

Innovation in Societal Evolution: Some Thoughts on Evolving Culture

The Body and Mind of Society

Innovation in societal evolution may come from altering the structure of the body and the mind of society. The body of society, as with the bodies of humans that make up our somewhat human society, is composed organs and supporting networks which carry out the functions of the system. These organs of society result from the interaction of individuals at various levels of networks that lead to the emergence of the organs and the body as a whole. [See chapter 3, An Analogical Model Using Human Biology. It is in the *American Democracy* treatise; the third book of this three book series.]

The body as a whole for the society under discussion is that of American civilization. However, the focus is on the functioning of American Democracy as a critical organ of Americana. That functioning is heavily influenced by the patterns that evolve in the process of the evolution. Patterns are key characteristics in the process of emergence. They arise from the interactions of the agents (the people and their organizations). The hope for the next round of innovation rests heavily with the role of the younger generations, particularly the millennials.

The mind of society is an emergent property of the brains (such as they are) at work. The brains of society are composed of the brains of individuals as though they were neural networks with interactions analogous to the interactions of neural networks in the human brain of an individual. As with the human mind, the system is quite complex with actions resulting from the memes and genes imbedded in the system. But the system evolves over time. Our concern here is with fostering an evolution that would improve the quality of life prevalent in American Democracy, especially with the values espoused in the Declaration of independence...

Some Historical Changes in Societal Structure

... Innovation for the twenty-first century needs to tilt towards changes in societal structure – changes that alter the body of society as it structures its relationships, not only for equality in the sense of equity in the reciprocity of the system, but also through the realistic access to the tools of government. That change in the body of society can come about only with a change in the mind of society – each change being dependent on the other. It is a feedback system...

Changes in the Body of Society

The change in the body of society is heavily dependent on the education of the individuals in a democracy, not only for the participation in the body politic, but also the economic participation in enhancing the productivity of the society. The globalization that affords the availability of cheap labor abroad, leading to outsourcing abroad and establishment of factories abroad, puts great pressure on the domestic job market. It has generated movements toward protectionism reminiscent of earlier era – protectionism that did not work well for the country as a whole over the long run...

Some Elements in the Evolutionary Process

Many societal segments may be involved in making substantial progress. However, three heavily interrelated elements appear to be salient. One is education as an element in different arenas including productivity and democracy. The other is the nature of goods and services provided in the economy in both the market and non-market arenas affecting the quality of life. The third is a culture change that hosts an evolving human nature and in turn feeds future change. That culture change is especially important as it relates to morality and social justice that in turn affect the extent of social capital that in turn affects progress in the first two societal segments, education and productivity.

These societal segments, partially alluded to in the discussion of the body of society, are interrelated to the mind of society. It is through the mind of society that the body of society evolves. Then, as the structure in the body of society has emerged with changes there is an impact on some of the minds in society. Interactions among the individual minds generate an emergent change in the mind of society. The discussion now turns to some elements in the evolutionary process that are rooted in the mind and transformed into behavior that may alter the structure of society.

A Couple of Arenas of Knowledge

The relevant arenas for knowledge obviously include knowledge essential for gainful employment. The structure of production in America having shifted from predominance of manufacturing to service industries is further evolving to require more technical ability in the mix of abilities in the labor force. Dissatisfaction with employment opportunities is a condition that may breed evolutionary changes, but even people with good jobs may breed societal change. Their qualities of life may not comport with their values because the societal structure may foster behavior not in accordance with their values, or may deter the pursuit of the qualities of life they cherish for themselves and believe others ought to cherish.

Going beyond the level of knowledge required for gainful employment, we have knowledge (or absence thereof) of how the political-economy really operates. What is even more destructive of quality of life than absence of knowledge on how the system operates is conviction that its operation in accordance with principles that are unrealistic. Simply put, it is not so much what people don't know that get them in trouble it is what they know that is not so.

The main treatise on democracy and its endangerment, especially its opening chapter, and its supporting chapters and appendices, deals with nascent disciplines, as does all three books of this trilogy. These advancements in knowledge of nonlinearity in complex adaptive systems provide a better understanding of reality than the traditional models that rely only on linear reasoning even though the system operation that is relevant to the issue at hand is nonlinear in nature. This arena of knowledge is centered on some nascent disciplines especially complexity science, network science, and cognitive science.

The Nature of Goods and Services Provided in the Economy

The second element in the evolution of societal structure is the nature of goods and services provided in the economy in both the market and non-market arenas affecting the quality of life. Those provided in market transactions for financial considerations typically provide the bulk of the employment opportunities. That changing structure of employment opportunities was mentioned in the discussion of education.

Additional opportunities for employment for financial compensation are present in organizations that operate on a not-for-profit basis. However, some of the employment in not-for-profit organizations is by volunteers, for which there is no pecuniary compensation.

Economic growth is often considered as it relates to standard of living. So, the non-market provision of goods and services are not included in the standard of living measures even though there may be substantial increases in standard of living provided through charitable services. The aging population and the lower workforce participation rates are altering the societal structure that provides the standard of living for some segments of the population.

In addition, the standard of living as measured by GDP (Gross Domestic Product) is not a measure of *Quality of Life* (QOL). A twenty-first century view of the state of the art of QOL from *The Economist Intelligence Unit's quality-of-life index* in THE WORLD IN 2005 lists nine QOL factors as follows: 1. Material wellbeing; 2. Health; 3. Political stability and security; 4. Family life; 5. Community life; 6. Climate and geography; 7. Job security; 8. Political freedom; and 9. Gender equality.

Take climate warming and the natural environment as an element in the quality of life; and, consider damage to the environment as a loss in standard of living. It is not measured in the economy. Indeed, costs to cure may be included when they qualify as market transactions in preventing pollution, but the unmeasured negatives of pollution are not included in the Gross Domestic Product when they are not part of market transactions.

So, the losses from air pollution provide unmeasured negatives to the values added through the operation of the economy. Indeed it is ironic that natural disasters emerging from the global warming that are causing increasing expenditures for relief count the production of goods and services domestically produced to provide aid as part of the gross national product, while not subtracting the negatives of the losses adversely affecting the quality of life. The latest indication of a force that will breed a pressure to come for cultural evolution is a backtracking of the scientific process dealing with the analytics of a range of potential outcomes and time horizons. By happenstance, on the day that it this essay is being updated, Tuesday, May 28, 2019, the lead article in the right hand column of the New York Times is titled "IN CLIMATE FIGHT, TRUMP WILL PUT SCIENCE ON TRIAL", with subtitles of "DEBASING THE RESEARCH", and "Proposed Advisory Panel Would Sow Doubt On Risks of Warming.". The article authored by Coral Davenport and Mark Lander has two items in a very lengthy article that I have selected to make the point that forces will build to foster a cultural innovation not only from resistance to the domestic terrorist disasters using military grade weapons against people in schools and houses of worship, but also the corruption of science to fuel financial benefits to the politically powerful. The first excerpt is "The attack on science is underway throughout the government...." with

the discussion in the paragraph indicating that an administrator "... has ordered that that the scientific assessments produced by that office [United States Geological Survey] use only computer-generated climate models that project the impact of climate change through 2040, rather than through the end of the century, as had been done previously." The second excerpt is the entire second paragraph of the text under the subheading of "**Mocking the Consensus.**" The paragraph in its entirety is as follows:

"His [Mr. Trump's] views are influenced mainly by friends and donors like Carl Icahn, the New York investor who owns oil refineries, and the oil and gas billionaire Harold Hamm - both of whom pushed Mr. Trump to deregulate the energy industry."

These and other quality of life factors take us to the third element in the evolution of societal structure.

The Culture Change that Hosts an Evolving Human Nature

The third element for discussion of societal evolution is culture changes that host an evolving human nature. America has a wide diversity of cultures within its borders, most of which ascribe to Isaiah Berlin's concept of pluralism, "...the conception that there are many different ends that men may seek and still be fully rational..."

There are many commonalities among the variety of subcultures and varying degrees of tolerance of the values of others. Within the subcultures there are memes impacting the evolution of human natures and behavior. The democratic structure facilitates an evolution of structure, but the power distribution, as exercised, falls well short of the ideals espoused in the Declaration of Independence and in some degree has been receding from the ideals as espoused in that remarkable document.

This essay in the form of an appendix is looking toward the innovations that may in the twenty-first century take America back on track towards the ideals espoused in the Declaration of Independence...

...Opportunities Relying on the Mind of Society The Transition Just Reviewed A Desired Expectation of Societal Evolution...

A Desired Expectation of Societal Evolution

The progress being hoped for, as discussed in the main treatise, is to get a Declaration of Reform. The path is heavily dependent on education of the populace to get closer to reality and to get leadership that is not only more knowledgeable, but better attuned to compromises that are part of the tradition of American Democracy.

Whether or not the desired expectation of a Declaration of Reform and a subsequent transition occurs in the nature of what amounted to be America's second Revolution, the transition from a confederation to a federation, is a matter of great uncertainty. However, as discussed in the first book of the trilogy, I expect there will be a third American Revolution in one form or another, hopefully not one that occurs to dethrone an autocrat who currently is tempting to overcome the exercise of congressional oversight responsibilities. How far it has to go before some dramatic change occurs, it's hard to say. But the trilogy is shedding some light on the situation.

The prologue to this trilogy's first book, *Common Sense Revisited: America's Third Revolution* introduces a discussion that suggests the seeds of a great cultural change were sown starting about the second quarter of the 20th century, in the sense of a third burst of creativity in the arena of Western civilization. In that prologue's opening section, Some Directions from the Pamphlet (referring to Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*) the series of subheads is as follows:

Consciousness and Moral Principles Grounded in Common Sense
The Importance of a Selection of Principal Concepts
Now for the First Part of Tietjen's Introduction [to the edition used]
Moving on to Specialized Knowledge

From my discussion in the third subsection, we have a paragraph as follows:

The era of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle is the marker for the heart of the first burst of creativity in which "...philosophy flourished within Western civilization during two bursts of creativity that lasted about 150 years each." [See *The Origins of Creativity* by Edward O. Wilson pages 195-196.] The second was, according to an excerpt from Anthony Gottlieb's *The Dream of Enlightenment* quoted by Wilson [on page 196] as follows: "The second... stretches from the 1630s to the eve of the French Revolution in the late eighteenth century. In those relatively few years, Descartes, Hobbs, Spinoza, Locke, Leibniz, Hume, Rousseau, and Voltaire -- most, that is, of the best-known modern philosophers -- made their mark."

After skipping a paragraph, that selection concludes with four paragraphs as follows:

A third burst of creativity may have started early in the second quarter of the twentieth century. My case for a third burst of creativity starts with Alfred North Whitehead in the late 1920s, writing *Process and Reality*. Using the corrected edition edited by David Ray Griffin and Donald W. Sherburne, the passage that marks, for me, the beginning of a third century-and-a-half philosophical and analytical era may well be the following: "The philosophy of organism in its appeal to the facts can thus support itself by an appeal to the insight of John Locke, who in British philosophy is the analog to Plato...this doctrine of organism is the attempt to describe the world as a process of generation of individual actual entities, each with its own absolute self-attainment [page 60]."

Also in that same second quarter of the twentieth century, Mordecai Kaplan wrote about the organic nature of Judaism as a civilization. The first edition of *Judaism as a Civilization: Toward a Reconstruction of American Jewish Life* was published in 1934, but in the preface to the 1967 edition he wrote the following: "Organismic thinking is the latest stage in the maturation of the human mind. First came mythology, then philosophy, then science, and now we are learning to think organismically [page xxv]." Kaplan discusses the concept in his concluding chapter with a discussion analogizing Judaism to an organism in which there are elements that are maintained in the adaptation to a changing environment much the same way that organic systems adapt while retaining some essential ingredients as they are being integrated in a pluralistic society. *Otherness works in pluralism* was his approach to Eastern European Jewry's adaptation to the new environment of a free society, American Democracy.

Most of us educated in the twentieth century are accustomed to looking for cause and effect in a linear relationship. It works well for linear structures, but for complex adaptive systems, systems that are characterized by nonlinear relationships in dynamic structures that evolve over time, it is much too simplistic. Such is the case identified in the opening discussion of this re-visitation of *Common Sense* that started with a focus on the 2017 tax reform.

Shortly to be discussed in this prologue is the progress made towards further conceptual development of looking at societal systems as organic being heavily relied on nonlinear relationships. Additionally, the epilogue serves as a transition to the second and third books in the trilogy.

As just noted in a listing of subheads in this opening section, the next subhead is titled "Moving on to Specialized Knowledge." The point in the first book, *Common Sense Revisited: America's Third Revolution*, is to raise the level of consciousness - an awareness of the public of what is really going on.

This trilogy's second book, *Perspectives for a Sense of Place: Voter Empowerment*, starts with a brief overview of the trilogy. It is in the boxed item that follows.

Introductory Note for the Trilogy. This the second book of the trilogy designed to shed light on processes that have a chance to improve outcomes. America is losing its leadership of Western civilization developed over the last three quarters of a century in part because rivals seek to undermine it, but a great measure because we are doing it to ourselves.

The trilogy shares an understanding of process and structure that blends nascent disciplines with mainstream disciplines in an interdisciplinary approach to improve outcomes. The books are titled as follows: (1) *Common Sense Revisited: America's Third Revolution*; (2) *Perspectives for a Sense of Place*; and (3) *American Democracy: The Declaration, Pursuit, and Endangerment*.

The first book of the trilogy seeks to raise the level of consciousness in the tradition of Thomas Paine's pamphlet, *Common Sense*. The second book, *Perspectives for a Sense of Place*, seeks to empower the electorate in order to contribute to a self-healing process of American Democracy. It is divided into three parts: Part I - *An Overview of the Trilogy*; Part II - *A Sense of Place in Perspective: Science and Religion*; & Part III - *A Sense of Progress*.

The main treatise is in the third book, *American Democracy: The Declaration, Pursuit, and Endangerment*. It calls for a Declaration of Reform that could have the potential to lead to the emergence of a third revolution of American Democracy as an encore to the Second American Revolution, the Constitution of the United States of America.

This second book, *Perspectives for a Sense of Place: Voter Empowerment*, was created because it was obvious that for American Democracy to function properly it was essential to have educated electorate. The future of American Democracy's is thus dependent upon the cultural evolution that needs to take place, that is in turn is dependent upon third burst of creativity that may have started about a century ago; and if it did, if you take a generation or two to get us back on track towards the ideals articulated in the Declaration of Independence.

It is scary to think about not only what is going to happen to America, but what will happen to Western civilization, if we don't resume the progress that we've made for two centuries, but have failed to pursue in recent decades.

The Body and Mind of Society
The Structure as a Critical Element in the Process
Some Historical Changes in Societal Structure
Changes in the Body of Society
Some Elements in the Evolutionary Process
A Couple of Arenas of Knowledge
The Nature of Goods and Services Provided in the Economy
The Culture Change that Hosts an Evolving Human Nature
Some Historical Innovational Opportunities Relying on the Mind of Society
The Arlington Case
Markets as an Emergent Phenomenon from Interactions
Two Environmental Cases
A Civil Rights Case
A More Recent Environmental Case
Opportunities Relying on the Mind of Society
The Transition Just Reviewed
A Desired Expectation of Societal Evolution