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Capitalism Versus Democracy: Irreconcilable in Principle

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### Introduction to the Current Debate

**In the wake of the 2008 mortgage credit collapse and resulting Great Recession, the Depression Era conflict of “Wall Street vs. Main Street” has again become a commonplace topic of heated debate in American politics.** The Federal Government bailed out a handful of big banks deemed “too big to fail,” at the expense of public mortgage relief or economic stimulus sufficient to deal adequately with massive job layoffs in Main Street triggered by reckless Wall Street speculation. Though banks subsequently got fined, not one corporate executive has gone to jail. Moreover, **there followed a 2012 “Citizens United” decision by the Supreme Court that brazenly privileged corporate speech over that of ordinary citizens.** Since then, the focus of public discussion has shifted away from the U. S. imperialism manifest in Bush Era oil wars abroad. The **question is now** whether the United State has at home become **an oligarchy rather than a democracy, and if so what can be done about it.**

In a closely argued and detailed 2014 inquiry, Georgia State University College of Law Professor **Timothy K. Kuhner gives one answer now widely shared by progressives: overturn the Citizens United decision by Constitutional amendment.** His work is entitled *Capitalism V. Democracy/Money in Politics and the Free Market Constitution*, published by Stanford Law Books. Kuhner traces the overwhelming political clout of large banks and multinational corporations to the **Supreme Court’s systematic overturn of decades of prior decisions designed to prevent undue influence of Big Money on political campaigns.** In *Citizens United*, the **Court’s conservative majority ruled decisively that any law limiting a corporation’s campaign contributions limits its right to political advocacy, in violation of Constitutional guarantees for freedom of speech.** The Court thereby **enabled the unfettered rapid rise of super-PACs and money-drenched TV political campaigns,** funded by powerful corporate interests.

In effect, argues Kuhner, the Court’s conservative majority **redefined free speech as the right to spend unlimited money in political debate.** As huge enterprises

capable of accumulating massive wealth, modern corporations can readily outspend all but the richest citizens engaged in political activity. So the Court's decision has **made free speech into a mere market commodity, with political influence for sale to the highest bidder.** As "artificial persons" under the law, large wealthy **corporations are now made equivalent to rich people freed to overwhelm the voices of individuals in competition for political influence,** through massive campaign donations or by purchase of expensive TV advertising unaffordable by the average citizen. **In consequence, elected officials fear to oppose well-funded special interest groups** and find themselves constantly competing for corporate electoral funding, **rather than listening to all their constituents.** In popular parlance, **the Court has decreed that "speech is money,"** thereby **enabling an economic plutocracy to overwhelm our political democracy.**

**Kuhner** cites data showing that **most Americans support free market capitalism, but strongly oppose reducing their democracy to a mere market commodity** for sale to the highest bidder. He goes on to argue that the *Citizens United* decision **has actually undermined capitalism itself. Giving current plutocrats the security of governmental privilege in a political marketplace undermines the basic capitalist principle of a free market open to all entrants.** Up against a favored plutocracy, new competitors with smaller resources likely find their novel ideas drowned out by big money. So in *Citizens United*, **Kuhner asserts, the Court's flawed decision not only subverts our democracy, it shackles American capitalism in the increasingly competitive global market** for new products and innovative techniques of production.

Ultimately, **Kuhner believes,** there is **only one way to undo the damage** done to democratic rule and capitalist innovation by the Supreme Court's decision. He hopes to **rally popular support for Congressional action to overturn the Citizen United decision, by amending the Constitution.** Nullifying fears that his cause is anticapitalist, he entitles **his final chapter "Capitalism and Democracy Reconciled."** Anyone who finds such reconciliation plausible will find most worthwhile **Kuhner's meticulous account of serious flaws in the train of conservative Court decisions leading up to Citizens United, radically overturning several years of established caselaw.**

However, **Kuhner's analysis of the ostensibly well-meaning but seriously wrong-headed motivation that lies behind the conservative majority's reasoning** seems less convincing than his dissection of their legal argumentation. **He charitably traces the conservative majority's view to their remaining mired in repudiation of Russian communist collectivist ideology during the Cold War.** On **Kuhner's overly gentle view,** the conservative justices see themselves patriotically defending democracy **by embracing 1950s "public choice theory."** That view defined truly democratic procedure as merely the accurate aggregation of the public's fixed individual preferences. Opposed to communist collectivism was thus a narrow theory of radical individualism, in the name of freedom.

**On that theory, there was no such thing as a current “common good” to be worked out through political debate, prior to framing issues for voting. All that mattered was to ensure that everybody had the power to vote for the prevailing fixed alternatives** presented in partisan party elections or on ballot issues, becoming consumers in democracy’s “marketplace of ideas.” **Freedom** was thus **reduced to respect for the power of numbers under majority rule**, rendering democracy subject to quantitative study, “scientifically.” **Pre-existing inequalities of wealth and power** were deemed **variables irrelevant to scientific study**. For the conservative justices adopting this theory, Kuhner observes, **electoral laws limiting the “lone voice” of a wealthy corporation in the democratic “marketplace of ideas”** were equivalent to **violating the free speech** of an individual voter. **Such laws they found unconstitutional**, in need of being **overturned by their 5 to 4 majority decision in *Citizens United***.

Oddly, Kuhner fails to consider **a more obvious explanation for the conservative majority’s decision in *Citizens United***. They simply define the “**national interest**” and even “**national security**” in terms of the **success of America’s multinational corporations in an increasingly competitive global marketplace** that includes even huge “sovereign wealth funds” of foreign governments. **Maintaining our comfortable material standard of life** depends upon corporate success in the global competition for diminishing natural resources and market outlets abroad. Next to the needs of “Big Business,” individual needs are entirely secondary. **In modern “geopolitics,” what counts is continued American dominance of global markets. Capitalism trumps democracy.**

On such a view, it would be **essential that America’s major corporations have the power to frame public issues for the mass media and to control the outcome of national elections by spending more** than the people, who are often out of touch with realities of global commerce. Corporate dominance at home and abroad is **essential to preserve “The American Way of Life,” which some hold to be “non-negotiable.”** Besides, more and more issues related to global treaties and trade disputes are coming before the Supreme Court. So the multinational corporations are the players who really count **in shaping national policy**, not poorly informed average citizens. **Corporate welfare outweighs workplace labor issues** or fuzzy moral causes like **human rights** or **environmental protection**. In short, capitalism is more important than equality and democracy or climate change. **Holding such a view**, the conservative justices might well find it **natural to privilege the speech of huge corporations** in deciding cases such as *Citizens United*.

**Unfortunately, the electorally entrenched polarization** and resultant **current dysfunction of Congress**, encouraged by targeted donations from wealthy donors, give **no realistic hope that Kuhner’s project of overturning *Citizens United* by amending the Constitution could succeed** in the foreseeable future. Indeed, **reconciling capitalism and democracy is belied by the imperialism dominant**

**throughout American history**, both at home and abroad. But current unfeasibility and the weight of history are not really the crux of our problem.

At the most **basic level of institutional principle, democracy and capitalism** are fundamentally opposed. The **irreconcilable opposition is between systems run on freedom and systems run on power. Restoration of our sabotaged democratic process** therefore requires **radical political and economic change, far beyond** the scope of **any Constitutional amendment**, helpful as it may be.

### **Part One: The Antagonists Redefined**

However democracy and capitalism may have been defined in theory or practice historically, **our primary concern** must be **how these two intertwined systems function as institutions in the political life of today's America**. Pragmatically, an institution is an enduring set of readily identifiable social habits or "practices" for solving recurrent problems that an organized group encounters in dealing with some specific type of situations important to their continuing survival, prosperity, or flourishing.

**The institutional structure of American democracy is familiar** to most citizens from required courses of "civics" in school, or from exposure to mass media reports or analyses. This civic information centers upon the structure of governance set forth in our federal and state constitutions, as elaborated by subsequent laws, amendments, and judicial decisions affecting the nation's course through history. Because it is so familiar, the **ensuing sketch of it can be brief**.

#### **A. Democracy**

**The United States is nominally a representative constitutional democracy**, in which each citizen has the right to vote in regular elections for state and national offices, or upon other items on the ballot. **Those elected to represent "the public interest"** are vested by the people's **electoral authority to legislate and execute the laws**, subject to Constitutional interpretation by a **judiciary ultimately responsible to the people's representatives**.

Historically, the most fundamental issues in our democracy have centered upon the proper constitutional roles of the federal executive, legislative, and judicial branches in relation to each other, and also upon the federal government's relation to state governments (as in the issue of "states rights," initially resolved by restoration of "the Union" in the Civil War). But derivative issues quickly arose. **The growing nation quickly found it "necessary and proper" to legislate into existence subsidiary "departments"** of the Executive Branch, such as a State Department to deal with other nations, some department to ensure a standing army for national defense, and a **Treasury Department** to pay the bills.

Of particular importance was a **need to reassure bankers overseas that the US was creditworthy, by provision of taxation sufficient to pay down the “national debt”** incurred by the colonists to finance their Revolutionary War with Great Britain. Though Virginia had paid its war debt, other states had not, so the issue of a national bank to supply a common currency and tax money to the Treasury Department was contentious. Moving the National Capitol from Philadelphia into a “District of Columbia” closer to Virginia provided an uneasy resolution, leading to **the first of two “National Banks,” modeled upon the proto-capitalist Bank of England so familiar to the colonists.** There ensued a subsequent period of reliance upon unstable private banks, and **finally the present partially decentralized system of Federal Reserve regional banks.**

What this **disjointed federal banking history reveals** is continuing **fear** by some States of a possible return to **tyranny, by a government made too powerful from the wealth afforded by national taxation.** Fear of aristocratic royal rule became **fear of an entrenched governmental bureaucracy.** Consideration of all such questions can be important for the equitable and just functioning of our democracy. But they pale in relation to **the more significant issue that underlies** so many contentious debates in our nation’s history. **What is the proper relation between our political democracy and our economic capitalism?**

**Largely unquestioned** by the States Righters afraid of Federal tyranny and by private individuals resentful of taxation was the **implicit assumption that English banking,** based upon huge **accumulations of private capital disbursed in loans at profitable interest rates, was the appropriate financial model for American economic growth and future “prosperity.”** Found initially in chartered colonial business ventures aimed at profitable return to bankers, then adopted by the newly installed national government of The United States of America, nascent Anglo-continental capitalism was tacitly **accepted and installed as the pattern for US commerce and trade as the US government first began to develop its institutional structure.** Capitalism and democracy were baked into the American mix together. Whether the mix would be compatible was the fateful question for our polity.

## B. Capitalism

### 1. The Traditional Market Model

Regrettably unclear to many citizens is the institutional structure of modern capitalism, though implicit in national histories and made more explicit in elective studies of economics and business. It is addressed sporadically also by mass media reports and analyses. **Reality demands that our definition of contemporary capitalism view it as the economic dimension of continuing American imperialism.** This less familiar approach will require a more lengthy discussion. Because **the present critique** focuses upon the political role of capitalism in our

national life, it may be appropriate to describe it as **an exercise in normative political economy, from an institutional standpoint.**

**The original definition of capitalism** is in terms of a “free market,” in which **sellers compete for buyers** of their products. **The sellers have accumulated sufficient surplus wealth, or “capital,” to endow** factories, mines, or other “private enterprises” that supply products in demand. These “capitalists” **succeed or fail to profit** from sales **by adjustment of their supplies and pricing to buyer demands.** Sellers aim for sales sufficient to cover costs of labor and materials, then to set aside enough profits for maintenance and improvement of their means of production. **Workers sell their labor to employers** who have acquired sufficient capital to employ them. **Workers return to the market to purchase** food, shelter, clothing and other **necessities of life**, while saving also for enjoyment and retirement.

**Since everyone goes to market, capitalism should achieve “social goods” of economic production and consumption required for the nation’s survival.** With aggregate good fortune, everyone shares to various extents in the “prosperity” of **aggregate social wealth** created by exchanges of labor for goods and services in the marketplace. **The underlying assumption is that a capitalist market let alone (“laissez faire”) from damaging political interference (over-taxation, over-regulation, competing public enterprise) by the nation state will efficiently achieve “equilibrium” of supply and demand, as though** rationally adjusted by an “invisible hand” mechanism of godlike power, for social good.

## 2. Today’s Capitalist Institutions

This traditional model is belied by **today’s economic reality**, in which there is a **two-tiered capitalist market, in which “big business” dominates “small business,”** with corner-store “mom-and-pop” retail business and street vendors at the very bottom. **The top tier today consists of the nation’s major corporations** (euphemistically, “the Fortune 500”), **many of them multinational competitors in the increasingly integrated global marketplace.** Entrance to the top-tier corporate **market is hardly free, requiring huge capital accumulations for entry.** Its most important **buyers are often government agencies**, such as the Department of Defense, **or state governments** that buy in bulk. Moreover, **consumer “demand” is increasingly created rather than “met” by “Big Business,”** which uses the **slick “good life” fantasies of large advertising agencies** to stimulate constant demand for new products **far beyond the level of necessities.** The “Small Business” market is **hardly free at all, mainly servicing the top-tier corporations** and providing franchise outlets for selling big-business products and services to individual consumers or local governments. And the **periodic collapses of capitalism into recession or depression are hardly the “social goods” expected** from the “invisible hand” aggregating market behaviors.

### 3. Capitalism's Imperialist Setting

More importantly, **any functional definition of capitalism today must take account of its global origins and the currently ongoing "globalization"** deliberately undertaken **by huge multinational corporations in the 1970s**, after the postwar "baby boom" waned and there was need for new markets and cheaper labor abroad. **A quick review of world history indicates that capitalism is essentially the economic form that imperialist activity took in the modern period.**

**Global history is largely the story of the rise, conflict, and fall of successive empires, or "Great Powers." American capitalism arose within the modern period of colonial conquest and conflict between large empires**, competing for trade routes and new territories worldwide. **Empires of Great Britain, Spain, and France contested the "New World" of the Americas**, in pursuit of golden wealth, natural resources, and slave labor for newly acquired plantation lands or mining operations. It was **the "Golden Age" of early modern imperialism and the forebears of modern capitalism** (royally chartered North American colonies, or other colonial administrations, such as The British East India Company).

Nor did imperial dreams diminish **after the Revolutionary War and birth of a new "nation" in North America**. Following the War of 1812 with Britain, firm assertion of **the "Monroe Doctrine" in 1823 made clear that the United States was a nascent imperial power in international affairs**. There were already those willing to view America as an empire rather than an independent republic, a mere nation state amongst others. What can be seen **both at home and abroad is the bumping together, conflict, and uneasy mutual adjustment of two somewhat separate yet connected systems, emerging at the same time internationally-- political democracy and economic capitalism.**

The following brief sketch will recall **how closely American capitalism and its national imperialism were intertwined** in their subsequent historical development, **within the emerging world order of politically competitive "nation states."** We should note at the outset that **people often mistakenly think of capitalism and democracy as separate systems**, one economic and one political. **But the struggle of nation states to regulate and control capitalist finance** (by national banks, imposition of common currency other than gold, taxation of profits, subjection to political treaties, etc.) **reminds us of the truth. Much of modern history arises from precisely the prior imperial "laws of the sea"** (against piracy, impression of foreign sailors, etc.) **and informal trade agreements** (respecting colonial priorities of different empires) **colliding with the competing internal priorities of emergent political states asserting nationhood within the realms of existing empires.**

**Freed of British rule and military interference, the fledgling United States continued the imperial conquest and subjugation of Native Americans,** already decimated by diseases spread by incursions of other nations. Spreading westward, the new nation **also emerged victorious in territorial conflicts with France and Spain.** Testing the unity of the growing nation was an **emerging conflict between the industrial and mercantile capitalism of the North and the slaveholding plantation capitalism of the South.** The North's industrial might and moral fervor prevailed in the ensuing Civil War. But its **reassertion of unity commenced a long political power struggle between North and South,** from the Reconstruction Era to the Civil Rights struggles of this day.

**However, capitalist expansion and a national mythology of "Manifest Destiny" moderated the uneasy postwar politics of "Reconstruction."** Through commerce, railroads, telegraph, and annexation of newly settled lands bounded only by the Pacific Ocean, **North and South gradually became interconnected parts of a single national market, based upon exchange of agricultural and manufactured products.** "Wall Street" in **New York City became,** in effect, the **"financial capitol" of American capitalism,** with the rise of powerful private national banks meeting capital needs of modern steel, coal, railroad, manufacturing, and international trading corporations. **Secular "progress" and economic "growth" began to replace "Manifest Destiny" as a national ideology.**

**When emerging agricultural and manufacturing surpluses demanded new markets, US annexation of Hawaii and territorial acquisition of "protectorates" in the Spanish American War declared American capitalist imperialism anew. Ousting Spain from the Western Hemisphere,** America acquired ruling interests in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and then Central America, **by "sending in the marines."** Destroying the Spanish fleet at Manila quickly expanded by brutal warfare to US domination of the Philippine Islands. The **era of worldwide US naval "gunboat diplomacy" was at hand, solidified by American entry into World War I** and subsequent **American partnership with Great Britain in exploitation of Mideast "oil states," formed following the Allied defeat of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires.**

**Twentieth century America saw American capitalists frightened by the specter of "Russian Bolshevism," leading to bitter and sometimes violent conflict at home with the growing workers union movement.** In response to massive unemployment after the **1929 speculative stock market crash and ensuing Great Depression of the 1930s,** President Roosevelt introduced **popular "New Deal" programs of government relief, public works, rural development, and Social Security** for retirees. **Capitalists and their media allies branded these programs "socialist" and sought to force FDR out.** They tried to enlist disgruntled veterans in a political march on Washington DC, **in a failed coup attempt** subsequently exposed and documented by hearings in the US House of Representatives.



**The Depression itself was ended with** the surging armament production required by **US entry into World War II**, arguably **a struggle between empires**. **German imperial ambitions** were clearly evident in the “The Reich’s” partial annexations and complete occupations of Central European nations. Germany allied with Japan and Italy, forming a **global “Axis” of fascism**. **Japan was a rising industrial empire**, expanding into Korea, China, and Burma, **threatening American, French, and British investments and trade routes in Southeast Asia**. Lacking oil of its own, Japan attacked our fleet at Pearl Harbor when the US embargoed oil for Japan. When the German Reich broke a treaty and invaded Russia, the USSR allied with the US and Great Britain to defeat the Axis powers in WW II.

Rationing during WW II to secure needed military supplies of food, oil, and materiel led to **pent-up consumer demand in America, ensuring a postwar economic “boom.”** A wartime truce between capital and labor at home led to **a tacit postwar “social contract,”** with newly powerful national labor **unions exchanging labor peace for rising wages and new employee “benefits”** (company pension plans, health insurance). During postwar “recovery” at home and “foreign aid “ abroad, the US under the “Marshall Plan” sought to rebuild and stabilize Europe to prevent the spread of Communism. The **nominally socialist but economically expansionist USSR** under Stalin was **essentially a modern totalitarian economic empire**, in search of Mediterranean ports and Central European farmland, resources, and factories. The advent of atomic weapons forced **America and its allies to confront the USSR in a “Cold War”** rather than risk nuclear exchange in open warfare.

Essentially, **the two “superpowers” and their respective Cold War allies** found themselves consolidating into **two new imperial alliances, East versus West, competing for dominance of global resources and markets**. Though historians had begun framing political history in terms of “nation states” and “international relations,” **contemporary “geopolitics” is still about the rise and fall of “great powers.”** The story remains one of **imperialistic state groupings, now locked in competition for the slowly dwindling supply of resources necessary for the industrial and technological means to economic growth deemed necessary for “progress” in “modernization.”**

During four decades of Cold War military mobilization under the banner of opposing **“monolithic global Communism,” the US became a “garrison state” fighting proxy wars against the USSR**, most notably in **Korea and Viet Nam**, while sidestepping an open Third World War. America began **sponsoring political subversion and military intervention against any foreign socialist government perceived as a “Communist threat” to capitalism**, in nations ranging from Greece to the Philippines to Iran to Indonesia to Cuba. Both in this hemisphere and abroad the **US military services instituted close liaison with the military branches of foreign governments in developing countries**, including the selection of young officers for training in the US. The aim was **to have ready options for local military takeover** of any government viewed as becoming politically unfavorable to US economic investments in that nation. In this way, **American imperialism**

**became covert, ever more tending toward fascism at home and intervention for dominance abroad.**

Indispensable to US control, interventions and overthrows of foreign governments is **the Central Intelligence Agency**. The CIA rapidly exceeded its intelligence-gathering charter and began specializing in “covert operations,” such as the disastrous Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba. To access needed aircraft ships and weapons for its operations, the CIA has used the cover of “National Security” to **embed special units anonymously in all branches of the US armed services**. Today it **uses private corporations, mass media connections, and specially commissioned and secretly funded (“black budget”) governmental agencies dedicated to promotion of “developmental aid,” “promotion of democracy,” and the like, in furtherance of its self-defined purposes.**

Briefing the President on resistance to American corporate “development” schemes, land-grabs, or pollution supported by governments the US props up abroad, **the CIA has begun to assume the power of defining “US interests” abroad, at the expense of the Executive Branch and State Department**. Highly secretive, elitist, and unresponsive to all but **nominal Congressional control**, the CIA and its allied agencies have become **the unofficial “army of capitalism”—an unelected fourth branch of government** subservient to the interests of dominant American corporations and financial institutions, **unaccountable to the democratic process.**

More recently, recklessly hasty **Congressional adoption of the Patriot Act**, introduced immediately **after the “9/11” demolition of the NYC Twin towers** in 2001, **has secretly redefined and constrained “due process,”** at grave expense to our Civil Liberties. Of even **graver threat is the ongoing “death of the nation state,”** with the **rise of a worldwide “corporatocracy” of banking and financial institutions** (the World Trade Organization, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, G-20 or G-7, and the like). Supported by political servants of multinational corporations, legislative bodies of the US and other national have used **passage of international trade treaties** (such as the currently controversial TPP, or Trans-Pacific Partnership) to **cede legal authority to global capitalist tribunals of these multinational institutions.**

Under such treaties, multinational corporations **can now sue nations in these global tribunals, for merely potential damage posed to corporate earnings abroad by laws nations may pass to prevent unfair labor practices, damage to local industries, or environmental pollution by foreign extractive industries.** Thus emerging is a web of international capitalist tribunals that **fatally undermines democratic governance, not only in the US, but also in democratic nations throughout the world,** perhaps even in the United Nations. Unelected and increasingly not accountable to their nations of origin, these multinational financial bodies are **quietly replacing national political sovereignty with global rule by an economic elite, subservient to the self-defined needs of capitalism alone.** In an age requiring global cooperation to offset the grave environmental threats of

**pollution and global warming from heedless industrial “growth,”** profit-oriented capitalist control of international politics could prove **dangerous to decent human survival upon this planet.**

Perhaps enough has been said to render plausible **two basic ideas.** First, **US capitalism today is inextricably linked** in history **with the politically imperialist expansion of an American economic empire, now globally dominant.** Secondly, **American capitalism today is in fact an economic oligarchy, politically at odds with democratic governance, both at home and abroad.** What remains to be shown is that this conflict is **not merely accidental and remediable, but fundamental, a matter of irreconcilable institutional principles.**

### **Part Two: The Irreconcilability of Capitalism and Democracy**

We have seen that capitalist wealth has been deployed to control or bypass political democracy, both at home and abroad. But **how is economic capitalism formally comparable to political democracy,** to establish their irreconcilability? The answer is that **in both systems some persons rule or govern others.** Furthermore, **freedom and power are the two fundamental and irreconcilable modes of rule or governance.**

A thoroughgoing historical analysis in support of this latter basic premise is way beyond the scope of this paper. But there is at hand a plausible illustration of its truth, **evident in the institutional opposition** of democracy and capitalism. We can show by a systematic fourfold analysis that **democracy is based upon freedom, whereas capitalism is based upon power.** The analysis will demonstrate **how** the two systems are **in principle irreconcilable.**

To show **why** the modes of **freedom and power are irreconcilable** would require a full comparative analysis of both, again far beyond the scope of this inquiry. Suffice it to say here that any attempt to reduce freedom to exercise of powers, or avoidance of being overpowered, rests upon a failure to acknowledge how **reasons for action differ fundamentally from motivations** by one’s animal nature or social conditioning. Through exercise of the natural human capacity for rationality, **reasoning can bypass rule by “motives” of animal instinct, desire, emotion, or unreflective habit,** whether sociocultural or personal. The **connections of meaning** established by reasoning **open up a whole new evolutionary realm of creative problem-solving,** stabilized, developed, and transmitted by shared use of language. The ensuing argument rests upon this basic premise.

**The analytic schema employed** below may resemble **Aristotle’s analysis of the four causes** by which something comes into being, given wider basis in the 20<sup>th</sup> century by University of Chicago scholar **Richard McKeon’s fourfold matrices** for comparison of philosophical systems, and exemplified in his student **Kenneth A. Telford’s analysis of Aristotle’s *Poetics*** (1961), and subsequently other works

(Aristotle's *organon*, or logic, and *Nichomachean Ethics*). I do not claim to follow schemata of any of these philosophers accurately here, but I must acknowledge their inspiration for anything that may be found correct, fitting, useful, or sound in establishing the truth of the hypothesis outlined below. Any failures in these respects are of course my own.

According to my understanding, Aristotle said that whatever comes into being has a **final cause** or end, like an aim or, better, a completion, a **formal cause** organizing its parts into a functional whole, an **efficient cause** that initiates or maintains the process, and a **material cause** that tells of what the constitutive parts are made. **Adapting this order to institutional analysis by modes of freedom versus power** yields the following rough schema. We shall **compare democracy and freedom with regard to** their respective **institutional rule** in terms of: **aims** of rule or governance, **organization** of ruling and ruled persons in governing and being governed, regular **procedures** effectuating governance, and activity characteristic of **constituents**, or persons within the system of governance.

Preceding more detailed explanation, **a rough comparison and contrast between the two forms of institutional rule** goes as follows. **Democracy runs on freedom**, whereas **capitalism runs on power**. Democracy aims at a **common good** for all, but capitalism aims at **privileged goods** for the wealthy. Democracy takes the form of **supremacy by the many**, but capitalism takes the form of **domination by the few**. Democracy proceeds, or is effectuated by, **participation**, capitalism by **coercion**. Characteristic of democracy is **equality** of constituent persons, but **inequality** in capitalism. For **each pair of opposites**, we may **in turn** find a **fourfold parallel of "causes"** or functional aspects (**aim, form, procedure, constituents**). Each of these in turn may be subjected to similar analysis.

These **recursive contrasts** are most easily displayed **in tabular form on the pages below**. Outlined thereby is the initial draft of a **tentative hypothesis**, inviting further elaboration or critical revision by anyone who finds it of possible use in furthering contemporary inquiry, discussion, or debate. **The author welcomes communication in this regard.**

## INSTITUTIONAL RULE

### DEMOCRACY (Modes of Freedom)

**A common good** for the people, joined together in a body politic as one nation:

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**a commonwealth of political, social, and material goods**, meeting needs of all the nation's people, secured jointly with fairness and justice, enabling their pursuit of varying visions of a good life;

**in a cooperative polis under a constitution** framed by the people or their delegates, that that specifies legislative, executive, and judicial functions, performed by officials at all levels national to local, elected by popular ballot, accountable to the people they represent;

establishing **an impartial rule of law** that structures joint resolution of differences, providing for regular or special forums of debate, negotiation, and compromise, with resolutions by public vote or secret ballot, ensuring citizens fair and unbiased resolutions of disagreements or grievances;

thereby promoting **civic comity**, by assurance of equal treatment under law, through protections afforded by constitutional guaranty of legal rights for all citizens regardless of economic class, in enjoyment of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

### Brief Commentary

In identifying the aims of democracy we do well to recall key terms in the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution: "more perfect union...justice...domestic tranquility...common defense...general welfare...blessings of liberty." Only four of the original United States (KY, MA, PA, VA) called and still call themselves a "commonwealth." But it seems appropriate to use the term (see *Wikipedia* online) to specify the "common weal" or "public well-being," akin to the Roman "*res publica*" or republic sought by the Founders in uniting their states. For their concerns in the Preamble go far beyond the material goods or economic "wealth of nations" deemed so essential in defining capitalism from Adam Smith's time until today. Also, as the "boom and bust" history of capitalism shows, "wealth" of the individual capitalist is really the primary concern of capitalists as a class, the supposed social blessings of capitalism to the "nations" merely a convenient rationalization of their drive for profit.

### CAPITALISM (Modes of Power)

**Private goods** for the wealthy class of business owners that run the nation's economy:

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**politically secure profitable return on invested wealth**, in private enterprises supplying goods or services in public demand, sold at the best prices jointly meeting in market equilibrium, the demands of people able to buy;

**in a competitive international market** system, with owners in each nation's market seeking economic advantage over each other and workers, jointly producing an aggregate wealth sufficient to stabilize a stratified class structure, using unequal distribution of incomes from profits to limit the people's political means;

establishing **an adversarial national economy** ruled by the rich, blocking competition by middle and lower classes for upward mobility, by use of wealth to install a political policy of *laissez faire* against regulatory oversight or redistribution of taxes, unaccountable to citizens left without legal recourse against inequities;

thereby giving wealthy owners the advantage in an economy riven by **class struggle**, with goods, services and political influence inequitably apportioned by income level, forcing the less wealthy to cede political control to the rich, leaving the financial fate of citizens subject to the success or failure of market management by the wealthy owner class.

## INSTITUTIONAL RULE

(continued)

### DEMOCRACY (Modes of Freedom)

### CAPITALISM (Modes of Power)

#### ORGANIZATION

**Supremacy of the people** in establishing political rule for themselves as a nation of citizens pursuing a good life in common:

**Domination by owners** of private enterprise, extending economic control of the nation's wealth to political control of the people:

with **legitimate authority for ruling** and obeying that rule, under a constitution by, of, and for the people, specifying the branches of government and their proper interrelations, subject to the citizens' specified right to ratify or amend it politically;

with **privileged rule** of the economy, constituted by legalized control of businesses singly and markets jointly, by purchase of political influence that suppresses regulation, lowers taxation, and limits government, opening up economic inequality amongst the citizenry;

within a system of **law and order** specifying rights and duties of citizens in giving law to themselves and obeying it, to be enforced by agencies national down to local as regulated by statute, serving and protecting the people;

within a system of **contractual hierarchy**, with owners on top distributing pay unequally among downwardly descending levels, by obtaining political legislation that legalizes owner conditions of worker employment in exchange for meeting owner work and profit goals, subjecting workers to legally enforceable business discipline;

prescribing **equal justice under law**, for fairness in all relations civic, contractual, or personal, with enforcement specified under rules of due process under law, giving to all citizens guaranty of fair treatment by agencies entrusted with enforcing the law;

ordaining **relations of subordination**, top down from owners' boards and shareholders through managerial levels to workers and customers, ruled by wages and prices set by owners, subject to breach of contract penalties or laws of buying and credit favorable to the wealthy;

thereby securing **the blessings of liberty** to the nation, extending protection against unjust rule to all endeavors public and private, by ensuring civic order and public safety, giving assurance against unfair restraint or unjust interference in the activities of citizens.

thereby ensuring **contingent rewards** for work, dependent upon company policy and profit, distributed to workers subject to owners' arbitrary assessment of workers' productivity relative to good times or bad in the economy, under economic constraint upon workers to obtain necessities to live or other goods to prosper.

#### **Brief Commentary**

Sections on this page illustrate a basic difference between democracy and capitalism. Democratic constitutional rights tend to be inalienable, as in the USA, whereas capitalist conditions of employment are dependent upon arbitrary policy of owners, subject to up-and-down profit contingencies of the very economy their own business decisions help to create. Of course in democracies the people may legislate exceptions to constitutional rights in wartime, subject to judicial review. And a high court may overturn even its own past rulings on laws, as in its *Citizens United* decision. Whether the severe abrogation of civil rights under the Patriot Act could withstand judicial challenge may well depend upon the political or ideological leanings of the Supreme Court justices that hear such a case.

## INSTITUTIONAL RULE

(continued)

### DEMOCRACY (Modes of Freedom)

### CAPITALISM (Modes of Power)

#### PROCEDURE

**Voluntary participation by citizens** in all public or private matters decided by polling of the people:

**Coercion by owners** enforcing corporate policies in private enterprise and public endeavors:

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with **decision by consensus or majority rule**, with these or equivalent voting methods agreed upon by the people or their duly authorized representatives, carried out at times and places consistent with the public interest, ensuring fair polling and honest report of polling to the people;

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with **group submission to arbitrary decision of owners**, accepting managerial rule based upon legal right of possession, enforceable within a top-down corporate hierarchy of subordinates under contract, specifying conditions of employment at each level;

under **public rules of assembly** from national to local level, with legislative, judicial, or executive guidelines for polling, scheduled at regular or special times published well in advance, giving citizens adequate time to gather, consider, and vote;

under **a national framework of private enterprise**, in accord with accepted standards of business practice, embedded in national law or international agreement, in provision of workers workers uniformly in compliance to norms of wealthy owners;

after full and fair **discussion** of the relevant public interest, in open political forums or other venues of public record, conducted by officials of the public legally bound to impartially supervise rules of order for honest polling, including citizen rights of ballot review and judicial appeal;

conveyed by **commands** of owners or policy directives of boards, delegating owner authority to managers at subordinate levels, who issue contractually enforceable orders, to workers, vendors, or customers, constrained to obey under threats of job loss and hardship;

obtaining the people's **consent** to be ruled or to obey laws ruling themselves, after public deliberation based upon rational appeal to argument based upon legal precedent or constitutional principle, followed by adequately supervised polling, demonstrating the people's exercise of inalienable rights and liberties.

compelling **obedience** to owners, due to promise of reward or threat of punishment, from emotional appeal to hopes or fears of those in a position of limited means, demonstrating the superiority of those in control of capital investment in private enterprise, to those of inferior position.

### **Brief Commentary**

The two preceding charts displaying national markets as part of a capitalist international market system are justified by the earlier brief discussion to show that, from colonial times onward, capitalism is the emergent economic form taken by international imperialism. We saw from America's own history of westward and then worldwide expansion how capitalism developed and spread along with democratic national rule—except in foreign protectorates acquired and dominated by the USA. The main focus in this chart is upon the coercive hierarchical form taken by capitalism within sovereign nations such as ours, bolstered by capitalist use of wealth to purchase favorable legislation, at once legalizing capitalist practice and also limiting government interference. Capitalist political influence has resulted in an underlying American class struggle becoming ever more evident since the 2008 Wall Street crash and attendant Great Recession. The Supreme Court's *Citizens United* decision shows that economic capitalism is ineluctably political, tending to oligarchy.

## INSTITUTIONAL RULE

(continued)

### DEMOCRACY (Modes of Freedom)

Citizens with **equality** of access to political rule by the people in governing the nation for the common good:

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encourage the most **full participation** of people in national down through local levels of government, drawing upon the widest array of talent, experience, view-point, and ideas useful in governance, thus affording individuals and groups a fair hearing, contributory to more wise and justly shared government;

with citizens' rights to **life, liberty, and property protected**, by constitutional guaranty of due process under law, to be enforced impartially by judges, police, or the military, leaving citizens at liberty to to pursue individually or in association any activities not proscribed by law;

as displayed by **citizen engagement in rule**, on any matter legislative, executive, or judicial, ensuring consideration of the public interest, as active proponents of government, by, of, and for the people;

with each and every citizen enjoying **inalienable civil rights and liberties**, in all legal endeavors public and private, protected by law enforcers and judiciary legally bound to enforce the law fairly, thereby enabled to pursue their chosen goods in life without unjust restraint.

### Brief Commentary

This final chart focuses upon the way in which each system of rule, democracy and capitalism, constitutes the persons within that system to achieve that system's aim. Thus the last of the four "causes" listed at each level of the recursive Aristotelian analysis employed is called "Constituents," in order to identify the characteristics typical of persons shaped by each system, as citizens, workers, or owners. This is not to say that the persons themselves are aware of these characteristics, or can identify them as instilled by a system. As John Dewey pointed out in *The Public and its Problems* (1927), our modern age is the result of huge, often revolutionary changes in the way people live, compared with simpler times in agrarian societies. So people do not always realize that larger trends may underlie the frustrations or difficulties of their daily lives. But analysis can reveal those trends.

### CAPITALISM (Modes of Power)

Citizens with **inequality** of access to economic rule within national and international markets:

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ensures **owner rule** of employment and employees in private enterprise, by control of all departments, projects, and tasks through delegation of rule to subordinates, who supervise and hold employees accountable for efficient performance of duties, at all worker levels of businesses in all markets;

with worker **autonomy rigidly circumscribed**, by precise job descriptions and by owners' political influence outside work, enforceable by legally permissible sanctions and use of wealth to obtain anti-labor laws, limiting workers' legal recourse to collective bargaining or strike;

as displayed by **legal constraint of workers**, required to follow employer orders at each subordinate level of an employment hierarchy, by contractual enforcement of owners' managerial orders and policies, compelling workers to perform prescribed work duties that enable them to earn a living wage;

instilling in workers **job obedience and political submission**, to an inferior - economic position within a hierarchical class structure, maintained by owners' joint influence upon wages, prices, credit, regulation, and labor law, with-workers thereby restricted in pursuit of wealth and other goods in life.



### Part Three: The Road Ahead

**Capitalism today** is not merely an economic system, but **essentially a political oligarchy** directly **competing with our political democracy**. Even so, it is fair to say that resolution of the conflict requires consideration of **far more fundamental problems with “the American Way of Life,”** in relation to other nations and to a survivable global future. Global inequities are manifest in ongoing collapse of the international state system. **International financial bodies and trade agreements nullify labor and environmental laws** passed by national governments. The myth of “progress” and irrational **policies of endless economic “growth” dangerously deplete resources** and visibly **destabilize the climate worldwide**. The price of steady economic “growth” required to complete worldwide “modernization” is now becoming apparent, in dangerous climate change fueled by carbon emissions in The Age of Oil that fuels modernity. Sadly, **American capitalism’s postwar “globalization”** of the world economy is **central to these larger disasters, far exceeding its threat to our own democracy**.

There is **need for radical change**, not only **to restore democracy at home and abroad**, but to **deal with the manifold global problems of modernity** arising from **capitalism’s rise to global domination** of international markets. That change must **begin with recognition that capitalism and democracy are incompatible**. Preservation of democratic rule worldwide thus requires the end of capitalism and **transition to a new global economic order**. What that new order shall be, **the many should decide democratically, not those who deem themselves our global economic masters**.

### Select Bibliography

Absent footnotes, **works listed below typify sources of the kind that have influenced the author’s thought on topics addressed in the paper**. They are grouped in an order roughly correspondent to sections of the paper, but commentary and brief quotations may range farther afield. **Although Marx and Marxist critiques of capitalism have much to offer, none are cited. The author’s functional perspective owes more to John Dewey, the premier American Pragmatist.** Marxian dialectical materialism seems more a hortatory device for radicals than an accurate portrayal of inevitable historical change. **Given our onward rush toward a totally administered sham democracy run by the military/industrial/surveillance state, Marx seems way too optimistic about the future of democracy and socialism.** Factually, George Orwell’s dystopian novel *1984* may turn out to work just as well.

## Introduction to the Current debate

Timothy K. Kuhner, *Capitalism v. Democracy: Money in Politics and the Free Market Constitution*. (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2014).

On page 9, Kuhner cites Adam Smith, the philosophical father of capitalism, on the primary motivation underlying the capitalist system. Merchants and manufacturers with the greatest capital “complain of the bad effects of high wages,” but are, Smith says, “silent with regard to the pernicious effects of their own gains...an order of men whose interest is never the same with that of the public, who have generally an interest to deceive and even oppress the public,” and so, Kuhner paraphrases, “desire restraints upon competition and an increase in profits at the public’s expense.” Given Adam Smith’s view thus expressed, it seems fair to state in the first comparative chart of the present paper, on page 13, that the actual motivation of capitalism is “private goods for the wealthy class of business owners that run the economy,” rather than any desirable social good which may emerge via the “invisible hand” of market equilibrium--which may or may not occur, as shown by the economic inequalities within the system and the ensuing periodic depressions and recessions endemic to capitalism.

## Part One: The Antagonists Redefined

### 1. General Considerations on Parts A and B, about Democracy and Capitalism

John Dewey, *The Public and its Problems* (Denver, CO: Alan Swallow, 1954; original copyright 1927, Henry Holt and company).

In common usage, “the public” is often taken to mean all the people within a nation’s borders. But for Dewey, “a public” is a group of citizens facing a common problem within the society as a whole, beginning to organize itself for political action. A prime example of Dewey’s view would be the American colonists that rose up against the English King and his oppressive colonial administrators, summarizing their grievances in our Declaration of Independence in 1776, beginning a successful revolution that led to statement of the Founders’ uniting values in the Constitution of our representative democracy, in solution of their common problem. His Chapter III, “The Democratic State,” points out that industrialization since then has brought about profound changes that rapidly outstripped traditional town meeting democracy, such that “new forms of combined action due to the modern economic regime control present politics, much as dynastic interests controlled those of two centuries ago” (p.108). So the original “democratic public is still unorganized and inchoate” (p. 109). Hence in Dewey’s Ch. IV, “The Eclipse of the Public,” he finds that the bewildered electorate is “composed of rather amorphous groups,” swinging back and forth between progressivism and return to normalcy. His key point is that “At present, many consequences are felt rather than perceived; they are suffered, but they cannot be said to be known, for they are not...referred to their origins,” in the new economic order emerging into political dominance. Though Dewey never says so, perhaps to avoid the taint of Marxism, that order is clearly contemporary capitalism. But in his Ch. V, “Search for the Great Community,” Dewey does assert that “democracy...is the idea of community life itself” (p. 148), and that its enduring ideals of fraternity, liberty and equality need to be rearticulated in a way that can reorganize the democratic public so as to address contemporary conditions more adequately (p. 150). The ongoing political debate for the 2016 presidential election is precisely about the terms most appropriate to reorganizing our democracy in a way that can end its dysfunctional paralysis. Judicially, Supreme Court “originalism” seems to have worsened the problem by radically overturning earlier progressive measures to rescue democratic politics from the overweening power of concentrated wealth. Kuhner’s important book suggests one necessary, but insufficient, step toward resolution of the problem. The present paper aims to widen the terms of ongoing debate, by providing a functional analysis of how capitalism is in fact irreconcilably at odds with the needed restoration and reorganization of American democracy.

## 2. Works Relevant to Part One, Section B3: Capitalism's Imperialist Setting

Ronald Wright, *What is America? A Short History of the New World Order* (Philadelphia, PA: Da Capo Press, A Member of the Perseus Books Group, 2008).

Wright's answer is captured in his page 5 comment on the failure of Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*: "...he failed to grasp that America already *was* an empire—armed aggressive, expanding before his eyes and presided over by a militarist, General Andrew Jackson...an Indian killer and practitioner of what is now called ethnic cleansing, the Indian Removal of the 1830s." Wright provides a smooth narrative overview of American imperialism from that time up through WW II and the postwar era, with a brief look at the global damage wrought during the two terms of President George W. Bush.

Walter Nugent, *Habits of Empire: A History of American Expansionism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008).

Nugent's frontispiece quotes from an 1809 letter of Thomas Jefferson to James Madison: "We should have such an empire for liberty as...never surveyed since the creation: & I am persuaded no constitution was ever before so well calculated as ours for extensive empire & self government...". Wright's *Foreward* identifies (p.xiii) Jefferson, Franklin, John and John Quincy Adams, Jackson, Theodore Roosevelt as among earlier American imperialists, including more lately Madeleine Albright and Condoleeza Rice of the George W. Bush Presidencies. Wright's thesis (p. xiv) is that "acquisitions and occupations of transcontinental territory before the Civil War...taught well-learned lessons of empire building. ...Today there is a good chance that "empire" might eclipse "republic"." Nugent provides a detailed history of US territorial acquisitions from 1782 through 1986 and concludes with a look "...beyond them into the current global or virtual empire, the present "military hegemony." "

Jules Archer, *The Plot to Seize the White House: The Shocking TRUE story of the Conspiracy to Overthrow FDR* (New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2007—originally published in 1973 by Hawthorne Books, Inc. of New York).

Some "conspiracy theories" are true. This one was documented by hearings 1934-1935 in the US House of Representatives, led by Speaker John McCormack of Massachusetts—and then conveniently excluded from American schoolbooks, because it named names of some of the most prominent industrialists and Wall Street bankers of the time, who were never prosecuted. Alarmed by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's 1932 leftist "new Deal," the conspirators sought to stage a fascist *putsch* to neutralize, and kill him if he resisted. They tried to enlist General Smedley Butler, beloved by the troops he had led in earlier imperialist missions abroad, in a plot to use the American Legion's veterans, disappointed by failure of efforts to get government bonuses promised for their service, in a march on Washington. (The plotters had bankrolled the Legion earlier and had tried to use veterans as strikebreakers, against unionizing workers demonized as "communists.") Butler refused and exposed the plot, and subsequently wrote the book *War is a Racket*. What Archer's work shows us is the early workings of what Presidents Truman, Eisenhower, and John F. Kennedy came to see as a severe threat to American democracy: the rise of an unelected, permanent, powerful, and deadly (in the case of JFK) "military-industrial complex" that constitutes a capitalist "shadow government" unaccountable to the American people.

L. Fletcher Prouty, *The Secret Team: The CIA and its Allies in Control of the United States and the World* (New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2008—originally published 1972 by Prentice Hall and in paperback by Ballantine Books, but ruthlessly suppressed: the bulk of 1972 copies in the US and Australia were bought up and removed from libraries, including from the Library of Congress and its catalog).

Colonel Prouty had served as a tank commander in WW II, then worked for the Air Force and CIA. He was a briefing officer for the President and Pentagon officials on “special operations” around the world, serving as liaison between the CIA and Department of Defense. Prouty tells (pages xviii-xix) of being directed in 1955-56 to establish a covert network that came to include “...hundreds of experts and agents concealed in military commands throughout the world...,” giving the CIA its own private aircraft, weaponry, and global access to military bases and secret installations around the world, for the “Containment” of Communism during the global Cold War. On Prouty’s telling, The CIA deliberately sabotaged a secret CIA U-2 flight by Gary Francis Powers over the USSR in contravention of president Eisenhower’s explicit orders, thereby scuttling “Ike’s” planned Paris peace conference of “detente” with USSR premier Nikita Krushchev, giving us thirty years of unnecessary Cold War that profited only the military-industrial complexes of both nations. At his retirement in 1964 Prouty was Chief of Special Operations (“clandestine” or “covert” activities) for the US Joint Chiefs of Staff. Prouty reveals an autonomous CIA out of civilian control, indoctrinating the President, government and military officials about what the CIA considers US “security interests” around the world, in service to an international Secret Team, or wealthy capitalist “cabal.” His motive for blowing the CIA’s cover may be gleaned from the dismay that led to his second book—*JFK: the CIA, Vietnam, and the Plot to Assassinate President Kennedy* (New York: A Citadel Press Book, Published by Carol Publishing Group, 1992, updated 1996), which led to Oliver Stone’s film *JFK*.

Stephen Kinzer, *Overthrow: America’s Century of Regime Change from Hawaii to Iraq* (New York: Times Books, Henry Holt and Company, 2006).

Kinzer gives a highly detailed and readable account of the long history of American intervention in the affairs of other nations, including the disastrous results of military or CIA operations without adequate consideration of what could follow—which we now see in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere in the Mideast, as our military leaders contemplate a generational “long war” there. From the standpoint of the present paper, what is revealed is the utter bankruptcy of foreign policy run on power rather than freedom, domination rather than cooperation.

Sheldon S. Wolin, *Democracy Inc.: Managed Democracy and the Specter of Inverted Totalitarianism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008)

Wolin portrays a USA within which a ruling capitalist elite sees totalitarian control of the people as necessary in order to maintain global dominance by US corporations: the state’s power is turned inward, upon its own people. No longer sovereign, the people are managed and “shepherded.”

Andrew J Bacevich, *The Limits of Power: The End of American Exceptionalism* (New York: Metropolitan books, Henry Holt and Company, 2008—paperback 2009).

Bacevich traces American crises abroad to indulgent over-consumption and debt at home, leading political leaders catering to our sense of material entitlement into perpetual resource wars abroad and an undemocratic national security state at home. He urges abandonment of imperial illusions.

### 3. Works Relevant to The Aristotelian Methodology of Part Two, on The Irreconcilability of Capitalism and Democracy

Kenneth A. Telford, *Aristotle's Poetics: Translation and Analysis* (Chicago, IL: A Gateway Edition, Henry Regnery Company, 1961).

Prof. Telford's brilliant explication of the *Poetics* shows that work to be a beautiful example of Aristotle's own procedure of explaining things natural or of human artifice by reference to four causes (final, formal, efficient, material) by which anything comes into being, in this case the poetic object of a human author. Highly critical of modern mistranslations and misreadings of Aristotle, Telford found it necessary to retranslate some parts of the Greek text of the *Poetics* edited by Ingram Bywater, recurring in those instances to "our primary source for the *Poetics*, the eleventh-century manuscript, Parisinus 1741" (Preface, p.xii). Telford's rigorous demonstration that Aristotle followed his own procedure in organizing the *Poetics* encouraged me to do the same in my own comparative analysis of democracy and capitalism as human institutions. Doing so, I rediscovered for myself how one can use the procedure recursively, using the four causes at successively deeper levels of analysis of initial key terms of inquiry denoting institutional realities. I am also indebted to Ken Telford for offering his own informal seminar on the work of Prof. Richard McKeon, his mentor and the editor of *The Basic Works of Aristotle* (New York: Random House, 1941), presented to the small group of new teachers (of which I was a part) hired to teach in the Humanities Department at Wilbur Wright College in Fall, 1968. Though McKeon was noted for extensive work on Aristotle and also a thesis on Spinoza, he said in one of his philosophy classes (of which I had three) at the U. of Chicago that he was a Pragmatist; he had studied with John Dewey at Columbia University. But I came to Dewey's pragmatism via a course with Prof. Knox Hill at Chicago.

Kenneth A. Telford, *Commentary on Aristotle's Nichomachean Ethics* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1999).

In this work, upon which I have begun study in writing the present paper, Telford provides a masterly commentary of the *Ethics'* argument on the nature of the human being as a moral agent. For reasons similar to those in his 1961 translation and commentary on the *Poetics*, Telford also had SUNY publish in 1999 his own volume of translation and commentary on *The Organon's* works *Categories* and *Concerning Interpretation*, and as well a volume in translation of the *Nichomachean Ethics* (2<sup>nd</sup> printing 2000 with corrections). Chapter 10 of the *Commentary* provides a nice overview of McKeon's system of fourfold matrices for analyzing philosophers on their own terms, rather than on those of other philosophers or readers. I owe to this book an understanding of why Aristotle's "final cause" is better understood as a "completion" of a process, not as a mere end, purpose or (as in my usage in the present paper) an aim. I stuck with "aim" because it captures the American colonists' explicit reasoning behind their *Declaration of Independence*, ensuing Revolution, and *Constitution*, as well as documents such as the collected *Federalist Papers*, which correspond well to the original institution of American representative democracy in its various branches, departments or agencies. But "completion" does work better if we look toward Amendment XIII, abolishing slavery later on.

M. Ali Lakhani, "Who will Rule, God or Man?"—*Politics and the Sacred* in *Sacred Web: A Journal of Tradition and Modernity*, 35 (Vancouver, BC, Canada: Sacred Web Publishing, June 2015).

Lakhani takes up the difficult question of whether political values can and should be grounded in religious faith, as he believes, rather than in philosophy or experience alone (as I do). Seeking common ground for the world's faiths, he includes a thoughtful survey of Western political history. He affirms as essential the notion of the people's "engagement" or "participation" (the term I use) in democracy, viewed in terms of reciprocity to both earthly and divine ruler, grounded in a sense of the sacred "theophany" or origin (pp.45-49) that underlies political bonds of love and benevolent justice.



