Adapting to Change a Reality:

Restore American Democracy's Resilience[1]

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[1]This essay is as an appendix to the trilogy's second book, *Perspectives for A Sense of Place: Voter Empowerment.* However, it may also be used to develop a short article promoting the trilogy, American democracy endangered

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Adapting to Change a Reality:
Restore American Democracy's Resilience

Introduction

America is in a cyber war with Russia because Putin has a strategy for undermining Western civilization. America is moving toward an autocracy, in part, because some of us have lost faith in our democratic institutions and the divisiveness has eroded our democratic norms. It will take a change in our cultures to restore the resilience of the nation necessary for the resumption of its pursuit of the ideals articulated in the Declaration of Independence. This essay considers some key ideas about our mental, social, and cultural capacities and processes to help us develop a proposal for restoring the resilience of American Democracy.

As individuals pass through stages of growth, as from childhood through adolescence to maturity, their beliefs and behaviors evolve similar to the co-evolution of the stages of development of a society. There are interactions within and among the various types and levels of networks that generate the characteristics of the cultures within the society. Monolithic nation-states have a dominant culture with an array of segments with diverse distributions of education and intelligence. But the pluralistic society by nature has a changing distribution of subcultures. The battle against the diversity of subcultures in favor of preservation of the majority is antithetical to the ideals of American Democracy.

The evolution of Homo Sapiens has a long history with the pace of change in education and intelligence being gradual. In recent history the curve has started a sharper rise from infancy and childhood to adolescence. If one considers the state of the world today, especially the wisdom-challenged decisions prevailing among the power structures of the global territorial organizations, one would be hard put to defend a claim that it is reflecting a stage of maturity.

Furthermore, the rise and fall of civilizations reflecting territorial control continues to evolve with a shortfall of respect for survival of the planet as a habitable entity as well as for a continuity of diverse civilizations. The various cultures have diverse remnants of what Edward O. Wilson describes as "… The Paleolithic curse: genetic adaptations that worked very well for millions of years of hunter gatherer existence but are increasingly a hindrance in a globally urban and techno-scientific society [*The Meaning of Human Existence*, page 176]."

Those developments are discussed in the first book (*Common Sense Revisited*) of the trilogy titled *American Democracy Endangered* in the chapter titled Harnessing Complexity in the Twenty-First Century. The section is titled Co-Evolution of Americans and American Democracy.

This essay is delving deeper so as to explore the beliefs and behavior of subcultures and their members that exist in the pluralistic society which for some has been known as the *Great Experiment*, American Democracy.

Although a case can be made that the nation-states of the world have reached various stages of development, some of which is inferred or lightly discussed in the epilogue to the trilogy's third book,

American Democracy: The Declaration, Pursuit, and Endangerment, our focus in this introduction is with the subcultures of the pluralistic system of American Democracy.

A great divisiveness has developed in recent decades. Working across the aisle has eroded. The new norm has shifted toward power of the party and away from the democratic principles essential to the integrity of American Democracy, shifts in majority party leadership in both houses of Congress as well as with the presidency. In essence, with the erosion of norms, a path towards maturity is reversed and in some measure is reminiscent of childhood behavior.

Just as a higher level of education is conducive to an individual growing to maturity, so does a higher level of education in the community as a whole impact its growing to maturity. That growth recognizes that diversity is an asset.

The epilogue of the third book of the trilogy takes note of the opportunities lost in Islamic civilization for growing up. In its Golden Age, its development was impeded by insisting on one view of science and religion prevailing. In the 21st century, so far only one Islamic nation-state has made the progress of sustaining a form of liberal democracy. The two other Islamic nation-states are battling for hegemony in the Mideast; and the upstart ISIS operates in a regressive mode of development relying on terrorism and with the little territorial control they can muster.

Christianity has also had its impediments with the Scholastics, and the dominance of the Holy Roman Empire. The rivalry for followers at least brought some peace with the Treaty of Westphalia. America is facing a variation of the threat for dominance with the white supremacy groups that seek some reincarnation of the Nazi nationalism of racial purity.

The surge of nationalism is rising globally, and is a threat to the existence of liberal democracies in general, and now to America in particular. Understanding the system, and the development of resilience, starts with understanding the evolution of the individual. That understanding is linked to understanding the evolution of a culture. Indeed, there is a co-evolution in the consciousness of individuals and in the culture as a whole. So, for the first part of this essay, we turn to gaining an understanding of the process by which individuals evolve.

As a start on a co-evolution approach, we are looking at the mind as the brain at work handling the information encountered by the individual living in a societal structure. The evolving of an individual blends genes resulting from genetic evolution and the memes encountered and adopted by the individual. An interaction process of sharing and improving influences the culture and in successive generations provides some advancement of the progeny.

<u>Evolving by the Individual</u>

<u>An Analogy of Mind and Brain</u>

Philosopher Patrick Grim tells us in Philosophy of Mind, [The Teaching Company, lecture six of the transcript] of a suggestive analogy that may help in understanding minds and brains and their inter-relationship. He suggests the following:

> "Hold up your right hand and make a fist. Now, there are clearly two different things here. We
> know they are different because different things are true of them. Open your hand and you still

have a hand, but you no longer have a fist. But, the stuff of your hand and the stuff of your fist are exactly the same. The difference between them is not a matter of constituent stuff. To understand what a fist is, you have to understand something radically different than the stuff it's made of. Maybe the same is true of minds [pages 85-86]."

The Cartesian argument concluded that mind and body are two different things. Grim concludes: "There is certainly a sense in which your hand is not identical to your fist, but we don't think it follows that your fist is something extra, above and beyond your hand. We don't think there are, therefore, two kinds of basic substance in the universe: hand substance and fist substance. … there's some sense in which my fist *is* my hand. My fist *is* my hand in a particular posture, perhaps, or doing a particular thing, and maybe something like that is true of minds and brains [page 34]."

Perhaps mental content is part of a process or pattern of changes or intended movements, akin to the process of making a fist, as contrasted with brain matter and neuronal networks, akin to the stuff of the hand. Conceived in this way, mental states are functionally defined by what is being done.

Where we are going is that **the interaction of the actions experienced is leading to a state change in the memes of a community**. Our concern is with the subsequent change in the mental content that arises from the experiences encountered, and the knowledge gained from that experience in the community.

Our interest is in the identification of what is intended to result from the interactions. As discussed in the first book of the trilogy, there was a post-World War II transition in political leadership from *doing good* to *doing well*, that is *doing well* for themselves.

 What is discussed in the third book of the trilogy is that the building of social capital may be an intentional output of interactions intended to develop a better balance between self and community interest. Our concern is with the role that education can play in contributing to that process.

As a transition to the third book, the second book discusses the sense of place in the societal structure and the connections in science and religion. These connections are built upon a foundation of the evolution of primordial biological forces that produce survival and other motivations, including sustenance at various levels of preference.

Components and Operations of Mental Activity in Awareness and Change

Mind, self, self-concept, and emotion are components of mental activity that appear in conscious awareness. Any attempt to influence or modify mental content needs to take these components into account.

Ouellette points out that "[The mind is] a broad term that encompasses perception, memory retrieval, subconscious processes, and aspects of consciousness. [op. cit., page 236]"   It is the totality of conscious and unconscious mental processes and activities of a person that reasons, thinks, wills, feels, perceives, remembers, understands, imagines, chooses, directs behavior, etc. Mind also underlies our awareness and all of our subjective experiences, providing a degree of sameness and continuity over time.[i]

The self is your own distinct individuality or identity. Two broad aspects of the self are: (1) that which knows, remembers, desires, suffers, intends, etc., (the ego or "I", the conscious subject) and (2) that

which is known, remembered, etc. (the "me", the objects of one's thought).The self is a very complex system of organized interdependent operations on a substrate of a neuronal network of networks.

The self-concept is the idea or mental image a person has of herself and her strengths, weaknesses, status, sense of place including affordances, etc., as her attributes are distinguished from those of others. It also includes the nature and value to her of key social relationships. In other words, the *self-concept* is the individual's assessment of her status on many relevant human dimensions under various conditions, using personal or societal norms as criteria.

Emotions are discussed by Steven Pinker as "adaptations, akin to well-engineered software models, that work in harmony with the intellect and are indispensable to the functioning of the whole mind; … [once triggered by a possible threat to survival or reproduction]… an emotion, in turn, triggers the cascade of sub-goals and sub-sub-goals that we call thinking and acting ….mobilizing the mind and body to deal with one of the challenges of living [op. cit., pages 373-374]."

Another view to explain emotion is the Theory of Constructed Emotion proposed by Lisa Feldman Barrett in her book *How Emotions Are Made*. According to Barrett, "emotions aren't reactions to the world. Rather, emotions actually *construct our world.*" Our interception sense monitors the physiological condition of our bodies and sends status updates, affective feelings of pleasantness, unpleasantness, arousal and calmness, to the brain., Barrett's position is that "emotions are formed from the brain's attempts to make sense out of [find meaning in] this raw data. The brain does this by taking the raw data and filtering it through our past experiences – through our learned concepts [and the immediate social reality]." [4]

"*Consciousness* emerges from the integration of information across large networks … [there is] a wide distribution across brain structures that coordinate with one another only when needed --- a network of networks … consciousness also depends on how those networks are organized [Ouellette, page 250]." Access is gained to all the specialized domains of cognition via reentry, thereby accomplishing the unity of experience. This organization, via the simultaneous differentiation and integration of brain activity, is the basis of consciousness.

Reentry is discussed by Gerald Edelman as a central neural mechanism underlying the conscious state, where functionally segregated regions of the brain are connected as an intricate complex system. Edelman defines reentry as "the dynamic ongoing process of recursive signaling across massively parallel reciprocal fibers [that]… allows coherent and synchronous events to emerge in the brain; that is, it is the basis for spatiotemporal correlation[op.cit., page 174]." [5]

"Human consciousness … creates a model of the world and then simulates it in time, by evaluating the past to simulate the future. This requires mediating and evaluating many feedback loops in order to

[4]This and related discussion can be found in Steven Johnson's review of the Barrett book, *Radical Theory Overturns Old Model of How Emotions Are Made.*
[5]Reentry is discussed by Gerald Edelman as a central neural mechanism underlying the conscious state, where functionally segregated regions of the brain are connected as an intricate complex system.

make a decision to achieve a goal … there are so many competing feedback loops that we need a CEO [executive functions] to sift through them to make a final decision." [6]

Human consciousness mainly represents the brain constantly creating models of the outside world, in the form of trees of causal links, using past memories of people and events, and projects them forward in time to simulate and predict the future. Conscious awareness is an emergent property of immensely complex neurological processes. Self-awareness is creating a model of the future in which you appear.

Brain feedback loops enable "testing" the correspondence of predictions of the future with actual future occurrences. The surprise of non-correspondence may lead to modifying the models to be more adaptive or to behaving so as to make future environmental occurrences fit the models.

Consciousness is not a unitary phenomenon; it encompasses at least two classes of functional definition.[7] The first defining aspect of consciousness is as a central cognitive processer at the top of a control hierarchy. It "is not directly concerned with the fine details of gathering sensation or controlling muscles. Rather, it sits in a position of command and control, concerned with the overall orchestration of thought and understanding … this definition acknowledges the very wide reach of awareness and the fact that it can bring cognition, emotion, and action under a unified command, [producing a] unity of experience and control."

The second class of definition employs a "representational approach, in which "consciousness is made dependent upon our human capacity for symbolization, and becoming aware of something is synonymous with capturing it in symbolic form." Symbols can mediate certain forms of thought and make it possible to formulate new kinds of concepts, if there is the capacity to understand what the symbols represent.

Intervention

Given this summary of mental components and operations, we turn to how intervention in someone's consciousness might be accomplished.

A mind or consciousness is changed by modifying or replacing mental content, processes, or activities, influencing the way the functions of the mind are carried out in order to alter results from subsequent choices and decisions. **This involves one's worldview and understanding of context and possibilities, feelings and emotional expression, and thinking and reasoning**. The interactive processes by which the consciousness of an individual is changed result in an impact not only on the individual, but also on social structure.

This is where education comes in. We are looking at providing information that corresponds to reality rather than so-called alternative facts that are made up to influence outcomes, but cannot withstand the tests of truth. Such false information, provided to members of the broadband populace in order to

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[6]This and related discussion can be found in *The Future of Mind*, by Michio Kaku, page 46.

[7]: This way of defining classes of functional definition for consciousness and related discussion is from *A Mind So Rare: The Evolution of Human Consciousness*, by Merlin Donald, pages 118-119.}

retain power and benefits, when accepted without critical thinking, also changes mental content and resulting choices. From our discussion in the epilogue to the third book, it sure looks like the approach that President Trump utilizes providing false information apparently works for some people who choose to believe without critical thinking. It is also possible that some don't even care whether or not the information is true.

In short, our approach is to foster critical thinking by making it easier for the learner to delve deeper into the ideas that are presented, assuming they care. A character count of 280 in tweeting while twice the previous 140, does not constitute delving deeper as a matter of critical thinking.

 Delving deeper is influenced by prevailing patterns in the subculture in which the individual dwells. Some break out of their subculture and into the so-called mainstream of educated decision-making. An eloquent discussion of an individual making such a transition is described in the book by J. D. Vance, *Hillbilly Elegy*. Consider the following excerpt from a December 7, 2016, book review appearing in *The Guardian.*

> "Class mobility in America is stagnant and Vance is a statistical outlier. He should not have made it out of Middletown, Ohio. That he did, he ascribes to luck, character and the relative stability provided by his grandmother, known as 'Mamaw'."

So, does class mobility in America have to remain stagnant, or can we innovate in education so as to restore resilience in American Democracy? The answer to that depends in some measure upon what we do in evolving the educational culture, especially in critical thinking leading to a balance between self and social interests essential to resilience in a democratic system.

So now let's look at evolving of the culture.

<div align="center">Evolving of the Culture</div>

A Perspective of Culture

Meme transmission and coordination is a key vehicle for cultural evolution. Psychologist Susan Blackmore has provided us with a summary statement about memes:

> "Memes are habits, skills, behaviors, or stories that are copied from person to person by imitation. Like genes, memes compete to be copied, but instead of being chemicals locked inside cells, they are information that jumps from brain to brain, or from brains to computers, books, and works of art.   The winning memes spread across the world, shaping our minds and cultures as they go."

> "Memes club together to make vast memeplexes**. Many of these enhance our lives, such as financial systems, scientific theories, legal systems, and sports and the arts. But others are more like infections or parasites that jump from host, such as quack remedies, cults, chain letters and computer viruses**. Their basic structure is an instruction to 'copy me' backed up with threats and promises …the self could also be a memeplex: a group of memes that thrive

together and are strengthened every time the word 'I' is used, [such as in saying]'I want …', 'I believe …', and 'I know …'." [8] [Emphasis added.]

Our individual lives unfold in a familiar developmental cycle and we evolve collectively as a species.   Our communities establish conditions for the psychological and social growth of mature individuals who, in turn, foster life-sustaining cultural customs and practices, a cultural co-evolution. It is the meaning and developmental consequences that mostly determine the intra-psychic and interpersonal significance for the individuals and their communities.

Cultural authorities devise values, rules, practices, and roles for "our people" to follow --- laws of honor, of conduct, and specific directives. A child learns particular prescriptions for being a person because they are what she sees people do. She creates categories out of her experience. Ethnic, religious, national, or corporate cultures ensure that community-level prescriptions that you have adopted for yourself, such as your idea of freedom, is the same as mine based on our shared experience.

Evolution of Patterns in the Culture

The enduring emergent patterns in the functioning of a self-organizing system are at the foundation of culture. They underlie and define the general future of the system. However, there are turning points when catastrophic moments occur. Dealing with these crises, which are also creative moments, requires widespread collaboration between individuals, communities, and sometimes nation states. The result is a comprehensive change in consciousness, with profound changes in how we embody and support every stage of human growth.

An important feature of cultural evolution is trans-cultural evolution. It is where there is transmission of cultural elements between cultures, and where, as a result, more than one culture and the relationships between them are involved in the impact on the individual, leading to the transformation and amalgamation of previously distinct cultural elements by the person within a new cultural synthesis or perceived human kind. What makes for developmental progress within any stage of life … is the meaning and developmental consequences of your actions that count, not the particular cultural forms or styles through which you achieve them. Additional discussion of transcultural evolution appears in *Nature and the Human Soul*, by Bill Plotkin, on page 25.

Plotkin also writes that a child learns about herself and the world, the marvels of nature, and what she is capable of doing. She learns the fundamental features of having and being a self and how the self conceptualizes a world and operates within it; she develops a coherent value system, guided by emotion. She also learns about participating successfully in the life of her family and about practices, roles, norms, history and mythology of her culture.[9]

The primary ways of knowing about self and world are feeling, imagining, sensing, and thinking. There is also a need to explore and understand beauty, creativity, artistic expression, emotional growth and healing, healthy relationships, personal fulfillment, and meaning.

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[8]These paragraphs are an excerpt from a statement highlighted in *Consciousness: A Very Short Introduction*, by Susan Blackmore, on pages 127-128.
[9]See related discussion in Plotkin, op. cit., pages 132-136.

Each one of these ways of knowing are collectively essential to learn about our emotions, dreams, possibilities, and destinies as well as to establish and maintain relationships that are caring, cooperative, creative, fun, and gratifying. **Efforts of individuation and exploring the cultural world help one to uncover one's own more authentic self**.

Co-Evolving of Consciousness and Culture

Personality is defined as "enduring patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that distinguish individuals from one another --- that is, the sum total of your mental, emotional, and social characteristics [as observed by others], including quirky behaviors, that make us who we are. ... we all share the same basic traits, just as all have a height and a weight; the only differences are the degree to which we express **those traits**[of personality]**,"enabling us to adapt and evolve to changing circumstances, shaped by cultural factors, as we go through life**.[10] [Emphasis added.]

Our behavior is strongly influenced by and influences the situation in which we find ourselves. Ouellette makes several points in this regard: "we adjust our behavior to suit whatever social role we play in a specific context, such as the home or work environment …we can use the feedback we receive from others to finesse our self-presentation and smooth our social interactions … how we see ourselves can influence the perceptions of those around us [and our community's culture… the environment helps increase or reduce the expression of our predispositions]."[11]

Steven Pinker informs us that "a handful of concepts about places, paths, motions, agency, and causation underlie the literal or figurative meanings of tens of thousands of words and [language] constructions...these concepts and relations appear to be the vocabulary and syntax of mentalize, the language of thought", underlying and shaping our mental processes.[12]

He continues that "we have inherited a pad of forms [or the propensity to devise such forms] that capture the key features of encounters among objects and forces, and the features of other consequential themes of the human condition such as fighting, food, and health. By erasing the content and filling in the blanks with new symbols, we can adapt our inherited forms to more abstruse domains. Some of the revisions may have taken place in our evolution, giving us basic mental categories like ownership, time, and will out of forms originally designed for intuitive physics. Other revisions take place as we live our lives and grapple with new realms of knowledge [op. cit., page 358]."

These forms are instances of generalized inherited frameworks or prepared learning that, along with strongly-held and long-lasting values and beliefs, function to shape or filter our thinking processes. They can have a powerful influence on mental activities and behavior, ultimately reinforcing or modifying social structures and processes and, in turn, influencing our values and beliefs.

Human Kinds Link Culture and Consciousness

Human kinds encompass both (1) aspects of environmental perception and response to social elements of society such as culture and (2) aspects of mental activities of individuals like consciousness and

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[10]This and related discussion is from Ouellette, op. cit., page 76.
[11]Ouellette, op. cit., pages 92-93 & 96.
[12]Pinker, op. cit., page 355.

intention. Thus, they provide a bridge or **basis of interaction and interdependence between the societal environment and personal cognition.**

Humankinds are concepts, mental images of the categories we use to get through life, made partly out of reality and partly by the mind itself. They are also the perception of belonging together in a thing made of people and the belief that your membership in that human grouping provides you behavioral prescriptions that explain your past and predict your future.[13]

 Categorization by itself is not worth much attention, having to fulfill obligations of a human kind makes it a meaningful grouping. For example, men are similar to other men, which makes men a category, but husbands, wives, and children depend on each other to act in particular ways, which makes families meaningful groupings [op. cit., page 67][14]

We rely on our predispositions to team up with others, to understand other people and to get along with them. For instance, someone is trustworthy not because we know her, but because she's a surgeon. Thus, we are assigning characteristics of trustworthiness to someone because of the way we have categorized her [op. cit., page 66-69].

Collectively, members of a human kind act consistently, even if some individual members do not. We tend to view a human kind as both a category and an entity made up of people. In this second respect, we tend to think of a human kind as if it were a person --- a being with thoughts, feelings, and plans of its own (for example, "America is arrogant").

We believe the way we do because our daily experiences are organized to make certain categories relevant and useful and others not relevant or useful. Human kinds have a "life cycle of concepts about human beings",[they arise, they convince, and then they fall away] …they are simply re-categorized." This includes "the ones that have emotional as well as intellectual impact: cultures, ethnic groups, nations, races, religions, cults, castes, political movements."[15]

We believe in a human kind, and then, because we believe, we think and behave according to its rules. Human kinds include: (1) rules for thinking, in sorting out perceptions as constituting a particular class and (2) rules for behavior, in knowing what members of that class are supposed to do in specific circumstances and how you, as a member of that class, are obliged to act in your turn. We rely on our predisposition to team up with others, to understand other people, and to get along with them.

A human kind can be a guide to action, telling me if what I'm doing in the moment is appropriate. "Once I've classed myself and the stranger as, say, employer and boss, I know which game to play and which rules apply --- how to speak, how to dress, and how to behave toward this other person." It can also be a guide to what a perception means, guided by your present needs and emotions [op. cit., page 149].

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[13] For detailed discussion of human kinds, see *Us & Them: The Science of Identity*, by David Berreby.

[14] An example of the simple-category aspect of a human kind: "mothers are people who have children" and an example of the thing-made-of-people aspect: "mothers want good schools"[op. cit., page 133].

[15]This and related discussion is drawn from, *Us & Them* by David Berreby, page 39.

<u>Evolving and Modifying Human Kinds</u>

Each of us is a member simultaneously of many different human kinds, and each of us is capable of inventing new ones. We place ourselves in whichever of our human kinds feels relevant to the needs of the moment, in an ever-changing mental dance.   Our human-kind faculty makes decisions hundreds of times a day about what is right and wrong to do to or with other people, depending on subtle signals we receive from the current situation and the kinds of people involved.

Your sense of human kinds is constantly responding, outside of your awareness, without referring to your consciously chosen commitments.   Only a relative few of your human kinds can be affected by conscious thought in their operation. In the latter case, "We are all, also, I think, *kind* readers. To make sense of another person, we don't just ask the mind question --- 'Who is this person?'. We also ask the kind question ---'What is this person?' What type does she belong to? What knowledge about human kinds can I bring to this encounter to help me understand it?" This and related discussion are found in Berreby, op. cit., pages 123-124.

As our needs or circumstances change, so do our perceptions of what kinds of people there are and what kinds we belong with, as is evident when people travel to other countries or cultures. It is at moments of mixed feelings and uncertainty that we may switch from one set of human kinds to another.

Emotional responses and the feeling that we are among "us" derive from subtle cues we receive from our surroundings. These cues may include signs and symbols that indicate who is part of "our kind" in addition to the cues from our personal experience. If these cues are sufficient, we sense that we and the other are among "our kind". If they are insufficient, we may decide the other is not one of "us". [16]

<u>Diversity of Capability Among Individuals</u>

To start with, **there are limitations of the sensory capability of the human species**. Homo sapiens, in contrast with the sensory capabilities on which other forms of animal life heavily rely, concentrate on the "narrow audiovisual bubble that we inherited from our pre-human ancestors." This leads us to "the hereditary propensity to learn certain forms of behavior and to avoid others--- what psychologists call "prepared learning" versus "counter-prepared learning." [17]

More on learning is discussed in the third essay in the series of trilogy appendices co-authored by John Lillibridge and Maury Seldin. That essay is titled "Empowerment through More Effective Learning." Of particular interest is an excerpt drawn from the major part titled "Fostering Empowerment through Effective Learning" that starts off with the side heading of "The Thinking Process as a Feedback System." It includes the following:

> One's perception is biased by the baggage of her experiences, the accumulated learning in memory of her life to date. What has been experienced and learned can serve as prior

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[16]This and related discussion is drawn from Berreby, op. cit., page 215.
[17] [*Wilson, The Origins of Creativity*, pages 53 & 55.]

knowledge in the generation of models and other mental structures. It can also channel attention processes in perception and action.

Another kind of bias is the many unconscious mechanisms that operate where people's actions are at odds with their intentions. People tend to rationalize these actions away --- they even may claim ownership for the actions they had not intended. These two possible sources of biased actions may be a partial explanation of why the Republicans in the U.S. Senate have great difficulty in reaching a compromise in their legislative proposals.

[David] Clark tells us that understanding these two types of bias and their effects may have social and political consequences. At the very heart of human experience, predictive processing suggests, lies the massed strata of our own (mostly unconscious) experiences. Unconscious bias influences people subtly, not overtly. It may cause serious errors of judgment and unwarranted confidence about their conclusions. This means that we should carefully consider the shape of the worlds to which we (and our children) are exposed.

This is relevant because **the diversity in capability although heavily influenced by intelligence and education may also be biased in different ways among diverse subcultures**. In general, the diversity provides strength because it enables the evolutionary process dependent upon diversity, selection and magnification produce better outcomes than if it were denied in a societal structure.

More on this is discussed in *Perspectives for a Sense of Place* (the second book of the trilogy) in the chapter titled "Denominations in Science and Religions." It is in the section titled **"**Denominations in Religions as Part of a System." An excerpt is as follows:

Diversity is an Asset

Diversity is a great asset for progress through evolution. With diversity there is an opportunity for selection that produces more favorable outcomes. [Emphasis added.] Those outcomes are often magnified. Forcing acceptance of one solution has not worked out well for science or religion. The classic case in science was insisting that the earth was the center of the universe. That insistence deferred the progress of science; the reality of the universe was different than what was insisted by those attempting to force the belief of the earth as the center of the universe.

Being right in not enough. Forcing a belief when dealing with a societal structure (our critical case of a complex adaptive system) may generate outcomes that are not simply unfavorable, but devastating for the quality of life. Consider a case from the Middle Ages when "The Mu'tazilite scholars called for a rational theology, arguing that God has a rational nature and that moral laws and free will were part of the unchangeable essence of reason. The movement was the result of the encounter of Islam with earlier civilizations – Persian and Greco Roman – and especially the traditions of Greek philosophy." So wrote Gregorian, Vartan Gregorian in his book, Islam*: A Mosaic, Not a Monolith.* [p. 16].

Substantial diversity in capability exists within our democratic society, its subcultures, and its human kinds. The interaction among individuals within the democratic society as a whole, the subcultures, and within the diversity of human kinds to which an individual classifies herself generates outcomes with characteristics beyond the generating network.

The tightest networks are typically among the family members. Think of the family as in the earlier example of the hand - a thing; yet, when the fingers are clutched together in a fist, the bonding provides a power that emerges from the interaction. It is this power that emerges from the interaction that individuals with different capabilities may leverage off. This process exists with teams in which different members have different capabilities as well as different roles. **Synergy of action produces outcomes beyond an aggregation of talents; those are emergent properties creating social capital**.

Our interest is in the emergent outcomes that may be generated when individuals interact with others, sometimes in their expressing a common interest as an advocacy for some public policy. Our interest is also in the emergent outcomes that may be generated when individuals interact with others having conflicting interests. The first case is a cooperative effort; while the second case is a competitive effort.

That competitive effort is exemplified by business transactions in which ownership of a property of some sort is transferred. The multiplicity of such transfers produces an outcome is commonly identified as a market. The differences in the capability of the individuals for their transactions directly affect the outcomes for them; but the emergent characteristics producing a market have a broader impact. That impact is a societal concern, justifying regulations that constrain conditions under which transactions are occurring. The same logic applies to outcomes of political transactions such as voting in the context of the emergent characteristics of public policy.

Our primary focus is on unalienable rights articulated in the Declaration of Independence, especially in the sense of equality for access to the processes of government in pursuit of one's own life and liberty including conditions of equality and reciprocity as a participant in the societal system.

Interactions within a Democratic Structure

The Complexity of Issues within a Democratic Structure

The complexity of issues within a democracy may be centered on some equality ideas as follows:

- Ideally each individual is free; entitled to possession of positive as well as negative liberties so as to flourish for herself or himself based upon the unalienable rights articulated as an ideal in the Declaration of Independence.
- However, in order to avoid chaos, there is a self-organization of sorts within the legal regulation as a social order; and norms of behavior provide guidelines for actions and interactions.
- The development of the structure and the participation in processes calls for a substantial degree of confidence in the societal institutions involved in protection of the rights of individuals.

All societal structures have to deal with the interplay of not only the political and economic systems under which it is structured, but also societal systems in which people live their lives. There are enough remnants of ancient genetic forces to keep the thirst for life high on the priority list of forces generating behavior. The memes that emerged over time produce priorities that vary among cultures. The quest for freedom is a widely rising priority; although the security found by some in the faith that the controls are behavior in *and* on free society is a rising alternative for some people. The clash of civilizations that has been discussed has developed to some degree, and is under an increasing threat to Western civilization.

Understanding the complexity of a political-economy is so difficult that civilizations have not organized themselves so as to be able to survive in peace on the planet Earth. *The Great American Experiment* that is approaching a quarter of a millennium occupies but a minuscule portion of the history of mankind. Its arch rival, the totalitarian structure, keeps rising and falling; and maybe that is just its organic nature. But that could also be said about free societies. Democratic structures at least have an opportunity to regenerate themselves without the use of massive deadly force as is typical of totality regimes.

The hierarchal structures tend to mess up the system because the people in it are constrained from self-organizing that can provide feedback to enable adjustment to the process of the structure. The great challenge for democracy is to get the cooperation at the levels of community interest as with the family and the various societal justice issues from health to employment, and from environment, as a start.

Given the diversity of issues there is the expectation of competition for priorities in policy. Coalitions may be formed based upon a series of trade-offs by groups with intense preferences on some issues and consents on other issues that rank high for other groups. Pluralism, as discussed by Isaiah Berlin, concedes that there is no one, and only one, answer to all the issues. However, the commonality for the nation's interest predicated on the ideals articulated in the Declaration of Independence, especially quality and access to the tools of government and reciprocity in the system, are essential for the *Great Experiment* in democracy to succeed.

It is the self-organization of democracy as a process and as a structure, operating with societal norms that have enabled progress for the two centuries since *The Declaration*. However, it has been the decay of the system in recent decades that is a danger to the *Great Experiment.*

It is the co-evolution of culture and individuals that has generated the current conditions; and it will take further co-evolution to restore American democracy back on path. However, the complexity of the nation is increased greatly; not only in the last century, but in recent decades such that the need for better agency is required. It is that agency to which this essay has been addressed.

Agency within the Democratic System

Agency within the American Democratic system is a critical issue because it is unrealistic to expect that, given the range and complexity of issues, the voting populace will have sufficient competence and motivation to use critical thinking for the full range of issues. The agency is critical in the selection of representatives at all levels of government, but it is especially confounded in national elections because of the layers of networks and the distribution of power.

Aside from agency representation of the voting public on the issues, **there is an increase in the call for agency by the individuals to rely on others for the formation of their opinions based upon science as well as values.** The autocracy rivals not only have different values but repress science for personal interest. Thus, the question comes to start with the quality of knowledge accepted by the voter.

This is where supply agents come into the process. Such agents have intense interests in some issues for a variety of reasons. The equitable balance of diverse interests is essential to a pluralism that respects a coexistence of diversity. That diversity has turned out to be a great asset in the evolution of American

democracy, the concentration of power by the wealthy and by a relatively small group of industrial giants with great stakes in the regulatory system has significantly altered the representation.

The gerrymandering is further denied representation not only at the local levels, but also at the national level especially through the electoral system. This is not the place to discuss the options for the preparation of American Democracy, only to note that it is the culture that makes up the cells, tissues, and organs of democracy that need to evolve. The adaptation to a changing reality calls for a better education of the electorate.

<u>Strategy for Dealing with Limitations of Capability and Diversity of Interests</u>

  <u>Understanding Capability</u>

An understanding of capability, its origin, development, and potential, will impact the development of a strategy dealing with its limitations. Our discussion of learning and the co-evolution of individuals and society are especially relevant. What follows is a series of selected sentences or phrases highlighted in the previous discussion. They are presented in two sets, the first of which is as follows:

> **...the interaction of the actions experienced is leading to a state change in the memes of a community.**

> **This involves one's worldview and understanding of context and possibilities, feelings and emotional expression, and thinking and reasoning**.

> **In short, our approach is to foster critical thinking by making it easier for the learner to delve deeper into the ideas that are presented.**

> **..."Many of these**[memes] **enhance our lives, such as financial systems, scientific theories, legal systems, and sports and the arts. But others are more like infections or parasites that jump from host, such as quack remedies, cults, chain letters and computer viruses. ..."**

> **... those traits**[of personality]**,"enabling us to adapt and evolve to changing circumstances as we go through life**.[x] [Emphasis added.]

> ...[Human kinds provide a]**basis of interaction and interdependence between the societal environment and personal cognition.**

> **A human kind can be a guide to action, telling me if what I'm doing in the moment is appropriate**.

> **As our needs or circumstances change, so do our perceptions of what kinds of people there are and what kinds we belong with, as is evident when people travel to other countries or cultures**.

> ...**there are limitations of the sensory capability of the human species**.

> ...**the diversity in capability although heavily influenced by intelligence and education may also be biased in different ways among diverse subcultures**.

Learning is the key to enhancing capability! People start with a genetic resource and the environment that impacts learning capacity and development. It is not an aggregation of learning capacity that

counts, it is an integration of the critical thinking of individuals and their interactions with other individuals that impact outcomes, much of the same way that transactions in the marketplace influence the market. That market is an emergent property, and so is the outcome of the society based upon the multiplicity of ideas just highlighted, and then some.

The strategy of Putin in undermining Western democracies is based upon his fostering a belief among his people that others have it worse, and he does so by inhibiting their learning about reality. The greatest threat to American Democracy is not that external threat. Rather, it is the internal threat of the divisiveness that has arisen in recent decades. Donald Trump did not invent that divisiveness or myopia of pursuit of self-interest at the expense of the decay of society, he just personifies it.

Consider what is happening to the application of science, not only with global warming as an issue but with education as a process. The absence of any respect for truth and the reliance on tweets is parasitic to the body of health of the society. Parasites can be tolerated by healthy organisms to some extent, but they can tilt the balance, as is happening with failed states, and failing states.

Strategy being advocated in dealing with these issues is fostering a liberal education, as well as career education, for the populace so that they could flourish. The increase in productivity in recent centuries has enabled civilization to do a lot better for the masses; however, the democratic system has been so manipulated for selfish interests that ithas provided a range and depth of injustices that are cancerous to survival of the society.

The call for a Declaration of Reform is a call for processes and structure that will facilitate a better understanding of the potential of a variety of reforms that would receive enough popular support to enable American Democracy to be restored back on its path towards the ideals articulated in the Declaration of Independence. The education innovation, of which this essay is a part, is designed not only to enhance the productivity of individual educational endeavors to enhance their capability, but to facilitate an agency system in which they could rely on others who have respect for truth in science, and conform to their faith, not referring to ritual but rather to the basic morality - the foundation of faith.

The morality of society is not a secondary consideration. It functions as part of a blood flow that emerges in the system, and its debasement for short-term highs, as in addiction that deteriorates the system, and can lead to its demise.

This book has been devoted to focusing on individual beliefs founded in faith and/or science as they relate to choices made by an individual. The highlighted excerpts from this appendix (an essay that delves deeper than the narrative of the book) presumes that the reader has read the second book of the trilogy, or least the sixth chapter discussing education innovation and some of the additional appendices that are also devoted to education.

In that context it makes points that support the pursuit of education as a means of enhancing capability of the individual and leading to an innovative approach of leveraging off of knowledge of others who can function as reliable agents in providing information for choices to be made that would not only directly assist the individual in her pursuit of flourishing by enhancing the wisdom of a wide variety of choices, but would also improve the democratic environment that significantly influences the opportunities for

improving the quality of life. Without that institutional arrangement, people simply become tools of a tyrant.

As noted, the Great Experiment of American Democracy has a diversity of kinds, and the kinds evolve. What we are moving to is a discussion of accommodating a diversity of interests, largely associated with different beliefs and the norms which influence an individual's choice on how life should be lived. The big issue relates to what is proper for American Democracy as to where the line is drawn on imposing one's personal beliefs on others. Drawing that line for the society, as a whole, needs to consider the concept of pluralism if one can reasonably expect that American Democracy will survive.

The concept of pluralism was repeatedly included in the discussion in the trilogy's first book, *Common Sense Revisited: America's Third Revolution*. Drawing from the discussion in that book, so as to assist in providing a transition to the next subsection discussion, Accommodating Diversity of Interests, we have an endnote triggered by one of the times in which the idea of pluralism was mentioned. The endnote is as follows:

> The concept [pluralism], as discussed by Isaiah Berlin is "…the conception that there are many different ends that men may seek and still be fully rational…" The relevance, also as discussed by Isaiah Berlin is "We are urged to look upon life as affording a plurality of values, equally genuine, equally ultimate, above all equally objective; incapable, therefore, of being ordered in a timeless hierarchy, or judged in terms of one absolute standard." [That is from page 11 of Isaiah Berlin's **The Crooked Timber of Humanity: Chapters in the History of Ideas**, edited by Henry Hardy. It is in the first of a collection of eight essays. That essay is titled "The Pursuit of the Ideal."] The point here is that pluralism is in an essential ingredient for balance and diversity in our democratic society.

Isaiah Berlin's further discussion in the book has pointed out that in history of mankind there has never been just one solution, imposed upon others, that has survived. The great challenge is in how to make American Democracy work for Americans. That is especially significant, because its success or failure will impact the future of other democracies; and they too are in danger.

So now let us go to the second set of highlighted items in this essay. They lead off after a brief discussion drawn from material in the trilogy's first book

Accommodating Diversity of Interests

There are two paragraphs in the latter part of *American Democracy Revisited: America's Third Revolution* that are especially relevant. They are in the fourth chapter, Harnessing Complexity In The Twenty-First Century. The side heading is Coevolution of Americans and American Democracy. The subheading Is Diversity as a Choice. The two paragraphs are as follows:

> Consider that diversity in representation is important because of the concept of majority rule, but with the protection of the rights of minorities. The point is to avoid the tyranny of the majority. All eligible voters are nutrients to the operation of a democratic process. A winner-take-all philosophy is destructive of democracy when it is empowered. In short, the health of democracy is highly dependent upon the choices of all eligible voters being faithfully represented in the system, essentially because all participants are nutrients in the recirculation

system of democracy, politically as well as economically; they impact the quality of life for themselves and the rest of the community.

Clearly, American Democracy is endangered because the current trend is toward a nationalism built upon a tribalism that is moving away from democracy towards a plutocracy; a plutocracy that will not long endure and could lead to something even worse. The challenge is to capitalize on diversity in returning towards the path of the ideals expressed in the Declaration of Independence.

So now here are the highlighted items that will shed light on accommodating the diversity of interests.

...**Diversity is a great asset for progress through evolution. With diversity there is an opportunity for selection that produces more favorable outcomes**. [Emphasis added.]

Synergy of action produces outcomes beyond an aggregation of talents; those are emergent properties creating a social capital.

Our primary focus is on unalienable rights articulated in the Declaration of Independence, especially in the sense of equality for access to the processes of government in pursuit of one's own life and liberty including conditions of equality and reciprocity as a participant in the societal system.

Given the diversity of issues there is the expectation of competition for priorities in policy. Coalitions may be formed based upon a series of trade-offs by groups with intense preferences on some issues and consents on other issues that rank high for other groups.

It is the co-evolution of culture and individuals that has generated the current conditions; and it will take further co-evolution to restore American democracy back on path.

..., **there is an increase in the call for agency by the individuals to rely on others for the formation of their opinions based upon science as well as values.**

The current condition of American Democracy may be aptly described as dysfunctional. The cancers of injustice are raising the level of consciousness of the current condition. Early stages of what may be described as a "a third burst of creativity in the arena of Western civilization" relates to a century and a half of cultural change that may well be underway. The first burst of creativity arose with the ancient Greek philosophers. The second encompass the Enlightenment era. The third may have started in the 20th century; and if it did it may take a couple of generations in the 21st century to peak.[ii]

These bursts of creativity relate to the development and dissemination of knowledge, but they rely on evolution of institutional arrangements. It is these institutional arrangements, process and structure that evolve. As to the evolution of the third burst of creativity, a great deal depends upon how the diversity of interests are handled, especially when a commonality of interests needs to be pursued in the creation of social capital.

That first burst of creativity propelled by the ancient Greek philosophers had a blend of science and philosophy that was used as a single discipline. Aside from of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle there was Epicurus who laid a foundation for Lucretius (the Roman poet who wrote the key work *On the Nature of*

Things). The second burst of creativity encompassed the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment. If there is a third burst of creativity, it may have started with the organic perspective perceived by Alfred North Whitehead in the late 1920s with his writing *Process and Reality*. That may well have been the seed leading to the creation of nascent disciplines that focus on the nonlinear analytics and are being extended by an Information Revolution.

The evolutionary process is highly complex, but if one had to put a thread to it, that thread could well be the evolution of the concept of justice as it is pursued in changing environments. To Epicurus, justice was simply an agreement of nonaggression. He was preceded by Socrates who accepted the justice of the sentenced to death because he believed in the democracy of Athens. He also believed that the unexamined life was not worth living. Plato and Aristotle advanced the concepts related to reason.

The examined lives' of the philosophers in the second burst of creativity led to a view of justice that was articulated in the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America, dealing with the right to think for oneself and to express those thoughts. These are touched on in the books of the trilogy, the point here being that is going to take the pursuit of justice for American Democracy to survive, and we are back to justice as a nonaggression viewpoint of Epicurus. That speaks to the aggression in the divisiveness that is destructive of our democracy in America today.

The role of education may well be to develop an awareness beyond the short-term benefits dealing with the injustices that are prevailing, and moving to the institutional arrangements that would restore the norms that we once had when two legislators vigorously argued positions across the aisle, but when they left the chamber they walked side-by-side with an amiable nature because they both valued the norms of civility and would accept graciously peaceful transfer of leadership by a fair electoral process.

The fairness of the processes has regressed and it will take a restructuring not only both parties in terms of their internal relationships, but also in their interactions. As discussed in the first book of the trilogy, the most dangerous branch of the government may be the judicial, although many may argue that the path of the administrative branch is a great contender.

This essay is already too long, speculation about the various paths that may unfold calls for the use of an analytical model known as an *agent-based model*. Such a model deals with the diversity of paths that may be taken in dealing with Congressional action following the Mueller report.

As of this writing, the divisiveness looks as though it's going to continue until there is a transition not only in the leadership of the Administration, but also in both houses of Congress. That transition is going to take time and involve the restructuring of both mature political parties back to where there are compromises that facilitate actions that place the interests of the country as a whole above the interests of the party.

Historically, the emergence of that social capital at the national level has been fostered by crises that make it apparent to pursue the institutional arrangements of democracy rather than to pursue the gain of personal and party power at the expense of the national interest. It may take a national crisis to bring that realization about, and there are many prospects for such a crisis; and more than one may have in the same time. In the longer view, innovation in education of the masses and the leveraging through trusted networks can provide a gradual result of the transition. The call is for hastening the process

through education, without necessitating a crisis. The drama is unfolding the signal to watch for is a crisis of conscience the movement for impeachment is ripe.

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[i] This is discussed in greater detail in the first appendix to the second book which is devoted to perspectives of the self, particularly as they apply in a democratic society in consideration of relationships between science and religion.

[ii] This is discussed in Appendix 4A, Innovation in Societal Evolution, of this book, by providing excerpts from a discussion presented in the prologue to this trilogy's first book, *Common Sense Revisited: America's Third Revolution.*