

**THE
TERROR
ERROR**

Park Teter

Born in Oak Park, Illinois, in 1934, Daniel Park Teter was awarded “Honors with Exceptional Distinction” when he graduated *summa cum laude* from Yale in 1956. As a child shocked by Pearl Harbor and Hiroshima, he had planned a career working against war. Yale was to be followed by study abroad... then five or six years in the Foreign Service... then politics. But in 1958, when a Swedish beauty broke his heart, he “threw my career to the winds.” He dropped out the University of London’s Institute of Historical Research and hitch-hiked to Lebanon.

Wars, he reassured his conscience, do not begin in Congress or the Kremlin; they begin in the human heart. Perhaps in a different civilization, he told himself, he could find “an education of my ignorant heart.” Then he could reach the warring hearts of others by writing poetry and fiction.

His education began sooner than expected. While crossing Greece he learned from a bakery-truck driver that Lebanon had erupted in war.

Because Lebanon’s frontier was closed, he had to fly the last sixty miles from Damascus to Beirut. There he taught Western Civilization at the American University of Beirut.

And he married an Iranian student. She was to give birth to two sons... and further “education of my heart.”

Because of immigration problems, they were married in Canada. There Teter began a career in journalism as an editorial writer for the Toronto Globe and Mail. When they moved to Washington, he became news editor at Congressional Quarterly.

From 1965 to 1967 Teter was the University of Pennsylvania's Adviser in Humanities at a university in Shiraz, Iran, a city famous for its roses, its nightingales, and the poets Hafez and Saadi. The next year he evaluated U.S. Peace Corps programs in Iran, Morocco, and Afghanistan.

From 1968 to 1973, at the University of Chicago and at Princeton, he studied psychological changes in Europe during The Scientific Revolution of the 16th-17th centuries. In the age of Copernicus, Galileo, and Newton he sought the origins of two Western attitudes he felt were needed in non-Western cultures caught in an earthquake of change: 1) a passion for objectivity; 2) a willingness to abandon sacred beliefs.

Teter was then forced to abandon his own sacred belief, his Western belief in an objective physical universe, by a coincidence. He violated his own passionate commitment to rationality by “superstitious” concentration on producing a chance meeting with a troubled woman he loved. When that chance meeting took place he knew, inwardly, that it was not chance. That knowledge opened his life to floods of amazing coincidences that no rational person would attribute to chance.

Teter discovered that coincidences can be rationally explained by a new scientific paradigm that recognizes that we create physical facts in the same way that we create dream images. Since 1973, Teter has been exploring that paradigm’s revolutionary consequences for science, religion, society, and personal life.

While writing books he supported himself by part-time work for the Los Angeles Times – Washington Post News Service and by free-lance writing on topics like “Iran Between East and West” (Congressional Quarterly/Editorial Research Reports, Jan. 26, 1979), “Future Shock in Iran” (Washington Post Outlook, Dec. 10, 1978), “Princeton-Pennsylvania Accelerator: End of an Era in Particle Physics,” *Science*, July 2, 1971)

He combined a journalist's immersion in public affairs with years of reading, reflection, writing, and rewriting in the solitudes of a Lake Superior lighthouse, a Virginia farmhouse, a Rocky Mountain cabin, a cottage by a Danish fjord, and a ranch near the Pacific.

Teter’s discoveries are summarized in *The Revolution of the Species*, and analyzed in greater depth in *The Adventure*. The story of the discoveries, and their application to private and public life, is recounted in *The Personal Universe: A True Story of Passionate Love and Revolutionary Science*.

Teter has also written a novel, (*The Trial of God*), two plays (*The Winter War*, *Satan II*), a book of poetry (*Paper Wings*) and a collection of bumper stickers (*Bumper Thinkers*). The novel and stage plays will be rewritten as screenplays for popular feature movies.

All of these works, Teter explains, express “a revolution of consciousness that will replace the insanity of war with awakening, at last, to the adventure for which we exist.”

All of these works are published at TheNextCivilization.com

THE TERROR ERROR

Park Teter

The Terror Error is a condensed and modified version of Park Teter's *The Adventure*.

Both books are published at TheNextCivilization.com

ADVENTURES IN REALITY (AIR)

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THE CONCENTRATION CAMP UNIVERSE

Some years ago a tribe of Middle East nomads watched their first motion picture on a portable screen in the desert. When a villain on horseback seized the heroine and galloped away, the men in the movie audience sprang to their steeds and pursued the villain into the night.

All those who now pursue terrorists are, like those horsemen of the desert, chasing shadows into the dark.

What is the alternative? To recognize that the real source of terror is not in our villains, but in ourselves.

What is the inner terror of which terrorism is the outward sign?

Until we answer that question, terrorism will continue. In fact, like a recurring nightmare whose meaning has not been grasped, terrorism will grow worse.

As a dreamer projects images into a dream world, our unconscious projects facts into the real world. Just as a dreamer can awaken and interpret dream images, so we can awaken and interpret real facts.

Facts like 9/11.

Why should anyone believe that we are unconsciously creating facts in the real world? This conclusion is derived from an explanation of how coincidences are created.

Coincidences are natural phenomena that pose a scientific puzzle. That puzzle can be solved only by a new scientific paradigm. That new paradigm will transform not only science, but religion, society, and personal life.

In this age of weapons of mass destruction, that transformation has a terrible urgency. This booklet tells how all of us can confront the inner sources of our terror... and then awaken from the nightmare of terrorism to an opportunity as beautiful as our weapons are ghastly.

Dread of proliferation of nuclear weapons will be replaced by joy in the proliferation of understanding.

The following paragraphs, an excerpt from my longer book *The Adventure*, provide a sample of the kind of natural phenomena that demand a scientific – and religious and social and personal – revolution.

SAMPLE DATA

At the end of 1990, the United States and its allies threatened to take military action unless Iraqi forces were withdrawn from Kuwait by January 15. As the deadline approached, I sent several articles to major newspapers warning against that terrible mistake.

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Because I had worked for the Toronto Globe and Mail, Congressional Quarterly, and the Los Angeles Times-Washington Post News Service, I knew only too well how my thoughts defied the conventional wisdom of editors. But I had to try.

As I drove from my home in a Lake Superior lighthouse to a town where I could fax the third article I had written, my car broke down. It was the third breakdown in less than a week.

The first time, a mechanic had replaced a worn timing belt. Two days later, another mechanic replaced the new timing belt, which had mysteriously worn out. When my car broke down for the third time, another mechanic told me: "I can't figure out why, but the timing was off."

Immediately after the three timing failures of my car, my only clock stopped working. To learn the time, I began telephoning, at intervals of a few hours, a number that provided a recording of the exact time. After several calls, the recorded telephone message became an undecipherable shriek. Then a friend told me she had awakened in the night to find that her alarm clock was on fire.

My car's three timing failures, my stopped clock, the telephone shriek, and the alarm-clock fire were all, like a recurring nightmare, sending me a message. All six events were telling me that my timing was off. It was too late – or too early? – to publish the ideas I was sending to editors.

And when I read one of my articles printed in the Detroit Free Press, I realized that 800 words could never convince Americans of the folly of military action in The Gulf.

RECURRING NIGHTMARE

That folly continues today, like a recurring nightmare whose meaning has not been grasped. How much crazier must the nightmare get before warring nations awaken to its meaning?

Disputes over the meanings of revealed truths have recurrently driven Jews, Christians, and Moslems to Middle East warfare. But there is another religion driving modern Middle Easterners to war, a religion hidden in science

Scientists ask the mass and velocity of physical facts but never ask the meanings of physical facts. This irrational behavior has established the "scientific" religion, the myth of a meaningless and impersonal universe.

The Scientific Revolution of the 16th-17th centuries took place during appalling religious wars between Protestants and Catholics, who slaughtered each other over the meanings of revealed truths. One of the powerful historic forces creating the "scientific" myth of a meaningless universe was a sense of despair at wars over meaning.

This trauma in the formative childhood of modern science led leaders of European thought to rechannel religious energy into description of a neutral physical universe. While most of them they still saw the cosmos as testimony to the glory of God, they pursued its details without asking the meanings of physical facts.

Over time, meaning-free science achieved such miracles that its picture of a meaningless universe became powerfully convincing. Whatever meanings modern minds may still find in the supernatural, they experience natural phenomena through the lens of sciences that never ask the

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meanings of physical facts. Scientific descriptions of natural phenomena that ignore their meanings are routinely accepted as rational. As a consequence, modern minds dwell in a wasteland of facts that have been drained of their significance.

In reaction to the religious wars over meaning scientists created another religion, a faith in a meaningless physical universe. Today that “scientific” faith has replaced wars over meaning with wars over lack of meaning.

The destructiveness of that “scientific” religion is now manifested in the miracles of scientific weapons.

The “scientific” picture of a meaningless universe can only be sustained by ignoring the data of personal meanings in physical facts. The six timing failures of my cars and clocks are a sample of innumerable data that orthodox scientists sweep under the rug because they would demolish their religious faith.

The miracles of modern science give it great credibility, and that credibility threatens all beliefs that find meanings in physical facts. The resulting war between meaningless science and meaningful religion is waged mostly in the unconscious of individuals and societies. The more that inner war is unconscious, the more violent is its manifestation in the outer world.

Modern weapons of mass destruction are manifestations of that deeply unconscious war. Chemical, biological, and atomic weapons are striking symbols of the insanity of modern chemistry, biology, and atomic physics.

Consider the following statements of champions of modern sciences:

Thomas Kuhn, author of *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*:

"deliberative processes. . . must ultimately be neural, and they are therefore governed by the same *physico-chemical* laws that govern perception on the one hand and the beating of our hearts on the other."
(italics in original)¹

Nobel-Prize-winning biologist Francis Crick, the co-discoverer of DNA:

"'You,' your joys and your sorrows, your memories and your ambitions, your sense of personal identity and free will, are in fact no more than the behavior of a vast assembly of nerve cells and their associated molecules."²

Nobel-Prize-winning atomic physicist Richard Feynman:

“The thing I call my individuality is only a pattern or a dance. . . . The atoms come into my brain, dance a dance, and then go out – there are always new

¹ Kuhn, Thomas S. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2nd Edition, University of Chicago Press, 1970, p. 195.

² Crick, Francis, *The Astonishing Hypothesis: The Scientific Search for the Soul*, p. 3

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atoms, but always doing the same dance, remembering what was done yesterday.”³

What kind of place is this universe in which your thinking is governed by “physico-chemical laws,” in which your “personal identity and free will” are no more than “the behavior of nerve cells,” and the thing you call your “individuality” is only a dance of atoms?

Such a totalitarian universe is worse than any concentration camp. Its inmates are not only powerless... they don’t exist. For an individual to believe that he or she does not exist is the ultimate terror.

And the ultimate source of today’s terrorism.

Moslems, who believe God’s will is manifest in every detail of nature, are especially threatened by the miracles of meaningless science. American warriors successfully slaughtering with the weapons of godless science are demons in the worst nightmares of Moslems. Terror evoked by miraculous scientific weapons can even lead to suicide, to suicidal bombings that reaffirm religious faith at the same time that they arouse primitive terror in the scientific civilization of the West.

But it is not only Moslems who are terrorized by science. Americans, who lead the world in the development of scientific weapons, now live in terror of their own weapons being used against them. Their terror of scientific “weapons of mass destruction” has even led Americans to create a concentration camp for the hidden torture of suspected “enemy combatants.”

And neither Moslems nor Americans recognize in their enemies the shadows of their own inner terror.

HONEST SCIENCE

The alternative to that terror is not to abandon science, but to be more scientific... to examine the data of meaning with the same passionate honesty now devoted to the data of mass and velocity.

In *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Kuhn observes that scientists normally solve puzzles in accordance with an established “paradigm” or model of proven effectiveness. Their expectation that new puzzles will be solved in the same way is usually justified. But some stubborn data don’t fit. As these “anomalies” accumulate, scientists may adopt a revolutionary paradigm to explain them.

Meaningful coincidences are data that stubbornly defy explanation within the established paradigm of today’s sciences. To establish a new paradigm, scientists must solve puzzles posed by coincidences.

Overdetermination. The six auto and clock coincidences are a sample of data that pose scientific puzzles. Here is one of those puzzles:

How was it possible for the three mechanics, who knew nothing of my mis-timed newspaper articles, to find timing problems in my car? The physical facts had different meanings for them and for me. How can a single fact have multiple meanings?

³ Feynman, Richard, *What Do You Care What Other People Think?* W.W. Norton and Co., New York, 1988, p244.

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It happens all the time. In dreams. In a dream world it is normal operating procedure for the dreamer to create a single image to express multiple unconscious ideas. For example, a burning house may express the dreamer's childhood experience in a burning house, his wish that his house would burn down so that he could be a vagabond, an archetypal urge to purification by fire, and the sound of fire engines penetrating his sleep. Thus four different ideas created one dream image.

Such multiple causes of the same dream image is called "overdetermination." By borrowing this principle of "overdetermination" from dream worlds and applying it in the physical world, we can solve one of the puzzles of coincidences. Just as a single dream image can express more than one idea, so a single physical fact can express the ideas of more than one person. A mechanic may see in a worn timing belt a need to replace it at the same time that I see a message about the timing of my newspaper articles.

The Projective Universe. The puzzle of multiple causes of a single fact is solved by overdetermination. But there are other puzzles. Here's one.

It is easy to see how a manufacturer could put a timing belt into my car and a mechanic could lift the hood to examine it. But how did I put under the car hood the meaningful symbol of a timing problem? In the same way that I would put an image into a dream world.

If I woke up from a dream world in which a worn timing belt appeared, I wouldn't look for the belt under my pillow or in my closet or in the laundry basket. I would recognize that somehow my mind put that belt into my dream world.

In the same way, when I wake up from the real world in which a timing belt appeared, I can recognize that my mind somehow put the belt into the real world.

The mental process of creating dream images and physical facts can be called "projection." The word comes from the Latin *projicere*, to throw forward.

We are all familiar with the projection of a movie, in which images are "thrown forward" by a projector onto a screen.

The projection of a movie is a useful illustration of how we project dream images and physical facts. What a movie audience sees on the screen is put there by a projector. What a dreamer sees in a dream world, and what a realist sees in the real world, is put there by his or her projective mind.

A movie manifests the thoughts of the film maker. A dream manifests the thoughts of the dreamer. A reality manifests the thoughts of the observer.

In psychology, the term "projection" is used for the unconscious act or process of ascribing to others one's own ideas or impulses. For example, a husband may accuse his wife of infidelity because he, himself, unconsciously wants to be unfaithful. The husband "projects" his own unconscious feelings onto his wife. He thinks he sees in his wife what is really hidden in himself.

In the same way, we project our unconscious feelings onto nature. We think we see in nature what is really in ourselves.

In the same way, I projected my unconscious feelings onto a timing belt. What I saw in the belt was an image of what I needed to see in my self.

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The mechanics got professional messages at the same time that I got a symbolic message. Possibly the belt had symbolic as well as practical meaning for the mechanics. I know that the second mechanic was locally known as "The Wizard," and that he referred to the first mechanic as "The Butcher." In any case, the physical fact was overdetermined.

Perhaps the mechanics and I were not the only sources of the overdetermined timing symbols. After all, the three breakdowns of my car occurred when I was sending articles to newspapers about the impending war in Iraq. Was the message to me expressing thoughts in the unconscious of nations on the brink of war? Were the overdetermined timing symbols expressing not only personal, but also collective, unconscious thoughts?

Reality Agreements. Two puzzles are solved by overdetermination and projection, but these solutions pose a third puzzle. If everyone is projecting facts into the physical world, how come so many people project the same facts? How come many different people see the same automobile accident... or the same blazing skyscrapers... or the same planets?

Imagine a movie theater in which everyone brought his or her own movie projector and projected his or her own movie onto the same screen. The image on the screen would be chaos.

To avoid chaos in a movie theater, there must be some agreement on the movie to be projected.

To avoid chaos in the physical universe, there must be some agreement on the reality to be projected.

How can people agree to project the same planets in the sky? How can humanity reach agreement on the laws of nature?

We can't enact natural laws in the same way that we enact traffic laws. We can't control the motions of planets in the same way that we can control the motions of automobiles.

So how can we reach agreement on laws like gravity?

We have a model in children's games.

In his study *The Moral Judgment of the Child*, psychologist Jean Piaget has shown that young children are not conscious that the rules of their games — for instance, a game of marbles — are agreements.⁴

Young children think that the rules exist "out there." They think that the rules were not created by humans (unless, perhaps, by god-like ancestors) and cannot be changed by humans.

In other words, young children have the same belief about the rules of games that modern adults have about the laws of nature. Just as modern adults are not conscious that the laws of nature are agreements made by humans, so young children are not conscious that the rules of marbles are agreements made by humans.

Just as a modern adult thinks that the laws of electricity exist "out there," were not made by humans, and cannot be changed by humans, so the young child thinks that the rules of marbles exist "out there," were not made by humans, and cannot be changed by humans.

⁴ Piaget, Jean, *the Moral Judgment of the Child*, The Free Press, N.Y., 1954.

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Some non-scientific societies see their social laws in the same way that modern societies see their natural laws. Some societies believe that their social laws exist "out there," were not made by humans (unless by god-like ancestors), and cannot be changed by humans.

There is a reason why some societies believe that their social laws are not man-made. If men make social laws, men can change them. If men can change social laws, they may create social chaos.

For the same reason, modern societies believe that their natural laws are not man-made. If men can change natural laws, they may create natural chaos.

Indeed, fear of human tampering with nature is aroused today by experiments in genetics.

Non-scientific societies may guard their social laws against change by treating them as sacred. Scientific societies guard their natural laws against change by treating them as objective.

Treating a religious belief in social laws as "sacred" and treating a scientific belief in natural laws as "objective" are behaviors that serve the same social purpose. Both "sacred" and "objective" attitudes treat laws as 1) existing outside the believer, 2) originating in something non-human (supernatural or natural powers), and 3) unchangeable by humans.

In some non-scientific societies, challenging sacred social laws is considered sacrilegious. In scientific societies, challenging objective natural laws is considered insane.

Dread of sacrilege may drive individuals to accept social laws as sacred. Dread of insanity may drive individuals to accept natural laws as objective.

Thus powerful taboos enforce agreed beliefs of both non-scientific and scientific societies.

Agreements on the laws of nature are extremely useful. That is why we create natural laws that are extremely powerful.

911: A DREAMLIKE SYMBOL

An overdetermined physical event can combine unconscious and conscious ideas. Thus the 911 nightmare was consciously created by terrorists and unconsciously created by Americans.

What are the unconscious terrors of Americans that found dreamlike expression in 911?

Consider the symbols. Why should the World Trade Center and the Pentagon be the targets of terrorists?

The giant buildings are striking expressions of America's global economic and military power. Nations who lack wealth and power may resent the world's one super-power. But it would be a great mistake to view this resentment as mere envy.

Most Americans have little consciousness of the fact that decisions made in New York and Washington profoundly affect the everyday lives of billions of people all over the world. And Americans seldom reflect that those billions of less wealthy and less powerful people have little or no influence on the decisions made in New York and Washington. Most Americans have no grasp of what it feels like to have your life determined by decisions made thousands of miles away.

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But what an irony that Americans, of all people, make decisions with impacts thousands of miles away. America was founded in a revolution against a government making decisions thousands of miles away.

Taxes imposed in America by a parliament in London triggered the American Revolution. The American colonists demanded a right that had long been established in their mother country: “no taxation without representation.”

The United States government is not taxing citizens in foreign countries. America’s impact on foreign lives is much greater than anything that could be achieved by taxes.

In many countries the United States has supported undemocratic regimes or overthrown democratic regimes. Here is just one example, one that is especially relevant for understanding today’s Middle East conflicts. In 1953 the C.I.A. overthrew Iran’s first elected government and restored to power the dictatorial shah.

Americans simply do not know what it feels like to have a foreign government overthrow their elected government and install a dictator.

Even more than America’s military power, America’s economic power has decisive impacts on the lives of foreigners. Americans dominate the multi-national corporations and international economic agencies that profoundly influence such things as privatization, debt, taxes, government spending, distribution of wealth, workers’ rights, health, environment, welfare, consumer choices, media content.... And yet the people whose way of life is being decided in New York and Washington do not elect representatives to the U.S. Congress or executives to giant corporations.

So what can they do?

Americans who opposed British taxation without representation dumped taxed tea into the sea at the “Boston Tea Party.” Some Moslems who were not represented in American decisions affecting their countries organized the attacks of 911.

Although the airplanes of 911 took off from Boston, the event was no tea party. But neither is America’s impact on the lives of billions of unrepresented foreigners.

It is necessary to condemn terrorism, including the mass terrorism called war. But condemning is no substitute for understanding.

Americans need to understand the impact they have on billions of non-Americans, and then create ways to share decision-making with the world’s majority. That is the only way that Americans can stop betraying their own values.

To awaken themselves to their betrayal of the values on which their country was founded is one of the reasons why Americans unconsciously created 911. And that is one of the reasons why the date of the 9-11 nightmare was the phone number Americans use to cry for help.

Americans unconsciously created the attack on the center of world trade and the attack on the center of military power to awaken them from faith in economic power and military power.

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The whole world needs to awaken from faith in economic power and military power. That is why the whole world created the nightmare attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

There were yet deeper meanings in the overdetermined event of 911.

“Scientific” faith that our behavior is governed by atoms and neurons and physico-chemical laws fosters unconscious feelings of powerlessness, and these feelings of impotence can lead to fanatic pursuit of military power and economic power. But all the military and economic power represented by the World Trade Center and the Pentagon are powerless to combat this unconscious source of Americans’ terror.

Until we replace faith in a meaningless physical universe, we will continue the futile chase of the shadows of our terror.

What can replace the “scientific” myth? The new scientific paradigm that solves the puzzle of meaningful coincidences.

Recognition that we project physical facts in the same way that we project dream images not only solves scientific puzzles. It leads to new answers to the old questions “Who are we? Why are we here? How shall we live?”

When a dreamer awakens from a dream world, he can recognize that he in some way created that dream world. He can also see that he was a character inside that dream world. And now that he is awake he can be the interpreter of that dream world. It’s as if he or she is three different persons... and yet one person.

In the same way, each of us is the Creator, the Hero, and the Interpreter of the physical universe.

Recognition that each of us is Creator-Hero-Interpreter of the universe means that every mortal individual has absolute, unconditional, inalienable, infinite greatness.

Someone who recognizes his or her own infinite greatness cannot fail to recognize the infinite greatness of every other individual.

Such awakened individuals will replace the recurring nightmare of war with the thrill of the human adventure of creating, exploring, explaining, enjoying, sharing, and re-creating the universe.

FAILED RELIGIONS

Modern weapons make the end of war necessary. All the world religions have failed to create a civilization free of the insanity of war. Therefore, replacement of all these failed faiths is necessary.

Clinging to failed religions will perpetuate war.

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Many seek a common wisdom shared by all the world religions. In this age of weapons of mass destruction, it is imperative to find the common error shared by all the religions that have failed to end war.

What is the common error shared by Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Confucianism, Marxism, Nationalism ... and the religion hidden in science?

What is the alternative to that common error?

Before we can replace failed faiths, we must recognize their glory.

The world's great religions have inspired love... hope... beauty... courage... bliss.... If that were not true, hundreds of millions would not have embraced these beliefs for thousands of years.

It is precisely the greatness of these religions that makes it so difficult to see in them the common insanity that is the deepest source of humanity's thousands of years of mass murder.

It is precisely the greatness of these religions that makes them such impenetrable hiding places for the inward and invisible horror of which war is the outward and visible expression.

It is precisely the greatness of these religions that makes it terrifying to abandon them.

It is precisely because the people who teach these great religions to their children believe they are showing love for their children that it is so difficult to recognize these religions as child abuse.

But it is precisely the failure of these religions that drives people to treat their beliefs as sacred, and to guard these sacred beliefs against recognition of their failure.

Like the child who saw that the emperor had no clothes, today's children must see that the world's religions have failed to end the insanity of war. But how can children believe what they see when all the world religions engage in child abuse?

THE CURSE OF ABRAHAM

In search of the common error shared by all the world religions, we can begin with an outrageous child abuse held sacred by Jews, Christians, and Moslems.

That error finds dramatic expression in the story of God's command to Abraham to sacrifice his son. Abraham proves his faith by his readiness to kill his son, whom God spares at the last moment. In the Old Testament, Isaac is the son whom Abraham is ordered to sacrifice. The Koran does not specify which of his two sons Abraham is ordered to sacrifice, but Moslem scholars later concluded that it was his first-born son Ishmael whom God spared at the last minute.

The disagreement between Jews and Moslems is much less significant than their agreement. In both religions – and in Christianity – the revered prophet was willing to murder his own child in obedience to something greater.

Recognition that every child is the Creator and the Hero and the Interpreter of the universe is recognition that nothing exists that is greater than each child. This understanding exposes the absolute horror of the story of Abraham's sacrifice. But children of Moslems and Jews and Christians are taught to revere, rather than abhor, Abraham. That reverence for

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Abraham represses into the unconscious the Jewish and Moslem and Christian child's horror at Abraham's willingness to murder his child.

What is astounding is that Abraham's cruel and repulsive behavior is held up as a model of virtue! This is the horror that is the beginning and the foundation of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

As if Abraham's readiness to sacrifice of his son were not ghastly enough, Christians have God sacrificing his own son.

And Christians, Moslems, and Jews have, since their religions began, sacrificed their sons in the insanity of war.

What is all this son-sacrifice?

Clearly it is not only Christians and Moslems and Jews who sacrifice their sons in war. But the story of Abraham is a parable revealing the origin of the sacrifice of sons that is practiced in all warring civilizations.

Why did not Abraham tell God to go to hell?

Because Abraham believed in something greater than his son, greater than himself, greater than any human individual.

That worship of something greater than the individual mortal human self is the common insanity that has driven all civilizations to murder their sons in the insanity of war.

Whether the child is taught to bow to God or Nature or Nation or Nirvana or whatever, the child's soul is sacrificed on the altar of **BIG OTHER**.

Thousands of years of Jewish, Moslem, and Christian wars have demonstrated the murderous insanity of these religions.

That insanity continues today in wars in the Holy Land.

That murderous insanity will continue until Jews, Moslems, and Christians, in defense of their own children, rise up against Abraham's God.

The Bible says that "fear of God is the beginning of wisdom." How outrageous! Fear of God is the beginning of war.

The murderous insanity of war will continue wherever children are taught to worship anything greater than their own individual selves.

The murderous insanity has reached its extreme in the religion hidden in modern science, which reduces the human individual to atoms adrift in a vast and meaningless physical universe. This extreme religion finds expression in extreme weapons, in the atomic, biological, and chemical weapons that now terrorize humanity.

Like the knife of Abraham poised over his child, these scientific weapons are poised over all our children. Are we willing to sacrifice our children to something greater than our children?

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Or will we end war by raising every child to know that nothing exists that is greater than his or her own individual self, and to know that every individual self is equally, infinitely, great.

THE SELF-BLAME DEFENSE

In *The Adventure*, several varieties of religious child abuse are analyzed as defense mechanisms. To show mercy to children, we must be merciless in exposing the child abuse of any sacred belief.

However, while showing no mercy in attacking sacred beliefs, we must never attack any believer. Every believer is greater than his or her belief. In fact, nothing is greater than any individual, whatever he or she may believe.

Several varieties of sacred child abuse are analyzed in *The Adventure*. The following excerpt from *The Adventure* is one example of such analysis.

Children of cruel parents frequently blame themselves for the cruelty of their parents. Many who in childhood were abused by alcoholic or incestuous parents feel for the rest of their lives that there is something wrong with themselves. Even if they know, intellectually, that this self-blame is both stupid and unfair, they feel, emotionally, that they are unworthy. Abused children, even as adults, often feel shame and guilt for the cruelty inflicted on them by their parents.

Why does a child blame himself for the cruelty of his parent? In self-defense.

A child feels at the mercy of parents who are much larger and stronger and on whom he or she depends for food, shelter, love, and his or her origin. If the child believes that the parent is cruel, what hope can he have? But if the child can locate the evil in himself, then at least there is some hope. The child cannot reform the omnipotent parent, but he can hope to reform himself. Thus the child's self-blame is a defense mechanism, a desperate alternative to devastating recognition of the cruelty of a parent with overwhelming power.

The Judaeo-Christian myth of humanity's fall from grace is the same defense mechanism.

No parent, unless he were suffering from severe mental illness, would do to his children what God did to Adam and Eve. A healthy parent would be proud that his children dared to rebel against his stupid prohibition against eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And yet, in the Judaeo-Christian myth, God is not blamed for booting his disobedient kids out of paradise. God's kids blame themselves for God's child abuse. In the same way that kids, in psychological self-defense, blame themselves for the abuse inflicted on them by mentally ill parents.

And in the same way that many abused children spend the rest of their lives trying to reform their supposedly wicked nature, so many Jews and Christians have spent centuries trying to reform their supposedly wicked nature.

Jews have spent centuries wandering the earth dreaming of a "promised" land from which they had been driven for their sins, and today make themselves and their neighbors miserable by imagining that some Middle East real estate can be a substitute for humanity's true estate, of which they were robbed by their desperate, childish belief that their divine Creator had good reasons for making them suffer.

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Even the Holocaust was not horrible enough to persuade Jews to stop worshiping the god who for centuries punished them for their own good.

Christians adorn their churches and their bosoms with an instrument of torture, the cross, the symbol of God's wonderful forgiveness of the original sin they supposedly committed in the wicked childhood of human existence. The Christian's belief that he or she is forgiven is an especially crippling defense mechanism. The feeling of being forgiven is a huge relief. But one cannot feel forgiven unless one feels a need for forgiveness.

For a Christian to feel that he or she is not guilty would rob the Christian of that overwhelming relief of feeling forgiven. Thus the feeling of being forgiven drives ever deeper into the Christian's soul the cruel lie of his or her own intrinsic unworthiness.

Thus Christians are damned by their doctrine of salvation.

No wonder Christians adore an instrument of torture!

Some modern Christians have either abandoned the idea of original sin, or have rationalized the story of Adam and Eve as a myth about separation from God rather than punishment for disobedience of God. But whatever modern Christians make of the myth of the Fall, as long as they believe Christ is their redeemer the psychological fact remains unchanged. They feel that they need to be redeemed. Believers in a redeemer feel that they need the intervention of a greater power to repair their defective nature.

The Christian who is overjoyed that he has a divine redeemer embraces the defense mechanism of the abused child who yearns to be forgiven by his abusive parent.

And the divine Father of Christian belief lays a huge and terrible guilt trip on His children. Jesus, Christians are taught, died for their sins.

Suppose you had a brother who suffered an agonizing torture and death. If your father convinced you that your brother died an agonizing torture and death in order to rescue you from your flawed character and bad behavior, how would you feel?

So how do Christians, who believe that Jesus died an agonizing torture and death in order to free them from their flawed character and bad behavior, feel about themselves?

They can only feel good by feeling bad about themselves. They feel so bad about themselves that they can only find relief by finally throwing themselves on God's mercy. Then they find overpowering relief when they can believe that their father has forgiven them for the flawed character and bad behavior that required the torture and death of his son.

One thing a Christian will never believe is that he or she is the Creator, the Hero, and the Interpreter of the universe. Such arrogance is exactly the kind of sin that provoked their divine father to kick them out of their home, and then to let them come back only after the torture and death of Jesus had persuaded them to fall on their knees to beg forgiveness.

Arrogant belief in one's own infinite worth is exactly the kind of sin that separates the human soul from Christianity's divine Father. The Christian feels restored to God's graces when

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he accepts the intercession of God's son. In accepting the son's sacrifice, and the father's forgiveness, the soul has everything to gain and nothing to lose... except its arrogance.

Nothing to lose except the truth. The truth that arrogance is our birthright. The truth that every human soul has infinite worth. The truth that each soul's infinite worth does not come from any God or other power. The truth that each soul has no need for forgiveness because nothing can take away the soul's infinite worth.

NATIONAL PATRIOTISM IS TREASON

At the beginning of World War I, the nations of Europe went berserk with flags and parades and music and speeches glorying in national patriotism as if patriotism were a great virtue instead of a hideous sickness. The fact that national patriotism is a hideous sickness was demonstrated by the astounding slaughter of the First World War.

But the slaughtered, slaughtering nations did not get the message of this nightmare. So the fact that national patriotism is a hideous crime was made even more nightmarishly obvious in Nazism.

Nazism magnified national patriotism to its extreme. Thus magnified, the horror of all national patriotism was revealed in all its insanity.

That is one of the ways in which dreams work. When painful truths are repressed into the unconscious, the unconscious may magnify them. Desperate to get our conscious attention, the unconscious symbolizes the buried truth with the terrifying monsters of nightmares. The terrifying monster of Hitler and his armies and concentration camps were created in the same way. And for the same purpose.

The unconscious of modern humanity collectively dreamed the magnified nationalism of Nazi Germany in a desperate, desperate, desperate effort to awaken us to the horror of all nationalism.

THE INSANITY OF NATIONAL PATRIOTISM

An individual raised to be patriotic believes that his patriotism is noble. And it is. It is noble to feel loyalty to other people, and to be willing to make sacrifices for other people.

But all the patriotisms of the world are also ignoble. It is ignoble to value one part of the human race more than all of the human race.

Not only ignoble... insane.

The insanity of patriotism is one of the oldest and deepest sources of war. Here is a recent example of that insanity.

When American troops in the Persian Gulf in 1991 slaughtered Iraqis, the "victory" was celebrated in an orgy of patriotism.

How can any human being celebrate the slaughter of human beings?

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Many Americans congratulated themselves that so few of "our" boys were killed.

But isn't an Iraqi boy also one of "our" boys? Isn't he also a human being? Doesn't he have a body and a heart and a mind? Don't Iraqi boys also have mothers and fathers and brothers and sisters and wives and children and friends? Don't Iraqi boys also have fears and hopes and virtues and vices and tears and laughter? How can anyone feel that a boy from Baghdad is worth less than a boy from Boston?

About 2,500 years ago Lao Tzu wrote in the *Tao Te Ching*: "He who thinks triumph beautiful is one with a will to kill. The death of a multitude is cause for mourning. Conduct your triumph as a funeral."

HUMAN PATRIOTISM

When a group of friends get together to play volleyball, they can split into two teams that compete to win games. But if one team consistently wins by large margins, one or more of the better players on the winning team will trade places with one or more of the less skilled players on the losing team. The resulting equality of the teams makes the competition more fun.

Clearly, the players on both teams were really members of a group larger than either team. Their identification with one of the teams was temporary and superficial. Their identification with the whole group of players was enduring, and more fundamental than their team identity.

That is how patriotism will work in The Next Civilization. Everyone will identify with the larger group — humanity — and will recognize all identification with smaller groups — teams or nations or political parties or organizations or businesses — as less important and less enduring.

Competition between two volleyball teams is really cooperation among all the members of both teams. When that is understood, all players are winners.

In The Next Civilization, all competition between nations or political parties or organizations or businesses will be recognized as cooperation among all members of the human race. When that is understood, all humans will be winners.

The Next Civilization will not tolerate any group that has excessive power — that uses competition not to advance humanity but to dominate other groups.

In a civilization embarked on The Adventure, the desire of any group to have power to dominate other groups will be recognized as silly.

No domination of one group by another can be satisfying because sharing in The Adventure is so absolutely satisfying.

Societies cherish their distinct cultures. This cherishing of their differences from other cultures serves all humanity. It makes possible the cultural diversity that is essential to the human adventure.

Because cultural diversity enriches all humanity, no culture has a right to dominate other cultures.

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This does not mean that the behavior of every culture should be respected. One cannot say that German concentration camps were part of German culture and therefore should be respected by other cultures. One cannot say that racism is part of American culture and therefore should be respected by other cultures.

Cultural diversity cannot be respected at the price of individual diversity. Any culture that violates individuals' human rights is a culture in need of reform.

Every individual human being has inalienable human rights because every individual is the Creator and the Hero and the Interpreter of the universe. The infinite worth of every individual is more fundamental than the worth of any culture.

The greatest benefit of cultural diversity is the variety of lifestyles it makes available to individuals. Anyone who knows varied cultures is free to choose his or her own values by selecting from the values of any of those cultures. Thus a Japanese individual can embrace not only Japanese values but also values found in American jazz, Indian philosophy, Chinese literature, Latin American dances, Marxist economics, "primitive" simplicities....

SUBHUMAN IDENTIFICATION

Cultural differences are to be cherished because they enrich the lives of all humanity. But it is one thing to cherish a culture's lifestyle, and quite another to identify with a culture.

Most people have been taught to identify themselves, and others, in terms of tribe, or ethnic group, or nation, or class, or religious community, or gender, or generation, or gang, or sexual preference, or astrological sign. Such group identification is destructive for several reasons, including the following:

- An individual who is assumed by other people to have the characteristics of her group may, in fact, be very different from everyone in that group.
- An individual who identifies himself with a group may fail to recognize in himself characteristics that are different from those dominating his group.
- An individual who deviates from the normality of a group with which she identifies may feel that there is something wrong with her.
- An individual may feel that he has no right to deviate from the norms of a group with whom he identifies.
- A group may assume that it has a right to expect from its individual members behaviors that the individual member has every right to reject.
- When a culture achieves unity by repressing forbidden thoughts and feelings into the unconscious of its individual members, the culture may project onto "enemies" what it represses in its own members.
- A group may retaliate against acts of an "enemy" group by injuring or killing innocent individuals solely because they were members of that "enemy" group.
- Identification with human groups smaller than the human race undermines identification with the entire human race.

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National patriotism is made obsolete by globalization of the economy, the environment, public health, communications, warfare.... To adapt to this powerful and growing reality requires replacing national patriotism with human patriotism.

This adaptation is not only necessary. It is extremely desirable.

Patriotism has always been a curse. To value one part of humanity more than all of humanity is treason against humanity.

This treason leads to wars between nations and to repression within nations.

All subhuman patriotism is monstrous. For at least seven reasons.

1. The Individual. Every individual human being is the Creator, the Hero, and the Interpreter of the universe. Because every individual human being is infinitely wonderful, to put a bullet or a bayonet into the guts of another human being is ghastly beyond comprehension. Because every human being is the glory of existence, to feel that killing "enemy" human beings is heroic is very, very, very sick. Then why do so many subhuman groups revere their killers as heroes?

Reverence for killers is the sick symptom of repressed despair. It kills the human soul when patriots fail to recognize that every individual human being — every Creator, Hero, and Interpreter of the universe — is infinitely wonderful regardless of the subhuman group to which he or she "belongs." Someone who knows his or her own infinite worth cannot fail to know the infinite worth of every other human being.

Anyone who knows the infinite worth of every individual human will experience his or her human identity as more fundamental than any identification with any nation, tribe, class, religious group, or gang. In The Next Civilization, the deepest loyalty will be to the nation of all individual human beings.

2. Absurdity. A patriot may feel more identification with another human being who came out of his mother's womb on the near side of an international border than he feels for a human being who came out of his mother's womb on the far side of the international border.

Isn't that absurd?

A patriot may identify with someone who came out of his mother's womb on the far side of an international border if that trans-border baby is a member of the patriot's nation or tribe or ethnic group. What determines whether the trans-border baby is a member of the patriot's tribe? Belief that the baby shares ancestors with the patriot. Why does the patriot identify with a baby with whom he shares ancestors more than with a baby with whom he does not share ancestors?

Isn't that absurd?

3. Repression. There is a connection between patriotism and the repression of the individual's knowledge of his or her infinite worth. A nation or tribe or religious community teaches its children to hold in awe something greater than himself or herself. That something-greater may be the nation itself, or a god, or even a piece of colored cloth

Whether children are taught to revere a visible flag or an invisible god, the purpose is the same: to glue people together in an emotional unit.

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The purpose is the same, and so is the result. By teaching its children to bow to whatever the group worships, the group achieves emotional unity. But that emotional unity is achieved at the price of repressing the child's knowledge of his or her own infinite worth. The rage that the child feels at the repression of his inner truth is buried deep in his unconscious. That buried rage can find "heroic" release in murdering "enemy" children who have been repressed by worship of different gods or flags.

4. Enemies. Because we are dreaming reality, everything that appears in the "external" world is a manifestation of something inside our selves. That includes enemies. Every "enemy" that appears in the external world is a manifestation of something inside ourselves.

That is why we must not only love our enemies; we must also understand them. We must understand our enemies in order to understand our own selves.

Patriotism prevents recognition of our enemies as revelations of our hidden selves. By preaching war against enemies, patriotism keeps repressed what is hidden in ourselves.

Even war against a Hitler is repression of what is hidden in ourselves. One of the things hidden in ourselves is our unconscious knowledge that our national patriotism is insane. Because we were busy killing Nazi enemies, we could not recognize in Hitler's insane nationalism a magnifying mirror of our own unconscious knowledge that our own nationalism is insane.

Many Americans believe that their military intervention in Iraq was in defense of international values, in defense of human rights that are not national but universal. To the extent that this human patriotism is genuine it is an advance over national patriotism.

But American reliance on military violence to defend human rights blinds many Americans to the deepest sources of violations of human rights. Repression of human rights in Iraq reflects the repression of children brainwashed to bow to the Abrahamic religions spawned in Iraq... or to the "scientific" religion expressed in scientific weapons used in Iraq... or to the patriotism of Americans expressed in "patriot" missiles, the repressive "Patriot Act," and bumper stickers proclaiming "God Bless America."

The only way to replace national patriotisms with human patriotism is to replace military violence with self-understanding, with recognition in our "enemies" projections of what is unconscious in our selves.

5. Intrahuman Conflict. Subhuman patriotism promotes intrahuman conflict. For thousands of years human beings who identify with one subhuman group — tribe, nation, class, religious group, gang — have sought to have more power or wealth or status than human beings who identify with other subhuman groups. Because humans know in their hearts that this subhuman patriotism is destructive, and because they are brainwashed from childhood to believe that this subhuman patriotism is good, subhuman groups create in their members deep inner conflict. A conflict between the truth they know and the false "good" they are taught.

That inner conflict is so painful that the unpatriotic truth is repressed into the unconscious and the false "good" of patriotism is embraced with fervor.

That inner conflict is so painful that it frequently erupts into violent outer conflict against different subhuman groups.

6. Idolatry. Patriotism is usually reinforced by reverence for non-living things – a flag, a temple, a location, a ritual, the bones of ancestors.... In many cultures those who show disrespect

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for sacred things are condemned as immoral. They may be punished. Indeed, societies may kill “enemies” who show disrespect for their sacred things.

Why do living human beings place such value in non-living things? As an instrument of repression. The child who is taught to bow to things will never recognize that his or her living self is worth more than all the non-living things in the universe. Children who learn to bow to things will more readily bow to established beliefs and institutions. Thus belief in the sacredness of things supports order in a society. But the order is achieved at a price. Those who bow have been robbed of their knowledge of their absolute worth.

Bowers whose knowledge of their absolute worth has been repressed into their unconscious may seek revenge in hostility toward those who bow to other sacred things.

7. The Adventure. All of humanity is embarked together on the adventure of creating, entering, exploring, interpreting, enjoying, sharing, and re-creating the universe. Every identification with a group smaller than the human race dilutes the passion, the thrill, and the fun of our identification with our real group, humanity. The astonishing adventure of human existence is lost sight of in all the patriotic struggles to promote subhuman nations, tribes, classes, religious groups, or gangs.

In our cosmic adventure, each of us alone, and all of us together, are more wonderful than we have been taught to believe by all the subhuman groups clamoring for our souls.

EMOTIONAL LIBERATION FROM PATRIOTISM

An intellectual recognition of the sickness of patriotism is not enough. Patriotism is an emotion as well as an idea. To gain freedom from the emotion requires emotional action.

The emotion of patriotism is drilled into children by rituals. For example, American children are brainwashed by rituals like singing America's National Anthem and reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to the American flag. One device for freeing adults from that childhood brainwashing is to revise such rituals.

Thus Americans' National Anthem, “The Star Spangled Banner,” can be rewritten:

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THE BLOOD SPATTERED BANNER

*(Written during 1991 Gulf War
"victory" celebrations)*

Oh say can you see
By our victory's delight
How proudly we failed
At peace and goodwillig?

Our bright kids and smart bombs
Through the fairytale fight
O'er the TVs we watched
Were so gallantly killing.

And the rockets red glare,
Children bursting in air,
Guaranteed that the price
Of our oil will be fair.

Oh say does that blood-spattered
Banner yet wave
O'er the land of the fool
And the home of the knave?

Non-Americans unfamiliar with the American National Anthem, The Star Spangled Banner, can compare this parody with the following original text:

Oh say can you see
By the dawn's early light
What so proudly we hailed
At the twilight's last gleaming,

Whose broad stripes and bright stars
Through the perilous fight
O'er the ramparts we watched
Were so gallantly streaming?

And the rockets' red glare,
The bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night
That our flag was still there.

Oh say does that star-spangled
Banner yet wave
O'er the land of the free
And the home of the brave?

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Any American who is practicing mental self-surgery to cut out cancerous feelings of patriotism can sing the revised National Anthem. While everyone else at a sports event or school graduation or Veterans Day ceremony is singing the American National Anthem, the human-patriot can sing this attack on American insanity.

American schoolchildren are brainwashed by recital, with their hands over their hearts, of this patriotic pledge:

I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, indivisible, under God, with liberty and justice for all.

Parents who want to free their children from the cancer of patriotism can teach them this substitute pledge:

I pledge allegiance to humanity, one nation, indivisible, seeking liberty and justice and beauty and truth and adventure and love for everyone.

Of course a young child might be afraid to speak these words out loud if his or her teachers and classmates might respond with anger or ridicule. But the child can be taught by her parents that teachers and classmates can be tragically wrong, themselves the victims of brainwashing. The child can repeat the Pledge to Humanity silently to herself until she is old enough to stand up to all teachers of the sickness of national patriotism.

And just as an American can rewrite the American national anthem and pledge to the flag, so any member of any nation can rewrite his or her national anthems or pledges.

And all nations can raise their children to celebrate human patriotism.

Nearly two and a half millennia ago the philosopher Diogenes said: "I am neither an Athenian nor a Greek, but a citizen of the world."

In this new millennium individuals all over the world can say: "I am not an American... or a Chinese... or a Brazilian... or a Russian... or an Arab... or a Yoruba... but a citizen of the world."

Such an awakening is thousands of years overdue.

But better late than never.

As a nation trashes its patriotism, what will be the result? The first result will be greater freedom for each citizen of that enlightened nation. The second result will be an inspiring example for nations that have not yet trashed their patriotism. The third result will be the removal of one of the oldest and deepest causes of mass murder.

REPLACING THE SACRED

“The one essential condition of human existence is that man should always be able to bow down before something infinitely great. If men are deprived of the infinitely great they will not go on living and will die of despair.”

Those two sentences, spoken by a character in Dostoevsky’s novel *The Possessed*, express very simply the common error shared by all the religions that have failed to end war. The sentiment expressed in that statement is the deepest cause of thousands of years of mass murder.

To end the endless insanity of war requires embracing the opposite of that statement:

“The one essential condition of human existence is that man should never bow down before anything ‘greater’ than his or her own self. If men and women are deprived of their own infinite greatness, they will continue to live in the despair that has produced thousands of years of mass murder.”

A powerful and terrifying barrier stands between humanity and a civilization without war. The belief systems that have failed to end war are defense mechanisms that apparently brought their believers relief from despair and gave their lives deep meaning. To abandon these defense mechanisms will require letting go of beliefs held sacred.

Holding a belief sacred is itself a defense mechanism.

Holding a belief sacred protects the believer from examining the false foundations of a belief he inwardly knows is false.

Many people who would not hesitate to make fun of a political belief avoid making fun of a religious belief. Why?

Many who would feel insulted if someone made fun of their god or prophet or holy object would not feel insulted if someone made fun of their universe or president or swimming pool. What is the difference?

Reverence for the sacred is an instrument for repressing deviation from a society’s norms. Children raised to fear sacrilege will not only repress their deviant beliefs, they will righteously instill in their own children fear of deviance.

That fear of deviance may drive the adult to enmity toward societies with different beliefs. The sacredness of a belief can even lead believers to war.

The first emotional task in letting go of a sacred belief is to rob it of its sacredness. To demolish the sacredness of a belief cannot be done by the intellect alone. No matter how irrational a sacred belief, believers will cling to it unless they experience an emotional earthquake.

Everyone, at some times in his or her life, experiences emotional earthquakes. But it is easier for the earthquake to result in abandoning a sacred belief if the sacredness of the belief has already been challenged.

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To undermine the sacredness of a belief requires both intellectual and emotional challenge of the belief. The preceding pages have sketched the intellectual challenge. The emotional challenge to the sacredness of failed beliefs is sketched in the following examples of my poetry.

Some of these poems challenge established religions. All of the poems cherish the mortal human individual as more lovable than any God or Nature or Nirvana.

THE TERROR ERROR

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

(Hitler was a corporal when he was gassed in the trenches in World War I)

We are all on the train to
Auschwitz,
Because we all are Jews,
Or something like Jews,
Humans.

Our deaths are certain,
Putrid, and inane,
The whim of some mad corporal
Gassed in the trenches
Of a war in Europe,
Or somewhere,
Maybe Heaven.

Give us our daily
Soup and bread
And lead us not
Into thy ovens
Until tomorrow,
Or, better, Wednesday.

We'll promise to behave
If, great soldier
Of some master race
Or supernatural species,
You'll beat us less
Before you smudge the sky
With the greasy smoke
Of our feeble, yes,
But familiar, flesh.

God, Hitler, whoever you are,
Forgive us.
We know not what we've done,
But, surely, somehow we have sinned.

THE TERROR ERROR

THE GARDENER

Because we dared
When we were small,
To prove He cared
He cursed us all.

So we, His children,
Driven wild,
Tried to kill
His only child.

Though we nailed
Him to a tree,
Father failed,
Still, to see.

Still He tells us
To obey.
He compels us,
Thus, to pray:

Faithful Serpent,
Come again,
Free your Servant
From His sin,

Forgive our Father,
He knows not
What He wrought, or
What we got,

Where He goes,
Or whence He came.
Until He knows,
He's not to blame,

But make Him eat
Of His own fruit,
The bitter, sweet,
Forbidden truth

THE TERROR ERROR

SNEERVANA

As a wave is a piece of the ocean,
Each soul is a piece of God.
That thought is a fishy commotion
Of minnows in schools of cod.

My soul is a soaring falcon
That knows the waves and the sea,
And though I shall drop in the ocean,
The ocean will never know me.

CALL TO PRAYER

Stoop, kneel, bow,
Then rise to smite the infidel
To appease that sacred cow,
The Compassionate, the Merciful.

Drink, laugh, lust,
Then dance with those who doubt it:
There is no god but us,
And everyone is our prophet.

HIGHER TRUTH

If chemistry were right
And life were but a thing,

Then hawks would have no flight
And larks could never sing,

Hope would have no height
And thought could not take wing,

But the world is a kite
On an urchin's string.

THE TERROR ERROR

THE LAST JUDGEMENT

Awe and war
Go hand in hand.
Those who kneel
Slay those who stand.

Let them win
The final hour,
Our last laugh
Will mock their power.

WRAPTURE

God is coming for lunch today,
And if I'm lucky she will stay
For dinner, dancing, even bed,
And what we'll do there makes my head
Reel, race, roar, riot. . . .

Next we'll sleepwalk hand in hand
Like orphans toward some promised land,
Until we find a fishing hole,
Where, laughing,
God will shove me in
Then leap into the pool
And wrap me in her legs.

GLORIA!

In a filthy barn, in a flimsy crèche,
An infant whimpers from diaper rash.
His shivering mother wipes his ass,
The Almighty swaddled in human flesh.

At the carwash at Ninety-ninth and First
A junkie helps a whore give birth.
Another Jesus arrives on Earth.
Why don't angels sing his worth?

THE TERROR ERROR

THE MEMORIAL

Dead flowers in a rusty can
Rotting on an unmarked grave.
More eloquent than plastic blooms
Or marble words of praise.

"Rest In Peace?" God forbid
That I shall share that fate.
Eternity's an afterthought,
Too little, and too late.

WATCHING MY SON FALL ASLEEP

We watched today a caterpillar weave
Himself from sight, and I explained his plan.
And now your eyelids close,
And soon you'll be a man.

Then you'll watch your own child weaving dreams
And understand your father's restless night.
You'll know his paper wings.
You'll know his candle light.

AFTERTASTE

When all stars disappear
Like snowflakes in the sea,
The salt of an old maid's tear
Will flavor, still, her tea.

SELF-IMPORTANCE

I began this book with the data of coincidences of international importance, messages about a collective nightmare in Iraq. I will conclude with data of coincidences of personal importance. It is a fitting conclusion to recognition of the infinite importance of the personal life of every mortal individual.

The concluding poem, "Aftertaste," was inspired by a Danish woman named Agathe. One of twelve children raised on a Danish farm, she immigrated to America at the age of 21. She returned to Denmark after 50 years in America, working for American families, raising other people's children. I am one of those children, and I was born on her birthday, February 24.

In January 1987 I was hoping to get to Denmark in time to celebrate our shared birthday. But I had no money and was giving up hope that I could make the journey.

Then, while visiting a friend's cabin in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia, I noticed on a kitchen shelf a can of Limfjord oysters. Agathe was born by the shore of the Limfjord and again lived by that shore. Then I noticed the name of the manufacturer of the cabin's woodstove — Morsø. The stove was from the Limfjord island where Agathe was born and again lived, the island of Mors.

A few weeks later, shortly before our birthday, in a cafe in Charlottesville, Virginia, I saw a yellow poster that said HUSKER DU. Why were those Danish words staring at me from the wall of a Charlottesville cafe? Translated they mean: "Do you remember?"

Husker Du, I learned, was the name of an American rock band. The date of its concert in Charlottesville, printed on the poster under "Husker Du," was the date of Agathe's and my birthday — February 24.

The appearance of the Limfjord oysters and the Morsø stove in the Virginia cabin where I was deciding whether or not to travel to the Limfjord island of Mors certainly seems unlikely. But their timely appearance could have been "mere" coincidence, produced by random chance.

After all, there are an infinite number of facts in an ordinary life — or an ordinary day. If there were zero strange coincidences among those infinite facts — that would be very strange!

But to say that not only the Limfjord oysters and the Morsø stove, but also the Husker Du poster, were all produced by chance — that is truly far-fetched!

It would be irrational to say that it was chance that produced in that Charlottesville cafe a poster that was (a) written in Danish, and (b) announcing Agathe's and my February 24 birthday, and (c) saying "do you remember?"

The new scientific paradigm required to explain such coincidences leads to the conclusion that every individual is the Creator, the Hero, and the Interpreter of the universe. What will your life be like if you realize that you are the Creator-Hero-Interpreter?

Well, for one thing, you will be filled with the knowledge of your own importance.

THE TERROR ERROR

So, soar!

For another thing, you will be thrilled by the importance of everyone you meet.

Your home and neighborhood and workplace and school and restaurants and hotels and committees and governments and shops and beaches and ski resorts and hospitals and sidewalks will be populated by fellow Creator-Hero-Interpreters of the universe.

It will be like living with Zeus and Aphrodite and Jesus and Yahweh and Allah and Satan and Shiva and Vishnu and Isis and Osiris and The Great Spirit and Beelzebub and.... But it will be much more exciting than mixing with that crowd.

That whole crowd of immortal celebrities are dull, dull, dull compared to the human individuals you meet everyday. Each of the unique individuals you meet is embarked with you on a human adventure filled with greater variety, and played for higher stakes, and pursued with greater passion, than you can find in all the monotonous reruns of the soap operas of the immortals.

Those poor immortals can never play for mortal stakes. And so they can never love as humans can love.

At the same time that you recognize the cosmic importance of your own personality, you can recognize the personal importance of the cosmos.

You can recognize that the cosmos is tremendously important because it is being created by you. And because it is being created by your fellow human creators. And because it reveals what is hidden in yourself, and in your family and community and nation and species.

The world around you will be experienced as revelation. Your ordinary life will be like Buddha under the Bo tree, or Moses watching the burning bush, or Mohammed in a cave with the angel Gabriel. In your daily life you will receive many messages, like mail that needs only to be opened to hear the latest news from your self, and from your friends, and from humanity.

Because you know that you are the Creator-Hero-Interpreter of existence, you will interpret realities. Because you interpret realities, you will receive constant reinforcement of your knowledge that you are the Creator-Hero-Interpreter.

Thus we awaken from reality in order to interpret reality. And interpreting reality is a way to awaken from reality.

A friend, when he first heard the ideas I was writing about, asked: "Will I catch more fish?"

I didn't, at that moment, have a ready answer. But now I know what I should have said. Maybe you will catch more fish, and maybe not. But by using the interpretation of reality, you will catch more of whatever it is that fish symbolize to you. Maybe you will pull up from your own hidden depths, or hook in a rushing stream of rush-hour traffic, some thought that is alive and thrashing and shiny and tasty and nourishing.

THE TERROR ERROR

REVOLUTION OF CONSCIOUSNESS

The foundation of the next civilization will be a revolution of consciousness. In the next civilization it will be common sense to recognize that **mentality creates reality**.

The profound change in consciousness will find expression in profound changes in behavior. Public and private decisions will express consciousness that **inner acts create outer facts**.

In the next civilization, all the institutions and traditions and art and science and education and politics and diplomacy and economics and sports and habits and history will be the outward and visible expressions of a new inward and invisible reality.

How can we create that civilization? The task is large, but it will be accomplished by something we have been taught is small – the human individual.

Can individuals create a new civilization? We have a clear and compelling precedent that demonstrates that individuals deciding to change their own lives can change world history.

Most of the 800 million now living in North and South America are descended from individuals who decided to leave their homes in other continents and cross oceans to a "New World." In the same way, individuals today can decide to immigrate to a "New World." But that migration will be an inner migration to a new inner world.

Leaving one's inner home will be harder than leaving a physical home, and the inner ocean that must be crossed will be more vast than the Atlantic or Pacific. But those individual inner migrations will change human history more profoundly than all the migrations of individuals to the Americas.

In important ways, the inner migrations will not resemble the migrations from Europe to the Americas. Instead of repressing natives, inner migrants will rediscover their own native selves. Instead of enslaving Africans, inner migrants will free themselves.

The inner migration that will create The Next Civilization is this: recognition by 'ordinary' individuals of how extraordinary they truly are.

If an individual decides today to migrate across an inner ocean to settle in an inner New World, how can she or he start the adventure?

Before a Moslem begins a journey she or he usually says: "In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate."

Someone who decides to begin a journey to a new inner world can say: "In the Name of My Self, the Creator, the Hero, the Interpreter."

Five times every day a devout Moslem stops whatever he is doing and kneels in prayer to express his devotion to his Creator. An adventurer can stop whatever he is doing and express his thrill at his or her own creating, entering, exploring, explaining, enjoying, sharing, and re-creating the universe.

Of course the adventurer will never kneel to anything. But she will embrace fellow adventurers and venture with them. In fact, one of greatest adventures in The Adventure is love of a fellow adventurer.

THE TERROR ERROR

The adventurer who stops whatever he is doing won't pray to any "greater" power. He will stop to feel amazement at the amazing fact of his own existence. And then feel amazed at the amazing fact of the existence of some other person. And then feel amazed at a rabbit or a humming bird or a spider or a dandelion. And then feel amazed at the whole wild cosmic adventure on which he, and all other living individuals, has embarked.

And then he will interpret what is going on around him as divine revelations from himself and from other selves.

The adventurer will not stop for amazement and interpretation five times every day. One day, she may stop eleven times. On another day, only twice. There are no rules, unless the individual wants to make rules for her self. And even if she makes rules (e.g., "I will always stop and admire myself and my husband before I scream at his insensitivity," or "Every morning, while I am driving to work, I will ask myself the meanings of events of the previous day.") she can change her rules whenever she pleases.

Each individual will develop his own ways of responding to the meanings of realities. And individuals can learn new ways from each other.

I responded to the meaning of the HUSKER DU poster by finding the money to fly to Denmark to see Agathe. I arrived a few weeks after our February 24 birthday, but the delay did not diminish the importance of our time together.

As the poem "Aftertaste" says, an old maid's tear is more important than a mere universe. And when the physical universe has disappeared, each individual's moments of sorrow and delight, of loss and love, will eternally flavor existence.

You are more important than the universe we are creating. When you know that, you will have immigrated to the real world.

You Can Set a Spark to a Powder Keg

The next two pages can be reproduced separately as an 800-word column entitled “The Real Terrorists: Patriotism and Piety.” The column is short to make it easy for editors to find space to reprint it.

Because it is short, the column can only serve as a spark... but the spark can ignite an explosive debate. That debate can gain breadth and depth from *The Terror Error* (13,500 words) and *The Adventure* (125,000 words), both published at TheNextCivilization.com

The column may be reprinted or broadcast in any national, local, and alternative media, in newsletters, on flyers, and on the Internet.

Readers are urged to urge editors to publish “The Real Terrorists: Patriotism and Piety.” To provide editors with background, readers may accompany the column with a complete copy of *The Terror Error*.

This 800-word column may be reprinted or broadcast in any national, local, and alternative media, in newsletters, on flyers, and on the Internet.

THE REAL TERRORISTS: PATRIOTISM AND PIETY

By Park Teter

Park Teter taught at universities in Lebanon and Iran and worked as a journalist in Washington. His book The Adventure, published at TheNextCivilization.com, demonstrates that we project facts into the news in the same way that we project images into dreams.

Some years ago a tribe of Middle East nomads watched their first motion picture on a portable screen in the desert. When a villain on horseback seized the heroine and galloped away, the men in the movie audience sprang to their steeds and pursued the villain into the night.

All those who now pursue terrorists are, like those horsemen of the desert, chasing shadows into the dark.

What is the alternative? To recognize that the real sources of terror are not in our villains, but in ourselves.

The real sources of our terror are patriotism and piety.

National Patriotism Is Treason

To value one part of humanity more than all of humanity has always been treason against humanity. That treason found passionate expression at the beginning of World War I, when the nations of Europe went berserk with flags and parades and music and speeches glorying in national patriotism as if it were a virtue instead of a sickness. The fact that national patriotism is insane was demonstrated in the slaughter of World War I.

But the slaughtered, slaughtering nations did not get the message of this nightmare. So the fact that national patriotism is a sickness was made even more nightmarishly obvious in Nazism. Nazism magnified national patriotism to its extreme. Thus magnified, the horror of all national patriotism was revealed in all its insanity.

Still, no one gets the message. Not even weapons of mass destruction can persuade nations to replace national patriotism with human patriotism.

Sacred Child Abuse

While Americans go to war singing “God Bless America,” Moslems and Jews are killing each other in the name of God. And yet Islam, Judaism, and Christianity have, for centuries, preached peace.

None of these religions has established a civilization free of the insanity of war. What, then, shall we do with these religions?

By their fruits, Jesus said, you shall know them. By Jesus’ criterion, Christianity is a failure. If 2,000 years are not enough to end war, should we wait 2,000 more?

Many seek the common wisdom shared by all the world religions. But all the world religions have failed to end the insanity of war. In this age of modern weapons, it is necessary to end war. Therefore, it is necessary to find the common error shared by all these failed faiths.

We can begin that search by confronting an event held sacred by Jews, Christians and Moslems. In the Bible and the Koran God commands Abraham to sacrifice his son. Abraham proves his faith by his readiness to kill his son. At the last moment, God spares Abraham's son. But the horror of the story places child abuse at the heart of the three "Abrahamic" faiths.

As if Abraham's readiness to sacrifice his son were not ghastly enough, Christians have God sacrificing his own son.

And Christians, Moslems, and Jews have, since their religions began, sacrificed their sons in the insanity of war.

And today in Iraq, the land of Abraham's origin, Americans are sacrificing their sons.

What is all this son-sacrifice?

Big Other

Clearly it is not only Christians and Moslems and Jews who sacrifice their sons in war. But the story of Abraham is a parable revealing the origin of the sacrifice of sons that is practiced in all warring civilizations.

Why did not Abraham tell God to go to hell?

Because Abraham believed in something greater than his son, greater than himself, greater than any human individual.

That worship of something greater than the individual mortal human self is the common insanity that has driven all civilizations to murder their sons in the insanity of war.

Whether the child is taught to bow to God or Nature or Nation or Nirvana or whatever, the child's soul is sacrificed on the altar of some Big Other.

The murderous insanity of war will continue wherever children are taught to worship anything greater than their own individual selves.

The murderous insanity has reached its extreme in a religion hidden in modern science. Scientists ask the mass or velocity of physical facts but never ask the meanings of physical facts. This irrational neglect of the data of meaning has established a "scientific" myth of a meaningless physical universe. In this myth the individual is reduced to atoms bowing to the omnipotent laws of a mindless Nature. This extreme religion finds expression in extreme weapons, in the atomic, biological, and chemical weapons that now terrorize humanity.

Like the knife of Abraham poised over his child, these scientific weapons are poised over all our children. Are we willing to sacrifice our children to something greater than our children?

Or will we end war by raising every child to know that nothing exists that is greater than his or her own individual self, and to know that every individual self is equally, infinitely, great.

THE TRIAL OF GOD

A novel by

Park Teter

In a village in Central Asia, God is put on trial for the murder of a child in an earthquake. The plaintiff is the child's mother, the judge is an Asian-Canadian woman, the prosecutor had been a pilgrim to Mecca, the defense attorney is an American corporate lawyer.

Village witnesses are joined by experts representing Islam, Buddhism, Christianity, Science... and by a deserter from the Russian Army (the lover of the judge).

The international media broadcast God's trial by satellite.

The Internet Edition of *The Trial of God* is published at

TheNextCivilization.com

Publishers interested in publishing hardcover or paperback editions of *The Trial of God* or *The Adventure* may contact Park Teter at

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A TERRIBLE URGENCY

Modern weapons make it imperative to end war.

All the world religions – including the religion hidden in science – have failed to end war.

Therefore: it is imperative to replace all the world religions.

What will replace all these failed faiths?

Answering that question is the most urgent task facing all of us.

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The Terror Error is a condensed and modified version of Park Teter's longer work *The Adventure*, which is also published at TheNextCivilization.com

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