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Democracy in America, America in France: Ernest Duvergier de Hauranne on Liberty and Unity

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Nearly two centuries after the publication of its second volume in 1840, Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* remains the authoritative look at America through foreign eyes. The text's origin story is well known.[1] Tocqueville and his travel companion Gustave de Beaumont arrived in Newport harbor in May 1831 on the pretext of investigating the penitentiary system across different states, and while they did produce their promised work on prisons, their voyage took them in another direction as well.[2] By journey's end, the two had seen far outside of prison walls and happened upon "much more than America." Tocqueville looked on "the image of democracy itself, its inclinations, character, prejudices, and passion."[3] After returning to France the following year, he set to work converting his notes into what would become *Democracy in America*, a text to project that image of democracy before a French audience.

Tocqueville and Beaumont were not the only nineteenth-century travelers to depart France for a sojourn in the New World.[4] Following his periodic visits from 1826 to 1827, Victor Jacquemont deemed the American people "severe, cold, flat, and vulgar" and disapproved of the "terrible inequality" of slavery in the supposed land of equality.[5] The royalist Benjamin Saint-Victor and the

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Saint-Simonian Michel Chevalier followed Tocqueville to the United States in separate voyages in the 1830s.[6] Their writings and others like them never rose to the status of *Democracy in America* (hereafter *DA*) on either continent. But perceptions of America in travelogues, correspondence, essays, and even novels informed debates beginning in the Bourbon Restoration (1814–1830) about the merits of foreign constitutions. The issue divided French statesmen. Some looked to learn from England, others from America. All of them hoped to break the French cycle of revolutionary violence, short-lived constitutions, and despotism.[7]

Little attention has been paid to the generation of French visitors after the Revolution of 1848.[8] Yet disagreements over the virtues of American institutions did not end with the violent dissolution of the liberal July Monarchy (1830–1848). Indeed, the French remained fascinated by the foreignness of the New World. Jean-Jacques Ampère followed in Tocqueville's footsteps in 1851, hoping to see for himself what his close friend brought to life in the pages of *DA* nearly two decades earlier.[9] Tocqueville himself penned a new preface to his acclaimed work, in which he urged the French once again to study the principles of American liberty.[10] And it was not only *republican* France that needed to seek guidance from America, it seemed. Édouard Laboulaye, professor of comparative law at the Collège de France and the nation's foremost authority on the United States after Tocqueville's death in 1859, drew inspiration from the American example to outline the principles for a new liberal party during the Second Empire (1852–1870). Laboulaye lauded the United States—a true "republic, not imaginary but real and living"—as an imitable model for a stable, prosperous, and free modern nation, though he never actually laid eyes on the country he so admired.[11]

As a contribution to the study of America through foreign eyes, this paper turns to the period of the Second Empire and to the understudied writings of Ernest Duvergier de Hauranne (1843–1877), who traveled throughout North America from June 1864 to February 1865 at age twenty-one. Duvergier de

Hauranne published his observations in the journal *Revue des Deux Mondes* as a series of twelve entries, organized chronologically and collectively titled *Huit mois en Amérique*. His visit was remarkable for its timing. When he disembarked in New York harbor in late spring 1864, the nation was embroiled in civil war, and the young Frenchman himself was keen to speak with supporters of the Union and Confederacy alike at the start of his travels. In fact, he believed that such volatile circumstances granted him more penetrating insight into American life than one could ever gain during peacetime. "Great revolutions reveal the true character of a people and the real value of the institutions that govern it," he later wrote in a foreword to his collected essays. "A year of civil disorders can tell more about their virtues and vices than a century of regular, ordered life under a regime where the rule of force is unquestioned."[12]

The only English translation of Duvergier de Hauranne's articles was given the title *A Frenchman in Lincoln's America*.[13] Although that translation appeared in 1974, the author's depiction of the United States at war has passed by largely unnoticed.[14] This paper, the first to reconstruct and analyze his shifting impressions of America, pursues two aims. First, it compares Duvergier de Hauranne to Tocqueville on key features of American life, and in so doing demonstrates how Duvergier de Hauranne deepened Tocqueville's observations about America at key points but amended and even criticized them at others. Caught inevitably in the "mortal struggle between North and South," Duvergier de Hauranne was captivated by what the Civil War revealed about the power of US public opinion and the actions of the press.[15] At the same time, his insights remind us why many Frenchmen in the nineteenth century were drawn to America in the first place: to understand the idiosyncrasies of one country in order to respond to the unique circumstances of another. Even now, as scholars continue to admire Tocqueville's uncanny ability to recognize in America what she might never have seen in herself,[16] they often overlook the key point that he wrote *for* a French audience—that

he aimed to highlight what was distant and unfamiliar across the Atlantic in order to bring the dilemmas facing his home nation into sharper relief.

This brings us to the paper's second purpose. Of Duvergier de Hauranne's many reflections on American life, his insights into the party system in particular were meant to educate Second Empire France. His visit coincided with the presidential campaign of 1864, and in America's open and unapologetic displays of partisanship and party loyalty, Duvergier de Hauranne observed democratic practices that he urged the French to emulate. From the ratification of its imperial constitution in 1852, Napoleon III depicted his regime as a unified democracy legitimized by universal manhood suffrage, or a state that stood above party division. For Duvergier de Hauranne, by contrast, the divisiveness and dynamism (and even at times the crudeness) of American electoral politics revealed how the party system could break the stronghold of an all-powerful state without sacrificing national unity, that is, how pluralism in politics could deepen national solidarity while thwarting despotism.

The first section of this essay situates Duvergier de Hauranne's writings in context. It positions the author among those in the loosely organized liberal opposition of the 1860s whose exemplars, like Laboulaye, contested the Caesarist Second Empire by praising America's distant republic. Section II opens with a brief biography of Ernest Duvergier de Hauranne and his more famous father, the Orléanist Prosper, the Doctrinaire statesman who later became one of several liberal adversaries of the July Monarchy's minister François Guizot. Sections II through IV highlight two central themes from *Huit mois en Amérique*, the first on Union and abolition, the second on division and party politics. Taken together, they reveal that Duvergier de Hauranne's observations about the particulars of American politics were simultaneously—if counterintuitively—intended to instruct Second Empire France. In the conclusion, I suggest that scholars should delve into both American and European contexts to grasp the motivations behind

foreign visits and to reinterpret the writings of French visitors—Tocqueville's *DA* included.

I. The American Civil War in the French Second Empire

It is no exaggeration to say that French publicists in the nineteenth century were captivated by political life beyond their own borders.[17] Beginning as early as the Restoration, figures as varied in their political leanings as the *Indepéndant* liberal Benjamin Constant, the ultraroyalist Louis de Bonald, the Doctrinaire liberal François Guizot, and the republican Alphonse de Lamartine celebrated English institutions.[18] Others, as we know, looked across the Atlantic in search of social and political remedies for the ills of despotism and revolutionary violence that continued to plague French society, or for ways to quiet what Tocqueville described as "a religious terror" about Europe's own democratic future.[19] The literary magazine *Revue des Deux Mondes*, where Duvergier's series would later appear, was founded in 1829 to bridge the cultures of "two worlds," Old and New, European and American.

During the Second Empire, certain key voices in the rather disjointed liberal opposition extolled what Laboulaye called the "real republic" of the United States, first to undermine the illiberal state and later, when they became a more cohesive parliamentary union, to encourage the regime's "liberal" evolution.[20] Louis-Napoleon, president of the Republic, assumed the title of Emperor Napoleon III in 1852 when the new imperial constitution was ratified in a plebiscite. For roughly a decade, he reigned as an autocrat. Eager to imitate the Consulate (1789–1804) and the Empire (1804–1814) ruled by his uncle Napoleon Bonaparte, Napoleon III pursued aggressive policies of military and economic expansion abroad.[21] At home, he surveilled and exiled his republican enemies, banned most newspapers and censored the few that continued publishing, interfered with elections to the Corps législatif (even compiling his own official list of candidates), and outlawed political meetings.[22] Between 1848 and 1852, then, liberals were forced into "retreat." Ousted from the seats of power they occupied during the

July Monarchy, they were reduced to a disorganized opposition group that could garner little electoral support, even under universal suffrage.[23]

As liberal elites fell from power, Laboulaye lamented that the whole of France had embraced its long "tradition of servitude," forsaking the alternative "tradition of liberty" that prevailed in the Revolution of 1789 and endured in England, Holland, Switzerland, and especially the United States.[24] In his eyes, France had abandoned the Revolution's promise to establish individual and local liberties in favor of achieving national unity, viewing the two as contradictory political ends. The rhetoric of a unified nation was nothing new in the 1850s and 1860s; one could hear it in the Revolutionary era constitutions, Laboulaye claimed, in the reactionary agenda of the ultraroyalist majority of the Bourbon Restoration, and even in the cries of the Parisian insurrectionists of 1848. Such rhetoric propped up regimes based on absolute, arbitrary power and, at best, a half-century or so of "*demi-libertés*" masquerading as true freedoms, civil and political.[25] Under Napoleon III, the push for a unified nation manifested in an all-powerful state that curtailed civil liberties of the press and association. America, by contrast, balanced the two values, Laboulaye maintained; as of the 1850s, it remained unified but free.

The year 1860 marked a turning point in the policies of the empire that also changed the political fortunes of its liberal opponents. In reaction to mounting public dissatisfaction and a failed assassination attempt, Napoleon III abandoned coercion for liberalization.[26] The emperor relaxed his repressive policies on the press, thereby re-enlivening legitimist, republican, and liberal newspapers, and agreed to grant amnesty to some of the figures he had exiled. As Sudhir Hazareesingh has demonstrated, the empire also undertook legislative initiatives to promote local liberties, helping to foster a vibrant and increasingly decentralized public sphere.[27]

Liberals took full advantage of the freer press. And in the 1863 elections, those liberals who were already divided under the July

Monarchy and fractured further after the 1848 Revolution joined forces long enough to win parliamentary seats. They also seized on the expansion of civil liberties to agitate for political change. Led once again by Laboulaye, eminent members of the newly constituted Liberal Party, such as Augustin Cochin and Agénor de Gasparin, exalted the freedom of the United States to bolster their defense of republican institutions.[28] Yet, they did so at the very moment when those institutions had been thrown into turmoil. When Laboulaye authored *Le parti libéral* in 1863, calling for the formation of a more ecumenical party built on the political principles of free nations such as the United States, secession tested the strength of the US Constitution. But the Civil War only deepened liberals' convictions about the merits of the American system. America's war paralleled political dilemmas in France, they thought. It showcased one version of the struggle between national unity and liberty. Yet Laboulaye continued to maintain that the US Constitution managed to enshrine both priorities, even if its country was racked by war over precisely this issue. "What is the American war pursued with such tenacity and such courage if not the supreme effort of a free people to sacrifice everything to maintain unity?" Laboulaye asked, before concluding that liberty would not need to be sacrificed there after all. In fact, "it is liberty that gives birth to national unity and nourishes it," a fact that the Americans already knew (if some had forgotten) but that the French had yet to learn.[29]

Liberals rallied unofficially to the side of the Union, though most of them pushed for an official policy of neutrality on the part of France.[30] Many used their renewed influence in the French press to write in favor of ending slavery in the United States, both because they abhorred the institution of slavery and because they saw abolition as an appealing moral cause that could sway public opinion in their electoral favor.[31] As a group, they tended to praise Lincoln's leadership amid crisis, which in their eyes could never approach anything like the dictatorship of a Napoleon.

II. Union and Liberty

Barely twenty-one when he ventured to the United States himself, the young Duvergier de Hauranne was already well acquainted with members of the liberal party and with famous French admirers of America. His father, Prosper, served in the Chamber of Deputies from 1831 to 1848 and served as a cabinet minister to King Louis-Philippe. He later emerged as an outspoken critic of Guizot, the foreign and later prime minister of the July Monarchy who was considered its chief architect, or the politician responsible for the Revolution of 1848. In the years leading up to revolution, Prosper Duvergier de Hauranne joined the liberal parliamentary alliance of Adolphe Thiers and Odilon Barrot to insist on electoral reform and to organize the banquet campaigns of 1847–1848 against the Guizot government.[32] He was a lifelong friend of Tocqueville and a student of the American republic, though he remained a monarchist in France. During the Second Empire, he penned a ten-volume history of parliamentary government in France from the Restoration through 1848 that is worthy of at least a scholarly article all its own.[33]

Thanks to his father's career and connections, Ernest Duvergier de Hauranne was steeped in American political and constitutional history from childhood.[34] In addition to Tocqueville's *DA*, he read other accounts by French visitors and later hoped to set his own apart from theirs, both in its approach to the subject and its conclusions. But despite his long-standing interest in the United States and his reverence for its republic, Duvergier de Hauranne left France in 1864 unconvinced of his fellow liberals' stance on the necessity of maintaining the Union at all costs. He admitted as much in one of the first entries from his travels, in which he spoke earnestly with advocates for both sides: "There I am between the advocates of the two parties . . . but I cannot draw conclusions before having seen for myself the evidence for and against each one."[35] At the same time, Duvergier had so romanticized American liberty in his own mind that his earliest days in the country sparked disappointment rather than enthusiasm. In a foreword authored in 1866 to accompany a new collection of his articles, Duvergier

explained that his initial outlook on the United States during his time there, which blended doubts with disenchantment, was borne out of his French experiences. In particular, it was the attitude of one who had become accustomed to despotism and thus glorified liberty in the abstract without any real knowledge of it:

> This book is neither a criticism of nor a reasoned apologia for democracy. Rather, it is a recital of the spontaneous feelings of a liberal Frenchman who threw himself unprepared into the tumult of American society . . . [,] who, too demanding at first, was astonished not to find the perfection he desired. In short, a Platonic lover of freedom who was nonetheless ignorant of the actual practices of free institutions, and who unconsciously carried over into his own judgments the habits and tastes that one acquires under despotism.[36]

The author's "spontaneous feelings" toward America, among other features of his writings, distinguished his work from *DA*. Published as separate travel entries on everything from the American landscape to the squalor of its capital city rather than a single (if two-volume) treatise on democracy, *Huit mois en Amérique* brings the reader directly into the mind of a traveler whose impressions of American life shifted as he spent more time among its people. For instance, just one month into his visit in July 1864, the same writer who first expressed his reticence to take sides on the Civil War declared that he was "no longer hesitant" to do so. And in considering the "evident justice" of the Union cause, Duvergier de Hauranne joined the chorus of French liberals who blamed the war not on any supposed deficiencies of the US Constitution but squarely on the Southerners who wished to destroy it. Although in some French publications the "Confederates are pictured as true defenders of liberty" and the Unionists as "despots" who seek to curtail the fundamental liberties of part of the population, Duvergier de Hauranne arrived at the opposite conclusion and insisted that the Constitution itself was fundamentally just. "The first breach of

legality came from the rebels," he stressed, "who called themselves the champions of the ravished Constitution but were the first to lay violent hands on it."[37]

Two years later, once the war's dust had cleared, he would insist that America's crisis "only made her greater." The "freedom that was to have perished at the slightest test has come without mishap through five years of civil war," he wrote, and the nation's greatness could be attributed both to the *moeurs* of the people and to the soundness of the Constitution.[38] Indeed, the outcome of the war in America refuted the central arguments of absolutists across Europe, who claimed that concentrated absolute power was the only way to bring any revolution to an end and that reunification would always have to trump freedom in the process.

As different as his approach to the study of American life was from Tocqueville's, Duvergier de Hauranne applied two concepts that his predecessor made famous in *DA* to scrutinize the nation at war. The first was the Tocquevillean binary of aristocracy and democracy, which could be used to uncover the true causes of division between North and South and to explain the persistence of slavery. In reviving Tocqueville's distinction, Duvergier de Hauranne was also reaching back in time to "The Great Debate" of the Bourbon Restoration, when statesmen took sides in the struggle between the aristocratic way of life that characterized the *ancien régime* and the new democracy of the post-revolutionary nation. He thus framed the current American struggle in terms that would have been familiar to generations of readers of *Revues des Deux Mondes*, some of whom participated in the debates between the reactionary aristocrats and the more forward-looking theorists of the democratic age.[39] Not only did slavery and plantation ownership in the South produce "aristocratic vices" in a country that lacked a hereditary aristocracy and its virtues, but the relationship between slavery and democracy—by which he meant, following Tocqueville, an equalized rather than a hierarchical type of society—was zero-sum. "The atmosphere of democracy was deadly to [slavery]" and "every bit of ground that slavery loses is invaded by democracy," he reasoned.[40] This explained why slavery

could never gain a foothold in the North and why it served as "the symbol of aristocracy" in the American South, which clung to an antiquated notion of hierarchy. Using his distinction between Northern democracy and Southern aristocracy, Duvergier de Hauranne recast the reason for the war itself. "I do not say that the war is being fought over the *moral* and *philosophical* question of abolition," or over the "abstract idea" of ending slavery. Rather, the "question of principle"—of slavery—"also corresponded to the question of interest," or of preserving the commercial and political influence of the South.[41]

But even if the causes of discord could be traced to aristocratic vices, the fighting itself was initiated by a democratic phenomenon: what Tocqueville called the tyranny of the majority. Having been chastised by an American who claimed that a Frenchman could never understand freedom, Duvergier de Hauranne was quick to note that American freedom too often consists in "submission to the multitude," so much so that it bears a troubling resemblance to the "sophistries of the Committee of Public Safety," which initiated the Reign of Terror in France in 1793. Echoing Tocqueville, he commented that democracy is the Americans' "oracle, their god," so much so that most Americans "will never agree that it may not be the same thing as liberty."[42] Tocqueville's earlier warnings about the "omnipotence" of the majority thus played out in the most violent and divisive of ways in the 1860s. When the state legislatures voted to secede, presumably expressing the majority will, few individuals in the South possessed the courage or the will to challenge them. "No one dared any longer to defend the laws of the Union against the [Southern] majority that had already violated them," and such resignation to the powerful majority reinforced the "intellectual myopia" of American democracy.[43]

III. France's "Violent Spirit of Party"

While many of Duvergier de Hauranne's entries relayed his impressions of the particular circumstances that prevailed in the last year or so of the war, he intended his notes on the United States to prove edifying to Europeans long after 1865. Contrasting

his approach with those of his countrymen from across the political spectrum—republican, legitimist, and absolutist—Duvergier de Hauranne cautioned against propagating "picturesque lies" or "fantasies" about the New World, whether positive or negative. America ought not function as a mere "object of astonishment or of dread, or of admiration or exaggerated aversion," as either a bugbear or an ideal—what Duvergier de Hauranne thought it had become in novels and travelogues after Tocqueville's *DA*. Instead, "it should be viewed as a vast storehouse of experiences from which to gather warnings and examples with an open mind."[44] Yet the author also confessed that he would rather "stay silent" than give any ammunition to the defenders of absolutism at home, and thus while endeavoring to keep an open mind about the lessons that his foreign travels might reveal to him, he refused to paint an unfavorable portrait of the American republic that might embolden its enemies abroad.

And still, Duvergier de Hauranne often returned to the question about America's future that captivated the French: Could freedom survive five years of war? Would unity come at the sacrifice of America's much-vaunted local liberties? Or, in his own words, "is it really certain that liberty can resist the concentration of power" necessary to win the war for the Union?[45] If so, which institutions would preserve local liberties amid calls to reconcile a divided nation, no matter the cost?

Duvergier de Hauranne discovered one answer to these questions in a rather "strange spectacle," an ingrained feature of American electoral politics that seemed entirely unfamiliar, even appalling to French eyes: the activities of the political party. Indeed, the French suspicion toward parties originated in the Revolution of 1789. Their antipathy toward party politics was characteristic of what Pierre Rosanvallon calls their "culture of generality." If the nation remade in the Revolution was to enshrine the will of the whole people instead of the rule of hereditary privilege of the few, it had to avoid particularity in all its forms, from civic associations to trade unions to local identities below the nation-state.[46]

Any intermediary bodies—or to quote Rosanvallon, "any organization that walled individuals off from one another"—were decried as competing authorities and sources of discord, political parties included.[47] The term *parti* evoked images of factional violence in the early part of the century.[48] In the first days of the Restoration in 1815, the Doctrinaire Pierre-Paul Royer-Collard denounced "the violent spirit of party forming among us" as the greatest threat to the impartiality of the deputies, who traditionally refused to judge an issue on the basis of ideological affiliation.[49] Most publicists believed that the party spirit befitting English political practice had no place in France.[50]

The quest for unity initiated in 1789 reached its apex under the Second Empire, which modeled itself as a state to transcend parochial loyalties, parties included. Napoleon III affirmed his commitment to unifying the nation by appealing to the Bonapartist legacy:

> [The people know] that in 1852, society would have rushed to disaster, because every party was willing to risk being shipwrecked in the hope of hoisting its flag over the debris that floated. I am glad to have been able to save the ship and hoist the national flag. I admit, though, like the Emperor, I have conquests to make. I want, like him, to work for the conciliation of dissident parties.[51]

His words were apparently convincing enough. Even the socialist Pierre-Joseph Proudhon speculated that the nation had chosen Louis-Napoleon as its president because it was "tired of parties," by which he meant the warring parliamentary oppositions that eventually allied to undermine the July Monarchy.[52] Later, through an electoral arrangement that integrated plebiscites with universal suffrage, Napoleon championed the supremacy of the executive (the elect of the *entire* nation) over parliament (its deputies elected by "local intrigues, rather than the expression of a general ideal"), and his imperial state placed itself above the conflicts generated by parties past.[53]

However, we should be clear about the meaning of "party" in this period, since nineteenth-century French parties barely resembled their twentieth-century inheritors. During the Restoration, deputies with shared political interests sat together in the Chamber, but they voted as individuals without a shared platform. Throughout much of the century, "parties" lacked a centralized organization that would bring national and local issues or mobilize voters—which should come as no surprise, given the limited size of the French electorate through 1848.[54] The modern party emerged slowly between the end of the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries. The historian Raymond Huard locates the earliest signs of an organized party apparatus in the more liberal 1860s.[55] When the French condemned "the spirit of party" in the decades following the Revolution, they thus attacked an institution that was a mere shell of what it would later become—in part because of the lessons Duvergier de Hauranne first gleaned from America.[56]

IV. American Unity Through Party Politics

Having admittedly "acquired the tastes of despotism," Duvergier de Hauranne was predisposed to take a dim view of political parties, whether at home or abroad. As a guest at the Chicago Democratic Convention, he witnessed a political spectacle that would have alarmed any Frenchman. What was the party convention, after all, if not "a committee of nine hundred obviously formed to overthrow the administration, an electoral meeting to usurp the attributes of the sovereign assembly that dare to propose its chosen candidate in place of the government . . . [, in short] a legalized rebellion supported by half of the citizens"?[57] And in an entry from July 1864, he targeted the party within his broader critiques of the Americans' political apathy, which made them all too willing to abandon government to "intriguers and underlings" rather than esteemed statesmen.[58] Above all, the party appeared to be another source of separation in a country that sorely needed to find common ground. As the critical presidential election of 1864 drew closer, he feared that "the parties will bluster and lock horns [and] during this time, the general welfare will be forgotten."[59]

Yet, just as he had been willing to change his mind about the Union cause, Duvergier de Hauranne would soon come to appreciate the party for three principal reasons: for the mutually reinforcing *representative*, *freedom-preserving*, and above all *unifying* functions it performed. Although the very existence of a party convention affirmed virtually everything that the French had taken to be true about party intrigue as the antithesis of legislative impartiality, Duvergier de Hauranne praised the activities of this "State within a State," this well-organized, public alternative to the current administration—the kind of intermediary political body that would have been unthinkable in France, at least through the first decade of the Empire.[60]

First, the party acted as a vehicle for *representation*, and not only at the federal level. There is "no undertaking . . . [,] whether a horse-race or a presidential election, that is not organized from the start as a political body," he decided. What looks like a "seditious conspiracy" from the outsider's perspective was in fact "the free and regular representation of one the great bodies of opinion to be found in the country," a bulwark against the tyranny of the majority that amplifies those voices left outside the government.[61] Second, the very idea that a national convention could be held during wartime attested to the *persistence of freedom* even in the darkest days of crisis. It revealed that "the right of association is inviolable to the point where a whole party can lend open support to rebels."[62] If nothing else, the party shone as a beacon of liberty, a sign of the sacredness of rights under the US Constitution.

But the party was much more as well, Duvergier de Hauranne would go on to affirm. Following Lincoln's 1864 reelection, he marveled at the calmness and self-discipline that seemed to spread among a population that had only days earlier been "on the verge of tearing itself to pieces" but that now largely accepted the outcome of the election and the legitimacy of the executive chosen by the people. Once skeptical, even outright critical of the vulgarity of party politics, the same foreign visitor now concluded that the party held the "whole secret" behind pairing liberty with ordered unity. "What is this *génie tutélaire* that guards democracy?"

he questioned. "To what does she owe this spirit of order, perseverance, and wisdom, which her friends themselves have never counted among her virtues? She owes it to her party organizations."[63]

But by exactly what means did the party, an institution by its nature based on particular loyalties and factious opinions and open to conflict and contestation promote not only wisdom but order? In the course of his answer, Duvergier de Hauranne at once praised parties in America as he condemned the unifying rhetoric that suffused French politics—the same rhetoric that Laboulaye disparaged in his program for the new liberal party. "A legal enactment is not sufficient to create a nation," Duvergier de Hauranne declared in an open attack on the imperial constitution, nor does political centralization guarantee unity, as Napoleon III promised.[64] What was so remarkable about parties was their ability to stitch together the local with the federal, to accept that the deep-seated "passions and interests of local factions" were there to stay, and to link them to "a set of principles common to all." The powerful party association positions issues of national interest as its "rallying point," and thus the party pulls an array of local interests, desires, and passions into its orbit, tying the choice of president to that of "police chief or street cleaner."[65] The result of so much associational liberty, of divided allegiances, of political parochialism was a surprising *unanimity*—"a unity more complete than under the most absolute despot" because it did not deny diversity of human opinions or spurn the array of interests across a single nation.[66]

This was true unity, Duvergier de Hauranne implied, not the false sense of security offered by a despot. In an allegedly well-ordered but actually despotic regime without associational liberty or a free press, conflicts burn slowly below the political surface, only to erupt in insurrection.[67] But the party system brings political disagreements into "the open air." And though perhaps party loyalties may interrupt day-to-day democratic life with sporadic moments of incivility or vulgarity, they also are less likely to spark great upheavals that "paralyze a nation with surprise and shock" and render it a "half-dazed captive of the next dictator who comes

along."[68] America may lack a centralized administration. It may find itself less prepared to repel foreign invaders, less efficient in its distribution of resources, less quick to respond to immediate threats, Duvergier de Hauranne conceded, noting some of the benefits of unitary leadership. But its people already embraced a political reality that French citizens, long accustomed to living under a centralized state, refused to hear: that unity is "drawn not from administration" but from democracy itself, flowing "from the very heart of the nation through the arteries of the great parties that govern it."[69]

This was a message that Duvergier de Hauranne would try to impart to his countrymen in the waning years of the Empire into the founding of the Third Republic.[70] In his 1868 *La démocratie et le droit de suffrage*, he reproduced some of the central defenses of the party that were first inspired by America, continuing to wage an uphill battle against anti-party prejudice in the less repressive climate of the late 1860s.[71] The publication of *La République conservatrice* (1873) marked Duvergier de Hauranne's full conversion to republicanism. He continued to insist on the necessity of an American-style party system across the Atlantic, of open political disagreement and pluralism in the newly established Third Republic.[72]

V. Conclusion: Studying the New World for the Old

Even at the height of the Civil War, at the moment when the country was most clearly split into factions and torn apart by sectional differences, Duvergier de Hauranne remarkably doubled down on the argument that the United States maintained more real unity than France ever had. More remarkable still is how the French visitor arrived at this position. While since childhood he admired America and esteemed Tocqueville as an authority, he entered the country as a young man with much less faith in the cause of the Union than his fellow liberals displayed and with an inbuilt distrust of the party system. But his initial revulsion at observing the party system at work soon transformed into reverence for the partisan dimension of American democracy. All the while, his shifting

opinions on the features of American life were inflected by his experiences at home—by the habits of despotism and the French fear of diversity and plurality, which he sought to counter by appealing to republican successes in preserving liberty during the darkest days of war.

It is not difficult to read Duvergier de Hauranne's praises of America as statements on the deficiencies of French politics, or even as open attacks on Bonapartism and Caesarism. Duvergier de Hauranne never seemed to shy away from disparaging absolute and arbitrary government as he recorded his impressions of a faraway republic. As just one difference among many, his openly critical attitude toward the state of French politics distinguished his work from that of Tocqueville, who at least seemed to keep his distance from specific French controversies while he reflected on the shape of democracy elsewhere.

But Duvergier de Hauranne's unapologetic criticisms of his own nation also reinforce the importance of Tocqueville's mission in the New World and shed light on some of the oft-overlooked intentions behind *DA*. They also expose some of the latter's critiques of French politics. Tocqueville compiled its first volume shortly after the liberal July Monarchy rose to power, at the very time when he and Beaumont found themselves caught between their aristocratic roots and the bourgeois government and its "citizen-king" that had taken the reins of power, between the overthrown House of Bourbon with which they sympathized and the House of Orléans. In a sense, they "fled" France for America because they were unsure of their place in the new democratic society and the new government that would rule over it. And while we can certainly hear echoes of Tocqueville's uncertainty in the pages of *DA*, we can also find more overt misgivings about the bourgeois government as well. Tocqueville opened the text with a tone of disappointment, chastising those French statesmen who "did not take hold of democracy in order to direct it," and who, following the example of the minister Guizot, sought to keep democracy out of politics by means of restrictive electoral laws.[73] Writing in the first volume about popular sovereignty in America,

Tocqueville admitted that his words "were sure to offend all of the parties dividing France," virtually none of which embraced universal (male) suffrage as a viable electoral scheme.[74] By the mid-1840s, his initial skepticism about the July Monarchy morphed into full-fledged opposition to the lifeless middle-class regime. But the reasons for that opposition grew first on American soil. Although Americans tend to read *DA* as a text for and about us, we also fail to remember what led Tocqueville to the New World in the first place: a dissatisfaction with French public life and, like Duvergier de Hauranne decades later, a desire to find answers for French failings in the peculiar workings of a distant democracy.

Notes

1. George Wilson Pierson, *Tocqueville in America* (Baltimore: JHU Press, 1996); James T. Schleifer, *The Making of Tocqueville's "Democracy in America,"* 2nd ed. (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 2000).
2. Gustave de Beaumont and Alexis de Tocqueville, *On the Penitentiary System in the United States: And Its Application in France* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1979). For a sample of the secondary literature on Tocqueville and the penitentiary system, see Roger Boesche, "The Prison: Tocqueville's Model for Despotism," *Western Political Quarterly* 33, no. 4 (December 1980): 550–63; Richard Avramenko and Robert Gingerich, "Democratic Dystopia: Tocqueville and the American Penitentiary System," *Polity* 46, no. 1 (January 2014): 56–80; Sara M. Benson, "Democracy and Unfreedom: Revisiting Tocqueville and Beaumont in America," *Political Theory* 45, no. 4 (August 2017): 466–94; Gianna Englert, "Isolation and Association: The Penitentiary System's Democratic Lessons," *Tocqueville21* (March 2019) https://tocqueville21.com/focus/isolation-and-association-the-penitentiary-systems-democratic-lessons/.
3. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, ed. Eduardo Nolla, trans. James T Schliefer, vol. 1 (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 2012), 28.
4. Of earlier eighteenth-century visitors, J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur is notable for his portrait of American rural life. J. Crèvecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer* (London, 1782); Chateaubriand's account of his 1791 travels was published in 1826. François-René de Chateaubriand, "Voyage en Amérique [1826]," in *Oeuvres complètes de Chateaubriand* (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1861).

5. See Aurelian Craiutu, "A Precursor of Tocqueville: Victor Jacquemont's Reflections on America," in *America Through European Eyes: British and French Reflections on the New World from the Eighteenth Century to the Present*, ed. Jeffrey C. Isaac and Aurelian Craiutu (University Park: Penn State Press, 2009).
6. Jacques Benjamin Saint-Victor, *Lettres Sur Les États-Unis d'Amérique* (Paris: Perisse Frères, 1835); Michel Chevalier, *Lettres Sur l'Amérique Du Nord* (Paris: Gosselin, 1836).
7. On defenses of England, see Jeremy Jennings, "Conceptions of England and Its Constitution in Nineteenth-Century French Political Thought," *Historical Journal* 29, no. 1 (1986): 65–85; Theodore Zeldin, "English Ideals in French Politics during the Nineteenth Century," *Historical Journal* 2, no. 1 (March 1959): 40–58.
8. René Rémond's magisterial study of the image of the United States in French public opinion, including its presentation in travelogues and letters written from America, ends in 1852. René Rémond, *Les États-Unis Devant l'opinion française, 1815–1852* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1962). One major exception to my claim is the work of Stephen Sawyer. Stephen W. Sawyer, "An American Model for French Liberalism: The State of Exception in Édouard Laboulaye's Constitutional Thought," *Journal of Modern History* 85, no. 4 (2013): 739–71; Stephen W. Sawyer, *Demos Assembled: Democracy and the International Origins of the Modern State, 1840–1880* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018).
9. Jean-Jacques Ampère, *Promenade en Amérique*, 2 vols. (Paris: Michel Lévy, 1856); Ampère dedicated the work to Tocqueville, who wrote of his excitement to follow along with the journey. See Jeremy Jennings, "French Visions of America: From Tocqueville to the Civil War," in *America Through European Eyes: British and French Reflections on the New World from the Eighteenth Century to the Present*, ed. Aurelian Craiutu and Jeffrey C. Isaac (University Park: Penn State Press, 2009), 179.
10. Tocqueville's updated preface to the twelfth edition of *DA* in 1848, the next-to-last edition that would appear during his lifetime, can be found in *Democracy in America,* ed. J.P Mayer and trans. George Lawrence (New York: Anchor Books, 1969), xiii-xiv. On Tocqueville's turn back toward America after 1840, see Sheldon Wolin, *Tocqueville Between Two Worlds: The Making of a Political and Theoretical Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 562; Aurelian Craiutu and Jeremy Jennings, "The Third *Democracy:* Tocqueville's Views of America after 1840," *American Political Science Review* 98, no. 3 (2004): 391–404.

11. Édouard Laboulaye, *De la constitution américaine et de l'utilité de son étude* (Paris: Hennuyer, 1850), 10; It was also Laboulaye who conceived of the plan to gift the Statue of Liberty to the United States. Francesca Lidia Viano, *Sentinel: The Unlikely Origins of the Statue of Liberty* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018).
12. Ernest Duvergier de Hauranne, *Huit mois en Amérique, lettres et notes de voyage* (Paris: Lacroix, 1866), 1:ii.
13. Ernest Duvergier de Hauranne, *Huit Mois en Amérique: Lettres et Notes de Voyage, 1864–65*, trans. as *A Frenchman in Lincoln's America*, trans. Ralph H. Bowen, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Chicago: R. R. Donnelley & Sons, 1974).
14. Duvergier de Hauranne's writings are discussed in Jennings, "French Visions of America: From Tocqueville to the Civil War"; Jaume compares Duvergier on the party to Tocqueville and François Guizot's visions of a new aristocracy. Lucien Jaume, "Tocqueville face au thème de la 'nouvelle aristocratie': La difficile naissance des partis en France," *Revue française de science politique* 56, no. 6 (2006): 969.
15. Duvergier de Hauranne, *Huit mois en Amérique*, 1866, 1:ii.
16. Aurelian Craiutu and Jeffrey C. Isaac, *America Through European Eyes: British and French Reflections on the New World from the Eighteenth Century to the Present* (University Park: Penn State Press, 2009).
17. Stephen Sawyer demonstrates how French writers looked across the Atlantic to develop a conception of the democratic state after 1840. Sawyer, *Demos Assembled*.
18. William Selinger argues that nineteenth-century theorists modified Montesquieu's earlier assessment of the English constitution. William Selinger, *Parliamentarism, from Burke to Weber* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).
19. Tocqueville, *DA*, 1:14.
20. My goal here is not to treat French liberalism, or even Second Empire liberalism, as a monolithic tradition, with its adherents in perfect agreement. Far from it. Instead, I aim to highlight a tradition of liberalism that turned to American institutions for guidance. For just some of the literature on the diversity of French liberalism both before and during the Second Empire, see Roger Price, *The French Second Empire: An Anatomy of Political Power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Sudhir Hazareesingh, *From Subject to Citizen: The Second Empire and the Emergence of Modern French Democracy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998); Lucien Jaume, *L'Individu effacé, ou la paradoxe du libéralisme français* (Paris: Fayard, 1997); Lucien Jaume, "The Unity, Diversity, and Paradoxes of French

Liberalism," in *French Liberalism from Montesquieu to the Present Day*, ed. Raf Geenens and Helena Rosenblatt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Arthur Ghins, "What Is French Liberalism?," *Political Studies*, no. Online First (October 2022).

21. Louis-Napoleon, "Proclamation du 18 janvier 1852."
22. Price, *The French Second Empire*, Part II.
23. Jardin, *Histoire du libéralisme politique, de la crise de l'absolutisme a la constitution de 1875* (Paris: Hachette Littérature, 1985); Alan Kahan, *Liberalism in Nineteenth Century Europe: The Political Culture of Limited Suffrage* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003). In the 1857 elections, only five liberals were elected to the Corps législatif.
24. Édouard Laboulaye, *Le parti libéral: son programme et son avenir*, 6th ed. (Paris: Charpentier, 1865), vi–vii.
25. Ibid., viii.
26. Theodore Zeldin, *The Political System of Napoleon III* (London: Macmillan, 1958).
27. Hazareesingh, *From Subject to Citizen*, chap. 1.
28. Agénor Gasparin et al., *Réponse de Mm. de Gasparin, Laboulaye, Martin et Cochin: À La Ligue Loyale et Nationale de New York.*, vol. 41, Loyal Publication Society of New York (New York: Wm. C. Bryant & Co., 1864).
29. Laboulaye, *Le parti libéral: son programme et son avenir*, ix.
30. Édouard Laboulaye, *The United States and France* (Boston: Boston Daily Advertiser, 1862).
31. Serge Gavronsky, "American Slavery and the French Liberals: An Interpretation of the Role of Slavery in French Politics during the Second Empire," *Journal of Negro History* 51, no. 1 (January 1966): 36–52.
32. Prosper Duvergier de Hauranne, *De la réforme parlementaire et de la réforme électorale* (Paris: Paulin, 1847).
33. Prosper Duvergier de Hauranne, *Histoire du gouvernement parlementaire en France: 1814–1848* (Paris: Michel Lévy, 1860).
34. Ralph H. Bowen and Albert Kress, "Historical Introduction," in Ernest Duvergier de Hauranne, *A Frenchman in Lincoln's America* (Chicago: R. R. Donnelley & Sons, 1974), xxi–xxii.
35. Duvergier de Hauranne, *Huit mois en Amérique*, 1866, 1:11.
36. Ibid., 1:x.
37. Ibid., 1:84.
38. Ibid., 1:iii.
39. On Tocqueville's contribution to The Great Debate, see Larry Siedentop, *Tocqueville* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

40. Duvergier de Hauranne, *Huit mois en Amérique*, 1866, 1:84–85.
41. Ibid., 1:85.
42. Ibid., 1:55.
43. Ibid., 1:164.
44. Ibid., 1:vi.
45. Ibid., 1:48.
46. Pierre Rosanvallon, *Le Peuple introuvable: Histoire de la représentation démocratique en France* (Paris: Gallimard, 2002), 39. See also all of chap. 1, on the people as abstraction.
47. Pierre Rosanvallon, *The Demands of Liberty: Civil Society in France since the Revolution*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 14.
48. Raymond Huard, *La naissance du parti politique en France* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1996), 13; Alan B. Spitzer, "Restoration Political Theory and the Debate over the Law of the Double Vote," *Journal of Modern History* 55, no. 1 (March 1, 1983): 68; J. A. W. Gunn surveys debates over faction and conflict during the Restoration, but argues that certain French figures aimed to used party rivalries to realize national ends. J. A. W. Gunn, *When the French Tried to Be British: Party, Opposition, and the Quest for Civil Disagreement, 1814–1848* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009).
49. The mode of secret voting in the Chamber, adopted after 1820, also aimed to limit party affiliation by allowing deputies to hide their commitments. See Gunn, *When the French Tried to Be British*, 117–18.
50. Prosper de Barante, *La vie politique de M. Royer-Collard*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1861), 215–16; thus when Tocqueville called for the emergence of great parties in 1847, he too went against the grain of public opinion. See Gianna Englert, "Tocqueville's Politics of Grandeur," *Political Theory* 50, no. 3 (2022): 477–503.
51. Louis Girard, *Napoléon III* (Paris: Fayard, 1986), 182.
52. Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, *Les confessions d'un révolutionnaire, pour servir à l'histoire de la révolution de février* (Paris, 1849), 277.
53. Speech of May 28, 1872, qtd in Price, *The French Second Empire*, 106.
54. Price insightfully describes parties in this period as "political tendencies." Price, *The French Second Empire*, 259.
55. These defining features of the party are Huard's. Huard, *La naissance du parti politique en France*.
56. On continued opposition to parties into the early twentieth century, see Nicolas Roussellier, "Brilliant Failure: Political Parties under the Republic Era in France (1870–1914)," in *Organizing Democracy: Reflections on the Rise of Political Organizations in the Nineteenth*

Century, ed. Henk te Velde and Maartje Janse (New York: Springer, 2017). For more on the role of parties at the turn of the twentieth century, see Gaetano Quagliariello, *Politics Without Parties: Moisei Ostrogorski and the Debate on Political Parties on the Eve of the Twentieth Century* (Aldershot, UK: Avebury, 1996).

57. Duvergier de Hauranne, *Huit mois en Amérique*, 1866, 2:215.
58. Ibid., 1:79.
59. Ibid., 1:91.
60. Ibid., 2:215.
61. Ibid., 2:216.
62. Ibid.
63. Ibid., 2:23.
64. Ibid., 2:26.
65. Ibid., 2:23.
66. Ibid., 2:24.
67. Duvergier de Hauranne despaired that "secrecy and solitude [have become] the condition of our independence" with government serving as little more than the "jailer" of a cell in which each citizen lives in isolation. Ernest Duvergier de Hauranne, "La démocratie et le droit de suffrage: II. Le suffrage universel," *Revue des Deux Mondes* 74, no. 4 (1868): 798.
68. Duvergier de Hauranne, *Huit mois en Amérique*, 1866, 2:27.
69. Ibid, 2:27–28.
70. Although Jaume acknowledges that Duvergier de Hauranne's work on parties fell on deaf ears when it was published, he doesn't follow Duvergier's influence into the Third Republic. Jaume, "Tocqueville face au thème de la 'nouvelle aristocratie.'"
71. Duvergier de Hauranne, "La démocratie et le droit de suffrage."
72. Huard, *La naissance du parti politique en France*.
73. Tocqueville, *DA*, 1:18. For a reading of Tocqueville's *DA* that interprets parts of the first volume as an argument against the Doctrinaires, see Gianna Englert, *Democracy Tamed: French Liberalism and the Politics of Suffrage* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2024). For another recent study that argues that even Tocqueville's use of the word *democracy* in America was meant to challenge the Doctrinaires, see Salih Emre Gerçek, "Alexis de Tocqueville's Reluctant 'Democratic Language,'" *Review of Politics* 83, no. 1 (2020): 1–24.
74. Tocqueville, *DA*, 1:313.