Name: _____ Period: _____ Date: _____
Advanced Placement United States History Mr. Gallucci

JAMES MADISON, *FEDERALIST* NUMBER 10 (1788)

Questions:

1) **How does Madison define "faction"? Why does he feel that factions arise? Why do factions pose a challenge to legislatures?**
2) **What is Madison's opinion of democracy? How does he compare democratic and republican governments? Which system does he prefer? Why?**
3) **Do you believe our current government works as Madison claimed it would? Explain your answer.**

When the Philadelphia Convention ended in September 1787, its delegates had approved the Constitution, a document that differed greatly from the Articles of Confederation. Because they knew that it would generate heated discussion, the framers of the Constitution established procedures for its ratification. The states would convene special conventions comprised of popularly elected representatives. When nine state conventions ratified the Constitution, it would become the new national government.

When first published, the Constitution had minimal support. Still wary of centralized authority, many Americans were reluctant to embrace a radically restructured government. Opponents of the Constitution, stuck with the unwieldy name Anti-Federalists, doubted that the proposed system of checks and balances could work in such a large and diverse republic. They also feared that a strong national government would imperil the states and individual liberties.

To address these concerns, the Federalists, the supporters of the Constitution, began a well-funded publicity campaign. During the ratification process, it became apparent that populous New York and Virginia would be crucial to the new government's success. To bolster support for the Constitution in New York, Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay published a series of essays under the pseudonym Publius. Known collectively as The Federalist*, the eighty five essays became an eloquent expression of American political philosophy. In 1788, New Yorkers voted in favor of ratification.*

James Madison (1751-1836) wrote the most important of the essays, Federalist 10. A brilliant lawyer, Madison helped to draft the Virginia state constitution and advocated religious freedom. While serving in the Continental Congress, Madison was a staunch critic of the Confederation. In 1787, at the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, Madison's Virginia Plan provided the basic framework and major themes of the Constitution. Upon entering the House of Representatives, Madison sponsored the first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution. Known as the Bill of Rights, the amendments protected individual and states' rights. Between 1809 and 1817, he served as the nation's fourth president.

By a faction, I understand a number of citizens, whether amounting to a majority or minority of the whole, who are united and actuated by some common impulse of passion, or of interest, adverse to the rights of other citizens, or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community.

There are two methods of curing the mischiefs of faction: the one, by removing its causes; the other, by controlling its effects.

There are again two methods of removing the causes of faction: the one, by destroying the liberty which is essential to its existence; the other, by giving to every citizen the same opinions, the same passions, and the same interests.

It could never be more truly said than of the first remedy that it was worse than the disease. Liberty is to faction what air is to fire, an ailment without which it instantly expires. But it could not be less folly to abolish liberty, which is essential to political life, because it nourishes faction, than it would be to wish the annihilation of air, which is essential to animal life....

The second expedient is as impracticable as the first would be unwise. As long as the reason of man continues fallible, and he is at liberty to exercise it, different opinions will be formed….The diversity in the faculties of men, from which the rights of property originate, is not less an insuperable obstacle to a uniformity of interest. The protection of these faculties is the first object of government….

The latent causes of faction are thus sown in a nature of man; and we see them everywhere brought into different degrees of activity, according to the different circumstances of civil societyBut the most common and durable source of factions has been the various and unequal distribution of property.

Those who hold and those who are without property have ever formed distinct interests in society. Those who are creditors and those who are debtors fall under a like discrimination. A landed interest, a manufacturing interest, a mercantile interest, a moneyed interest, with many lesser interests, grow up of necessity in civilized nations and divide them into different classes, actuated by different sentiments and views. The regulation of these various and interfering interests forms the principal task of modem legislation and involves the spirit of party and faction in the necessary and ordinary operations of the government….

It is in vain to say that enlightened statesmen will be able to adjust these clashing interests and render them all subservient to the public good. Enlightened statesmen will not always be at the helm. Nor, in many cases, can such an adjustment be made at all without taking into view indirect and remote considerations, which will rarely prevail over the immediate interest which one party may find in disregarding the right of another or the good of the whole.

The inference to which we are brought is that the causes of faction cannot be removed and that relief is only to be sought in the means of controlling its effects.

If a faction consists of less than a majority, relief is supplied by the republican principal, which enables the majority to defeat its sinister views by regular vote.... When a majority is included in a faction, the form of popular government, on the other hand, enables it to sacrifice to its ruling passion or interest both the public good and the rights of other citizens. To secure the public good and private rights against the danger of such a faction, and at the same time to preserve the spirit and the form of popular government, is then the great object to which our inquiries are directed….

From this view of the subject it may be concluded that a pure democracy, by which I mean a society consisting of a small number of citizens who assemble and administer the government in person, can admit of no cure for the mischiefs of faction. A common passion or interest will, in almost every case, be felt by a majority of the whole; a communication and concert result from the form of government itself; and there is nothing to check the inducements to sacrifice the weaker party or an obnoxious individual. Hence it is that such democracies have ever been spectacles of turbulence and contention; have ever been found incompatible with personal security or the rights of property; and have in general been as short in their lives as they have been violent in their deaths. Theoretic politicians, who have patronized this species of government, have erroneously supposed that by reducing mankind to perfect equality in their political rights, they would, at the same time, be perfectly equalized and assimilated in their possessions, their opinions, and their passions.

A republic, by which I mean a government in which the scheme of representation takes place, opens a different prospect and promises the cure for which we are seeking….

The two great points of difference between a democracy and a republic are: first, the delegation of the government in the latter, to a small number of citizens elected by the rest; secondly, the greater sphere of country, over which the latter may be executed.

The effect of the first difference is, on the one hand, to refine and enlarge the public views by passing them through the medium of a chosen body of citizens, whose wisdom may best discern the true interest of their country, and whose patriotism and love of justice will be least likely to sacrifice it to temporary or partial considerations Men of factious tempers, of local prejudices, or of sinister designs may, by intrigue, by corruption, or by other means, first obtain the suffrages, and then betray the interests of the people. The question resulting is, whether small or extensive republics are more favorable to the

election of proper guardians of the public weal; and it is clearly decided in favor of the latter by two obvious considerations:

In the first place, it is to be remarked that, however small the republic may be, the representatives must be raised to a certain number, in order to guard against the cabals of a few; and that, however large it may be, they must be limited to a certain number, in order to guard against the confusion of the multitude....

In the next place, as each representative will be chosen by a greater number of citizens in the large than in the small republic, it will be more difficult for unworthy candidates to practice with success the vicious arts by which elections are too often carried; and the suffrages of the people being more free, will be more likely to center in men who possess the most attractive merit and the most diffusive and established character.

By enlarging too much the number of electors, you render the representative too little acquainted with all their local circumstances and lesser interests; as by reducing it too much, you render him unduly attached to these and too little fit to comprehend and pursue great and national objects. The federal Constitution forms a happy combination in this respect: the great and aggregate interests being referred to the national, the local and particular to the state legislatures.

The other point of difference is the greater number of citizens and the extent of territory which may be brought within the compass of republican than of democratic government; and it is this circumstance principally which renders factious combinations less to be dreaded in the former than in the latter. The smaller the society, the fewer probably will be the distinct parties and interests composing it;….the more easily will they concert and execute their plans of oppression. Extend the sphere and you take in a greater variety of parties and interests; you make it less probable that a majority of the whole will have a common motive to invade the rights of their citizens; or if such a common motive exists, it will be more difficult for all who feel it to discover their own strength and to act in unison with each other….

Hence, it clearly appears that the same advantage which a republic has over a democracy, in controlling the effects of factions, is enjoyed by a large over a small republic-is enjoyed by the Union over the states composing it....

In the extent, and proper structure of the Union, therefore, we behold a republican remedy for the diseases most incident to republican government. And according to the degree of pleasure and pride we feel in being republicans, ought to be our zeal in cherishing the spirit and supporting the character of Federalists.

"The Numerous Advantages of the Union," The Federalist (New York, 1901), 44-51.