

## AP US History – Summer Fun - M. Schiavo

First Hunk - o - Stuff...

Welcome to AP...  
Let's get to work.

1. On day one, an essay entitled **“The American Idea,”** will be due. This short essay is to be a maximum 300 words - just like the “scholars, novelists, politicians, artists and others” that were asked to contribute to one of our country’s oldest magazines, *The Atlantic Monthly*. In honor of their 150<sup>th</sup> year in publication, *The Atlantic* collected a series of thoughts on “The Future of the American Idea.” You are simply asked to respond to the title. **What is your concept of the American Idea?** Please scroll through the intro and essays from The Atlantic Monthly below for examples. *(We will revisit your ideas after the AP test next spring to pull this entire year, and your vision of the future, together!)*

2. Our summer reading is David Cohen’s **“Chasing the Red, White and Blue.”** You will enjoy his efforts to update Alexis De Toqueville’s classic **Democracy in America**, and then be tested (essay) on your understanding of it on the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of class this September. We will reference **“Chasing the Red, White and Blue”** throughout the year and come back to it in the spring after the AP Test.

### **To give you an understanding of the first two weeks of class I offer you the following:**

3. In our attempt to spend a bit more time with 20<sup>th</sup> century US History and reviewing for the AP test in the spring... please re-familiarize yourself with what is considered **Colonial History – (from Discovery to the French and Indian War)**. The test prep book you used last year – **United States History** – is quite helpful. For that matter, any AP US History test prep book published since 2014 (due to the new test that year) will work. Simply put, you will need to find objective information throughout the year for most of what we do. Students of the past come to realize that there is a world of objective info online but that the book you used last year is essential. Purchase one.

4. **“Thesis Thingy” - Major Concepts in essay form:** We will discuss the first 5 chapters in class – and many other themes this year – through these “Thesis Thingys.” You are asked to write an impressive introduction and conclusion paragraph **and in between the intro and conclusion offer an extensive OUTLINE!!** as a defense of your thesis in your “body paragraphs.” (You should not limit yourself to 5 paragraphs!) You will get very good at organizing ideas and details needed to score highly on the AP test. Your efforts to analyze and synthesize historical information in this format will also be a wonderful resource for your review efforts prior to the AP test in the spring!

In putting together your Thesis Thing, you should utilize any source you are comfortable with (online, AP test prep book), for your objective information and the American Spirit to “color” your outlines with detail. **The American Spirit must be utilized in your first three Thesis Thingys. Please identify what Spirit readings were used, when they are used, in your thesis things by putting the source author and page number of the Spirit source in parenthesis after using the source in your outline.**

### **Three of the Thesis Thingys that will take us through major themes of the first five chapters are as follows:** *(Each of these questions is from an actual AP test!)*

1. Early encounters between American Indians and European colonists led to a variety of relationships among the different cultures. Analyze how the actions taken by BOTH American Indians and European colonists shaped those relationships in the following regions. Confine your answer to the period prior to the French and Indian War  
New England, Chesapeake, Spanish Southwest, New York and New France

2. In the seventeenth century, New England Puritans tried to create a model society. What were their aspirations, and to what extent were those aspirations fulfilled prior to 1756?

3. For the period before 1750, analyze the ways in which Britain’s policy of Salutary Neglect influenced the development of American society as illustrated in the following:  
Legislative assemblies, Commerce, Religion

The above “Thesis Thingys” will be due starting the second week of classes next fall. I do not expect you to complete all of them over the summer, but it might be helpful to have begun work on the first one prior to walking into school in September so that you may ask good questions regarding this process in class. The choice is yours...

**A specific first week syllabus will look something like this...**

- Day 1 – “Administrative” details... Collect “American Idea” essay, (Hwk – Prepare for Summer Reading Essay Test)
- Day 2 – Summer Reading Essay test... (Hwk – Prepare for Multiple Choice quiz)
- Day 3 – Multiple Choice test on Colonial History through the French and Indian war (1763) (Hwk - Read Emerson essay, write essay in response to ideas presented in essay)
- Day 4 - Discussion of Emerson Essay – (Hwk – conclude 1<sup>st</sup> Thesis Thingy)
- Day 5 – Discussion of 1<sup>st</sup> Thesis Thingy – (Hwk – read *Taking Sides* Historiographical essay)
- Day 6 – 1<sup>st</sup> miniature debate from *Taking Sides* Historiography

**Please note that I will be handing you the first volume of *The American Spirit* in September, but if you have any questions before the end of the year, please stop by B-5 to ask!**

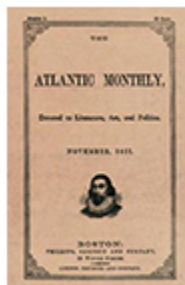
Below is the editor’s explanation of *The Atlantic*’s 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition, followed by a few examples of the American Idea essay that you will be offering the first day of class in September.

NOVEMBER 2007 ATLANTIC MONTHLY

## The Future of the American Idea

**O**n learning of plans for a new American magazine, the scholar [Charles Eliot Norton wrote in June 1857](#) to its first editor, his friend James Russell Lowell. He wanted to offer help but also to supply an inoculating dose of reality, to caution that “such things are never permanent in our country. They burn brightly for a little while, and then burn out.” He continued, referring to the 18th-century British editor Edward Cave by his pen name, Sylvanus Urban:

It would be a great thing for us if any undertaking of this kind could live long enough to get affections and associations connected with it, whose steady glow should take the place of, and more than supply, the shine of novelty, and the dazzle of a first go-off. I wish we had a Sylvanus Urban a hundred and fifty years old. I wish, indeed, we had anything so old in America; would give a thousand of our new lamps for the one old, battered, but true magical light.



With this issue, Lowell's magazine turns 150—declining, with respect, the “battered,” still aspiring to the magical. What, beyond the patient commitment of its owners, can account for this longevity? Consider *The Atlantic's* passage: through a permanent revolution in technology, from the telephone, to the practical fountain pen, to the radio, to the note pad, to the television, to the Internet; through financial crises, beginning in 1857 with what *The Atlantic* called a national “flurry” over credit (or *liquidity*, to use the present flurry's term); through national arguments over slavery, suffrage, evolution, immigration, prohibition, anticommunism, civil rights, feminism, gay rights, evolution and immigration (again); through the international contests of ideology that defined the last century and into the new contest that so far is shaping this one. How has *The Atlantic* endured? More to the point, why?

We may be able to spot a clue in the arguments. Unlike other publications, *The Atlantic* wasn't created to track a particular identity found on a map—Hollywood's glamour, New York's sophistication, Washington's power, Silicon Valley's imagination. It wasn't yoked from birth to a particular industry or technology, like the automobile or the computer. *The Atlantic* was created in Boston by writers who saw themselves as the country's intellectual leaders, and so its scope from the start was national, if rather theoretical. It was founded on an encompassing abstraction, expressed in the words that appeared in the first issue and that appear again on the cover of this one: In politics, it would “honestly endeavor to be the exponent of what its conductors believe to be the American idea.” That sounds pretty good. But those first conductors—among them Lowell, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and Harriet Beecher Stowe—did not explain what they meant, not exactly. What or which “American idea”? The answer must have seemed obvious to them: In literature, they wanted to provide a platform for an emerging American voice; in politics, they had a cause—abolition—that gave granite definition to the American idea as equality, at least among men. One can easily imagine that beyond abolition, agreement would quickly break down. Only reluctantly did Lowell finally agree, in 1859, to publish an essay called [“Ought Women to Learn the Alphabet?”](#)

Today, our national facts would seem radically strange to Lowell—machines that can listen in on millions of telephone conversations, city-killing weapons that can fit inside satchels, tools that can pluck cells from embryos and hone them to fight disease—but the reference points for debate would seem quite familiar. What American faction, what American, doesn't embrace both the revolutionary message of the Declaration of Independence and the restraining message of the Constitution? Our endless quarrels are over what these messages mean, over how the ideal should be made real. It is the endlessness of the quarrels—the elusiveness of the American idea, the tantalizing possibility of its full realization—that has sustained *The Atlantic*. Through the decades, *The Atlantic* has argued; over time, its writers have been found on both sides of some questions, as, without regard for party or clique or convention, the magazine has struggled with the great perplexities of the day. (This by turns fractious, forceful, and witty history is anthologized in [a new collection of Atlantic pieces—called, as it happens, \*The American Idea\*](#)—that Doubleday has just published.) Only a magazine devoted to understanding change could have thrived through so much of it. Only a magazine that constantly questions its own assumptions about the American idea could remain true to that idea's potential. That, surely, was the founders' original intent. (The image they selected for *The Atlantic's* first cover, [pictured](#) on the preceding page, is of John Winthrop, he of the “City upon a hill.”) While we celebrate the magazine this month with [glances back at the archive](#), we honor it more by continuing to turn our gaze ahead, with

pieces like [Walter Kirn's romp](#) through the multitaskers' labyrinth, [Robert D. Kaplan's report](#) on the decline of American might, and [Caitlin Flanagan's essay](#) on Hillary Clinton.

To mark this anniversary, we also invited an eclectic group of thinkers who have had cause to consider the American idea to describe its future and the greatest challenges to it. We provided little more charge than that, beyond asking that they accomplish this feat in 300 words or so. (It should be noted that [Judith Martin—Miss Manners—delivered precisely 300](#), one of them *whoops*. [Her old colleague Tom Wolfe](#), who happens to differ with Martin on one point of historical interpretation, returned again and again to the library, revising his piece until it reached 2,100 words.) We asked artists to perform the same feat with a drawing or a photograph.

In [the pages that follow](#), [George F. Will rings an alarm](#) over the danger inherent in embracing a singular American idea, but many of the contributors agree on a rough definition of the idea itself—the easy part, [as John Hope Franklin suggests](#). Yet has this idea been put into practice or not? Is it more threatened by Americans' faith in God or by their secularism? By Islamic fundamentalism or by our response to it? By poverty, racism, celebrity, the gobbling up of natural resources? Will science and the entrepreneurial spirit carry us through? Should we rejoice on this anniversary, or should we be angry? What follows is a wise, amused, pained, and impassioned cacophony, and, in sum, a statement of the sustaining value of *The Atlantic*, its commitment to the open mind in pursuit of an idea whose realization was partial and fragile 150 years ago, and still is.

**THE FUTURE OF THE AMERICAN IDEA** NOVEMBER 2007 ATLANTIC MONTHLY

### **The American Idea**

Scholars, novelists, politicians, artists, and others look ahead to the future of the American idea.

BY JOHN UPDIKE

## The Individual

The American idea, as I understand it, is to trust people to know their own minds and to act in their own enlightened self-interest, with a necessary respect for others. Totalitarian governments promise relief for deprived and desperate people, but in the end are maintained in power by terrorism from above rather than the consent of the governed. Empowerment of the individual was the idea in 1857, and after a century and a half of travail and misadventure among human societies, there is no better idea left standing. The idea of individual freedom, undermined by a collectivist tide in the first half of the last century and disregarded by radical Islam today, now spreads through an electronic culture of music, television, and the Internet, even under governments fearful of losing control.

Not only are ordinary citizens to be trusted, in the American idea, but leaders of government, too. Those who have lost the people's trust can be voted out. To be sure, there is a lag in the process, but a process more immediately responsive to the people's will might have ousted Lincoln and Washington in their unpopular moments. A certain trust in a nation's overall soundness and stability is implied in the contract between the governed and the governors. American democracy speaks not just in votes and policies, but in the buoyancy, good nature, and mutual tolerance of its people. These qualities persist even in difficult times—and what times are devoid of difficulties, of contention and conflict and

challenge? The American idea builds them in, creating not a static paradise but a productively competitive section of the Earth's humanity.

The challenges ahead? A fury against liberal civilization by the world's poor, who have nothing to lose; a ruinous further depletion of the world's natural assets; a global warming that will change world climate and with it world geopolitics. The American idea, promulgated in a land of plenty, must prepare to sustain itself in a world of scarcity.

---

*John Updike has published more than 20 novels, as well as many collections of short stories, poetry, and criticism. He has twice won the Pulitzer Prize for his fiction.*

BY RAY KURZWEIL

## Frontiers

The American idea is to push beyond frontiers, whether in geography (Manifest Destiny), science (splitting the atom, DNA), invention (the telephone, the lightbulb, the airplane, the Internet), industry (mass production), music (jazz, rock and roll), or popular culture (Hollywood).

The means of creativity have now been democratized. For example, anyone with an inexpensive high-definition video camera and a personal computer can create a high-quality, full-length motion picture. A musician in her dorm room commands the resources once available only in a multimillion-dollar recording studio. Just a few years ago, a couple of students at Stanford University wrote some software on their personal computers that revolutionized Web searches and became the basis of a company now worth \$150 billion. Individuals now have the tools to break new ground in every field.

These information tools are more than doubling their power in terms of price-performance and capacity every year, which means multiplying by a thousand in less than a decade, by a billion in 25 years. Every decade, according to my models, we are also shrinking the size of these technologies by a factor of about 100. Today you can e-mail movies and sound recordings and books. In about 20 years, you will be able to e-mail three-dimensional products; they will be "printed" in 3-D using tabletop nanotechnology assembly devices, which will rearrange molecules from inexpensive input material into complex products. So you will be able to e-mail a blouse, for instance, or a computer, or a toaster—or the toast. That will democratize the means of production, so we'll finally be able to bury Karl Marx.

This exponential growth of information technology is not limited to electronics; it also includes our biology. This biotechnology revolution is also doubling its power each year, and will ultimately bring great gains to human longevity. That is not a new story. Life expectancy was only about 40 years in 1857, when *The Atlantic Monthly* was founded. It was 47 years in 1900. It is now pushing 80, but this increase will go into high gear in about a decade. Despite well-publicized obstructions, the American drive to push beyond frontiers is alive and well, and represents the dominant philosophy in the world today, with continued exponential advance on the horizon.

---

*Ray Kurzweil is a member of the National Inventors Hall of Fame and a winner of the National Medal of Technology.*

BY AZAR NAFISI

## Sivilization

On the first page of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Huck informs us that the Widow Douglas decided to take him up and "sivilize" him, but

it was rough living in the house all the time, considering how dismal regular and decent the widow was in all her ways; and so when I couldn't stand it no longer I lit out.

The way Huck subverts a whole way of living, a way of thinking and relating to the world, by misspelling a word is to my mind a pure expression of the American idea. That idea is always threatened by another: the secure and smug world from which Huck and Jim turn away. Throughout the book, Huck and Jim turn the "decent" and "sivilized" world on its head, and we come out in the end with a new definition of these words.

These subversive characters, like Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*, F. Scott Fitzgerald's *Gatsby*, Zora Neale Hurston's *Janie*—all outcasts who refuse to comply—are part of a tradition in American fiction. Like Huck, they risk hell but trust their own

instincts and experiences above static convention. They are thoughtful and reflect upon these experiences; they are critical not just of others but of themselves, and they act upon their reflections. This is the American idea I would like to return to: a slight subversion, an instinctive urge to do the right thing, which, in the eyes of the “correct” world, might seem to be exactly the wrong thing.

The idea that I want to believe America was founded on also depended on challenging the world as it is and, by standing up to civilized society, redefining it. That idea was essentially based on a poetic vision, on imagining something that did not exist. It has been pointed out that the man who wrote the Declaration of Independence—who could state with simplicity and beauty that every individual has the right to “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness”—was himself a slaveowner. Jefferson lived in a slaveowning society, one in which half of the non-slave population, the women, were not equal citizens. Yet for all its flaws, that society’s saving grace was its foundation on a certain set of beliefs that transcended the individuals, their prejudices, and their times and allowed for the possibility of a different future, foreshadowing a time when other women and men, a Martin Luther King Jr. or an Elizabeth Cady Stanton, could take their ideas and words and suffuse them with new and risky and bold meanings, and with new dreams.

Huck closes his adventures with this statement:

But I reckon I got to light out for the territory ahead of the rest, because Aunt Sally she’s going to adopt me and sivilize me, and I can’t stand it. I been there before.

This, of course, is the whole point: In order to keep the American idea fresh and new, it must be constantly challenged. For the American idea to endure, we have to “light out,” and to find new ways to resist the “sivilizing” impulse of the Widow Douglasses and Aunt Sallies among us.

And yet today it seems that America, gripped by social and political crisis, has become almost forgetful of that idea. Cynical, shallow, defensive, and at the same time arrogant and greedy, it is unfaithful to its instincts and refuses to be reflective, mistaking blame for criticism and self-criticism, and believing that success at any cost is more important than failure with honor, taking as its ideal the Widow Douglas’s paradise rather than Huck Finn’s hell.

The question is: Can we still hope to be a little less “sivilized”?

---

**Azar Nafisi** is the author of *Reading Lolita in Tehran* (2003).

by [ALAN BRINKLEY](#)

## Messiah Complex

The United States is far from the only nation to believe it represents an idea. But America’s self-image is more deeply bound up with a sense of having a special place in history than most other nations’ are. The American idea has had various emphases, good and bad, over the years: equality, social justice, racial purity, freedom—and in the 20th and 21st centuries in particular, material abundance. But among the most powerful forms of the American idea has been the conviction that the nation has a special, moral mission in the world. America was to be a “city upon a hill,” as John Winthrop said of 17th-century Boston, and the “last best hope of man on earth,” as Abraham Lincoln said at the time of the Civil War. “We are the pioneers of the world,” Herman Melville wrote in 1850. “The political Messiah has ... come in us.”

For much of American history, this messianic sense of the nation’s destiny was a largely passive one. The United States was to be a model to other nations—a light shining out to a wretched world and inspiring others to lift themselves up. But in the 20th and 21st centuries, as America has ascended to global preeminence, that sense of mission has become linked to a series of attempts—after World War I, World War II, and the attacks of September 11, 2001—to reshape the world. Despite the many frustrations those efforts have produced—in places such as the Philippines in the early 20th century and Iraq in the early 21st—the idea of American mission has shown remarkable durability.

One could argue that a national idea is an inherently dangerous thing. But given America’s powerful traditions, and given its currently unmatched power in the world, there is little reason to believe that this country will abandon its belief that it is destined to lead the world. And yet our present travails suggest that there may be room to redefine how we exercise leadership, that we could embrace elements of the American idea that have in the past—and might again—make the United States not just a feared military power but an exemplar of ideals of potentially universal appeal: human rights, environmental responsibility, and a commitment to peace and stability as a precondition of progress, and indeed, survival.

*Alan Brinkley is the provost, and the Allan Nevins Professor of History, at Columbia University.*



BY [STEPHEN BREYER](#)

## Wise Constraints

The Constitution of the United States permits Americans to govern themselves. At its heart lies a certain concept of democracy, a form of self-government that protects basic human rights from invasion by the majority, assures a degree of equality, and insists upon the rule of law. It avoids concentrating power in too few hands by dividing power, vertically between states and a federal government and horizontally among three federal branches. It translates its ideals into institutions designed to work in practice.

The ideas at the heart of the Constitution are not uniquely American. Our Founders understood French Enlightenment thought, they respected British legal traditions from the Magna Carta onward, and they sought to create institutions that would embody the democratic ideals and republican values of ancient Greece and Rome. What is specially American, however, is the surprising fact that the democratic institutions established by a written Constitution have actually worked (with many ups and downs) over the course of more than 200 years, as the nation has grown by a factor of 75 and now encompasses every race, religion, ethnic background, and conceivable point of view.

This simple fact—that such a large, diverse nation has been able to govern itself democratically for so long—helps to explain why since the end of World War II, many other nations, seeking similar ends, have sought to learn from our experience. They have tried to create their own governmental institutions embodying similar ideals. And many have succeeded. The upshot is that we are not unique; our ideals are not exceptional; and, to everyone's good fortune, our ability to put those ideals into practice, however special it once may have been, has not remained so.

The future of the American constitutional idea, then, is the future of a shared set of ideals. This implies a shared commitment to practices necessary to make any democracy work: conversation, participation, flexibility, and compromise. Such a commitment cannot guarantee success in overcoming serious problems: terrorism, environmental degradation, population growth, energy security, and the like. But it does imply a certain attitude toward finding solutions—a willingness to explore options, to search for consensus, and not to be “too sure” of oneself, a habit of mind that Judge Learned Hand once defined as the very “spirit of liberty.”

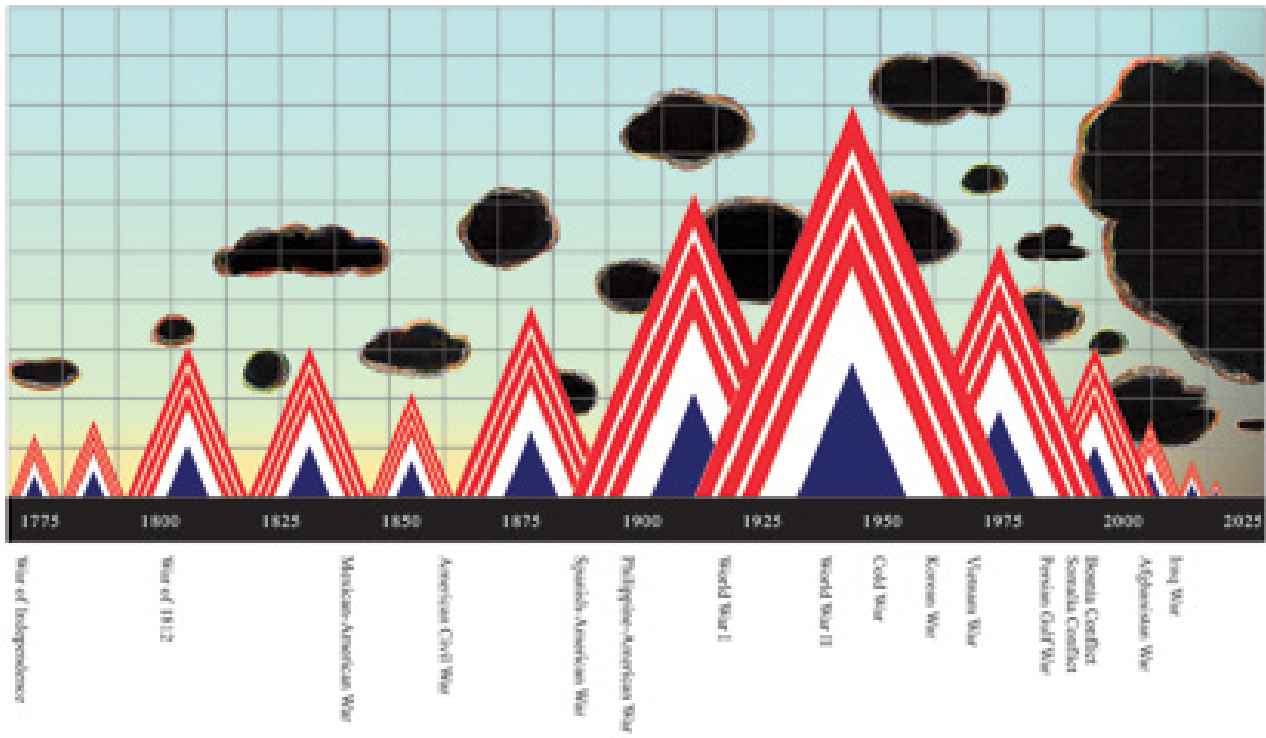
I believe that America, through choice, and not necessity, will follow this basic approach. I know of none more likely to work.

---

*Stephen Breyer is an associate justice of the United States Supreme Court and the author of [Active Liberty: Interpreting Our Democratic Constitution](#) (2005).*

BY [MILTON GLASER](#)

## The Rise and Fall of the American Idea



MILTON GLASER IS A GRAPHIC ARTIST




BY [STAN LEE](#)

# America Is a Dream

Illustrations by Anthony Winn

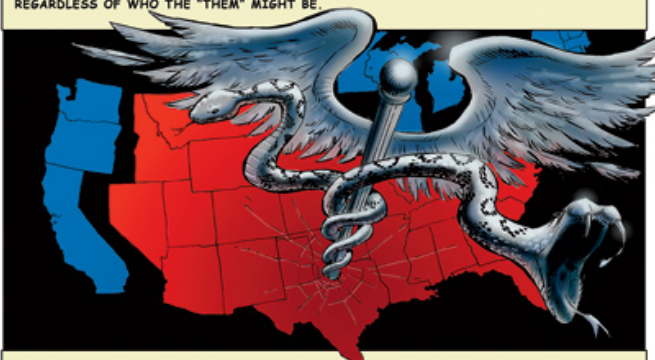
AMERICA IS A DREAM, A VISION, A MIRACLE BASED ON ONE NOBLE IDEA-- THE IDEA THAT PEOPLE OF EVERY RACE AND RELIGION CAN LIVE TOGETHER IN PEACE, THAT EVERYONE IS ENTITLED TO EQUAL JUSTICE UNDER THE LAW AND THAT GOVERNMENT IS RESPONSIBLE TO THE GOVERNED.



BUT AN IDEA, DESPITE ITS AWESOME POWER, CAN BE DANGEROUSLY VULNERABLE. IT MUST BE SHELTERED AND GUARDED, NOURISHED AND PROTECTED. FEW THINGS ARE MORE TRAGIC THAN THE DEATH OF AN IDEA, ESPECIALLY ONE WHICH HAS BEEN A SHINING BEACON FOR THE ENTIRE WORLD.

1


TODAY, THE AMERICAN IDEA IS MENACED AS NEVER BEFORE. WHERE VARIETY HAD ONCE BEEN THE SOURCE OF OUR INCALCULABLE STRENGTH, IT HAS NOW BROUGHT AN ERA OF GROWING DIVISIVENESS AMONG OUR PEOPLE, A FEELING OF "US AGAINST THEM" REGARDLESS OF WHO THE "THEM" MIGHT BE.



WITH MEDICAL CARE WE CAN FIND NO CONSENSUS. IS THE WARMING OF EARTH MERE FANCY OR FACT? BETWEEN RED STATES AND BLUE STATES THE SCHISM GROWS WIDER. WAS THERE EVER A TIME WE WERE SO FAR APART?

2


OUR BORDERS ARE BREACHED BY A FLOOD OF "ILLEGALS". SHRILL VOICES INDIGNANTLY WANT THEM EVICTED. OTHERS CRY, "STAY! WE CAN'T DO WITHOUT THEM." THE SHOUTING, THE TENSION, THE HOSTILITY GROWS.



TERRORISTS TOO ARE AN UNENDING THREAT. HOW DO WE FIGHT THOSE THAT CANNOT BE FOUND? AND THE WAR IN IRAQ HAS DIVIDED OUR NATION, WE'RE "PRO" OR WE'RE "ANTI", WITH NO ROOM IN BETWEEN.

3

AND YET... THERE IS HOPE. WE CAN STILL BE UNITED, NO MATTER THE SQUABBLING. NO MATTER THE RAGE. WE'RE AMERICANS ALL, NOW AND FOREVER. THE VIEWS THAT CONFLICT US ARE WHAT MAKE US STRONG.



ONE THING WILL SUSTAIN US, AS IT HAS IN THE PAST. IT WON'T BE FORSAKEN AND IT CAN'T BE DESTROYED! YOU CAN'T TOUCH IT OR SEE IT, BUT IT'S IN THE AIR THAT WE BREATHE. IT'S THE GREATEST IDEA ANY NATION COULD HAVE.

4

Stan Lee is a writer, editor, and [comic book artist](#) and the chairman emeritus of Marvel Comics.