

A Book Review of
Our Common Purpose
Reinventing American Democracy for the 21st Century

a report of the
**American Academy's Commission on
the Practice of Democratic Citizenship**

published in June 2020 by the
American Academy of Arts and Sciences

A NOTE FROM THE REVIEWER

This review of the booklet is responding to the call expressed in the report's subtitle, REINVENTING AMERICAN DEMOCRACY FOR THE 21ST CENTURY. The review is authored by the Maury Seldin LLC, the publisher of the timely trilogy, *American Democracy Endangered*, the third book of which contains the treatise that is the foundation of a response to the Academy's call for reinventing our democracy. That foundation for a response was drafted five years ago. It calls for a Declaration of Reform to be built upon a paradigm shift to "... What may become a new discipline, ***Societal Biology: The Body and Mind of Society.***"

This website, the Declaration Era Educational Press (DEEP), is an affiliate of Emily E Press, the hardcopy publication unit of the Research and Publication Division of the Maury Seldin LLC. The wiki arm of the website that will have a chat rooms and serve as the vehicle for the research activities is not yet available. The DEEP website, and the books in the trilogy, along with the other intellectual property owned by the LLC are part of the to-be transferred property to a to be created not-for-profit organization designed to carry forward the innovative processes designed to improve the effectiveness of higher education. The LLC vehicle is serving to provide an intermediate stage during which an appropriate leadership team for the to-be-created not-for-profit organization may be developed.

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A Review of *Our Common Purpose*

“Our Common Purpose: Reinventing American Democracy for the 21st Century, a report of the American Academy’s Commission on the Practice of Democratic Citizenship, comes at a pivotal point moment in the history of the American experiment.” That is the opening paragraph of the letter, from David W. Oxtoby, the president of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, introducing the report issued in June 2020.

The report is well-organized in presenting its results. It is highly recommended for anyone concerned about our quality of life in America today, and the endangerment of further deterioration of our freedom and other aspects of our quality of life. You may read the entire report on the web; and, it is downloadable. Just search for *“Our Common Purpose | American Academy of Arts and Sciences.”* The website is www.amacad.org. Hard copy is also available. Email address is aaas@amacad.org.

Introduction

An Overview of the Content and Perspective

The report sets forth a series of challenges faced in our pursuit of *Reinventing American Democracy for the 21st Century*. It does so in about eight pages of the booklet (about 10% of the content).

The link to those eight pages is as follows: The Challenges. The sections (with the reviewer’s numbers added) are as follows: (1) A PREVAILING SENSE OF CRISIS; (2) ECONOMIC INEQUALITY; (3) A CENTRAL CONTEXTUAL FACTOR; (4) OBSTACLES TO VOTING; (5) DISTORTED REPRESENTATION; (6) DYSFUNCTIONAL INSTITUTIONS; (7) FRAGMENTED CIVIL SOCIETY; & (8) LACK OF A SHARED COMMITMENT TO CONSTITUTIONAL DEMOCRACY.

In the few months since the report was released, the challenges have been increasing. As will be discussed, the scope of this presentation goes beyond the booklet review. It goes to educational innovations that will facilitate improving outcomes as the evolution of American Democracy continues.

The main body of the report is in the section, linked and titled as follows, The Way Forward: Essential Reinvention of American Constitutional Democracy. Its main content is in The Six Strategies and Thirty-One Recommendations. The list of strategies is as follows: Strategy 1 - Achieve Equality of Voice and Representation; Strategy 2 - Empower Voters; Strategy 3 - Ensure the Responsiveness of Political Institutions; Strategy 4 - Dramatically Expand Civic Bridging Capacity; Strategy 5 - Build Civic Information Architecture that Supports Common Purpose; & Strategy 6 - Inspire a Culture of Commitment to American Constitutional Democracy and One Another.

Some of the recommendations are discussed by the reviewer using an alternative perspective of the evolving complex adaptive system that has already changed in the months since the report was issued. Also, the challenges have increased since the booklet was published, and reviewer expects that the damages from the dual crises will bring the nation to a point in which reconstruction will take place in a different environment.

In short, the reviewer is endorsing all six strategies as worthy of pursuit at this time through fostering the civic engagement leading to improvement of process and structure through the intervention paradigm. The focus of the review goes beyond that. It goes to a paradigm shift that utilizes a homeostatic strategy to be discussed, but it is briefly identified in the opening paragraphs of the third overview booklet, [*Great Danger Emerges: Democracy Challenged*](#).

Chapter One - Awareness of Your Rights

Danger Awareness

A Strategic Approach

A strategic approach to danger starts with awareness. Danger awareness provides an opportunity for prevention. The cost to cure is often substantially greater than the cost of prevention. Awareness, however, is a precondition for prevention.

Systemic awareness, with self-correcting systems, is by far the most cost-effective approach. Human biology, with *homeostasis* as its self-correcting system, provides the model that is more cost-effective than conventional curing. It is a process providing a tendency to move toward stability in the face of changing conditions.

The operation of the system is dependent upon information and energy. The quality of the information and the processing system influence the outcomes. Choices in the process are heavily impacted by discipline, self-imposed, or externally provided.

The Reviewer's Alternative Perspective

The Perspective of the Report. This reviewer's interpretation of the perspective of the report is that for the most part it utilizes a paradigm akin to that provided by the book [Harnessing Complexity: Organizational Implications of a Scientific Frontier](#), by Robert Axelrod and Michael Cohen. (The link is to [Unity Counts](#).) The book focuses on generating emergent properties to intervene in components of the system. That perspective is dominant in the first five strategies where there is intervention in the system through process and structure heavily dependent upon civic engagement. **The report is a call for civic engagement.** Inspire a Culture of Commitment to American Constitutional Democracy and One Another, although it contains intervention of the system using the same the same process and structure intervention approach, is not an explicit focus on a paradigm of a self-correcting system such as homeostasis in human biology.

The key element in the sixth strategy relates to the civic culture in the near opening sentence, "The recommendations of Strategy 6 aim to inspire a culture of commitment to American Constitutional democracy and to one another." We will return to this in a discussion of cutting-edge science that will help with the development of a paradigm shift.

The Paradigm Shift Perspective. This reviewer is responding to the call expressed in the report's subtitle, REINVENTING AMERICAN DEMOCRACY FOR THE 21ST CENTURY. The reinvention process goes beyond restructuring to correct the deficiencies. It goes to a paradigm shift in which the system is viewed differently. That perspective, it is viewed as an organic system that evolves over time. The organs in the societal system, includes the organs of the economy and the body politic.

The paradigm used by the founding fathers was built upon the Enlightenment and the Scientific Revolution. The major paradigm shift in the Enlightenment was to the source of authority being from the self-organization of the populace, in contrast to the hierarchal structure that prevailed in that era. The Scientific Revolution that bred the Industrial Revolution was built upon scientific advances heavily

oriented towards linear analyses, especially using models to test the falsifiability of propositions. The result was the quality of knowledge was enhanced with an inductive method that improved understanding of systems.

Since that era, the systems have evolved and linear analytics are insufficient for dealing with the organic nature of our political economy. Furthermore, the last hundred years of the Industrial Revolution ended the about the time of the beginning of the Information Revolution. [Link to a discussion of the Robert J. Gordon book, *The Rise and Fall of American Growth: The U.S. Standard of Living Since The Civil War.*]

That was about a half century ago. It was also about the time the Republican Party, in fear of tyranny of the masses started on an effort to increase power in the operation of American Democracy. It was also at the time Democratic Party shifted from a blue-collar constituency to the electorate benefiting from structural change in the nature of the economy.

Although that evolution been underway with a half century, major shifts have occurred in the last quarter of a century. The lack of awareness, or really consciousness, and understanding the evolution missed the first clues of the Long-Term Capital Management debacle in the late 1990s. The message came again in 2008 financial crisis that stems from the housing market bubble and capital market freeze. The nation suffered an unnecessary Great Depression. [link]

The sixth strategy on the commission's report focuses on a culture of commitment to constitutional democracy and to the rights of others as well as to one's own rights. That is an evolutionary process; but it needs to coevolved with the economy and the body politic. In the analytics for the Enlightenment focuses was *on* analytics that can enhance the quality of knowledge through the use of falsifiability experiments. The paradigm shift is to focus on analytics that can enhance the quality of knowledge about organic systems in which there is an abundance of nonlinear relationships not amenable to laboratory experiments because of changing relationships and contingencies.

As an example, consider weather forecasts that use various models with different assumptions as to what will unfold with various components. A comparison of the expected patterns provides a range of what appeared to be likely outcomes, but there is great uncertainty because the relationships change over time. The longer the time horizon, the greater the uncertainty. We have not learned the lessons from the Long-Term Capital Management debacle and the Great Recession. [link]

Beyond the failure to apply complexity economics for dealing with housing bubble and capital market freeze for their prevention and recovery adapting regulation to facilitate self-correcting systems, we have failed with the ethics and morality of the culture. What is being advocated by the sixth strategy may be viewed with a paradigm closer to that described by John H. Holland in his book *Signals and Boundaries: Building Blocks for Complex Adaptive Systems*. The approach is discussed in a section of the fourth chapter (Harnessing Complexity in the Twenty-First Century) of the trilogy's first book, *Common Sense Revisited: America's Third Revolution*. That Book Is posted on the web, but access is restricted to review and comment. However, the excerpt of the entire section is also contained in the discussion platform of an essay under development, [Unity Counts](#). It is linked; but here are some excerpts (endnotes are omitted and emphasis is added) from that section follows:

Three Levels of Meeting Problems

In order to avoid a failure of American Democracy, we may consider three levels of meeting problems. The three levels of meeting problems may be categorized as a curative approach, preventive approach, and perfective approach. These are discussed in the fourth chapter, *Understanding the System*, of the main treatise, *American Democracy: The Declaration, Pursuit, and Endangerment*. Intervention in the gerrymandering problem falls into a curative approach. America's Second Revolution, providing a Constitution, provides the foundation of the preventive approach, especially focusing on the avoidance of tyranny. We are now turning to a perfective strategy for fostering coevolution as part of a Cultural Revolution, especially through research and education, and amounting to America's Third Revolution. That perfective approach is built using Holland's "...four general properties of signal/boundary systems... diversity, recirculation, niche and hierarchy, and co-evolution [page 94]."

The starting point is that key sentence of the Declaration of Independence, "We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness." That was the marker for America's first revolution. Values articulated include Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. Dealing with these values starts with the individual.

Our discussion started with the merits of diversity of individuals and moved on to recirculation. The strategy placed before you now progresses to niche and hierarchy.

Niche and Hierarchy. We now turn to the third of the four general properties discussed by Holland, Niche and Hierarchy. These are building blocks in the structure of the system. The niche for the individual may be viewed as a sense of place for the individual among a network of others within the boundaries of the cell or organ in the biology of society. That cell or organ is a building block in the complex adaptive system of American Democracy. [\[link\]](#)

It is within that niche and hierarchal structure of American society, and beyond, that the individual functions in her or his life, which needs to be understood; liberty also needs to be understood. Understanding both life and liberty contributes to the fruitful pursuit of happiness.

Understanding life is no simple matter. One approach is a liberal education going back at least to the ancient Greek philosophers... .. The third step takes one to Homo sapiens, and that's going to take us to liberty; and it can start with caring about another person or other people.

Understanding liberty is part of understanding life. Within the niche and hierarchy there are constraints protecting the liberty of others. That has been called negative liberty. It is in contrast to positive liberty which is having the opportunity and resources to pursue flourishing. Plants cannot flourish in barren land. The discussion of diversity and recirculation set the stage for understanding the interdependence of life within the niche and hierarchy of an anthropological system. Within that context, there is a right to the pursuit of happiness. That pursuit is for an individual to flourish.

That right to pursuit of happiness is not an unfettered liberty... The Constitution of the United States of America and its First Amendment recognized that right to freedom of speech.

It is the behavior in the interactions of individuals as niches in the hierarchy that can generate the emergent properties for the functioning of the perfective system.

The American Revolution started as a pursuit of justice but morphed into the establishment of thirteen sovereign states. The Confederation and then the Federation provided a great experiment in the development of a structure that provided an exceptional opportunity for pursuit of happiness. As that structure evolved, the populace had increasing opportunity to flourish with the quality of political rights to life and liberty. That great experiment in a societal structure of American Democracy is now in grave danger from its internal activity. This was a case of niche and hierarchy for a working perfective system.

So, as noted at the beginning of this chapter, “The essence of a Democratic society is that it is rooted in the essence of the people. It is not, however, a summation of the people as with a simple aggregation. **It is what results from the interactions among the people as an emergent property; the set of characteristics of the structure that results from the processes.**” [Emphasis added.] Thus, using the lens of complexity, through a discussion of diversity and recirculation, what is going to emerge in a democratic system is dependent upon the interactions of the individuals within the system. The divisiveness is destructive for democracies.

Individuals have an equality of rights in those interactions that include the equality of rights to the access to the tools of government, especially voting rights. The denial of their rights is an injustice. **Put together with other injustices it can lead to a Third Revolution.** [Emphasis added.] The recent Supreme Court decision denying federal authority to also include an equality rights to reciprocity; an equitable treatment in the interactions within the networks is also included. The increasing skewed distribution of income and wealth indicates that the reciprocity is falling short of equitable treatment as a participant in the system for the production and distribution of resources.

The call is thus for a change in behavior that values the pluralism that contributes to the existence of a perfective approach. **That will require a coevolution of inclusiveness and society.** [Emphasis added.]

Coevolution of Individuals and Society. The case has just been made that we can use a biological analogy for the evolution of a complex adaptive system. A stronger case is made in the third book of the trilogy in the chapter titled “An Analogical Model Using Human Biology.” It is supported by an appendix with greater biological detail.

We have now set the stage for our discussion of the co-evolution of individuals and society. Unfortunately, we have been moving towards a form of government that will become an autocracy. President Trump appears to be using the playbook of Putin.

Putin’s policy of generating fake news and other misinformation is taking us on the road to autocracy, and debunking history in favor of myths designed to generate the action or inaction of his choice, takes advantage of the limited ability of the population to think as if they were ants in the colony, rather than think things through. By the way of contrast, the case of self-organization of bees, and their innate ability, provides an example of how a better quality of information processing produces better outcomes.

The challenge before we pursue the evolution of processes and structures that would naturally serve for a functioning, representative democracy **calls for a coevolution of individuals and society.** [Emphasis has been added to these excerpts for present purposes.]

The commission’s report, in the introduction, makes reference to a “second founding” and “third founding” with the possibility of a “fourth founding.” The rest of the paragraph, as excerpted from the digital version of report on the web, is as follows:

...We on this Commission believe that the profoundly challenging conditions of the twenty-first century pose an urgent threat to the future of our democratic way of life and thus require a “fourth founding”: rooted not only in the language of our Constitution and laws, but also in our expanded national creed of liberty and justice for all; [\[link\]](#) not only in the actions of government, but also in the commitments of citizens; **not only in the reinvention of federal structures, but also in devolution of power to local governance; not only in research and analysis, but also in love of country and one another. [Emphasis added.]**

The “...**devolution of power to local governance...**” could imply a structural shift in authority as between the states and the federal government. The coronavirus has been incredibly mismanaged by the federal government. [\[Link to fifth risk.\]](#) Some of the state governments have been developing coordination in order to contain the spread of the virus. That devolution of power can also be viewed as a paradigm shift as to the distribution of power among the organs of the system and the relationship the body as a whole.

The timely trilogy, *American Democracy Endangered*, in its first book, *Common Sense Revisited: America’s Third Revolution*, discusses the first American Revolution as a rejection of tyranny. Its pursuit of justice formed a confederation of sovereign states in order to strengthen their power in the war for independence. The Second American Revolution converted a confederation into a federation as an organizational matter. It would not have been feasible to form a federation as the sovereign state in waging a war for independence. The Third American Revolution might be a cultural evolution, restoring American Democracy to its form as a pluralistic society rather than a tribal society with a winner-take-all perspective, such as was illustrated in the case of Egypt, and seemingly so far as a result of the 2016 elections.

The reviewer’s reading of *Our Common Purpose* sees it as being supportive of the discussion in the trilogy’s third overview booklet, *Great Danger Emerges: Democracy Challenged*. In the second chapter, the analytical approach utilizes analogies from land-use and urban development akin to the organic perspective used with the analogy to the human body. [\[link\]](#)

Both publications, *Our Common Purpose: Reinventing American Democracy for the 21st Century* & *Common Sense Revisited: America’s Third Revolution*, call for a change in the political process and structure. The game plan for *Our Common Purpose* is summarized in the long paragraph on page 22 as a segue to strategies. What follows is excerpts starting with the first part of the paragraph and ending with and the last part of that long paragraph.

The Commission aspires to achieve significant progress on all recommendations by 2026, the 250th anniversary of the nation’s birth. Starting, as we do now, from the depths of a crisis, this is an expression of great ambition. Implementing the six strategies and thirty-one tactical recommendations will require support from policy-makers, private philanthropy, business, educators, civil society leaders, and, of course, individual Americans.... ...Progress will depend on the hard work of the many organizations, advocates, public officials, and civic leaders already working on similar solutions at the local, state, and national levels. Shining a light on that existing work will inspire others... ...**Implementation will require a groundswell of new activity and commitment to reinventing American democracy. New leaders will have to step forward and many more of us will need to engage in advancing these ideas in our communities.**

[Emphasis added.] Committed to one another, inspired by love of country, we can do it, and find joy in the process.

That approach is supported by the reviewer, an LLC that is designed to spin off its research and publication division to a to-be-formed not-for-profit organization. This was identified in the note from the reviewer that introduced the booklet review. For the reader's convenience, what follows is an excerpt from an introductory note.

...The DEEP website, and the books in the trilogy, along with the other intellectual property owned by the LLC are part of the to-be transferred property to a to be created not-for-profit organization designed to carry forward the innovative processes designed to improve the effectiveness of higher education. The LLC vehicle is serving to provide an intermediate stage during which an appropriate leadership team for the to-be-created not-for-profit organization may be developed.

It should be clear that the *Declaration Era Educational Press (DEEP)* is an educational organization, and while it endorses the Academy's excellent efforts to enhance *civic engagement*, DEEP's educational mission goes beyond the case study of *American Democracy Endangered*. It goes to educational innovation, especially in higher education. As such, it is integrating the fine work of the Academy's *Report of Commission on the Practice of Democratic Citizenship* into the website of *Declaration Era Educational Press (DEEP)*. This is being done as a matter of **fair use**. If the Academy has any objection to the interpretation of the **fair use**, the LLC will be pleased to make appropriate adjustments.

As is noted on the inside of the back cover of the DEEP booklets in hard copy form, and on the penultimate page of the digital version of the website, "Institutions of higher learning, and other educational enterprises, are invited to participate. Access to the authorship rights vested in the Maury Seldin LLC will be available as a gift to institutions of higher learning, and especially other educational enterprises who are prepared to offer certificates to learners who have demonstrated mastery of subject areas for which the innovative technology is used." **This offer is now extended to the Academy's Commission on the Practice of Democratic Citizenship.**

Our nation's educational system is not doing well for the education of the populace as to the nature of our constitutional democracy. How would most voters do if they had a simple test, with only one question, "What are the three branches of the federal government?" And for those who passed, how many could explain why? And now for the elected legislators, in dealing with *The Challenges* (pages 10-19) posed in the booklet, what grade do you think you would get, for your answers, from an interdisciplinary, nonpartisan, team of experts? And why?

The second reason for differences in approach is that DEEP, as part of the Research and Publication Division of the Maury Seldin LLC, is at the cutting edge of research, and fostering discipline development and dissemination by the integration of nascent disciplines into mainstream disciplines, especially by the use of the lens of complexity, when faced with complex adaptive systems such as political economies.

More of the differences in the missions of the two enterprises, and the similarities will be discussed. In both enterprises, motivated learners have opportunity to delve deeper outcomes for themselves and for society. However, motivated learners interested in getting a liberal education, at virtually no cost except the use of time for the pursuit of knowledge, will find that this review will be enlightening. It is easy to skip over some material, but it is also easy to delve deeper into high productivity of learning efforts. A

liberal education can be of great assistance in adapting to changing environments well beyond the political evolution. Such an education should be available for all, in one form or another, without crippling debt.

Some Commonalities in the Strategic Approaches

Some Basic Principles

The Challenges. The challenges presented in the commission's report are enumerated by the reviewer as follows: (1) A PREVAILING SENSE OF CRISIS; (2) ECONOMIC INEQUALITY: CENTRAL CONTEXTUAL FACTOR; (3) OBSTACLES THE VOTING; (4) DISTORTED REPRESENTATION; (5) DYSFUNCTIONAL INSTITUTIONS; (6) FRAGMENTED CIVIL SOCIETY (7) DISRUPTED MEDIA ENVIRONMENT; & (8) LACK OF A SHARED COMMITMENT TO CONSTITUTIONAL DEMOCRACY. They are identified earlier in this review, and linked to the Academy's website containing the commission's report. As a whole, they are conditions existing in an organic system that is highly complex. It is akin to the human body, but it is significantly more complex because it is a societal system in which the humans are the agents, just as cells are the agents operating through tissues and organs in the human body. In the case of societal structures, particularly focused on the organs that dealt with disciplines of economics and political science, the complexity is mind-boggling

The commission has identified a series of challenges existing in a complex adaptive system that may be approached starting with the view of the system as a whole. Grasping the nature of a series of relationships, that typically operate in complex adaptive systems, will facilitate improving outcomes. These relationships apply to each of the eight challenges because each may be viewed as operating in a complex adaptive system. The same principles apply to the system as a whole.

As a result of choices made by an individual (or group) as an agent, as well as the results of the choices made by other agents. The interactions generate emergent properties; an example being a series of transactions at one level of a network, generates properties at a network macro to the generating network. The process is known as emergence.

As discussed in the introduction, the reviewer is taking the perspective of developing a paradigm shift to facilitate dealing with complex adaptive systems. A great deal has already been done development of some nascent disciplines, especially complexity science and network science. In the case at hand, there is a paradigm shift potential for understanding the role of land-use control in a constitutional democracy as a systemic component influencing the other components. This is under development in the trilogy's third book [link], and the third overview booklet, *Great Danger Emerges: Democracy Challenged* [link].

Solving such complex problems is a great challenge because of the nature of complex adaptive systems. That nature may, as a start, be most readily understood by understanding three sets of relationships, their interdependence, and commonalities of interests.

1. The existing structure influences processes, and the processes influence the evolution of the structure. As the structure evolves, the changed environment influences the processes. This is essentially the nature of organic systems.
2. Agents (individuals or entities) in the layers of networks make their choices, but the outcomes are also dependent upon choices made by others in the networks. The outcomes include the emergent properties resulting from the interactions. That is the nature of markets. It is not the summation activities, but rather the emergence of properties that are not aggregations of

activities, but rather characteristics that are present in the structure that evolved. Obviously, as discussed in the first point, that structure influences the next round of choices.

3. Designing a cooperative effort for our common purpose, where agents have different perspectives of desired outcomes, calls for an identification of a commonality of interest that is sufficient for a cooperative effort. Differences in perspectives may be exemplified by the way physicists and chemists observing the same phenomena have different explanations of how the system is operating. [Link to Kuhn.] The perspectives differ, but the commonality is in a scientific approach. The design of the common effort focuses on the on the commonalities of the scientific principles. The common purpose is the use of science to better understand the relationships; an understanding that may be used to improve outcomes based on choices that are made.

The Issues at Hand. This last point, of cooperative effort for the common purpose, is achieved through our common purpose of restoring our constitutional democracy to a path towards the ideals articulated the Declaration of Independence. That is what this discussion is about.

As a society, we have a political structure designed to protect our freedom to believe and think and say what we wish, but within the constitutional constraints of the rights of others under a system where our rights are only as secure as the rights of others. This means that we are not free to yell fire in a created theater where there is no fire. It also means that there is a rule of law that constrains other choices.

Just as in science, the quality of knowledge is enhanced by the exposure to tests of falsifiability, so in the social sciences we have the same tests. Unfortunately, we do not have the same opportunities for laboratory experiments to enhance the quality of knowledge, but we do have the role of **truth**.

There is a sharp difference between free societies and tyrannical societies. In tyrannical societies, the tyrants use words to generate desired responses, and do so without regard to the truths. In free societies, truth is a valuable asset. Thus, truth, as well is honesty, and other values necessary for a free society, are part of a common purpose of a democratic society. Their violation is injurious to the health of society. When it becomes contagious, it may be cancerous, not only because it spread, but its damage to the health of society become fatal.

The democratic structure is dependent upon pluralism, a concept in which there may be different sets of values, all equally valid in different perspectives, but the common good of our democracy is dependent upon a common purpose, the presence of the free society that provides liberty and justice for all. That free society, with the rule of law based upon protection of rights, and an equality of rights as a common purpose in which people with different perspectives can cooperate. Failure to honor the common purpose of the constitutional democracy is cancerous to its survival.

This last point of the common good, leads to the basic issue whether our nation will pursue the common purpose of a free society in the context of constitutional democracy, or whether it will continue with its development as a plutocracy (with rule by those possessing the concentration of wealth) or an oligarchy (with rule by relatively few for whatever the connection) on the way to becoming an autocracy, which appears to be the ambition of Donald Trump. Consider the possibility that his behavior is a cancer to the survival of our constitutional democracy.

The issue may be viewed as the resiliency of the constitutional democracy to provide protection against the tyranny that it was designed to avoid. The legislative branch has been yielding power to the

administrative branch, and the has become dangerous because the political party evolution has produced a tribalism in which the goal is power at the expense of the common good of a free society.

The tribalism has become a denial of pluralism that conceptually provides for the equality of unalienable rights alluded to in the Declaration of Independence. Just as the physical sciences have their principles by which the common purposes our governed, so do the social sciences. *The Great Experiment of American Democracy*, also has its principles, starting with the separation of powers and the rule of law, protected by constitutional provisions. However, the system is organic, and so it evolves. Unfortunately, some of that evolution has eroded the separation of powers and allowed the rule of law to be gamed for special interests. That trend is endangering the survival of *The Great Experiment, American Democracy*, the pioneer in *Western Constitutional Democracy*. Reforming the system, whether viewed as *America's Third Revolution* or a "fourth founding," necessitates evolution of the structure as well as of processes.

The discussion that follows focuses on various dimensions of the preventive, curative, and perfective (homeostatic) processes. The *Our Common Purpose* perspective is based upon pursuit of civic engagement as a vehicle for equity in dealing with our unalienable rights. The *American Democracy Endangered* enterprise is focusing upon educational innovation coupled with *Third Wave* Internet evolution that was part of what was envisioned in an exploratory wiki, *Academy in the Cloud*.

The Invitation to Collaborative Efforts

This booklet review is an invitation to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and to other institutions that subscribe to our common purpose of a free society with constitutional protections for liberty and justice for all, not just some [link]. It is also an invitation to thought leaders, and others who can facilitate the evolution of the process, to join in a leadership role. This especially applies to motivated learners who wish to avail themselves of a virtually free supplement to a liberal education, and who will share their knowledge via social media so that others with a respect for truth and knowledge can delve deeper with greater productivity. This is in contrast to social media being used to treat the public as a commodity that is commercialized for marketing to enterprises selling goods and services, and unfortunately for marketing to those who wish to destroy our constitutional democracy, for one reason or another.

There is substantial commonality in coverage. The reviewer has selected three areas for discussion that are prioritized for the DEEP website platform. They are among a wide range of recommendations. They may also be dealt with utilizing diverse perspectives. This review is designed to foster a blending of efforts for our commonality of interests that may be defined in terms of *Reinventing American Democracy for the 21st Century* and/or *American Democracy Endangered: Restructuring American Democracy*.

Some Commonalities in Topics

Equality and Empowerment for Representation

Our Common Purpose Strategy 1. The first strategy, "***Achieve Equality of Voice and Representation***" has eight recommendations. Although all eight are endorsed by the reviewer, the discussion utilizes the first recommendation as the departure point for providing background that leads to the discussion of a recovery from the two crises that is presented in DEEP's third booklet, *Great Danger Emerges: Democracy Challenged*. [Link to Chapter 3.]

At this time, we are focusing on the first recommendation, “Substantially enlarge the House of Representatives through federal legislation to make it and the Electoral College more representative of the nation’s population.” As to the representative issue of the Electoral College, enlarging the size of the House of Representatives had not occurred to the author of the trilogy. What had occurred was restructuring the representation in the Senate.

California could readily be divided into three segments or states, each with two senators. Texas could be divided into East and West Texas, with two senators from each. As it stands now, and that is discussed in the trilogy, two states with 20% of the population have 4% of the votes in the Senate. (See page 104 of Book One.)

The change would increase the number of senators to 106 resulting in 20% of the population having a little over 9% of the votes in the Senate. That would represent some progress. Also, there are low population states geographically clustered with a commonality of interests for economic development and subcultures in the nation marked by pluralism is subcultures as well as faiths. There is a diversity among the clusters of states with low percentages of the population, but a greater commonality with the clusters as to economic interests and a variety of sociological dimensions. Consider the differences among four potential clusters. One is the Rust Belt, and another is farther West. A third is in the south, and the fourth in New England.

Diversity is a great asset, as is discussed for economic productivity and sociological development. [Link] However, many subcultures strong have preferences for homogeneity. That can be respected within the constraints of constitutional protections that relate to liberty and justice for all. [Link] Some of these clusters, with small populations, but disproportionate representation in the Senate, failed to get their interests protected in the transition from the last hundred years of the Industrial Revolution to the first 50 years of the Information Revolution. Perhaps a different organizational structure would have produced better results; a devolution of power to clusters of states.

A contemporary illustration relates to COVID-19 is where the administrative branch of the federal government has earned a place among the worst national governments in management of the global pandemic. This is the under the leadership of a president whose major focus is on reelection, and who appears to have a disregard for science. Some of the governors developed cooperative relationships that could have been stronger had the design of power distribution utilized the devolution as discussed in the subheading, The Paradigm Shift Perspective. That discussion starts midway through the paragraph heading (see pages 6-7).

Returning to the equality of representation, consider that if six of the lowest population states, if clustered for representation equity in groups of two or three, with each state electing a senator for a six-year term, the state will always have one senator, but the total would be 104 or 103 (depending on the cluster size of two or three). The population of the Senate, under the restructuring of the representation of California and Texas amounting to a collective difference is still under 10%. Doubling the number of states involved to 10 (using two clusters of two each and two clusters of three each) could bring the number back to 100. That would leave six states with only one senator.

Although that approach on its own, would go nowhere, it does raise the question of devolution. Devolution is discussed in the introduction of *Our Common Purpose* (on page 3 in the hard copy

published by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences). It was noted on page 6 of this review. The discussion on page 22 of the report, makes reference to communities that may well imply an increase in power by the states, individually, and then in combinations with clusters of states with common interests beyond those of the nation as a whole.

It is too soon to take a position on a devolution because we have not as yet come to a paradigm in which we could analyze the likely outcome considering of the complexity of the system. The experience with the pandemic makes it is clear that neither the national leadership exhibited the competence to lead in dealing with the pandemic, nor did the leadership in many of the individual states do particularly well. In short, the system by which America handled the pandemic was dysfunctional; and that includes behavior of a great many of the individuals who failed to act responsibly. The encouraging aspect of what has happened so far is that there are many in individuals who acted heroically to serve others. The individuals were heroes banding together to serve the common interests; that included concern for the others.

Our common interests as a constitutional democracy started with thirteen colonies becoming sovereign states as a protection from tyranny [link]. That American Revolution led to a Confederation that evolved to become the Federation, the United States of America with a constitution. The process has been called America's Second Revolution [link]. What we are looking at, as discussed in the trilogy, *American Democracy Endangered*, is the potential of *America's Third Revolution*; that happens to be the subtitle of the trilogy's first book, *Common Sense Revisited* [link].

By happenstance, the recently released booklet, *Our Common Purpose: Reinventing American Democracy The 21st Century* (American Academy of Arts and Sciences), speaks of "...devolution of power to local governance; not only in research and analysis, but also in love of country and one another [page 3]. It is in the discussion of a series of "foundings" in the evolution of constitutional democracy, especially in the arena of civil rights. The reference appears to be to the Bill of Rights, the "... Adoption of the reconstruction amendments abolished slavery...", and the civil rights movement. The long paragraph continues with

"We on this Commission believe that the profoundly challenging conditions of the 21st century pose an urgent threat the future of our democratic way of life and thus require a "fourth founding": rooted not only in the language of our current laws, but also in our expanded national creed of liberty and justice for all; not only the actions of government, but also in the commitments of symptoms; but also in devolution of power to local governance..."

The report, in the discussion of challenges, refers to data developed about the state of our political and civil life. The data were used for the set of six strategies and 31 recommendations, focused on mechanisms of change. In discussing ... "where reform can have the widest impact..." the paragraph concludes as follows:

It requires too that we find our way back to love of country and one another. We emphasize the word *love*. What we need is as much about *our motivations* as about mechanisms of change [emphasis added].

We shall return to motivations at least twice. Once when we get to the second strategy, empower voters. That will be shortly; then again when we get to commonality of

interests in designing an approach for *Reinventing American Democracy The 21st Century* and/or Declaration of Reform for *Restructuring American Democracy, America's Third Revolution*. That will be the third subsection dealing with a culture of commitment.

The rustbelt was seriously neglected in the globalization of production as the transition from the Industrial Revolution to the Information Revolution proceeded. At this point, it is highly uncertain how the commonality between the two approaches (a “fourth founding” and a *Third Revolution*) stands relative to a shift in power from federal authority to state and local governments. From the timely trilogy’s perspective, it could be viewed as a *Third American Revolution*, akin to the *Second American Revolution*. That would involve substantial revision of the Constitution, among other changes that would move more heavily toward a homeostatic approach. [Insert link for homeostatic approach.]

The excerpts from the paragraph on page 22 of the commission’s hard copy publication are provided on page 7 of this review. They are repeated here.

The Commission aspires to achieve significant progress on all recommendations by 2026, the 250th anniversary of the nation’s birth. Starting, as we do now, from the depths of a crisis, this is an expression of great ambition. Implementing the six strategies and thirty-one tactical recommendations will require support from policy-makers, private philanthropy, business, educators, civil society leaders, and, of course, individual Americans.... ..Progress will depend on the hard work of the many organizations, advocates, public officials, and civic leaders already working on similar solutions at the local, state, and national levels. Shining a light on that existing work will inspire others... ..**Implementation will require a groundswell of new activity and commitment to reinventing American democracy. New leaders will have to step forward and many more of us will need to engage in advancing these ideas in our communities.** [Emphasis added.] Committed to one another, inspired by love of country, we can do it, and find joy in the process.

This reviewer is not optimistic as to restructuring number of senatorial representatives relative to population. But there is some hope that there will be better, accountability for proper representation of voters’ interests. We will return to that issue in the discussion of rebuilding the economy from the dual crises of the pandemic and recession. However, we now turn to the second strategy, **Empower Voters**, and some unfolding events that provide an opportunity for some modest updating (as an additional recommendation), in one form or another, to deal with a danger that has increased in 2020.

Our Common Purpose Strategy 2. The second strategy, **Empower Voters**, has seven recommendations, all of which are endorsed by the reviewer. The commonality for the second strategy is in goals, rather than detailed recommendations, except for recommendation 2.1; a high priority to be discussed shortly as part of a proposal to supplement the second strategy with a recommendation to strengthen accountability to voters.

The goal for empowerment of the electorate, as presented in DEEP, is to produce better outcomes for the individual and society. It is based upon individuals having a better understanding of one’s own sense of place in the society. It is done through education. We will return to that shortly as part of a proposal to supplement the second strategy, *Empower Voters*, increasing and strengthening accountability in the system through a better understanding of the consequences of the choices they make, and the choices being made by their elected representatives.

The commonality of the two approaches (“fourth founding” and *third revolution*) to empower voters will be discussed again when we get to the sixth strategy (Inspire a Culture of Commitment to American Constitutional Democracy and One Another); concerned with civic education (recommendation 6.5 on pages 62-3).

The second strategy deals with empowering voters. It has seven recommendations. The first four make it easier to vote. Last three relate to responsibility. What is missing is accountability of the three branches of government designed to avoid tyranny, in some measure as relates to civic norms, and the assumed shared values underlying the system. Essentially, there is a denial of power to the electorate at large by increasing concentration of power by the wealthy. This results in an increase in the concentration of power, moving from a democracy to a plutocracy on the way to becoming an autocracy with an increase in tyranny en route. That increase towards tyranny has been particularly evident over the past few years.

It did not start with this administration [link to [Republican Revolutions](#)], but the trend has accelerated with an abuse of power that has encouraged within the last year as a result of the failure of the Senate to permit witnesses in the impeachment trial. That trial of President Donald Trump was based upon two articles of impeachment; (1) abuse of power; & (2) obstruction of Congress. The first was related to a quid pro quo allegation of holding up the release of \$391 million of congressionally approved military aid to Ukraine, and conditioning a White House meeting for the Ukrainian president, both in exchange for an announcement of an investigation of Donald Trump’s potential 2020 election rival, Joe Biden and Biden/s son Hunter. The second was related defiance of subpoenas issued by the House of Representatives pursuant to its power of impeachment. Only one Republican Senator voted for permitting witness testimony.

Excerpted from Unity Counts [insert link]

Consider the case of John Bolton, former national security advisor to the president. His just-released book, *The Room Where It Happened*, contains information relevant to the impeachment proceedings held by the House of Representatives, but was not available to them. It would have been available for the Senate at the trial in the form of testimony had John Bolton been subpoenaed. It is uncertain what the consequences will be from the members of the Senate who opposed to having witnesses at the trial, when they are up for reelection, as events unfold. It appears that Bolton was focused on the revenue from the book sales in the way that he was handling critical information, including at the time the House of Representatives was preparing the articles of impeachment. Now there is some uncertainty as to whether retribution from Donald Trump, through law enforcement processes in which the federal government sees the profits on the basis of his violating national security constraints.

President Trump appears to have interpreted the *rule of law* as a means of utilizing the *role of law* as a presidential power to pursue his own personal political interests. Add to that the violation of presidential norms of behavior, especially in the president violating the role of uniting the nation in a time of crisis, the public is responding with a demand for real structural change, especially from the abuse of police power, including the presidential willingness to use military forces designed for national defense to squash the demonstrations protected by constitutional rights. In short, he is at the wrong size of the culture war.

Unity starts with caring about the commonality of interests, and the knowledge that one’s own interests are dependent upon others. Just as the diversity of skills and tasks is

essential to the evolution of productivity in the economy, so are the diversities in beliefs and cultures essential to the evolution of free societies that recognize pluralism to be at the core of equality of rights.

The issue is accountability. Some of the Republican Senators may well have been intimidated by potential retribution from the president if they voted to have witnesses. Some of argued that the case presented for the two articles of impeachment did not rise to the level of impeachment. However, they certainly rose to a level where the Senate could provide an official rebuke for the actions.

The position taken by some is just let the electorate take care of it. Now let us take a look at some of the president's actions since May as related to letting the electorate take care of it, now that he has been further emboldened by some of the Senators failing to honor the oath that they took at the beginning of the trial.

Although there are other incidents of **emboldenment** so far this year, among the latest is President Trump's efforts to use the Postal Service as a vehicle for enhancing the likelihood of his winning the election, and doing so at the expense of degrading fairness of the election process. The oath taken by the President of the United States was as follows: "I do solemnly swear that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States." So, the question is, does the Constitution call for the protection of the fairness of elections? If it does, he has committed impeachable offense. If it does not, then the recommendations of the second strategy, *Empower Voters*, should **consider an eighth recommendation along the lines of legislation and/or the Constitution should be amended to prohibit the president from abusing his power within the administration to sacrifice the fairness of elections in order to favor his political interests.**

A short summary of the unfolding events that shed light on the merits on such a recommendation starts with a series of fast unfolding events designed to make it more difficult for voters. President Trump has been making unfounded claims "that the election could be riddled with fraud if mail ballots were widely used, he made clear that he opposed Democratic demands for additional funding for both the post office and election security measures because of his opposition malleability. Still, he left open the possibility that he could come to a deal as part of a larger negotiation over a new round of economic stimulus." That is from a New York Times August 14, 2020 article titled quote from waivers over financing for postop" by Emily Cochran and Hailey Fuchs.

Since when has the fairness of elections been a negotiating item for political advantage? Maybe it started with the president utilized withholding congressionally authorized funds for national security as a negotiating tool with the president of Ukraine with a request for a favor? Consider the possibility that President Trump is using his executive power over the United States Postal Service to interfere with fair and free elections in November 2020 because he values his reelection over of the common interests of the nation in a democratic way of life. He is offering to negotiate funding for the post office that would facilitate voting by mail in exchange for making a deal for another round of funding for economic stimulus necessitated by the coronavirus pandemic. What appears to be the reasoning is that the health dangers from the pandemic will be a greater deterrence to those who will vote Democratic and those who will vote Republican.

Since the issue of wearing a mask as a measure to restrain the spread of the virus appears to have taken on the role of a political symbol, and he is ready to put the voters in a position of taking whatever risk

they see themselves and others by voting in person, with the potential of an increase in the acceleration of number of deaths caused by the virus, including their own.

In May, Donald Trump appointed Lewis DeJoy, a major donor to his campaign, as postmaster general. As a start, during the administration of the new postmaster general there was a cutback in services as a cost-saving measure. More recently, equipment that efficiently sorts mail has been removed, supposedly in order to make space for packages. (See PBS NewsHour August 14 discussion of technology for sorting mail US Post Office.)

As to the evolution of the extent of diversity in the economy, there are the diversities in beliefs and cultures that are essential to the evolution of free societies that recognize pluralism to be at the core of equality of rights. The box that follows contains some literature references that indicate perspectives of the empowerment of voters being diminished.

Excerpted from REVISED SEGMENT OF CHAPTER ONE on July 15

Some More Literature on Background. This section has been designed to provide an updating to events in the last couple or few years that provide knowledge that will be helpful to people in their making choices that will influence the environment in which they live. The website has an abundance of literature that would provide such help. Considering that this is just a brief revision of the opening chapter of the first book of the trilogy, the focus is simply been on include events evolving during the current administration.

The first of several books for 2019 to be mentioned is titled *Democracy May Not Exist, But We'll Miss It When It's Gone*. It is authored by Astrid Taylor. A brief paragraph from the flyleaf sends the message as follows: "There is no shortage of democracy, at least in name, yet it is in crisis everywhere we look. From a cabal of plutocrats in the White House to gerrymandering and dark money campaign contributions, it is clear that the principle of government by and for the people is not living up to promise."

The title of the second of the several books for 2019 is *If We Can Keep It: How the Republic Collapsed and How It Might Be Saved*. It is by Michael Tomsky. It takes a longer evolutionary perspective. From the other side of the aisle, we have a more voluminous perspective titled *The Conservative Sensibility*. It is by George F. Will, a longtime Republican, but then he decided that he no longer wanted that affiliation. Also, presumably from the other side of the aisle we have a moderate Republican, if we are intent on classifying people by party. His 2019 book, *The Second Mountain: The Quest for a Moral Life*. The key sentence in the flyleaf is "On the second mountain, life moves from self-centered to others centered."

This website is nonpartisan, but it obviously is calling for a change back to the pursuit for the ideals articulated in the Declaration of Independence. It is a strong advocate of pluralism, and liberty and justice for all. And, is looking to share knowledge and to assist the motivated learner. A brief theme emanates from learning, caring, and justice. But is heavily structured in discipline development and dissemination.

Congressional Responsibility. The tribalism continued in 2019. However, the Speaker of the House of Representatives was unwilling to pursue impeachment processes based upon the Mueller report, unless there was bipartisan support. The Mueller report contains at least ten instances of obstruction of justice. However, Mueller, the special counsel concluded that he could neither charge nor clear that the president of the charges because the Justice Department

policy prohibiting the indictment of a sitting president. It is up to Congress to resolve the allegations. That was in April 2019.

The speaker of the House of Representatives changed her position about bipartisan support being essential to going forward with an indictment process after the whistleblower information became available about the quid pro quo case. The president was holding up sending funds to the Ukraine when in the telephone call with Ukrainian leader, he asked for a favor. He asked for the Ukraine leadership to announce an investigation related to his expected rival candidate in the 2020 elections.

Upon obtaining further information, the speaker of the House of Representatives decided to proceed with an investigation that led to an impeachment by the House of Representatives, on two counts, one alleging abuse of power, and the other alleging obstruction of Congress. As a result, the vote along party lines resulted in sending two articles of impeachment on to the Senate for trial. Information became available that direct testimony by a witness would be available by subpoena, but all the Republican Senators, except for one, voted not to have the witnesses.

As noted in the box a few pages earlier, “The impeachment of President Trump by the House of Representatives, [on articles of impeachment related to the Ukrainian case] simply wound up as a clue for a need for change, especially in restoration of the appropriate functioning of the authority of Congress in order to avoid tyranny, with a side effect of emboldening a president who didn’t seem to have a problem with shyness...”

Predictably, the Senate did not convict. It also did not permit testimony from persons with firsthand knowledge relevant to a trial that met the standards to which Senators took an oath. The result was an emboldened president, who has already appeared to have overcome any bashfulness that he may have had, okay thank you I and even respect for the norms expected of presidential leadership.

As noted in the box a few pages earlier, “The impeachment of President Trump by the House of Representatives, [on articles of impeachment related to the Ukrainian case] simply wound up as a clue for a need for change, especially in restoration of the appropriate functioning of the authority of Congress in order to avoid tyranny, with a side effect of emboldening a president who didn’t seem to have a problem with shyness.”

A Chance for Hope

There is a chance for hope, but it is going to take a co-evolution of enough individuals and organizations in the organic system of the American political economy to place a priority of the health of the nation to produce a balance between self-interest and community interest. That calls for learning what is essential for the invisible hand to accomplish what Adam Smith envisioned in what we now understand as emergence.

Responsiveness of Government Through Education

The responsiveness of government through education leads us to two of the six strategies. These are the third strategy to *Ensure the Responsiveness of Political Institutions*, and the sixth strategy, *Inspire a Culture of Commitment to American Constitutional Democracy and One Another*.

The Third Strategy. The third strategy deals with the interactions and educational process. Of particular concern is **accountability**, a concern discussed in the subsection Equality and Empowerment for Representation. Accountability may be viewed as an interactive process in which the person being

held accountable is aware of her responsibilities, and is committed to faithfully fulfilling them. It further involves an electorate with sufficient education to hold the representatives accountable.

Many of the recommendations in the third strategy deal with the civic engagement that is not only the process facilitating the formation of desirable governmental policies, but also part of the process of holding representatives accountable.

The third strategy includes fostering an education for participation in the process. An additional concern is with the context in which it is obvious that civic engagement is essential for achieving environment that favorably influences one's quality of life. The approach of the timely trilogy, *American Democracy Endangered*, is to foster the development of liberal education, meaning a breadth of understanding of the arts and sciences with enough depth to enhance one's quality of life in developing a *sense of place* in the world at the various levels of interactions. Of particular concern in the case of the timely trilogy is the health and resilience the political economy that provides the environment for the emergence of the quality of life for individuals.

Unfortunately, many choices that lead to undesirable outcomes come about because individuals, who do not have the grasp of the complexity of the situation, react with an insufficiency of critical thinking. The result is a lessening of the quality of life of the individual, and of the community. The current dual debacle of the pandemic and recession, while it is largely attributable to gross mismanagement by government leadership, is also substantially attributable to a lack of critical thinking by individuals in regard to their behavior, including the aversion of the masks for health and for social distancing.

The focus here is on the presence or absence of a quality of education that facilitates learning how to live in a democratic society. The shortest statement, for making the point that the knowledge may be absent for the masses, may well have been made by John Adams. He did so in taking his position on the bicameral legislature (as opposed to a single legislative authority) when he referred to a single fact, "The multitude have always been credulous..." a statement that is part of the excerpt from a linked discussion of a book titled, *The Problem of Democracy: President Adams Confront the Cult of Personality*, authored by Nancy Isenberg and Andrew Bernstein. An additional excerpt from the linked item is as follows: "If men are now sufficiently enlightened to disabuse themselves of artifice, imposture, hypocrisy, and superstition," the public good would be protected [page 106]. (That is a clue that we are on the way to discussing the potential of a New Age of Enlightenment.)

The focus on the individual's civic engagement is insufficient in that the extent of civic engagement of others, and the quality of their judgment is significant because the process is not simply a tally of votes. It is the interaction among the voters that results in emergent properties of the culture. Those emergent properties include the extent to which the integrity of the system is reinforced or eroded. That means that you can get tallies of the votes that undermine the essence of democracy, and endanger its existence. This will be discussed as part of the sixth strategy, *Inspire a Culture of Commitment to American Constitutional Democracy and One Another*.

The other side of the coin is the education of the elected representatives. The point that will be developed is that the electorate contains a substantial portion of the population that may be easily misled, and that electoral representatives need the morality and the appropriate wisdom in order to properly represent the interests of the electorate. The box that follows contains a selection of excerpts from a book published in 2019, *The Problem of Democracy: President Adams Confront the Cult of Personality*, authored by Nancy Isenberg and Andrew Bernstein.

Discussion of Excerpts from Chapter 4, Exiles, in
the section titled “Hooking Turgot” (pages 101-8)

As this section of the review of the commission’s report (*Our Common Purpose: Reinventing American Democracy the 21st Century*) by the Maury Seldin LLC, on the behalf of the *Declaration Era Educational Press*, a.k.a. *DEEP* (publisher of the trilogy, *American Democracy Endangered*, the first book of which is titled *Beyond Common Sense: America’s Third Revolution*) the Democratic National Committee’s National Convention is midway through its four-day virtual convention. The reviewer’s interpretation of what is unfolding after the first two days, is not being blended into the reviewer’s interpretation of the quotes within the box. However, after the box, the narrative of the review and comment on similarities of the situation the environment what went on, and with what Adam thought was of critical concern.

The first excerpt is an entire paragraph. It is as follows:

The treatise that the angst-ridden American minister to England [John Adams] decided to compose dwelled on urgent issues before his thoughtful countrymen in 1787: natural nobility, political wisdom, and good government. Three volumes appeared in rapid succession under the combined title *A Defense of the Constitution of Government of the United States of America*. John Adams’s work was available stateside throughout the critical period when the federal Constitution came up for debate across the states [page 102].

Readers of this review are urged to read the entire seven pages in the section on Hooking Turgot. It will enable them to better understand the lengthy quote from Benjamin Franklin provided on the inside cover of the hard copy published by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Reading both will provide a joy of discovery well worth the effort considering the comparable condition America faces today, and indeed the future of *The Great Experiment*, democracy in general.

The clue for the relevance between Franklin quote and the section title is based upon the advocacy by Adams of a bicameral legislature. More on the role of a bicameral legislature is provided a few pages later. The long paragraph contains quotes from what Adam’s wrote. The only way to do it justice is to provide the entire paragraph. It is as follows:

In the preface to the first volume of the *Defense*, the only one of the volumes that found an American audience during the Constitutional convention, Adams insisted that “the best and wisest prince” (meaning the national sovereign, chief authority, or architect of policy) had “an immense advantage in a free state over a monarchy.” It was premature to propose that the United States move in a democratic direction; therefore, he placed his hope in “a set consisting of all that is most noble, wealthy, and able in the nation,” serving as a “a check to ministers, and a security against abuses.” A second body, “composed of representatives chosen by the people in all parts,” would give voice to “the whole nation,” communicating “all its wants, knowledge, projects, and wishes to government.” This more democratic assembly would, Adams assured readers, answer the purpose of republican governments by dignifying the popular will: “It excites emulation among all classes, removes complaints, redressing grievances ... and gives full scope to all the faculties of man.”

The relatively small U.S. population made tolerance of this degree popular expression feasible [pages 105-6 with an endnote referencing source of the quotation from *Defense* and referencing "... The best overall analysis of the *Defense* ..." for those who choose to delve deeper].

There is more, and at the risk of having to redact, there is a series of excerpts from a paragraph that starts off expressing the faith that Adam's had in a senate composed of elites. The excerpt, including the authors quotes from Adams is as follows:

Adams's practical concern about any across-the-board popular election boiled down to a single fact: "The multitude have always been credulous, and the few are always artful." Fancy speech could win votes or persuade common people to support bad ideas. Thus far, the states had proven themselves alert to this regard, which led him to project, "If men are now sufficiently enlightened to disabuse themselves of artifice, imposture, hypocrisy, and superstition," the public good would be protected [page 106].

Reviewer's Note

The reviewer believes that the extensive use of quotations is *FAIR USE* under the circumstances. As usual, if the copyright holder has objections, appropriate adjustments may be made. Since hundreds of excerpts in citations are used in the trilogy, although efforts are being made to contact authors who own the copyrights.

The quote from Benjamin Franklin posted on the inside cover indicated a unity once the discussion process had proceeded and concluded. What went on at the Democratic convention was a unity within the party fostered by a remarkable nomination acceptance speech by a leader who understands unity in a common purpose. What went on with Republicans were splits before their convention of Republicans who saw common purpose well enough to vote for the candidate of the opposition party.

Apparently, the Republican Senators who failed to honor their oath either did not understand the responsibility for were intimidated. In any case considered what has evolved so far in 2020.

The Sixth Strategy, *Inspire a Culture of Commitment*. The sixth strategy, *Inspire a Culture of Commitment to American Constitutional Democracy and One Another*, contains five recommendations. The concluding recommendation is as follows:

Invest in civic educators and civic education for all ages and in all communities through curricula, ongoing program evaluations, professional development for teachers, and a federal award program that recognizes civic-learning achievements. These measures should encompass lifelong (K-12 and adult) civic-learning experiences with the full community in mind.

On the subject of education, the Declaration Era Educational Publication (DEEP) has a broader coverage. It provides a liberal education content for the civic and endangerment. A broader perspective is indicated in the fifth chapter, [Building a New Paradigm](#), of the trilogy's third book, [American Democracy: The Declaration, Pursuit, and Endangerment](#).

It calls for a new paradigm by which to better understand the system. The box that follows contains excerpts from the subsection titled *The Analytical Structure*, and a bit of the ensuing subsection, *An Envisioned Societal Structure*.

The Analytical Structure

The analytical structure for ***Societal Biology: The Body and Mind of Society*** is built upon a series of layers of networks of our outer world that are analogous to the layers of networks in human biology starting from cells and on through tissues and organs to the whole person in the form of the person's inner world.

The layers in the outer-world series may be of diverse natures including communities of various types and scales, organizations for diverse purposes, and layers of government. The structure is a complex adaptive system in which interactions at various levels of networks produce emergent properties at levels macro to the generating micro level.

The interaction of information and energy result in patterns of changes in outcomes at various point in the evolutionary process of the system. Understanding these patterns is a challenge similar to understanding the patterns of the inner world.

The Linkage. The linkage between the inner world and the outer world is critical in the analytical system using the principles from biology in understand the improvement of outcomes through altering the structure of the system. That linkage is built upon the results of the interaction of the decisions of individuals.

The thesis is that there is a neurobiological foundation in the human nature of each individual, and that along with reasoning and knowledge leads to choices of behavior; these choices interact at various levels of the networks in emergent processes from layer to layer of the networks of the structure, and as a result there is an evolution of the structure.

There is also an evolution in the human nature of individuals prompted not only by the internal processes, but also by the externalities of the culture. In other words, the genes and meme are part of the evolutionary process. Furthermore, the cognitive ability bolstered by education and reasoning enters into the process that has the capability of improving deliberate choices.

Before turning to a discussion of the inner world in order to outline the framework that is the departure for an analogous structure of the outer world, the foundation for the linkage is expressed in a discussion of the work of Antonio Damasio in his book ***Looking for Spinoza: Joy, Sorrow, and the Feeling Brain***. In it, on page 170, he provides an extensive quote... "...from Proposition18 in part IV of The *Ethics*...

... Damasio goes on to explain noting that he would rewrite Spinoza's proposition as follows:...

...I hold these truths to be self evident, that all humans are created such that they tend to preserve their life and seek well being , that their happiness comes from the successful endeavor to do so, and that the foundation of virtue rests on these facts.

Perhaps these resonances are not a coincidence...

¶... how does Spinoza move from oneself to all the selves to whom virtue must apply? Spinoza makes the transition relying again on biological facts. Here is the procedure: The biological reality of self-preservation leads to virtue because in our inalienable need to maintain ourselves, we must of necessity, help preserve other selves [p.71]. He continues in the same paragraph to note that this foundation of virtue in the social structure is in the context of a complex organism with an "interdependence with our own organism." Later he notes that "Happiness is not a reward for virtue: it is virtue itself [p.175]." This is explained in part by the idea that acting in response to the self-preservation tendency leads toward establishment of a

social contract furthering happiness viewed as being free of “the tyranny of negative emotions [p.175].”

The Inner/Outer World Analogy. The key organ in the inner world is the brain. It serves as the control center for the human body. The mind is the brain at work and operates as a result of emergent processes. Damasio, in a later book, *Self Come to Mind: Constructing the Conscious Brain wrote:*

In brief, the conscious mind emerges within the history of life regulation. Life regulation, a dynamic process known as homeostasis for short, begins in unicellular living creatures, such as a bacterial cell or a simple amoeba, which do not have a brain but are capable of adaptive behavior. It progresses...From there on, an organized self process could develop and be added to the mind, thereby providing the beginning of elaborate conscious minds [p 27].

The mind, as the life regulation system, exists for societies. In the case of our focus on the American society today we have a societal mind operating through formal regulation and informal networks of culture that structure the environment. That structure operates to influence the decisions of individuals and organizations micro to the macro networks.

The body of the system is composed of organs, each of which is its own complex adaptive system. These organs interact with each other much in the same way as the heart, lungs, and stomach in the human body interact along with the other organs of the body. For our society, the three main organs in our discussion are the economy, the political structure, and the sociological network of organizations.

In terms of discipline development along the lines of complexity science, for the major social sciences, sociology may be the farthest along in integrating analytics of complex adaptive systems. The next most developed social science in this dimension may be economics with the nascent branch of complexity economics. As for political science, some of the ideas are integrated as has been the case with the other two disciplines, but it is unclear that a branch has sprung forth in its own right.

Taken together, these three established disciplines and the nascent branches, developed to whatever stages, for the core of Societal Biology. However, the really difficult integration is that of the neurological sciences to discover the patterns that emerge from extant behavior. Drilling down in the system is not quite a reductionist approach because it is in a complex adaptive system. However, the systemic structure can be analyzed starting with individual behavior, even though individual behavior is the emergent property of the human system. But, an aggregation of individual behavior won't work. It will take something along the lines of an agent based model to deal with the patterns of emergent properties.

Changes in group behavior, and differences in behavior among individuals, are evolutionary processes. It operates both on an individual basis and on a cultural basis. It starts with the imbedded value systems, but operates along the lines described by Damasio in his explanation of the quote from Spinoza's proposition 18 that started with “I hold these truths to be self evident...” That was in the preceding discussion of “Linkage” in the section on “Analytical Structure.”

After the discussion of an envisioned societal structure, we turn to a discussion of team building as a route to the development of the new discipline of Societal Biology: The Body and Mind of Society. That leads to a first discussion draft of a Declaration of Reform as a foundation

document to be used in an attempt to deal with the cancer of injustice in our society that includes applications of the to-be nascent discipline. It is built on the same principles as the Declaration of Independence, but focuses on empowering the populace through knowledge and participation in governance to contain the spread of malignancy in society.

Preparatory to that team building discussion focuses on the advancement of knowledge, there is a recent addition to the literature that focuses on a team of teams.

Team of Teams. Team building is a linkage between the individual and the team. Its cohesiveness affects the group's productivity. Teams of teams takes the process to the next higher layer of networks. A book released in 2015, titled *Team of Teams: New Rules of Engagement for a Complex World* by General Stanley McChrystal (U.S. Army Retired) and others. The book focuses on the application of the concept by the Joint Special Operations Task Force in 2004 under the leadership of General McChrystal. However, after discussing Adam Smith's innovation of specialization in a pin factory and Frederick Taylor's managerial innovation of time and motion studies, the book moves from productivity in those linear systems to problems in nonlinear systems where complexity reigns.

The book discusses that the nonlinearity worked well for General Motors in its early years but became inadequate as the vehicles and society became more complex... The implications of the faulty ignition switch were unknown to GM because in its hierarchical structure there was not the cross departmental knowledge... Ford made the transition to flattening the structure enough to get some cross departmental communication. This was after we were hearing about Japanese organizational innovations in formation of teams in the production process.

The New York Times has a scathing article on the failure of the federal regulators to intervene in a timely manner to avert deaths from a General Motors snafu with the ignition systems... A reading of the Team of Team's book would indicate that GM's organizational structure was not amenable to their identifying the complexity of the situation and the hazard of a minor cost saving.

Societal structure at all levels impacts emergent properties from the interactions taken. Societal structure also impacts outcomes in the absence of sufficient information useful in improving outcomes. Understanding the system makes a big difference.

An Envisioned Societal Structure

An envisioned societal structure might be labeled as American Democracy as a Civil Society. The key is the civility of the society in a balance between self-interest and societal interest. The closer the self-interest is to being enlightened, the better the balance based on the criteria including productivity, reciprocity, and justice.

The key question is the process of going from “the self comes to mind” (as through reason or faith) to building social capital and enhancing social technology so as to improve the outer world which in turn will favorably affect one’s inner world.

Such a structure would be built on the moral commitment to equality of access to government as a vehicle for liberty and justice for all. But, it goes beyond government as a vehicle – it goes to a moral commitment to structuring a civil society that includes non-governmental organizations ranging from coalitions of interfaith groups pursuing social justice to coalitions of foundations committed to development and dissemination of knowledge

to (1) improve the functioning of the political-economy and (2) to support of innovative programs designed to help those in dire straits, and (3) to innovate in programs that would do more to avert people falling into dire straits.

On this last goal in improving the structure of the society, consider as an example of the dysfunctional nature of our society leading to the Great Recession and its aftermath...

All this is documented in various ways in the Declaration Era Educational Press (DEEP) website that contains a trilogy of books, and supporting literature. As it turns out, about two years ago, the Academy of Arts and Sciences sponsored the project that produced strategies designed to intervene in process and structure. That project has accomplished some of what was envisioned when the treatise for the trilogy was written about five years ago. Thus, this review of the report of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences is a start of integration of the compatible pursuits.

Concluding Comments

This review of, *OUR COMMON PURPOSE: REINVENTING AMERICAN DEMOCRACY FOR THE 21ST CENTURY*, is posted on the Motivated Learner Platform of the Declaration Era Educational Press (DEEP) website as an encouragement to the websites readership to read the entire booklet, and to enhance their civic engagement. Their comments on the booklet, in the context of the presentations on this website, are welcome.

Additionally, under exploration is the addition of a wiki site containing chat rooms and other supporting educational material. As noted elsewhere on the site, the plan is to develop a not-for-profit organization that will receive as a donation a nonexclusive license to use the intellectual property of the Research and Education Division of the Maury Seldin LLC.

An introduction to the research component is contained in the sixth chapter of the trilogy second book, *Perspectives for a Sense of Place: Voter Empowerment*. The box that follows contains an excerpt from the opening of the chapter (the endnotes have been removed). The mentioning in civic engagement has been highlighted.

Part III: A Sense of Progress

Chapter 6 - Third Wave Education Innovation: Fostering Democracy as a Pilot Case

Posing the Problem

An Outdated Educational Process

Higher education is in a great difficulty, in part because of archaic structures, and in part because the information revolution has been using its digital capability to exploit the public as a higher priority than using it to inform and educate the public. Other factors are in play, including the malfeasance of the federal government in reversing its regulation on for-profit educational institutions that as a group have notoriously exploited their students.

It is time for innovation to foster the evolution of education that comes in many forms. Matt Ridley writes in *The Evolution of Everything: How New Ideas Emerge*, "What would education look like if allowed to evolve?" The chapter *The Evolution of Education* notes that compulsory class-based education in preparation for exams "is one of those universal things nobody ever

questions." The idea goes back to Napoleon's defeat of Prussia in 1806 that sparked "...compulsory and rigorous education, the purpose of which was mainly to train young men to be obedient soldiers who would not run away in battle."

A great shortfall in higher education today is a lack of critical thinking when faced with complex situations. The reliance on messages constrained within a limitation of 280 characters, and communications targeted to individuals relying on the Internet for their foundational information on complex events affecting the quality of life in America, is wisdom challenged, to say the least. Innovation in the evolution of education could do a better job in preparing youth and adults to more readily delve into understanding potential outcomes from the choices that they are making.

A Call for Innovation

Innovation needs to come to grips with issues at all stages of education. There needs to be a better job done understanding the responsibilities of ***civic engagement*** (emphasis added) and the nature of democratic institutions. On the latter issue, the current administration's policy on international trade doesn't seem to grasp the role of learning in a market economy. Our focus is on a companion learning issue. It is on the role of innovation in improving the learning process of individuals, as a process. Furthermore, the interest is in the distribution of knowledge as well as its development and integration into the system through learning innovation. In particular, considering second and third wave of internet technology, there are two stages in the process. The first is innovation in learning by motivated learners in what is considered the Third Wave according to Steve Case, in his book, *The Third Wave: An Entrepreneur's Vision of the Future*, shortly to be discussed. The second stage is the sharing of that knowledge through networks, especially social media building upon what is described by Case in his book as the "APP ECONOMY AND MOBILE REVOLUTION" that brought search and social networks as well as media for e-commerce in the Second Wave (2000-2015).

The full text and appendices of the second book have not been prepared for release to the public for review and comment. Access is available to cited authors and selected others.

HELP WANTED

The enterprise is seeking production and distribution assistance in several key areas in order to further its educational mission.

Among those needs are team members with skills in one or more of areas such as; editing, bibliographic construction, and author relationships. The website has several hundred citations, the vast majority of which are unquestionably FAIR USE. Authors, who have different views, or would like modifications, are welcome to propose content adjustment, including the posting of additional items on the *Motivated Learner Platform* that includes detailed references to further literary work.

The tasks include contacting quoted authors via email and/or snail mail, and working with them to obtain permissions, if necessary, or sufficient editing (including dropping questionable FAIR USE citations). The digital format facilitates frequent updating, and unfolding events call for frequent revisions.

Motivated learners, with networking experience, who can facilitate the dissemination and development of a discussion groups are also being sought. Experience in constructing and dissemination of apps would also be helpful.

Budgets are available for independent contractors on specific content development work. Volunteers are welcome. Team members will have access to the entire content of the trilogy during the review and comment process. Only the first book has been printed in paperback version for review and comment. The other two books are still in Word, the first book having been printed using InDesign. We are anxious to have hard copy publication of all three books and overview booklets in time for rebuilding our democracy by the new administration in the recovery from the dual crisis.

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