### Contention One is Conscience

#### 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 and goodness and freedom are not our *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.

#### 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 10 (Michael, School of Communication - Simon Fraser University phD, spring 2010, DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY “Terror and democratic communication”)

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.

#### When we lose our conscience and allow the president messianic authority, we give up everything to the state and it’s avatar, the president.

#### This is roulette politics—it gives the president the power, unchecked, to absolutely and completely obliterate life on the planet.

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The messianic presidency, as a form of sovereign power, is a performative metaphysics. Its vast, interconnected systems in the machinery of the state, its capacity to orient political culture and the market to its self-perpetuation, its unilateral control over conventional and thermonuclear weaponry of unimaginable scale allow this institution to administer or obliterate life, from individuals to the biosphere, and in so doing define the nature and purpose of existence as such. If the contemporary State is, as Alain Badiou argues, a “superpower”, the messianic presidency is something greater still. Badiou argues that the State is the Leviathan Hobbes could not imagine, that there “is no answer to the question about how much the power of the State exceeds the individual.” (Badiou, 2005: 144 Original emphasis.) It holds a capacity for violence far greater than the sum of our individual capacities for self-defence; Agamben would observe that this excess is so great that it erases the distinction in classical politics between the life of the individual, the power of the people, and the superpower of the State. The State is not principally a superpower against any ideology or doctrine, but against life itself—the life of the human species and of the biosphere as a whole. I believe it is important to distinguish this analysis of the phenomenon of the State and its biopolitical rule from the specific nature of the messianic presidency as it has developed in the United States, especially from Wilson to Bush and Obama. In the messianic presidency, the unknowable excess of the State’s superpower becomes flesh, communicates itself to the lives and systems it would form in its own image. The messianic presidency is the personification of this power relationship, obscuring it, making it absolute and the object of our political desire. To be clear, it does this within the public culture of the United States, but it also does so globally to affirm the dominance of the State over life as an ontological absolute. The messianic presidency establishes the superpower of the State as the author of history, in order to make it unimaginable that democratic communication might take other forms. In this way—in its promise of emancipation from terror, want and oppression in every form—authority presents itself as truth. It vivifies conscience, calling us to see through its unblinking gaze the world as it ought to be. The messianic presidency is therefore the sign and safeguard of the State, the voice and guarantor of the superpower that is greater than the superpower itself.

#### Conscience is at the root of our current imperialism. Abu Grhaib, Guantanomo, drones and torture are subsets of a broader thought process that authorizes endless violence.

#### Rather than treating these cases as “exceptions” or “bad apples,” we need to treat them as a rule. We need a politics of maladjustment, where every action and word of the president makes us deeply uncomfortable. We need to find our collective conscience.

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Just before midnight on November 4th, 2003, Sabrina Harman, a military police officer, stood in a communal shower in the Abu Ghraib prison and took photographs with a Mercury Deluxe Classic camera. Her subject was naked, covered in a blanket the colour of ashes, head covered in a burlap sack, and made to stand cruciform on a box—an Iraqi man her age, a “young guy, very decent”. She helped other soldiers attach electrical wires to his fingers. They told him he would be electrocuted if he moved from the box; they did not tell him the wires were not connected to a power source. This was a “stress position”, calculated to deprive the man of sleep and compel him to talk. (Morris, 2008) By the authority of the 43rd president of the United States, and the casuistry of a White House determined to bend domestic and international laws against torture its way, the event Harman’s now iconic photograph captured was not illegal and it was not torture; on the orders of Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfled it was standard operating procedure. After Harman’s photographs and a host of others like it streamed into global circulation, BBC News persisted in describing the prison as a “square kilometre of hell during Saddam Hussein’s horrific rule”. (Asser, 2004) But this was George W. Bush’s Abu Ghraib, and it exposed the errancy of the presidency’s sovereign power of vivisection.

Errol Morris, in his brutally perspicacious film about these photographs, Standard Operating Procedure, does not allow any of the detainees to speak. Instead, the U.S. soldiers and private contractors who forced the detainees into “stress positions”—handcuffed naked to a bed frame, drowning under drenched burlap—and beat them into sexual degradation—¶ masturbating as a twenty-first birthday present for MP Lynndie England, stripped and stacked in a homoerotic pyramid—testify. Women and men, gay and straight, black and white these soldiers and contractors, many of them imprisoned as Rumsfeld’s “bad apples”, are united through Morris’ lens in placing the blame elsewhere. They were following orders to “keep more Americans from dying”. In the words of Sergeant Javal Davis, they were doing the preparatory work of “humiliation” and “softening up” for senior officials. “Torture happened during interrogations. Guys go into interrogations and they’re dead. And they were killed, and they died. That’s where the torture happened. We don’t have pictures of that.” (Morris, 2008) “Ghosts” did the torturing, operatives from a host of intelligence agencies, including the CIA, who remained nameless in the logs of the military police and faceless before the soldiers’ ubiquitous cameras.

The trouble with this “square kilometre of hell” is that it was, and remains, global. Through the work of a cadre of six senior administration lawyers, culminating in a one-¶ page memo on “Counter-Resistance Techniques”, the Bush administration claimed the power to suspend the rule of international law and the U.S. Constitution at will. (Sands, 2008) Abu Ghraib, Baghram, and Guantanamo Bay are comparatively small measures of the presidency’s immeasurable biopolitical power. Vivisection is the materialist epistemology of this power, asserting that the ability to bleed intelligence out of a tortured subject makes the sovereign omnipercipient, all seeing. Torture is therefore a form of surveillance, backed by the “modern processing power and data-mining technology” claiming for the sovereign complete knowledge of the subject when it dissects the organs of bare life. “Terrorist suspects” and “enemy combatants”, be they citizen or alien, have no transcendent political personality, no inherent rights; they, and all of us, have an instrumental utility as both a threat to be contained and quantified. (Healy, 2008: 166, 86-87) In this way, vivisection, for Rumsfeld and his lawyers, is a truth procedure with no jurisdictional limit.

Vivisection is the diffusion of sovereign power’s capacity for total violence. It is the expression of discipleship, the willingness to be the monsters of sovereign power. This is possible as vivification displaces politics, creating the messianic presidency in each of us. The reality of the messianic presidency’s superpower, and its project of producing this power in us from the inside through the corruption of conscience, is the “fact of oppression” that tests every theory of democratic communication. It brings with it the challenge of grounding a practice of justice in the empirical and moral truths of our condition, to build a politics that works from the permanence of our diversity to an authoritative assertion about the nature and purpose of human existence. Borrowing from King, the challenge is to build a politics of maladjustment, a politics that will not adjust itself “to the madness of militarism, to self-defeating effects of physical violence”, the “bleak and desolate midnight of man’s inhumanity to man”. (King, 1963: 32) This politics will reclaim from sovereign power the discourse of human rights and dignity, affirming their foundation in the truth of what it means to be human.

#### The INSTITUTIONAL MOOD of the government authorizes and justifies racist violence by citizens—racism BECOMES socially appropriate in the context of the war on terror

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There is also little room in Young’s analysis for the experience of religious and racial minorities. In my direct experience, Muslim leaders in Canada reacted with horror and moral outrage to the terrorist attacks of 9/11, moving very quickly to manifest their social solidarity. However, they soon began to experience arbitrary and racist exercises of power and this sense of unity slid into an experience of otherness. The sign of a similar slide is also clear in Muneer Ahmad’s analysis of the treatment of “Muslim-looking” peoples in the United States in the aftermath of 9/11. This includes the murder of up to nineteen people, assaults, harassment and intimidation, the fire bombing of gurdwaras, temples and mosques and acts of vandalism. Unlike acts of homophobic violence, such as the torture and killing of Matthew Shepard, these crimes were not seen as acts of incomprehensible violence. Instead, in Ahmad’s analysis, they were seen as “expressing a socially appropriate emotion—overwhelming anger in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks—in socially inappropriate ways.” These crimes were forms of veneration of the American way of life, expressions of adoration of the security regime meted out in the flesh of a racialized minority. They were not solely discrete and isolated incidents, but part of a broader confluence between individual crimes and the institutional mood. “The physical violence exercised upon the bodies of Arabs, Muslims, and South Asians has been accompanied by a legal and political violence toward these communities.” (2004: 1262).

In addition to direct acts of violence and abuse against Muslims and Muslim-looking people, and the systemic forms of isolation and disparate treatment, there is also the cumulative impact upon these communities of a public discourse of suspicion, enmity and blame. This is evident in the aftermath of the attacks on Glasgow’s airport in 2007. Kafeel Ahmad, supported by a small clutch of physicians, loads a second hand Jeep with propane tanks and drives it into the airport’s entrance court. The Jeep sets off a comparatively small explosion, the only reported injury was to Ahmad who died after sustaining severe burns. The airport’s entrance was repaired and opened in short order. Nevertheless, the attack seems to have had a profound impact on Britain’s Muslim community. It reinforced the sense of the community as an alien, threatening presence that quickened with the 7/7 bombings of London’s transit system. Unlike those conspirators, who were British born and raised, Ahmad and his cohort were immigrants. Even so, British born Muslims experienced a sense of race shame, a feeling of being the “other”. In the words of Na'eem Raza, writing for the BBC, “We have lived together for years, carried out business together, our children play together, we support the same team, we walk the same streets, and now we are ‘them.’”(Raza, 2007).

#### These are not individual instances of violence, they are NORMALIZED and CODIFIED auto-immune responses.

Ahmad 04 (Muneer I. Ahmad, professor of law at the Yale Law School. He is a specialist in international human rights and immigration law. Georgetown University Law Center, “A Rage Shared by Law: Post-September 11 Racial Violence as Crimes of Passion”, California Law Review Volume 92 | Issue 5 Article 1, 10/31/04, <http://scholarship.law.berkeley.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1321&context=californialawreview>)

There is a danger that hate violence against Arabs, Muslims, and South Asians is understood as a passing, or past, phenomenon. Such an assumption ignores the steady stream of violence directed against these communities long after September 11. Nearly two years after the terroristattacks, this violence continued, including: the stabbing in the back of a Muslim woman in Virginia, while her perpetrator called her a "terroristpig"4; the brutal beating of a Hindu pizza delivery man in Massachusettswho was mistaken for a Muslim'; and a cross-burning in front of an Islamiccenter in Maryland.6 Events such as these suggest that, rather than an isolated phenomenon, the racialization of Arabs, Muslims, and South Asians after September 11 is ongoing. Indeed, the reconstruction of Arab, Muslim, and South Asian identity after September 11 constitutes a major shift in American racial conceptualization. Hate violence has played a major rolein this process, and continues to do so.7 Moreover, the very persistence ofthis violence suggests that it and underlying biases toward Arabs, Muslims, and South Asians have been normalized.

#### Our willingness to cede power to the executive is a site of subjugation – The security regime – pre-labels anyone non-white as in need of demonstrating they are not a threat—the aff is key to rupture this presumption of guilt

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The security regime fosters what Iris Marion Young calls ‘emergency obedience’. In the act of protecting us against the depredations of terrorist cells, the security regime subjugates us. “The state pledges to protect us, but tells us that we should submit to its rule and decisions without deliberation, publicity, criticism, or dissent.” (Young, 2003: 227) We cannot be equal to the government we formally constitute because it, ultimately, has the last word about our physical safety and the safety of the people we love. Our role is not simply to give our obedience, but also our gratitude and adoration. The result is a polity that infantilises the citizen, where a relationship of dependency dissolves into irrelevance any substantive form of democratic participation or consent. Young describes this as masculinist power writ large and entrenched in virtue, with the executive branch playing the part of chivalrous protector against the bad men outside our walls and the enemy within.

For theorists like Goldberg (2002b) and Ahmad (2004), masculinist power is also white. It makes ‘Muslim looking people’ the problematic, shifting the onus to the members of this constructed race category to demonstrate they are not a threat. This manifestation of power is not experienced as benign or endearing by the people subject to its race-categorization. During the first Gulf War, as western forces combined under U.S. leadership to roll back Saddam Hussein’s invasion of Kuwait, Canada’s Globe and Mail published an editorial cartoon featuring a “Muslim looking” caricature prostrate on a prayer mat, surrounded by assault weaponry. The title inscribed on the book before him, in an allusion to the Koran, was “How to Kill and Maim.” The community’s response to the cartoon was tame in comparison to the outcry against the caricatures of Mohammed in Denmark’s Jyllands-Posten, even though the Koran is more central to Islam. Nevertheless the publication of the Globe’s cartoon was consistent with the patterns of harassment endured by Muslims in Canadian cities at the time. In referring then, to the bargain ‘we’ strike with the security regime, the collective pronoun masks a social fragmentation or heterogeneity by race and religion as well as gender. Our personal relationships to the security regime are by no means uniform. They differ dramatically between communities, indeed within our own personalities from one moment to the next.

### Contention Two is Democratic Communication

#### Thus Viveth and I advocate the unconditional surrender to those nations, organizations, or persons who planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001, or harbored such organizations or persons

#### Citizenship is the spirit of human dignity, but the war on terror’s policies have birthed us into the citizenship of the gulag. No war can be held at arms length and the atrocities of the war on terror destroy democratic communication.

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Aristotle’s assertion that we are “born for citizenship” stands in sharp contrast to what the war on terror is making of us and of the possibility of free and democratic societies. Although one should proceed cautiously with his claim—Aristotle makes it almost parenthetically in the Nicomachean Ethics to bolster his argument about the nature of happiness, an argument he uses ultimately to justify the construction of the state— I find nevertheless the idea that we are by nature citizens opens a path to understanding democratic communication and what it means at a time of terror. (Aristotle & Ross, 1954: I, vii) It is, in the purest sense of the word, a radical claim, calling us back to the ontological primacy of human life as such over the life of the state. The state is not the author or source of human life, though it devotes great energy to simulate this role. To be “born for citizenship” suggests that we are born to be in relationships with each other, relationships that aim to varying degrees at forms of social (if not political) governance and, ultimately, happiness. To be “born for citizenship” is to be born for social communion. At the heart of our species is the capacity to discern together and manifest the nature and purpose of human existence, to order our lives together according to our best understanding of what it means to be human. If this is correct, then “citizenship” is not, in the first instance, a juridical or constitutional status—a ground of exclusion of the alien, as Derrida would have it— but the action of being, the action of the “soul” to borrow again from Aristotle, that is democratic communication. To be “born for citizenship” is to be a participant in the human action of finding the truth about our lives as they are, discerning the truth about our lives as they ought to be and advancing through all of this the truth about what it means to be human. This involves the practical work of sharing in the ordering of our lives together. Speaking in the sanctuary of Washington, DC’s Vermont Baptist Church, on the spot where Martin Luther King Jr. had once preached, Barack Obama delicately established himself as the Joshua to the Moses that was Dr. King. Obama was approaching the first anniversary of his inauguration as President, and this speech was an audacious but strangely majestic moment. As he exhorted the faithful and Americans generally not to lose faith in government, President Obama bound the practice of citizenship to what he described as “that sweet spirit of resistance”. Citizenship is this spirit, the action of human dignity in history against every form of oppression.

The purpose of my research is to map the conflict between citizenship as democratic communication, the “sweet spirit of resistance”, and the powers at work in the war on terror that make an effigy of this spirit. Through a close reading of the impact of the war on terror on Canada, Great Britain and the United States, my ultimate purpose is to test our beliefs in what constitutes a free, democratic and just society with a view to developing a pragmatic theory of democratic communication. This theory is pragmatic to the extent it recognizes that the first moments of the twenty-first century reinforced the lesson of its incarnadine predecessor: no war can be held at arm’s length. The lesson came home with skyline altering violence in the airspace and on the soil of the United States, Bali, London, Madrid, Baghdad, Kabul and myriad other sites since September 11th, 2001. It leaked out in the point and shoot images of US soldiers at brutal work in Abu Ghraib, a prison made infamous by Saddam Hussein and doubly so by Donald Rumsfeld. It is the refrain in the litany of horrors recounted by Maher Arar of his “extraordinary rendition” into the hands of Syrian torturers. It bleeds life out of the constitutional norms that have shaped for at least half a millennium our understanding of liberal democracy, *feeding the rise of the executive branch as Leviathan and saviour.*

The intimate reach of the war on terror turns Aristotle’s axiom on its head. It births us into the citizenship of the gulag, the concentration camp, the grave-like cell, ground zero. It supplants the necessary diversity of the ways we manifest human life with the monotony of bare life, rendering us human organisms stripped of personality, dignity and agency. For this reason, my approach to developing an idea of democratic communication is to examine the actual impact of the war on terror on our capacity for citizenship. With great respect to Rawls and his seminal theory of justice, I do not believe an adequate understanding of justice in communication can flow from a state of abstraction, from a veil of ignorance. Further, I do not believe the fact of social pluralism supports Rawls’ insistence that politics must eschew any form of metaphysics. Claims about absolutes like the good of human existence always, as I will argue below, make their way into politics. Social pluralism is not a historical accident; the diversity of beliefs about human existence, its origins and ultimate significance is a necessary feature of our species, a visible sign of our capacity actively to reflect on who we are and to organize ourselves accordingly. Equally, Agamben’s grim but apposite insistence that we are trapped ineluctably by sovereign power in the condition of bare life, that the role of law is to entrench our status as homo sacer, sacrificial victims for the perfection of sovereign power, misses the paradox that endures at the heart of oppression. Even as the state would push us into a condition of voicelessness, reducing human life to a raw material, the “sweet spirit of resistance” persists. We retain our capacity for social communion, and affirm our human function as citizens, against the most deplorable and dehumanizing conditions where justice is itself perverted. Indeed, the truly remarkable thing about our human agency as citizens is that we make powerful, ultimately metaphysical, assertions about the good even in the moments of great suffering. This ability to participate in the vast but purposive deliberation about the truth of human existence marks our point of return from bare life to citizenship, from victim to agent of change. My research, therefore, examines democratic communication as this process of assertion, resistance and recovery that marks our participation in the conversation—as broad as history and as diverse as humanity—about who we are as people, and what we are as a species. My aim is to find in the intractable and hard realities of our relationship to the war on terror the seeds of a sound understanding of democratic communication.

#### 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 2007 [Mary Beth, Ph.D. in Personal Development and Transformation, “ Surrender: An Alchemical Act in Personal Transforma tion “, Journal of Conscious Evolution, <http://www.cejournal.org/GRD/Surrender.pdf>]

Surrender and the Ego Surrender provides a willing path toward greater un derstandings. 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 po int 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, by promoting this sort of reflection and thought through the act of surrender, we solve a shift in citizen and congressional opinions on the war on terror—the aff is the sort of painful self-examination that creates change

Grieder, 2004 [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 ofthe‘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 destruc- tion 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.

#### That is the start for change – Pluralism is necessary to challenge the domination of the messianic presidency and the state. Using conscience as our justifications and challenging the security regime is a necessary first step to challenge state dominated communication.

Markwick 10 (Michael, School of Communication - Simon Fraser University phD, spring 2010, DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY “Terror and democratic communication”)

The imbalance between the citizen and the State provokes Badiou to posit an idea of politics, of democratic communication, that breaks with liberal categories. Habermas and Rawls attempt to preserve the distinction in classical politics between the private life of the citizen—in the autonomy of a “lifeworld” or in fashioning “one’s own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life”—to locate liberty in this space, as a zone of exclusion. The democratic challenge, on this view, is to determine how privately formed opinions ought to guide the public exercise of power, ensuring these opinions are purified of doctrinal content and at the same time formed at a remove from the power of the State. This liberal project is no longer feasible because, as Agamben and Badiou show, the State will not be excluded from private life. The sovereign power of vivification continually attempts to colonize our lifeworlds or life plans with the State’s ontological claims about the nature and purpose of human existence. As we incorporate these claims into the life of conscience, we gain the feeling of political agency or communicative reason, a false sense that we are not bare life.

Badiou, more lucidly than Agamben, argues that the superpower of the State and the frustration of the liberal project do not mean an end to politics, but a reorientation: politics is a truth procedure, comparable to mathematics, science and love. While he grants it is rare and fleeting, politics exposes the radical imbalance between the human person and the State’s superhuman power, it “summons the power of the State” and “is the only truth procedure to do so directly.” Politics is the practice of a freedom that is larger than the ultimately illusory liberty promised by liberalism—the liberty of the insular, creatively self-fashioning individual; it is a necessarily public liberty. The fact that, in Badiou’s words, “it is essential to the normal functioning of the State that its power remains measureless, errant, unassignable” does not bring, contra Agamben’s darker moments, an ineluctable condition of voiceless bare life. It brings, Badiou insists, a new imperative for politics and with it freedom as the “interruption of this errancy”. “The State”, he continues, is in fact the measureless enslavement of the parts of the situation, an enslavement whose secret is precisely the errancy of superpower, its absence of measure. Freedom here consists in putting the State at a distance through the collective establishment of a measure for its excess. And if the excess if [sic] measured, it is because the collective can measure up to it. (Badiou, 2005: 144 - 45).

Politics is therefore a truth procedure of communication, a pubic application of conscience that aims to build a deliberative collective. We weigh issues of fact and value together in order to come to the best articulations of the empirical and moral truth. Democratic communication is not the production of free-floating opinions, or knowledge as a simple catalogue of beliefs (where difference brings an indifference to whether they are justified and true). It is Badiou’s politics, a determined and perpetual form of collective ontological enquiry that engages all people—citizen and non-citizen alike—because truth claims are addressed to all of us, they are claims about what it means to be human and to share the material conditions of existence, including the reality of sovereign power’s capacity for omnicide.

If politics is a truth procedure, then justice must be so as well. With Badiou, democratic communication in a pluralistic society can allow for the arrival of a person of courageous and true insight, the single person Rawls anticipates—but cannot include—who “may stand alone and be right in saying that the law and government are wrong and unjust”. This is possible because, as Christopher Norris observes, Badiou rejects the notion […] that justice can best be served or human welfare most effectively promoted through a maximal respect for the differences, rather than the commonalities, between people of various ethnic affiliation, cultural background, social class membership, linguistic provenance, or sexual/gender orientation. On the contrary, [Badiou] argues that this emphasis on difference along with its sundry cognate terms (alterity, otherness, heterogeneity, incommensurability and so forth) very often betokens not so much a respect for the diversity of human values and beliefs but an absence of genuine, that is, reasoned and principled respect for any of them, one’s own included. (Norris, 2009: 31).

The fact of social pluralism, as a permanent and dynamic feature of the human species, is not an impediment to discerning with greater clarity the identity of our species and the conditions we face together. Indeed, it is through a “genuine, reasoned and principled respect” for the diversity of human values that the identity of our species becomes more explicit as the substantive ground for a human justice. William Connolly echoes Norris and Badiou in his understanding of critical pluralism as the ground for a new and authoritative ground for a politics of emancipation, a way out of the ossified and unexamined metaphysics of the State. “In critical pluralism,” he argues, each constituency would acknowledge its own identity to be bound up with a variety of differences sustaining it. Each identity depends on the differences it constitutes, and each attempt to define identity through difference encounters disturbing responses by those who challenge the sufficiency or dignity of its definition of them. Each identity is fated, thereby, to contend—to various degrees and in multifarious ways—with others it depends on to enunciate itself. That’s politics. The issue is not if but how. (Connolly, 1993: 28)

Politics cannot be a truth procedure if pluralism is an infinity of solitudes mediated by the State. When pluralism is grounded in conscience, when we see our own identity and circumstances existing in a form of communion with others, then truth becomes the motive force for social change. Against the entropy of relativism and the self-serving nostrums of sovereign power and its vassals, the challenge of finding and telling the truth is the fundamental work of democratic communication. It allows us, as Sontag enjoins us, to see that our privileges exist on the same map as the pain of others; it impels us to recognize that we are all homines sacri, bare life even though we may for the moment be covered—unequally, arbitrarily, unjustly—in dignities at the pleasure of sovereign power. (Sontag, 2003).

Surrender is a tool that we can willfully employ. Releasing our certainties FIRST is a prerequisite.

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]

Based on literature from the field of psychology, we have learned that surrender is hugely instrumental in growing our selves, our relationships with others, and opening up the greater potentials embedded within us. We have also learned that we must trust in someone or something and ultimately first act to release our attachment to perceived certainties and control in order to rest in the benefits of the state of surrender. First act in trust, then benefits arise.

In addition, psychological literature has also provided very practical and detailed information that helps to build a bridge over the chasm of our fears: the fears that thwart transformation. Behind us, we have the tower of identified keys that help to enable an act of surrender. In front of us, on the other side of the chasm, we have the tower of benefits and outcomes that can magnetize us forward. When we sur render, the bridge is established.

 Before this literature review, surrender may have b een visualized as a certain launch into the chasm of fears. Now, it is my great hope that s urrender can be seen more as a stage of flight over the chasm, thrust by the keys that enable it and mobilized forward by the benefits of it. Surrender is the sublime state where the loft of trust and faith carries us from the rim of Egoic attachments to an alchemical place of transformational knowing .

As stated in the introduction, surrender is a tool that we can willfully employ for beneficial development. From our collective toolbox filled with the keys and benefits of surrender, we can assemble the tool to strategicall y match our individualized needs. Each time we craft and use the tool of surrender, we snip an attachment that frees us to be lofted through heroic passage toward greater insights. Just imagin e how we can build our tomorrows based on how we utilize our tools at hand today!

The actual act of surrender is key—it creates change—various fields of theory prove

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]

Introduction There is a moment in the process of personal development and transformation that is pivotal. It is the moment when we either enter into the process of change or avoid it. It is a point of resistance that is mystifying, often fearful, an d begs to be understood. Having studied literature from the fields of psychology, sociology , and transformation theory, I offer to name the act that enters us into the process of change; it is called surrender. Surrender is simple and yet complex. It can be inviting, not threatening. It can be fulfilling, not defeating. It is an act that does not merely effect a natural progression of change; it is alchemical in its magical ability to transmute u s from one state of being into another. It is a tool that we can willfully employ for beneficial development.

This article is the result of my research to invest igate the phenomenon of surrender. My goal is to help us understand it more so that we might fear it less . In so doing, we can help to make the process of personal development and change more inviting and less threatening. We can nurture human capacity to realize our potential , optimize it, and proactively evolve our individual and collective well-being.

Transformation In order to contextualize the role of surrender, I frame it within the transformative process. Transformation is a ten phase experience w hich starts with a disorienting dilemma and then leads into progressive stages of engaging and evolving our habits of mind (Mezirow, 2000). The key in transformation is to examine our taken-f or-granted beliefs to either modify them or to reconfirm them based on enhanced ways of knowing. The purpose is to improve personal and collective well-being largely through improved relationships with self and other. It is more than a change in perspective, which is only a lateral move . Transformation is a vertical move that integrates greater truths and allows us to live lif e from a new way of knowing rather than just seeing it from a different perspective.

The ten phases of the transformative process are (

Mezirow, 2000, p. 22):

1.A disorienting dilemma

2.Self-examination with feelings of fear, anger, guilt, or shame

3.A critical assessment of assumptions

4.Recognition that one’s discontent and the process of transformation are shared

5.Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions

6.Planning a course of action

7.Acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one’s plans

8.Provisional trying of new roles

9.Building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships

10.A reintegration into one’s life on the basis of conditions dictated by one’s new perspective

The first phase - a disorienting dilemma - initiates the process. This can occur by accident or by design. Since we tend to resist the moment of change, much less induce it proactively (Hawkins, 2002), transformation tends to be a consequence of traumatic experiences and borne of crisis rather than choice. Transformation need n ot be epochal; it can be incremental (Mezirow, 2000) and pursued deliberately. Of significance – whether encountered by accident or design – is that a disorienting dilemma is an invitation for gr owth, not a guarantee of growth.

 Phases two and three represent the point at which we either enter further into the transformative process or avoid it. This is when the ego’s fearful response to perceived challenges of its authority is most pronounced. The ego’s fear is experienced as existential dread and can thwart transformation (Gozawa, 2005). Phase s two and three are the point at which we can surrender our certainties to allow for their cr itical examination and assessment.

Courage is essential to transformation (Lucas, 1994 ), but courage is a character trait (Peterson & Seligman, 2004), whereas surrender is a n act of character. Courage helps to enable surrender, but it is the actual act of surrender th at advances the transformational process. Understanding the phenomenon of surrender helps to shine a light on the shadowy moment that we fear in the process of change and transformation

#### 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, School of Communication - Simon Fraser University phD, spring 2010, DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY “Terror and democratic communication”)

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.

### 2AC

Capital is important but not the root cause—sovereign decisions about what life is valuable are the key internal link

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]

 The fact is that violence against Arabs, Muslims and South Asians in the United States after 9/11 wrote the trauma of the terrorist attacks into their flesh. The violence was about their bodies, racialized and reduced to bare life. The effect of the violence, as Sontag argues via Simone Weil, was not to aid in profit making of any kind, however indirectly, but to make persons into things. Although it certainly can be used to support a political economy, and there is without question a menacing synergy between racism and property, I do not believe capital itself can be said to be the author of race categories and race hatred. The money comes second. The principal issue is the arrogation by sovereign power of the authority to impose a taxonomy on the human species. This springs from its claim to ownership of life as such, to grant subjects the status of personhood—of inclusion in the political community—under the terms of a rule of law, and to suspend the rule of law, reducing its subject to bare life in the state of exception. Racism is therefore not an incidental result of market-driven propaganda; racism is a mode of propaganda’s biopolitical function as the voice of the state’s monopoly over violence.

#### We all have agency – especially when it comes to coscience

Markwick 10 (Michael, School of Communication - Simon Fraser University phD, spring 2010, DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY “Terror and democratic communication”)

The camps were real, and they have returned (if, in fact, they ever left). What Agamben misses is the persistence of personality, of determined human agency, even in the camps. For all of the energy sovereign power has expended on the extirpation of human dignity, human dignity, nevertheless, can find its voice. It is in the state of exception, where the person stands bereft of any cultural or juridical trappings of personhood, stripped down to the muteness of bare life by the perversion of justice that is biopolitically the rule of law, that we find evidence of the spontaneous upwelling of human dignity as an absolute feature of life. It does not seem to register with Agamben that even in the camps, even at this stage of the total abnegation of personhood, human agency continues to meet ultimate violence with rebellion and beauty.

Viktor Ullmann, a pupil of Arnold Schöenberg, found himself interned for two years with his wife at Theresienstadt, at the same time a concentration camp and ghetto. It was 1942, and the Nazis had transformed this Czech village into a waypoint to the death chambers of Auschwitz, holding up to 60,000 Jews in a facility designed for 7,000. The death rate from disease and starvation was so high the year of Ullmann’s arrival at Theresienstadt that the SS built an adjacent crematorium with a capacity of 200 bodies a day. Of the estimated 140,000 Jews held at this facility, 33,000 died at the site with approximately 90,000 removed to death camps. At the same time, Hitler presented Theresienstadt as a “spa town” for elderly German Jews, a place to keep them secure against the ravages of war; the Red Cross enhanced the impact of this propaganda with a favourable report of the camp.14 In reality, the Nazis designed the site to grind the inmates down to a bestial condition. But the Theresienstadt inmates included leading intellectuals, poets, rabbis, musicians and other artists, together they developed a secret and, under the circumstances, vigorous cultural and spiritual life. They mounted an estimated 2,340 covert lectures on a wide array of subjects, including “ethnography, psychology, politics, religion, or even Zionism”, maintained religious observances, a lending library and schools for the 15,000 that passed through the camp. (Kaufmann, 2008).

#### No social death—history proves

Brown 9—Vincent, Prof. of History and African and African-American Studies @ Harvard Univ. [December, “Social Death and Political Life in the Study of Slavery,” *American Historical Review*, p. 1231-1249]

THE PREMISE OF ORLANDO PATTERSON’S MAJOR WORK, that enslaved Africans were natally alienated and culturally isolated, was challenged even before he published his influential thesis, primarily by scholars concerned with “survivals” or “retentions” of African culture and by historians of slave resistance. In the early to mid-twentieth century, when Robert Park’s view of “the Negro” predominated among scholars, it was generally assumed that the slave trade and slavery had denuded black people of any ancestral heritage from Africa. The historians Carter G. Woodson and W. E. B. Du Bois and the anthropologist Melville J. Herskovits argued the opposite. Their research supported the conclusion that while enslaved Africans could not have brought intact social, political, and religious institutions with them to the Americas, they did maintain significant aspects of their cultural backgrounds.32 Herskovits ex- amined “Africanisms”—any practices that seemed to be identifiably African—as useful symbols of cultural survival that would help him to analyze change and continuity in African American culture.33 He engaged in one of his most heated scholarly disputes with the sociologist E. Franklin Frazier, a student of Park’s, who empha- sized the damage wrought by slavery on black families and folkways.34 More recently, a number of scholars have built on Herskovits’s line of thought, enhancing our understanding of African history during the era of the slave trade. Their studies have evolved productively from assertions about general cultural heritage into more precise demonstrations of the continuity of worldviews, categories of belonging, and social practices from Africa to America. For these scholars, the preservation of distinctive cultural forms has served as an index both of a resilient social personhood, or identity, and of resistance to slavery itself. 35 Scholars of slave resistance have never had much use for the concept of social death. The early efforts of writers such as Herbert Aptheker aimed to derail the popular notion that American slavery had been a civilizing institution threatened by “slave crime.”36 Soon after, studies of slave revolts and conspiracies advocated the idea that resistance demonstrated the basic humanity and intractable will of the enslaved—indeed, they often equated acts of will with humanity itself. As these writ- ers turned toward more detailed analyses of the causes, strategies, and tactics of slave revolts in the context of the social relations of slavery, they had trouble squaring abstract characterizations of “the slave” with what they were learning about the en- slaved.37 Michael Craton, who authored Testing the Chains: Resistance to Slavery in the British West Indies, was an early critic of Slavery and Social Death, protesting that what was known about chattel bondage in the Americas did not confirm Patterson’s definition of slavery. “If slaves were in fact ‘generally dishonored,’ ” Craton asked, “how does he explain the degrees of rank found among all groups of slaves—that is, the scale of ‘reputation’ and authority accorded, or at least acknowledged, by slave and master alike?” How could they have formed the fragile families documented by social historians if they had been “natally alienated” by definition? Finally, and per- haps most tellingly, if slaves had been uniformly subjected to “permanent violent domination,” they could not have revolted as often as they did or shown the “varied manifestations of their resistance” that so frustrated masters and compromised their power, sometimes “fatally.”38 The dynamics of social control and slave resistance falsified Patterson’s description of slavery even as the tenacity of African culture showed that enslaved men, women, and children had arrived in the Americas bearing much more than their “tropical temperament.” The cultural continuity and resistance schools of thought come together pow- erfully in an important book by Walter C. Rucker, The River Flows On: Black Re- sistance, Culture, and Identity Formation in Early America. In Rucker’s analysis of slave revolts, conspiracies, and daily recalcitrance, African concepts, values, and cul- tural metaphors play the central role. Unlike Smallwood and Hartman, for whom “the rupture was the story” of slavery, Rucker aims to reveal the “perseverance of African culture even among second, third, and fourth generation creoles.”39 He looks again at some familiar events in North America—New York City’s 1712 Coromantee revolt and 1741 conspiracy, the 1739 Stono rebellion in South Carolina, as well as the plots, schemes, and insurgencies of Gabriel Prosser, Denmark Vesey, and Nat Turner—deftly teasing out the African origins of many of the attitudes and actions of the black rebels. Rucker outlines how the transformation of a “shared cultural heritage” that shaped collective action against slavery corresponded to the “various steps Africans made in the process of becoming ‘African American’ in culture, orientation, and identity.”40

#### DA to black body social dead now –

This is McWhorter in 2003**—the “robinson” he refers to in the evidence is the author who provides the theorhetical backing for their foster evidence and is quoted multiple times in that card—our link is HIGHLY specific**

[John McWhorter. John McWhorter earned his PhD in linguistics from Stanford University in 1993 and became Associate Professor of Linguistics at UC Berkeley after teaching at Cornell University. *Authentically Black: Essays from the Black Silent Majority.* 84-85]

What about recasting our vision of what came after we were brought here? What far too many Americans of African descent believe, in no small part because of books like *The Debt*, is that blacks have never been able to accomplish much of anything here, except the occasional superstars like Frederick Douglass. Robinson allows no room for the thriving black business districts in several cities just two generations past Emancipation, for the revolution of American popular music that African descendants sparked, for the fact that in the late 1800s, black university students were well known for taking top prizes over white students not in athletics or music, but oratory! Classical oratory! Robinson processes all of this as marginal just as the geocentric astronomers I mentioned in Chapter One saw the stars that did not follow their expected orbits. Like those astronomers, he is operating according to a defeatist paradigm that restricts his view to a limited body of data. This paradigm is a direct result of the sidelining of black ideology in the 1960s by the triumph of the New Left among thinking whites. Bruised, inevitably, into a racial inferiority complex after centuries of disenfranchisement, black America naturally took this leftist ball and ran with it; egged on by whites newly committed to redressing the past. The idea of staged pessimism as "progressive thought” seems self-defeating to the outside observer. But its appeal is that it of from the inadequacies one perceives in oneself. Shelby Steele made this point beautifully in The Content of Our Character. Time passes, and the message of that almost book seems to have faded but it is a keystone to what ails us today.

Blacks have embraced this line, then, out of private pain and doubt. We must be under no impression that the "I would still be black” of the UC Berkeley writer's manifesto is a cynical ploy designed to elicit handouts and exemptions. That lady means it. However, it remains poisonously self-destructive to treat residual racism as a check on self-realization. And to the extent that *The Debt* founded upon this paradigm, it is rooted ultimately in shame.