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**Attacking the Shadow through Iraq**

*Using the I-Rack to Put Western Civilization to the Question*

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**Introduction**

As discussed elsewhere with respect to the unrecognized logic of America's 'War on Terra', a problem of pronunciation signals a problem of comprehension. In the case of 'terror', this confusion is signalled by the title of the UN Environment Programme's INFOTERRA information system. Indeed, in most English and American dialects there is no distinction in the pronunciation between "Terror" and "Terra". Similarly, in most American dialects, in the pronunciation of 'Iraq', there is no distinction between "raq" and "rack". The unconscious implications of this are explored below.

Two linked approaches are used here. One approach is to consider the possibility that America is effectively undertaking a massive attack on its own shadow -- through Iraq. The second is to consider the way in which the identity of western civilization is being put on a form of 'rack' -- the 'I-rack'.

**Attacking the Shadow**

**Shadow:** Psychoanalysts and psychotherapists have extensively explored the 'shadow' and the pathology associated with the tendency of people to attack their own shadow. The archetypal scapegoat or shadow, present in everyone, is that part of the psyche normally the focus of blame or attack when the individual feels it necessary to vindicate himself or justify his own behaviour. It is not normally recognized as part of the self and thus the blame or attack is usually received by someone else who has sparked off the disquieting view of the shadow.

The shadow has its collective dimension, as noted by Michael Daniels (*The Shadow in Transpersonal Psychology*, 2000):

> According to Jung, there is another important dimension to the shadow - its collective manifestations. Jung is referring here to the darkness that may be found as an undercurrent in all human groups, whether families, tribes, organisations, movements or large civilisations, as well as in human nature generally. For example, in the same way that the personal shadow is the dark complement of an individual's persona, a culture's dominant zeitgeist will cast its own dark, antithetical, collective shadow. At the universal level, the shining light of our self-professed and sometimes expressed humanity is complemented and counterbalanced by a very dark side to human nature. We rightly react in horror and disgust at the brutality and inhumanity of the Holocaust, or of Rwanda and Kosovo. But the real horror is that we are all capable of such atrocities - especially, it seems, if we are male. It is very much a case of "There, but for the grace of God, go I". Or, as Jung (1958) puts it: "we are always, thanks to our human nature, potential criminals ... None of us stands outside humanity's ... collective shadow." (p. 96) [more]

Psychosynthesis, for example, aims, by psychoanalysis, to assist in acknowledgement of this lower aspect of man's nature and thus create inner harmony. Such acknowledgement takes courage but results in integrating the shadow in a constructive manner, leading first to humility and humanness and eventually to new insight and expanded horizons. It is postulated that the inability to accept that the "enemy" is in fact one's own lower nature is the cause of all bias, discrimination and conflict. Acknowledgement of the collective shadow might well prevent nationalistic or racialistic over-reactions to atrocities and barbarism which effectively are merely responding in kind. By accepting that everyone, as a human being, holds in himself collective responsibility for every development may well be the key to the next stage in human evolution.

From the perspective of Neuro-Linguistic Programming: 'Change comes from 'widening the aperture' of the person's map of the world or by finding and transforming the obstacles to the light -- not by attacking the shadow' [more]. But curiously it is in fantasy gaming and role playing that the phrase 'attacking the shadow' is now most widely recognized in modern culture -- thanks in part to works such as *The Lord of the Rings* and the challenge of its 'Dark Riders' [The "Dark Riders" of Social Change, 2002].

**Estranged fatherhood:** The American poet, Robert Bly, for example, has written on how many men have fought their fathers -- a dark "shadowy" father -- to overcome them. He also writes of men who have tried to rise above their fathers, flying high, transcending, leaving them below. Bly said, with respect to US involvement in the Vietnam war (*Iron John*, 1990, p. 95),
"The older men in the American military establishment and government did betray the younger men in Vietnam, lying about the nature of the war, remaining in safe places themselves, after having asked the young men to be warriors and then in effect sending them out to be ordinary murderers." (at p.95)

The pattern of folly sustaining this has been explored by Barbara Tuchman (The March of Folly: From Troy to Vietnam, 1984), In his book, People of the Lie (1983), M Scott Peck notes with respect to Vietnam, where he served in the Army Medical Corps:

I used to ask the troops on their way to battle in Vietnam what they knew about the war and its relationship to Vietnamese history. The enlisted men knew nothing. Ninety percent of the junior officers knew nothing. What little the senior officers did know was generally solely what they had been taught in the highly biased programs of their military schools. It was astounding. At least 95 percent of the men going off to risk their very lives did not even have the slightest knowledge of what the war was about...The fact of the matter is that as a nation we did not even know why we were waging the war.

As Bly develops his argument, U.S. fathers fail to give their sons what they need to be men. Young men need initiation into adulthood, to be welcomed among the fathers of the world, or they rage and sulk alone through life. In the special mythology of the U.S., says Bly, all you need to do to become an American man is reject your father. In situation comedies, in popular media, fathers are portrayed as weak and ridiculous. In this atmosphere it is little wonder that older men lack the confidence, or even the knowledge needed, to be more generous. Over past decades it has been the phenomenon of the counter-culture (whether through long hair, alternative philosophies and states of consciousness), its male adherents acted out their rejection of the Fathers and everything they stood for. But driving that rejection was the grief of shattered illusions.

Bly has spent the last few years talking about this problem to groups of men. He offers them traditional initiatory solutions. The meetings are part poetry reading, part spiritual retreat, part group therapy. That his book has become a number-one best seller in the United States suggests he has indeed tapped a deep well of unspoken pain. Since 1974, Bly has organized an annual Conference on the Great Mother and the New Father to consider a wide variety of mythological, poetic and other traditions. The aim is to create an environment in which participants are able to move toward an understanding between men and women, young and old, and people of diverse cultures, ethnic backgrounds, mythological and ritual traditions.

The question is whether the frustration at the 'deep well of unspoken pain' he addresses has now been collectively projected by American culture onto Iraq as a concrete focus for the shadowy attributes of 'terror'. Has the Iraq crisis, focused on Saddam Hussein, been evoked and set up by a complex cultural dynamic as a kind of 'father' who has to be rejected and overcome for American culture to be able to be able to come into some new form of maturity. Certainly the relationship of George Bush Sr to Saddam Hussein has created a pattern on which many have commented as a motivating factor for George W Bush.

Tilting at windmills: It is useful to look at a famous contemporary commentary on the Spanish Conquistadores invasion of the 'New World', as developed by Miguel de Cervantes [1547-1616]. His political allegories were readily understood by Spaniards notably through the actions of Don Quixote against windmills -- that gave rise to the much-used phrase "tilting at windmills". The phrase originates with an incident when Don Quixote sees windmills and tries to convince his companion Sancho Panza that they are evil giants and that he must do battle with them. Don Quixote battles enemy knights and soldiers, sorcerers, and giants. His only problem is that he often gets things wrong, mistaking strangers for enemies, falling off his horse, and being beaten senseless by mule-drivers. He blames every setback on the magic of an evil enchanter he believes to be his nemesis. Everywhere he goes, Don Quixote sees the everyday as the legendary: he confuses inns for castles, windmills for giants, and prostitutes for princesses.

Confused by modern media, there is every possibility that Iraq has become a focus for the modern military-industrial complex -- in their desperate search for oil, rather than for the gold of the Conquistadores. Might Iraqi oil rigs have unconscious resonances to Spanish windmills? Don Quixote, of course, did not lack courage but was bested by forces which he did not understand and he was completely powerless to defeat. A Castilian Spaniard of that day would have identified with Don Quixote, because in spite of his own efforts, his life was getting worse for reasons he did not understand. He was simply too far removed from the economic and political centers of power in Spain.

Believing that outside forces are capriciously controlling one's experience can indeed lead to a desire for revenge, to the constant need to 'aveng' the arbitrary and fickle vicissitudes of life. Research (Stuckless, 1998) has found that the stronger the vengeful feelings people have, the less comprehensible, manageable, and meaningful their experience of life. McCullough et al (2001) corroborate these findings, noting that vengefulness is positively correlated with: being less forgiving; greater rumination about the offense; higher negative affectivity; and lower life satisfaction.

Robert Johnson (Transformation: understanding the Three Levels of Masculine Consciousness, 1993), uses Don Quixote to illustrate the first of three stages of personal growth to achieve maturity and wholeness. Using three quintessential figures from classical literature -- Don Quixote, Hamlet, and Faust -- he presents three levels of development that are to be achieved to experience the self-realized state of completion and harmony. Each is Don Quixote, Hamlet, and Faust at various stages of a life. They represent levels of consciousness that
live inside us, vying for dominance, one winning one moment, another the next.

- Don Quixote is the innocent child in us all, unaware of life's pain -- a poignant reference to US governments indifference to developing countries at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, 2002).
- Shakespeare's Hamlet represents conscious imperfection, a man divided between the opposing forces within himself and full of despair in the face of the tragic nature of life. This is the state of the modern Western person -- aware of shortcomings, anxious over what to do, neurotic and incomplete. As a result, modern Western culture has historically dismantled the more natural societies it has encountered, leaving entire populations stranded in the purgatory of this second level of consciousness.
- The third state, conscious perfection -- the state of the fully integrated person -- is represented by Goethe's Faust. His is an awareness that has been gained by struggling with and working through the second level of consciousness -- a journey that is both painful and dangerous and of particular pertinence to our contemporary culture. It is Faust who, through his own inner work, restores to wholeness the life he had torn apart to achieve the ecstatic, visionary, enlightened consciousness of which we are all capable. [more]

Sa’id Asgharzadeh (Tose'eh, Iran, 6 October 2001) compares the WTC twin towers to the windmills attacked by Don Quixote, of which he notes two variants in literature -- that of Cervantes he compares to bin Laden seeking to stop the Renaissance and restore medieval chivalry, with Sancho (his companion) on a donkey like Mullah Omar encouraging Don Quixote to pursue his dreams and illusions. He argues that Graham Greene's modern Don Quixote, like George Bush, is to be addressed as his excellency, pursues the path to absolute good and is in a constant struggle against evil, but is thwarted in his aims by his fantasies and illusions. His Sancho is a bankrupt capitalist -- in this case Tony Blair. For the commentator:

"Both are examples of the tragedy of human life. Both are prepared to sacrifice themselves for humanity, have companions, and insist on pursuing their chosen paths though they realize they are the object of universal ridicule....We should wait and see if the countries of the region and the world face a fate shaped by emotions or thought. If a choice is inevitable, do people prefer a tragic or a comical ending?"

**External vs Internal terrorism:** In a relatively rare analysis of the New York terrorist attacks, a Brazilian psychoanalyst, Norberto Keppe (founder of the personal development methodology Analytical Trilogy) states [in an interview with Richard Jones]:

Well, when we notice terrorism outside ourselves, we need to see that in a certain way, that terrorism also exists inside as well, in this case, inside the nation that sees the terrorism only outside itself. So we cannot say that certain nations are dangerous and others not. Because the question of terrorism is not a question of this or that nation. It's a universal question. So if a nation sees terrorism coming only from outside, and not from inside as well, it is actually in more danger than the one who is willing to look at its own internal terrorism and take care of it in a more careful way. So it is very dangerous to see the problem only on the outside. This brings up the question of psychological projection, which is a process where the person sees the problems that he has, in the other person. So a nation that sees the problem outside, becomes a very dangerous nation to itself, because it doesn't see that the problems are actually inside itself.

For Andrew Samuels (*Machiavelli and Shadow Politics*, 1994):

A more evolved attitude toward politics (one that goes with shadow energies and not against them) is something to work on in the office or consulting room, just as we work on more evolved attitudes to spirituality, sexuality and aggression. Analysts (and patients, too?) might begin to work out models that enable us to refer to a person's level of political development, to a political drive, to a political level of the psyche. In clinical practice, such models would enable us to generate new readings of personal and collective political imagery. We may even find that there is a politics of imagery. [more]

John Schlapobersky (1993) comments on how Andrew Samuels' book *Political Psyche* (1994) brings political questions to bear on depth psychology, and psychological questions to bear on the political world. As the two areas of discourse engage one another through the book, he acknowledges "the discovery of a two-way process ... as the original intent to illumine the political turned into a searching exploration of the clinical." [more]

**Attacking others:** As a strategy such attack is envisaged when the feeling of being overpowered or ashamed is converted into destructive aggression or attempts to make others feel humiliated or shamed. This is the person who tries to avoid their own sense of inadequacy by shifting that feeling to the other person -- trying to invoke in another the shame they can't bear to feel about themselves. It is the essence of scapegoating [more; more] -- a dimension neglected with respect to Iraq.

On 'internal terrorism' Norberto Keppe (see above) states:

Well, this question of terrorism, this terror of terrorism, shows to the people the terror they have of their own internal terrorism. And explaining this in the pathological sense ... the individual has inside himself ideas of destruction, ideas of self-destruction, and it becomes very dangerous for him because by thinking that he is a victim of external terrorism, of external destruction, he forgets to see that he also has this not exactly tendency, but that he has this attitude of destroying himself.... So what I'm saying is that absolutely no individual who has maturity will try to solve a problem through a fight, or through a war. There is a Chinese saying, that says when you see two people talking, two people discussing, watch for the one who loses his cool and physically attacks. That is the one who has lost his reason. So if a country declares war on another because of terrorism, it is because it puts itself on the same plane, on the same level as the other one. An inferior level. A level with no reason. Therefore, there is
In exploring shame, psychoanalyst James M. Shultz (Shame, 1996) notes:

Is it surprising that there are many defenses against shame? Donald Nathanson, the psychiatrist who has written most comprehensively about shame, has grouped the defenses against it into four areas. These areas are withdrawal, avoidance (which can take many different forms), attacking others, and attacking the self. There isn't time to go into these here, but let me just say that if you read his descriptions of defenses against shame you can see in slightly different language, practically all of what psychoanalysts have called the ego defense mechanisms. They are the ways we protect the integrity of our individual point of view and conscious functioning. It makes sense that our psychological defenses against overwhelming anxiety and threats of castration or disintegration would also protect us from overwhelming shame and threats of dismemberment or dissolution. Here's a thought: if you're about to be castrated you are afraid, but if you're already castrated you're ashamed.

Many have compared the World Trade Center disaster to a symbolic castration of American culture. Jerome Bernstein is one of the few psychoanalysts to apply his insights to the nature of the cultural challenge of terrorism. In an earlier book [Power and Politics: The Psychology of Soviet-American Partnership, 1989], he makes the case for underlying archetypal dynamics that prevented a political solution between the two superpowers during the Cold War, and which were responsible ultimately for the collapse of the Cold War (not a U.S. victory over the Soviet Union, as the U.S. subsequently claimed). Bernstein states:

The end of the Cold War...was of such importance that no approach to the study of international relations claiming both foresight and competence should have failed to see it coming. None actually did so...and that fact ought to raise questions about the methods we have developed for trying to understand world politics.

And, again, on page 18, he asserts:

What is immediately obvious...[is] that very few of our theoretical approaches to the study of international relations came anywhere close to forecasting any of these developments. One might as well have relied upon stargazers, readers of entrails, and other "pre-scientific" methods for all the good our "scientific" methods did; clearly our theories were not up to the task of anticipating the most significant event in world politics since the end of World War II... (See Journal of International Security, Vol 17, No. 3, Winter 1992/93, pp.5-58. Italics those of Dr. Gaddis.)

Bernstein indicates that by the year 2000, no one in the political science community had taken up the challenge formulated by Gaddis. The response had been: 'total silence from the very individuals and groups who should be most concerned'.

I-Rack: American culture 'Put to the Question'

Rack as framework: A 'rack' is any kind of framework in which one or more items can be stored or mounted. Electronic equipment is often 'rack-mounted' -- notably in aerospace vehicles. There is even an I-Rack series for such storage.

Metaphorically a rack could also be understood as a form of conceptual scaffolding, like a map, through which insights are held in a particular configuration through which broader insights can emerge. The Christian and other rosaries can be understood as such a 'rack' to order integrative insights -- indeed the rosary is currently recommended as a 'weapon' against terrorism. The Christian cross -- as a focus for meditation -- is itself associated in many complex ways with a rack (some were indeed placed on the cross after being tortured on the rack).

The Eastern mandala may also be considered as a form of rack on which the elements of the psyche are disposed as a subject for meditation. The 'dreamcatchers' made by American Indians could be seen in this light. As with the cross, each could indeed be described as an 'I-Rack' through which self-understanding may be achieved. In this metaphorical sense an 'I-Rack' may also be explored as a framework on which a dynamic system of elements of cultural identity are projected so as to be held in a meaningful configuration. An 'I-Rack' can thus be understood as serving as a kind of 'coat hanger' for one's sense of ego and identity.

It is possible that during the Cold War the USSR served as an I-Rack for the USA. With the fall of the Soviet Union, as some have remarked, there is a need for a new kind of enemy onto which to project particular dimensions of American cultural identity (see Needing Evil Elsewhere, 2001). Does America need a continuing supply of I-Racks?
There is a challenge to inter-weaving conscious and unconscious processes in governance. An earlier paper explored the metaphor of weaving as providing important insights into the future challenge of governance -- in the light of Gandhi's highly successful use of the spinning metaphor (Warp and Weft: world governance as a Gandhian challenge for the individual, 2002). 'Weft' is explored there as providing contrasting insights in necessary opposition to the 'warp' framed by the government line. It is ironic that in the Westminster parliamentary model any 'opposition' is focused by 'shadow' ministers in one, or more, 'shadow cabinets'. A 'warping rack' is of course one of the tools of weaving.

**Rack as instrument of torture:** The 'rack', as one of the most used instruments of torture is displayed (in one form or another) in many museums. It is a table -- or framework -- often with spiked rollers for the victim to lay on. The victim would be tied to the rack and stretched for days at a time. It is reported that, in some cases, the victim would be stretched up to 12 inches. Wooden beating racks were much used in Nazi concentration camps [more].

Torture was much used by Christian authorities in medieval times in the process of interrogating suspected heretics who were 'Put to the Question', through a procedure developed and practiced by the Inquisition. Indeed 'Put to the Question' became synonymous with 'Put to the Rack'. Guidelines for this process were provided in a notorious manual Malleus Maleficarum (1486) translated by Montague Summers (1928). This is the best known of the 'witch-hunt' manuals. Written in Latin, the Malleus was first submitted to the University of Cologne in 1487. The title is translated as The Hammer of Witches. Written by James Sprenger and Henry Kramer, the Malleus remained in use for three hundred years. It had tremendous influence in the witch trials in England and on the continent.

When put to the 'Question' for the first time by the Inquisition, the victim's shoulders are dislocated and muscles are ripped apart. Upon the 2nd degree, knee, hip and elbow joints begin to be forced out of their sockets. At this point, the victim is maimed for life. Upon the "Question" of the 3rd degree the joints are separated from the sockets with an audible and sickening "pop" and the victim is paralyzed. He then dies, gradually, over the course of several days if he is lucky and misses out on the festivities of the auto da fé. The Inquisitors, however, were usually too careful to allow that to happen. The Church did not wish to be responsible for the victim's death; he would be "abandoned" to the secular authorities who would handle the actual execution.

The Malleus was used as a judicial case-book for the detection and persecution of witches, specifying rules of evidence and the canonical procedures by which suspected witches were tortured and put to death [more]. Thousands of people (primarily women) were judicially murdered as a result of the procedures described in this book, for no reason than a strange birthmark, living alone, mental illness, cultivation of medicinal herbs, or simply because they were falsely accused (often for financial gain by the accuser). The Malleus serves as a horrible warning about what happens when intolerance takes over a society.

It is curious that modern times have seen a great resurgence of interest in torture and use of the rack. One form has been much publicized in movies [more]. There is a 'torture rack' web database for erotic fantasies and rape scenes. 'Torture racks' are even sold as toys [more]. Torture equipment is manufactured and sold worldwide [USA; UK; more; more] and is used by state authorities in many countries according to Amnesty's periodical reports [more]. Reports of torture and ill-treatment inflicted by state agents in over 150 countries have been received since 1997. In more than 70 torture or ill-treatment by state officials was widespread and in over 80 countries people reportedly died as a result.

Torture is now freely used by such national authorities as a 'legitimate' means of obtaining evidence relating to terrorism -- whether those tortured are genuinely implicated or are only suspects. Extrajudicial provisions have been made in places like Camp X-Ray to avoid any possibility of unwelcome investigation. [more; more; more]. Techniques of interrogation are allegedly developed at the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHISC). According to the Washington Post, under the euphemism 'stress and duress', such techniques are reportedly in use in secret detention centres around the world by agents of the USA government -- or by 'contracting' such interrogation to foreign intelligence agencies known to routinely use torture [more]. With the current secrecy, how will the USA ever be able to prove that it has not systematically implemented a pattern of 'dissappearances'? How will it distinguish itself from the notorious regimes that have used such practices before? Has such 'interrogation' already become a credit course in American military academies?

Those now suspected of terrorism are indeed 'Put to the Question' with all the skills of scientifically-enhanced torture. An equivalent to the Malleus undoubtedly exists to provide guidance in this process.

**Unconscious self-torture:** The question raised here however is whether American culture is in fact 'putting itself to the Question' through its projection of 'evil' onto Iraq (as a way of avoiding recognition of the USA's own internal 'evils') -- and through the attack on Iraq, effectively an attack on the 'evils' conjured up from its own collective unconscious.

Like the Christian Crusaders and the Conquistadores, the Americans have been able to psych themselves into believing that they have a divine mandate to bring civilization to foreign parts -- and are considerably motivated by the riches that they can obtain in such a win-win process. As with the Christian Conquistadores, the moral and spiritual mandate is totally confused with the mundane rewards to be reaped through oil. The 'Gold' of the Conquistadores has been transmuted into the 'Black Gold' of the modern Crusaders in defence of civilization -- via the earlier 'Black Gold' of slavery. "Send us gold, for we Spaniards have a disease that can only be cured by gold," is the reported message of Cortez to the Montezuma, the Aztec ruler of Mexico in 1519. Ironically this 'Spanish disease' continues to govern American thinking.

Unlike other cultures Americans have not been tested on their home territory by foreign invasion. As a superpower they cannot expect more powerful father-figures from which to acquire the wisdom they need to move on through appropriate initiation processes. It is curious therefore that George Bush should engage in what his Christian supporters, and others, have termed a 'crusade' to 'Baghdad' [more; more; more]. No city carries a name more symbolic of the challenge of Robert Bly's problematic son-father relationship for
of fundamental regime

In the current Christian right-wing framing of the war against various Muslim states as a "crusade" -- a mission from God [more; more] -- it is a curious irony (unlikely to be lost on Arabs) that it is a "General Franks" who is seen as the probable US military commander of Iraq after "regime change" [more]. The Franks were a key Christian group responding to Pope Urban's appeal for a first Crusade in 1095 that led to the establishment of "crusader states" sympathetic to the West. At that time, the term "Franks" was applied in a general manner to all the inhabitants of Western Europe by Muslims [more]. A contemporary described their initiative as the "Doings of God through the Franks".

Through this massive attack by American forces, Iraq becomes the 'I-Rack' for America and its allies -- perhaps to become known as the "Identity-Rack". Will the coherence of American beliefs and identity be called into question through this in a manner analogous to the experience of those exposed to one of the most painful devices developed by the ingenuity of man? America now brings to the process even more painful devices, including thermobaric ('daisy-cutter') bombs and chemical, biological and nuclear weaponry -- if these prove 'necessary' to its mission [more; more]. The challenge for American culture is that the decision to use these devices may be made by extremely flawed individuals -- articulating through their flaws the will of the American people to learn most appropriately about the depths of their faith in the 'non-negotiable' American Way of Life.

At some stage Americans will be obliged to recognize that the pain their action brings to bear on others is a pain that they are effectively inflicting upon themselves 'unto seven generations' -- as with the slave trade [more; more]. The American intervention in Vietnam provides interesting insights into the mindsets that may govern the intervention in Iraq [more]. The terrible question is how many human lives must be sacrificed in this learning process for the bloodlust of the Americans to be satisfied in the cause of their 'civilization'? Will it be 1,000, 10,000, 100,000, 1,000,000, or 10,000,000? In the case of the Christian orthodoxy (in defence of their faith), it has been estimated by careful and reputed historians of the Catholic Inquisition that 50 million people were slaughtered for the crime of "heresy" -- by Roman persecutors between the A.D. 606 and the middle of the 19th century [more]. The figures are of course disputed [more].

History will comment on the parallels between the 'heretics' denounced by Catholicism and the 'terrorists' denounced in the current 'War against Terror'. The women and 'pagans' who died painfully as heretics will be accompanied by new figures whose rejection of modern dogma is now more complex than can be tolerated. Will 'terrorists' become the 'witches' of the 21st century -- with the archives of their trials only to be opened in centuries, as in the case of the Inquisition? Rack and ruin: A further twist to 'I-Rack' derives from the phrase 'rack and ruin'. The American identity is indeed bringing, and will bring, 'rack and ruin' to those who oppose its cultural hegemony. In the future 'I-Rack' may become understood like the GI World War II phrase 'Kidroy Was Here'. Sadly however it is on the much-valued subtleties of their own culture that 'rack and ruin' will be wrought by this process -- possibly to be understood as analogous to self-mutilation. It is their culture that will be 'racked with pain' as their conscience endeavours to come to terms with it. From the karmic perspective of some non-Christian religions, any action on Iraq will cause a reaction on the culture perpetrating it. This is familiar to Christians in the Biblical phrase 'As Ye Sow, So Shall Ye Reap' [Gal. 6:7], currently much-quoted in relation to the crisis [more].

In the light of the different stages of Question in the Malleus, what might be the stages of challenge to American collective identity when stretched upon 'I-Rack'? How 'tall' will American pilots stand after releasing 'daisy cutters' -- an extra 12 inches? How will the American military nourish its sense of honour after engaging in stealthy massacres of many who may well have been innocent?

Will American culture find itself obliged to 'cleanse itself' through 'confessing' to the evils in which it has denied engaging in the world? Will this confession be subject to the kind of sceptical examination and criticism as to its inadequacies -- as is the case of that of Saddam Hussein?

It is another matter as to whether history will see any parallels with the American Civil War (1861-65). Are the Unionists to be equated with the 'terrorists' or with their opponents? Given the politics of the Confederates, and their exploitation of other races, it is perhaps they who best carry the banner for 'western civilization' and its current relation to 'developing countries'. The Confederate mind-set continues to deeply influence Republican thinking -- and that of the President of the USA [more]. Would either side, back then, have found it inappropriate to use a 'Patriot Act' to demonize contrary views and justify 'any measures' against them -- especially in the light of their use of torture [more]? Are the unresolved Civil War dynamics of America now being played out unconsciously in the responses to terrorism and Iraq? To paraphrase Eldridge Cleaver, is it 'McCarthyism that is as American as apple pie'? [more]

Stake: Will America's self-appointed torturers, seeking to save its soul, require the signature of a final confession before taking it to the 'stake'?

It is another historical irony that the term 'stake', as in 'stakeholder', should have acquired such prominence in the action against Iraq. In the process of 'coalition building' -- effectively creating the partners in the initiative -- the question of who will get to be a 'stakeholder' in the final carve up of Iraqi assets has become totally blatant in the financial press. But 'stake' at the time of the Inquisition had a very sinister alternative meaning. Has George Bush effectively appointed those who will hold the 'stake' on which American culture will be tempered in fire -- in the necessary initiation to which Robert Bly alludes? Is America effectively dragging other key members of the Security Council to their 'stakes' through the I-Rack process?

Much is made of the logic and logistical superiority that is being applied by Pentagon planners to the attack on Iraq. It is presented as a textbook application of military superiority. It is interesting therefore to note the comments by Thomas Waelder (An Iraqi Scenario: impact of fundamental regime change in Iraq on acquired and new contractual titles in the Iraqi oil industry, Oil-Gas-Energy-Law Intelligence...
The US, in sustaining during the Reagan years (with partly the same, now 20 years older players) both Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden and his Saudi warriors, did not expect that its then tools would turn into major enemies. The US government and its agencies thought they would create mindless tools -- but what emerged were Golems and Frankensteins. So a slight modesty and scepticism over the ability of policy intentions to fulfil themselves is appropriate.

New Golems and Frankensteins may indeed emerge, as a result of the I-Rack process, to haunt American culture. There is indeed a case to be wary of contemporary stakeholders in the light of what mythopoetic fiction is so helpfully exploring (see The "Dark Riders" of Social Change, 2002).

**Unconscious dimensions:** David Wasdell, in his role as Director of the Meridian Programme (formerly the "Manhattan Project of the Behavioural Sciences") stressed the importance of recognizing the unconscious dimension at this time, starting:

1. That factors which are non-rational and largely unconscious play a major part in the dynamics of international relationships and decision-making. It is critical that this level of understanding of systems behaviour is taken into consideration by all concerned irrespective of their political, religious, national or ethnic affiliation.

2. That in the post September 11 context, large sectors of the international community are acting out classical symptoms of post-traumatic shock syndrome. The intensity of emotion involved reinforces fixation in the moment of shock and the tendency to re-stage the event in repeated cycles of displacement.

In contrast to the realpolitik rationale for the attack on Iraq to control oil resources, Joseph Stiglitz (Nobel Laureate in economics in 2001) has recently stressed the importance of the 'irrational' in economics:

This year's Nobel Prize celebrates a critique of simplistic market economics, just as last year's award (of which I was one of the three winners) did. Last year's laureates emphasised that different market participants have different (and imperfect) information, and these asymmetries in information have a profound impact on how an economy functions.

As the minimally-reported experiences of American 'clean-up' forces in Afghanistan have indicated, simplistic approaches sustain dangerous delusions like those of Don Quixote. It is to be expected that 'irrationality' will have a major part to play in America's experience of the I-Rack.

It would be good to believe that the focus on 'I-Rack' will catalyze, as a secondary effect, efforts by the best and the brightest to 'rack their brains' for more appropriate ways of encountering terrorism and the more complex problems of the world. This phrase is interesting in that it also suggests the need for a more appropriately ordered configuration of brains -- a 'rack of brains'!

From a quite different perspective, for any individual to attach undue importance to 'terrorism' and America's Iraq crusade, may also pose some of the questions explored in Don Quixote. To what extent is the above commentary then itself an exercise in 'tilting at windmills'? At the same time, through being voluntarily engaged in that reality through the media, to what extent does it mirror our own personal condition? Am I both stretched upon my own personal I-Rack and obliged to 'rack my brains' (and more) to make a larger sense of the learnings to be gained from the process -- whilst many are being killed, supposedly for my benefit?

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