

INTRODUCTION

FROM THE NIGHTMARE TO THE DREAM

THIS BOOK was born from an essay, “The Death of Environmentalism: Global Warming Politics in a Post-Environmental World,” that we wrote in the fall of 2004. We released the essay in pamphlet form at the annual conference of environmental donors and grantees, hoping to spark a conversation among insiders. What we didn’t expect was that it would be read and debated by such a diverse audience, from college students to corporate executives, everywhere from Italy to Colombia to Japan, or that it would become a projection screen for the hopes and anxieties of the broader progressive community in the United States.

After all was said and done, the passages of our essay that seemed to resonate the most with readers were those that criticized environmentalists for their doomsday discourse. The most quoted lines in the essay were these:

Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I have a dream” speech is famous because it put forward an inspiring, positive vision that carried a critique of the current moment within it. Imagine how history would have turned out had King given an “I have a nightmare” speech instead.

We went on to contrast the environmental movement’s complaint-based approach to politics with King’s positive vision — and

called on environmentalists to replace their doomsday discourse with an imaginative, aspirational, and future-oriented one.

What we didn't know at the time we wrote those words was that King *had* given an "I have a nightmare" speech. In fact, he had given it just moments before he gave his "I have a dream" speech.

The setting was the August 28, 1963, March on Washington. Hundreds of thousands of people had crowded before the Lincoln Memorial, on the Washington Mall, to hear King and other leaders rally the country to support civil rights legislation. Millions of others watched on television, where the speech was carried live by all three networks.

President John F. Kennedy had just returned from Germany; against the backdrop of the Berlin Wall, he had called for freedom for those living behind the Iron Curtain. On his return, Kennedy asked King to call off the demonstration. "We want success in Congress," the president said, "not just a big show at the Capitol."¹

Kennedy's comment tipped King into a dark mood. The worst manifestations of human nature were on display in the South — bigotry, beatings, cowardice, murder — and King was intent on making sure that white America, Kennedy included, faced up to them. And so, a few minutes before he was to speak, King leaned over to the gospel singer Mahalia Jackson, who had been traveling the country with him, and whispered, "Before I speak I want you to sing 'I Been 'Buked and I Been Scorned.'" When Jackson told her stage manager of King's request, he replied, "We need a song that's a little livelier than that!" But Jackson did as King requested. "Dere is trouble all over dis world, children," she sang. "Dere is trouble all over dis world."²

The operating metaphor in King's nightmare speech was the debt white America owed African Americans. "We've come to our nation's capital to cash a check," he said, but "instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check that has come back marked 'insufficient funds.'" The words revealed King's fears that the march wouldn't be taken seriously by

Congress and the White House. "It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment," he warned. Those who underestimated the movement's power, he said, would have a "rude awakening."³ It was perhaps the darkest and most discouraged speech King ever gave.

But then something strange and wonderful happened. A voice rang out from the back of the dais. It was Mahalia Jackson. "Tell them about your dream, Martin!" She could feel that King had dwelt too long in the dark valley — he needed to bring the crowd up to the sunlit mountaintop. Having heard him give riffs of the dream speech to earlier audiences, Jackson knew just what King needed to do. "Tell them about the dream!" she cried once more.⁴

King seemed to address his next line — "Let us not wallow in the valley of despair" — as much to himself as to the crowd. He then pattered — "I say to you today my friend" — and paused, triggering soft applause from the tired audience and buying himself the time he needed to reorganize his thoughts.

King then seemed to find the words Mahalia Jackson had tossed him, and he began the new speech. "And so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, *I still have a dream.*"⁵ From there King led the hot crowd in a rapid climb out of the valley.

[W]hen we allow freedom to ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children — black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics — will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual: "Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!"

With the words "Thank God Almighty, we are free at last," racial integration suddenly felt inevitable.

Even the nervous Kennedy, who was watching the speech live on television down the street, was impressed. "He's damn good," he told

his aides. When Kennedy greeted King at the White House later that same day, the president smiled and said, "I have a dream."⁶

Three months later Kennedy was dead, but his successor, Lyndon Johnson, surprised nearly everyone and became an aggressive pursuer of King's dream. Over the next two years, Congress passed, and President Johnson signed, the sweeping Civil Rights and Voting Rights acts. And while those laws might have been enacted no matter what speech King had given, it is unlikely that history would have unfolded as peacefully or as quickly as it did had it not been for King's dramatic and mysterious leap from the nightmare to the dream.

1.

One unfortunate consequence of having quoted Dr. King in our essay was that we ended up tapping into that apparently inexhaustible reservoir of nostalgia for the 1960s. The truth is that King's dramatic leap from the nightmare to the dream can be a parable for the future only if we first understand how much the world has changed since 1963.

Schools today are still segregated, but for reasons vastly more complex than Jim Crow. Americans of all colors are living roughly a decade longer, thanks in part to advances in medicine. Our homes and cars are larger, and more of us own them. We take such luxuries as air conditioning, cell phones, and inexpensive air travel for granted. And our air and water are far cleaner. Our unprecedented wealth and freedom have profoundly changed what we care about, aspire to, and believe in, so it's no wonder that the old political and moral fault lines no longer apply.

Civil rights, the environment, feminism, labor — what were once cutting-edge movements are now established special interests. This is due in no small part to their success. Rights-based liberalism ended school segregation, dramatically reduced employment discrimina-

tion, and gave women the right to abortions. And environmental laws cleaned up our air and water and protected wilderness lands.

But the old politics has taken us as far as it can. The world has changed in profound ways, but liberal interest groups have not. In defining themselves and their interests so narrowly, it is the issue groups and their political allies — not bogeymen like Rush Limbaugh, Fox News, and the Heritage Foundation — who have created the widespread impression that liberalism is little more than an aggregation of the aggrieved. Environmentalists define their interest as limiting human intrusions upon nature. Health care reformers define theirs around insuring the uninsured. Civil rights groups define their mandate around ending racial prejudice and disparities. And reproductive rights and women's groups define theirs around access to contraception and abortion.⁷

This literalism in setting policy contains its own contradiction: in reducing their own manifold interests to single essential causes and complaints, liberal-issue groups have inhibited their ability to create the kinds of broad coalitions they need to achieve their goals. And in consistently defining the interests of others — whether they are corporate executives, labor unions, or Brazilian peasants — as outside the categories of the environment and nature, environmental and conservation leaders have failed to create a politics capable of dealing with ecological crises.

2.

In 1943, the American psychologist Abraham Maslow wrote a seminal paper called "A Theory of Human Motivation."⁸ In it he introduced the theory that humans have a "hierarchy of needs," a deceptively simple concept that many of us can still remember seeing as a multicolor pyramid in our high school social studies classes. At the bottom of the pyramid there were the basic material needs: food, shelter, and security. Above those were esteem, belonging, and status

needs, and above them were “being” needs, such as purpose, self-creation, and fulfillment. Maslow argued that once we have met the lower material needs, new and higher needs emerge that demand our attention. Sociologists today describe these higher needs as “postmaterial,” since they emerge only after our basic material needs have been met.

Environmentalism and other progressive social movements of the 1960s were born of the prosperity of the postwar era and the widespread emergence of higher-order postmaterialist needs. As Americans became increasingly wealthy, secure, and optimistic, they started to care more about problems such as air and water pollution and the protection of the wilderness and open space. This powerful correlation between increasing affluence and the emergence of quality-of-life and fulfillment values has been documented in developed and undeveloped countries around the world.

Of course, these universal human *needs* express themselves as strikingly different social *values*, and we must thus understand both. By values we mean, very broadly, those fundamental concerns and beliefs that comprise our worldviews and the different ways of making sense of ourselves. An individual’s core values are formed early in life and evolve slowly over time as we go through major life events. Throughout this book we will refer to the social values research that we and others have conducted.⁹ Nothing is more central to this book than our contention that for any politics to succeed, it must swim with, not against, the currents of changing social values.

Environmentalists have long misunderstood, downplayed, or ignored the conditions for their own existence. They have tended to view economic growth as the *cause* but not the *solution* to ecological crisis. Environmentalists like to emphasize the ways in which the economy depends on ecology, but they often miss the ways in which thinking ecologically depends on prospering economically. Given that prosperity is the basis for ecological concern, our political goal must be to create a kind of prosperity that moves everyone up

Maslow’s pyramid as quickly as possible while also achieving our ecological goals.

3.

Paradoxically, it is the global ecological crises themselves that have triggered the death of environmentalism. For us to make sense of them, the category of “the environment” — along with the ancient story of humankind’s fall from nature — is no longer useful. The challenge of climate change is so massive, so global, and so complex that it can be overcome only if we look beyond the issue categories of the past and embrace a grand new vision for the future.

Through their stories, institutions, and policies, environmentalists constantly reinforce the sense that nature is something separate from, and victimized by, humans. This paradigm defines ecological problems as the inevitable consequence of humans violating nature. Think of the verbs associated with environmentalism and conservation: “stop,” “restrict,” “reverse,” “prevent,” “regulate,” and “constrain.” All of them direct our thinking to stopping the bad, not creating the good. When environmentalists do speak in positive tones, it is usually about things like clean air and water, or “preserving nature” — all concepts that define human activity as an intrusion on, or a contaminant of, a separate and once pure nature.

Environmental leaders continue to insist that global warming is essentially a very big pollution problem. But while the coal smoke of Manchester in nineteenth-century England and smog in Los Angeles in the 1970s can reasonably be understood as pollution, the principal greenhouse gas, carbon dioxide, is invisible and has no offensive odor. Moreover, the quantitative accumulation of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere has created something *qualitatively* different from pollution: changing temperatures worldwide and melting ice caps, which may lead to a collapse of the North Atlantic Gulf Stream, water shortages, new disease epidemics, and resource wars.

To describe these challenges as problems of pollution is to stretch the meaning of the word beyond recognition. Global warming is as different from smog in Los Angeles as nuclear war is from gang violence. The ecological crises we face are more global, complex, and tied to the basic functioning of the economy than were the problems environmentalism was created to address forty years ago. Global warming threatens human civilization so fundamentally that it cannot be understood as a straightforward pollution problem, but instead as an existential one. Its impacts will be so enormous that it is better understood as a problem of *evolution*, not pollution.

Our planet, and we along with it, will evolve in rapid and dramatic ways over the next century. The challenge for humankind now is not whether we can stop global warming, which is already well under way, but whether we can minimize it, prepare for it, and improve human and nonhuman life while we're at it. The problem is so great that before answering *What is to be done?* we must first ask, *What kind of beings are we?* and *What can we become?*

4.

Before we wrote the essay "The Death of Environmentalism," the two of us had spent all of our professional careers, about thirty years between us, working for the country's largest environmental organizations and foundations, as well as many smaller grassroots ones. Like most of our colleagues, we viewed global warming as a problem of pollution, whose solution would be found in pollution limits.

In 2003 we started to break away from the pollution and regulation framework. With a small group of others we created a proposal for a new Apollo project. We proposed a major investment in clean-energy jobs, research and development, infrastructure, and transit, with the goal of achieving energy independence. The political thinking was that this agenda would win over blue-collar swing voters and Reagan Democrats in the presidential battleground states of the Midwest, and excite the high-tech creative class at the same time. And by

putting serious public investment on the table — \$300 billion over ten years — we hoped we could break through the logjam that had divided business, labor, and environmental groups for twenty years.

But more than any short-term political calculation, Apollo, we hoped, would be the vehicle for telling a powerful new story about American greatness, invention, and moral purpose.

After we created the Apollo proposal, we did what new political coalitions on the left tend to do: round up endorsements from other groups. And while we succeeded in getting endorsements and letters of support for Apollo's principles from businesses, unions, and most of the large national environmental groups, we were baffled, and then angered, by what happened next.

Environmental lobbyists told us that while they supported Apollo's vision, they would do nothing to support it in concrete ways, either in Congress or during the 2004 election. Those of us who had created Apollo had made the decision to focus on jobs and energy independence, because they were far higher priorities among voters than stopping global warming. In particular, we discovered that investment in clean-energy jobs, to get free of oil, was more popular with voters than talk of global warming, clean air, and regulation. But environmental leaders thought our nonenvironmental and nonregulatory focus was a vice, not a virtue.

Fearing that it would distract Democrats' attention away from stopping the George W. Bush administration's energy bill, which included billions in new subsidies for coal and oil, environmental leaders eventually asked us to keep Apollo legislation from being considered by Congress. Still the good soldiers, we did as we were asked, and Apollo was, briefly, withdrawn. But it hardly mattered: the Bush energy bill passed anyway.

5.

Frustrated with the environmental lobby's policy literalism, and annoyed by the uninspired, small-bore, complaint-based agenda of

Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry, we set out in the summer of 2004 to write an essay about the politics of global warming.

We started by interviewing the environmental leaders and funders who determine global warming strategy in the United States. By the time we finished, we were convinced that the environmental approach was inadequate, at the policy and the political levels, to deal with the monumental nature of the crisis. We concluded that the problem wasn't with environmental leaders so much as with their conceptual models, policy frameworks, and institutions.

The intensity of the reaction to our essay surprised, delighted, and occasionally frightened us. Many imagined that we had claimed environmentalism *was* dead. The response from the most literal-minded was that environmentalism couldn't be dead because they themselves were (a) environmentalists and (b) alive. Others didn't understand how we could be so concerned with global warming and *not* be environmentalists, implying that such a position was a contradiction in terms.

Happily, many people read the essay and, whether they agreed or disagreed, considered our thesis that "modern environmentalism, with all of its unexamined assumptions, outdated concepts and exhausted strategies, must die so that something new can live." Our intention was, in part, to question whether the category of "the environment" made sense any longer. If "the environment" *includes* humans, then everything is environmental and the concept has little use other than being a poor synonym for "everything." If it *excludes* humans, then it is scientifically specious, not to mention politically suicidal.

In the end, the most gratifying aspect of the experience was being told by environmentalists and nonenvironmentalists alike that the essay had had a powerful impact on their thinking and their work. Some told us that they read and discussed the essay in small groups of friends and colleagues. Local environmental leaders told us that they had become more focused on creating a new kind of development than on "protecting the environment."

Today, a new Apollo-like proposal for energy independence seems to appear every few months, including from the campaigns of presidential candidates. The story of America as an innovative nation, the increasing importance of high-tech research and development, and the role of strategic public investment have all emerged as key talking points for anyone concerned about global warming or energy independence. And billions of dollars in new investments are pouring into the clean-energy sector, and even major players in the old energy economy see the opportunity and are positioning themselves to take advantage of it. All of these are the makings of a new dream, and a new story, about America and the world.

6.

The political environment for action on energy independence and global warming has undergone a dramatic shift since 2004. Motivated by their anger with government inaction and the Bush administration's outright interference, climate scientists increasingly started speaking out about the need for bold action. In the summer of 2006, Al Gore wrote a best-selling book and starred in a widely seen movie, *An Inconvenient Truth*, that were compelling — and terrifying — presentations about global warming.

In lieu of action by Congress, progress on climate has come from other quarters. California enacted historic legislation reducing the state's greenhouse gases to 1990 levels by 2020, and other states are likely to follow. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled, in the spring of 2007, that the Clean Air Act gives the Environmental Protection Agency the authority to regulate carbon dioxide as a pollutant causing global warming. And sustainability is today one of the hottest topics in politics, the corporate world, and the media.

The twenty-year effort by environmentalists to educate the public about the facts of global warming has gotten us halfway there. Lawmakers and the media now understand the seriousness of climate change and are committed to action. The passage of federal legisla-

tion to cap greenhouse gas emissions, and create a mechanism for them to be traded, appears inevitable.

But if we are to seize the opportunities being offered, we must first face up to four inconvenient truths about global warming. The first is that those developed nations that ratified the Kyoto treaty on global warming have made little headway in actually reducing their own emissions. In late 2006, the United Nations announced that, since 2000, the emissions of the forty-one wealthy, industrialized members of Kyoto had gone up, not down, by more than 4 percent.¹⁰

The second truth is that China and India long ago rejected any approach to addressing climate change that would constrain their greenhouse gas emissions or their economic growth. For years, energy experts had expected that China would overtake the United States as the world's largest greenhouse gas emitter by 2025. It turns out that China will gain that dubious distinction by 2008.¹¹ The governments and the people of China and India are increasingly concerned about global warming, to be sure, but they are far more motivated by economic development, and to the extent that the battle against global warming is fought in terms of ecological limits rather than economic possibility, there's little doubt which path these countries will take.

The third truth is that even if we were to drastically limit the greenhouse gas emissions produced by power plants and automobiles, we would still need a strategy to slow the rapid rate of deforestation. Destruction of rain forests contributes an estimated 25 percent of all greenhouse gases, more than even vehicles contribute.¹² Perversely, some of the deforestation in Indonesia and Brazil is driven by the rising demand for land to grow biofuels.¹³ In the years since the United Nations environmental conference in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, foreign governments and philanthropists have invested billions in conservation and "sustainable development" pilot projects in the Amazon region. And yet during that time, deforestation accelerated. The

problem is confounded by the fact that when the forests are gone, they can no longer play their ecologically crucial roles of storing carbon and cooling the atmosphere.

The fourth truth about the crises we face is that global warming has arrived and will have increasingly serious consequences, even if we stop emitting all greenhouse gases tomorrow. Climatic changes will lead to increasingly severe, more destructive, and more deadly hurricanes, tornadoes, and monsoons. The melting of ice sheets will raise sea levels and increase the threat of flooding, agricultural collapse, and food shortages. In other parts of the world, global warming will likely trigger droughts, water scarcities, and famines.

7.

In November 2006, Americans voted to eject Republicans from both houses of Congress. Public upset over the worsening quagmire in Iraq has kept President Bush's popularity ratings at around 30 percent, and today it seems that nothing can go right for Republicans. The chances are good that in 2008 America will elect both a Democratic president and Congress, and so it is no exaggeration to say that the opportunity for real action on everything from global warming to health care is better than it has been since 1992.

Many on the left viewed the 2006 election results as proof not just that the Republican Party had been repudiated but also that conservative ideological hegemony had come to an end. Whether that's the case, only time will tell. What is certain is that, while voters rejected Republican incompetence, they have not yet affirmed a Democratic vision.

The time is ripe for the Democratic Party to embrace a new story about America, one focused more on aspiration than complaint, on assets than deficits, and on possibility than limits. For the party to do that, progressives, liberals, and Democrats must deal with some inconvenient truths of their own. Just as environmentalists

must grapple with how global warming challenges the politics of limits, progressives must understand how a half century of prosperity and changing social values challenges materialist liberalism.

Globalization and the transition to a postindustrial economy have generated remarkable material wealth, but they have also brought outsourcing, downsizing, and instability. The result is that Americans have seen their wealth and spending power rise, but they have also become increasingly insecure in terms of their employment, retirement, health care, and community. What results is what we call insecure affluence, a kind of postmaterial insecurity that is profoundly misunderstood when viewed as poverty.

The worldview of materially affluent and postmaterially insecure people is vastly different from the worldview of the materially deprived. During the Great Depression, the poorest one-third of the country stood in breadlines, ate from the garbage, and roamed cities searching for work. They could not hide their poverty. Today's insecure affluent both mask and overcompensate for their insecurity by flaunting their material wealth. The politics born of material poverty cannot speak to postmaterial insecurity. Misunderstanding this, Democrats and liberals find themselves constantly telling Americans how poor and vulnerable they are — which is quite possibly the last thing insecure Americans want to be told.

The rise of insecure affluence has caused social values to evolve in two directions simultaneously. Rising insecurity has fueled the move away from fulfillment values and back toward lower-order, postmaterialist “survival” values, which tend to manifest as status competition, thrill-seeking, and hedonism, all of which have triggered a cultural backlash that conservatives more than liberals, Republicans more than Democrats, have harnessed. At the same time, rising affluence has fueled the shift, over the past century and a half, away from traditional forms of religious, familial, and political authority and toward greater individuality. In response, today Americans are creating a number of new identities for themselves that were unimaginable a hundred, fifty, or even twenty years ago. The problem

is thus not with globalization and postindustrialization so much as with the absence of a new social contract, one that joins the individual's self-interest with the common good.¹⁴

8.

The politics we propose breaks with several widely accepted, largely unconscious distinctions, such as those between humans and nature, the community and the individual, and the government and the market. Few things have hampered environmentalism more than its longstanding position that limits to growth are the remedy for ecological crises. We argue for an explicitly pro-growth agenda that defines the kind of prosperity we believe is necessary to improve the quality of human life and to overcome ecological crises.

One of the places where this politics of possibility takes concrete form is at the intersection of investment and innovation. There is simply no way we can achieve an 80 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions without creating breakthrough technologies that do not pollute. This is not just our opinion but also that of the United Nations International Panel on Climate Change, of Nicholas Stern, the former chief economist of the World Bank, and of top energy experts worldwide. Unfortunately, as a result of twenty years of cuts in funding research and development in energy, we are still a long way from even beginning to create these breakthroughs.

The transition to a clean-energy economy should be modeled not on pollution control efforts, like the one on acid rain, but rather on past investments in infrastructure, such as railroads and highways, as well as on research and development — microchips, medicines, and the Internet, among other areas. This innovation-centered framework makes sense not only for the long-term expansion of individual freedom, possibility, and choice that characterize modern democratic nations, but also for the cultural peculiarities of the United States.

In 1840, Alexis de Tocqueville observed that “in the United

States, there is no limit to the inventiveness of man to discover ways of increasing wealth and to satisfy the public's needs." Rather than *limiting* the aspirations of Americans, we believe that we should harness them in order to, in Tocqueville's words, "make new discoveries to increase the general prosperity, which, when made, they pass eagerly to the mass of people."¹⁵

The good news is that, at the very moment when we find ourselves facing new problems, from global warming to postmaterialist insecurity, new social and economic forces are emerging to overcome them. The new high-tech businesses and the new creative class may become a political force for a new, postindustrial social contract and a new clean-energy economy.

One inspiring model for overcoming adversity can be found in the formation, after World War II, of what would later become the European Union. It was in the postwar years that the United States, France, Britain, and West Germany invested billions in the European Coal and Steel Community, which existed to rebuild war-torn nations and repair relations between former enemies, and which grew to become the greatest economic power the world has ever seen. Today's European Union wouldn't exist had it not been for a massive, shared global investment in energy. It's not hard to imagine what a similar approach to clean energy might do for countries like the United States, China, and India.

9.

Environmentalism offered something profoundly important to America and the world. It inspired an appreciation for, and an awe of the beauty and majesty of, the nonhuman world. It focused our attention on future generations and our responsibility toward them. And it called upon people to take valiant risks, from saving rain forests and whales to inventing wondrous new technologies that will help us overcome the ecological crises we face.

But environmentalism has also saddled us with the albatross we call the politics of limits, which seeks to constrain human ambition, aspiration, and power rather than unleash and direct them. In focusing attention so exclusively on the nonhuman worlds that have been lost rather than also on the astonishing human world that has been created, environmentalists have felt more resentment than gratitude for the efforts of those who came before us. And the "rational" environmentalist focus on just fixing what's wrong with the present narrows our vision at a time when we desperately need to expand it.

There are various expressions of environmentalism, and we have done our best to describe them with reference to specific events, leaders, and ideas. There are important differences between them, which we point out, but there are also striking similarities. When we describe the conceptual underpinnings these different expressions of environmentalism share, some readers will no doubt feel that we have overgeneralized. But those readers who do not see themselves in our descriptions and definitions of environmentalism might consider whether they themselves have already moved beyond environmentalism.

Others will wonder why, with our embrace of markets and prosperity, we don't just call the politics we are proposing a "new environmentalism." The reason has everything to do with our central argument: if we are to overcome ecological crises, we must no longer put concepts like nature or "the environment" at the center of our politics.

10.

When you really consider how monumental the ecological crises are, and how much they are an outgrowth of firmly rooted ways of being in the world, it is hard not to feel overwhelmed. And while fear is an appropriate response to crisis, it matters what we do with it. Fear may be inevitable, but despair is a choice.

With Abraham Lincoln at his back and Congress before him, Martin Luther King felt fear and resentment, and he expressed those dark feelings. But then he stopped himself midspeech. Perhaps he felt the crowd's wishes. Perhaps he heard Mahalia Jackson's cry. Perhaps he had scared himself sensible. Whatever the reason, consciously or unconsciously, King made a choice.

Today we have new choices to make. We must choose between a politics of limits and a politics of possibility; a focus on investment and assets and a focus on regulation and deficits; and a discourse of affluence and a discourse of insecurity. And, most of all, we must choose between a resentful narrative of tragedy and a grateful narrative of overcoming.

In the end, it was probably for the best that King gave a nightmare speech before giving the dream speech. Had he ignored his feelings of frustration and anger, his dream speech would not have been nearly as powerful. Had he avoided the dark valley, the mountaintop would not have been as high or as bright.

We will, to be sure, always call it the "I have a dream" speech. But we should never forget that it all began with a nightmare — one that King, and America with him, overcame.

PART ONE



THE POLITICS OF LIMITS