social ideas discussed in the present work are dealt with more systematically in The Puritan Smile (SUNY Press, 1987) and The Cosmology of Freedom (Yale University Press, 1974). However, the idea that the American tradition provides a viable and often-neglected alternative to both modernism and postmodernism, and the attempt to work out some implications of this from a specific standpoint which draws on that tradition, provide this book with a distinctive theme and focus, and make it a valuable addition to the growing corpus of Neville's work.

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Fukuyama's 1989 article "The End of History" reintroduced the latent Hegelian optimism of much of American thought into the contemporary political debate. Fukuyama summarized the utopian liberal state as "... liberal democracy in the political sphere combined with easy access to VCRs and stereos in the economic." In this book, Fukuyama argues that moral freedom is more significant than economic, and stresses the importance of recognition of human dignity as the means by which liberalism ends history. Liberal states must satisfy the thymotic side of human nature. And liberalism succeeds by providing for mutual recognition of human dignity and the maximum opportunity to publicly express individual values.

Fukuyama still believes that a universal philosophical history is possible because history can be understood as a single, coherent, evolutionary process culminating in liberal democracy. He distinguishes political liberalism, the recognition in law of a sphere of individual rights free from government control, from liberal democracy in which all citizens share in political power. The economic manifestation of liberalism is its recognition of free economic exchange based on private property and open markets.

The point of these distinctions is that one can have political liberalism without democracy. And, the most advantageous economic arrangement would be political liberalism and strong government control. This leads Fukuyama to speculate on why political liberalism and economic development lead to liberal democracy.

Fukuyama rejects "Anglo-Saxon liberalism" which defines freedom negatively as the absence of external coercion. The Hegelian freedom of making moral choices is what will be found at the end of history. The ability to make such choices is demonstrated by the willingness to risk one's life for a value. This demonstrates that history is fueled by conflict, and that the good society must be more than a non-aggression pact. It must satisfy all citizens' desires for recognition of their dignity.
and social development by providing the stimulus for universal education and the opportunity to realize one's ability to be a master through technology.

Fukuyama's answer also supports the end of history thesis: "... we can argue that history has come to an end if the present form of social and political organization is completely satisfying to human beings in their most essential characteristics." Liberal democracy does this by providing all citizens the opportunity of political participation as a means of publicly asserting their values. In fact, liberal democracy depends upon the preservation of irrational communities based in religion or ethnicity, as an impetus to community association.

Still, this valuing be equals raises the question of whether esteem by equals will be satisfying. Here Fukuyama remarks that natural differences will allow people the opportunity to excel in areas such as the economy to support their sense of individuality.

Fukuyama's political convictions lead to some strange claims. He remarks that ethnic strife is limited in the United States because "... none of America's ethnic groups constitutes historical communities living on their traditional lands and speaking their own language, with a memory of past nationhood and sovereignty." This is news for many Native Americans. Environmentalism, which could be a theoretical alternative to liberalism since it expands the sphere of rights holders, is dismissed because no environmentalist would insist that the HIV virus has a right to life and no one seriously expects that cars and cities will disappear. Capitalism is the major hope for environmental preservation anyway, and no one can imagine the future without capitalism. This is news for Star Trek fans. And the conflicts at abortion centers reveals a struggle for recognition between the traditional mother and the working woman. This is surely news for traditional mothers who desire abortions and working women with traditional families.

This is an interesting book for what it reveals about the continuities in American Thought. It is a contemporary example of Hegelian optimism, emphasizes the historicist approach to political justice but at the same time attempts to preserve naturalistic categories in the area of rights, shows a commitment to racial and ethnic diversity while being clearly concerned with the assimilation of European values for the support of pluralistic institutions, stresses the role of the individual and conscious choice in history, endorses consumerism as a source of personal meaning, and supports the special historical mission of the American community. We have utopia now, this is indeed the best of times. Emerson would not be pleased.

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