should pay attention to: it concerns Tocqueville's thought about local government, about provincial self-rule and the risks of letting the central government take over. We could call it the Welfare State. He didn't, but this is the title I now give this little paragraph. Listen:

Of what importance is it to me, after all, that there is an authority which is always afoot, which sees that all my pleasures may be quietly enjoyed, which flies before my feet to ward off all dangers, without my even bothering to think about them; [of what importance is all that to me] if that authority, at the same time that it removes the smallest thorns from my path, is absolute mistress of my liberty and my life; if it monopolizes action and existence to such a degree that all about it must languish when it lan-

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guishes, that all sleep when it sleeps, that all perish [when the funds no longer come from Washington?] if it dies? . . .

Pierson, Translation in *Tocqueville and Beaumont in America*, p. 412, cf. *Democracy in America*, I, 129.

If as a society we have weaknesses, Tocqueville probably guessed what they would be. If you or I have a particular anxiety, Tocqueville will speak to it. He's taught me quite a bit about historians in a democracy; in fact his range of thinking is really extraordinary. As Max Lerner put it, "Tocqueville almost single-handedly shaped a political sociology, a military sociology, a sociology of the intellectual life, a theory of alienation, a theory of mass culture and mass tyranny in a democracy." So the more we read Tocqueville the more we can still learn about ourselves. He even warned us about the destruction of our natural resources. Read again that beautiful thing he wrote about their "Fortnight in the Wilderness," with its breathtaking description of the doomed forests of Michigan: what to Tocqueville was a paradise—a fragile paradise—is now, as one Detroit journalist puts it, a junkyard.

Each of us will, of course, read Tocqueville for himself. But I can't close without mentioning Tocqueville's greatest claim on us all, what lifts him above all the writers of our two hundred years, and that is his basic concern. In contrast to Marx, he took a high view of man, and he was concerned for human values. In coming to the United States and writing a book about us, he tried to prepare the world for democracy, but a democracy in which freedom would survive. For what he cared most of all for was freedom. "Freedom," he said, "is a sacred thing." So through a nine-months' physical journey and then a nine-years' mental journey, he tried to teach us, children of equality, and show us how liberty could still be preserved in America and in the Western World. Thank you very much. . . .