

disease control and a food and drug administration, an environmental protection agency, a national park and national monument system, a public resource management system, a civil service to replace the corrupt old spoils system, and on and on. And perhaps the greatest public resource of all is a public system for managing and guaranteeing the functioning of all of these public resources: a government—a system of governing—up to these tasks.

Without all of this, the blessings of modern American private life and private enterprise would not be here. The private depends on the public. Public resources make private life possible.

It doesn't take much to see this. The evidence is all around us every day. There used to be signs on public projects: "Your tax money at work!" But such signs appear no more and the most basic truth of our democracy goes largely unspoken. Why?

Progressives take it for granted, as part of their moral and practical assumptions, like breathing or noting that the sky is blue. This is an important fact about how brains work. Some ideas and some knowledge are so deep that they rarely if ever even come to consciousness. Nobody goes around saying things like, "People breathe," or "You have a nose."

But for conservatives, the very idea that the private depends on the public is anathema—immoral. Conservatives have a different view of responsibility. Whereas progressives believe centrally in empathy (caring about their fellow citizens), both personal and social responsibility, and a commitment toward doing their best toward those ends, conservatives believe only in personal responsibility.

This yields a completely different view of democracy, that democracy provides what they call "liberty"—the ability to seek one's own interests without the responsibility of others to help them, without any responsibility to help their fellow citizens, and without interference from the government.

This is a moral conviction, as deep in the conservative brain as the progressive moral vision is in the progressive brain.

Again, I say "brain"—not "psyche" or "mind"—for a deep and vital reason: All thought is physical, carried out by the neural circuitry in one's brain. Thoughts don't just float in air. As a result, you can only understand