

## Homeless on “Paradise Drive”: Two Views of Americanization

The question of “the American identity” is intertwined with another question about what it means to say the world is becoming “Americanized.” Our country’s two best twentieth-century critics—Martin Heidegger and G. K. Chesterton—differ profoundly on the meaning and significance of this Americanization. For the German Heidegger, the American middle class lives in the thrall of a technological utopianism that is making human beings everywhere ever more displaced or homeless. Our poetic pragmatists, such as David Brooks in his recent *Paradise Drive*, seem to differ from Heidegger mainly by putting an optimistic American spin on the technological fate that Heidegger abhors.

For the English Catholic Chesterton, however, to Americanize the world would be to make every displaced person throughout the world at home in the American way—which is to say, at home with the truth about being human. For Chesterton, to be a middle-class American is to live in light of the truth about our spiritual existence between the other animals and God. Heidegger and Chesterton are both partly right, as we can see from the evidence that the judicious and conflicted Brooks has presents in his books and *New York Times* columns. Together, Heidegger and Chesterton can help us account both for the

cultural or moral division in American life today and for the genuine distinctiveness of the American identity.

### The Inauthentic Homelessness of Our Middle Class

The middle-class American was first and perhaps best described by our best nineteenth-century critic, Alexis de Tocqueville. The bad news is that we Americans have to work. We are caught between being slaves or serfs, who are compelled to work for others, and aristocrats who are free not to work in the name of noble leisure. We are neither below nor above having *interests*; we’re stuck with securing our own existence as individuals in a fundamentally hostile natural environment.<sup>1</sup>

We are both free for, and stuck with, transforming nature to meet what we believe are our basically material or bodily wants. We have been given nothing from God or nature for which we can be grateful, except for our freedom to add our own labor to nature for our own benefit. Consequently, we have a wholly technological

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understanding of science, which is the same as having a pragmatic understanding of truth. What's real is what is measurable and useful.

We are only interested in science—the knowledge of the way things really are—insofar as it can help us secure our precarious existence as individuals. By abolishing the distinction between truth and utility, we have made ourselves progressively more wealthy, powerful, and free. But because we can get no enjoyment from, see nothing real about, or, more generally, get the point of either leisure or contemplation, we end up abolishing the distinction between the pursuit of happiness and happiness itself. The American individual prides himself on having “been habituated to sacrificing without effort the pleasure of the moment to the permanent interests of his whole life.”<sup>2</sup> But by subordinating momentary pleasure to permanent interest, the American surrenders, in effect, enjoyment itself, which always occurs for the moment or in the present.

The obvious criticism of this technological or middle-class view of life is that it lacks integrity or authenticity.<sup>3</sup> We Americans are all about “seeming” at the expense of “being.” We manipulate reality—including the impressions others have of us—to suit our convenience, and we inauthentically try to claim that the truth we cannot change doesn't really exist. We deny the reality of the present to live imaginatively in an always indefinite future, always in anticipation of the world still to come through our own efforts. We divert ourselves from our perception of the emptiness of Being—especially one's own being—by losing ourselves in incessant “becoming.” In our view, nothing is meant to last; *to be* means *to be replaceable*.

We are homeless, Heidegger explains, in the sense that we believe nothing exists to be handed down to us. We are also homeless in

the sense that we find ourselves nowhere in particular. We understand ourselves both as more contingent (as accidents detached from roots in God, nature, or tradition) and less contingent (or more self-created or self-controlled) than ever. We cannot be authentic because we refuse to acknowledge any stable conception of who we are in the first place. We are constantly at work reinventing our very selves or souls, while diverting ourselves from the self or soul that must be at the foundation of all such invention.

Most of all, we work frantically to control our futures by preserving our bodies from the nature which is out to kill us. As the French Heideggerian Jean Baudrillard explains, we Americans work against “that death to which no one can any longer give a meaning, but everyone knows has at all times to be prevented.” We refuse to let the necessity of death—or anything else—define us. Death has become a disease to be cured through medical technology and scientific personal discipline. But that means that we are more defined by our working against death than ever before: our material prosperity has done the opposite of freeing us middle-class beings from the need to work. Americans, Baudrillard says, are lonely individuals “running straight ahead, because they have lost the formula for stopping.”<sup>4</sup> To stop and think and enjoy, we would have to acknowledge some other reality besides the results of our free work, and that we cannot do. Because we believe that everything is replaceable—even what nature intends for us—we can never relax enough to accept our natural destiny of being replaced.

Our language, Heidegger (and Tocqueville) claims, is even being emptied of words that correspond to anything beyond information, calculation, and control. “Language today,” Heidegger observes, “is merely an instrument, an instru-

ment for the acquisition of information."<sup>5</sup> The "soul," for example, means less and less to us, and we have nothing to say about death. Anything that eludes the technological thinking of calculation and control is nothing, an illusion, we say. In that sense, we are nihilists. Yet our nihilism means that we are controlled by technology, and not technology by us. Something—technology—cannot be controlled by nothing, least of all by our mere "values" or "preferences."<sup>6</sup> We have no perspective from which to reject the most technically efficient solution to every human problem. That is why we're such laidback nonjudgmentalists—or have no real opinions—when it comes to the soul, but are ever more obsessive when it comes to the body, which nobody denies is real.

We middle-class Americans do think we envy the authenticity or integrity of less technological ways of life. We sometimes nostalgically imagine that both the contented animals and the tradition-bound aristocrats knew how to live well. But really, we know that the aristocrats—and their slaves—were constantly fleeing from the truth. There's a certain integrity in being a slave, in being viewed by others as merely a body. And there's a certain integrity in being an aristocrat, in viewing oneself as essentially a soul. But for us both the contented slave and contented aristocrat live in self-deception; their integrity consists in their denial that all human beings equally have interests. We perversely believe that being authentic depends on sincerely believing in illusions which we can't help but see are both untrue and produce great injustice. For us, a life full of anything but work would be hell; our work endlessly diverts us from what we really know about our emptiness and futility.

When Heidegger wrote of the Americanization of the world, he meant the victory of the American views of truth and

justice through the destruction of all ways of thinking but the technological way. To Americanize the world means to uproot human beings from their historical place or home, to detach them from the roots they need to flourish in some particular place for nothing in particular. Americanism, from this point of view, is really the distinctively modern or technological form of thinking. That way of thinking actually originated, of course, in Europe. But what that European thinking first did to America—which was lacking in pre-technological or pre-modern resources to resist it—America will do to the rest of the world, through the power and influence of the American technological empire.

#### Our Aspirational Trance

David Brooks, our progressive conservative or pragmatic social critic and poet, claims to write to defend us from our European critics. Yet in doing so, he actually provides plenty of evidence that Heidegger is right about Americanization. In *Paradise Drive*, Brooks opposes those Europeans—and Americans, such as Allan Bloom, who are too influenced by alien thinkers—who say that Americans are superficial and content, that we are "blond Bimbos" living cluelessly at the end of history.<sup>7</sup> Brooks, in fact, has unveiled a contradiction in that kind of criticism. He says that we have worked to deprive life of all distinctively human or historical content, that we are in the process of bringing human liberty to an end; but he also says that we are working to ever more completely impose our idea of freedom on the world, transforming everything according to our technological will. From the latter view, we are more free or more restlessly discontent with our biological existences than ever. Brooks shows, in effect, that Heidegger's nihilistic or technological view

of America is *not* the end-of-history view popularized by Francis Fukuyama. Americans will *never* be satisfied with any particular level of technological development, and we continue to be driven by the desire to free ourselves from the nature that completely and impersonally governs the other animals.

*Paradise Drive* therefore corrects Brooks' own previous flirtation with the idea of the end of history in his *Bobos in Paradise*.<sup>8</sup> In *Bobos*, he described radically unrevolutionary and self-satisfied sophisticated Americans who believe they have reconciled perfectly bourgeois productivity and bohemian self-fulfillment. But *Bobos* also had a subtext that insistently suggested that this reconciliation was actually the triumph of middle-class or bourgeois productivity, the triumph of *work*. The eradication of the distinction between work and play had, in effect, turned every moment of life into work. That subtext becomes the text of *Paradise Drive*: the greatness of middle-class, suburban American freedom is presented as our relentless drive to create a paradise through the work of self-improvement. Brooks' first book said we live as if paradise is already here; his second book says that our free work is shaped by imaginative visions of the paradise always to come.

Brooks explains that the "imaginative fire" or "perpetual aspirational trance" that animates us is what saves us from "the crass and cynical realities" of technological exploitation. That's not to say that those realities don't still exist: without the lenses of poetic enchantment, we can see that having "the entire universe" revolving around the individual and his future is "a brutal form of narcissism." Brooks adds that our drive for wealth and power is "a manifestation of a deeper metaphysical striving," but the only metaphysics we acknowledge is the divinized or "semidivinized" self. Our belief

is that "whatever serves [our] self-journey to happiness must be godly and true." We are always *on the way* to becoming happy gods.

The pragmatic insight that nothing is permanent is our antidote to "the tragic view of life that is supposedly the prerequisite for the profound and probing soul." The view that nothing about the present is permanent—which could lead to anxiety about the contingency and vulnerability of each individual's being—imaginatively becomes the good news that even sin and death might have no future. We are, as Heidegger says, so caught up in becoming because we are willfully blind to Being. We allow our view of the future to be so indefinite so that we cannot see that it is clearly untrue.

The core of Brooks' description of our suburbs is that they have no sense of place, "no centers, no recognizable borders or boundaries." They are not and can never become "home." They are, as is America itself, anthropologically unprecedented; before them, "people always lived in some definable place." And our detachment is not just geographical. Brooks describes what our "achievement ethic" has done to families, friendships, and all forms of human loyalty, and he adds that we cannot even begin to figure out how to counter the ways it "corrodes virtue." Our anxious homelessness is the cause of our unprecedented drive, and so of our unprecedented prosperity, but what we Americans have done to ourselves we are in the process of doing to the whole world. Our "Suburban Empire"—the rule of people who exist nowhere in particular—is increasingly a global empire in which all human beings will live nowhere in particular.

Brooks' Whitmanesque poetry is more ambivalent. He aims to create a sense of our greatness as a people by showing us that our common experience is of "a nation formed

by collective fantasy"; we all—despite our seeming diversity—dream "the American Dream" together. He tries to make us all at home together with our homelessness, to be proud together of the astounding extent to which our rootless imaginative narcissism really has transformed the world—a kind of benevolent wrecking ball. If oblivion to Being is the price to be paid for opportunity and prosperity, Brooks answers Heidegger, so be it. It is a price worth paying. We are happy enough in our hope for the vague and finally impossible anxiety-free world to come. As Pascal would have predicted, our poet uses a combination of pride and hope to divert us from what we really know about the truth of nihilism, as Heidegger describes it.



Martin Heidegger

#### A Nation with the Soul of a Church

But there is another way of viewing America, one that recognizes us as the only human beings at home with the truth about the human soul. According to Chesterton's famous formulation, the Americans are "a nation with the soul of a church." Human beings, we Americans believe, are all equally beings with souls and God-given dignity existing between the other animals and God. The middle-class way of life, in this view, is the result of the movement from the chaotic "becoming" of historical force and fraud to the truth about existence. To be middle-class is not to be a pragmatist or technologist in the most importance sense; other dignified beings with souls do not exist for our manipulation or exploitation. So the American view of middle-class exist-

ence, Chesterton noticed, is at the heart of our distinctively spiritual adventure of discovering all human beings at home with each other, living in common awareness that nihilism isn't true.

America, Chesterton says, is about "making a home of vagabonds and a nation out of exiles." Our nation is an "asylum," a "home for the homeless." Like the church, it is a place where all human beings can find a home. Each and every human being—despite race, class, gender, physical deformity, etc.—can be a member of the universal church if he or she just accepts its creed. And each and every human being can become an American if he accepts our political creed. The Puritans left their homeland not for wealth and power but to "make an idea triumph."

And "[p]artly by original theory and partly by historical accident," America is the one nation held together by citizens' common belief in an idea. That idea is not to be confused, Chesterton explains, with "internationalism," but is actually "the nationalisation of the internationalised," the placement of those who find themselves displaced—usually for quite unjust reasons—from their previous national homes. Being bound by an idea or creed, according to Chesterton, is "what is called Americanisation"—the making of patriotic American citizens.

To be an American is to be bound by the "creed...set forth with dogmatic and even theological lucidity in the Declaration of Independence." That document, "[t]he highest point of democratic idealism," declares, above all, that Americans are "dedicated to the proposition that all men are

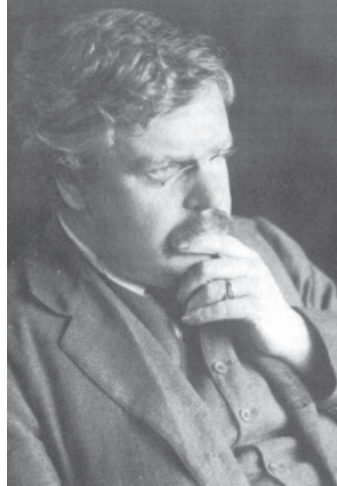
created equal." Chesterton's account of the Declaration's dogma comes not from Jefferson but from Lincoln, showing that this "piece of practical politics that is also theoretical politics" is more than individualistic or self-interested or merely utilitarian calculation about one's own liberty. The "proposition" is a theoretical and theological statement about the way "all men" stand in relation to each other, to the rest of earthly reality, and to God.

To be Americanized, for Chesterton, doesn't mean to be uprooted from history, tradition, culture, and faith, but to be newly rooted as a free and equal citizen. That means that American citizens are perfectly free to keep their particular religious faiths and alien cultural traditions; the only assimilation required of them is political. It is possible to be a Catholic and American in a way that it is not possible to be Catholic and English (because of their established church) or Catholic and French (because of their revolutionary, anti-clerical tradition). Americans—unlike the British or French—are perfectly free to keep their religious faith and to be fully at home as citizens, but finally both anarchism (which includes socialist and libertarian promises of a post-political world) and atheism are un-American.

The American idea is not wholly detached from religion. Our "romance of the citizen" depends upon the pre-existing dogma about the equality of all men under God. America is a home for the homeless because both our religious founding—with the Puritans—and our constitutional founding—with the Lockean—are in

agreement that God is not dead and all men are created equal. The dogma that unites our two foundations, Chesterton explains, is that "there is no meaning in anything if the universe has not a center of significance and an authority that is the author of our rights." The American dogma is that nihilism isn't true; our dogma is that our technology is subordinate to our real souls and our real God. The American dogma does not so much transform as it stands in judgment over all of American life, and it is more a doctrine about the whole of reality than it is a dogma merely about citizenship.

Chesterton's view of our identity differs from those who understand American citizenship to have a wholly secular and wholly contractual foundation. As Marx noticed, such a purely Lockean view of our Constitution posits free or non-political, egoistic human beings consenting to be citizens. They know that the egalitarian community of citizens is merely constructed, so they are not *really* citizens. The result is that all the distinctions of private life not based on money become nothing but "*private whims*" or "*caprices*."<sup>10</sup> Religion—the result of human defects and human misery—disappears from public life because our political life becomes, in principle, a perfect community in which all are recognized equally as emancipated beings in this world. But our emancipation is merely political or constructed: it is not *real* or natural. So religion takes on "*a fresh and vital*" existence in private or real life, because there, the miserably egoistic war of all against all is liberated from all communal illusions. And religion—having become nothing but an individual whim or prefer-



G. K. Chesterton

ence or, like all spiritual distinctions, something weightless or unreal—saves us not at all from the miserably isolating nihilistic struggle of a purely capitalistic meritocracy. Religion becomes but one individual preference among many.

For Chesterton, unlike Marx, our dogma stands in *real* criticism of our oligarchic and individualistic excesses. Americans, like Catholics, resist "Americanism" (or nihilism, in Heidegger's sense) by being at home with their creed, a doctrine about citizenship that is not abstract or constructed. By being at home with our creed, we Americans can experience ourselves as being at home in other ways too. Our romance about citizenship stands in countercultural opposition to our individualism. It makes our European critics not completely right—although not completely wrong, either. Chesterton notices that there is "not quite enough unconsciousness in America to produce real individuality." Our pragmatism produces a labored self-consciousness that causes Americans to think too much "about how they can will, more than about what they really want." Americans, Chesterton explains, excel at the "very active" and cheerful virtues, but not so much at the naturally accepting or ironic or contemplative virtues.<sup>11</sup> Chesterton's measured judgment is that the "nation with the soul of a church" is caught between modern or technological homelessness and the Catholic's or Aristotelian's being at home. But even that judgment must be qualified, for no Christian can experience himself as completely at home in this world. Chesterton seems to present the Americans' mixture of homelessness and being at home as mirroring the truth about our middle-class existence under God.

### God and Family in the Exurbs

Despite his poetic efforts to celebrate our

future orientation—to give our Heideggerian fate a happy ending—Brooks himself seems caught between homelessness and being at home. In his poetry and his skepticism, he slights evidence that American individualism is founded on a sense of God-given limits. But he cannot deny the reality or goodness of that evidence. He is attracted, if ambivalently, to the thought that our American creed is not merely a construction but reflects the truth about our being. He is skeptical, but not completely skeptical, about our dogma.

In *Paradise Drive*, Brooks brings us the allegedly good news that American religion is just another form of pragmatism. It, like everything else American, emphasizes "personal growth over any fixed creed"; it is all about "mobility" and "blurry boundaries." It is part of "the provisional life" of individuals on the move; we think of ourselves as free to choose and switch churches as we do houses or cars. Brooks agrees with the sociologist Alan Wolfe that our religion is part of our culture of narcissism; its content depends, therapeutically, on the individual's quite subjective needs. And so it offers no real challenge or antidote to the reigning nihilism: even our believers "know very little for certain except what works for me is valid, and what works for you is probably valid too." Most Americans apply technological or pragmatic thinking to their whole lives, and the "orthodox" who do not are an insignificant minority. Brooks finds the ersatz consumer-orientation of the "megachurch," which has, among other things, a "faux-Gothic basement stone chapel" for those feeling traditional, an easy target to mock.

But Brooks can't adhere to that position consistently. While he rejects "the smug ignorance" of the view that "the culture war is a contest between enlightened reason and dogmatic absolutism,"<sup>12</sup> Brooks still finds it sometimes necessary to criticize our "evan-

gical causes" for being too dogmatic and too enthusiastic to be contained by our constitutional limits. And sometimes he admits that what distinguishes an evangelical Christian from his fellow Americans is that "he does not believe that truth is plural." Nor does he believe that "truth is something humans are working toward." "Truth," instead, "has been revealed"<sup>13</sup>—and that truth can be shared. Our evangelicals, Brooks is capable of acknowledging, are not relativists because revelation allows them to see that the technological view of truth is not true. They have a source of absolute truth in what would, especially to them, otherwise be a relativistic or whimsically nonjudgmental world. For them, Heidegger would be right if it weren't for revelation.

Brooks is similarly ambivalent about the exurbs—those new places on the periphery of the suburbs. The exurban dwellers have taken "a daring leap into the unknown"; they're utopians, even techno-utopians, insofar as the exurbs exist in many ways on the technological frontier. But the exurbs are also "conservative"—they reflect American's longings for order, place, and family. Exurbanites went to this frontier not to escape civilization or even to find economic opportunity, as most American pioneers have done. They aimed instead to escape the frontier of the nihilistic or technological society, to make themselves at home in a familial and communal or genuinely civilized way. Like all middle-class Americans, the exurbanites are busy and future-oriented, but if they lived for their jobs they would live somewhere else. They understand leisure to be working for and with—especially in noble or character building activities like sports—family and friends they love.

In one of his most countercultural columns, Brooks notices that the exurbs contain a disproportionate number of

"natalists" or people whose "personal identity is defined by parenthood" and who have three or more children. Natalists "are more spiritually, emotionally, and physically invested in their homes than in other spheres of life, having concluded that parenthood is the most enriching and elevating thing they can do." Birthrates are plummeting throughout Western Europe, Canada, and large parts of the United States, but not in the exurbs. Areas of our country that some view "as sprawling materialistic wastelands" are seen by "many natalists...as clean, orderly, and affordable places where they can nurture children."

People who have big families, Brooks goes on, "are explicitly rejecting materialistic incentives and hyperindividualism." They are, in other words, rejecting "Americanism" as described by Heidegger (and Brooks). Mainly, if not only, because of such people, America, from Heidegger's view, is now the least "Americanized" place in the prosperous West. Because of the natalists, the U.S., Brooks notices, "stands out in all sorts of demographic and cultural categories," and there is a clear correlation between natalism, attendance at religious services, and conservative voting patterns.<sup>14</sup>

Brooks attempts to downplay the connection between orthodox religious beliefs and big families. But Philip Longman, for instance, says that if it weren't for such religious Americans, our birth rate would be roughly the same as that of the France, which is fading away.<sup>15</sup> The natalists who understand themselves more as parents than as individuals usually also understand themselves more as creatures than as individuals. America, we are tempted to say, is now divided between Heidegger's technological nihilists or free individuals—who believe they can define themselves as they please—and Chesterton's dogmatists, who see themselves as parents, creatures, and citizens. Surely another weakness of Brooks'

poetry is his view that our perception of ourselves as citizens—our collective national greatness—may be centered on our paradise drive: for surely the most patriotic Americans are found at home in the exurbs.

But Brooks’ efforts at moderation through nuance are not without merit. He says that natalism “is a spiritual movement, not a political one.” He seems to mean that people vote, above all, to protect functioning families—and not for some abstract program of political transformation. The evangelical exurbanites are not “launching a Jihad.” They are not at war with their country as it is. They are simply trying, with considerable success, to find a home there. Most good parents are too busy to be leaders in a “culture war,” and with good reason they tend to limit their efforts to what they can control. What can some guy who sells cell phones do about the underclass? Not much. But he can home-school his own kids.

Brooks’ most controversial point is to call the differences between our exurban natalists and most other Americans “differences of degree, not kind.” He is surely wrong to say that someone who sees himself primarily as a creature or a parent is not fundamentally and qualitatively different from someone who thinks of himself primarily as a liberated individual. And so he is wrong not to see more clearly a division in our country between virtue voters and rights voters. Although he is also wrong not to acknowledge more clearly that our evangelicals’ faith in a personal and at least somewhat judgmental God is real, it’s also true enough that faith is compromised by the individualism that infuses the ways that faith expresses itself. We can’t really confuse the megachurch “campus” with the settled Christian communities of the past, and the megachurch’s “whole life” approach to Christianity isn’t much like, say, the Amish. Our evangelical natalists understand themselves, to some extent, as

individuals—but so too, many of our allegedly liberated individuals make some room in their lives for parenthood, citizenship, and God. Brooks is right that “most Americans” cherish “the self-sacrificial love shown by parents,” even if they vary a lot on how much that love actually shapes their own lives.<sup>18</sup>

In almost all American cases, Heidegger is neither completely right nor completely wrong, and Chesterton helps us to understand why. The contradictions in Brooks’ own soul that shape his rather inconsistent description of American souls are touchingly and distinctively American. His perception that the truth is somewhere between dogmatic fundamentalism and nihilistic secularism keeps him pointed in the direction of Chesterton’s Thomism. He even knows, deep down, that reason and revelation somehow both point to the truth and don’t contradict each other.

### Human Nature and Americans at Home

Heidegger (and David Brooks in *Paradise Drive*) present middle-class Americans as having the uncanny power to impose their wholly technological view of the truth—their nihilism—on the world by eradicating every human experience of being at home, every human experience of Being or what exists independently of our sovereign wills. Chesterton presents middle-class America as politically embodying the middle-class truth about all human beings, providing a home, in principle, for everyone. The evidence Brooks actually uses in his writing shows that both views have some merit. But the evidence, most of all, shows that the proposition that free human work could kill God and eradicate all natural resistance to boundless imaginary freedom is contradicted by American—much more than European—facts.

Our evangelicals may be vulgar, but they

are not inauthentic; their opposition to unbounded moral freedom is based on genuine Christian faith and realistic insights about human psychology. The evangelical natalists who live in our exurbs manage to live as nature in the most obvious or sociobiological sense intends: they devote themselves to having and raising children. The European birth dearth is evidence that thinking of oneself primarily as an individual—and not as a parent, citizen, or creature—is bad for the self-preservation not only of the species but of nations and, in the long term, even of individuals. Our natural inclination to have children is one we share with the other animals and it must moderate our self-obsession if we are to have a human future. But our social and rational inclinations also point members of our species—alone among the animals—toward friendship, larger communities, country, and finally the church.

Especially if not only through its exurban evangelical families, middle-class America, despite the shallowness of its historical roots, its impoverished culture, and the restless vagueness of its secular utopianism, still remains capable of the showing how human beings can be at home in the world, as well as how they can be at home with their homelessness. Partly because American is a nation with the soul of a church, Americans remain distinctively able to display the fact that we do have souls.

Our European critics today often criticize us for not being Americanized enough in Heidegger’s sense. In the election of 2004, they called our “moral values” voters stupid for not voting on merely technical grounds—for the party that would do best in delivering health care, social security, more secure alliances, etc. They couldn’t believe that American voters regarded religion and morality as the real foundation of issues such as abortion, stem cell research, and same-sex marriage. But our voters

might respond that, because of our faith or dogma, our lives are more real than those of Europeans in the thrall of a post-familial, post-religious, and post-political fantasy. And the result is that our country has more of a real future.

Brooks is wrong: American greatness is not mainly our fantastic pursuit of mirages. We are, let me repeat, the least Americanized or least technological or hopelessly homesick and nihilistic nation in a Heideggerian sense today. We remain, of course, the most Americanized nation in Chesterton’s sense. Our dogma remains real to us—although we have not been as successful in exporting our real faith as we have been in leveling the alternative faiths of other nations.

1. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, volume 2, parts 1-2.
2. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, volume 2, part 2, chapter 9.
3. This criticism originates in Rousseau’s *Discourse on the Arts and Sciences*. It picked up steam in the revolutionary conservatism of late-nineteenth-century German thought, as James W. Ceaser explains (*Reconstructing America: The Symbol of America in Modern Thought* [Yale University Press, 1997], chapter 7). My analysis of the German/Heideggerian criticism of Americanization is indebted to Ceaser for most of its details.
4. Jean Baudrillard, *America*, trans. C. Turner (Verso, 1989) 35, 39.
5. Martin Heidegger, *Der Satz von Grund* (Neske, 1971), 26-27, as translated by Ceaser, *Reconstructing America*, 197. See also Tocqueville, volume 2, part 2, chapter 16: “How American Democracy Has Modified the English Language.”
6. Martin Heidegger, “The Question Concerning Technology,” *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* (Harper, 1977), 6-7.
7. David Brooks, *On Paradise Drive: How We Live Now and Always Have in the Future Tense* (New York: Simon and Shuster, 2004).
8. David Brooks, *Bobos in Paradise: The New Upper Class and How They Got There* (New York: Simon and Shuster, 2001).

9. G.K. Chesterton, *What I Saw in America* in *Collected Works*, Vol. 21. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990), 45-49, 255.

10. Karl Marx, "On the Jewish Question," *The Portable Marx*, ed. E. Kamenka (Penguin Books, 1983), 100-104.

11. Chesterton, 162-163.

12. David Brooks, "The Values-Voter Myth," *The New*

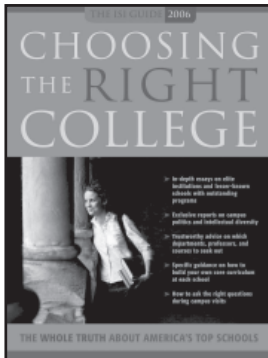
*York Times*, November 6, 2004.

13. David Brooks, "Who is John Stott?" *The New York Times*, November 30, 2004.

14. David Brooks, "The New Red-Diaper Babies," *The New York Times*, December 7, 2004.

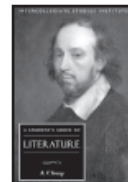
15. Philip Longman, *The Empty Cradle: How Falling Birthrates Threaten World Prosperity and What to do About It* (New York: Basic Books, 2004).

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