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### Patton

Men, all this stuff you hear about America not wanting to fight, wanting to stay out of the war, is a lot of bullshit. Americans love to fight. All real Americans love the sting and clash of battle. When you were kids, you all admired the champion marble shooter, the fastest runner, the big-league ball players and the toughest boxers. Americans love a winner and will not tolerate a loser. Americans play to win all the time. That's why Americans have never lost and will never lose a war. The very thought of losing is hateful to Americans. Battle is the most significant competitions in which a man can indulge. It brings out all that is best and it removes all that is base.

George Patton, war hero

### Contention one is *Victory*

#### The United States thinks quite highly of itself. We think we are a city on a hill, that we are invulnerable, that there’s no fight we can lose. The world is a lump of iron and we are a hammer. Justice, goodness, and freedom are not ideals, they are our *possessions*.

#### At least, that’s what we tell ourselves. In reality, this exceptional belief in our righteousness, omnipotence, and invulnerability is a psychological fiction, akin to an outfit we like to wear because it makes us feel like the most popular kid in school. We feel an obligation to eliminate anything that threatens this psychological fiction, lest our nightmares come true and we end up naked to the world.

Lifton, professor of psychiatry at Harvard, 3 [Robert Jay Lifton, Visiting Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, previously Distinguished Professor of Psychiatry and Psychology at the Graduate School and Director of The Center on Violence and Human Survival at John Jay College of Criminal Justice at the City University of New York, 2003 (Superpower Syndrome: America’s Apocalyptic Confrontation With The World, Published by Thunder’s Mouth Press / Nation Books, ISBN 1560255129, p. 125-130)]

It is almost un-American to be vulnerable. As a people, we pride ourselves on being able to stand up to anything, solve all problems. We have long had a national self-image that involves an ability to call forth reservoirs or strength when we need it, and a sense of a protected existence peculiar to America in an otherwise precarious world. In recent times we managed, after all, to weather the most brutal century in human history relatively unscathed. THE BLESSED COUNTRY Our attitude stems partly from geography. We have always claimed a glorious aloneness thanks to what has been called the “Free security” of the two great oceans which separate us from dangerous upheavals in Europe and Asia. While George Washington was not the isolationist he is sometimes represented to be, he insisted on his celebrated Farewell Address of 1796, “’Tis our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances, with any portion of the foreign world.” That image has been embraced, and often simplified or distorted, by politicians ever since. (He warned against permanent alliances, not alliances in general).

The idea of our separateness and safety from faraway conflicts has had importance from the time of the early settlers, many of whom left Europe to escape political religious, or legal threats or entanglements. Even if one came as an adventurer or an empire-builder, one was leaving a continent of complexity and conflict for a land whose remoteness could support new beginnings. Abraham Lincoln absolutized that remoteness and security from outside attack in order to stress that our only danger came from ourselves: “All the armies of Europe, Asia and Africa combined, with all the treasure of the earth (our own excepted) in their military chest; with a Buonaparte for a commander, could not by force, take a drink from the Ohio, or make a track on the Blue Ridge, in a trial of a thousand years.” However much the world has shrunk technologically in the last half century, and however far-ranging our own superpower forays, that sense of geographic invulnerability has never left us. We have seen ourselves as not only separate from but different from the rest of the world, a special nation among nations. That sense of American exceptionalism was intensely observed by Alexis de Tocqueville, the brilliant French politician and writer, in the early nineteenth century. In de Tocqueville’s view of America, “A course almost without limits, a field without horizon, is revealed: the human spirit rushes forward and traverses [it] in every direction.” American exceptionalism has always been, as the sociologist Seymour Martin Lipset has pointed out, “a double-edged sword.” In the psychological life of Americans it has been bound up with feelings of unique virtue, strength, and success. But this has sometimes led Americans to be “utopian moralists, who press hard to institutionalize virtue, to destroy evil people, and eliminate wicked institutions and practices.” That subjective exceptionalism has been vividly expressed in the historian Richard Hofstadter’s observation, “It has been our fate as a nation not to have ideologies, but to be one.” At the time of the Puritans, sentiments of exceptionalism were expressed in biblical terms: America was an “Arcadian image of the New World … an Eden from which the serpent and forbidden trees had been thoroughly excluded,” and “a new Promised Land and a New Jerusalem.” The language was that of a postapocalyptic utopia, and remnants of such sentiments persist whenever we speak of ourselves in more secular terms as the “new world.” Important to this feeling of exceptionalism has been a deep sense that America offered unparalleled access to regenerative power. As Richard Slotkin explains: “The first colonists saw in America an opportunity to regenerate [end page 127] their fortunes, their spirits, and the power of their church and nation,” though “the means to that regeneration ultimately became the means of violence.” Even when Americans played what has been called a “shell game of identity,” they could experience an unlimited capacity for renewal—endless new beginnings as individuals or as a nation. Slotkin speaks of a new relationship to authority in this new world. While “in Europe all men were under authority; in America all men dreamed they had the power to become authority.” These claims of new authority extended to the country as a whole, to America’s authority among nations—a claim to new national authority that was expanded over time thanks to America’s considerable achievements—economic, technological, scientific, and cultural. American exceptionalism has often had the overall psychological quality of a sense of ourselves as a blessed people, immune from the defeats and sufferings of others. But underneath that sense there had to be a potential chink in our psychological armor—which was a deep-seated if hidden sense of vulnerability. OMNIPOTENCE AND VULNERABILITY Ironically, superpower syndrome projects the problem of American vulnerability onto the world stage. A superpower is perceived as possessing more than natural power. [end page 128] (In this sense it comes closer to resembling the comic-strip hero Superman than the Nietzschean Superman.) For a nation, its leaders, or even its ordinary citizens to enter into the superpower syndrome is to lay claim to omnipotence, to power that is unlimited, which is ultimately power over death. At the heart of the superpower syndrome then is the need to eliminate a vulnerability that, as the antithesis of omnipotence, contains the basic contradiction of the syndrome. For vulnerability can never be eliminated, either by a nation or an individual. In seeking its elimination, the superpower finds itself on a psychological treadmill. The idea of vulnerability is intolerable, the fact of it irrefutable. One solution is to maintain an illusion of invulnerability. But the superpower then runs the danger of taking increasingly draconian actions to sustain that illusion. For to do otherwise would be to surrender the cherished status of superpower. Other nations have experiences in the world that render them and their citizens all too aware of the essential vulnerability of life on earth. They also may be influenced by religious and cultural traditions (far weaker in the United States) that emphasize vulnerability as an aspect of human mortality. No such reality can be accepted by those clinging to a sense of omnipotence. At issue is the experience of death anxiety, which is the strongest manifestation of vulnerability. Such a deep-seated [end page 129] sense of vulnerability can sometimes be acknowledged by the ordinary citizens of a superpower, or even at times by its leaders, who may admit, for instance, that there is no guaranteed defense against terrorist acts. But those leaders nonetheless remain committed to eliminating precisely that vulnerability—committed, that is, to the illusory goal of invulnerability. When that goal is repeatedly undermined—whether by large-scale terrorist acts like 9/11, or as at present by militant resistance to American hegemony in Iraq and elsewhere in the Middle East—both the superpower and the world it acts upon may become dangerously destabilized.

#### Why do we hold such an egotistical self image? We, as citizens, have lost a war over our *consciences*.

#### The power of the presidency is a big part of the reason why. The presidency exists to seduce us into thoughtless compliance. I value security and freedom, so how can I possibly disagree with Bush? I hope for things, and there are things I want changed, so how could I possibly disagree with Obama? The president is like a fortune teller—it tells us vague platitudes we want to hear so we trust it absolutely. As a result, we close off our conscience and consent to an imperial “war on terror”

Markwick, Lecturer at Simon Fraser University, 10—Michael Markwick, Ph.D candidate in philosophy at Simon Fraser University [Spring 2010, “Terror and Democratic Communication,” Ph.D Dissertation, http://summit.sfu.ca/item/9989]

From Bush to Obama, the war on terror is principally a war over conscience. The aim of the security regime is to justify itself not only through the ownership of bare life, but in laying claim to the life of conscience as well. Its purpose is to continue the century-old devolution to the messianic presidency through the permeation and colonization of conscience. Its agenda, on the strength of the values it presents as liberal and democratic, is to make conscience the ground of the presidency — to mollify, conscript, subdue and seduce the operation of conscience in sovereign power’s construction of democratic citizenship. The biopolitical project of the war on terror is to produce, and lay claim to, what Agamben calls “forms of life” of which there are two: politically qualified life, the life of the choice-making citizen, and bare life, the naked fact of our biological existence. I argue that the war on terror produces these forms of life through two integrated means. Vivification is the process of animating public deliberation or doing the work of conscience for us in an effigy of democratic communication. It provides a more satisfactory account of the subjective impact of sovereign power as violence than theories of total biopolitical oppression (e.g. Edkins and Pin-Fat) because it acknowledges, with Iris Marion Young, that this power elicits adoration and gratitude. (Young, 2003) Vivisection is the extraction of the truth that makes us secure through rendition, torture and structurally reinforced racism, from the matter of the human body reduced to bare life. The powers of vivification and vivisection mark the rise of the messianic presidency, its biopolitical function as the source of citizenship and arrogator of conscience. They allow a more precise definition of the violence of sovereign power that reduces all of us to homines sacri or bare life. At the same time, it is essential to recognize that these powers have a disparate impact on human personality, through the construction of a taxonomy of citizens and human existents according to their race, gender, religion and social condition. The violence of sovereign power is by no means equal. An ethic of democratic communication would speak to this contest over conscience, mapping it out as the terrain upon which the troubled story of citizenship unfolds and bare human life finds a new political voice.

Barak Obama’s presidency—like good philosophy—raises more questions than it settles about democratic political culture in pluralistic societies. The central problem liberal political philosophy attempts to decide is how to sustain a culture of democratic communication, allowing us equally to share in self-governance as citizens even as we bear disparate, fundamentally irreconcilable views about the big questions of human existence. Will Kymlicka summarizes this project as seeking “equality between groups, and freedom within groups”; the sequestering of deep personal beliefs is essential if we are to allow maximal equality and freedom. (Kymlicka, 2007: 255) The rise to power of this son of a Kenyan scholar, it would seem, affirms the wisdom of a polity designed to relegate existential questions, questions about the good, to the small circles of our private lives whilst structuring the democratic playing field to address the basic, non-metaphysical issue of fairness. More astonishing still, this drama played out against the war on terror’s 198 reassertion of race categories. (Ahmad, 2004) Standing in the light of Obama’s victory, it is tempting to see the theocratic ambition of the Bush White House—its retrograde imposition of faith based standards in domestic policy and on the global stage, branding the war on terror a crusade to rid the world of evil—as an anti-liberal atavism that died with a stake through its heart in the election of 2008. Obama’s triumph was the triumph of political liberalism and its project of creating a neutral framework of democratic communication, a public square emancipated from the stubborn intimacy of race, religion, gender and so on. Political liberalism allows anyone—any domestically born U.S. citizen—to be president. Obama won because he was constitutionally emancipated to fashion for himself answers to the big questions, while excelling in the political capacity to keep his metaphysics to himself and thus prove his worth for the leadership of the world’s leading pluralist democracy: the bi-racially telegenic, cool and neutral decider. The prize is a presidency the framers of the republic would not have recognized as republican—not simply in the scale of the nation’s martial, social and economic resources, but that the president should have these at what amounts to an imperial command.

My sense is that Obama’s success, like the core function of the presidency itself, has nothing to do with anything like a liberal restraint concerning the big questions of human existence but is, instead, a most illiberal and muscular intrusion into these matters. Instead of carving out a zone of exclusion for the private operation of conscience, the function of the presidency in contemporary U.S. political culture is to elicit the conformity of conscience with powerful, charismatic affirmations of the nature and purpose of human life. Clearly, the core of Obama’s ongoing resonance with voters and aliens alike—why we 199 want to adore him—has nothing to do with his bracketing out his beliefs about the big questions, the facts of his race and his religion, his worldview; he built political power in large measure through his acumen in actively presenting these features of his personality. Furthermore, these features were not parsed through the rarefied Cartesian space of a public square, they were embroiled in the maelstrom of detraction, calumny and desperate stargazing that is political discourse in the United States. Judging by his biography, the capacity to foreground his beliefs and make them publicly resonant is not something Obama purchased with his campaign contributions. It is a capacity that is integral to his political personality. None of this was novel or revolutionary in any way because U.S. electoral politics demands that candidates make bold claims about the big questions as defined in the political culture of the United States. Politics, in this sense, remains very much about the power to produce doctrine. The situation persists not as an aberration from the norms of political liberalism, but because of them.

#### The result of this consent to an imperial presidency is that we defer decisions about the life and death of whole populations to sovereign power—the doctrines the sovereign sells us are policed by imperial violence.

Markwick 10—Michael Markwick, Lecturer at Simon Fraser University, Ph.D candidate in philosophy at Simon Fraser University [Spring 2010, “Terror and Democratic Communication,” Ph.D Dissertation, http://summit.sfu.ca/item/9989]

Far from living in a post-metaphysical era, I believe Connolly is correct in his assertion that every “political interpretation projects presumptions about the primordial character of things”. (Connolly, 1993: 1) There is, therefore, a caesaropapist effect in the liberal narrative of public neutrality; it provides plausible cover for the construction of dominant, history-ending definitions about what it means to be human. Instead of building a political culture beyond metaphysics—the purely procedural and inclusive political culture, democratic in the equal freedoms it accords for our private fulfilment in seeking the good individually—this narrative allows sovereign power to enforce its edict about the nature and purpose of human life. The post-metaphysics feint allows a political culture to develop 200 and enforce the limits of the political community, setting the bounds between the citizen and the alien, and the community of life itself, setting the bounds between human and subhuman, the quick, the dead and the expendable. It is the means by which sovereign power bifurcates human existence, producing on the one hand politically qualified life—the citizen made in its own image—and, on the other, bare life, the human organism. Political liberalism’s restraint about the big questions, its concern to create maximal space for our individual, creative self-fashioning, is part of its edict about the “primordial character of things”. Instead of standing against republicanism, political liberalism works symbiotically with the republican project of defining the national character, the way of life, of a democratic people. Together they confer freedom and equality on the terms of sovereign power, not on the terms of conscience. They set the bounds of democratic communication, and remove from the function of citizenship public deliberation about existential questions. There is no return through political liberalism to classical politics, the sharing in self-governance of a democratic people through the scrupulous separation of public and private life, of political life and organic life. Instead, citizenship becomes the constructed acceptance of a synthetic freedom and equality, synthetic because freedom and equality under sovereign power are not the fruit of the operation of conscience; they are, instead, the doctrines of the state policed by violence. Citizenship becomes sovereign power’s imposition of a doctrinal closure on the debate about what it means to be human, because the definition of who is a citizen carries with it the power to define who is and who is not human. This places citizenship at odds against conscience and its principal function of continually discerning the meaning and purpose of human existence; sovereign power 201 might simulate conscience, but it cannot replace the restless human work in conscience of examination and deconstruction.

I will argue below that the persistence of this unexamined, dominant metaphysics allows the continuing ascendance of the security regime. Further, the political effect of this metaphysics is to consolidate power in the messianic presidency. A great deal of authoritative work has been done to map the contours of, and at times laud, the “imperial presidency”, with reference to the global reach of the executive branch in the United States. (Schlesinger, 1989) In the words of Michael Ignatieff, “Yet what word but ‘empire’ describes the awesome thing that America is becoming?” (Ignatieff, 2005) My concern is the biopolitical dimension this office now assumes; I believe the claim it makes to validate human life as such, to “touch the soul” of the citizen, to be the agent of a divine plan in the unfolding of human history suggest a presidency that is not simply imperial in its self-understanding but messianic. I will suggest that a biopolitical reading of the war on terror gains ground in deconstructing the covert ontology of what passes for democratic political culture, moving the analysis from ideology and discipline to the messianic powers of vivification and vivisection. Ostensible neutrality “about the primordial character of things” is the shell within which the messianic presidency quickens, rising to primacy over constitutional governance in the United States. The Obama White House does not represent a break with this phenomenon; it does not return the Office of the President to the proportions the framers of the republic entrenched constitutionally. Instead, through its reinvigorated prosecution of the war on terror, the Obama White House represents the next phase in the maturation of the messianic presidency.202

#### This leads to an apocalyptic violence, insistent on defending the nation at all costs—that makes annihilation possible

Lifton 3 [Robert Jay Lifton, Visiting Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, previously Distinguished Professor of Psychiatry and Psychology at the Graduate School and Director of The Center on Violence and Human Survival at John Jay College of Criminal Justice at the City University of New York, 2003 (Superpower Syndrome: America’s Apocalyptic Confrontation With The World, Published by Thunder’s Mouth Press / Nation Books, ISBN 1560255129, p. 1-4)]

The apocalyptic imagination has spawned a new kind of violence at the beginning of the twenty-first century. We can, in fact, speak of a worldwide epidemic of violence aimed at massive destruction in the service of various visions of purification and renewal. In particular, we are experiencing what could be called an apocalyptic face-off between Islamist\* forces, overtly visionary in their willingness to kill and die for their religion, and American forces claiming to be restrained and reasonable but no less visionary in their projection of a cleansing war-making and military power. Both sides are [end page 1] energized by versions of intense idealism; both see themselves as embarked on a mission of combating evil in order to redeem and renew the world; and both are ready to release untold levels of violence to achieve that purpose. The war on Iraq—a country with longstanding aspirations toward weapons of mass destruction but with no evident stockpiles of them and no apparent connection to the assaults of September 11—was a manifestation of that American visionary projection. The religious fanaticism of Osama bin Laden and other Islamist zealots has, by now, a certain familiarity to us as to others elsewhere, for their violent demands for spiritual purification are aimed as much at fellow Islamics as at American “infidels.” Their fierce attacks on the defilement that they believe they see everywhere in contemporary life resemble those of past movements and sects from all parts of the world; such sects, with end-of-the-world prophecies and devout violence in the service of bringing those prophecies about, flourished in Europe from the eleventh through the sixteenth century. Similar sects like the fanatical Japanese cult Aum Shinrikyo, which released sarin gas into the Tokyo subways in 1995, have existed—even proliferated—in our own time. The American apocalyptic entity is less familiar to us. Even if its urges to power and domination seem historically recognizable, it nonetheless represents a new constellation of forces bound up with what I’ve come to think of [end page 2] as “superpower syndrome.” By that term I mean a national mindset—put forward strongly by a tight-knit leadership group—that takes on a sense of omnipotence, of unique standing in the world that grants it the right to hold sway over all other nations. The American superpower status derives from our emergence from World War II as uniquely powerful in every respect, still more so as the only superpower left standing at the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s. More than merely dominate, the American superpower now seeks to control history. Such cosmic ambition is accompanied by an equally vast sense of entitlement, of special dispensation to pursue its aims. That entitlement stems partly from historic claims to special democratic virtue, but has much to do with an embrace of technological power translated into military terms. That is, a superpower—the world’s only superpower—is entitled to dominate and control precisely because it is a superpower. The murderous events of 9/11 hardened that sense of entitlement as nothing else could have. Superpower syndrome did not require 9/11, but the attacks on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon rendered us an aggrieved superpower, a giant violated and made vulnerable, which no superpower can permit. Indeed, at the core of superpower syndrome lies a powerful fear of vulnerability. A superpower’s victimization brings on both a sense of humiliation and an angry determination to restore, or even [end page 3] extend, the boundaries of a superpower-dominated world. Integral to superpower syndrome are its menacing nuclear stockpiles and their world-destroying capacity. Throughout the decades of the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union both lived with a godlike nuclear capacity to obliterate the cosmos, along with a fear of being annihilated by the enemy power. Now America alone possesses that world-destroying capacity, and post-Soviet Russia no longer looms as a nuclear or superpower adversary. We have yet to grasp the full impact of this exclusive capacity to blow up anyone or everything, but its reverberations are never absent in any part of the world. The confrontation between Islamist and American versions of planetary excess has unfortunately tended to define a world in which the vast majority of people embrace neither. But apocalyptic excess needs no majority to dominate a landscape. All the more so when, in their mutual zealotry, Islamist and American leaders seem to act in concert. That is, each, in its excess, nurtures the apocalypticism of the other, resulting in a malignant synergy. \* In keeping with general usage, Islamist refers to groups that are essentially theocratic and fundamentalist, and at times apocalyptic. Islamic is a more general ethnic as well as religious term for Muslims. The terms can of course overlap, and “Islamic state” can mean one run on Islamist principles.

### Plan(s)

#### The United States Congress should surrender the global war on terror by restricting the President’s authority to introduce armed forces into hostilities.

### Contention two is *Surrender*

#### The act of surrendering is a radical one—it opens us to vulnerability, ambiguity, and acceptance of the world as it is. It gives up on the dream of invulnerability, and helps to shatter falsely held illusions about our place in the world.

Lifton 3 [Robert Jay Lifton, Visiting Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, previously Distinguished Professor of Psychiatry and Psychology at the Graduate School and Director of The Center on Violence and Human Survival at John Jay College of Criminal Justice at the City University of New York, 2003 (Superpower Syndrome: America’s Apocalyptic Confrontation With The World, Published by Thunder’s Mouth Press / Nation Books, ISBN 1560255129, p. 196-199)]

Stepping out of that syndrome would also include surrendering the claim of certainty, of ownership of truth and reality. That ownership gives rise to deadly righteousness, with a claim to illumination so absolute as to transcend ordinary restraints against mass violence. The healthier alternative is an acceptance of some measure of ambiguity, of inevitable elements of confusion and contradiction, [end page 196] whether in relation to large historical events or in matters of personal experience. This would include a more nuanced approach to Islam and Islamist thought and behavior that allows for the possibility of evolution and change. It is often claimed that no such acceptance of ambiguity is possible because superpowers, like nations, like people, are uncomfortable with it, that the tendency is always to seek clarity and something close to certainty. But this assumption may well underestimate our psychological capabilities. Ambiguity, in fact, is central to human function, recognized and provided for by cultural institutions and practices everywhere. American society in particular has cultivated the kinds of ambiguity that go with multiplicity and with shifting populations and frontiers. I have tried in my past work to formulate a version of the self as many-sided, flexible, and capable of change and transformation. This protean self (named after Proteus, the Greek sea god who was capable of taking on many shapes) stands in direct contrast to the fundamentalist or apocalyptic self. Indeed, the closed fundamentalist self and its apocalyptic impulses can be understood as a reaction to protean tendencies, which are widely abroad in our world as a response to the complexities of recent history. Any contemporary claim to absolute certainty, then, is compensatory, an artificial plunge into totalism that seeks an escape from the ambiguity that so pervades our historical legacy. American society is more volatile on these matters than [end page 197] many suspect. Over the previous century and at the beginning of a new one, we have been undergoing waves of contending forms of populism—pendulum swings between totalistic impulses and more open, if less clearly formulated, protean principles. How this psychohistorical struggle will develop we have no way of knowing, but we need hardly give up on ambiguity, or on our capacity to combine it with strongly held ethical principles. There is a real sense in which elements of ambiguity are necessary to our well-being. They certainly are necessary to the well-being of our nation, and of the world. To live with ambiguity is to accept vulnerability. American aspirations toward superpower invulnerability have troubling parallels in Islamist visions of godly power. Surrendering the dream of invulnerability, more enlightened American leaders could begin to come to terms with the idea that there will always be some danger in our world, that reasonable and measured steps can be taken to limit that danger and combat threats of violence, but that invulnerability is itself a perilous illusion. To cast off that illusion would mean removing the psychological pressure of sustaining a falsified vision of the world, as opposed to taking a genuine place in the real one. Much of this has to do with accepting the fact that we die, a fact not altered by either superpower militarism or religious fanaticism. A great part of apocalyptic violence is in the service of a vast claim of immortality, a claim that [end page 198] can, in the end, often be sustained only by victimizing large numbers of people. Zealots come to depend upon their mystical, spiritual, or military vision to protect themselves from death, and to provide immortality through killing.

#### And, Surrender leads to an embrace of change and a willingness to think differently. It changes our psyche. The psychic wound and shock people will feel is an opportunity for growth. A voluntary act of authentic surrender is key.

Moze, Ph.D in Personal Development, 7—Mary Beth, Ph.D. in Personal Development and Transformation [“Surrender: An Alchemical Act in Personal Transformation,” *Journal of Conscious Evolution*, http://www.cejournal.org/GRD/Surrender.pdf]

Surrender and the Ego

Surrender provides a willing path toward greater understandings. Surrender allows for flexibility and movement in relation to a polarized Other and is a voluntary choice to not resist. Such a choice is as much a part of ego development as choosing to resist (LaMothe, 2005). The wise use of our will can get us to the edge of the Ego and beyond; we can will ourselves into the act of surrender that carries us into the flow of possibilities and growth (Hart, 2000).

We think we live by virtues and influences that we can control, but we are governed by more than ourselves (Hawkins, 2002). World religion s teach that the Ego interferes with detection of truth and cannot engage the bigger, systemic view of things (Leary, 2004) central to personal development is the management of the Ego and surrendering to a more universal identity (Hidas, 1981). In lieu of more culturally sanctioned spiritual practices in the West, our need for universal identity and spiritual sustenanc e comes by way of therapy (Some’, 1999), but Western therapy focuses heavily on ego strengthenin g and can inadvertently build up the Ego’s narcissistic muscles.

Recovery from any dysfunction as well as growth fr om places of normality is dependent on the willingness to explore new ways of looking a t things: to endure inner fears when belief systems are shaken (Hawkins, 2002). By quieting the Ego, we can soften its rigid influence and help to strengthen the health of the ego and assist the act of surrender (Hidas, 1981; Leary, 2004). It is an act of ego strength void of Ego fix ation (Hart, 2000). Surrender is the exercise of moral muscles. In surrender, the Ego may feel like it is dying, but the ego is sustained. In the initial efforts to exercise moral muscles, the Ego will feel torn, but it is through that wound – a sacred wound - that new ways of understanding arrive (Branscomb, 1991).

We are complex systems. Systems are made up of systems and exist within ever larger systems within which paradox is characteristic and can be understood (Laszlo, 1996; Morin, 1999; Rowland, 1999). As long as the Ego functions with its narrow view, the paradox of human behavior can not be sufficiently contextualized and it causes frustration. Curiously enough, motives to embrace change arise when the mind is challenged and puzzles are perceived (Baumeister & Vohs, 2002; Hawkins, 2002), and paradoxes are puzzles. The very fears and obstacles that we perceive and resist ironically point us in the very direction of our own growth and serve as portals for surrender (Hart, 2000). Each surrender exposes us to a part of the larger systems within which we function. Through surrender , the Ego can grasp paradox and greater truths.

It is beneath the fears of the narrow Egoic system where one finds the curiosity and courage that is willing to risk and accept what unfolds, driven by a desire to connect (Grant, 1996). Surrender releases the perceived control to which the Ego clings and simultaneously releases of the burden of being in control (Branscomb, 1991). Surrender eases the burden and grip of Egoic boundary control, relaxing narcissistic muscles in order to also flex and build the unintentionally neglected moral muscles.

#### And, Surrender is different than submission, compliance, or resignation. Surrender yields unconditionally, unworried about preferences or expectations. Only this authentic letting go is an act that create immediate, authentic, and lasting personal change.

Moze 7—Mary Beth, Ph.D. in Personal Development and Transformation [“Surrender: An Alchemical Act in Personal Transformation,” *Journal of Conscious Evolution*, http://www.cejournal.org/GRD/Surrender.pdf]

Before pursuing a definition of what surrender is, it is helpful to benchmark what it is not. Some terms are used synonymously with surrender but have subtle shifts in meaning that differ significantly from the healthy version of surrender that grounds this article. Those terms include submission, resignation, and compliance.

Submission entails a role of domination by one over another and is a perversion of surrender (LaMothe, 2005). It is an individual’s conscious acceptance of reality but tainted with an unconscious unacceptance that harbors the desire for eventual revenge (Tiebout, 1949). Submission sustains the tension between self and Other and houses distrust and a sense of betrayal (LaMothe, 2005; Tiebout, 1949). It is ofte n a defense against hopelessness and the fear  of the annihilation of one’s sense of identity (LaM othe, 2005). It resembles surrender in its longing to know and be known, but cheats the process by sustaining a role of bondage and a sense of futility (Ghent, 1990).

Resignation holds an element of judgment (Tolle, 1 999) which is contrary to the unconditional nature of healthy surrender. Resignation moves one into accordance with another, but not based on shared beliefs nor trust and often as a result of exhausted failed efforts to negotiate a mutually satisfying interpersonal relat ionship. It often accompanies the role of submission (Ghent, 1990). Both submission and resignation have a resistant quality about them which maintains an Egoic position, not a state of surrender. To a certain degree, there is a sense of longevity to the roles of submission and resigna tion.

In comparison, compliance has a temporariness abou t it. Like resignation, it entails a going along with attitude while not necessarily approving of that t o which one resigns. However, compliance is more about saying yes in the moment more for the sake of convenience than for the sake of acceptance. Compliance contributes to a sense of guilt, inferiority, and shame for not standing up for oneself and it also deceives all of those involved with the circumstance (Tiebout, 1953).

The more inviting definition of surrender appeals to its resilient nature, not its resistant nature. Resistance operates against growth or chang e and seeks to maintain the familiar, while surrender and resilience operate toward growth (Ghe nt, 1990). Rather than an Egotistical defeat, healthy surrender is a compassionate giving over that rests on trust (LaMothe, 2005). Such surrender involves commitment, openness, soulful mo tivation, and vibrancy.

Total surrender unconditionally yields to what is (Tolle, 1999) rather than to what one prefers or expects. It is a wholehearted acceptance of one’s perception of reality and unreservedly yields to more than the Ego (Cohen, 20 04; Jones, 1994; Tiebout, 1953). Judgments are suspended. One is involved in a code of integrity and unity with Other, and admits to not knowing the full meaning of an encounter, especially in the moment it occurs (Parlee, 1993; Wolff, 1974). This allows for openness of experience and fully embraces the unknown (May, 2004).

Surrender is liberation, expansion of self, and the letting down of defensive barriers (Ghent, 1990). It is something that takes place within one’s self and contingent only upon one’s willingness to let down the barriers that one alone puts up: to give up resistances, defenses, and self-preconceptions in service of healing, acceptance, and seeking to know Other (Branscomb, 1993; Jones, 1994; Tiebout, 1949). Surrender is an existential reality that does not objectify self or Other and rather identifies with limitlessness ( May, 1982). Surrender need not be permanent; it can be a temporary relinquishment of control and suspension of beliefs (Hart, 2000). It leaves intellectual knowledge in tact while releasing one to inquire further about truths (Rutledge, 2004) without an agenda for expected outcomes (Wolff, 197 4). It involves curiosity that is attracted to meaning, not oddity.

Surrender is a particular way of functioning, motivated by the longing for growth and connectedness (Ghent, 1990). It is soulful. Such willingness rests on and is motivated by trust, faith, hope, and heart based desires for meaning; it appeals to that which dignifies and ennobles (Hawkins, 2002). Surrender is an act of faith and a statement of hope based on trust (Hart, 2000). Surrender of this nature reacquaints us with our humanness and innocence, not our individuality, and enables us to see the good in Other and in the world (Branscomb, 1993; Wolff, 1974). It nourishes the needs of the soul and gently releases the wants of the Ego (Zukav, 1990).

An act of surrender is inevitably followed by a state of surrender (Tiebout, 1949), free of time and space (Hart, 2000). Surprisingly, surrender is vibrant, not passive. It is an intimate state of involvement (May, 1982) in which one actively constructs an experience while choosing to give in – to lean in toward – another (LaMothe, 200 5). There is a dynamic flow of emergence and waning that actualizes the potential for enhanc ed meaning and communion with Other (LaMothe, 2005). One does not passively tolerate a situation nor cease personal action; instead, there is an awareness and reciprocity of responsive ness that is improvisational and uncontrolling (Rutledge, 2004; Tolle, 1999). To improvise is to be intuitively creative; it is a universal capacity!

I do not posit a linear relationship between trust, commitment, openness, soulful motivation, and vibrancy. The literature does not suggest anything in this regard. What is noteworthy is the simultaneous simplicity and compl exity of a resilient act of surrender. It is alchemical. It is not an act that simply initiates a natural progression of potential change; it is an innately complex function that transmutes one way of being into another.

I hesitate to offer a definition of surrender, fea ring that it will be concretized. Surrender has a wholesomeness that is elusive and not easily definable. For the sake of grounding the remaining contents of this article, I offer the following definition as support, not absolute. Surrender is a trusting act to which one fully commits and lets go of absolute perceived control and personal defenses in order to step into a limitless unknown and actively engage Other, allowing for the potential discovery of greater truths while being unattached to any expected outcomes. Even more simply stated, surrender is a faithful gesture toward knowing Other and being known.

#### And, by promoting this sort of reflection and thought through the act of surrender, we solve a shift in citizen opinions on the war on terror—the aff is the sort of painful self-examination that creates change

Grieder, bestselling author, 4 [William Greider, a prominent political journalist and author, has been a reporter for more than 35 years for newspapers, magazines and television.. He is the author of the national bestsellers One World, Ready or Not, Secrets of the Temple and Who Will Tell The People. In the award-winning Secrets of the Temple, he offered a critique of the Federal Reserve system. Greider has also served as a correspondent for six Frontline documentaries on PBS, including "Return to Beirut," which won an Emmy in 1985. “Under the Banner of the ‘War’ on Terror” http://samizdat.cc/shelf/documents/2004/06.07-greider/greider.pdf]

An important question remains for Americans to ponder: Why have most people submitted so willingly to a new political order organized around fear? Other nations have confronted terrorism of a more sustained nature without coming thoroughly un- hinged. I remember living in London briefly in the 1970s s, when IRA bombings were a frequent occurrence. Daily life continued with stiff -upper-lip reserve (police searched ladies’ handbags at restaurants, but did not pat down the gentlemen). We can only spec- ulate on answers. Was it the uniquely horrific quality of the 9/11 attacks? Or the fact that, unlike Europe, the continental United States has never been bombed? For mod- ern Americans, war’s destruction is a foreign experience, though the United States has participated in many conflicts on foreign soil. Despite the patriotic breast-beating, are we closet wimps? America’s exaggerated expressions of fear may look to others like a surprising revelation of weakness.

My own suspicion is that many Americans have enjoyed Bush’s “terror war” more than they wish to admit. Feeling scared can be oddly pleasurable, like participating in a real-life action thriller, when one is allied in imagined combat with a united country of brave patriots. The plot line is simple—good guys against satanic forces—and pushes aside doubts and ambiguities, like why exactly these people are out to get us. Does our own behavior in the world have anything to do with it? No, they resent us because we are so virtuous—kind, free, wealthy, democratic. The contest, as framed by Bush, invites Americans to indulge in a luxurious sense of self-pity—poor, powerful America, so innocent and yet so misunderstood. America’s exaggerated fear of unknown “others” is perhaps an unconscious inversion of its exaggerated claims of power.

The only way out of this fog of pretension is painful self-examination by Americans— cutting our fears down to more plausible terms and facing the complicated realities of our role in the world. The spirited opposition that arose to Bush’s war in Iraq is a good starting place, because citizens raised real questions that were brushed aside. I don’t think most Americans are interested in imperial rule, but they were grossly misled by patriotic rhetoric. Now is the time for sober, serious teach-ins that lay out the real history of power in the world, and that also explain the positive and progressive future that is possible. Once citizens have constructed a clear-eyed, dissenting version of our situation, perhaps politicians can also be liberated from exaggerated fear. The self-imposed destruction that has flowed from Bush’s logic cannot be stopped until a new cast of leaders steps forward to guide the country. This transformation begins by changing Presidents.

#### And, the affirmative represents a psychological shift—yes, we think congress should actually surrender the war on terror, but, more importantly, it’s a useful thought experiment for any American.

#### What does it mean that we were wrong about fighting terrorists? What does it mean that we couldn’t win? This change on the psychological and personal level allows us to reclaim our moral compass, resist the fantasy of total control, and change the way future and current leaders deal with feelings of vulnerability

Lifton 3 [Robert Jay Lifton, Visiting Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, previously Distinguished Professor of Psychiatry and Psychology at the Graduate School and Director of The Center on Violence and Human Survival at John Jay College of Criminal Justice at the City University of New York, 2003 (Superpower Syndrome: America’s Apocalyptic Confrontation With The World, Published by Thunder’s Mouth Press / Nation Books, ISBN 1560255129, p. 188-192)]

We can do better. America is capable of wiser, more measured approaches, more humane applications of our considerable power and influence in the world. These may not be as far away as they now seem, and can be made closer by bringing our imaginations to bear on them. Change must be political, of course, but certain psychological contours seem necessary to it. As a start, we do not have to collude in partitioning the world into two contending apocalyptic forces. We are capable instead of reclaiming our moral compass, of finding further balance in our national behavior. So intensely have we embraced superpower syndrome that emerging from it is not an easy task. Yet in doing so we would relieve ourselves of a burden of our own creation—the psychic burden of insistent illusion. For there is no [end page 189] greater weight than that one takes on when pursuing total power. We need to draw a new and different lesson from Lord Acton's nineteenth-century assertion: "Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely." Acton was not quite right. The corruption begins not with the acquisition of power but with the quest for and claim to absolute power. Ever susceptible to the seductive promise that twenty-first-century technology can achieve world control, the superpower can best resist that temptation by recognizing the corruption connected with that illusion. STEPPING OFF THE TREADMILL To renounce the claim to total power would bring relief not only to everyone else, but, soon enough, to citizens of the superpower itself. For to live out superpower syndrome is to place oneself on a treadmill that eventually has to break down. In its efforts to rule the world and to determine history, the United States is, in actuality, working against itself, subjecting itself to constant failure. It becomes a Sisyphus with bombs, able to set off explosions but unable to cope with its own burden, unable to roll its heavy stone to the top of the hill in Hades. Perhaps the crucial step in ridding ourselves of superpower syndrome is recognizing that history cannot be controlled, fluidly or otherwise. Stepping off the superpower treadmill would also enable us to cease being a nation ruled by fear. [end page 190] Renouncing omnipotence might make our leaders—or at least future leaders—themselves less fearful of weakness, and diminish their inclination to instill fear in their people as a means of enlisting them for military efforts at illusory world hegemony. Without the need for invulnerability, everyone would have much less to be afraid of. What we call the historical process is largely unpredictable, never completely manageable. All the more so at a time of radical questioning of the phenomenon of nationalism and its nineteenth- and twentieth-century excesses. In addition, there has been a general decline in confidence in the nation state, and in its ability to protect its people from larger world problems such as global warming or weapons of mass destruction. The quick but dangerous substitute is the superpower, which seeks to fill the void with a globalized, militarized extension of American nationalism. The traditional nation state, whatever its shortcomings, could at least claim to be grounded in a specific geographic area and a particular people or combination of peoples. The superpower claims to "represent" everyone on earth, but it lacks legitimacy in the eyes of those it seeks to dominate, while its leaders must struggle to mask or suppress their own doubts about any such legitimacy. The American superpower is an artificial construct, widely perceived as illegitimate, whatever the acquiescence it coerces in others. Its reign is therefore inherently unstable. Indeed, its reach for full-scale world domination [end page 191] marks the beginning of its decline. A large task for the world, and for Americans in particular, is the early recognition and humane management of that decline.

#### Rather than singlehanded solving everything in one shot, surrender sets off an avalanche of conversation and questioning that activates our conscience. Only this process can engage both formal legal discourse and social movements—conscience is the one kernel of humanity that exists in every context, it is the lynchpin of solvency

Markwick 10—Michael Markwick, Lecturer at Simon Fraser University, Ph.D candidate in philosophy at Simon Fraser University [Spring 2010, “Terror and Democratic Communication,” Ph.D Dissertation, http://summit.sfu.ca/item/9989]

At the same time, the messianic presidency as sovereign power is the product of continual negotiation, and its powers of vivification and vivisection do not—indeed cannot— extirpate the operation of conscience. Against the facts of the war on terror, I argue for the role of conscience in democratic communication, across the full range of cultural expression, from formal political and jurisprudential discourse to movements of social change and popular culture. Democratic communication persists even in the midst of bare life as the site of the public operation of conscience, of knowing together. It is the assertion of conscience against sovereign power, not through grand narratives or defiant, beautiful acts of hopelessness but through our agonistic and reflexive encounters in a plurality of worldviews. The point, therefore, of Kymlicka’s “equality between groups, and freedom within groups” is not to isolate conscience as an insular entity, but rather to allow us to meet each other and contend with each other over the big questions about human existence, to get to the truth and to order our affairs to suit our best understanding about these questions. The project of democratic communication is not to create zones of exclusion for our creative self-fashioning, it is to allow us to take seriously the content of each other’s lives, to discern therein insights into the way we understand ourselves as human persons. In this sense, democratic communication necessarily involves the ongoing articulation and deconstruction of ontological claims, not to rid us of metaphysics but instead—agonistically, empathetically—to find our own voice in it.

#### Terrorism is politically motivated—only our radical action of stepping back and taking blame can address the real grievences

Blum 4—William Blum is an author, historian, and renowned critic of U.S. foreign policy. He is the author of *Killing Hope: U.S. Military and CIA Interventions Since World War II* and *Rogue State: A Guide to the World’s Only Superpower*. In early 2006, Blum briefly became the subject of widespread media attention when Osama bin Laden issued a public statement in which he quoted Blum and recommended that all Americans read *Rogue State: A Guide to the World's Only Superpower*. As a result of the mention sales of his book greatly increased. "I was quite surprised and even shocked and amused when I found out what he'd said," Blum said. "I was glad. I knew it would help the book's sales and I was not bothered by who it was coming from. If he shares with me a deep dislike for certain aspects of US foreign policy, then I'm not going to spurn any endorsement of the book by him. I think it's good that he shares those views and I'm not turned off by that."[4] On the Bin Laden endorsement Blum stated "This is almost as good as being an Oprah book." [http://williamblum.org/chapters/freeing-the-world-to-death/myth-and-denial-in-the-war-against-terrorism]

It dies hard. It dies very hard. The notion that terrorist acts against the United States can be explained by envy and irrational hatred, and not by what the United States does to the world – i.e., US foreign policy – is alive and well. The fires were still burning intensely at Ground Zero when Colin Powell declared: “Once again, we see terrorism, we see terrorists, people who don’t believe in democracy …” 1 George W. picked up on that theme and ran with it. He’s been its leading proponent ever since September 11 with his repeated insistence, in one wording or another, that terrorists are people who hate America and all that it stands for, its democracy, its freedom, its wealth, its secular government.” (Ironically, the president and Attorney General John Ashcroft probably hate our secular government as much as anyone.) Here he is more than a year after September 11: “The threats we face are global terrorist attacks. That’s the threat. And the more you love freedom, the more likely it is you’ll be attacked.” 2 The American Council of Trustees and Alumni, a conservative watchdog group founded by Lynne Cheney, wife of the vice-president, announced in November 2001 the formation of the Defense of Civilization Fund, declaring that “It was not only America that was attacked on September 11, but civilization. We were attacked not for our vices, but for our virtues.” 3 In September 2002, the White House released the “National Security Strategy”, purported to be chiefly the handiwork of Condoleezza Rice, which speaks of the “rogue states” which “sponsor terrorism around the globe; and reject basic human values and hate the United States and everything for which it stands.” In July of the following year, we could hear the spokesman for Homeland Security, Brian Roehrkasse, declare: “Terrorists hate our freedoms. They want to change our ways.” 4 Thomas Friedman the renowned foreign policy analyst of the New York Times would say amen. Terrorists, he wrote in 1998 after two US embassies in Africa had been attacked, “have no specific ideological program or demands. Rather, they are driven by a generalized hatred of the US, Israel and other supposed enemies of Islam.” 5 This idée fixe – that the rise of anti-American terrorism owes nothing to American policies – in effect postulates an America that is always the aggrieved innocent in a treacherous world, a benign United States government peacefully going about its business but being “provoked” into taking extreme measures to defend its people, its freedom and its democracy. There consequently is no good reason to modify US foreign policy, and many people who might otherwise know better are scared into supporting the empire’s wars out of the belief that there’s no choice but to crush without mercy – or even without evidence – this irrational international force out there that hates the United States with an abiding passion. Thus it was that Afghanistan and Iraq were bombed and invaded with seemingly little concern in Washington that this could well create many new anti-American terrorists. And indeed, since the first strike on Afghanistan in October 2001 there have been literally scores of terrorist attacks against American institutions in the Middle East, South Asia and the Pacific, more than a dozen in Pakistan alone: military, civilian, Christian, and other targets associated with the United States, including the October 2002 bombings in Bali, Indonesia, which destroyed two nightclubs and killed more than 200 people, almost all of them Americans and their Australian and British allies. The following year brought the heavy bombing of the US-managed Marriott Hotel in Jakarta, Indonesia, the site of diplomatic receptions and 4th of July celebrations held by the American Embassy. Even when a terrorist attack is not aimed directly at Americans, the reason the target has been chosen can be because the country it takes place in has been cooperating with the United States in its so-called “War on Terrorism”. Witness the horrendous attacks of recent years in Madrid, Turkey and Saudi Arabia. A US State Department report on worldwide terrorist attacks showed that the year 2003 had more “significant terrorist incidents” than at any time since the department began issuing statistics in 1982; the 2003 figures do not include attacks on US troops by insurgents in Iraq. 6 Terrorists in their own words The word “terrorism” has been so overused in recent years that it’s now commonly used simply to stigmatize any individual or group one doesn’t like, for almost any kind of behavior involving force. But the word’s raison d’être has traditionally been to convey a political meaning, something along the lines of: the deliberate use of violence against civilians and property to intimidate or coerce a government or the population in furtherance of a political objective. Terrorism is fundamentally propaganda, a very bloody form of propaganda. It follows that if the perpetrators of a terrorist act declare what their objective was, their statement should carry credibility, no matter what one thinks of the objective or the method used to achieve it. Let us look at some of their actual declarations. The terrorists responsible for the bombing of the World Trade Center in 1993 sent a letter to the New York Times which stated, in part: “We declare our responsibility for the explosion on the mentioned building. This action was done in response for the American political, economical, and military support to Israel the state of terrorism and to the rest of the dictator countries in the region.” 7 Richard Reid, who tried to ignite a bomb in his shoe while aboard an American Airline flight to Miami in December 2001, told police that his planned suicide attack was an attempt to strike a blow against the US campaign in Afghanistan and the Western economy. In an e-mail sent to his mother, which he intended her to read after his death, Reid wrote that it was his duty “to help remove the oppressive American forces from the Muslims land.” 8 After the bombings in Bali, one of the leading suspects – later convicted – told police that the bombings were “revenge” for “what Americans have done to Muslims.” He said that he wanted to “kill as many Americans as possible” because “America oppresses the Muslims”. 9 In November 2002, a taped message from Osama bin Laden began: “The road to safety begins by ending the aggression. Reciprocal treatment is part of justice. The [terrorist] incidents that have taken place … are only reactions and reciprocal actions.” 10 That same month, when Mir Aimal Kasi, who killed several people outside of CIA headquarters in 1993, was on death row, he declared: “What I did was a retaliation against the US government” for American policy in the Middle East and its support of Israel. 11 It should be noted that the State Department warned at the time that the execution of Kasi could result in attacks against Americans around the world. 12 It did not warn that the attacks would result from foreigners hating or envying American democracy, freedom, wealth, or secular government. Similarly, in the days following the start of US bombing of Afghanistan there were numerous warnings from US government officials about being prepared for retaliatory acts, and during the war in Iraq, the State Department announced: “Tensions remaining from the recent events in Iraq may increase the potential threat to US citizens and interests abroad, including by terrorist groups.” 13 Another example of the difficulty the Bush administration has in consistently maintaining its simplistic idée fixe: In June 2002, after a car bomb exploded outside the US Consulate in Karachi, killing or injuring more than 60 people, the Washington Post reported that “US officials said the attack was likely the work of extremists angry at both the United States and Pakistan’s president, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, for siding with the United States after September 11 and abandoning support for Afghanistan’s ruling Taliban.” 14 George W. and others of his administration may or may not believe what they tell the world about the motivations behind anti-American terrorism, but, as in the examples just given, some officials have questioned the party line for years. A Department of Defense study in 1997 concluded: “Historical data show a strong correlation between US involvement in international situations and an increase in terrorist attacks against the United States.” 15 Former US president Jimmy Carter told the New York Times in a 1989 interview: We sent Marines into Lebanon and you only have to go to Lebanon, to Syria or to Jordan to witness first-hand the intense hatred among many people for the United States because we bombed and shelled and unmercifully killed totally innocent villagers – women and children and farmers and housewives – in those villages around Beirut. … As a result of that … we became kind of a Satan in the minds of those who are deeply resentful. That is what precipitated the taking of our hostages and that is what has precipitated some of the terrorist attacks. 16 Colin Powell has also revealed that he knows better. Writing of this same 1983 Lebanon debacle in his memoir, he forgoes clichŽs about terrorists hating democracy: “The U.S.S. New Jersey started hurling 16-inch shells into the mountains above Beirut, in World War II style, as if we were softening up the beaches on some Pacific atoll prior to an invasion. What we tend to overlook in such situations is that other people will react much as we would.” 17 The ensuing retaliatory attack against US Marine barracks in Lebanon took the lives of 241 American military personnel. The bombardment of Beirut in 1983 and 1984 is but one of many examples of American violence against the Middle East and/or Muslims since the 1980s. The record includes: the shooting down of two Libyan planes in 1981 the bombing of Libya in 1986 the bombing and sinking of an Iranian ship in 1987 the shooting down of an Iranian passenger plane in 1988 the shooting down of two more Libyan planes in 1989 the massive bombing of the Iraqi people in 1991 the continuing bombings and sanctions against Iraq for the next 12 years the bombing of Afghanistan and Sudan///

 in 1998 the habitual support of Israel despite the routine devastation and torture it inflicts upon the Palestinian people the habitual condemnation of Palestinian resistance to this the abduction of “suspected terrorists” from Muslim countries, such as Malaysia, Pakistan, Lebanon and Albania, who are then taken to places like Egypt and Saudi Arabia, where they are tortured the large military and hi-tech presence in Islam’s holiest land, Saudi Arabia, and elsewhere in the Persian Gulf region the support of undemocratic, authoritarian Middle East governments from the Shah of Iran to the Saudis. “How do I respond when I see that in some Islamic countries there is vitriolic hatred for America?” asked George W. “I’ll tell you how I respond: I’m amazed. I’m amazed that there’s such misunderstanding of what our country is about that people would hate us. I am – like most Americans, I just can’t believe it because I know how good we are.” 18 It’s not just people in the Middle East who have good reason for hating what the US government does. The United States has created huge numbers of potential terrorists all over Latin America during a half century of American actions far worse than what it’s done in the Middle East. If Latin Americans shared the belief of radical Muslims that they will go directly to paradise for martyring themselves in the act of killing the great Satan enemy, by now we might have had decades of repeated terrorist horror coming from south of the border. As it is, there have been many non-suicidal terrorist attacks against Americans and their buildings in Latin America over the years. To what extent do Americans really believe the official disconnect between what the US does in the world and anti-American terrorism? One indication that the public is somewhat skeptical came in the days immediately following the commencement of the bombing of Iraq on March 20 of this year. The airlines later announced that there had been a sharp increase in cancellations of flights and a sharp decrease in future flight reservations in those few days. 19 In June, the Pew Research Center released the results of polling in 20 Muslim countries and the Palestinian territories that brought into question another official thesis, that support for anti-American terrorism goes hand in hand with hatred of American society. The polling revealed that people interviewed had much more “confidence” in Osama bin Laden than in George W. Bush. However, “the survey suggested little correlation between support for bin Laden and hostility to American ideas and cultural products. People who expressed a favorable opinion of bin Laden were just as likely to appreciate American technology and cultural products as people opposed to bin Laden. Pro- and anti-bin Laden respondents also differed little in their views on the workability of Western-style democracy in the Arab world.” 20 The Iraqi resistance The official Washington mentality about the motivations of individuals they call terrorists is also manifested in current US occupation policy in Iraq. Secretary of War Donald Rumsfeld has declared that there are five groups opposing US forces – looters, criminals, remnants of Saddam Hussein’s government, foreign terrorists and those influenced by Iran. 21 An American official in Iraq maintains that many of the people shooting at US troops are “poor young Iraqis” who have been paid between $20 and $100 to stage hit-and-run attacks on US soldiers. “They’re not dedicated fighters,” he said. “They’re people who wanted to take a few potshots.” 22 With such language do American officials avoid dealing with the idea that any part of the resistance is composed of Iraqi citizens who are simply demonstrating their resentment about being bombed, invaded, occupied, and subjected to daily humiliations. Some officials convinced themselves that it was largely the most loyal followers of Saddam Hussein and his two sons who were behind the daily attacks on Americans, and that with the capture or killing of the evil family, resistance would die out; tens of millions of dollars were offered as reward for information leading to this joyful prospect. Thus it was that the killing of the sons elated military personnel. US Army trucks with loudspeakers drove through small towns and villages to broadcast a message about the death of Hussein’s sons. “Coalition forces have won a great victory over the Baath Party and the Saddam Hussein regime by killing Uday and Qusay Hussein in Mosul,” said the message broadcast in Arabic. “The Baath Party has no power in Iraq. Renounce the Baath Party or you are in great danger.” It called on all officials of Hussein’s government to turn themselves in. 23 What followed was several days of some of the deadliest attacks against American personnel since the guerrilla war began. Unfazed, American officials in Washington and Iraq continue to suggest that the elimination of Saddam will write finis to anti-American actions. Another way in which the political origins of terrorism are obscured is by the common practice of blaming poverty or repression by Middle Eastern governments (as opposed to US support for such governments) for the creation of terrorists. Defenders of US foreign policy cite this also as a way of showing how enlightened they are. Here’s Condoleezza Rice: [The Middle East] is a region where hopelessness provides a fertile ground for ideologies that convince promising youths to aspire not to a university education, a career or family, but to blowing themselves up, taking as many innocent lives with them as possible. We need to address the source of the problem. 24 Many on the left speak in a similar fashion, apparently unconscious of what they’re obfuscating. This analysis confuses terrorism with revolution. In light of the several instances mentioned above, among others which could be cited, of US officials giving the game away, in effect admitting that terrorists and guerrillas may be, or in fact are, reacting to actual hurts and injustices, it may be that George W. is the only true believer among them, if in fact he is one. The thought may visit leaders of the American Empire, at least occasionally, that all their expressed justifications for invading Iraq and Afghanistan and for their “War on Terrorism” are no more than fairy tales for young children and grown-up innocents. But officialdom doesn’t make statements to represent reality. It constructs stories to legitimize the pursuit of interests. And the interests here are irresistibly compelling: creating the most powerful empire in all history, enriching their class comrades, remaking the world in their own ideological image. Being the target of terrorism is just one of the prices you pay for such prizes, and terrorist attacks provide a great excuse for the next intervention, the next expansion of the empire, the next expansion of the military budget. A while ago, I heard a union person on the radio proposing what he called “a radical solution to poverty – pay people enough to live on.” Well, I’d like to propose a radical solution to anti-American terrorism – stop giving terrorists the motivation to attack America. As long as the imperial mafia insist that anti-American terrorists have no good or rational reason for retaliation against the United States for anything the US has ever done to their countries, as long as US foreign policy continues with its bloody and oppressive interventions, the “War on Terrorism” is as doomed to failure as the war on drugs has been. If I were the president, I could stop terrorist attacks against the United States in a few days. Permanently. I would first apologize – very publicly and very sincerely – to all the widows and orphans, the impoverished and the tortured, and all the many millions of other victims of American imperialism. Then I would announce to every corner of the world that America’s global military interventions have come to an end. I would then inform Israel that it is no longer the 51st state of the union but -ññ oddly enough -ññ a foreign country. Then I would reduce the military budget by at least 90% and use the savings to pay reparations to the victims and repair the damage from the many American bombings, invasions and sanctions. There would be more than enough money. One year’s military budget in the United States is equal to more than $20,000 per hour for every hour since Jesus Christ was born. That’s one year. That’s what I’d do on my first three days in the White House. On the fourth day, I’d be assassinated.

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#### An analysis that begins with conscience is key—we provide the best understanding of action in the context of sovereignty.

Markwick 10—Michael Markwick, Lecturer at Simon Fraser University, Ph.D candidate in philosophy at Simon Fraser University [Spring 2010, “Terror and Democratic Communication,” Ph.D Dissertation, http://summit.sfu.ca/item/9989]

In order to understand the impact of the war on terror on democratic communication, an examination that begins with conscience may be more fruitful than the debate over citizenship has proven to be. The contestation between republican and liberal theorists, their strategies for reconciling the persistence of pluralism, lead to justifications of sovereign power and constructions of diversity that, in my view, fail the test of building a satisfactory ethic of democratic communication. My hope is that an analysis that begins with the problem of conscience will, first, provide a way forward concerning the problematic of citizenship and pluralism, the construction and anathematisation of the “other” that comes with every construction of the “we” of citizenship. (Hayward, 2007) Conscience includes 195 our faculty for both encountering the other and reflecting on this encounter. Second, it explores the persistence, indeed primacy, of conscience in democratic communication despite our constitutional or positive status as citizen or stateless other. In this sense, I do not believe conscience is reducible to the structures of discipline and dominance ranged against it. Even in situations of the annihilation of citizenship, of its inscription into the projects of the state and our reduction to bare life, the human capacity to reflect upon the nature and purpose of existence remains intact despite attenuation, an enduring site of judgement and resistance, of agency and emancipation.

To be clear, I do not mean by conscience an isolated, individual “holy will”, standing at one remove from others, a transcendent atomistic self. Conscience, etymologically, is to know together, and it suggests a communion of deliberation, where the act of communication goes, as it were, all the way down to the core of our sense of self. It is not the choicemaking agent one would find, for example, behind a Rawlsian veil: conscience takes up the complications and intricate conflicts within oneself, examining the features of identity including personal relationships and beliefs that claim us, that often precede our capacity to choose. This ongoing discernment of one’s sense of self is at the core of W.E.B. DuBois’ powerful exposition of the dilemma of race. “One ever feels his two-ness, an American, a Negro” Dubois wrote,

two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. [The American Negro may long] to merge his double-self into a better and truer self. [But] in this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost. He would not Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa. He would not bleach his Negro soul in a flood of white Americanism, for he knows that Negro blood has a message for the world. He simply wishes to make it possible 196 for a man to be both a Negro and an American. (The Souls of Black Folk, as quoted in Calhoun, 2007: 289)

The porous nature of conscience, not a zone of exclusion but the inward point of contact between the self and the other, between aspects of the other in oneself, is also its great vulnerability.

#### The perm solves—The act of surrender allows us to put paradoxical ideas in play and opens the gateway for actual change.

Moze 7—Mary Beth, Ph.D. in Personal Development and Transformation [“Surrender: An Alchemical Act in Personal Transformation,” *Journal of Conscious Evolution*, http://www.cejournal.org/GRD/Surrender.pdf]

Paradox Surrender is a paradoxical phenomenon (Wallace, 2001), and so is the process of transformation and the bulk of human experience (Fe rendo, 2005; Viorst, 1998).

Paradox exhibits the inexplicable, and this is difficult to embrace in Western culture because it goes against our preferential grain of l ogic and reason. We experience a contradiction and yet discern truth within it. In the act and state of surrender, there is a balance point between being in control and letting go; a paradox of being voluntary and involuntary (Rutledge, 2004). An outcome of surrender is becoming more open and t rusting while gaining wisdom: the paradox of becoming younger (more childlike in curiosity) a nd older (wiser) at the same time (Branscomb, 1993). The Ego seeks to sustain control and yet, in the process of surrender – the very act it fights against – it gains more control (Jones, 1994; May, 1982).

Paradox is evidenced when we act in contradiction to the very behavior that we believe will produce preferable outcomes (Leary, 2004). We reason one way but act in another. By acknowledging and accepting the paradox of our ways , we can help to avoid deducing inaccurate conclusions about ourselves and others (Leary, 2004 ), and open the gateway for surrender and personal growth. In surrender, we release the burde n of our inadequate perceived control and gain proficiency over that which we can control.

Notice that paradox can only exist when there are expectations. Without expectations, occurrences simply are what they are, not judged against an expectation or a standard. This is the challenge for the Ego: quelling its certainties and managing its inclination to control and judge via expectations. Surrender accepts what is.

#### Their insistence on negativity and a particular starting point is problematic—only our inclusive approach can create movements and tangible change

Brand-Jacobsen, 2005[Kai Frithjof Brand-Jacobsen is founder and Director of the Peace Action, Training and Research Institute of Romania (PATRIR) and Co-Director of TRANSCEND, and is on the Executive Board of the TRANSCEND Peace University (TPU) where he is Course Director for the courses Peacebuilding and Empowerment and War to Peace Transitions. He has worked in Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, Nepal, Russia, South Eastern Europe, North America, Colombia, Somalia, Cambodia, Aceh-Indonesia and the Middle East at the invitation of governments, inter-governmental organisations, UN agencies, and local organisations and communities. He has written and published widely, and is author of The Struggle Continues: The Political Economy of Globalisation and People's Struggles for Peace (Pluto, forthcoming), co-author, together with Johan Galtung and Carl Jacobsen, of Searching for Peace: The Road to TRANSCEND (Pluto, 2000 & 2002) and Editor of the TRANSCEND book series published together with Pluto Press, Constructive Peace Studies: Peace by Peaceful Means. He is a member of the Executive Board of the Journal of Peace and Development and the Executive Board of the Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution. In 1999 he was founder and Director of the Coalition for Global Solidarity and Social Development, and in 2000, together with Johan Galtung, he was founder of the Nordic Institute for Peace Research (NIFF). Since 1996 he has provided more than 250 training programmes in peacebuilding, development, and constructive conflict transformation to more than 4000 participants in 30 countries. <http://www.globalsolidarity.org/articles/peace_means_kai.html>]

Peace by Peaceful Means

Dear Friends, The discussions which have taken place over e-mail over the past few days have been extremely interesting. I have just returned from Oslo where the 100th anniversary of the Nobel Peace Prize was being celebrated. The obvious contrast between the rather elite 'suit' dominated celebrations in Oslo and the realities of what is occurring in the world today was stark. Questions of strategy, tactics and visions for how we work to bring about change, to transform all forms of violent conflict -- direct, structural, and cultural -- and to empower, mobilise, and involve people in a mass, broad-based movement for peace and to build the alternatives we are looking for, are **vital**. In Norway alone, to take one example, perhaps 80% of people think what is happening now in and over Afghanistan is wrong, either completely or at least in part, and yet all they hear from the media, academics and politicians is constant support and acclaim for the 'justness' of this war (or indeed, any war in which it is 'we' against 'them'). Small groups of people and 'NGOs', in Norway as in every single country, are trying to bring forward alternatives, to raise their voices, and to protest/oppose what they think is wrong. While these organisations are in every case much smaller than our governments and militaries going to war, they often represent the social majority. A major challenge they face, however, is how to reach out to people, how to involve people, and how to develop alternatives which make sense to people tired of war and violence (whether of the kind we are seeing in Afghanistan, or of a global economic system killing 100,000 a day). **Negative** **slogans** and **opposition** to what is wrong **is** **not** **enough** however. It is not enough, but it is necessary. 'Basta!', 'Enough!' was perhaps the most 'revolutionary' cry of the last decade, and still is in many parts of the world. The simple, courageous act, of standing up when we see that something is wrong, and stating that it is wrong, not cooperating with it, can be a powerful and evocative symbol. When we are having our conferences, discussions and meetings in whichever city, town or village of the world we may be found, we should always remember that the vast majority of people in our own city, town or village, as well as the entire rest of the world, have no idea that we are there, meeting. The vision, hope and ideas which bring people to these conferences are, in the vast majority of cases, kept marginalised, on the periphery. Yet that is also part of our own responsibility, technique and methods. Basta! became a cry to inspire millions, because those who said it lived it, refusing to cooperate any longer with what they know to be wrong. While Basta! may be the most revolutionary cry or word today, transforming all forms of direct, structural, and cultural violence is the greatest challenge. The two are **inclusive** and **complementary**, not exclusive. We need to state clearly our opposition to violence, war, injustice and exploitation (the 'peace movement' has often been willing to do the first two, not always as willing on the last two), and we need also to build a constructive, positive programme. It is not only a question of what we are against, but what we are for. When we criticize what we think is wrong, people will also want to know what we think could be done instead. In these cases, our **answers** **must** **seem** **real** and **viable** to people. The 'anti-globalisation' movement is therefore also a social justice movement; 'non-governmental organisations' should also be people's organisations or people's movements; and one of our challenges today will be to build upon the growing 'anti-war' movement, transforming it also into a peace movement. A step further, as many social and peace activists have recognised, will be to link the peace and social justice movements. Slogans and messages are important, as are practice and vision. It will not be possible today to unite broad numbers of people around issues which they feel are too abstract and divorced from them. The 'abolish the debt' campaign/movement was successful because people were able to see the clear linkages between debt and the effective colonisation and enslavement of countries and people across the south, as well as the incredible suffering and destruction it brought. The Jubilee 2000 'campaign' however, unlike the Jubilee South movement which continues today, did not reach its objective of having the debt cancelled. Instead, while many people around the world believe the problem has been solved, the debt-system and the burden it places upon countries has become even more extreme. Going from 'campaigns' to movements will also be important, though even here it is not a question of 'either/or' but 'both/and' with individual campaigns extremely useful and effective at times for involving people, raising awareness and mobilising around specific issues, strengthening further the broader movements of which they may be a part. Today, a movement for demos kratos is necessary, and vital for any movement or work towards peace. To speak about the United States or any government in the world today as a 'democracy' is a ridiculous farce. They are highly elite dominated systems built upon massive structures and cultures of violence, and willing to use overwhelming (Powel Doctrine) violence when necessary to enforce their needs and/or interests. At best they may be demagogia's, where elites maintain power by promising the people what they will do for them (we call this 'elections'), but they are not system's or societies built upon people's power, demos kratos. Decisions to go to war are made by tiny numbers of people. Our economic and political policies are constructed for us, often to the detriment of the social majorities who are told to 'leave well enough alone' and trust in the experts. This is sometimes as true of politicians as it is of non-governmental organisations who themselves frequently prefer the conference halls and well-funded projects to actually working democratically with people as part of the people themselves. An alternative today, what Johan Galtung has called for, with 10,000 dialogues, meetings, discussions at every level, focussing not only on what is wrong, but also on what we want therapy, ideas, alternatives. In one form or another many of these dialogues are taking place. In a way they are therapy for the massive amounts of violence we are all being exposed to today, in our cultures, in our world, on our television sets or in the speeches of our 'democratically elected' rulers (the question, for those who do not support their policies, should not be 'who put them in power' -- though this is also important -- but why haven't we removed them from power yet\_). They are also empowering, if we take the step beyond saying what is wrong to what could be done\_, what should be done\_, and then go further to discussing what I/we can do about it. Mobilising people for peace today is not simply about a slogan (though coming up with clearly expressed messages in a few words will of course help us to link people together and raise awareness). What is necessary, beyond any single issue or top-level strategy for how to change the world, is the process. The way is the goal. Perhaps the greatest achievement of the social justice/anti-globalisation movement is that it has mobilised, involved, and empowered millions of people around the world in discussing, thinking about, and acting upon the realities around them. On the streets of Seattle, Praha, Okinawa, Melbourne, Gotheburg, Washington, Quebec, Genoa, Ottawa, people, many of whom refuse to vote, have been discussing foreign policy, domestic politics, people to people movements, and all the issues which politicians and well-established NGOs are not able and often not willing to discuss with people. We have our 'manifestos', our policies and plans which we wish to put forward in the name of people, often addressing them to 'politicians' and 'elites' believing, in a fundamentally undemocratic way, that they will be the ones to bring about and implement change for us. This is not to say that that is not an important level which we also need to work at. The broader vision here is both/and, not either or, in terms of strategy as well often of vision. We also need, however, to be willing to take part in the much slower, more timely, and more empowering process, of tens of thousands of dialogues together with people, communities, and organisations at every level. Solidarity today is being built upon and carried further into alliances not just supporting people in their struggles for social justice, peace and freedom, but carrying forward those struggles ourselves in our own communities, our own towns, cities and villages. If we wish to change the injustices taking place in the world today we must of course work on a global level, but we must also work, just as importantly, within our communities. Again, both/and rather than either or. We should also be wary when we say 'we must begin here', or 'this must be done first!', even when the message is very positive and constructive. 'We must begin with the individual!'. 'We must begin by changing society!'. 'We must begin with a culture of peace!'. 'We must begin by ending the debt!'. All of these, and the many others put forward, are extremely important issues. They are also all linked together. Again, both/and. Exclusive and elitist visions will only serve to further fragment our efforts, creating division and separation where what is needed is dialogue, solidarity, cooperation and alliances between movements/organisations which often take diverse strategies and approaches to addressing deeply interlinking injustices and structures and cultures of violence. Conscientisation (raising awareness, often political awareness -- but also social, cultural, economic), organisation (we can do more together than we can apart, and it is necessary to organise -- though in many different ways -- to be able to bring about changes, both against what we think is wrong and for what we think is right), mobilisation (bringing in more and more people, involving people in dialogues, discussion, action, and work for change/transformation), and empowerment (I/we can, rather than 'I/we can't'; also important recognising the power we have to bring about change, rather than simply accepting existing, often extremely violent, power structures and believing that change can/should/must be implemented by those 'in power', whether slave owners, men, politicians, or fuhrers) are all necessary.

#### We must reject hopelessness—participating in democratic movements via solidarity with causes creates the CULTURAL and PSYCHOLOGICAL building blocks necessary for anti-authoritarian movements at home AND abroad—refusing this solidarity creates a cycle of pessimism, passivity, and mental slavery. The Aff, even if it cannot itself accomplish anything, is a psychological prerequisite for any change.

Levine 11 [Bruce, Bruce E. Levine, PhD, is a clinical [psychologist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychologist) in private practice in [Cincinnati, Ohio](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cincinnati%2C_Ohio). He has been in practice for more than two decades.[[citation needed](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed%22%20%5Co%20%22Wikipedia%3ACitation%20needed)Levine's most recent book is Get Up, Stand Up: Uniting Populists, Energizing the Defeated, and Battling the Corporate Elite (Chelsea Green Publishing, 2011, [ISBN 1603582983](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special%3ABookSources/1603582983)). It calls for a new kind of politics to help Americans overcome political demoralization. <http://october2011.org/blogs/kevin-zeese/how-anti-authoritarians-can-transcend-their-sense-hopelessness-and-fight-back>]

Critical thinking anti-authoritarians see the enormity of the military-industrial complex, the energy-industrial complex, and the financial-industrial complex. They see the overwhelming power of the U.S. ruling class. They see many Americans unaware of the true sources of their oppression or with little knowledge of the strategies and tactics necessary to overcome it. They see American society lacking the psychological and cultural building blocks necessary for democratic movements—the self-respect required to reject the role as a mere subject of power, the collective self-confidence that success is possible, courage, determination, anti-authoritarianism, and solidarity. They see how the corporatocracy pays back those few Americans who do question, challenge, and resist illegitimate authority with economic and political marginalization. Why bother with any kind of political activism? Isn’t it futile? Critical Thinking, Depression, and Political Passivity Research shows that a more accurate notion of one’s powerless can result in a greater feeling of helplessness and is associated with depression. Several classic studies show that moderately depressed people are more critically thinking than those who are not depressed. Researchers Lauren Alloy and Lyn Abramson, studying nondepressed and depressed subjects who played a rigged game in which they had no actual control, found that nondepressed subjects overestimated their contribution to winning, while depressed subjects more accurately evaluated their lack of control. If you are critical thinking enough to see the reality of just how much influence the corporatocracy has and how little power you have, then you are going to experience more pain than those who do not see these truths. To dull this pain, in addition to drugs and other diversions, human beings use depression and apathy. But these “shutdown strategies” weaken us and create passivity, immobilization, and what Bob Marley called “mental slavery,” which in itself can be humiliatingly painful. And in this vicious cycle, human beings use even more diversions and shutdown strategies to dull this ever-increasing pain. When one is in such a debilitating vicious cycle, painful truths about the cause of one’s malaise—the truths of how we are getting screwed—are not positively energizing. Instead, one may take such truths as confirmation that pessimism and hopelessness are warranted. The vicious cycle continues. When one is already in pain and immobilized, there is a reflexive negative reaction to any proposed solution. Solutions demand effort, and a demand for effort is painful for those with little energy. So, it’s much easier to reflexively dismiss any solution. Of course, many solutions do deserve to be dismissed, as they may well be naïve. The feeling of hopelessness is a legitimate one. And hopeless people are turned off by attempts to invalidate their feelings. Is it possible to validate that feeling of hopelessness while at the same time challenging the wisdom of inactions based on hopelessness? And is it possible to challenge it in a way that doesn’t insult the intelligence of critical thinkers? Critical Thinking about Critical Thinking The battle against the corporatocracy demands critical thinking, which results in seeing many ugly truths about reality. This critical thinking is absolutely necessary. Without it, one is more likely to engage in tactics that can make matters worse. Critical thinking also means the ability to think critically about one’s pessimism—realizing that pessimism can cripple the will. Critical thinkers who reflect on their own critical thinking recognize how negativism can cause inaction, which results in maintaining the status quo. Critical thinking anti-authoritarians who move into hopelessness can forget that while they may in fact be better at seeing ugly truths than are many other people, they cannot see everything. Simply put, critical thinkers sometimes lose their humility Abraham Lincoln, considered by many historians to be our most critical thinking president, was also a major depressive. When he was a young man, he became so depressed that twice his friends had to form suicide watches over him. In the 1850s in the United States, the major battle was less over abolishing slavery than merely stopping the spread of it. Lincoln, who fought politically to stop the spread of slavery, wrote in 1856 a pessimistic analysis of the North’s chances of winning this fight: This immense, palpable pecuniary interest, on the question of extending slavery, unites the Southern people, as one man. But it can not be demonstrated that the North will gain a dollar by restricting it. Moral principle is all, or nearly all, that unites us of the North. Pity ’tis, it is so, but this is a looser bond, than pecuniary interest. Right here is the plain cause of their perfect union and our want of it. That slavery would be abolished in the United States less than a decade after Lincoln’s pessimistic analysis of the difficulty of merely stopping its spread was one of those seeming impossibilities that became possible because of unforeseen historical events. In the North, there was certainly not enough concern for African Americans so as to end slavery. But less than a decade after Lincoln’s pessimistic analysis about merely stopping the spread of slavery, one unforeseen event after another resulted in the abolition of slavery. There are many examples from history of seeming impossibilities actually happening, examples that compel critical thinkers to rethink whether they are actually seeing all the possibilities. One recent example is, of course, the Arab spring. Many critical thinkers from that part of the world remain amazed at the huge revolts in Egypt that toppled the Mubarak tyranny. The collapse of the Soviet empire seemed impossible to most Americans up until shortly before it occurred. Most Americans saw only mass resignation within the Soviet Union and its sphere of control. But the shipyard workers in Gdansk, Poland, did not see their Soviet and Communist Party rulers as the all-powerful forces that Americans did. And so Polish workers’ Solidarity, by simply refusing to go away, provided a strong dose of morale across Eastern Europe at the same time other historical events—such as the Soviet Union’s Afghanistan war—weakened their empire. Why Not Just Wait for the Collapse? History tells us that not just the Soviet empire but all empires ultimately collapse, and so why not just wait for their fall? It is pretty safe to say that the U.S. military-industrial complex and other oppressive U.S. industrial complexes will ultimately fall. These may be transformed by our own efforts or, more likely—given Americans’ current state of political passivity—they will fall owing mostly under the weight of their own stupidity. So, if it is more likely that these will fall under the weight of their own stupidity, why bother with activism? One reason for democratic movements is that history tells us that not all empires and oppressive institutions fall under the weight of their own stupidity, as some are transformed by a combination of democratic movements and empire stupidity. There is another reason to work each day on the democracy battlefields at our workplace, schools, the media, the marketplace, etc. Whether an empire and its oppressive institutions fall under the weight of their own stupidity or with help from a democratic movement, there must be people around in the aftermath who have what it takes to create and maintain a democratic society. There must be people who have retained their individual self-respect, collective self-confidence, courage, determination, anti-authoritarianism, and solidarity. The lesson from history is that tyrannical and dehumanizing institutions are often more fragile than they appear. We never really know until it happens whether or not we are living in that time when historical variables are creating opportunities for seemingly impossible change. Maybe in our lifetime, or our kids’ lifetime, or their kids’ lifetime, the current corporatocracy will fall. It may fall because of the efforts of democratic movements or because of its own stupidity or some combination. But when it does fall, the likelihood that it will be replaced by an enduring democratic society rests on whether there are enough of us with practice in democracy, enough of us who **took** **seriously** the **psychological** and **cultural** **building** **blocks** of self-**respect**, collective self-**confidence**, **courage**, determination, **anti**-**authoritarianism**, and **solidarity**. And **democratic** **movements** are the **best** **place** to **practice** creating those **psychological** and **cultural** **building** **blocks** required for an enduring democracy.

#### Iraq Veterans Against the War demonstrates that anti-war activism cuts across academic and veteran communities. It also proves that many veterans and active service personnel who fear speaking out hope for solidarity from others.

Iraq Veterans Against the War **‘13**

http://www.ivaw.org/about

Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW) was founded by Iraq war veterans in July 2004 at the annual convention of Veterans for Peace (VFP) in Boston to give a voice to the large number of active duty service people and veterans who are against this war, but are under various pressures to remain silent. From its inception, IVAW has called for: Immediate withdrawal of all occupying forces in Iraq; Reparations for the human and structural damages Iraq has suffered, and stopping the corporate pillaging of Iraq so that their people can control their own lives and future; and Full benefits, adequate healthcare (including mental health), and other supports for returning servicemen and women. Our membership includes recent veterans and active duty servicemen and women from all branches of military service, National Guard members, and reservists who have served in the United States military since September 11, 2001. IVAW’s strategy is to mobilize the military community to withdraw its support for the war and occupation in Iraq. Therefore, IVAW is leading the movement of veterans and GIs who are working to bring the troops home now. Today, IVAW members are in 48 states, Washington, D.C., Canada, and on numerous bases overseas, including Iraq. IVAW has chapters around the country and in Canada. IVAW members educate the public about the realities of the Iraq war by speaking in communities and to the media about their experiences. Members also dialogue with youth in classrooms about the realities of military service. IVAW supports all those resisting the war, including Conscientious Objectors and others facing military prosecution for their refusal to fight. IVAW advocates for full funding for the Veterans Administration, and full quality health treatment (including mental health) and benefits for veterans when they return from duty.

#### Using personal experience to establish the legitimacy of argument essentializes difference. This prevents an analysis of the ideological systems that shape the construction of experience

Joan W. SCOTT is professor of social science at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey, 91 [“The Evidence of Experience,” Critical Inquiry, Vol. 17, No. 4 (Summer, 1991), pp. 773-797, JSTOR]

When the evidence offered is the evidence of "experience," the claim for referentiality is further buttressed-what could be truer, after all, than a subject's own account of what he or she has lived through? It is precisely this kind of appeal to experience as uncontestable evidence and as an originary point of explanation-as a foundation on which analysis is based-that weakens the critical thrust of histories of difference. By remaining within the epistemological frame of orthodox history, these studies lose the possibility of examining those assumptions and practices that excluded considerations of difference in the first place. They take as self-evident the identities of those whose experience is being documented and thus naturalize their difference. They locate resistance outside its discursive construction and reify agency as an inherent attribute of individuals, thus decontextualizing it. When experience is taken as the origin of knowledge, the vision of the individual subject (the person who had the experience or the historian who recounts it) becomes the bedrock of evidence on which explanation is built. Questions about the constructed nature of experience, about how subjects are constituted as different in the first place, about how one's vision is structured-about language (or discourse) and history-are left aside. The evidence of experience then becomes evidence for the fact of difference, rather than a way of exploring how difference is established, how it operates, how and in what ways it constitutes subjects who see and act in the world.7

To put it another way, the evidence of experience, whether conceived through a metaphor of visibility or in any other way that takes meaning as transparent, reproduces rather than contests given ideological systems-those that assume that the facts of history speak for themselves and those that rest on notions of a natural or established opposition between, say, sexual practices and social conventions, or between homosexuality and heterosexuality. Histories that document the "hidden" world of homosexuality, for example, show the impact of silence and repression on the lives of those affected by it and bring to light the history of their suppression and exploitation. But the project of making experience visible precludes critical examination of the workings of the ideological system itself, its categories of representation (homosexual/heterosexual, man/woman, black/white as fixed immutable identities), its premises about what these categories mean and how they operate, and of its notions of subjects, origin, and cause. Homosexual practices are seen as the result of desire, conceived as a natural force operating outside or in opposition to social regulation. In these stories homosexuality is presented as a repressed desire (experience denied), made to seem invisible, abnormal, and silenced by a "society" that legislates heterosexuality as the only normal practice.8 Because this kind of (homosexual) desire cannot ultimately be repressed-because experience is there-it invents institutions to accommodate itself. These institutions are unacknowledged but not invisible; indeed, it is the possibility that they can be seen that threatens order and ultimately overcomes repression. Resistance and agency are presented as driven by uncontainable desire; emancipation is a teleological story in which desire ultimately overcomes social control and becomes visible. History is a chronology that makes experience visible, but in which categories appear as nonetheless ahistorical: desire, homosexuality, heterosexuality, femininity, masculinity, sex, and even sexual practices become so many fixed entities being played out over time, but not themselves historicized. Presenting the story in this way excludes, or at least under- states, the historically variable interrelationship between the meanings "homosexual" and "heterosexual," the constitutive force each has for the other, and the contested and changing nature of the terrain that they simultaneously occupy. "The importance-an importance-of the category 'homosexual,'" writes Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick,

comes not necessarily from its regulatory relation to a nascent or already-constituted minority of homosexual people or desires, but from its potential for giving whoever wields it a structuring definitional leverage over the whole range of male bonds that shape the social constitution.9