

freedom, a poor white man could style himself a member of the nobility and thus be relied upon to take the necessary measures in its defense.

Whether one subscribed to the first or second school of thought, the master class believed that democratic feudalism was a potent counter to the egalitarian movements then roiling Europe and Jacksonian America. European radicals, declared Dew, “wish all mankind to be brought to one common level. We believe slavery, in the United States, has accomplished this.” By freeing whites from “menial and low offices,” slavery had eliminated “the greatest cause of distinction and separation of the ranks of society.”<sup>40</sup> As the nineteenth-century ruling classes contended with challenge after challenge to their power, the master class offered up racial domination as a way of harnessing the energy of the white masses, in support of, rather than in opposition to, the privileges and powers of established elites. This program would find its ultimate fulfillment a century later and a continent away.

These populist currents can help us make sense of a final element of conservatism. From the beginning, conservatism has appealed to and relied upon outsiders. Maistre was from Savoy, Burke from Ireland. Alexander Hamilton was born out of wedlock in Nevis and rumored to be part black. Disraeli was a Jew, as are many of the neoconservatives who helped transform the Republican Party from a cocktail party in Darien into the party of Scalia, d’Souza, Gonzalez, and Yoo. (It was Irving Kristol who first identified “the historical task and political purpose of neoconservatism” as the conversion of “the Republican Party, and American conservatism in general, against their respective wills, into a new kind of conservative politics suitable to governing a modern democracy.”)<sup>41</sup> Allan Bloom was a Jew and a homosexual. And as she never tired of reminding us during the 2008 campaign, Sarah Palin is a woman in a world of