

Working title:

Baby Acres: a road map to make society suck less in about 60 years

by Shira Destinie A. Jones, c. 2021

Chapters: 12 chapters total, total wd count: 45k wds

(4 phases: how each ties into one of FDR's freedom's)

**Chapter summary:**

*Preface:* (posted March 24th & 31st as two parts as reasoning behind this project)

*Intro. chapter (chptr 0):* 2500 wds

-900: done, 31.3.21

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-700: started 14:54, 2 Apr, done: 16:14 PST

chapters 1-5: Part I

chapter 1: 4 k wds on why we need both equ. + justice, & why in 4 phases

chapter 2: 2500 wds 1.) PublicDomainInfrastructure

chapter 3: 3500 wds 2.) Adulthood Challenge

chapter 4: 3k wds 3.) Complimenting currencies, UBI

chapter 5: 3k wds 4.) Free food, water, shelter + duty to serve in local or federal government via Sortition

chapter 6: Getting there from here, non-violently

chapters 7-10: part II

chp 7: 5k wds

cp 8: 5k

cp 9: 5k

chp 10: 5k wds

chapter 11: summary: 2500 words

Acks: Melanie Reynolds, for title and editing suggestions

## Preface

This preface begins to explain some of the reasoning that led to this book, as *A Vision for A Kinder Society, in 60 Years*.

(Thanks to JYP and Tammy for the title ideas for *Baby Acres...*) The goal is to lay out a roadmap for a fully inclusive society for all of us. I'd love to see other such roadmaps toward a Kinder World, but thus far, I don't see any fully drawn up plans, so I figured I'd put my ever-evolving roadmap out there for scrutiny. Part of that map includes posts that I have written before, as I piece ideas I've had over the last 10 to 15 years together into one coherent framework. I hope to offer that framework as one possible vision of what a society might look like that could eventually pass the Rawlsian Veil of Ignorance Test.

This framework started as The Four Freedoms for All HumanKind Movement idea, but then I realized that a movement needs more than one person, so I thought I'd better try to explain it and get some other folks to help me tracing this path, or possible path, forward for our society. Back around 2011 or so, I had the idea that if we had a modern inclusive rite of passage adapted to our current society, we could build a better definition of what it means to be an adult, and how we figure out at what point that time has arrived, for any given person. Some sort of definition, and then test of passage, made universal, could be a more satisfactory criterion, or set of criteria, than mere age, whether 18, 21, or 25, as has been in different times and places in American society. That led me to imagine the Adulthood Challenge, with its various prerequisites and the final test. That led me to wonder how on earth we could bring such a new ritual into general acceptance as a means-test for adulthood, and what that could mean for those who pass, or don't. What sort of society would we have in which some number of 40 or 50 year old persons are not considered legal adults, and what would that mean for such a society? How do you determine who is reasonably able to conduct the responsibilities of adulthood, and what exactly are those responsibilities, since the state of being an "*adult*" comes with duties, but also grants rights and privileges denied to children. And you cannot have a functioning society with absolutely no bar, or you then have to grant driving, governing, and other privileges and other decision-making functions to anyone and everyone at any time, which clearly will not work. So, the need for some way to decide on the maturity and preparation level of each person in society led me to wonder what levels of preparation, and in what areas, an adult in our society is expected to have, and how one could fairly test that across the entire society. This, of course, reminded me of the woeful state of our public education system in the US, not to mention other parts of our social infrastructure which are in the public domain, such as library systems, and health care.

That brought me to another problem: when one has not had access to basic necessities, like health care, information, education, and transportation, as a child, one reaches (assuming one survives long enough) the age of juridic adulthood lacking much of what kids who grew up in less traumatizing or negligent or abusive or poverty-stricken homes generally have. So, backing up from adulthood, I wondered how we can build, or rather, what would be needed, to build a society that ensured access to those tools for each and every child. Starting with food, clothing, shelter and health care for kids whose parents either die young and had no other family, or kids who never had adequate parents to begin with. Clearly, state Child Protective Service systems are not good enough, judging by "*foster care-to-prison pipeline*" statistics. (*I'll come back to further ideas about this in future posts as part of Phases III and IV...*)

If you follow my blog regularly, you might have noticed that those four basic necessities, health care, information, education, and transportation, are something I rotate into my posts on a regular

basis, under the name of a hash tag #publicdomaininfrastructure. That is because a couple of years ago, I realized that those four basics had the potential to solve a lot of problems for a lot of people, if our social infrastructure systems like **Public Libraries**, **Public Health Care**, **Public Education** (for both kids and adults), and **Public Transportation** were upgraded. A lot. With those systems adequately funded and utilized by the middle classes as well as the poor, you could also get a situation going where people meet and greet and get to know each other more, as well as more attention to the needs of those public goods than merely as a hand-out for those who cannot or wish not to use the privatized version of all of these public goods. Then I realized that without empathy, you cannot have any of those things. So, then I began to wonder what a society could look like that met all of our needs, while keeping our freedoms intact, and still allowing each individual person to go as far as that person's potential would allow, creatively, athletically, intellectually, etc. Without having to dig out of a childhood hellhole just to get to the starting line. What various shapes could such a society (indeed, societies) take, and how could you ensure that any and all of those various shapes remained just? Obviously, you don't go from where we are now, to a just and safe world for all of us, including women in Africa, in a day. So, I divided the various parts of ideas I've had over the years into four sets, thinking that a movement can surely be built in 15 years or so, and then gave somewhat arbitrary names to each of those sets of ideas, to phase in one after another as part of a path to one possible offering of a vision for a better world. And the path, or paths, will certainly not be simple, but "another world is possible," clearly, because we have 6000 years of recorded human history to show us that nearly every possible form of governance has existed, and ceased to exist, on our planet among human beings. So, I wondered, how we could conceive and plan a set of possible visions for a society that would be just, safe, free, and fair, for each and every human being on this planet. I wondered why I've not seen someone write a book about such an idea, or set of ideas. Then, I wondered if I should write one, myself.

The overall goal still being to lay out a roadmap for a fully inclusive society for all of us, I am turning, this week, to Phase III. Just a short overview, mind you, to explain what my thoughts are as I start to work on fleshing the whole idea out for the book. I realized that any society that could pass the Rawlsian Veil of Ignorance Test would still be connected to societies that might not pass that test, which would be a problem for that just, or even merely less unsafe, society. A serious problem.

That meant that All HumanKind would have to be included in both Phases III and IV, since otherwise, large waves of economic migration would be generated from unsafe places, toward any society where security and basic needs were met. Kind of like now, with the waves of refugees fleeing the on-going wars in various parts of the world toward Europe and the US.

If you follow my blog or my Twitter feed regularly, you know of a hash tag #publicdomaininfrastructure. That tag encompasses four basic parts of our social infrastructure system which I think could give the most ‘bang for the buck’ if we devoted more support to them: Public Libraries, Public Health Care, Public Education (for both kids and adults), and Public Transportation. With those areas shored up, our society then has the foundation for more participatory and inclusive governance structures, that can also scale up to fit in other parts of the world, as those areas levels of development increase, a bit like accession to the European Union.

Phases I and II develop the key basic stepping stones for a just society, building on empathy and critical thinking skills, the four key Public Domain Infrastructure systems, and an educated public able and willing to protect and teach themselves and others how to stay safe emotionally, physically, financially, and intellectually. That means having systems that support those needs, like health care, libraries, well-rounded educational systems for all ages, and solid mass transit. We must start by building those foundations in our own country, but they are also sorely needed in every country around the world, as attested to by many NGOs and UN agencies. And it is with those international bodies that we can work to ensure that those basic health, information access, education and transportation needs are met for all people of the world.

In Phase III, both in the United States and in other parts of the world as they are interested and able, ideas like Participatory Budgeting, Citizens Juries, Ranked Choice Voting or IRV, and local complementary currencies to supplement existing national monetary supplies can be tried and adjusted or abandoned depending on the needs of the community in question. All of these tools are part of including a wider array of people in the decision-making processes that determine how resources are allocated among people in a given locality. These tools each depend, however, on understanding the importance of cooperation and acting in good faith toward ones fellow citizens and residents.

So, Phase III would require an expanded world view, and a population ready to reach out to others, to learn new languages, to see through the lenses of other people’s experiences. Thus, phases I and II are intended to build the necessary empathy, foundational bases for understanding, and then the values and skills for protecting others that could then allow such growth.

## Introduction: Empathy-building as an ongoing part of all 4 Phases

Having cited some of the reasoning which led up to the inception of this project, we now delve into the foundational concepts behind each phase. Empathy-building, through various means, is a continual part of each phase, as without empathy, no society can be just or safe or kind. This vision of one potential just society is based on the ideas that such a society must be defined by its levels of both empathy and of full respect for the Human Rights of every living person. Such rights as the right to equity, the right to help create peaceful change, and to have each of those four freedoms that President Franklin Delano Roosevelt spoke of, embody the essence of a just society. But that essence still requires some tangible way to measure the level of justice, change institutions and systems that need changing, and to define specific ideals upon which those justice seeking institutions build, and to what particular ends.

Human Rights must be the starting point for any society which seeks to be a just society. The application of named rights for each human being in an equitable manner is essential for a society to be truly just. Some way to measure that application is also necessary. John Rawls proposed a test for determining whether a given society could be considered just, via a thought experiment. While that test will neither be debated nor explained in full here, further exploration of his writings will show that his proposal involved imagining oneself, after having designed a just society, as being given the choice to become part of that society, but without any knowledge of the position in which one, personally, would enter it. Rawls suggested that if a person would not be willing to enter a given society with no knowledge, or under a thick veil of ignorance, as to what that person's position would be in the society, then that society might not be a just society. For example, no reasonable person, not knowing what position he or she might have, would consent to become part of US society, because if the position of that person turns out to be one of a homeless person, then the lived experience of the vast majority of people who experience homelessness would indicate that entering society in that position would very nearly doom one's chances in life. Thus, Rawls' test would show that the current state of American society is not that of a just society. As many have pointed out.

It can be argued that unfair treatment of outsiders by members of even a just society affects all members within that society, causing divisions and even justifying mistreatment of dissenting opinions, rendering that formerly just society unjust in the act. This shows that even a just society would have to have ways of interacting with other societies that set boundaries and spell out ideals to which all connected societies could aspire.

Eleanor Roosevelt, in helping to draft the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights, drew heavily on the concept enshrined in the US Declaration of Independence "that all men are created equal... that they are endowed with certain inalienable rights..." which include the right to be treated with equal dignity to that of every other human being, regardless of momentary state of being, such as poverty or wealth, gender, religion or lack thereof, etc. As crucial as to whom these rights apply, the document defined an international standard of what rights should be considered as basic to all human beings. The right not to be tortured is, for example, a basic human right which applies to each and every human being at all times and under all circumstances. Likewise with "the right to life, liberty, and security of person." Certain rights, such as that negating slavery, which is in direct contradiction to the 13th

Amendment to the US federal Constitution, were visionary in their global scope, considering that many nations had not yet completed the rebuilding from the destruction of the second world war, and even that of the first, the Great War. The UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights is thus a fitting starting point for our definition of what, in terms of tangible rights, a just society ought to look like. The definition of those rights does not, in itself, show us all of what a just society looks like, but it is a start, beginning at where we are today, from a documentary and international legal point of view. It shows that to build a truly just society, we do not really have that far to go. With a set of basic human right in place to which everyone around the world has agreed, in principle, we can move on to look at ways in which those rights could potentially be implemented in a way that would be equitable for all human beings on the planet. Given that the current global systems of finance, trade, etc, are clearly highly inequitable, a just society must therefore have mechanisms in place to allow the peaceful changing of the systems of governance, and even of government, allowing citizens within the society to change parts of the system of governing that show themselves to be unjust. Such peaceful revolution, though, revolves around several connected but distinct types of justice, and depends upon the ability of all citizens to make their voices heard in absolutely non-violent, non-threatening, and non-aggressive manners, so that all citizens can feel both heard, and protected.

## Peace and Justice

Peaceful change revolves around various types of justice. Social justice is perhaps the first type of justice that comes to mind, but economic justice, both of outcome and of opportunity, and also climate and other sorts of justice count heavily when considering the factors involved in building a just society.

Social justice is one of the more obvious types of justice, or more visible, in terms of how we human beings treat one another. The basic human rights to dignity, equal treatment under the law, and equal access to resources as seen in the right to due process, competent legal representation, etc, have been the focus of civil rights activism and litigation, most prominently in the 1960s, but reaching much farther back than that, in the United States (*Jones, Stayed on Freedom's Call, P. 20*). Cooperation between many oppressed groups over time has led to a variety of policies aimed at addressing mistreatment of vulnerable people in public venues, often based on visible characteristics such as race, gender, etc. The right to associate and travel, live in safe areas, access social venues, etc, has often been addressed, however, without actively acknowledging the fact that the realistic exercise of these rights is dependent upon the actual ability to pay for access to these rights, as most of our venues in the US require some form of entrance fee, or payment. What often goes unaddressed, and ignored, is the right to economic justice that forms the bedrock of one's ability to gain access to nearly all of these rights, in practical usage. Yet, this lack of acknowledgment and action is not due to lack of warning. Many have pointed out over the years that providing social justice, without providing economic justice, is paying mere lip service to the ideal of a just society.

The calls for economic justice as part of social equity in the United States go back far, but a convenient start might be the most well known of those calls, from the 1960s. In 1963, *The March on Washington* was a march for "jobs and freedom" as part of the long struggle to end Jim Crow, implemented both as social segregation, and also as economic segregation. The economic part of Jim Crow, preventing most Negroes from working in most professional job positions, was the true motor of inequality, leading to both the formation and enforced permanence of a deliberately poverty-stricken underclass constantly obligated to accept any jobs offered by the dominant members of society. The codification of this system based on skin color meant that even after the end, de Jure, of social Jim Crow, the majority of the members of that underclass remained stuck in the position of living in substandard housing and having to accept the lowest paying of jobs because the dominant culture had not changed, even when the laws did. Thus, the legal ability to attend the same cinemas, the same schools, and the same concerts did not grant the financial ability to take advantage of these new rights. Jim Crow was still, economically speaking, alive and well despite new social justice laws. Many observers, from Dr. King himself, who called for a Citizen's Income just a few years after that famous march (*King, Where Do We Go From Here, 1967*), to Joseph Stiglitz, to Steve Pressman, to Thomas Piketty, have continued to point out that economic inequality hampers all forms of justice for vulnerable groups. They also argue that economic inequality exerts increasing pressure toward injustice on all groups, from the dominant down to the most vulnerable, in that society. Thus, social justice and economic justice must really be considered one: two sides of the same coin.

A society which would like to consider itself just toward all of its members, and indeed attempts to provide social and economic justice for all groups, would still be missing something crucial, if

social and economic justice were the only types of justice to be considered. While public goods such as libraries, health care, transportation, and education may be considered part of the social or economic spheres, these systems are also part of a set of pieces of social infrastructure which work in our society both as common touch stones, and as common points of concern. Each person needs access to information, and to community level places for gatherings and entertainment, provided by local libraries. Each person needs health care, and the health of every resident in a society affects every other resident, from the hospital system right down to the sewage and water treatment systems. Transportation is a concern that touches every resident as well, whether driving in a private car, or riding on a trolley, and the culture and education of every resident of a society inform how those modes of transportation will be used, or abused. Yet, information and communication systems, sanitation, transportation, and even schools all impact the local environment, and also pull resources from the local environment. And, as many Native American Tribal councils, like that of the Black Hills, in South Dakota, can confirm, not all lands are treated with equal care. Thus, climate and land or commons based justice must also be considered, as part of the foundation of any just society. Hence, social, economic, and commons based justice must all form part of any discussion or offering of a potential vision for a just society. Those three fundamental forms of justice must also then be made tangible by codifying specific examples of what that might look like. One offering of an example was given to us by a president who saw the need to end both segregation and to list necessary freedoms.



## The Four Fundamental Freedoms and “perpetual peaceful revolution”

The "four essential human freedoms" that President Franklin Delano Roosevelt listed in his famous inaugural (?) speech of 1941 ([https://www.ourdocuments.gov/print\\_friendly.php?flash=false&page=transcript&doc=70&title=Transcript+of+President+Franklin+Roosevelts+Annual+Message+%28Four+Freedoms%29+to+Congress+%281941%29](https://www.ourdocuments.gov/print_friendly.php?flash=false&page=transcript&doc=70&title=Transcript+of+President+Franklin+Roosevelts+Annual+Message+%28Four+Freedoms%29+to+Congress+%281941%29), accessed Friday, 2 April, 2012, 15:15 PST...) are, as the president himself pointed out, a tangible distillation of those Human Rights as a list of freedoms that each both facilitate and require the equitable implementation of the three types of justice mentioned earlier. President Roosevelt put it thusly:

“The first is freedom of speech and expression--everywhere in the world.

The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way--everywhere in the world.

The third is freedom from want--which, translated into world terms, means economic understandings which will secure to every nation a healthy peacetime life for its inhabitants--everywhere in the world.

The fourth is freedom from fear--which, translated into world terms, means a world-wide reduction of armaments to such a point and in such a thorough fashion that no nation will be in a position to commit an act of physical aggression against any neighbor--anywhere in the world. That is no vision of a distant millennium. It is a definite basis for a kind of world attainable in our own time and generation.

”

The president went on to say that "we have been engaged in change -- in a perpetual peaceful revolution -- a revolution which goes on steadily, quietly adjusting itself to changing conditions ... The world order which we seek is the cooperation of free countries, working together in a friendly, civilized society.”

and that

“Freedom means the supremacy of human rights everywhere.“

These words touched off **The** (<https://blogs.loc.gov/loc/2020/08/world-war-ii-the-double-v-campaign/>, accessed 2 April, 2021, 15:35 PST...) **Double V Campaign** of the modern civil rights era. While these rights have yet to be fully realized for all Americans, much less all human beings everywhere, they are, as Roosevelt stated, the start of what any just society must aspire to guarantee to all of its citizens.

That peaceful revolution of which President Roosevelt spoke must make needed changes to the entire set of institutions with which we govern our society so that, as the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. pointed out, “the edifice which produces beggars” is changed into one that produces truly equitable opportunities for all human beings around the world. Clearly, the rebuilding of such a massive edifice as our interconnected web of societal infrastructures, social, economic, physical, and governance-related, requires both time and fore-thought. The task of wrapping up even the most basic of essential human rights into a system capable of guaranteeing that each and every citizen is treated equitably in the light of each of the major types of justice is “a vast project.” Yet it is a project that must be taken on if the promise of those four essential freedoms that President Roosevelt spoke of and Dr. King dreamt of seeing are to be made a reality. It is a project which our founding documents, from the United States Declaration of Independence, to the Preamble to the US Constitution enshrine in law, that “we the people” “are created equal.”

It is equally clear that this is a project which cannot hope to be successful alone, even if undertaken by an entire generation. The goal of building a just society must be one which is undertaken and committed to by an alliance spanning multiple generations. From the Framers of the US Constitution, to President Roosevelt, Dr. Martin Luther King, and Noam Chomsky and John Rawls, together with Naomi Klein, members of Black Lives Matter, to the students from the many schools who have experienced mass shooting traumas, generation upon generation has added its voice to the calls for justice, freedom, and human rights for all citizens. No one community is capable of welding together a system that will be just for all members of society, and no one generation is capable of finishing such a gargantuan task. It is thus incumbent upon all members of society to play a part in contributing to the vision of a just society, whether by putting forth an alternative potential vision of how such a society could function, or by sketching out what some piece of such a society could look like. Changing our societal edifice into one which not only no longer produces suffering, but even encourages the best in all of us, is not a task that even one generation could accomplish alone. We are all indeed in this together, and must do the work, all together. It can be done, if we will it.

“Yes, we can.”

**Temp** space for add suggestions:

1.) Find ... (JYP, 11 or 10 april from HR as Equity Baby Acres Wednesday: "...examples of current or historic societies that have enacted any part of these ideas, even on a smaller micro level. I feel like examples of success would be helpful to a reader struggling to envision how these ideas could be implemented.

”

**Temp** area for rm'd material:

3rd paragraph of Intro. part I, via JYP's comments on Human Rights as Equity post on 8 april, 2021:

( Like Noam Chomsky.

Chomsky and others have written many books and articles detailing a variety of critiques of US and other current societies, in terms of the damage that governments of the United States and other developed nations allow to be done in the name of economic competition. A just society must be just for its own citizens, and must also promote the ideals upon which it is founded in its dealings with other societies. On that basis, Chomsky finds that US treatment of other nations is especially unjust, and that injustice is a reflection of treatment withing US society of the most vulnerable communities within US society, as well, such as Black Americans, refugees, and women of all races. So, the treatment of citizens within a just society must also be mirrored by how that society treats those outside of its boundaries with whom it has dealings, as Chomsky points out on page 83 of his book Profits over People: unfairly vilifying and then crushing a nation for the sake of economic competition is unjust not only to those outside of a society, but even to those within the 'winning' society, as the reality of such behavior is evident even to small children, when viewed without the coloring of propaganda. The effects within US society, for example, of the embargo against Cuba over the long term, have been to harden views in some quarters against any compromise or opening of discussion on the topic, while others in American society have come to see hard-liners insistent on the embargo as both anti-Cuban and even anti-immigration.)

End note: every country must become like Switzerland: multi-lingual federation with citizen military all reservists