

## ON DEMOCRATIC PERSONALITIES

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### INTRODUCTION

In Part I, I describe and discuss the ideal traits of a democratic personality, note the contribution of education to the acquisition of these traits, and describe other immature traits of personality that impede or preclude the emergence of a democratic personality. In Part II, I note how the traits of a democratic personality are or are not acquired through the processes of identity formation in late adolescence and early adulthood. Finally, I contrast the ideal traits of a democratic personality with other traits that can frustrate attempts to develop a democracy but which can contribute to successful adaptation in some relations of exchange. I conclude by offering a comment on the prospects for democracy in America.

### I. BACKGROUND CONSIDERATIONS

Good government is government that is conducive to good lives for those subject to it. Democracy is a means to good government, a form of government in which the adult members of a society, in principle, govern themselves.<sup>1</sup> In a representative, constitutional democracy, the members of society are called “citizens” because with respect to the processes and substantive concerns of government they legitimately have a voice in shaping laws and political institutions, and a vote in determining who will represent them in performing the duties of various public offices. Citizens in a democracy also have the right of judicial appeal against the abuses of government, for laws and a constitutional order apply to those who govern as well as those who are governed. “[S]elf-government’ expresses the meaning of political liberty . . . when the public or legislative will to which the individual is subject is *not a will wholly alien to his own*,” for he contributes to its formation and, given his legitimate rights (e.g., freedom of speech and assembly) “has the opportunity and power to say what is for the

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1. RALPH KETCHAM, THE IDEA OF DEMOCRACY IN THE MODERN ERA 10-11 (2004).

common good *from the point of view of his own particular interests.*"<sup>2</sup> Citizens of a democracy are not mere residents of a place or "consumers" of public services.

Those who study states and law affirm that personality factors play a role in the annals of governments. A well-known essay on citizenship holds that "the health and stability of a modern democracy depends, not only on the justice of its 'basic structure' but also on the qualities and attitudes of its citizens."<sup>3</sup> I will identify some of these qualities in a moment after furnishing these reflections with an additional set of premises.

In a democracy there will be many sorts of good lives. Every good life will be composed of many different elements, and each citizen will display a more or less unique pattern of personality traits that, for the most part, will be respected and somehow supported by a government and by laws animated by the precepts of democracy.<sup>4</sup> Something should, therefore, be said about justice if we want to know how, in principle, good government is conducive to good lives. This will give us a criterion for specifying traits of personality needed for a good democracy, traits we want to foster. For counsel on human relations,

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2. MORTIMER J. ADLER, *THE IDEA OF FREEDOM, VOLUME II, A DIALECTICAL EXAMINATION OF THE CONTROVERSIES ABOUT FREEDOM* 9 (1961) (emphasis in the original).

3. Will Kymlicka & Wayne Norman, *Return of the Citizen: A Survey of Recent Work on Citizenship Theory*, in *THEORIZING CITIZENSHIP* 283, 284 (Ronald Beiner ed., 1995). As to legal theory, even H.L.A. Hart while defending his view that international law is a system of law, has recourse to moral psychology:

Even in municipal law, where there are effective organized sanctions, we must distinguish . . . the meaning of the external predictive statement 'I (you) are likely to suffer for disobedience', from the external predictive statement 'I (you) have an obligation to act thus' which assesses a particular person's situation from the point of view of rules accepted as guiding standards of behavior.

For Hart, the idea of obligation inherent in law is not necessarily a prisoner of external threats. Compliance with or obedience to a valid law may come about because the agent has accepted *as his own* a rule as a guiding standard of conduct. In answering a related argument that casts doubt on international law as law Hart says that the answer "is to be found in those elementary truths about human beings and their environment which constitute the enduring psychological and physical setting of municipal law." See H.L.A. HART, *THE CONCEPT OF LAW* 218 (2d ed. 1997).

4. Good lives may be a necessary condition for a sustainable democracy. Ronald Inglehart argues that once there is sufficient economic development to provide for the basic material needs of a population, interpersonal trust, life satisfaction, cognitive mobilization, and a reduction in materialism tend to follow, and a society is produced that creates attitudes and expectations that favor democracy over other, less participatory forms of government and sustains democracy once it begins. Inglehart's work is discussed in J.L. Sullivan & J.E. Transue, *The Psychological Underpinnings of Democracy: A Selective Review of Research on Political Tolerance, Interpersonal Trust, and Social Capital*, 50 *ANN. REV. PSYCHOL.* 625, 640-43 (1999).

justice, and the state, I turn to the work of the Scottish philosopher John Macmurray.

“Morality [Macmurray tells us] . . . expresses the necessary and universal intention to maintain community, as the condition of freedom.”<sup>5</sup> Justice is a moral idea, the idea of “the minimum of reciprocity and interest in the other that I must express in relation to the other that can rightly be extracted from me if I refuse it.”<sup>6</sup> Law, for Macmurray, is the means to justice, not the criterion of justice. He contrasts justice, which can be extracted with qualities that cannot be demanded, i.e., “with mercy, with generosity, with benevolence, with all these moral qualities which express the positive readiness to sacrifice self-interest for the sake of others.”<sup>7</sup> Justice is the lower limit of moral behavior, and simultaneously, the essence of morality “without which the higher virtues lose their moral quality.”<sup>8</sup>

“But community can only be actual in direct personal relations . . . with those whom we know personally. Where relations are indirect it [community] can only be potential: and this means that if we did come into direct relation with another person the relation would be positively motivated [motivated].”<sup>9</sup> So justice “appears as the minimum requirement of morality in all personal and impersonal relations whether positive or negative, direct or indirect.”<sup>10</sup> While justice is a necessary though not sufficient condition of sustainable personal relations, it is “the bond . . . of society; of any form of co-operation which is a co-operation of persons. . . . Justice determines reciprocal rights and obligations which we engage ourselves to respect, whether or not we know the other.”<sup>11</sup> We must trust one another to act justly not only in personal relations but also in society, in relations that are indirect and impersonal. “The State [Macmurray says] depends upon an existing habit of co-operation which needs no enforcement; upon the existence of a society in which people do trust one another for the most part though not under every condition or in all cases.”<sup>12</sup>

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5. JOHN MACMURRAY, *PERSONS IN RELATION* 188-91 (1961). There are, of course, many forms of justice: commutative, contributive, creative, distributive, retributive, social, etc. The goods at issue are also varied. For a discussion of these and many other matters regarding justice, see JOHN RAWLS, *A THEORY OF JUSTICE* (1971).

6. MACMURRAY, *supra* note 5, at 188-91.

7. *Id.*

8. *Id.*

9. *Id.*

10. *Id.*

11. MACMURRAY, *supra* note 5, at 188-91.

12. *Id.*

So, a representative, constitutional democracy conduces to good lives by the election of citizens who generate laws, administered by the State, that reflect and sustain those substantive and procedural habits of minimal interest and reciprocity that the members of society already, and for the most part, have toward one another. And these minima, as specified, for example, by public law secured in keeping with the constitutional order, will in turn both shape and depend to a considerable extent for their specification upon the personality traits of the members of society. More precisely, a democratic personality in a polity such as the United States, will exhibit, in and through the citizen's activities, dispositions to secure justice as a condition essential for the possibility of freedom—not only in direct personal relations, but with regard to the rules and sanctions of society that order indirect and impersonal relations, especially relations between the citizens and the State, and among citizens in relations of exchange.

## II. TRAITS OF PERSONALITY – DEMOCRATIC AND OTHERWISE

Human activity insofar as it is authored or originated by a human agent, (i.e., by 'you' or 'me') on the basis of knowledge and choice, is human *action*. 'Personality' is that feature of an individual's activity which is present in action as the behavioral and experiential foundation of the possibility of action. The idea of personality draws attention to the ways in which your activities are exhibited or determined not by you as an agent, but in some other way. A vast range of "personality factors" has been identified: the stuff of which you are composed; any process, event, or relation; any image, idea, fantasy, belief, feeling, emotion, desire, habit, trait or disposition; any recurrent or equivalent circumstance, situation, habitat, or environment; or previous actions of yours or others, may determine your activities and experiences.

'Traits of personality' are those "aspects of personality in respect to which most people within a given culture can be profitably compared, . . . a neuropsychic structure having the capacity to render many stimuli functionally equivalent, and to initiate and guide equivalent (meaningfully consistent) forms of adaptive and expressive behavior."<sup>13</sup> Given the commonalities of human nature and the common culture of some historical epoch, many people will have similar traits "though to varying degrees."<sup>14</sup> In these reflections, "trait of personality" is used in this latter sense—to specify the elements of an

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13. GORDON ALLPORT, *PATTERN AND GROWTH IN PERSONALITY* 340, 347 (1961).

14. *Id.* at 340-49.

ideal-typical trait common to many persons. Of course, *as a trait of an individual person*, any trait is variously arranged with respect to other traits and to other features of a personal identity, and so is expressed in ways unique to each person.

#### A. *Democratic Traits*

From what has been said about how justice is secured in a democracy, it is not surprising that the traits of a democratic personality are described (in one version) as follows:

- an affective sense of membership and identity in a community and polity, from which flows an interest [“public spiritedness”] in the public [or common] good;
- a disposition to be treated justly by others and an active concern that others in the polity be treated justly, not simply by the state but in general;
- an ability to co-operate [and compete?] with others who differ even in radical ways from oneself;
- a disposition to exhibit self-restraint in the markets for things and services, and;
- a capacity to make reasonable choices that affect one’s health, the health of others, and the quality of the environment.<sup>15</sup>

These ideal-typical elements of a democratic personality imply that the citizen recognizes that his or her well being depends on the well being of others. This requires some capacity to trust others, “to tolerate others’ efforts to participate in politics, even if they promote unpopular views,” and a desire as well as a capacity to express such commitments in political and other sorts of associations.<sup>16</sup>

We should not imagine that citizens must possess all the elements of a democratic personality in order to be good citizens. For then no one would be a good citizen. We should acknowledge that many who participate in politics fail to exhibit these traits in a steady manner while others who exhibit such traits do not participate in any regular way in

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15. Kymlicka & Norman, *supra* note 3, at 284. See also ABRAHAM H. MASLOW, *MOTIVATION AND PERSONALITY* 219-20 (1954) (Maslow’s classic work on a “folk definition” of democratic character structure and associated traits).

16. Sullivan & Transue, *supra* note 4, at 625.

the affairs of the State. What we can hope is that enough citizens possess and exhibit some of these elements of a democratic personality sometimes—hopefully at different times—so that these elements do predominate in the affairs of society and in the deliberations of those who hold public office.

*B. Education and the Acquisition of Traits*

The emergence of democratic traits is not only the unfolding of *endowments* (such as the expression of genes or of the sequence of powers conferred on us by the maturation of our brains), but also the result of *acquirements* garnered in the course of living a life. These traits do not suddenly emerge when a person enters the voting booth for the first time. This conviction underwrites the belief that education - the intentional refinement of learning—is essential for those who would exercise the rights of citizens or govern well. This belief that is coherent, long-standing, and entirely credible—if not always verifiable. Because of their endowments and acquisitions, some (e.g., Lincoln) govern well without much education from their seniors while others (e.g., Kaiser Wilhelm II) govern poorly despite the intention of others that they be well educated.

The content and the process of education will, of course, vary according to the form of government for which one is preparing or being prepared. But these differences and other problems of educating the future king, the aristocracy, or the members of a small, historic, and comparatively homogeneous democracy (e.g., Switzerland) are relatively straightforward when compared to the problems of educating the many—the millions of citizens, including new immigrants, who legitimately have a voice and a vote in a large-scale representative democracy. In the United States, citizens and future citizens are not only many but also remarkably diverse with respect to genetic endowment; habitat; intelligence; lived experience; sexual orientation; opportunities as well as abilities for education, marriage, and work; historical, regional, and aesthetic sensibilities; ethnic identity; and religion. *So another trait of a democratic personality should be a habitual concern for the education of children and adults for participation as citizens in a democratic polity.*

Good schooling builds on that intention and generalizes it beyond the domestic household to peers and to adults whom the child does not know. Learning the rights, and obligations of the classroom and how to contest ideas about practical affairs, tacitly introduces children to the processes by which justice is sought in a society free of tyranny. The child comes to know that her behavior and the behavior of others affect

people she does not know, i.e., to the concept of indirect and impersonal relations with others. But Gerald Grant has shown how schooling for participation in democracy can be undermined when “bureaucratic legalism” is “the primary expression of the moral order of the school” and when difficulty in conforming to the code of conduct is addressed only by “therapeutic contractualism” and “values clarification.”<sup>17</sup> This culture of education reifies the apolitical romance of the self which may prepare students for participation in markets but does not help them acquire the concepts and practical skills required for participation in a democracy.

Community service by adolescents, linked to family, school, neighborhood, religious tradition, youth association, etc., is important for the later development of a political identity.<sup>18</sup> Citizens who exhibit public spiritedness and a concern for the common good in young adulthood were usually economically advantaged and committed members of voluntary associations concerned with public service during their adolescence.<sup>19</sup> This sort of opportunity is not routinely available in poor urban neighborhoods, but as Yates and Youniss, and Grant have demonstrated “clearly some things can be done [in the schools] and . . . are worth doing.”<sup>20</sup>

I will not consider further the formidable problems of the educational formation of citizens—that is, questions concerning the indoctrination, socialization, instruction, and coaching of successor generations in the acquisition of the knowledge and skills required for participation in a democracy.<sup>21</sup> I shall instead indicate that there are citizens in America with traits that are not conducive to the future of

17. GERALD GRANT, *THE WORLD WE CREATED AT HAMILTON HIGH 183-201* (1988).

18. Constance Flanagan, *Developmental Roots of Political Engagement*, PS: POL. SCI. & POL. 257 (Apr. 2003) available at [www.apsanet.org](http://www.apsanet.org) (last visited Dec. 30, 2005). Flanagan is concerned to move “the agenda of youth civic engagement forward” by focusing “on the contributions adolescents make to local communities rather than the risks they pose for them. . . . [T]he ‘assets’ approach reframes political socialization from an emphasis on preparing for [voting] to enabling adolescents to act as citizens in the present.” *Id.* at 260.

19. Miranda Yates & James Youniss, *Community Service and Political Identity Development in Adolescence*, 54(3) J. SOC. ISSUES 495 (1998). This paper demonstrates what can be done by students in a relatively poor urban school to acquaint adolescents with civic responsibility and with knowledge of the commons.

20. Gerald Grant, *Fluctuations of Social Capital in an Urban Neighborhood*, in *MAKING GOOD CITIZENS: EDUCATION AND CIVIL SOCIETY* 96, 119 (Diane Ravitch & Joseph P. Viteritti, eds., 2001). Like Yates & Youniss, Grant illustrates that civic awareness and competence can be engendered among youth in problematic urban neighborhoods by engaging them in practical tasks of urban improvement.

21. MANFRED STANLEY, *THE TECHNOLOGICAL CONSCIENCE* 211, 212-13 (1978).

democracy.

*C. Traits That May Impede Constitutional Democracy*

Consider the orientation to self and others implied by expression of the traits of a democratic personality in the political arena:

- A person lives in and through relations with others.
- Reasoned interdependency with others is required if democracy as a good means to justice is to flourish.
- Other adults are equals with respect to having a right to a voice as citizens.
- The citizen is not regularly and unduly threatened or angered by the different views and programmatic plans of others and is thereby able to confront those differences in a respectful manner.
- The citizen's political identity allows him to proceed in freedom to advocate his views as if he understood that the substantive meaning and steps to be taken to secure justice in the polity, and more generally in society are inevitably problematic.
- His political identity and practices imply his willingness to sustain the procedural rules that maintain the possibility of co-operation in conducting the continuous substantive struggles of a democratic form of government.
- He is aware that procedural rules should only be changed with great caution, with foresight, and with the intent that a democratic form of government be sustained if not improved.

A person who displays some of the traits of a democratic personality will have achieved, at least as a citizen, a mature level of personality development. Harry Guntrip, in considering the basic forms of human relationships, says that “. . . fully adult relationships between emotional equals, [are] characterized by mutuality, spontaneity, co-operation, preservation of individuality and valuable differences, and by stability.”<sup>22</sup> Following Guntrip further, we can ask of him what prominent traits, habits, dispositions, and narrative accounts of self and

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22. HARRY GUNTRIP, PERSONALITY STRUCTURE AND HUMAN INTERACTION 349, 377 (1961).

others (also the results of endowments and acquisitions) would stand in the place of democratic traits. Here, by implication, are some of his answers:

- helplessness and dependency on a protective comforter;
- aggressive searching for such a comforter or aggressive efforts to be such a figure for others;
- being dependent on others while feeling persecuted and rejected by them, or rejecting and persecuting others while remaining radically dependent on them;
- believing the self to be weak, while fearfully admiring the strong and the ruthless;
- sustaining illusions of strength and invulnerability while demanding admiration from others believed to be submissive and weak;
- being detached, impersonal, isolated, cold, and mechanical in relations with others;
- being fearful of disapproval from others for advocating one's views and of exhibiting the affect associated with those views;
- condemning the avowed needs, interests, and negative emotions of other people.<sup>23</sup>

Are such dispositions and habits elements of political identities? Yes. Are these traits and narratives common among the citizens of large-scale democracies? Yes. Are these traits conducive to a reasoned search with others for justice? No. Do these traits in parents make it difficult for children to acquire the precursors of a democratic personality? Yes.

Guntrip observes, "Politics, as much as other spheres of life, is a happy hunting-ground for the 'acting out' of immature relationship-patterns, especially in disturbed times."<sup>24</sup> Erich Fromm in *Escape from Freedom* offers an analysis of modern persons free of the religious certainties of the medieval period and whose quest for authoritative leaders with certain knowledge of the dramatic design of

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23. *Id.* at 375-78.

24. *Id.* at 378.

society and of the fate of this world continues to be relevant in the United States.<sup>25</sup>

### III. IDENTITY FORMATION IN LATE ADOLESCENCE AND EARLY ADULTHOOD

I shall now consider some aspects of the development of the personal substrate on which education, including higher education, for citizenship in a democracy must build—the substrate of what has already been learned (or not learned, or mis-learned) in the course of development, a substrate that, for the most part, does not come about by way of education, a substrate that is nearly or altogether out of the awareness of the individual, or “unconscious.” Given the attributes of a democratic personality, what are some of the critical features of *psychological development* that promote or fail to promote the emergence of democratic traits in persons between the ages of fifteen and twenty-five, the phase of life when political identity emerges?

#### A. Identification, Identity, and Political Identity

‘Political identity’ and ‘political identification’ are usually employed in the transitive sense of ‘identity as,’ for example, identity as a Republican. But here I will use ‘identification,’ ‘identity,’ ‘identity fragment,’ ‘identity formation,’ and ‘political identity’ in a reflexive way, in the psychological sense of, ‘identification with,’ identification with the Republican Party. Identification, from a psychological point of view, is a largely unconscious “process whereby the subject [or person] assimilates [internalizes] an aspect, property or attribute of the other and is transformed, wholly or partially, after the [positive or negative] model the other provides. It is by means of a series of identifications [identity fragments] that the personality of an individual is constituted

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25. ERICH FROMM, *ESCAPE FROM FREEDOM* viii (1941). It is timely to recall the purpose of this text: to understand “the reasons for the totalitarian flight from freedom.” *Id.* His thesis is:

... that modern man, freed from the bonds of pre-individualistic society, which simultaneously gave him security and limited him, has not gained freedom in the positive sense of the realization of his individual self; that is, the expression of his intellectual, emotional and sensuous potentialities. Freedom, though it has brought him independence and rationality has made him isolated and, thereby, anxious and powerless. *Id.*

As such isolation is “unbearable,” he must either “escape from the burden of this freedom into new dependencies and submission,” or, “advance to the full realization of positive freedom which is based upon the uniqueness and individuality of man.” *Id.* The advent of democracy and good schooling does not evaporate this state of affairs.

and specified.”<sup>26</sup>

There are different modes of identification. I may identify myself with the other—‘I am like him’—or identify the other with myself—‘He is like me.’ From a psychological point of view, when both these modes of identity formation or identification are proceeding in a reciprocal and positive mode, whether in direct or indirect relations, a ‘we’ is constituted.<sup>27</sup> When these processes operate in a predominately negative mode, the psychology of ‘we,’ including reference group identities, is refused or dissolved.

It is the psychological glue of identification that bonds us or fails to bond us in every context of life. It unites us as citizens of the polities—local, state, and federal—to which we belong and which, in an authentic democracy, belong to us. Personal identity, of which political identity is one facet, also grounds our political differences. Political identities [for the sake of simplicity, identifications and traits that shape how a citizen decides what justice in society is and how it is to be secured] are not all alike or even akin. The marks of one’s political identity and of the unconscious as well as conscious determinants of that identity are revealed in such activities as joining or not joining a political party; working on behalf of a party and its candidates; communicating one’s views on policies, legislation, regulations; and voting. Tolerance for conflict, and excellence in the arts of advocacy, negotiation, and compromise reveal the limits as well as the richness and variability of the political identity of individuals. Reasoned debate and sound arguments are not the only factors that shape the political destinies of persons and states.

The collisions of incommensurable political identities in the recent elections in the United States have lead to playful and not so playful rumblings of radical political disunity. At least one commentator has wondered whether such differences can be contained by a common identification with the constitutional order.<sup>28</sup>

### B. *Psychological Considerations*

The identity fragments that underwrite the traits of a democratic personality are more likely to emerge in young adulthood if the child has been born into a family that inspires and sustains trustworthiness, respects the individual dignity of household members, and supports the

26. J. LAPLANCH AND J-B PONTALIS, *THE LANGUAGE OF PSYCHO-ANALYSIS* 205 (Donald Nicholson-Smith trans., 1973).

27. *Id.* at 205-06.

28. See Bob Herbert, *Our Battered Constitution*, N. Y. TIMES, Feb. 2, 2005, at A19.

initiative and industry of the child, so that she learns to live comfortably and responsibly with herself and others.<sup>29</sup> It is in the family that the child learns the rudiments of competent membership in a social institution and the importance of sacrifice, memory, and vision in human relationships.<sup>30</sup> If these qualities and acquisitions are wanting it will likely make it more difficult, even with good schooling, for the adolescent and young adult to develop a well-moderated, balanced, and constructive sense of informed participation in civic life. If a capacity for trust, respect for others, initiative, and industry are not acquired in childhood, the adolescent or young adult may not participate in civic life, or her participation may be motivated by unconscious efforts to resolve the residual problems of an unhappy childhood.

Adolescence is that time of organismic maturation when reproduction becomes possible, new energies seek expression, and the development of the brain permits the emergence of new and complex conceptual operations.<sup>31</sup> The adolescent and the young adult face the problem of maintaining continuity, psychologically, with the roles, skills, and relationships established in childhood. New and changing practices with respect to sexuality and to relations with peers, parents, teachers, religious traditions, custom and law, the economy and the polity, become the order of the night as well as the day. Young people, not yet fixed in, and by, roles and responsibilities are comparatively free to examine society in the light of their knowledge and to respond politically. The processes of identity formation, including the formation of a political identity with others of the same generation, are propelled by the (sometimes unhappy) conjunction of changing biology and appearance, identity fragments born of what one has made of previous life experiences, and fears as well as hopes regarding the future. In America, trying to make a life for oneself in relation to others between fourteen and twenty-five is a formidable challenge<sup>32</sup>—even if one has a

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29. See generally ERIK ERIKSON, *IDENTITY AND THE LIFE CYCLE*, ch. 2 (1959) (Monograph 1 of Psychological Issues).

30. THOMAS F. GREEN, *THE FORMATION OF CONSCIENCE IN AN AGE OF TECHNOLOGY: THE JOHN DEWEY LECTURE 1984* (1984).

31. See, e.g., Jay Giedd et al., *Brain Development During Childhood and Adolescence: A Longitudinal MRI Study*, 2:10 *NATURE NEUROSCIENCE* 861, 861-63; see also Nitin Gotay et al., *Dynamic Mapping of Human Cortical Development During Childhood Through Early Adulthood*, 101:21 *PROC. NAT'L ACAD. SCI.* 8174, 8174-79 (These and other studies show that while the brains of human beings develop in a non-linear and heterogeneous way, the sequence of maturation follows the observed, behavioral, functional sequence, with the regions that underwrite judgment being the last to mature.).

32. ERIKSON, *supra* note 29, at 92-94; see Richard G. Braungart & Margaret M. Braungart, *Political Generations*, 4 *RES. POL. SOC.* 281, 281-319 (1989) (for a pertinent

sound family of origin and good schooling. Not all succeed at the tasks of identity formation, and most of those who do succeed only to an extent.

In a democracy that extends the right of citizenship to nearly all adults, the activities of citizens often reveal the psychology of identifications and counter-identifications powered by negative emotions that speak the language of trauma, denial, displacement, projection, and other devices. Such devices insulate a person from, as well as express the unfinished business of, previous experiences. A recent, two-year study by the James L. Knight Foundation of an estimated 100,000 high school students at 544 public and private schools revealed that only fifty-one percent of high school students think newspapers should be allowed to publish freely, without government approval of their stories. Forty-four percent said that the free speech guarantees of the First Amendment go 'too far.'<sup>33</sup> Surveys of students that reveal deficiencies in readiness for citizenship are not necessarily a reflection of poor schooling for democracy.

### *C. The Political Economy and Personality Conflicts in Young Adults*

For most young people in America, whether privileged and confident, or poor and fearful, or angry, the transition to adulthood in post-industrial, capitalistic economies is protracted. Good jobs require education, and time in those jobs (and in life in general) is needed to allow one to discover whether marriage and reproduction are desirable and economically feasible. Young people establishing their adult lives may take little interest in the common good. Whether they are seeking private wealth or simply grasping for the necessities of life their exercise of individual rights is not regularly connected with public goods and community obligations.

Among those who are not privileged, the out-sourcing of low-wage jobs to the third world means fewer opportunities for secure employment in the developed world for those with little formal education. So these young adults, with their entitlements decreasing, are less able to support families and to set down roots, making it less likely that they will develop a vested and positive interest in the polity. Indeed, these circumstances may well engender negative

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review of political identifications within a generation).

33. Gail Koch, *Students Fail to Understand First Amendment, Survey Shows*, THE STAR PRESS, Feb. 1, 2005, available at <http://www.thestarpress.com> (this survey also shows that classroom instruction about rights influences the views of students) (last visited Dec. 30, 2005).

counter-identifications in response to the presence and exercise of political authority. Partisan politics and elections are often not salient for young people, especially those in the working-class and among the poor.<sup>34</sup> Many are busy with other projects: including drugs, TV, violence, and the management of depression—possibly in prison.

These findings again remind us that the integration of identity fragments in late adolescence and young adulthood do not emerge apart from adaptation to the realities of the market. In this regard, we should attend to what Kevin Phillips calls “a simple premise: *Democracy and market economics are not the same thing . . .* capitalism and democracy, while easily overlapping and allied, must be kept separate. They cannot be confused.”<sup>35</sup> He reminds us that market triumphalism now abounds:

[The] choruses swelled during the 1990s like an economic version of Handel's *Messiah*. The market and the people are one and the same. *Hallelujah*. Buying, selling, and consuming is true democracy. *Hallelujah*. Popular will is expressed through the law of supply and demand. *Hallelujah*. Populism is market economics. *Hallelujah*. Opposition to the verdict of the market is elitism. *Hallelujah*. The Nations and Peoples shall rejoice. *Hallelujah, Hallelujah*.<sup>36</sup>

Cynics suggest that we now have the best elected representatives money can buy. Corporate persons are the new citizens of the new regimes. Phillips replies: “Markets . . . must be reestablished as adjuncts, not criteria, of democracy and representative government.”<sup>37</sup>

The psychological point is that some traits of personality that can be re-enforced by and lead to success in modern relations of exchange contrast or conflict with those traits ascribed to “democratic personalities:”

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34. Constance A. Flanagan & Lonnie R. Sherrod, *Youth Political Development: An Introduction*, 54 J. SOC. ISSUES 447, 447-51 (1981). For an excellent review of citizenship and citizenship education in the United States prior to 9/11 together with a table of surveys of American adolescents regarding personal conduct and beliefs about American government in the 1990s, see Richard G. Braungart & Margaret M. Braungart, *Citizenship and Citizenship Education in the United States in the 1990s*, in CITIZENSHIP AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN A CHANGING WORLD (Orit Ichilov ed., 1998) (chapter six, Citizenship and Citizenship Education in the United States in the 1990s). It would be useful to compare post 9/11 data of a similar sort with these findings.

35. KEVIN PHILLIPS, WEALTH AND DEMOCRACY: A POLITICAL HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN RICH 417-19 (2002).

36. *Id.* at 419.

37. *Id.* at 420.

- identification with a skill-set deployed in a self-interested way in changing and hierarchically organized corporate settings;
- readiness to adapt to competitive and ever-changing market conditions;
- self-esteem defined by individual capital accumulation and the arts of consumption;
- a propensity to reject law and public regulation when regulation could adversely affect profits or creative entrepreneurial ventures;
- acceptance of great inequalities of income, education, and health among members of the polity;
- a disposition to view the health and education of others with indifference, or, at a conscious level, as “the cost of doing business;” and,
- a habit of viewing the natural environment as a set of resources awaiting exploitation.

Young adults can find it difficult, without knowing why, to integrate the identity fragments that equip them for democratic citizenship *and* for participation in some relations of exchange.<sup>38</sup> The problem of integrating these two sets of fragments, insofar as they are out of awareness, also haunts older citizens, including those who walk the halls of government intent upon discerning and re-discerning “the best handshake” between the goals and practices of good government concerned with justice and the shape of a sound economy that is favorable *in its way* to the lives of those who participate in it.

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38. The personality tensions and conflicts aroused by preparation for democracy and for participation in liberal market economies provide only one example of how the demands of civilization, mediated by domestic households, educational systems, religious traditions, and political economies inevitably create personality conflicts for human beings—as Freud frequently reminded us. He also says:

The fateful question for the human species seems to me to be whether and to what extent their cultural development will succeed in mastering the disturbance of their communal life by the human instinct of aggression and self-destruction. . . . Men have gained control over the forces of nature to such an extent that with their help they would have no difficulty in exterminating one another to the last man. They know this, and hence comes a large part of their current unrest, their unhappiness and their mood of anxiety.

SIGMUND FREUD, CIVILIZATION AND ITS DISCONTENTS 92 (James Strachey trans., 1962).

CONCLUSION

If we contrast the ideal traits of a democratic personality with actual personalities and political identities, it is not apparent at the moment that democracy and the rule of law in American have a bright future. It is not even clear that sufficient numbers of citizens “possess and exhibit some of these traits, sometimes, so that they tend to predominate in the affairs of society, and in the deliberations of those who hold public office.” But that has never been true in American history, at least for very long.<sup>39</sup>

Still, we should not cease our efforts to make it true. While traits of personality are formative of our actions, Democracy, like other forms of government, is manifestly intentional. Constitutional Democracy is authored and re-authored by those “carriers of the creed” who believe it to be the form of government, however problematic and fragile, which is in the long run and in most circumstances, best for the lives of those subject to it.

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39. Sullivan & Transue, *supra* note 4, at 628-31.