

War Stories

Key Words and Narratives

submitted as final project for the Prophetic
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War Stories

Key words

- ❖ War
- ❖ Genocide
- ❖ Empire
- ❖ Dynast
- ❖ Elections

Key Narratives

Personal stories: Ambiguity, irony and aspiration

- ❖ My family's wars
- ❖ My Country's wars
- ❖ My empire's wars

Counter Narratives

- ❖ Stories of survival:
 - Empire: before during ...
- ❖ Stories of resistance:
 - Tale of Two Shutdowns
 - Glossary of the Haughty Worker
 - Glossary of the Pragmatic Dreamer
- ❖ Stories of liberation:
 - Impeachment!
 - Invitation to a possible world
 - We Hold the Rock!

Poems

- ❖ To Kill the Last of You
- ❖ Poor People In Church by Arthur Rimbaud
- ❖ He holds Europe by David Meltzer
- ❖ About 20%

Keyword: War, at the core of political experience

War functions like a laboratory for belonging and meaning. In a laboratory specialists learn to use key concepts to describe specific complex experiences. For example, electrical engineers learn the terms ohms, volts, and resistance. They learn to measure these relationships in very specific processes. This learning enables them to apply these key concepts to infinite situations in the wide world. Theory has wedded experience. The couple live their lives together, person and theory, interpreting, planning, executing and preserving the meaning that has been achieved.

Soldiers are like a nation's specialists. They associate key concepts with specific actions in the laboratory of war: life, death, life's purpose, death's, human freedom and action, human misery and disgrace, all of these concepts are fraught with meaning in military experience. Few experiences can compare with the weight of war for imputing meaning to national life.

One of war's powers is erasing the past before the war started. Displacement, either as refugees or as soldiers to distant countries helps erase the past. But the erasure also follows from how the extreme experiences of war become the basis of the soldier and citizens life stories. The sheer emotional force of such energy focused on killing and being killed redefine the soldiers and their targets lives in terms of battle and the nations that cause them. The past becomes a romance. As a legacy, it is over.

Time starts at the crux of war. If you're a winner, time starts when your side made the inspired decision to declare your victorious intentions. If you're a loser, your new narrative of subjugation starts when the decisive battle was lost, you were taken prisoner, your prizes and purposes captured. Nations and their peoples are reborn in war. Their purposes remade, the metal of their character renewed or abandoned.

The story that includes the beginning of time is a mythical story. Wars give birth to nations. They involve the Gods who give lives meaning. Challenging a creation myth established by a war is like begging for banishment. Questioning the myth's validity is like using the concepts of volts in a different way, its incongruous. It asks people to go back, at least in their imagination, to a time before their wedding of life to theory. It risks the chance that your betrothed won't show up. It requires divorcing the life you've lived.

Fortunately we have many conflicting sources of common experience to draw from and we can reorganize our life's meaning rapidly and enthusiastically, if the balance of power shifts. Shifting that balance, that's our job as internationalists, naturalists, and human beings. These little essays experiment with contexts for accomplishing that shift.

Keyword Genocide:

War's ultimate purpose

Like many acts war has many illegitimate motivations: taking control of land or people, revenge, unifying a country, creating a leader's sense of purpose. None of these "reasons" is more complex and potent than the intention to rid the world of a kind of human being.

4 Problems

1. Its impossible

The word genocide refers to something that literally can't happen. All human beings belong to the same genus: homo-sapiens. There are many ethnic and cultural differences, some of these are associated with gene clusters, but the effort to destroy an entire people is motivated by fear of differences in religious, economic, social, and cultural life.

2. It's a trick.

What the concept of genocide offers is to rivet the minds of soldiers, minds that are weapons of war. Soldiers who believe they are accomplishing a medical procedure for their species by riding the planet of ill-formed competitors are better motivated (sic) than soldiers who believe their enemies are essentially the same kind of human being as the soldiers are. If the enemy could be a cousin, a business partner, or a soldier on the same side, the clarity of the soldier's purpose is less certain. Employing this essentialist term, genocide, in addition to being inaccurate, encourages systematic massacres. It is a term of the oppressor that seeks to make a new soldier and a new nation who are "not" the target.

3. It binds its perpetrators to a false dichotomy

A further error promoted by using the term genocide is that it tends to hide the possibility of blending into the oppressor culture, escaping capture and creating a revolution. If the biological conditions necessary for accomplishing genocide can not be met then the real victim is a social condition, combined perhaps with a language and with a culture. In the broad matrix of behaviors held by the target population, which are most essential to the victims? Which can be hidden? Which can survive by betraying other elements that are not as important? What is it that the oppressor wants to destroy? What is it that the captured and oppressed want to preserve?

4. Playing God with human being

Warrior societies want to have weapons at the defining edge of technical capability. Practically this lends the best chance of victory. Psychologically, claiming control of the elements of nature and claiming to use them against opponents is the height of hubris. Claiming to have turned the smallest particles into weapons, or to use the chemical elements or to be able to exterminate the genetic type of a people is a psychological victory, although it is biologically a misnomer. In war, soldiers believe their nations have become gods, able to create and destroy kinds of human life.

Are reparations admissions of defeat?

Soldiers often grow disgusted with the hypocrisy, ignorance, and callousness of their commanders. Especially in the act of killing prisoners or "civilians" a soldier may feel so betrayed that he begins to oppose his command, to feel that they are a greater threat to his well being than the people he is fighting. In cases such as this, if the order is to commit genocide, how many soldiers learn to detest their superiors? Is one way to do this by taking

some of the consciousness, the intention of the victims of genocide forward into the future? Is that a way for the target culture to survive, to defeat the genocidalists? Are reparations one method for the target culture's expression?

Two types of genocide: internecine and settler

There are two significant types of genocide, internal "cleansing" genocide where the target population is surrounded and lives within the perpetrating empire, and settler society's genocide that clears land of societies in order to inhabit it as pristine.

The crusades were incubators of both internecine and settler genocides

European internecine and settler genocides grow out of the crusades. About half of the crusades were fought against Muslims. About half were fought against internal enemies of the Popes, or religious sects. The internal crusades were in large measure an effort to purify Christianity from within. The measure of when Christianity had achieved purity would be when it could defeat the Muslims. At the moment the culture was truly Christian, had cleansed itself of unchristian elements, God would secure its victory over the Muslims. Thus, the internal crusades, wars of Christian against Christian, were extremely bitter and thorough. In many instances, the effort was to get everyone in a specific region, as kings and princes made major doctrinal religious choices about their people's faith. This process of murderous wars went on for several centuries including the reformation and counter-reformation, the wars between England and France, England and Spain, and many others. These wars were also efforts to prove the purity of the competing empire's Christianity.

By the time the British came to America, they were winning the war of empire waged against the other European, Christian powers. Part of the psychology of this was it reinforced their righteousness, their sense of divine justice. A sense that was further amplified as new victories occurred. The prospect of killing native Americans, in this righteous culture, was not simply about taking native's land, that is but the materialist dimension of it. Victory against the natives reinforced the idea that settler culture was God's culture. Calvinism instituted a tremendous doubt about how to verify one's standing before God. No earthly condition was an indication. However, victory in battle was not merely an earthly enterprise.

Women's experience unmask the hubris, the imposition of culture and denial of continuity

This area of inquiry takes particular poignancy from the perspective of women. War is a defining existential experience for men. But women give birth. War is an ideological and political event with genocide its defining goal. Women have a source of existential definition that is immanent as much as it is also political and economic. A series of questions arise, when does a child belong to its father's band? What if the father was a conqueror? Several feminist authors have examined the experience of having their conquerors' baby as a survival strategy and as a metaphor for mating with any man who is a patriarch.

Some resistance narratives portray women birthing a child that undermines the conquering army's culture. The defeated become the victors. Who is to say when the process is finished, who is to declare final victory?

Paula Gunn Allen's *Pocahontas* argues that native America may yet transform the USA. (She argues that three priestess women, Pocahontas, Sacagawea, and Malinche each play a similar role of infusing the dominating culture with a seed that will cause its transformation.) The American Indian Movement held the same goal and believed they were realizing it. And they may have been correct.

Considering native American survival and resistance

Whenever whites assert that the natives suffered from genocide at the hands of the whites, one effect of that statement is to claim that no more natives exist. It is a psychological act that continues the genocide. This is one reason that a more conscious discussion would use the term ethnocide, would back off from granting the conquerors control of biology which is really only part of their propaganda. What is happening is a battle in a very long term struggle, a battle that has physical, cultural, and spiritual dimensions. At what point is the genocide over? When can spiritual victory be convincingly asserted? If the survival of a cultural trait may be designated as the essential trait that will in time transform or undermine the conquerors, how will we be certain none of the traits have survived? What can we do to cultivate them?

Absolute victory

For settler societies in particular, the belief that the native culture is completely, biologically defeated cannot be questioned. Every act of participation, with the sole exception of acts that attempt to remedy the abuse of native cultures, are acts predicated on success of genocide. If that has not occurred, if a settler culture is forced to admit that members of the native group survive, then the right of the settler culture to rule is in question. The fact of genocide, the denial of any contrary evidence is the ground that the settler society is built on.

For the settler society to believe in its divine right the genocide has to have been clean, not murderous, it helps if diseases were a prominent factor, it helps if there are few settler causalities which create memories of struggle. That the genocide happened in the past is also insufficient. For the settler society's smooth functioning, the genocide must have been complete, it must have occurred at or near the founding period, and it must be forgotten as an act of genocide. (narratives of protection, of innocence, of cooperation that just wasn't meant to be, are valuable substitutes. That the founding episode of the settler country's narrative be the perpetration of genocide against hundreds of native groups, perhaps millions of lives, is not coherent with the image of the divine right, nor the pristine nature guiltless participation in the conquering country requires.

In 1969 the Indians of All tribes began a process of educating the citizens of the US that native societies continue to exist, indeed, a native way of life that transcends the tribes exists, that the patterns of war and attempted genocide although they had been earnestly attempted, even up until the 1950s in the tribal relocation and termination plans, had failed. The tribes, and the native culture that once existed, continues to exist. The losses are great and ongoing. The suffering, the wounds, the deaths, the oppression of cultural practices, all of these crimes against humanity are real and there are living representatives of the victims of those crimes.

Settler society was not happy about hearing this. The myth of the country's origin was put at risk. In the context of the US defeat in Vietnam, the black, brown and yellow power movements, the student movements, and anti-war movement, the native American movement was a titan that shook the foundation of US society and it may never recover.

Keyword Empire:

Rule with violence

Vast differences in wealth, freedom and everything that goes with these exist between different nations within a modern empire. The empire employs mythic narratives to explain these differences. The idea of a “third world” that is progressing towards the first world as the core transfers its culture to the periphery is one dominant myth. Really, the economic differences are enforced by state violence: invasions, covert wars, destabilizations, and financial controls that prevent periphery nations from controlling their resources and destinies.

Follow the army, then the money

Empires conquer territory, extract resources and dominate local peoples. The defining experience of empire is the “conversion” to its dominion, often under threat of life and always liberty. In this conversion, words and experiences are fused in the ineffable human crucible of war: what is life, what does ours mean, why are we here, where did we come from, all these are convincingly if cynically narrated. To conquer includes gaining privileged access to another’s resources, imposing a national currency on them, a currency controlled by the army’s employer-state, and supplying an army with a narrative about why it exists.

Armies force conquered people to use the money its bosses mint, loan, collect and use in part, to hire their armies. Soldiers often confuse their invading cash and their victorious power with popular freedom. In the haze of that netherworld (the numinous pool of that doing and dieing) new half beings are forged that possess some elements of culture and humanity, but avoid others.

Oaths and pledges of allegiance describe contours of a mental geography that those within the empire inhabit. The soldier requires those who live outside these contours to receive punishment and to conform. Voting, paying taxes, believing the daily news are all moments in heroic tales describing experiences in the mythic dimension of war.

Workers are privileged workers

Soldiers and creativity define humanity not workers and productivity

Over the last hundred years, the democratic movements have won many victories. Many of them have resulted in concessions that divide workers against each other. In the current period, while the empire has exposed its motives so clearly, and after the communist threat has imploded, the opportunity to re-constitute a much broader base in opposition to US hegemony presents itself to us. One of the most destructive splits has been the valorization of the “working class” and the organization of our thought around the concept of this class opposing the ruling class as our best chance of defeating empire. Much of the focus of these essays deconstructs this valorization by taking a longer and broader view of history and the US role in it. This calls for a paradigm shift, a change from focus on workers to focus on soldiers, and from work as the source of pleasure and value to autonomy, creativity and sociality as the source of value.

The Dynast

In a stirring response to the 9/11 attack, the entire congress of the United States assembled on the capital's steps to sing *God Bless America*. God's country includes 22 million participating Evangelicals. For these Americans the King James Bible is literally the word of God. Unbelievers are damned. The crucifixion is a mystery enabling personal salvation. In the 2000 election, 16 million of President Bush's votes came from these believers, one third of his total.

In the history of the country only two US Presidents were not Protestant: Andrew Johnson, who was impeached, and John Kennedy, who was assassinated. All of the Vice Presidents have been Protestant with the one exception of Charles Curtis in 1929 who was a Native American and whose religious affiliation was not public.

The core decisions of government, fighting wars and reaping spoils remain deeply embedded in Protestant myth. Even Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin, the founding period's liberal proto-humanists, proposed a seal for the United States depicting "God's intervening to save the people of Israel by drowning Pharaoh (England's King George III) and his pursuing armies in the Red Sea." (see graphic at right.)

In 1987, George Bush accepted Jesus as his personal savior. In that same year he took his first nationwide political responsibility: securing the Christian vote for his father's presidential bid. Over the succeeding 13 years these Evangelical voters came to see President Bush Jr. as their political leader. As Karl Rove, Bush's 2004 campaign manager, stumps for the President among evangelicals, he repeats, "in 2000, only 16 million of you voted. We need the other four million."

President Bush leads with feudal concepts. After the 9/11 attack, he "launched a crusade against an evil force." In his April 2004, press conference the President shared "...this belief, strong belief, that freedom is not this country's gift to the world. Freedom is the Almighty's



gift to every man and woman in this world. And as the greatest power on the face of the earth, we have an obligation to help the spread of freedom." As he inaugurated the war on terror he announced, "Freedom and fear, justice and cruelty, have always been at war, and we know that God is not neutral between them."

Jonathan Riley-Smith, the Dixie Professor of Ecclesiastical History at Cambridge University identifies "...two premises [that] underpinned all medieval just wars, including crusades: first, that violence could be employed on behalf of Christ's intentions for mankind and second, that it [holy war] was a morally neutral force which drew whatever ethical coloring it had from the intentions of the perpetrators." The US "shock and awe"

military campaign and the occupation that has followed it including its torture, are a war that depends on God's discerning the good intentions of the US from the fear mongering of the terrorists. Prof. Riley-Smith distinguishes modern wars wherein "violence is an evil which can in certain situations be condoned as the lesser of evils."

Pat Robertson unknowingly voiced one of the most problematic consequences of medieval leadership. "The Lord has just blessed him [Pres. Bush.] I mean, he could make terrible mistakes and he comes out of it. It doesn't make any difference what he does, good or bad, God picks him up because he's a man of prayer and God's blessing him."

Bush Senior's Electoral Debut

In 1975 after the US military was defeated in Vietnam, some liberal Senators objected to ongoing military adventures. In 1975, Senator Church investigated the CIA and found that it had unlawfully surveilled on US citizens, disrupted their political and cultural activities, disrupted elections in foreign countries, attempted assassinations, and numerous other illegal acts. President Carter fired over eight hundred CIA covert operatives. During the 1978 interim election a republican coordinated, national effort succeeded in defeating Senator Church and several other leading liberal Democrats. By 1979, the Presidential election was evenly split between President Jimmy Carter and challenger Ronald Reagan.

Iran had just gone through a popular revolution that overthrew the US installed and supported Shah of Iran. The new Iranian government was led by a cleric with civilian leanings, Abolhassan Banisadr. Banisadr's opposition included fundamentalist Islamic leaders such as the Ayatollah Khomeini who had ties to militant groups that, during the revolutionary uprising, captured 52 US servicemen and were holding them hostage.

President Carter attempted to negotiate the release of the 52 hostages before the November election. They were released in January, as perhaps the greatest photo opportunity in history, on the day of Ronald Reagan's inauguration. Mr. Reagan's campaign manager, William Casey, was then appointed head of the CIA. His Vice President, George Bush, had previously been CIA Director. Dozens of CIA personnel that Carter had fired had worked for Reagan in his Arlington campaign headquarters under campaign manager and future CIA Director, Casey.

In 1991 the issue was investigated by congress, but the focus was too narrow and several reports were not complete until after the investigation closed. Banisadr, President of Iran in 1979, the Chief of the French Foreign Intelligence in 1979, the head of the Iranian secret police in 1979, and a voluminous report by Soviet intelligence each asserted that Reagan campaign members met with Iranian arms dealers and in all probability intervened in the hostage release, offering the kidnappers money and weapons if they would keep the hostages until after the US election in November, thus securing Reagan and Bush's victory. Many accounts named George Bush as the key negotiator, traveling to Paris, to bargain with an enemy terrorist organization and undermine President Carter.

Iran remains under the oppressive Shiite clerics who came to power as US money and weapons began flowing back into Iran.

Personal Narratives: ambiguity, irony and aspiration

My family Wars

My father served in World War II. He made beach landings on Guam, New Guinea, and in the Philippines. He killed Japanese soldiers. He killed some people he never knew who they were. He was helped by Maori tribesmen who knew the trails and who fought on the promise of liberty from Europe. He bonded with them, war bonding. Near the end he stood beside them on a bluff watching US ships return Danish Royal family took control of the Maoris' islands. He always hated his government after that. He became a communist.

On the GI bill he became a doctor, then a psychiatrist. He taught, then headed psychological services for schools. The schools couldn't change what needed changing. He started a private practice, but he knew that psychiatric patients self heal as frequently as they heal under a doctor's care. Finally he worked for the Veterans Administration helping veterans adjust to living with war trauma and disabilities.

He never accepted treatment even though, at 76, he woke from nightmares in a sweat to images of people he killed without reason.

My father's father died in a veteran's hospital of wounds from the war in the Philippines. My father's, father's father died in the civil war. My father's son, my brother, was disabled in the jails of the drug war and hasn't recovered, and will probably die with it.

My mother's line fled the highlands of Scotland as it went under to English conquest in the mid 1700s. They fled to Ireland where they could fight the British again. Defeated again, transported to Nova Scotia, they stayed until my great grandfather traded acreage for a mule and a wagon and left for Chicago then Washington State around 1900. All these generations they raised beef. Back in the highlands, before the British came, beef were currency, like money in the bank.

My mom and dad met and married just before he got on the ship headed for Guam. His battalion achieved some fame during his tour as the battalion who "jumped from island to island attacking the Japanese in their bunkers"

When he came back, you could see the difference in his face but you couldn't change it back.

Under his direction I began studying Plato in seventh grade. I was surprised to discover that Plato was a fascist, in his Republic recommending that society be like sheep herded by vicious army dogs. And Freud, in his "Interpretation of Dreams" concocted theories to defend father's who rape their daughters. I ran away. I found RD Laing's vision of healthy people unable to adapt to a sick society accurate.

In the wilderness I found Nature worth defending with civil disobedience. Eagles flew me on their backs over the ocean. I planted 500,000 trees devoted to a cooperative commonwealth. I read Reich, Arendt, and Chomsky. I led criticism self-criticism, peer counseling, and revolutionary socialist feminism groups.

Finally I dove into the frontier's capital, San Francisco. Becoming a pirate electrician, I lived in urban communes. I joined the Living Theater's demonstrations showing police that non-violence is the only solution. To extend the mind of the movement I organized anarchist conferences, Unitarian prophets and free speech news seminars.

Unbowed, my brother sank to street living. No rent. No taxes. No bosses. The culture war is real. The vagrant's quest for uncompromised truth, prophetic clarity, unambiguous condemnation was our shared god, something to die for.

In a spiritual battle I threw hundreds of micrograms of LSD at the imprint society had made on me. I did this with focus and study, as an organizer. I inspired and equipped others. I worshipped conferences as manifestations of collective invocation. I worshiped at temples of archetypal psychology, transpersonal psychology, ethno-botany, orgone accumulation, Unitarian Universalism, Earth First!, Ruckus, and ancient Ohlone. I researched Orthodox Taoism. I combined MDMA with 2CB and 5MEO DMT ritually.

In a spiritual battle with the core of a society's genocide I dethroned the prince. No one was in waiting. I made it my business to make it so no one could take responsibility. I filled my mind with the stories of first contact between natives and empire from many parts of the world.

Some of my friends helped me seek roots. I went back to Scotland again and again. I learned about John MacLean's Tramps Trust, 50,000 strong, and his correspondence course that taught ten thousand highlander's political economy. I learned that St Columba, who converted my Celtic ancestors to Christianity was raised a Druid Prince. I learned that my people, the MacLeans were responsible for burying the Chiefs of the highlands on their Western most island, Iona. I've learned that protecting the burial ground invoking the past it contains is my legacy.

I've learned that during the Highland clearances, when tens of thousands of my kind were removed from their ancestral homes, the usual method had been with forest fires, sometimes for five years running, to bring us out to the rocky beaches with nothing left but to board the ships for America. I heard that one taxman didn't want to bring in the guards, guns and fire. He asked a local how he might accomplish the clearing and was told to fence in the burial ground. If we weren't allowed to go to our ancestors, to meet with them and speak to them in the ground, the connection was broken. We might as well go off then. What does this mean for the MacLeans who buried the chiefs of the entire realm? What does this mean to their ancestor here on the Western edge of America? There was only one island West of Iona where the chiefs and kings are buried. That was an island no living person could return from: Tri Na Nog, where all live as children forever.

Personal Story: My Country's Wars

War has changed my country fundamentally

War is a form of torture hell bent on loyalty

In San Quentin prison, a few beautiful miles across the San Francisco Bay from where I am sitting, they have a room for torturing the prisoners. As a member of a support group for prisoners, I remember listening to a prisoner's mother plead for help, "why had the jail psychiatrist called her mid-session and put her imprisoned son's mouth to the phone so he could moan, "why are you letting them do this to me?"

She was never the same. She said that after that day her son was only half there, in the other half he fantasized about homicide and marrying television actresses.

After WWI

When veterans return to civilian life many of them inflict violence on it.

After World War I the veterans were organized as a public strike force against international workers in the nation's first national police action: the Palmer raids. The country never recovered the chance to become an industrial democracy. Instead, the FBI was born. Through it the largest trade union married the largest criminal syndicate and together they crushed democratic initiatives for 70 years.

After World War I Prescott Bush was working for Merriman Bank investing in the oil near and under the Caspian Sea, oil his grandson is now in striking distance of capturing. Although no real records are available, it seems likely Prescott also organized White Army invasions of the USSR in that era, the first covert US army counter insurgency. This covert force has grown so that for the last twenty five years we can't be certain the elected government is not subservient to a hidden government of intelligence agents and their military and mercenary workforces. The Patriot Act installed the criminal syndicates and the covert armies as the King and Queen of the country.

After WWII

The country was created again, this time the world's leader. Having defeated a European enemy that was capable of genocide, the US was pristine: civilization itself. Old Europe was corrupt, bankrupt, financially and culturally. The US was ethical, legal, immanent. I've been arguing that wars are the immanent force, the all pervasive God that rules an empire culture. After WWII, the US could define what deserved to live and to die. Not just nuclear dominance, but a media environment that could erase history and a corporate culture that rewarded greed and self effacement with self policing.

Personal Story: My Empire's Wars Irony and the professional banality of evil.

Most people want to be on the side of the victor. For citizen believers, this is especially rewarding because it justifies the arrogant consumption of war spoils and in a democracy it makes the vision of sons or daughters ascending to the heights of enfranchised power an unambiguous, "coherent" realization of "divine" fortune. Yet ambiguity and defeat in war can happen in many ways. Personal reality often conflicts with divine and nationalist narratives. Soldier experience rarely ascends to the heroic. The national leaders and the national capitalists, who seek to create a culture that celebrates consuming war spoils and denying survival legacies of the defeated, want to create unambiguous narratives of national celebration. Many citizens want to join these narratives, to give public meaning to the tragic private losses of the soldiers real lives.

Perhaps as children we all want to claim the righteousness of our cultural environment, our national legacy. What happens when there is conflict between this master-narrative and the personal narrative, perhaps accounting for the alienation of a family member soldier? What happens when authority is abused to the point that belief in the dominant system of culture is unsustainable? This is the terrain of irony, ambiguity, cynicism and professionalism (including the banality of modern evil.)

In the bible the children of Israel are finally led out of Canaan and brought to the promised land, the New Jerusalem. Most of the pilgrims believed the US was founded in this myth of empire. God's gift is the land grant and the birth right. The Congregationalists, the largest population of original settlers, believed that Jesus was like an earthquake coming into a person's life. After the quake everything a person does is for Jesus and comes from Jesus and from his gift of love to the world. (And the Congregationalists kept journals on one another's productivity and reported on one another in church.)

Everybody likes to escape. Nobody likes to get caught. But the empire's always over reaching, always finding its limits by sending troops out past them. Sometimes they rebel and start their own thing. Somehow America got away from Britain even though Britain reigned for a hundred and fifty years after US independence. From Canada to India to China's ports and including much of the middle East, Britain ruled. Somehow America got away. Seems like at some point during the war of independence Britain decided it was better to have the thirteen former colonies as trading partners than to have their total subservience as colonies. Settler countries, a special kind of colony that Britain pioneered represent their empire's interests in less direct ways. The US kept France and Spain from getting the entire continent.

Its not hard to figure what the settler's thought of the natives. Natives were allied with the French to the North and subdued under the Spanish to the South. The French and Spanish had been WASP enemies for centuries. England and France had fought the hundred years war, the thirty years war, Cromwell's pacification of all England and new areas of Scotland and Ireland were to help end the French and Papist influence. The Normans, a kind of French, had successfully invaded England hundreds of years before and still occupied it.

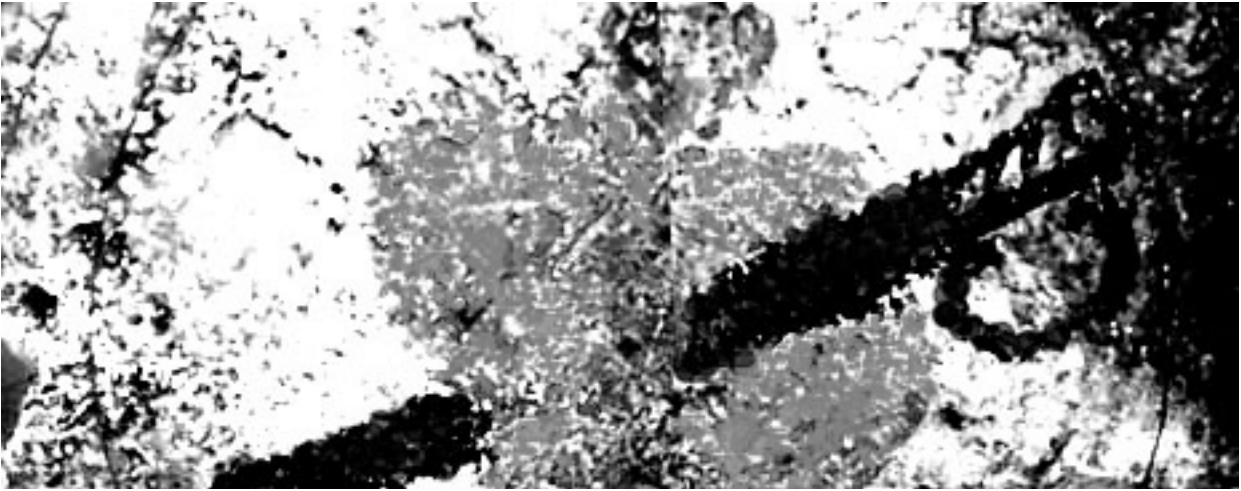
The Spanish had the best fleet of ships of anywhere and the most gold passed through their outposts, through the country and church, but somehow they just couldn't manage it. They used Danish Bankers and ended up poor. The British began to see them as naturally backward. They were Catholics, enemies of the WASP in hundreds of guises for centuries.

England itself is an early settler society. The Angles and Saxons pride themselves in not

having mixed with the Celtic British. Instead, in the fifth century CE, they formed a new society that ruled England.

For three thousand miles and over two hundred and fifty years the WASPs conquered US natives. It was sort of like cutting down trees or shooting threatening animals. Except victory reinforced the idea that God meant the country for US, Christian inhabitants. When they were aided by bacteria and disease, they interpreted that as acts of God.

The settler story is the ugliest story.



Detail of Ohlone mural circa 1780, Mission Dolores

Empire: Before, During and ...

Empire's arrive by establishing a baseline of violence, a reference against which freedom can be measured, a reference against which complicity can be justified. Before empire's first contact, the baseline of violence varies greatly, depending on the region's indigenous culture.

What was the baseline of violence here in San Francisco two hundred and twenty eight years ago when European colonists arrived? The Ohlone tribes were one of many hundred tribes, and many hundred language groups around the bay. They didn't make stone tools, though they traded with Sierra tribes for them. Their main building resource was Tule grass. Its long hollow stems were fashioned into boats, houses and clothing. When the tide was out, food was easy to get. Bushes, trees and grasses were cultivated for berries, nuts and weaving.

Though a great deal is uncertain, it seems that battles were mainly of the type known as "single combat" where one member of one band was pitted against one member of another band. Victory was usually declared before either combatant was killed, although sometimes one or both were injured. Boons to the victor's tribe could include land and slaves.

Despite the hagiography, we know a great deal more about what happened when Europeans first took possession in the Bay Area. In 1776, Father Junipero Serra led a garrison of troops and a batch of Franciscan Catholics on a trek from what was then New Spain up the California coast, a fifteen year journey in which nine missions were established, including the Mission

de la Asis, in San Francisco.

From the Catholic point of view, the missions brought a rational plantation system to the Indians. Catholic edicts say they generously wanted to create self-governing Indian colonies, with corn, cattle, cotton and other products that could sustain the newly enclosed Indians and produce surplus that could be sent back to New Spain. These utopian communes were to be self governing Indian communities after ten years.

Some hold that many Ohlones converted willingly. The advantages of European industry, weapons, printing and ships would have been evident. For some, perhaps, the transition was peaceable. For many others, conquest was brutal. There are records of battles, of burning down the missions in Monterrey and San Louis Obispo of uprisings, of flight and escape, and of capture.

Father Junipero's liturgical practices were crudely violent. He whipped, clubbed, and burned himself at the alter, often achieving a semi-conscious catatonia in which he believed he was in contact with God. Many times Ohlone's were whipped and clubbed as well both during services and during the long hours of laboring in the fields of the lord. Those who fled were feared as threats and killed or taken back in chains if captured. The solders had horses, guns, swords and whips. The Ohlone had spears, bows and arrows. Even today the statue of Father Junipero on the alter at Mission Dolores portrays a man with a cross in one hand and a sword in the other.

In 1848 California, along with New Mexico, Arizona, and Texas was taken in the US invasion of Mexico. Soon California would be the site of

a Protestant settler culture that sought not to save the Ohlone's souls but to take their land and make money off it. Natives were treated like trees or rocks. If they were in the way, they were killed. A settler could still get a bounty for native scalps from government offices in California up until 1910.

In the 1930s, 40s and 50s San Francisco was one of several US cities designated as relocation centers for Natives who were being encouraged to move off the reservation and join Anglo society. San Francisco became the home of many thousands of urban Indians.

In 1969, five Native American college students occupied Alcatraz Island and declared it land belonging to Indians of All Tribes. Over the next 19 months thousands of Indians traveled to the island. Many believe that a fundamental transformation occurred there. The American Indian Movement emerged from the occupation and traveled to reservations all across the country supporting land and treaty rights by occupying corporate headquarters such as mining companies and federal agencies as well as practicing traditional ceremonies.

The American Indian Movement wanted to reverse the history of conquest. They may have succeeded in challenging one of the pillars of the empire's creation myth, that the people of the United States had gotten this land as a gift from God. Such a belief denies that the land and natural wealth were taken by force and there is an ongoing government supported campaign to exterminate the indigenous survivors.

In the 1940s and 50s, US elites had brought US citizenry through a "rebirth" as Europe's civilized, democratic Nation, "not like those Germans who had committed genocide, supposed to be a unique practice the Nazi's developed. US civilization was supposed to be a purer kind.

As a result of the American Indian Movement the country was forced to admit that the US was little better than the Nazis. World War II served a good purpose by stopping the fascists, but if Germany was paying reparations to Jewish survivors, what should the US do regarding Native people? Many felt that a new way of governing, a way that included natives as equals should be brought about, but how?

As this moral truth reverberated throughout US society, the government first unleashed a brutal assassination and terror campaign against the American Indian Movement, eventually quelling it.

Yet treaty disputes have raged in the courts. Natives have won some of their first victories: fishing rights, gambling rights, and the fascinating cultural defense in which

*"Tony Serra argued that Croy acted in self-defense and gave supporting evidence of the genocide against California Native Americans that has continued since the 1850's. This strategy, known as a **cultural defense**, was used to explain why Croy feared for his life when he returned fire," (From reason to Fear, the Cultural Defense of Hooty Croy)*

Each of these gains natives have won as a result of their prideful organizing since the occupation of Alcatraz and of the settler society conceding some ground.

In this context we want to welcome two breakthroughs at the Mission Dolores. Andrew Galvin, descendent of an Ohlone who was baptized in 1782 at the Mission, has taken the job as curator of the Mission's cultural center. This is very likely the first time that a Native American has been in this key interpretive role in a Catholic Mission. He told us that he doesn't have many of the answers about what should happen, or what did happen, but he is committed to the truth. He is organizing presentations and supporting research, he is developing community organizations to discuss the past and the future of the Ohlone's and the Missions. He brings a very welcome breath of honesty to the site that still is a cornerstone of the empire in San Francisco.

Andy's first revelation is that the Mission has murals painted by Ohlone's in the 1780s, untouched and hidden for two hundred years. This is probably the most important first contact artwork in California, perhaps the country. This summer the images will be on display in the Mission's Museum and seminars on their significance will be held in the sanctuary.

When the Indians of All Tribes occupied Alcatraz in 1969 they didn't consider contacting the Ohlones. Respecting the local leaders was not the agenda. The movement has grown wiser since then. What new avenues of mutual respect can we build with Andy's support? What new challenges to the Protestant creation myth and its legal and cultural legacy can we make while Andy has the charge of interpreting the site of first contact with empire in San Francisco?

Part III

Counter Narratives: Stories of Survival, Resistance and Liberation

Story of Resistance: A tale of Two Shutdowns

On the day in 2003 when the US invaded Iraq, protesters in downtown San Francisco blocked thirty intersections, contained the Federal Building, the Bechtel Building, and the Pacific Stock Exchange and chained themselves together across Market Street anchored to light poles on either side. The retired President of the Pacific Stock Exchange was with the protesters, arrested for civil disobedience. It was the most successful shut down of San Francisco in seventy years.

In 1934, the Marine unions had isolated the docks where the ships, busses, trains, and trucks load and unload their cargo to the world from San Francisco. The conflict raged for months. It started when the Longshoreman's union wanted control of how the longshoreman's jobs were doled out. What the company called employment agencies they called slave markets. What they wanted were union hiring halls.

The bosses refused. The Longshoremen struck. The bosses brought strikebreakers to do the Longshoremen's work. The city brought cops to get the strikebreakers through the picket lines. Then the Maritime workers, the guys on the boats, refused to help the strikebreakers and the Teamsters refused to take the stuff off the docks to the warehouses. Soon there were ships lined up in the harbor waiting to unload, and stuff jamming up the docks from the berths to the picket lines.

More cops were called in. The cops tried to break the picket line by using tear and vomit gas, and horse riding patrols charging against the line. The strikers turned over trucks and threw bricks and grew in numbers. The Governor declared an emergency and sent the National Guard who set up machine guns nests and barbed wire fences and squads of gun wielding soldiers.

Two workers were shot dead outside their union hall. As Paul Eliel later wrote, "the funeral was one of the strangest and most dramatic that had ever moved along Market Street." It created a "tremendous wave of sympathy for the workers," and with it "a general strike ... became for the first time a practical and realizable objective." A few days later it happened. The general strike shut down the trains, the port, the taxis, the restaurants, much of downtown for four days.

It was illegal to strike because of another union's contract dispute. They did it anyway. Workers in over twenty ports from Alaska to San Diego, and sympathy actions in Chile, Australia, New Guinea and the Philippines. In 1935 Congress passed the Wagner Act that made these "sympathy strikes" more difficult by encouraging national unions rigidly separated into trades. Since that laws passage, workers have rarely protested the treatment of workers outside their own union.

In a similar way, over that same seventy year period, the world's big bosses have re-made their empires. They've separated them into nations, the core countries dominating the former colonies by controlling their finances. Occasionally they send troops to enforce their financial control. By the year 2003, San Francisco has become a major finance capital, Iraq, a major oil exporter. "For the first time in history, on the first day of a major war of aggression, a major American city was crippled and shut down," Van Jones stated from the podium at a recent rally in San Francisco. The shut downer's motivations were like workers who engage in a general strike: they express mutual aid not self preservation. They defy the logic of the rulers. To help understand shut-downer logic, I've reprinted glossaries of the workers and of the peace activists.

A Haughty Worker's Glossary:

Balloon-- bedroll

Beanmaster-- cook

Can-- Jail

Cooperative commonwealth-- the idea of a new social order which recognizes no national, occupational or racial distinctions and represents the united social force and collective will of all workers in the world

Damper--cash register

Frogskin-- dollar bill

Glom the guts of a rattler-- hop aboard a freight train

Hayburner--horse

Jerusalem Slim--Jesus of Nazareth, a kind of secular folk hero among wobblies

Let the cat loose-- launch sabatoge

Mulligan mixer--cook

OBU-- One BIg Union, letters often signed as ...for the OBU

Rockpile-- jail

Skypilot-- a preacher who urges workers to suffer humbly in order to earn "pie in the sky when ya die"

Silent agitator-- IWW sticker

Slave market-- employment agency

excerpted from *Break Their Haughty Power*, a biography of Joe Murphy, Wobbly who made the successful motion for his union to join the Great San Francisco General Strike

A Pragmatic Dreamer's Glossary

ABCNNBCS-- the increasingly blurred brand names for the same narrow stream of U.S. corporate filtered mass media.

Articulating values crisis--a strategy in which radicals lay claim to common sense values and expose the fact that the system is out of alignment with those values

Control mythology--the web of stories, symbols and ideas which define our sense of normal and make people think the system is natural and unchangeable.

Direct action at the point(s) of assumption-- actions whose goal is to re-frame issues and create new political space by targeting underlying assumptions.

Points of intervention--a place in a system, be it a physical system or a conceptual system where action can be taken to effectively interrupt the system. Examples include point of production (factory) point of destruction, (logging road) point of consumption, (chain store) point of decision, (corporate HQ) point of potential (actions which makes alternatives real) and point of assumption (culture/mythology.)

Political space-- the ability of an oppositional idea or critique of the dominant order to manifest itself and open up new political possibilities. The extent to which our imaginations are colonized is the extent to which we lack political space and can't implement or even suggest new political ideas.

Psychic break- the process or moment when people realize the system is out of alignment with their values

Psycho-geography-- the intersection of physical landscape with cultural and symbolic landscapes. A framework for finding targets for direct action at the point of assumption.

Subverter- an effective radical who works within the logic of the dominant culture to foster dissent, mobilize resistance and make fundamental social change imaginable

Values crisis-- the disconnect between common sense values (justice, equality, democracy, ecological literacy) and the pathological values which underlie the global corporate system

Excerpts from a handbill.

For more info check:

www.smartmeme.com

www.actagainstwar.org

What's the difference between a king and a president?

Presidents don't get to appoint their sons

Presidents are elected and leave when their term is over

Presidents don't get to decide whether to send the country to war

A President can be Impeached!

Presidents are challenged by legislators and media

Presidents don't get to put people in jail without a trial

Another World is Possible

As a renewed spirit-of-democracy challenges empire, we breathe new life. From the temporary victory of protests that shut down bad government in San Francisco, to new reform governments in Venezuela, Brazil, and Spain, to the world class victory of Zapatismo over colonization, to the World Trade Organization in disarray, we are in love with imaginative voices expressing a power that could change our lives.

Empire expands by conquest. Armies force conquered people to use the money its bosses mint, loan, collect and use in part, to hire their army. Soldiers often confuse their invading cash as a concrete manifestation of their victorious power with popular freedom.

Industrial workers, far from leading an international struggle to defeat the empires that hire them, as Marx imagined, are better understood as soldiers whose nationalism barter their obedience for the privilege of being second string soldiers, buffered from some of the violence and depravity.

Political protest rises highest against the most overt violence: wars, police brutality, torture and suppression of rights and police violence. Such protests attempt to break denial, especially regarding fundamental beliefs such as how the country was created or its moral character.

Empire lives by exploiting energy: primarily fossil fuels, nuclear explosions, and human agency.

Warrior cult nations, empires, often idealize purity: religious, racial and national to motivate one majority group of citizens loyalty. Fundamentalist Islamic, Christian, and Nationalist nations each utilize this purist mythology.

Humanist culture celebrates the opposite: mutual influence, persuasion, expansion by broad understanding, acknowledgement of mixed heritage and personal, human legacy are forces that counter warrior cult domination.

The US is not the first, the last, nor the only empire. It is the current empire. As US citizens, it is “our” empire. We can do much by coming forward as a culture of choice, persuasion and inclusion within it.

Our grief is not a cry for war

The world says no to war

This is what democracy looks like

We hold the Rock!

(broadside distributed in 1969.)

Indians of All Tribes greet our brothers and sisters of all races and tongues upon our Earth Mother. We here on Alcatraz Island, San Francisco Bay, California represent many tribes of the United States as well as Canada, Alaska, and Central and South America.

We are still holding the Island of Alcatraz in the true names of Freedom, Justice and Equality, because you, our brothers and sisters of this earth, have lent support to our just cause. We reach out our hands and hearts and send spirit messages to each and every one of you--

WE HOLD THE ROCK! Our anger at the many injustices forced upon us since the first whitemen landed on these sacred shores has been transformed into a hope that we be allowed the long-suppressed right of all men to plan and to live their own lives in harmony and co-operation with all fellow creatures and with Nature. We have learned that violence breeds only more violence and we therefore have carried on our occupation of Alcatraz in a peaceful manner, hoping that the government of these United States will also act accordingly.

Be it known, however, that we are quite serious in our demand to be given ownership of this island in the name Of Indians Of All Tribes. We are here to stay, men, women and children. We feel that this request is but little to ask from a government which has systematically stolen our lands, destroyed a once-beautiful and natural landscape, killed-off the creatures of nature, polluted air and water, ripped open the very bowels of our earth in senseless greed; and instituted a program to annihilate the many Indian Tribes of this land by outright murder which even now continues by the methods of theft, suppression, prejudice, termination, and so-called relocation and assimilation. We will preserve our traditions and ways of life by educating our own children. We are Indians! We will join hands in a unity never before put into practice. We are Indians! Our Earth Mother awaits our voices.

We are Indians of All Tribes!

WE HOLD THE ROCK!

TO KILL THE LAST OF YOU

And survive

I am the one who kills

I am the one who was killed

It was by mastery over the smallest thing, the atom, and what binds it, that I destroyed you

It was in the tiniest, most secret, best protected crevice of my body that you took me

I ended the life of everyone that carries your genes, which make you distinct: what you were, is no longer

I am the one who survived til the end, the last of my kind and therefore not a kind anymore

I am the one the future will answer to

I am that answer

All of us bow to me

We are you

I am the one who kills

I am the one who was killed

In blind rage I took my own eyes out

By perceiving you I can do no wrong, I am the healer

I need you to stop me from killing you

I can't imagine it.

I am the one who kills

since the first of time

right down to killing the last of you

Are you ready?

Is it over?

Poor People in Church by Arthur Rimbaud

Bent on wooden benches, in church corners
Warmed by the stink of their breath, their eyes dim
In the alter's glitter, turned to the rafters
Where twenty pious faces howl a hymn

Sniffing the smell of wax like baking bread,
Happy, humble as dogs with a beaten air,
The Poor raise to God, their savior and lord,
An endless, obstinate, ludicrous prayer.

The women like to sit on the smooth seats
After the six black days God puts them through.
They cradle in ill-fitting , twisted coats
Funny kids who cry, their faces turning blue.

Sloppy breasts hand out: these eaters of soup
--Prayer in their eyes, without a prayer within—
Watch a slovenly parade: a gawky group
Of girls in shapeless hats of unknown origin.

Outside—cold, and hunger, and horny husbands.
Its all right here. Another hour, then nameless pain.
Yet all around them, coughs, moans, whispers
Little clusters of dewlapped women whine.

Those beggars are there, and the epileptics
We avoided yesterday as we crossed the road:
And, nosing their way through ancient prayer books,
The blind men dogs drag through our yards.

They dribble faith, and mouth a stupid, begging love,
Reciting their endless complaint to Jesus—
Who dreams in a yellow glow, far above
Skinny failures and potbellied successes,

Far from the meat like smells, the moldy clothes,
The dark shuffling farce and its repulsive mime:
--Then the litany flowers with elegant woes
and mysteries flutter toward the sublime,

and from out of the nave where sunlight dies,
With stupid silks, sour smiles, and liver complaints,
Come ladies from the Better Side of Town—Jesus!—
Trailing yellowed fingers in the holy water founts.

There's a Europe *By David Meltzer*

There's a Europe he holds
Inside imagination unfolds
A scrapbook he keeps looking for
His picture among all those beards
Dark drowning eyes
Keeps looking for a picture of himself
Or at least his name on a document
Or even a tombstone.
Abruptly Europe dies.
Bloody tallis I wave
To cars to eyes. Dies.
The silk blazing.

About 20% *by Neil MacLean*

I
About 20% of the medieval population
were destitute and homeless
wondering the roads of Europe
looking for work or charity
and climbing beneath the roadside hedge to die.

I was of them
I had no food
I joined in the crusade on Jerusalem

No rations for us
We ate our slain enemies

We laid siege on Jerusalem
As its townspeople were starving,
we murdered them

Then our leaders took us into the desert
And left us

II
Christianity is for slaves
Enthralled by torturing love
But don't gloat

Buddhism is for prisoners
Nothing to play with but thought
Nothing to control

Islam I can't get
A theater of shadows
On a government wall

Natives are hip
Revolutionary
Struggle with vengeance

Jews have it all
And nothing

III
Now you want prophecy.
Because you have no future.
You want it with irony

Now you want forgiveness
Its true you don't know
what you are doing
If only you could stop

The phone will ring
The money will go
Pacer will fail
Chasm will open

We'll all fall through