

Essay 5A - Sense of Place and Empowerment

By Jack Lillibridge¹ and Maury Seldin²

Introduction

Sense of place contributes to both self-empowerment and the empowerment of an individual by others. In both cases, the individual's mental processes (perception, meaning, decision and intended action) have a part to play in the interpersonal exercise of power, whether the influencing person is someone else or the person herself.

Our intent is to explore an innovative opportunity to get closer to an equitable representation of the American public in the development of the societal structure. That intent is focused on the impacts of the structure on the quality of life of the American populace. Let's first consider the individual being influenced and her or his situation.

It Starts with Individuals

It starts with individuals' refers to the drama that unfolds when the political-economy of a society is examined in order to better understand how the environment constrains an individual's exercise of rights to *life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness*. That drama is the evolution of the societal structure as an emergent property of the interactions in networks of people and organizations.

One important way individuals, whatever their capabilities, can gain empowerment is by networking with others who have a sufficient commonality of interests. As a team member or by belonging to a particular community or human kind, the individual is challenged to do her or his best. To be so challenged requires that the individual have a sense of belonging and being committed. It is the interaction of the individuals in the relevant network that produces emergent properties, which are characteristics of power in the team or community that are not present in the individual members.

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Empowerment enables the process of a capable and willing agent (person or organization representing itself) to exercise power intentionally, acting to increase the power of another agent or acting to increase one's own power. The agent may be an individual or an organized cohesive grouping of individuals; in either case, it is a complex adaptive living system.

To be capable of exercising power, an agent seeking to influence another agent needs to be capable in the sense that she has a net positive of power base relative to the agent to be influenced. An agent seeking to add to her own power from another agent needs to be open to being influenced by the other agent. The agent's sense of place contributes to the mental processing that is her personal part of becoming empowered.

The process is complex. Not all individuals start with comparable talents in genes and memes, and other resources. Each faces her or his own challenges for personal fulfillment, or flourishing. Each individual is a member of multiple interpenetrating networks. The layers of hierarchical networks are many, but the mobility of participation exists through education and commitment to the causes in which there is commonality.

It Takes Brains and Commitment

It takes brains and commitment for an individual to intentionally make progress through the structure that imposes constraints. History is replete with individuals who used their brains in a self-education commitment to gain a better understanding of the part of the world in which they lived, and then went forward through interactions with others to leverage their power to alter the environment.

Brains are simply one organ in the human body. Its mass and interconnections relative to the rest of the body is larger than that of any other animal species. That relationship impacts the intelligence of the individual, man, bird, or dog. Within the species, the intelligence ranges widely as does the capability.

Capability is impacted by the genes and memes and evolves as the brain goes to work. The mind is the brain at work. Individuals internally self-organize perceptions about both the physical and social world. They define each unique *moment* and evaluate its meaning in terms of value to the self and to others.

This process provides input data to the organizing process for the *next moment*. The quality of the information taken in is assessed upon examination for validity. It is interpreted for its intended use. The higher the quality of knowledge that emerges from the processing of information, the greater the capability of being able to influence or even control things and events. These data directly impact some choices for one's own quality of life. They may also impact the choices of others in the networks in which one has links. But the leverage of power goes even farther. Those individuals and organizations may be part of hierarchical networks that are macro to the generating network. The emergent process may continue in a rising scale of networks through many layers. In some cases all the way to a national level.

The Coevolution Process

In her recent TED talk, Laura Schultz reminds us that the self and mind are social and embedded. There is a co-evolution of environment and mental content. The assessment of the other's intentions,

expectations, and feelings, and the anticipation of her reactions to your actions, are socially constructed. In a sense, the mind transcends the brain as it incorporates representations of the structure and operations of the body and the physical and social environment into the self.

Imagination is an emergent property of our whole physiology where we can “process information cognitively in order to consider hypothetical scenarios or circumstances, across space and time.” This capacity enables us to consider “being in different situations, including [the ability] to empathize with other people (both intellectually and emotionally).” It also gives us the ability to project into the future and to contemplate collective action in the future. For example, a circumstance where my decisions are contingent on my expectations of your future actions, and vice versa, simultaneously, and coordinated action is needed.

Humans are able to “draw rich, abstract inferences rapidly and usually accurately from sparse, noisy data.” We can think of altogether new ideas through a process of mental self-reorganization from prior order, through chaos, to a novel more adaptive order, “generating research and discovery ... art and literature ... poetry and theater.”ⁱⁱ

Concept of Sense of Place

Sense of place, in the context of the brain at work, is a composite of cognitions, values, attitudes, identities and behavioral intentions that is fundamentally about a particular setting. The agent lives and acts in various settings, consisting of physical locations and social communities with their various attributes and functions. She processes and organizes what she perceives about the physical and social world and the culture’s representations of that world, defining each unique *moment* and evaluating its meaning in terms of value to herself and to other people important to her that she cares about. Most of this mental processingⁱⁱⁱ is unconscious, some is conscious; the process is a kind of self-organization, which produces a synthesized and emergent conceptualization of definition and meaning about a place that is relevant to her. This concept is called the sense of place. It is a component of the self-concept.

The sense of place has two aspects^{iv}, one sociological (***a shared sense of place***), the other psychological, (***a personal sense of place***):

- The sociological aspect is inclusive of how the particular location and communities are represented by the culture. These representations are shared among those who are influenced by the culture and thus become part of an individual’s conception of the external environment. We call this first aspect ***the shared sense of place***.
- The other psychological aspect is inclusive of how the setting and communities are perceived and given meaning by the individual, part of one’s conscious awareness. We call this second aspect the ***personal sense of place***.

Nature of the Sense of Place

Jennifer Cross tells us that sense of place, in both of its aspects, is a “subjective perception of a given environment [along with] more or less conscious feelings” about that environment. “One’s feelings about place and one’s understanding of place become fused in the context of environmental meaning.”

The sense of place is “an experience created by the setting combined with what the person brings to it; ... we create our own place; it doesn’t exist independent of us.”

In the view of Jennifer Cross, sense of place is composed of bonds with settings in general and the depth of identifications and attachments with a particular setting. The relationship of person to environment is transactional: people take from and do things to the environment. Their acts may alter the environment’s influence on them. These relationships are likely to change over time. How we feel in one place is influenced by the positive and negative feelings one has with other places.^v

The generation or integration process for sense of place involves “the construction of complex percepts --- syntheses of images from every part of the cerebral cortex --- brought together into a conceptual unity” or scene, which, in turn, contributes to the thinking and behavior of the individuals in the setting. These interacting individuals are embedded in the self-organizing network structure emergent from their interactions and boundary conditions, which provides context for the generation process.^{vi}

We probably have no single sense of place, rather we bring to the places where we live and the roles we play a whole set of cultural preconceptions and norms. They shape the way we respond to the setting or role and in some measure reshape it to fit those preconceptions. The sense of place is generated by a dynamic process which integrates these mental, physical and spiritual elements and, once generated, the sense of place appears in our minds and contributes to decisions and actions.

Components of the Shared Sense of Place

A culture is a configuration of shared beliefs, values, symbols, and performance styles that characterizes a social system. The culture of a group or organization of people residing in or belonging to one or more of a particular setting’s location and communities, such as a group or organization, is “a map designating regularities of both the group’s physical surroundings and the member’s traditional patterns of thinking, believing and acting.”

Every mind creates categories (perceived regularities) out of its experiences. Since a lot of events experienced are the same for everyone, there’s a great deal of agreement among many people within a culture. Experiences of a fire may not be exactly the same for many people, but there are commonalities. This sharing of aspects of common experience becomes one basis for culture and its socialization.

The socialization process “involves the teaching and learning of this map (these regularities) ... a socialized individual not only learns some of the regularities contained in the cultural map; he is himself bound (constrained) in various ways by these regularities and commitments to them.”

A norm is a “pattern of commonly held behavior expectations” and a role involves “shared norms concerning the behavior of certain persons in certain settings.” For an individual, the impact of culture is mediated by norms. There are memories of “experiences concerning commonly held expectations” and an increasing ability to perceive the motives and beliefs of other individuals from the cues their behavior provides “making it easier to predict their behavior.” The roles of two interacting community members are organized in a social subsystem that is “bound together by shared expectations ... about

the behavioral implications of each role, the norms appropriate for different roles and some understanding of how the roles mesh with one another.”

The “roles increase predictability and stabilize the structure within the broader objectives of the group. Common expectations or norms define [a member’s role] and serve to constrain [the member’s] behavior in expected directions.” These expected actions “become morally correct and good actions.” This is the reason why the shared expectations or norms actually shape or constrain behavior. A person’s actions create expectations concerning her future actions. Once a role is assigned or established based on these actions, it may be very difficult for her to leave that role.^{vii}

The fact that our national government is a federation with laws and institutions makes it part of our shared sense of place. Key ideas of the Declaration of Independence transformed the sense of place shared by the colonists to add information about powers and ways to exercise those powers.

Components of the Personal Sense of Place

Personal sense of place includes one’s self-evaluation of competence in skills and knowledge in accomplishing the required tasks in one’s own journey of life. It also includes beliefs one has acquired or developed as well as cultural prescriptions adopted. Conception of one’s power (basis for exercising power) is part of one’s personal sense of place. Actions of an influencing agent can enhance these conceptions to accomplish empowerment.

Identity includes many categories or dimensions derived from various affiliations with many relevant communities via the perceived categories and beliefs formed about them. One’s various identities are part of the personal sense of place.

The affordances, norms, roles and cultural information made evident to the individual and her existing power bases, skills, motivation, expectations, memories, and so forth, are integrated to form her personal sense of place. They are also reflected in her unconscious automatic algorithms.

Relation of Shared Sense of Place and Personal Sense of Place

Shared sense of place, with its embedded cultural prescriptions, helps structure or influence but not determine personal sense of place. Other contributing factors to one’s personal sense of place include memories, expectations, sense of competence, and many others assembled from widespread brain locations. An important factor in reaching a decision is the individual’s perceived self-competence based on a self-evaluation of personal effectiveness or capability in the relevant specific domains and on having the awareness, beliefs, expectations, and understanding jointly required to be effective in interactions with the relevant environment.

Socially shared notions of the location and community are communicated to the individual via cultural information, demonstration, education, the exercise of power, and so forth. The perceived and constructed mental representations or images of the personally relevant setting are, in turn, communicated back to the social level. The individual’s mental picture and actions based on it affect the subsequent setting. The revised social level conception, in turn, is communicated back to the individual person. Altogether, this is a co-evolutionary causation process that includes feedbacks.

Meaning and context and the emotional value of conceptions that are part of shared perspectives, may not end up unchanged when they appear in personal perspectives. Meaning and feelings, expectations and context are evoked, not transferred. They are created in a self-organizing process. These evoked ideas and images enter into the construction process for the personal sense of place along with relevant parts of the self-concept, memories, and so forth.^{viii}

The individual perceives her shared sense of place and considers the prescribed set of norms and roles, with their required motivation, skills and abilities, in the context of network structure, events and processes of the relevant settings, for possible adoption or incorporation in her personal sense of place. Shared conceptions and internal, personal conceptions can differ based on the interaction of context and meaning.

Several factors are influential in the personal process of deciding that one *wants to do it*, and *has what it takes*, and *can do it* and, therefore will in fact adopt the prescribed cognitions and behaviors as one's personal sense of place and as part of one's self-conception and mind.

Networks and Social Structure

People are embedded in many sorts of relationships; the closeness of spousal and friendship relationships is among broad sets of connections, some with loose ties. These relationships are gathered together into various networks which have wide ranging numbers of links. Some links are strong, but many connections are in a dense network in which the individual (a node in the parlance of network science) has many paths from which to choose in order to influence the others in the network. The pattern of connections among people confers various properties on the collectivity, the social structure of the relationships.

We can view social structure as a societal network, comprised of interactions among social system nodes, via communication and action links among them. The interactions in the societal network are shaped in part by sense of place, both shared and personal. In turn, the societal network properties shape the individual's sense of her or his place. Shared sense of place can be structural in that membership and participation in a social network can contribute to effecting an individual's conception of her place in society.

Such a network, in terms of the strength of its connections and the knowledge and beliefs of its nodes, might also be considered as providing social capital. The central premise of social capital is that social networks have value based on who people know and the norm of reciprocity. Benefits flow from the trust, information and cooperation associated with social capital. This creates value for the people who are connected and sometimes for bystanders as well.

Our experience of the world depends on the actual structure of the networks in which we're residing and on the kinds of things that ripple and flow through the network. Furthermore, human beings assemble themselves into networks of networks and even more complex network forms. We require social networks that are sustained and nourished by the spread of good and valuable things, like love and kindness, altruism and ideas.^{ix}

Search for Place

Many, or even most, people (agents in the parlance of complexity science, the same as nodes in network science) are motivated to improve their current position in a location and/or membership in one or more of their communities. This motivation leads them to an exploration (mental simulation and sometimes in person) of the options. These options are impacted by the sense others have of their place.

The exploration includes observation of attempts by others to change, expand or shift their options and the results. Those attempts are considered as to the match of displayed characteristics, motivations, aspirations, connections, skills, and other power bases with those of the exploring individual. The various paths available in the network and the individual's ability to empower others may also be considered. The exploration can be conceptualized as a search for a better place, as part of one's self-conception and in actuality.

The search for place may concern geography, seeking a physical location that, among other desirable features, has possible connections linking the individual to other helpful persons and activities. Alternatively, the search may concern the selection of a role in some scale of a community. At the large scale, the search may relate to a wide range of organizations in society that are layers in the networks of which one is a part. At the small scale, it may range from immediate family to a network of biological relations. In any case, the search relates to how a person chooses to live and may be related to how the relevant collectivity of people chooses to live.

From the perspective of the individual, the environmental rules or prescriptions structure or influence her or his current place in society by way of location, roles, norms and culture. The perspective may also provide possible places that one can aspire for and work to attain. The search for place, then, needs to operate in this context of social space, via the thinking and behavior of the interacting individuals who are embedded in it.

Given the great complexity of our lives, enhancing one's understanding of the nature of the interconnectedness of complex adaptive systems in one's life is an aid to development of an effective strategy for a search for place. The uncertainty of outcomes in complex adaptive systems calls for strategies that comprehend patterns that emerge from the interactions. Improving one's understanding improves the potential of empowerment.

Empowerment and the Sense of Place

An agent may be defined as an individual, or an organized collectivity of individuals, with certain powers in a complex adaptive social system. The complex adaptive social system may simply be an organization at some scale of community. The agent has a capability to perceive, learn and remember or otherwise has a basis to decide and act based on the observations. The agent possesses one or more bases of power; the bases are related to each other and often used together. There are multiple bases of power and there are many ways to exercise power.

In the process of empowerment, there is a sending agent or source and a receiving agent or target. The intended purpose of the empowerment may be compliance or conformity with changes in behavior or it may be acceptance with changes in both behaviors and beliefs. Norms, roles and cultural information are environmental factors that shape the empowerment process.

The mirror image of being the sending agent of power is being the receiving agent. But, the receiving agent of power may leverage off of the knowledge generated by others, often generations earlier. Thus education, however received, can empower an individual through a greater understanding of the nature of the system. Furthermore, the sharing of the knowledge may impact the evolution of the system.

In self-empowerment, the agent acts to enhance her personal power or leverage, being both the sending and receiving agent in that transaction; her sense of place will then include knowing that she is in that way and to that extent more powerful.

Empowerment as the exercise of power is a major route to changing the direction of the evolution of American Democracy. Let's next consider the mechanisms of the journey along that route.

The Nature of Power

Power is seen as an ability to exert energy as a force that induces movement or transition. The force may be physical as with moving an object or it may be in the form of information as in data or an idea.

In social systems, leverage is the result of enlisting the efforts and support of others in a network to achieve a common purpose including intent to alter the structure of the system so that the natural forces in the system will evolve towards the goals of a common purpose.

Power deals with constraints and affordances, with restrictions on possible options and expansion of possible options, respectively. Restriction tends to control action and maintain process and structure. Expansion fosters creativity and the evolution of structure and process. Working together in combination, restriction and expansion make both dynamic balance and adaptation more likely.

Power is sometimes defined as an interaction concept: the ability to influence a desired effect in other individuals without having one's own behavior modified in any undesired way; the successful exercise of power from one's own power bases in spite of the recipient's reaction from her own power bases.

Another view of power sees generating increased authority in subordinates as empowerment. It is a preferred route to being more powerful as an employer, enabling the newly empowered employees, considered to have a commitment to the shared purpose, to achieve their own sense of power and success.

Power Bases of Force

An influencing agent is able to exercise power over another agent if there is an imbalance between two interacting agents' net power base in favor of the influencing agent. Typically, individuals have more than one base of power; each power base is a continuum, a given individual may have different strengths or potential for each of her power bases.

Classifications of power bases have evolved over time. Many years ago (1959), French and Raven identified five types of bases of power exhibited by individuals interacting socially. In 2000, Owen

Ambur reconsidered this typology from the perspective of the current conditions of the information age. As described by Ambur, the seven types of social power are: 1) Reward, 2) coercive, 3) legitimate, 4) referent, and 5) expert (French and Raven's original five), with the addition of 6) informational, and 7) connectional.

Reward power results from an agent's ability or action to provide rewards (positive reinforcement) for desired behavior to another agent while, conversely, coercive power reflects the potential to inflict punishment. Legitimate power is based upon authority recognized in accordance with position in an organizational structure; it stems from internalized values in the recipient which dictate that the influencing agent has a legitimate right to influence the recipient and the recipient has an obligation to accept this influence. Exercise of these three power bases requires action from a powerful agent.

Referent power is a function of the respect and esteem accorded to an individual by virtue of personal attributes of that individual with which others identify. It does not require action by a powerful agent. Instead, the referring individual voluntarily molds herself to the referent person. Also referent power cannot be enforced through punishment nor bought with rewards.

Expert power is a form of referent power resulting from recognized expertise while informational power is a variation of legitimate power stemming from the availability and accuracy of information which can be provided or withheld. Finally, connectional power or leverage reflects the influence agents possess as a result of the agents whom they know and the support they engender from those other agents; having connections to others who are willing to exercise power to advance your goals.

The control of information (informational power) is considered to be a form of empowerment where the empowering agent gives or withholds key information or is known to be able to do so. The control of key information by the influencing agent transforms the personal sense of place of the recipient and the recipient, in turn, utilizes this new power, now in her revised sense of place, as the basis for the empowerment of others or for self-empowerment.

Leverage relates to amplifying the effect of a given effort of an agent to exercise increased power, achieving much more with the same effort. The agent's effort is not increased but it is redirected, from being the agent's sole actions intended to advance accomplishing her purpose to actions that enlist or organize the efforts of other actors, along with her own efforts, towards accomplishing the same purpose, but now it is a shared purpose.

Hard power (reward, coercive, legitimate, and informational) drives short-term behavior, while *soft power* (referent, expert, connectional) leads to long-term changes to both behavior and beliefs. Referent power carries the greatest influence throughout society.^x

Belonging and personal power, described below, serve to enhance the exercise of other power bases.

The exercise of power may be intended to accomplish empowerment by a change in **power over** (control), **power with** (cooperation), or **power of** (presence and openness); drawing on one or more of the power bases possessed by the person.

Power from Belonging

The perception of belonging together, as part of your personal sense of place, is an additional source of power. Being a member of a *thing made of people*, such as a group, organization, community, institution or human kind, will serve to enhance the exercise of power from one of the other power bases that Ambur identified. Examples of human kind include *mothers, Americans, the Air Force, a baseball team, your church, etc.*

When people seem similar, headed for the same fate, prone to coordinate their acts, resistant to intrusions and able to communicate easily with one another, they satisfy the mind's criteria for a *thing made of people*. One may feel that those people are acting as a single being even though one may not know or know about most of the other members; there is no upper limit on the number of people who are members of one human entity.

When a person belongs to a *thing*, which is comprised of people, this includes the creation of expectations that other members will behave toward the person who belongs in a particular way, only because of being a member, not for anything that one has done or failed to do. Such belonging creates claims on people and limit what they are expected to do as an authentic member of the group --- the group of people function like a coherent, bounded entity, whose members have obligations to one another. They feel to fellow members of that particular human kind as if they were all in a simple category (mothers are female people who have children) and a big team --- a thing made of people that has thoughts of its own (mothers want good schools). The real work in these entities to which we belong is teaming up with others.^{xi}

A person being a member, being inside the network boundary while everyone not in the network is outside that boundary, means that that person is special to others in that same boundary (and often to the outside world). Members tend to have heightened awareness of the characteristics and behavior of other members including their power bases and their exercise of power. Relationships develop in the network; they are often bonds of trust. Increased self-confidence comes with learning to cope, being authentic, greatness of character, and high moral ideals. This process can be a source of power. There is an emergence from the multiple co-occurring interactions that alters the network structure and also affects the sense of place of each member.

Exercise of Personal Power

The source and exercise of personal power are interwoven in a complex adaptive system. An individual genuinely interested in other people, and creating a receptive communication environment, may build a mutually satisfactory relationship of their trust and loyalty. It is a case of empowerment.

Building that empowerment may be called creating personal power. It is power to do what's necessary for one's own self-growth, power to create joy and satisfaction in one's life, power to love, and power to act to bring about a desired result. To have an awareness of the cognitive links between your actions and the consequences or results you produce in the world. This knowledge of the ways your personal power gets expressed is a key part of your personal sense of place.^{xii}

People who are predominantly reactive and responsive rather than creative generate less personal power than those who develop the connections of the emergent mind to better understand reality. It

goes beyond believing what one sees as shadows in Plato's Allegory of the Cave. It goes to the search for human progress.

That progress has advanced with an increased understanding of the role of information and energy in the context of changing signals and boundaries in elements of societal structure. This is embedded in improving the quality of conscious decisions in the face of the increasing uncertainty of an evolving societal structure.

Making progress is dependent on development of the power base. This essay has focused on how an individual may enhance her or his power base as an agent in a system. It leads to the discussion of the empowerment of a society, the subject of the next essay, entitled "Empowerment Alters Evolution."

ⁱ The phrase "It Starts with Individuals" is used as the section title for a major section of the third chapter of the book *A Sense of Place in Perspective*. This essay was designed to serve as an appendix to that chapter in order to delve deeper into understanding the process by which individuals, with their sense of place, may become empowered to better influence outcomes. It was also designed as foundational material for a presentation at ASPEC's Seminar on Strategic Decisions.

ⁱⁱ This is from Laura Schultz's TED talk of March 2015, 20:18, entitled "The Surprisingly Logical Minds of Babies"]. She adds: "[However, at times] we are fallible, we take shortcuts, we err, we're biased, in innumerable ways we get the world wrong. [Because we] do this inference process effortlessly, we don't see [the predominant accuracy], but there is ... an extraordinary genius there that is underappreciated."

ⁱⁱⁱ See "How the Brain Creates Personality", by Stephen M. Kosslyn & G. Wane Miller, *Atlantic Monthly*, November 2013. One important type of the images that are synthesized is memories activated by inputs from the senses. The activated memories let the individual know things about a stimulus that are not apparent in what is currently seen and heard. The confluence of images representing information about what's out there, our emotional reactions to it, our goals and needs, our intentions, and so forth, as well as our memories, plays a crucial role in allowing us to formulate plans, make decisions and direct attention so as to enable us to figure out what to do given this information.

^{iv} There are many dimensions of sense of place. Some important ones include conceptions of what one does for living and of where (at least for Americans) one happens to be in the progressive stages of life. Other dimensions include conceptions of where you live, what things you are expected to do, are allowed to do, and so forth. One's concepts about one's values, skills, self-confidence, aspirations, and social connections will contribute to the formation of other relevant dimensions.

^v From 'What is Sense of Place?', a talk at the 12th Headwaters Conference, Western State College, November 2-4, 2001, by Jennifer E. Cross.

^{vi} See *The Origin of Consciousness in the Bicameral Mind*, by Julian James. "Our subjective conscious mind [and self are] built up from metaphors or analogs of behavior, objects and relationships in what is called the real world, [giving us] the ability to stand outside the rigid chain of stimulus and response and pause, enabling us to shortcut behavioral processes and arrive at more adequate decisions" through a creative or self-organizing process.

^{vii} Much of the discussion in this subsection is drawn from *Foundations of Social Psychology*, by Edward E. Jones and Harold B. Gerard (1967), pp. 176-`85.

^{viii} Juliette Wade, in a guest editorial in the May 2025 issue of *Analog*, discusses this possibility with a focus on verbal communication and psycholinguistics. When we hear or see a word or phrase, it activates neural pattern that is associated with various features of the sensation including appearance and meaning. The aroused pattern is derived from a simultaneous, multisensory memory of all the contexts in which we have experienced that sensation. We'll typically pick the meaning we've heard most often, the shared meaning. However, we tend to pick the meaning that best matches the set of contextual elements we actually discern, a more personal meaning that integrates mental elements such as memory, emotion, and intentions with the self-organizational process.

A great deal of the meaning of a story that we see or hear comes from the mind of the reader or listener. "When we write or talk, we are not transmitting meaning. We are evoking it." For that, we depend critically on the previously acquired knowledge and experiences of reader or listener.

At the same time, any story is itself a context for the words that appear in it. Writers and speakers therefore do not only evoke, but they also create context. When people have different experiences hearing the same word, role description or normative prescription, this causes them to understand its meaning differently. Different contexts of meaning possessed by interacting individuals will almost inevitably lead to misunderstandings.

^{ix} Some of this subsection is from a TED talk by Nicholas Christakis, “The Hidden Influence of Social Networks”, February 2010.

^x “Reconsidering the Higher Order Legitimacy of French

^{xi} *From Us and Them: The Science of Identity*, by David Berreby.

^{xii} Much of this discussion is from *How to Achieve and Increase Personal Power*, by Frederick Mann, (1993).
www.buildfreedom.com/tl/tl19.shtml.