



The Buddha survived Tsunamis in 1334, 1369, and 1498.

THE WORLD TURNED UPSIDE DOWN

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INTRODUCTION — We Tried

The media will soon begin to anticipate the arrival of a 30th anniversary — the November 1989 fall of the Berlin Wall which in turn signaled the end of the Cold War. Back then the US media was obsessed with the horse race, not who “won?” that was obviously “us” but how did it happen? Journalists and opinion writers in this country are often state-of-the-horse race obsessed, now just as much as thirty years ago. That so rarely actually contributes to a better world and the conviction that the US had won has much to answer for: Putin’s ongoing revenge acts for the implied Russian humiliation at very least.

In 1989 I was in the closing phases of writing a dissertation about ways the Cold War might end and for most of the year before Berlin I had been seeing signs that it really might happen. The collapse of The Wall did not seal the deal, partly because George H.W. Bush, US President by then, was much less comfortable with Gorbachev as an ally than Reagan had been. In 1991, the world wide collaboration in the war to drive Saddam Hussein’s Iraqi army out of Kuwait, made US - Soviet peace a done deal.

Gorbachev came to mind again thanks to a recent movie about him, part interview and part documentary. *Meeting Gorbachev* is two stories in parallel, Gorbachev’s life and career alongside the evolving conditions in the Soviet Union. If nothing else, the archival footage of the three ceremonial funerals honoring leaders whose deaths paved his way to power in 1985 will astound. But there is much more. Gorbachev now is very old, wonderfully wise and still adoring of his late wife Raisa who traveled the whole journey close by his side.

Towards the movie’s end the interviewer, Werner Herzog no less, asks Gorbachev what he would like on his tombstone. His reply? That he has never forgotten a tombstone which read “WE TRIED.”

It was very hard living one’s life under the threat of nuclear armageddon as we all did between 1957 and 1991. Computer errors and proxy hostilities in Cuba, Germany, Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, Angola, Nicaragua, Iran and Afghanistan meant catastrophe was never more than a few minutes away, sitting in missile-loaded submarines and on launchers along the inter-German frontier. Planetary survival really felt in question. Japan these days often speaks as though its national survival is at risk, living within easy range of North Korean missiles. Ending the Cold War was a courageous act, one for which Gorbachev and Reagan too deserve real thanks.

Gorbachev’s tomb motto quietly articulates his recognition that his great endeavor had huge unintended consequences, leading among other things to the complete break up of the Soviet Union. Russia today is just Russia because it is no longer united with all of the USSR’s constituent Republics. On a much smaller scale numerically speaking, I have never forgotten the unintended consequences of the progressive program that managed to end mandatory hospitalization of the mentally ill in USA. The second stage of the program, their treatment in a nation-wide network of Community Mental Health Centers, never really happened. As a result too many are free but desperate, police have become under-trained and unwilling custodians of the mentally ill and all over the country, cities and rural areas deal with the wandering lost.

INTRODUCTION — We Tried

In the segments that follow matters of planetary, national and personal survival confront us. So do serious questions of how we, ordinary mortals take up our parts of the “we tried” motto. Gorbachev was in a good position to do what he did; ending a war takes political leadership. The topics in this pamphlet: climate change, British elections, US Supreme Court decisions, and Women’s place in the institutions which govern our lives, present us not only with mystifying choices about what to do but also with dilemmas about how to position ourselves to try to engage at all. No matter where we stand and what we do, we cannot escape the truth that there will be unintended as well as intended consequences of everything we try.

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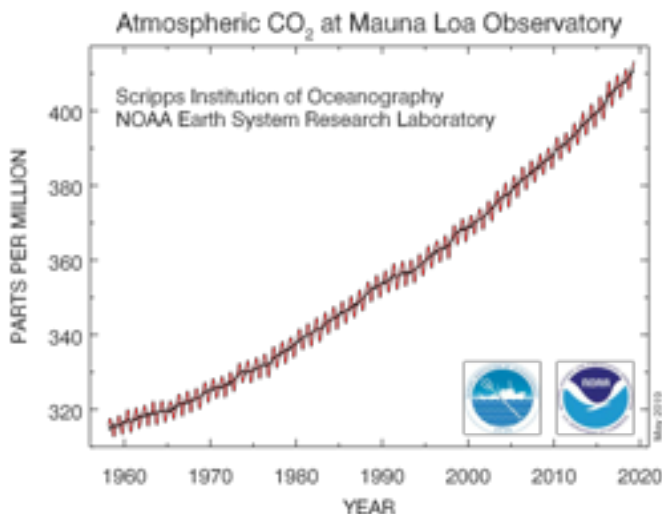
WE ARE NONE OF US ALONE – Climate change and Planetary survival

In this big wide world our interconnectedness is becoming clearer and clearer, at least as far as the weather is concerned. Leaders like Xi in China and Trump in the USA may insist on national sovereignty all they like but climate and weather do not respect national frontiers not even those with walls or digital population management.

Saying that is easy. Understanding what climate change is like is not.

I have been a weather “nut” all my life. Typical Brit except that my father taught me to watch the barometer carefully and in the UK the weather really does change on a dime so it’s worth watching. Given a sense of how massively variable weather patterns can be, I was one who found it hard see the steady upward change the scientists were talking about, particularly since it entailed such small numbers – 1° C over 50 or 100 years. And if one is to “try” in aid of change, one needs first to be convinced there is a problem. During the Cold War, most leaders most of the time didn’t even see there was a problem. Gorbachev, blessings on him did.

It was an image, used by one of my teaching colleagues at Evergreen, that tipped me into “convinced” back in 2007.



The graph is not about temperature. But Mauna Loa, 14,000 feet up on Hawaii, has virtually no natural air pollution, and there it is rising year on year. Decisive evidence that the amount of Carbon Dioxide in the atmosphere has been growing steadily since 1960. The scientist who began collecting the data was once widely derided as doing trivial work. No more, of course. The zigzags are simply signs of summer/winter variations year after year.

So for more than 10 years I have been convinced the climate was changing but my “variable weather” self still couldn’t understand how to see steady change in the variable weather we were actually seeing. And then my life’s partner did a back of the envelop approximation so beloved of serious scientists. Convinced turned into able-to-see-it.

Rob’s climate change calculation required nothing more than arithmetic with a little bit of help from a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration website and his physicist’s understanding that the atmosphere releases its contained energy by concentrating it and then sending it down to the earth’s surface in storms, heatwaves etc.. Here’s the math.

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Volume of the entire atmosphere = A

Amount of extra energy this volume will have to try to absorb if the temperature rises 1°C = B

Amount of atmospheric energy released in one day in the average Caribbean Hurricane = C.

Given A, B and C, how many extra “hurricane strength days” does releasing that extra 1°C represent?

96 days.

Let me say that again. If the earth’s temperature rises a mere one degree, it makes so much extra energy available that, somewhere on the earth, there could unavoidably be 96 additional days of weather events the equivalent of a Caribbean hurricane.

A sample from the last 12 months: In Oklahoma, Kansas and Missouri in June 12 days of extreme tornado activity. In February and March, rain and ice along the Missouri and Mississippi which ruined winter crops across huge swaths of Plains farmland. Last summer along the US west coast the winter’s heavy rains led to generous plant growth which then dried out and led to a whole summer of extreme fires. In Odisha, India, earlier this year a larger than ever seen “cyclone” their word for hurricane which forced the evacuation of perhaps 2 million people. In central and southern Europe in the last week of June temperatures rising higher than ever recorded in many places.

96 days does not mean 96 hurricanes. My list has only one but it was larger than ever seen before so it’s a normal hurricane with an added extra “day” of intensity.

Such was my personal climate change learning curve. General belief in science, made detailed by a graph, and made tangible by some math. Is such a process essential? Not at all. There are teenagers all over the world, activists already because the world they are growing into is one that terrifies them. Planetary survival fears, probably of a kind very similar to the ones that engulfed my generation growing up under the bomb, are mobilizing children by the hundreds and thousands. A month ago there was a youth action day in Oakland. I passed the kids skipping school in front of city hall on my way to the office. The media are making much of Greta Thornberg the Swedish teenager who skipped school every Friday to sit in front of the Parliament. Climate change action does not depend on any particular path.

Impelled into activism I continue to be guided by Joanna Macy’s three part action agenda. Effort is needed to hold the worst that is happening now in check: for example divesting from fossil fuels. Effort is needed to design institutions and material things that work in harmony with the planet: bio-regions were once a big idea. Perhaps their time has now come. Third we need to take up changing our own and others consciousness. The description set out above was my own path to anchoring a consciousness change, which does not mean that I delayed plans to grow and shop organic, to eat less meat, to drive less, and to work actively on getting a better government in place both here in the USA and elsewhere. Nonetheless, personally I find it easier to deepen my action plans now that the consciousness issues are tidier.

Let me turn now to action. To trying.

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Having never been thrilled by the materialist project that inspires a lot of modern life, it has been unattractively easy for me to be critical of people whose life styles do not seem to be taking climate change into account. By Trying, I mean doing more than the easy things which in my life required only straightforward organic non-materialism. And indeed in relation to the easy criticism, trying means doing something with the easy criticism itself that turns it into a deeper project. I will get back to that but let me start with an area where we, I in particular, am likely a target myself of easy criticism, namely flying on airplanes.

I fly a lot. Over my lifetime United Airlines alone calculates that I have flown over 1.5 million miles. To put that into perspective, the accumulated mileage on all the cars we have owned since we got married adds up to about the same amount of distance though a car with a single person in it is, these days, less “efficient” than a single seat on a full airplane. But let’s face it. Car trips had often had piles of kids in the back. No this airplane thing is real. I fly a lot and I have friends who have sworn off the practice virtually entirely. They don’t nag me but their actions keep me awake to my own.

Here I turn to another important notion generated by my life’s partner, whose professional work bonds science to sustainability. If we are to act sustainably, he says, we must believe in the beauty and meaning of the world we are sustaining. And for me personally, beauty and meanings I am closely tied to are far apart – three kids with their kids in London, New York and Berkeley, deep professional work in Japan and Korea, a mystically significant house and close family in the Lake District in the UK, friends continent-wide in the North America, to name only the key reasons I travel. We are nomadic and have been thus in limited ways since 1972 when, by moving to Olympia, Washington, we left our family homes 3000 and 6000 miles to the east. After the children left Olympia and work moved still further west our nomadism intensified.

We Try There are people who plant trees. To compensate for flying we weatherize other people’s houses. Oh not personally. But in the very same Olympia where we were based an organization, a non-profit provides insulation and good windows/doors, for people who would never have the resources to do it themselves. More arithmetic makes it possible to calculate how much weatherization makes up for the amount we fly. We give the Thurston Mason Lewis County Community Action Network about twice as much money every year. So we fly too much and we do something to take out of the atmosphere roughly the same amount of CO₂ as we put in, CO₂ that would not be taken out without our efforts. Spending that extra money has not really taxed either our resources or our consciousness but it does feel useful.

We Really Try Living with a sustainability prof. in temperate Olympia in an old house that leaked air had its challenges. Moving, as we are to California, to be nearer one kid and their family, has allowed us to meet that kind of challenge by spending truly huge sums of money to build a very small house in our son’s back yard (no need to fly) that is not only California regulations efficient but exceeds the rules by a good bit. The house put in front of me a small, real, action opportunity which

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is so middle class and bourgeois it is a bit hard to include here. It involves the hot tub. The garden hot tub. The dream that began in Olympia more than 30 years ago which has now been abandoned for the sake of the planet. No really. It all came down to seeing with clear eyes how much extra electricity that one item would use. Something I imagined was part of my life is not. And never will be. Consciousness change. Something material which would have been beautiful to look at and fun for us and the grand kids. NOT GOING TO HAPPEN.

My parents, survivors of World War II, my mother a relative of people who died under the holocaust, never engaged with opposition to nuclear weapons the way I did. Indeed, as I was digging into the archives for that PhD I was forced to realize that my father's work on Britain's "space policy" was interconnected with the very missiles to which I assigned so much of the responsibility for the terrifying immediacy of the Cold War. Given my age and history, I doubt that I will ever invest in the same deep way that young people are in action for climate change. Not that I will oppose them. Never. But the work, the deep work, the terrifying work that is ahead is theirs more than mine.

We Will Try Things keep happening to which we will add our efforts in solidarity, particularly if the leaders are the young. Aldermaston marches were quickly co-opted by Bertrand Russell and youth energy dissipated early in Britain's anti-nuc days. Later this year it appears there will be youth inspired events on September 20/21. I will watch out for a way to join in or support them, more than I did that day in Oakland when I walked on by, off to my office on my own agenda. Most of all I will be listening for things that young people ask me to do. My youngest grandchildren are too young to ask. The oldest is not.

Let's end up back with Gorbachev and easy criticisms. Gorbachev acted for good and events took off in directions he had never imagined. All of our family's trying to counter climate change, small or very small, will have unintended consequences. Not acting because of lack of certainty in the consequences is not an option for me, but it is often the reason that others don't act. Those people I could too easily criticize for not changing what they do may well fear known consequences – lack of status and comfort – without confidently seeing better outcomes. That I have found my own path to action does not entitle me to make nasty judgments about people who resist. Among the worst days in my work on the nuclear weapons were ones when some ideal I espoused was dismissed by others out of hand.

For the third time in these three pages let me return to the wisdom of my life's partner. If nearly half the country votes in direct contradiction to the directions I would like to see, it is likely, he says, that everyone is partly right. Not equally right. Partly right. One more Try: to search for the partly right in those with whom I disagree, so as to walk towards them and to cross the bridge over towards healthy planetary survival together.

IN REAL LIFE THERE IS NO INTERMISSION – British leadership elections and National Survival

Last week the New York the skies were sparkling and banging with fireworks. It was great fun. I had timed our flight back from the UK just to be here to watch it all. In addition to being a weather “nut” I am a fireworks “nut.” July 4th celebrates US Independence from what is now called the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. For many who live in the US, notably Native Americans and the descendants of slaves, July 4 cannot be entirely joyful. Having spent three weeks in the UK watching the latest rounds of British Brexit driven politics, being able to celebrate American political structures felt liberating. Not perfect but at least engaging.

Let me explain for those who have not been watching closely. And for the few readers in the UK, let me add that this is not intended as a personal critique but as a comment on politics as a form of culture.

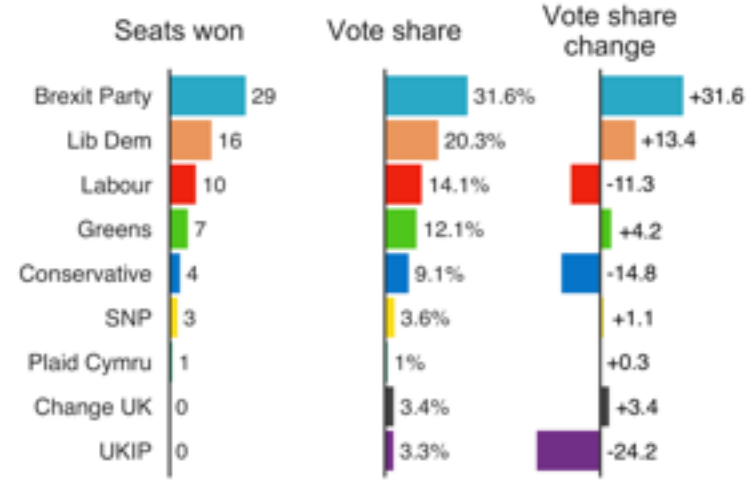
First a step backwards to earlier this year. There were local government elections in the UK in late April. These were scheduled as normal and led to new councils for cities, sub-county regions and counties all over the country. A cousin who lives in Suffolk happened to be with us, deeply engrossed watching the outcome of races. She has long been a Green and to her delight her friends were winning. Those local government elections signaled that a big political upheaval was underway in British politics. Labour and the Conservatives lost unprecedented numbers of seats and the more centrist Lib Dems and the edgier Greens took them away. Such an outcome was not entirely shocking. Theresa May’s government had been collapsing and Corbyn’s Labour had discredited itself over both Brexit and anti-semitism.

What stood out that day was that Jenny actually knew people running. Several of them. No-one else I know anywhere in the UK talks about friends running for office. There are people with appointive power and plenty of others who have risen by their own efforts to positions of authority in government, law and the non-profit sector but no-one, literally no-one else I know talks about friends or colleagues who have plunged into electoral politics in England, Wales or Scotland. The North of Ireland is probably different though I don’t know that for sure.

A few weeks later, May’s government having punted on Brexit, Brits were forced to hold yet more elections this time for the Parliament in Europe, a Parliament they are allegedly planning to leave. Once again, no-one talked about running for those seats though this time the results had an added twist – the Brexiters were running and ended up taking the largest number of seats. EU elections are less binary than British first-past-the-post elections so, while the results again demonstrated Conservative and Labour collapse, the biggest growth proportionally was for the Lib Dems → 1 seat to 16 and Greens 7→12. Brexiters went from 24 (as UKIP) to 29 seats and nationalists in Scotland and Wales also won. The vote was grim if one was just looking at the top vote getter in each region. The big cities were Europeanist Remain. The majority of the rest of the electorate went nationalist, called Brexit in England, Scots Nationalist in Scotland and Plaid Cymru in Wales.

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How did the parties do in Great Britain?



Both of these elections conformed to pretty standard democratic process – candidates selected according to known processes, election dates publicized, polling places set up and votes counted and announced in public.

Another election process in the UK is also underway as I write: the selection of the new leader of the Conservative Party. Which happens right now to mean the election of a Prime Minister whose term starts right away. Theresa May is still in office and will remain at Downing Street

until the summer recess but on Parliament's return to governing in September, the new Prime Minister will have been in office about 6 weeks. I am not even going to take up the question of how this new man, and it will be a man, manages to achieve anything in the subsequent 8 weeks he will have between the MPs' return and the official end of the Brexit process on October 31. You will have to read elsewhere about the lies and promises flying around the UK that allegedly set out party policy.

Right now the issue is process. Having watched British process for leadership elections, here comes the first of three cheers for US candidate selection primaries, extended and expensive as they are.

In the UK, parties tend to have a leader in waiting so, even if the Prime Minister changes while a government is in power, the handover is smooth. Tony Blair was going to quit and Gordon Brown to take over but everyone knew Blair wanted to win one more election and then Brown was forced to wait patiently till Blair finally quit. John Major was in the wings when the Conservatives finally decided they had to toss Thatcher out. This time, the wings were crowded and more than a few people were simply horrified by prospect of Boris Johnson, clear though he was that the office should be his.

So in the space of about 6 weeks two things had to happen. First the 312 Conservative party MPs had to whittle the number of possibles from about 9 down to 2. That process? A day by day series of votes dropping the lowest vote getter each time with an astonishing amount of skullduggery in the trading and shaping of ballots. Johnson managed to squeeze his arch enemy Gove out. Which left two – Hunt and Johnson.

And what did they have to do next? Why hold a series of "hustings" around the country to which only paid up members of the Conservative party were invited – mostly old, well off, white men and a

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whole bunch of Brexiters who had signed up to the Tories recently just so as to influence this particular election. A total of about 150,000 people. That is right. In a month the UK will have a new government led by a man who makes Trump look honest, put into power by 150,000 people out of a population of 64 million.

Thank heavens again say I for American primaries.

What can try mean under these conditions? The “World Turned Upside Down” title for these pamphlets comes from the ballad defeated British soldiers are said to have sung after loosing the last battle of what they thought of as the colonies war for independence. Britain’s 2019 council and MEP elections revealed that the “mother country’s” political system is being turned upside down, two main parties fragmenting around their centers ending up with something like six or perhaps eight real factions/minor parties – none big enough to craft that Parliamentary majority on which forming a British-style government depends. If you want to guess at the likely consequences of faction-based politics in a parliamentary system I can offer two contrasting images: Japan where factions brawl verbally outside Parliament and Israel where they do so inside the Parliament building. Neither country has the effective array of organized opposition politicians on which the binary parliamentary system depends

In the 1700s, having defeated their former King, the people of the 13 former colonies had also turned their own political system upside down. Their first attempt at independent unity failed, so they summoned a Constitutional Convention to develop a brand new way of distributing political power. The US Constitution’s designers thought long and hard about the details and about decentralization. 300 years later we can see that their beloved electoral college diminishes voter power, just as they hoped it would. Their willingness to allow states to manage electoral process can lead to dreadful results, about which more in the next section. But, though the Founders were elitist and exclusionary, the system they designed has proved expandable, able to include new states, new electors, new issues, new ways of governing, new kinds of economy, each expansion still subject to Constitutional constraints set down on paper more than 300 years ago. More on that also in the next section.

The British system has evolved often and ad hoc, as powers shifted and broadened. Nonetheless, to this day the landed upper classes and the Oxbridge elite still hold an almost 19th century grip on central power, occasionally offering up carelessly designed referenda as opportunities for expression of the “people’s will.” There is one elected House, The Commons, while the “upper house” rests mid-way through a Blairite reform of The Lords which seems to have no prospect of ever being completed.

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From this standpoint, an outsider looking in, any notion that my friends and relatives might **TRY** direct engagement in politics at levels more central than local councilor seems forbidding. With Brexit looming, the idea of initiating an electoral-process reform looks even more forbidding. MPs and the government find hashtags and demonstrations easy to ignore, so in the British version of the surveillance state, direct action Hong Kong style has also shown its weaknesses, at least thus far. Crises can be both dangerous and be times of opportunity but for Britain these days, I feel unqualified even to wonder about what should happen next. All I will say is that like Gorbachev I hope that everyone in the UK who is now alarmed will find ways to act that allow them later to say, regardless of the consequences, “WE TRIED”

Later next year, when I begin to groan about endless primaries, remind me how it was when 150,000 people in the UK found themselves entitled to elect the UK Prime Minister in a closed process that took less than six weeks.

DEEPER THAN ELECTIONS — Two US Supreme Court Decisions

The US too has been dealing with elections, in our case in planning for elections in the future. Two pivotal decisions came down from the Supreme Court in the last couple of weeks, decisions that spell out specific constraints on the electoral process as seen from the Federal perspective. In this country there is never a time when the US Supreme Court is not considering big issues. The Court truly does hold one third of the governing powers allocated under the Constitution. Legislatures may pass laws. Executives may enforce those laws. If the Constitution might have something to say about the laws and their enforcement, someone will bring a case in the hopes the US Supreme Court will make a final decisive ruling on the national significance of each position. Indeed, in the segment on women's work I will be talking about state laws passed to generate law suits precisely because the legislators hope to turn a local law into a national standard.

The two cases in this segment concluded as this year's Supreme Court term was coming to an end. One, the census case, speaks to something expressly mentioned in the Constitution, a decennial census to be undertaken by the Federal government so as to fairly apportion seats in the US House of Representatives according to the distribution of the population. The ruling 5-4 pleased the progressive parts of the society though the President vows to push on regardless. The other speaks to a question whose answer is implied but not stated in the Constitution, namely whether states can unfairly try to influence who actually wins elections. In this case the ruling pleased Trump and his allies.

First an important fact about elections in the US. The power to design voting procedures, the power to decide which state-wide offices will be elected or appointed, the power to set up voter registration procedures, the candidate selection mechanisms, whether primary or caucus, all these and many other features of the election system are decided state by state. The Feds control almost nothing, although the racial biases during segregation did lead the Feds to require Southern States for many years to submit proposed changes to voting regulations to Federal scrutiny to prevent discrimination in elections.

To begin with the second case. The case presented a challenge to the idea that State legislatures, though bound by the numbers generated in the census, were free in every other way to structure elections without even pretending to neutrality over whether a particular political party benefitted. The Supreme Court, in brief, said they could do whatever they wanted. Brought up on the image of "one person one vote" my friends and allies were disappointed.

I suppose I was disappointed too, but I never really believed that we would win that one. I never believed because, looked at one way, the Constitution itself contains a giant "gerrymander." In 1787 the Constitution allocated to slave states extra House of Representative seats based on the imaginary existence of 3/5 of a person for every slave in the state. Oh the slaves themselves were not counted, just 3/5 of an imaginary civic person for each slave. As their price for accession to the US Constitution, the Founders from the Southern States demanded a right of representation in the Federal House of Representatives that gave them several extra seats, insurance that they could for

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ever prevent the northern states stripping them of legal slavery. Those extra seats also ensured slave states control of the Presidency for virtually the entire period leading up to the Civil War.

Gerrymandering is a recent term but there has never been a time, even after the 3/5 fiction went away, that the US Supreme Court has demanded fully neutral rigor in the standards states set for elections. What rigor there, is apart from the general tenet that every eligible citizen has the right to vote, has often come about as a result of popular action. Women, first in the states and then at the Federal level, used demonstrations and civil disobedience to demand and finally gain their right to vote. The young got the right to vote during the Vietnam War — if they were old enough to be sent to war they were old enough to vote. As recently as my own memories, African Americans battled with literally with their lives for the right to vote, against a brutal opposition in those same states which once had counted them fictionally. Civic duties gave young people the right to vote in the 1960s. Requirements to pay Federal taxes finally endowed Native Americans with the right to vote in the 1920s.

Those who opposed gerrymandering hoped that by proving discrimination they could bring the Supreme Court to their side. Not this court which does little to protect against discrimination. But not just this court. Electoral fairness is not a national issue. It is a state-based issue. Voters regularly pass ballot initiatives demanding neutrality for their own state in allocating seats. Recent initiatives in two states prompted those very same state legislatures to set about weakening neutrality in favor of systems biased towards their own party. There are states, and even Republican led states, where fairness and neutrality prevail. My longtime home state of Washington is the clearest example of both characteristics. Elections have been governed by Republican officials even as all other state-wide offices went Democratic. The succession of Secretaries of State put forward by the Republicans have repeatedly earned the Washington voters respect and trust.

Will the USA ever have neutral, egalitarian voting rights nationwide? I doubt it. There are too many different ways the political culture here rewards pushing the edges of the competition and mistake not — both leading parties are to blame, each one trying craft an impregnable stronghold in legislatures such that holding actual elections will not threaten their grip on power. In this respect, age benefits my sanity hugely. Despite gerrymander, US elections continue to surprise and recreate instability no matter how strenuously the power structure tries to perpetuate itself for all eternity.

TRYING in a gerrymandered world at its minimum asks no more than not to give in to despair. So many offices, so many ways to vote, so many possible systems to create fairness. Every state provides opportunities and there are over a dozen different models of ways to bring more fairness into the balloting process. People in those states which need work should simply get to work at the state level again and again, to push back against the self-dealing of the political parties, to reinsert the voter into the political process.

* * *

DEEPER THAN ELECTIONS — Two US Supreme Court Decisions

The Census case is a much much bigger issue and one which, if it goes sour, threatens US national honor deeply and for a long time.

The Census as described in the constitution appears quite simple. Count everyone in every state — man, woman, child, slave, free, recent immigrant, old landowner, and then allocate House Seats based on the total numbers. For all states that meant counting everyone who might one day be able to vote, even women and children. For southern states that meant also counting the slaves even though they would never be able to vote. Seats were apportioned by total population partly because the total electoral role was so tiny.

Trump and his allies want to add a question to the 2020 census identifying whether the person being counted is a citizen. Immigrants who are undocumented would be mad to answer such a question since it would give the agents who might deport them an actual address to search. For the Republicans non-answering immediately cuts the number of seats allocated to the Democratic leaning, immigrant heavy regions of the country. It also appears likely that they might cut children and others included in the census but not of voting age out of the numbers used for the allocation of seats. In both these ways the Trump administration proposes an allocation process in direct contradiction to the process used at the nation's founding.

Trump lost at the Supreme Court because it became clear that the administrative reasoning behind adding the question to the census was unpersuasive. Chief Justice Roberts claimed that convincing reasons could have passed muster but that the Trump administration had not provided them. Constitutional cases often rest on construing "intent" and just before the ruling came out hard drives belonging to a dead Republican operative came to light clearly revealing that the official reasons offered were a complete fraud. Did that shift Roberts vote? We will never know.

We do know that the Attorney General immediately announced the Feds would NOT add the question. We also know that within days Trump himself had overruled the Justice Department and was looking for ways to add it after all. Not the best way to endear himself to the Chief Justice who undoubtedly considers himself to be Trump's equal in governing the USA.

This case is far from over. Even if the question does not get onto the forms, it is clear that immigrant communities are already spooked. Getting them to believe that it is safe to trust the anonymity of the census will be an uphill task. In that sense the nefarious endeavors of the Republicans' backroom boys have already achieved their desired outcome.

Intellectually I find the whole issue fascinating. It is fascinating that a technical matter like a census is even included in the Constitution. That document centers on offices and political procedure. There is concern to avoid outside influence in the political procedures and concern for corruption, and then there is the census. In a country that is huge geographically with a dispersed and inaccessible

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population, requiring a nationally organized vote count makes good sense but somehow it seems so very very technical and down to earth.

And then one realizes that the census was essential to that original slavery-oriented gerrymander. How would the southern states get their extra seats unless everyone, including slaves, were to be counted?

That, I would argue makes the clearest case of all for counting every single person in the USA on the day the census paper gets filled in. If Georgia could count slaves in 1800 to increase its seat count, then in 2020 New Mexico should also be able to count everyone, regardless of immigration status.

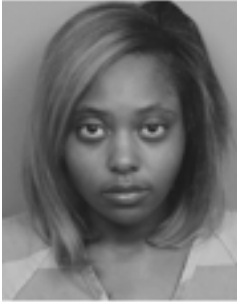
Trying get a “good” count. For ordinary Americans this is a wait and see moment. What does Trump actually try to do by himself with Executive orders? Does Roberts slap him on the wrist or does he let it pass?

Either way, sometime next year there will be jobs available, dozens of them in every state, for census takers, for people to go door to door to get the forms filled in. Most years these jobs go to the under-employed. They are temporary and not particularly well paid.

In 2020, even though I don't need the work, I will try to get involved in some way in setting up the work that census takers do. For nearly 30 years I participated in the US electoral process even though I was not a citizen. When I took the final step, my friends seem genuinely pleased that I had made the commitment and I understand why voting is a privilege confined to citizens. Nonetheless, being counted as present is a first crucial step and at the invitation of Chief Justice Roberts, I am allowing myself to **TRY** to do what I can in 2020 to help everyone in the country actually get counted.

WOMEN'S WORK — Christine LaGarde and Marshae Jones

LaGarde and Jones each graced the front pages of the New York Times recently. LaGarde's nomination to be head of the ECB, central bank for all countries in the Euro currency, was announced on July 2.



Jones indictment and arrest following the death of her unborn child, became public a few weeks earlier. Jones lost the baby after being shot during a fight but it was she and not the shooter who was indicted.



The question is not what do they represent? These images reveal two women in seemingly quite different circumstances from each other.

The deeper question is how do these two women inform “**We Tried?**”

The Jones case first. I argued in an earlier pamphlet that it is time to get the Federal court system out of the abortion issue. I knew then and still recognize that mine is an unusual position in the progressive communities with which I am normally in alliance. Nothing about the Jones case has changed this view. For those beyond the reaches of day to day US media dramas, I should add that the indictment against Jones has been dropped, presumably because the small Alabama prosecutor's office which issued it wants to fade out of sight once more. National and international news coverage is not what most people want, particularly not in this era of viral social media.

In that earlier pamphlet I suggested that we might be better off if women in hard places could ally across state lines without the heavy hand of the Feds reducing our bodies to components of US Constitutional law. Jones' case exemplifies what I mean. Spreading stories is easier now than it was in the Jim Crow days of the 1950s so, when justice goes badly astray Federal marshals are not the only means to achieve corrective action. The Jones indictment is gone, the aftermath of considerable external attention and pressure. This is good news, even knowing that merely being arrested must have imposed real trauma on a women who had already lived such huge losses in the shooting itself.

When Indiana's legislature passed draconian laws limiting the rights of the LGBT community, a similar, immediate and widespread reaction led to corporate boycotts of the state. A year later tallies of the 120 anti LGBT bills before Republican controlled legislatures showed that not one had even gone as far as their Governor's desk. California has forbidden the spending of state money on travel to the 4 states with particularly egregious discriminatory legislation enacted against the LGBT community. It does not take the Federal government for States to resist each other's cruelties.

Hence, for now I rest with my earlier argument — it is time to get the Federal government out of the business of monitoring our reproductive systems. Equally important, however, if we are to be able to say **We Tried** we must be ready to raise in our home states the outrage and a boycott against Alabama, Missouri, Georgia and others that resist the recent spate of abortion legislation across the

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former Confederacy, an outrage which is comparable to the outrage that has been so effective in blocking the worst of the anti-LGBT bills.

I am sometimes mystified by the ease with which the LGBT outrage led to legislative restraint while women are being hammered, and then I remember that the Jones case really did bring change. Also US misogyny is a deeply held trait, so visceral and hostile that it took my European trained mind a long time to grasp. To Try in the USA means to work on local resistance against the key States leading the assault on women. Their legislators are hoping to get a US Supreme Court ruling overturning *Roe v. Wade*. I do not fear that overturning *Roe* means we will lose all rights to abortion. It will mean more work state by state across our disagreements. Guided by our LGBT brothers and sisters, we can find ways to challenge Alabama and Georgia at home without getting the Supremes involved.

La Garde presents a completely different set of issues but one which may be rather harder for ordinary people to engage than the Jones case. Interviewed a few weeks ago by Trevor Noah on the *Daily Show*, LaGarde agreed with Noah's speculative comment that women at high levels routinely get offered true leadership only when the institutions they are to lead are genuinely precarious. The Glass Cliff Noah called it and LaGarde agreed, fervently. She had been made head of the IMF in the midst of the global financial crisis following the Lehmann Brothers collapse. She is nominated for the ECB presidency at a moment when the Euro currency is again facing serious risks of economic collapse. Brexit is not directly involved because Britain still uses their own Pound but a British crash out of Europe would damage every one. At the very same time, economic instability is once again haunting Greece and Italy to say nothing of the weaker ends of Eastern Europe.

The ECB presidency in 2020 may well be a poison chalice, and LaGarde is not the only woman suddenly being offered European leadership. Ursula von der Leyen, Germany's Defense Minister is being nominated as head of the European Commission, charged with completing Brexit a project she does not even wish were happening.

In Britain, Theresa May shows all the signs of having actually been poisoned by the chalice she accepted when PM David Cameron wandered nonchalantly away from his Brexit Referendum crisis. Within a few weeks May will be retiring to the "back benches" of Parliament. One wonders whether, after such a bruising three years, she will ever again raise her voice in The House. And what of George Osborn, Cameron's partner in the Referendum crime? He is said to be angling for LaGarde's IMF job, now that the world has survived the 2007/2008 meltdown. God help all fragile nations if he gets it since all he knows is austerity!!!! The profligate poor shall be starved to teach them never to try to live as well as the rich routinely do.

Surely a woman as talented, elegant and widely respected as LaGarde hardly needs our support and help? Just ask Hillary Clinton and Theresa May. Well dressed and clever is not enough in a world with more than a few truly crazy forces swirling. LaGarde will face both Boris Johnson and Donald Trump imposing their unexamined theories on major economies. Mark Carney, the Canadian who heads the Bank of England may be smart and restrained like LaGarde but he will have little power over Johnson,

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should the new PM start down the kind of lunatic economic paths he is currently threatening. No, LaGarde almost certainly faces a harrowing few years. Let me end, however, on a brighter note.

Another anniversary is already underway, this one commemorating the 50 years which have passed since Shirley Chisholm began her work representing Brooklyn in the US House of Representatives. Quite soon after, fervently opposed to the war in Vietnam and with strong ideas about economic and racial justice, she even joined the contest for President of the United States. In that time, with those values, few in the US media even considered her as entered into the Presidential horse-race they were handicapping back in 1972. When I think about leaders like Chisholm, like Christine LaGarde, like my friend Sheila Forbes, like the philosopher Michelle Moody Adams, I realize the biggest contribution I can make to their success is to recognize whole heartedly, even when others cannot manage to do so: **They Are Already Trying.**

Bio

Helena Meyer-Knapp is a scholar/activist, an immigrant for whom 2019 marks the 50th anniversary of her arrival to live and work in the USA. That work centers on peace-making. Her life includes a marvelous family as well.

She earned a BA in History at Oxford in the UK the country of her birth and younger years, and an MA in Communications and Ph.D. in Interdisciplinary Political Studies in the USA.

Her scholarly projects include *Dangerous Peace-Making*, a book published in 2003. It covers seven cases in different countries where serious attempts at peace-making were underway. The book ends examining the challenge of post war justice and reconciliation. Dr. Meyer-Knapp has also published essays on applied ethics, and on linkages between war and peace heritage-narratives and personal identity.

She was a member of the faculty at the Evergreen State College, (international relations and political studies) from 1984 - 2017. Since 2001 her research projects have taken her regularly to NE Asia, most often to Japan but also to South Korea.

An activist in public affairs, since the 1970s, she focused most of her efforts on local and national elections and on referenda in support of the Campaign for a Nuclear Weapons Freeze. Her college teaching has also centered on engagement in public life, encouraging students to gather the materials, the skills and the momentum they needed to participate in the community on their own behalf.



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