

# America as Eve-ill Empire

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## Abstract

*Explores the possibility that the new "imperial" American strategic policy results from what might be termed, in psychotherapeutic terms, the "illness of Eve" in American culture. Not only has the feminine perspective been repressed, as long-analyzed by feminists, but through that repression "Eve", in archetypal terms, has become "ill". The new, monopolar geopolitical concept of "America as Empire" can therefore be usefully understood as "America as Eve-ill Empire", suggesting the existence of an "Axis of Eve-ill" states -- as psychodynamic counterparts to the "Axis of Evil" rogue states. The "illness" may be understood as a pathological inability to deal in a healthy manner with those of different values and ways of knowing -- the archetypal "other" -- as exemplified for men by their relationship with women and for both by their relationship with their "shadows". From such a perspective, concerns with dissidence and terrorism can usefully be explored in terms of "fear of one's own shadow". Possible implications for those beyond the imperial pale are identified, recognizing the potential for a valuable resurgence of authenticity amongst those forced to come to terms with it.*

## Introduction

The outlines of an agenda on the part of key groups associated with the US government is becoming apparent beneath the declared strategies of "war against terrorism" and "regime change in Iraq". Features of this undeclared strategy appear to include taking over control of the world and its resources in a variety of ways.

Given that the attack against Iraq is likely to go ahead at the time of writing, and that other countries will then be similarly attacked or threatened, this article explores the unforeseen advantages of the resulting situation -- irrespective of whether it is to be regretted from many current perspectives.

Whilst Bush may indeed be sensitive to the increasingly dissolute nature of America, there is a curious irony to the possibility -- long stressed by feminists -- that the core problem for America is that it is becoming what

might be appropriately termed an "Eve-ill Empire". The unilateral action against Iraq could be encapsulated in the phrase: "Eve is ill in the American Empire and Adam goes off to war". Not only has the feminine perspective been repressed, as long-analyzed by feminists, but through that repression "Eve" has become "ill" -- as with any person incarcerated with inadequate care.

### **Outline of the imperial agenda: some indications**

Egon Matzner, author of *Monopolar World Order* (2000) states that:

The obvious fact of US global hegemony has taken quite some time to enter public awareness. It is frequently described now, sometimes quite critically, sometimes celebrated as a great blessing to the world - e.g. in Thomas L. Freedman's *The Lexus and the Olive Tree. Understanding Globalisation* (1999). Even the notion of an American Empire has come into use, the term often being used in a complacent manner. The most spectacu-

*\*Views expressed are those of the author, not of the institution.*

lar acknowledgement of US dominance was presented by the US historian Paul Kennedy. Until recently the prophet of American decline, he celebrated the one remaining global superpower with a brilliant essay in the London Financial Times. Its telling title is "*The Eagle has landed*" (Kennedy, 2002).<sup>1</sup>

The Washington-based Project for the New American Century<sup>2</sup> (PNAC) is a non-profit educational organization dedicated to a few fundamental propositions: that American leadership is good both for America and for the world; that such leadership requires military strength, diplomatic energy and commitment to moral principle; and that too few political leaders today are making the case for global leadership. It is committed to promoting American world leadership and notably to the control of international cyberspace.

PNAC produced *Rebuilding America's Defenses: Strategies, Forces And Resources For A New Century* in September 2000. It supports a 'blueprint for maintaining global US pre-eminence, precluding the rise of a great power rival, and shaping the international security order in line with American principles and interests'. This 'American grand strategy' must be advanced for 'as far into the future as possible'. When Bush assumed the Presidency, the men who created and nurtured the imperial dreams of PNAC became the men who run the Pentagon, the Defense Department and the White House. Vice President Dick Cheney is a founding member of PNAC, along with Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and Defense Policy Board chairman Richard Perle. Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz is the ideological father of the group. It has been argued that the desire for these freshly empowered PNAC men to extend American hegemony by force of arms across the globe has been there since day one of the Bush administration.<sup>3</sup>

For, Tam Dalyell, the Labour MP, "father of the House of Commons" and one of the leading UK rebel voices against war with Iraq, said:

This is a blueprint for US world domination -- a new world order of their making. These are the thought processes of fantasist Americans who want to control the world. I am appalled

that a British Labour Prime Minister should have got into bed with a crew which has this moral standing.<sup>4</sup>

For Jim Garrison, President of the California-based State of the World Forum, and author of *America as Empire*:

If 9/11 reframed everything within the context of national security and the war on terrorism, the invasion of Iraq will recontextualize the world yet again within the new reality of overwhelming U.S. power in the world. The U.S. is choosing to do this by seizing the most strategic point in the Middle East, possibly in the entire world. .... For the United States to take control of this region at America's moment of power is profound. It will be seizing the most sacred and fought over soil in the history of the world.

A strong U.S. presence along the Tigris Euphrates will make starkly clear that history has moved from an era of multipolarity, where there is a balance of power between nations, to a unipolar world, in which the United States holds global dominion. The consequences of this will be enormous and will raise many questions, one of the most profound of which is how the U.S. intends to act in the new unipolar world.<sup>5</sup>

The title of this paper was partly inspired by Jim Garrison's : *America as Empire*. Curiously, given his presidency of the State of the World Forum, the relationship between the title "State of the World" and "America as Empire" has not been explored. The first could be considered a worrying precursor of the second in the minds of some. Is America indeed to be considered to be the State of the World -- extending "America" to encompass the World?

As a conclusion to an analysis of the internal woes of the USA, Norman Mailer (*Only in America*,<sup>6</sup> 2003) notes that from Bush's perspective:

He also fears that the country is rapidly growing more dissolute, and the only solution may be-fell, mighty, and near-holy words-the only solution may be to strive for World Empire. Behind the whole push to go to war with Iraq is the desire to have a huge military presence in the Near East as a stepping stone to taking over the rest of the world. That is a big statement, but I can offer this much immediately: At the root of

flag conservatism is not madness, but an undisclosed logic. While I am hardly in accord, it is, nonetheless, logical if you accept its premises. From a militant Christian point of view, America is close to rotten....Flag conservatives truly believe America is not only fit to run the world but that it *must*. Without a commitment to Empire, the country will go down the drain. This, I would opine, is the prime subtext beneath the Iraqi project...

Mailer points to the most thorough explanation, of this as yet unadmitted campaign toward Empire, by Jay Bookman (*The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 29 September 2002):

This war, should it come, is intended to mark the official emergence of the United States as a full-fledged global empire, seizing sole responsibility and authority as planetary policeman. It would be the culmination of a plan 10 years or more in the making, carried out by those who believe the United States must seize the opportunity for global domination, even if it means becoming the "American imperialists" that our enemies always claimed we were.

Many of the arguments about, and against, American hegemony are made via links on the website of Americans against World Empire<sup>7</sup> ("a Conservative/Libertarian coalition for peace, opposed to the bombing & hypocrisy which brings retaliation from enemies that we ourselves create, turning our free Republic into a military empire"). They notably provide information on the Armageddon Lobby<sup>8</sup> in the US political system that is "trying to hurry up God".

Robert Cooper is a senior UK civil servant, currently Director General for External Relations and Politico-Military Affairs (Secretariat General of the EU Council). In his private capacity, Robert Cooper (*Re-ordering the world: the long-term implications of 11 September*, 2002) elaborated on the need for a "new imperialism" in the aftermath of the September 11 terror attacks, in a compilation published by the Foreign Policy Centre, with a foreword by Prime Minister Tony Blair<sup>9</sup>. He argues that:

"What is needed is a new kind of imperialism, one acceptable in a world of human rights and cosmopolitan values. We can already discern its outline: an imperialism which, like all imperial-

ism, aims to bring order and organisation but which rests today on voluntary principle."

According to Cooper, it could take two forms. First, there is the "voluntary imperialism of the global economy". This would entail "failed" or "failing" nations being helped into the global economy in return for which they "open themselves up to the interference of international organisations and foreign states". The second form, is the "imperialism of neighbours", whereby as the price for keeping security in their own backyards, the more powerful nations basically take over neighbouring countries, again voluntarily (as in the case of the UN protectorates in Bosnia and Kosovo where much of the aid, military hardware and personnel, and economic restructuring are the responsibility of the EU).. As one reviewer writes "Every statement Cooper makes is a barely concealed apologia for the forcible subordination of much of the world's people to the dominant powers"<sup>10</sup> One may rightly ask how much credibility is to be given in a world of spin to the notion of "human rights and cosmopolitan values" and "voluntary principle".<sup>11</sup>

Gwyn Prins (*The Heart of War*) of the London School of Economics states bluntly (*Goodbye to the old world*):<sup>12</sup>

But Iraq is simply a subplot within the play, whose major theme is the definitive end of the past cold war interregnum and the opening of the American imperial moment. We are at the passing of the age of Middle Earth. All the agents and the institutions of that age will be profoundly affected....For make no mistake, the ships of elves and hobbits are sailing from the grey haven as the age of Middle Earth passes." (*Guardian*, 15 March 2003)

It could be argued that the hegemonic project is but a momentary aberration of particular political tendency within the USA. The tragedy for Americans who do not support this view is that their president was elected according to their principles of the democracy that they are seeking to export to others around the globe -- but seemingly without the provision of the Second Amendment to the US Constitution, considered so vital to citizen's rights in a democracy (and so effectively explored in Michael

Moore's documentary *Bowling for Columbine*). Even though they may deplore that project, they are complicit in it according to those principles. What American would protest their president's declaration that the "American Way of Life is not negotiable" or his declaration that "I will never apologize for the United States. I don't care what the facts are."

The neo-conservatives are quite open about the common cultural and ethnic background they share, despite accusations of "dual loyalty". Given their geopolitical biases, David P Ryan (*Financial Times*, 26 May 2003), himself a US conservative, recalls the phrase in George Washington's *Farewell Address*<sup>13</sup> (1796):

So likewise, a passionate attachment of one nation for another produces a variety of evils. Sympathy for the favorite nation, facilitating the illusion of an imaginary common interest in cases where no real common interest exists, and infusing into one the enmities of the other, betrays the former into a participation in the quarrels and wars of the latter without adequate inducement or justification. It leads also to concessions to the favorite nation of privileges denied to others which is apt doubly to injure the nation making the concessions; by unnecessarily parting with what ought to have been retained, and by exciting jealousy, ill-will, and a disposition to retaliate, in the parties from whom equal privileges are withheld. And it gives to ambitious, corrupted, or deluded citizens (who devote themselves to the favorite nation), facility to betray or sacrifice the interests of their own country, without odium, sometimes even with popularity; gilding, with the appearances of a virtuous sense of obligation, a commendable deference for public opinion, or a laudable zeal for public good, the base or foolish compliances of ambition, corruption, or infatuation.

Ironically this caution originally applied to the UK, whether or not it now raises questions with respect to Australia or Israel. Tony Blair, as handmaiden for the new American strategy, has vigorously promoted the need for the rest of the world to come to terms with this new reality of a world dominated by a single superpower preoccupied with promoting its own way of life.. The question is what this new reality may mean for

social processes around the world.

## Implications for the majority of the world

A sense of how the imperial regime might be experienced can be gained by revisiting any of the following and considering how they might be interwoven under the new world order:

- democratic imperialism of classical Athens: the term "democratic imperialism" is already explicitly used to name the foreseen world order;
- imperialism of classical Rome: this is the most obvious model, from architecture to Senate, and including the use of "circuses" to distract the masses and punish dissidents (the modern counterparts to ancient Christians);
- enlightened slavery as claimed to have been practiced in the US Confederacy (or in the classical period): here the emphasis is on the care accorded to slaves and assertions of their interest in remaining bonded and unfree
- British Empire: this is the classical relationship from which colonial countries dissociated themselves (as extensively documented and facilitated by the UN during the process);
- fascist regime as implemented and envisaged in Nazi Germany ("Das tausend-jährige Reich")<sup>14</sup>
- totalitarian regimes of the Soviet bloc and other Communist countries: exemplified by the use of surveillance, gulag systems and arbitrary executions;
- apartheid regime: this exemplified a separation between the races and classes of citizenship (increasingly echoed in gated communities, and policies with regard to international freedom of movement and "asylum seeking");
- system of "robber barons"<sup>15</sup> (exemplified by the situation in the USA in 1900, but now recognized as re-emergent with the corporate scandals of 2002);
- incarceration policy: this approach is

increasingly used as a one-step response to the failure of modern social system policy, notably in the USA.

The challenging question is which features of these regimes would be retained and which excluded from the new vision of an imperial Pax Americana -- recognizing that some promoting this agenda might aspire to more repressive regimes and others to more enlightened variants. Spin would of course be the prime device through which to present any degree of repression and brutality as an enlightened reflection of the highest values of civilization: "democracy", "human rights", "peace", etc

Striking, if not blatant, features of the new world order are already becoming evident as a result of new legislation purportedly in response to "terrorism". These features include:

- surveillance of telephone communications, e-mail and web<sup>16</sup> usage, post, financial transactions (as exemplified by Echelon tracking, , the bugging of UN<sup>17</sup> and EU delegate offices, and voluntary reporting under the US Terrorism Information and Prevention System<sup>18</sup> (TIPS), etc);
- political campaign funding abuses, vote buying and failure of democratic consultation processes (as exemplified in the UN Security Council, in the formation under duress of a Coalition of the Willing, and in government assertions that public opinion is irrelevant or misguided);
- assassination and hit/death squads (as exemplified by documented policies of the US, UK and Israel, and of Latin American dictatorships);
- non-physical intimidation with respect to decision-making (as exemplified by threats on access to aid on country voting in intergovernmental arenas, or the threats of parliamentary "whips" to democratic representatives if they fail to follow the party line);
- retribution for failure of support (as exemplified by treatment of countries opposing US foreign policy, notably post-Iraq);
- physical intimidation (as exemplified by police brutality, cases of "dirty tricks" by major corporations, and the justifications

for use of torture, even when it proves fatal);

- pitilessness (as exemplified by withholding aid to refugees in camps and to those suffering of AIDS in Africa);
- broken promises of relief or compensation (as exemplified by the pattern of promising reconstruction and nation-building funds and then failing to make them available, notably as in Afghanistan or for the 15,000 killed in Union Carbide's Bhopal disaster in 1984);
- extensive use of propaganda and spin (as exemplified by news management in both peace and war time, facilitated by unconstrained consolidation of media empires);
- harassment of dissidents (as exemplified by treatment of academics critical of government policy in the US);
- transformation of dialogue into tokenism, targetting, threats, and even torture, to ensure conformity;
- appropriation of resources (as exemplified by genetic patenting initiatives, aggressive acquisition of foreign cultural artefacts, or the appropriation of Middle East oil resources);
- appropriation of international institutions (as exemplified in the case of the Bretton Woods institutions and the UN itself, and especially prefigured by the pattern in the early days of those bodies);
- destabilizing and then replacing national currencies with the American dollar (exemplified by the case of countries extending from the Mediterranean to China's Western border under the US Silk Road Strategy<sup>19</sup>);
- appropriation of discourse (as exemplified by imposition of use of English and associated cultural patterns and assumptions);
- imposition of legal obligations (as exemplified by requirements on countries to reciprocate unilateral legal provisions of the US Patriot Act);
- institutionalized illegitimacy or creating the law to justify the action (as exemplified by: US defiance of Turkish Parliamentary reso-

- lutions on basing invasion forces in Turkey; crossing the Kuwait-Iraq frontier prior to declaration of war; non-UN authorized no-fly zones in Iraq; use of toxics in Iraq in contravention of international conventions; detention of prisoners in Guantanamo Bay without legal representation);
- politicisation of intelligence agency reports<sup>20</sup>, used selectively (or amended) to lead to the opposite conclusion from the one they have drawn regarding threats;
  - affirmative action for benefit of special interest groups (as exemplified by US immunity for pharmaceutical companies<sup>21</sup> against present and future product liability);
  - rationalization criteria as a justification of ethical choices (as exemplified by the Nazi bureaucratic processes of administering the Final Solution -- cf. Gotz Aly and Susanne Heim: *Architects of Annihilation*, 2003);
  - absence of overriding ethical criteria to prevent emergence and prevalence of aggressive policies ensuring that other countries remain in the poverty trap, become increasingly uncompetitive, and become significantly vulnerable to catastrophic decimation through starvation or disease (as exemplified by the withholding of medicinal drugs, foodstuffs, exposure to chemical GM products rejected elsewhere, and illustrated historically by the distribution of smallpox infected blankets to Amerindians to reduce their population in the US);
  - institutionalized denial (as exemplified by NASA management of negative feedback prior to two shuttle disasters);
  - institutionalized tunnel vision (as exemplified by the focus on breaches of UN resolutions by one country, neglecting the pattern of systematic abuse by many countries);
  - unconstrained depredation of the environment, ecosystems and species;
  - fabrication and planting of evidence to justify a desired strategy (as exemplified by

the bombing of the pharmaceutical factory in the Sudan and US government recognition<sup>22</sup> that it had relied on fake and false evidence in seeking approval of its invasion of Iraq);

- suppression of information (notably with respect to government complicity in abuse, or the possibility of panic, as with the suspected terrorist attack on the NY Staten Island oil depot of 21 February 2003);
- indifference to rapidly increasing lack of credibility of public institutions and their declarations;
- disparagement and demeaning of the social or political structures of other countries and cultures, or of the multilateral structures through which they endeavour to work;
- increasingly unrepresentative nature of government;
- reversion to the kind of multi-class system characteristic of ancient Athens and Rome, the British Empire, pre-civil rights USA, communist *nomenklaturas*, and South African apartheid;
- progressive ghettoization of vulnerable groups (as practiced in the case of the Palestinians), and modeled on "reservation" policies for indigenous peoples (notably in the case of Amerindians in the USA);
- continuing pursuit of military action to ensure a continuing revenue stream for the empire's arms industries and for the political leadership as major shareholders therein in their personal capacity;
- priority military recruitment and use of ethnic minority groups whose population increase is considered problematic (as exemplified by use of surrogates in military conflicts);
- factory farming as a model for training work slaves for the imperial economy (as with slave farms of Roman times).

These possibilities raise the question as to the nature and origin of the dramatic shift in mindset to which the world is now witness. Explanations are of course forthcoming in terms

of geopolitical realpolitik. The philosophical underpinnings of the Washington neo-conservatives are acknowledged to be the writings of Machiavelli, Hobbes and Edmund Burke -- heralding in Robert Kaplan's terms *The Return of Ancient Times*<sup>23</sup> (2000).. More interesting however is the possibility that this shift towards a monopolar system is the consequence of a latent psycho-social malaise that has now become pathological.

### Emergence of "Eve-ill" Empire (and an "Axis of Eve-ill")

With regard to George Bush's presidency, Norman Mailer (*Only in America*<sup>24</sup>, 2003) argues:

The gap between his school of thought and that of old-value conservatives could yet produce a dichotomy on the right as clear-cut as the differences between Communists and socialists after World War I. "Flag conservatives" like Bush paid lip service to some conservative values, but at bottom they didn't give a damn. If they still used some of the terms, it was in order not to narrow their political base. They used the flag. They loved words like "evil." One of Bush's worst faults in rhetoric... was to use the word as if it were a button he could push to increase his power. When people have an IV tube put in them to feed a narcotic painkiller on demand, a few keep pressing that button. Bush uses evil as a narcotic for that part of the American public which feels most distressed. Of course, as he sees it, he is doing it because he believes America is good. He certainly does, he believes this country is the only hope of the world. He also fears that the country is rapidly growing more dissolute, and the only solution may be -- fell, mighty, and near-holy words -- the only solution may be to strive for World Empire.

It was Ronald Reagan who first labelled the enemy of the USA as "Evil Empire" in 1982<sup>25</sup>. In a separate paper<sup>26</sup> it was argued that much of the rhetoric of Bush against the evils of Iraq offered highly valuable insight -- provided it was understood as addressed to Americans. Namely that unconsciously Bush was articulating exactly what Americans needed to hear in relation to their own way of life and the need for "regime change". It is a basic factor in psychotherapy that

labels one attributes to characterize others need to be carefully examined for their applicability to one's own condition.

The neo-conservative move towards an American imperium, articulated by a group of men in the Project for a New American Century (PNAC), suggests the possibility of looking at the current crisis in a new way. Whilst Bush may indeed be sensitive to the increasingly dissolute nature of America, there is a curious irony to the possibility -- long stressed by feminists -- that the core problem for America is that it is becoming what might be appropriately termed an "Eve-ill Empire". This may prove to be a key feature of an emergent "Axis of Eve-ill".

The new, monopolar geopolitical concept of "America as Empire" can therefore be usefully understood as "America as Eve-ill Empire", suggesting the existence of an "Axis of Eve-ill" states -- as psychodynamic counterparts to the "Axis of Evil" rogue states. The "illness" may be understood as a pathological inability to deal in a healthy manner with those of different values and ways of knowing -- the archetypal "other" -- as exemplified for men by their relationship with women and for both by their relationship with their "shadows".. This manifests in the criminalization of those who disagree, legitimated by evoking violence from those whose concerns are ignored. The most obvious manifestation of this illness is in the significant breakdown in family relationships and the extraordinary level of incarceration in American society. From such a perspective, concerns with dissidence and terrorism can usefully be explored in terms of "fear of one's own shadow"..

The unilateral action against Iraq could be encapsulated in the phrase: "Eve is ill in the American Empire and Adam goes off to war". By that is meant that the feminine dimension of society -- that should be counter-balancing the PNAC perspective -- is no longer able to perform this function. "Eve" is here understood as the archetypal carrier of feminine values in the Jungian sense. Not only has the feminine perspective been repressed, as long-analyzed by feminists, but through that repression "Eve" has become "ill" -- as with any person incarcerated with inadequate care. Critics of the feminine

dimension are now able to focus on the illness as justification for continuing isolation.

It is a great historical irony, although perhaps a natural phenomenon in psycho-social systems, that it is in the USA that the liberation of women has been so successfully pursued. Yet it is in the USA that the image of woman -- through which understanding of the archetypal Eve is cultivated and sustained -- has been most subject to manipulation through omnipresent advertising. This has been undertaken in a society that is especially riven by the double standards associated with "decent" dress codes on the one hand, and strip joints, porn, etc, on the other. Both have been ambiguously exported to other cultures: one in the form of missionary values, the other in the form of internet porn. Such values have been used by American women to justify attack on an Afghan society where the burkha was worn<sup>27</sup>. But feminine values are not reflected in American strategic policy and military endeavours -- being then confined to the double standards of "writing home" and Saigon-style R&R. As Norman Mailer (*Only in America*<sup>28</sup>, 2003) puts it:

So one perk for the White House, should America become an international military machine huge enough to conquer all adversaries, is that American sexual freedom, all that gay, feminist, lesbian, transvestite hullabaloo, will be seen as too much of a luxury and will be put back into the closet again. Commitment, patriotism, and dedication will become all-pervasive national values once more (with all the hypocrisy attendant). Once we become a twenty-first-century embodiment of the old Roman Empire, moral reform can stride right back into the picture.

Concern for the absence of a healthy feminine dimension in relation to the Iraq crisis has been eloquently articulated in a call to action to women by the Moccasin Makers and War Breakers<sup>29</sup> -- as descendants of the Iroquois Confederacy: "In the tradition of our ancestors, it was customary for the women to make the moccasins worn by the men who were going to war. If the women did not want war, they did not make the moccasins". Recognizing the importance of the influence of that Confederacy

on the writers of the American Constitution, they argue that American women should not "make the moccasins" for the war on Iraq.

From a Freudian perspective, there is of course an obvious irony to promoting an exclusively "monopolar" world order. The irony is all the greater when this is done by a group of conservative men, with religious fundamentalist sympathies and supporters, who are significantly challenged both in their appreciation of non-masculine values and by the manner in which they manifest in society. From such a fundamentalist perspective, women have of course been traditionally associated with the challenge of evil. The feminine dimension then gets projected onto the "other", onto those exploring alternatives, and onto the world outside the pale of the American Way of Life (AWOL) -- where it evokes both a sense of "evil" (as with Iraq) and the sexual response typical within the AWOL (and notably the military). The sexual connotations of any pairing of monopole and black hole (explored in the extended version of the paper), and the war-mongering in its pursuit, merit reflection.

More generally still, the curious combination of Christian, Muslim and Jewish mindsets in framing the current crisis in the Middle East is far from being unrelated to the problematic relation of men to women amongst the fundamentalists of all three religions<sup>30</sup>. Each has a problem with "Eve" outside the home -- in the wider world. This dysfunctionality inhibits manifestation of corrective dynamics from outside those mindsets. To what extent should such fundamentalism be associated with the "illness of Eve" sustaining an "Axis of Eve-ill"? Aspects of this theme are now recognized as having been explored by Margaret Atwood in a prescient novel (*The Handmaid's Tale*, 1985) about a future dystopic Republic of Gilead (formerly the USA) where the regime spins news of war and terrorism to its advantage. Civil rights have been extinguished, books have been banned and culture has been terminated with extreme prejudice. Women are forbidden to hold jobs, property or money. Pollution and disease have decimated fertility rates -- birth control and homosexuality are now crimes punishable by death. The few remaining



fertile women, called handmaids, are used as brood mares for regime officials and their barren wives.

Irrespective of Atwood's speculative vision, reminiscent of George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-four*, what then of the future? How can humanity respond to the illness of Eve and ensure the collective therapy vital to recovery of the health of Eve and of Adam?

### **Interface with unmeaning and insignificance: challenge of authenticity**

For Lawrence Silverman (*Guardian*, 17 March 2003):

Instead of lamenting the lost world of "international law", or pretending that it still exists, we now have to work out how to live together in the world as it actually is. Don't be surprised if, like it or not, that means accepting a "Pax Americana"

Egon Matzner (*Conditional Co-operation: Coping With US Hegemony*)<sup>31</sup> explores 4 ways for dealing with American hegemony. There is a strong case for reviewing the experiences of those who successfully survived totalitarian and fascist regimes with integrity. The exercise could be usefully extended to cover the discriminatory experiences of multi-class societies such as those of the British Empire, pre-civil rights USA, the Hindu caste system, and South African apartheid. As with ancient Athens or Rome, few will enjoy the privileges of the *nomenklatura* of the new empire.

But, for those not seduced by its attractions, there is the exciting challenge of authenticity and how it is to become manifest in the ruins associated with imposition of imperial structures and dynamics. But, make no mistake, these will be used to appropriate or destroy any patterns of quality that might otherwise be used to reinforce a sense of authenticity.

The challenge for many levels of society will be the nature of the interface that it is possible to sustain with imperial dynamics. Many will be drawn inexorably into those dynamics. But the reality of the situation is that the resources are not available to sustain them for the majority of

the world's population. This is the tremendous learning offered by the American initiative. It frees people psychologically from dependence on the material support associated with those dynamics.

From a social perspective the expansionist dynamic of the American Way of Life (AWOL) could be explored in terms of "collapsing civilizations" -- a theme much studied by Christians fascinated by "End Times" scenarios<sup>32</sup> and more generally by historians (for example Johan Galtung and Sohail Inayatullah, 1997). For example under "nihilism" in the *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*:

Since Nietzsche's compelling critique, nihilistic themes--epistemological failure, value destruction, and cosmic purposelessness--have preoccupied artists, social critics, and philosophers. Convinced that Nietzsche's analysis was accurate, for example, Oswald Spengler in *The Decline of the West* (1926) studied several cultures to confirm that patterns of nihilism were indeed a conspicuous feature of collapsing civilizations. In each of the failed cultures he examines, Spengler noticed that centuries-old religious, artistic, and political traditions were weakened and finally toppled by the insidious workings of several distinct nihilistic postures: the Faustian nihilist "shatters the ideals"; the Apollinian nihilist "watches them crumble before his eyes"; and the Indian nihilist "withdraws from their presence into himself." Withdrawal, for instance, often identified with the negation of reality and resignation advocated by Eastern religions, is in the West associated with various versions of epicureanism and stoicism. In his study, Spengler concludes that Western civilization is already in the advanced stages of decay with all three forms of nihilism working to undermine epistemological authority and ontological grounding.<sup>33</sup>

The prime characteristic of the interface will be the omnipresence of spin. This will use as its material every nuance of human value and sense of quality. It will be designed to associate quality of life uniquely with the American Way of Life -- seeking to demean life beyond its reign by every means. But the very challenges it raises for thinking individuals will make increasingly apparent

the insignificance and unmeaning of such dynamics -- to a much higher degree than has been the case in past centuries. Its strenuous "positive" efforts to pretend the contrary may be increasingly seen as the value analogue to "false positives". Just as Saddam Hussein makes repugnant use of "human shields", the AWOL will continue to make use of the highest human values as "shields" and "Trojan horses" in order to protect its power-and-greed agenda.

It is in this context that the eloquent pleas of George Bush and Tony Blair to "just trust me" must now be assessed in the light of their remarkable failure to provide sufficient significance to justify their wreckage of the international community and civil rights -- and their barbaric destruction of the archaeological sites at the birthplace of civilization (caricatured in a BBC documentary as *The Raiders of the Lost Art*). As noted in an editorial of the *Financial Times* 45 days after the war's end (*Deception on WMD has hurt the case for preventive war*, 30 May 2003):

It is time for a reality check: we have been deceived. The US/UK occupation of Iraq has done nothing to prove the case for war. On the contrary, it has undermined, possibly fatally, their casus belli against the Iraqi regime - namely that it was stockpiling chemical and biological, if not nuclear, weapons.... So did the US and UK intelligence services get it wrong, or were their political masters lying? It seems a bit of both.... Paul Wolfowitz, has now tellingly admitted that WMD was chosen as the casus belli "for bureaucratic reasons, because it was the one reason everyone could agree on."

Were Bush and Blair being blackmailed? What are they hiding? Within the dynamics of spin that they have engendered, they are now unfortunately unable to communicate with any credibility the basis for their belief and sense of righteousness -- especially in the light of the many hard facts regarding the past complicity of their countries with the Iraqi regime, that they choose so willfully to ignore.

Do you want to rule the world and control it?  
I don't think that can ever be done. The world is  
a sacred vessel and it cannot be controlled.  
You will only make it worse if you try.

It may slip through your fingers and disappear.  
(*Tao Te Ching*, chapter 29)

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### Notes

1. See <http://fesportal.fes.de/pls/portal30/docs/FOLDER/POLITIKANALYSE/paxamericana/matzner.htm>
2. See <http://www.newamericancentury.org/>
3. See <http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article1665.htm>, [http://organicconsumers.org/corp/030303\\_globalization.cfm](http://organicconsumers.org/corp/030303_globalization.cfm), <http://www.fpif.org/pdf/papers/SRmen.pdf>, <http://www.eurolegal.org/usmideast4.htm#ALRT>
4. See <http://www.nadir.org/nadir/initiativ/agp/free/9-11/rebuildingdefense.htm>
5. See [http://www.worldforum.org/home/fmsd\\_1.htm](http://www.worldforum.org/home/fmsd_1.htm)
6. See <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/16166>
7. See <http://www.againstbombing.org/>
8. See <http://www.againstbombing.com/ArmageddonUpdates.htm>
9. See <http://www.observer.co.uk/worldview/story/0,11581,680095,00.html>, <http://www.observer.co.uk/worldview/story/0,11581,680095,00.html>
10. See <http://www.wsws.org/articles/2002/apr2002/coop-a27.shtml>
11. See [http://www.informationwar.org/stateterrorism/blairs\\_adviser\\_call\\_for\\_imperialism.htm](http://www.informationwar.org/stateterrorism/blairs_adviser_call_for_imperialism.htm)
12. See <http://www.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,3604,914636,00.html>
13. See <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/washing.htm>
14. See <http://www.geobop.com/Education/911/Bush/president/>
15. See [http://econ161.berkeley.edu/EconArticles/carnegie/delong\\_moscow\\_paper2.html](http://econ161.berkeley.edu/EconArticles/carnegie/delong_moscow_paper2.html)
16. [www.mailgate.org/misc/misc.activism.progressive/msg58533.htm/](http://www.mailgate.org/misc/misc.activism.progressive/msg58533.htm/)
17. See <http://www.observer.co.uk/iraq/story/0,12239,910657,00.html>
18. See <http://www.villagevoice.com/issues/>

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19. See <http://globalresearch.ca/articles/CHO303B.html>
20. See <http://news.independent.co.uk/world/politics/story.jsp?story=376732>
21. <http://www.dr-rath-health-foundation.org/facts/hsa13.html>
22. <http://jerusalem.indymedia.org/news/2003/03/111774.php>
23. See <http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/2000/06/kaplan.htm>
24. See <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/16166>
25. See <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1982reagan1.html>
26. See <http://laetusinpraesens.org/musings/bagdad.php>
27. See [http://www.metimes.com/2K2/issue2002-8/women/women\\_cling\\_to.htm](http://www.metimes.com/2K2/issue2002-8/women/women_cling_to.htm)
28. See <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/16166>
29. See [http://www.freepeltier.org/call\\_to\\_action.htm](http://www.freepeltier.org/call_to_action.htm)
30. See [http://www.womenpriests.org/scriptur/myth\\_ot.htm](http://www.womenpriests.org/scriptur/myth_ot.htm)
31. See <http://fesportal.fes.de/pls/portal30/docs/FOLDER/POLITIKANALYSE/paxamerica/matznern.htm>
32. See <http://www.pbc.org/dp/stedman/misc/3699.html>
33. See <http://www.utm.edu/research/iiep/n/nihilism.htm>

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