

from William F. Buckley's *National Review*: "The central question that emerges" from the civil rights movement "is whether the White community in the South is entitled to take such measures as are necessary to prevail, politically and culturally, in areas in which it does not predominate numerically? The sobering answer is Yes—the White community is so entitled because, for the time being, it is the advanced race."³⁰

The revolutionary declares the Year I, and in response the conservative declares the Year Negative I. From the revolution, the conservative develops a particular attitude toward political time, a belief in the power of men and women to shape history, to propel it forward or backward; and by virtue of that belief, he comes to adopt the future as his preferred tense. Ronald Reagan offered the perfect distillation of this phenomenon when he invoked, repeatedly, Thomas Paine's dictum that "we have it in our power to begin the world over again."³¹ Even when the conservative claims to be preserving a present that's threatened or recovering a past that's lost, he is impelled by his own activism and agency to confess that he's making a new beginning and creating the future.

Burke was especially attuned to this problem and so was often at pains to remind his comrades in the battle against the Revolution that whatever was rebuilt in France after the restoration would inevitably, as he put it in a letter to an émigré, "be in some measure a new thing."³² Other conservatives have been less ambivalent, happily affirming the virtues of political creativity and moral originality. Alexander Stephens, vice president of the U.S. Confederacy, proudly declared that "our new government is the first, in the history of the world" to be founded upon the "great physical, philosophical, and moral truth" that "the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery—subordination to the superior race—is his natural and normal condition."³³ Barry Goldwater said simply, "Our future, like our past, will be what we make it."³⁴