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Dissension and Democracy

Dissension, a rejection of the current in play powers in an unorthodox way (such as violence, breaking law, or supporting causes that will rebuild the foundation of an organization), is a natural progression of disagreement in situations where no all agreeable compromises can be met between all parties at play. Centralized Republican-Democracy (Our current, post-confederate system in which the federal government has more power than county or state) is inherently built off compromises that make it humanly impossible to satisfy everyone, therefore dissent comes into play as a natural form of practical disagreement.

Imagine two disagreeing parties over the legality of gun ownership. Gun ownership is an all or nothing deal for both parties, so any compromise will leave either unhappy. Both parties see the issue as greatly important and both are willing to talk to one another about the issue. In this case though, neither of them are willing to budge, even after heated debate. Both side's justification is based on something metaphysical such as morality. If either party's policy is enacted, the other party will be deeply upset, possibly on a moral level, and would want to reject it. If both sides are sound in their reasoning and we have no absolute science to making good political decisions (as of current, politics is not a solved subject so we don't), we have no objective way to measure the numerical merit of either party's position. From this conclusion we must assume that neither party has an absolute right to govern over the other due to the lack of an objective basis. Thus, in such a scenario like this, neither party's policy should be enacted. This simple argument here is just one example of an issue that can arise in terms of policy making and debate: if there is no good compromise, then no one can get what they want. It would be ideal to do nothing, but having a hole in the law is essentially permissive to what isn't being regulated, thus leading credence to one side (in this case, the allowance for gun rights) to be accepted as the norm; in law, inaction is an action. This leads to a conundrum where something must be done, but whatever is done will displease someone. Take the gun example, and now apply it to something more dividing: What should be done about abortion? Should we allow the death penalty? Does a company have to cater to homosexuals if they do not wish to? Are media platforms bound by the First Amendment? What should we do about the college debt and tuition problem? Should we have social programs? In all cases, a sound, *a priori* argument could be made for either side, but some of these arguments conflict with one another, depend on different value systems, and find themselves muddled with inconsistencies, personal axioms, and other plagues of the mind that undermine overall narrative. This causes great issues as people can make sound arguments in a vacuum, but the more basic one gets to a justification, the more muddled, the less precise, and the less cohesive an argument for

something becomes. This fact is especially true when one gets closer to a lower level, folk politics that has less philosophical rigor put into it. In cases like above where an action must be taken, but it will anger some form of the population, the only good option for the angry population is dissent. In a Centralized Republican-Democracy where laws are made at a macro scale (in our case, a nation that is over 3 million square miles of land, a population of over 300 million people, and hundreds, if not thousands, of cultures living in it) it is humanly impossible to create legislature that will appease all parties. So even those who disagree with the macro-enacted laws will still have to live under them (if those who are unhappy change said laws that make them unhappy, someone else will be unhappy under the new laws). Those living under laws that they see as unjust may perceive what they see as a form of tyranny (this realization can be as agreeable as a black man calling Jim Crow tyranny or as egregious as a pedophile calling anti-child pornography laws tyranny, it all depends the value system an individual holds). This perception of tyranny can cause a sense of agency to do something about the issue. Boorstin sees that debate and petition as a good exercise of this agency (and in a perfect world where decisions were easy, congress was made of angels, and everyone had the same value system, it would be), but if debate falls upon deaf ears, no one is willing to hear out a point, or an agreement cannot be made, dissent becomes the only other viable option to make change come about. Dissension rises when legal deafness comes into play; If someone ignores, stonewalls, or doesn't attend to an issue in law, politics, diplomacy, or economics, an unorthodox, and possibly violent rejection, becomes the best way to get attention. This is especially evident in a society such as the United States that focuses on majority appeal, populism through democracy, and centralized media for information to be dispersed as each of these play into the deafness and unwillingness for compromise that politician has. To make an example out of contemporary history and American history, Asking the government for police reform did not get anything substantial done, but rioting, protesting, violence, and other forms of dissension did. Asking the British to allow the colonists to have legal and economic independence did nothing, but violence, pillaging, rioting, and war did. If someone wants something done, but the leaders are not listening, such is the case in the United States as of current, they must be willing to tread over others, be violent, reject the current power, and strike fear into those at the top. All of this comes together to mean one thing: the disagreements that find themselves at the forefront of our legislative bodies attention are going to be the most controversial and dividing issues, and the mere thought of a decision being made causes dissent. This makes a direct acceleration between disagreement and dissent possible under the system we have today, making them now related with dissent being the conclusion of disagreements. There are multiple structural problems with Republican-Democracy that allow for dissent to be the final place of disagreement between parties. Republican-Democracy is an inherently flawed system that puts value upon a person's personal needs and emotions rather than skills, ability, or knowledge to define the law. This issue comes from the equal voting rights situation and the inevitable nature of such situations¹. In a civilization where all citizens are given power to sway government

¹Democracy naturally works for the expansion of who can vote due to the "liberation" culture that surrounds it. Due to the fact that many

action, including actions that are usually specialized to areas the citizen may not be adept in (such as environmental regulations, finances, psychological aspects of criminal justice, the building of infrastructure in non-local areas, technological adoptions, and meta-ethics) problems arise. What is popular rather than what is good becomes the forefront of right and wrong in a debate, no longer is a proper, neutral expert opinion valid, but instead the man with the biggest following and the loudest mouth. This at first seems more like a critique of democracy than how dissent is a result of disagreement, but from Republican-Democracy's overreach in legal applicative scope and enfranchisement of the unspecialized, a link is made. In a Democratic-Republican system where socialites, populists, and figureheads rather than philosophers, scientists, and the knowledgeable are in control of the narrative of policy, stubbornness, chauvinism towards an ideologue, and cults of personality are formed. No longer is a candidate, a news anchor, or a journalist a bringer of policy suggestions, truth, and enlightening, new fact, but instead they are a spokesman for your ideas, your way of living, your ethics, and your life. This fanaticism, and other types of social decay, puts people into a position that makes them willing to push the Overton Window: The Left gets more Left, the Right gets more Right, and thus we find ourselves in a position where compromise is less and less possible or desirable for either side². In essence, people's beliefs are reflective of the world's decay and so they attach themselves to figureheads and movements in desperation. This then makes it so these people will defend their figureheads like a tribe would defend an effigy of their God. This radicalism then creates an unwillingness to compromise due to the widely different, contradictory, or sometimes absurd needs of each side from governing groups. This issue, in turn, creates a scenario where dissention rather than debate becomes more effective at pushing a narrative. This is the natural conclusion to the Democratic-Republican experiment and, under this system, makes it where disagreement and dissent go hand-in-hand with one another. Dissent is a natural part of disagreement when compromises are impossible. Our Centralized Democratic-Republican system is the best creator of these situations that disallow compromise during times of societal change. Thus, to accept "democracy" as a good thing and "disagreement" as a good thing, especially when combined, would lead to a situation in which one would have to accept that dissension, a natural by-product of the combination of the current democratic system and disagreement, is also a good thing. If one would like to deny this assertion and say that dissenting is a bad thing, but still democracy and disagreement is a good thing, then they would be denying a basic logical structure: What comes from democracy and disagreement is good (or is at least better than the alternatives), Dissention is a natural by-product of democracy and disagreement, thus Dissention is good OR Democracy and Disagreement are not ideal. To deny argument would be to accept predicates (Democracy

of the same justifications for voting rights applying to some classes of people can easily be applied to others (especially if there is a culture of equality at play), there's a natural tendency for democratic governments to enfranchise those who did not hold voting rights before. This process can be accelerated by social movements (in the case of the United States: women's voting rights and the black Civil Rights movement). Although enfranchisement is nice in some aspects as it allows communities based around certain characteristics to self-govern and it allows for those with high amount of skills to benefit areas of importance regardless of immutable characteristics, it also has its problems on a federal scale as it adds more moving variables, wants, and needs to the public sphere of talking, thus creating more situations in where dissention can happen.

²Although this is an observation and one may be able to infer my opinions, there is not an intended or implied stance here on what side of politics is correct. The only claim being made is that against Boorstin's quote and the context around it that undermines it.

and Disagreement is good) of the logical structure, see that the logical structure is valid, and then deny the outcome (dissent coming from democracy) even after the outcome has been proven. If one is still willing to subscribe to their belief at this point, one must be mistaken in logic and needs to rethink, totally insane, or have some way of undermining the proofs given. If one would like to challenge that what comes out of Democracy and disagreement is good (or at least better than the rest of the options) as a means of undermining the quote, then we would be opening ourselves up to changing how the system works and therefore undermine the quote as a whole.

As our nation currently stands, it is impossible to give certain types of rules to certain types of people based on characteristics that differentiate them for two reasons. One being the unpopularity of such a ruling (as this is associated with the horrible actions of Jim Crow and other right suppression tactics) and the 14th amendment's first section that implies an equality under the law for all US Citizens. This creates issues in scenarios where controversial laws cannot have discrimination in who they apply to. For example, If a fundamentally Christian area wished not to allow abortion in their lands due to their belief that such a thing is an abomital sin, they could not enforce such a thing despite the fact the fact the land is controlled by people who wish not for these things to happen. This can apply the other way too, If a homosexual would like to be married and lives in a town that is friendly towards such a thing, but the state he lives in denies these sorts of marriages based on the laws of the state, then a problem arises³. In both situations, a non-local power is overriding the will of the locale. In the current centralized situation where the Federal government has more power than the locale and is highly out of touch with their own citizen's wants and needs, nothing can be done. If abortion was banned or if gay marriage was banned across the nation on a federal level, nothing can be done. This ties back into the fact that discrimination between people due to laws comes back into play: The Federal government, even if they wanted to, could not make certain people immune to social laws or fall under social laws while making a ruling due to the aforementioned unpopularity and the 14th amendment, thus all actions done by the Federal government have to be all encompassing and apply to every citizen equally, even if the citizens and interest groups of the United States are morally, ethically, racially, religious, sexually, politically, and philosophically different from one another. The issue that is struck here is alarming. If the federal government acts, it ends up being forced to oppress some form of people. If the federal government doesn't act, they will anger people by allowing what is perceived to be injustice. Due to the now populist, zealous, and emotional nature of politics, these decisive, uprooting actions that disallow the locale to differentiate right and wrong for itself, but rather give it to the federal government are becoming more common. When someone sees something they don't like, they will support a candidate who will fight it, but not a candidate on a local level where change can be small, discriminatory, and more consented to, but instead change will be on a wide scale across the nation and in a smug fashion. Progressives push for social change that uproots us from our foundational way of thinking; Traditionalists push for a consistency or reverting to a time akin to the past structures of before. These two sides battle one another and try to force their

³ Assume this is before federal legalization

beliefs on each other and in a Centralized Republican-Democracy such as this one, only one can come out on top. Even if the great compromise of "states rights" or "county rights" comes into play, there will always be those pushing for the upper levels of governance to act and do something so long as that governance has power. If such a decision is ever made, then disenfranchisement will come into play. Legalize gay marriage? Christians are angry. Make homosexual marriage illegal? Progressives are angry. Create healthcare social programs? Libertarians and Rightists are angry. Don't create healthcare social programs? Progressives and Socialists are angry. No matter the situation there will be disagreements, and that'd be fine if everyone could agree to get along and ditch their beliefs for some greater unity, but that isn't modern America, that is not the situation we are in, and thus more and more issues that are uncompromisable due to their binary and dividing nature. One solution for this problem would be the bridging of the gap in America, but it is painfully clear that this is not going to happen. As tensions heighten and dissent occurs, reduction of local autonomy comes to fruition, decisions by federal entities are made, and dissension, in response to those actions before, occurs. This is something that Boorstin happened to be correct about: dissent produces dissension, though he does ignore the fact that dissension finds its starting point in disagreement. The most common way throughout history to unite the United States was a common enemy or calamity. World War I, Pearl Harbor, 9/11, are prime examples of the uniting capabilities of tragedy, but even a calamity that disrupts the nation's existence will eventually fall into a modern form of partisanship and disagreement. Covid-19 and Global Warming are both swell examples in which something that should unite the population against a common enemy has become yet another issue that divides it. While it is true that almost everyone wants to do something about the issues enumerated, the way to do it is where controversy comes in. These controversies have created debate, something Boorstin would be happy about, but it has also produced dividing blame and outright dissension, rejection, and hostility amongst the populous when it comes to the two sides of the argument. This is especially true of Covid-19 in where some people simply ignore orders, regulations, and other stipulations as they believe that said orders have gone too far. The political, social, and economic gaps in our nation simply cannot be fixed by what commonly united us in the past: a common enemy. The division in the nation is too jarring for such a thing to have any lasting effect. Thus, the nation finds itself in a position that, so long as actions happen, dissension will be generated and nothing can be done to stop it. This dissension cannot be suppressed with the traditional "common enemy" method that has worked so well before, thus the nation is forced into a position that makes it take upon this dissension in full force, in our case, by rejection of mandates, riots, violence, and other forms of legal, moral, or otherwise active rejections. To summarize in an analogy, there is no good pressure valve on the pipes of America to release the pressure, so the pressure and straining just builds as disagreements happen and actions are made. With each passing argument, tragedy, question, and movement, there is disagreement. From this, usually praised disagreement becomes dissension that makes the polarization of America a real, tangible, and possibly violent thing. Even if we could somehow glue the left and right back together, the nation is still resting on broken foundations. As it stands, we have a federal over local system that

currently controls our legislation, execution, and justice systems. This less than desirable scenario is what allows disagreement to become dissent. If it is desirable to make dissent to not derive from disagreement, as Boorstin's quote allows us to infer, then disagreement or democracy must go away, be reduced in scope, or wain in influence. There are plenty of ways to go about this, but all of them would require a radical change in American politics, so much so that the America that Boorstin refers to would have to be absolutely and totally destroyed; If the foundational problem is to be fixed, then what Boorstin refers to as "liberal society" would cease existing in any recognizable way. What Boorstin refers to as a "liberal society" is a society of the late 60s to early 70s: a time that is still comparable to today's society due to the similiary in governing powers. This change in liberal society, in all likelihood, would either be by a relinquishment of democracy as a governing fact of life or rethinking the application of it so that it has extrodinarily less impact on the day-to-day life. This comes back to a major flaw in Boorstin's argument, it ignores the fact that disagreement, when accelerated, leads to dissent (in essence making dissent a type of disagreement) and that such a rule applies to both the liberal society of his time as much as it applies to the liberal society of ours. To summarize the lingustical argument against Boorstin, if the rules of the nation are changed in a way so that disagreement doesn't lead to dissent, a reflective change would need to happen in the nation. The only possible reflective changes in the nation would be those that would undermine the "liberal society" that is mentioned. If one is to undermine or change the definition of a "liberal society", he or she would end up undermining the quote by proxy as the definition of a liberal society is a pedicate for the quote to be true. From a governing stance, this quote is flawed. This quote doesn't recognize the nature of our government and how it, by structure, makes disagreement turn into dissent. It also does not realize that bridging the gap is humanly impossible under such a system like this, therefore meaning that, so long as we are a Centralized Republican-Democracy (what Boorstin inadvertently refers to when he says "liberal society" due to the politics and governance of the modern time, nothing can be done to prevent the modern tragedy that is America. Even if we could somehow magically fix everything and bridge the gap, we would still live in a liberal society that allows for said gaps to form, and given infinite time in such an entropy-filled place like the United States, it will happen again. If we could also prevent it from happening again by changing the structure of the nation, then Boorstin's quote would simply not apply as the liberal society he refers to would be in no way comparable to the society that would result from such a change, therefore making the quote linguistically impossible to be true under a situation of reforming the nation.

While some arguments have been brought up and refuted in refutation to the arguments presented here, there are still multiple others that desire proper addressing: A situation in which Centralized Republican-Democracy could find us out of the situation we are in exists and in such a case this quote could come true. For example, Imagine a scenario in which a magical Joe Biden acts as the great centrist unifier and can bridge the gap of the nation and also prevents that gap from ever reforming, or any gap like it from forming again all while preserving the Centralized Democratic-Republicanism. In such a scenario, would the quote be applicable? To answer this question, no it would

certainly not be due to the metaphysical impossibility of such a scenario. While it is logically possible for magical Joe Biden to save America and maintain its status as a Centralized Republican-Democracy, it is not nomologically possible for such a thing to happen. Although, we can think of the scenario that doesn't mean it will happen. So long as the argument that America is structurally broken and will lead to division is true, then this is not possible to be the case. To hit upon the same issue again, the quote would structurally fail if a division is healed. One of the predicates for the truthfulness of the quote is that "Dissent is the great problem of America today". If dissention is removed from the equation by removing division, a scenario would be the case that the quote no longer applies due to the fact that Dissent no longer is a part of the equation. So if unity is created, the quote fails, if unity is not created, the quote fails too.

The quote, while having its merits, hinges on dissent and disagreement being two independent concepts rather than being a causally linked chain and is therefore flawed. This dissent-disagreement structure is reinforced by the subject of the quote, Centralized Democratic-Republican America, being a flawed system that allows for disagreement-to-dissent situations to propagate. If one were to modify the subject of the quote in any way, then the quote would no longer be applicable and therefore would be invalid by default. The quote bases itself off of multiple assumptions about "liberal society" and "[the] America [of] today", and therefore cannot be valid.