

Every time a middle class person becomes a terrorist, the same question arises: Why? Each time, only mystery and silence remain. Until now. The Source of Terrorism: Middle Class Rebellion breaks the code of an otherwise inexplicable, deadly phenomenon.

The Source of Terrorism: Middle Class Rebellion

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**THE SOURCE OF TERRORISM:
MIDDLE CLASS REBELLION**

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THE SOURCE OF TERRORISM: MIDDLE CLASS REBELLION

A Fatal Enigma Unveiled

Thomas Belvedere

“Every culture produces, in an unbelievably appropriate
and rigid way, a philosophy that fits its needs like a glove.”

-- Jules Henry, *Culture Against Man*^{*} --

“Who is it that exercises social power to-day?
Who imposes the forms of his own mind on the period?
Without a doubt, the man of the middle class.”

-- José Ortega y Gasset, *The Revolt of the Masses*[†] --

^{*} Jules Henry, *Culture Against Man*, Random House, New York, 1963, p. 57.

[†] José Ortega y Gasset, *The Revolt of The Masses*, translator not identified, W.W. Norton & Company, New York, 1960, p. 108.

Hic liber habet multas matres

DEDICATION

There is a quick and direct way to determine if your higher education was worth the time, effort, and expense. If you find a single professor who fires up your curiosity, who makes learning come alive and sets you on your way, your experience was worthwhile.

This work is dedicated to Richard Mickey McCleery. For me and many other students, he was that professor. With uncompromising criticism, enduring friendship, and incredible forbearance, Mickey was and always will be a mentor of mentors.

WARNING

I wrote this essay for intelligence officers engaged in the fight against terrorism. My hope is to orient their thinking in a new, fruitful direction. Worldwide audience: 500 people. With that limited readership in mind, I was able to say certain things without restriction or reservation. They are presented here on a need-to-know basis, and only after time showed conclusively that a number of practical problems associated with terrorism could not be solved otherwise.

If you are an academician, from the media or general public, you will find this essay deeply disturbing. You will view it as an attack on many of your most cherished ideas, values, and assumptions. However, it is not my purpose to upset you. For that reason, I urge you to close this book and return to a road more traveled.

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PREFACE

THE QUESTION

“I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I--
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.”

-- Robert Frost, “The Road Not Taken” --

September 13, 2007. So near and yet so far from 9/11. And many other things as well...

I just opened that morning’s newspaper, and saw this headline: *Germans left puzzled by local terror suspects*. “What fascinates and deeply disturbs Germans,” the article reports, “is that two of the three suspects detained in the alleged plot to bomb U.S. installations are pretty much like them -- ordinary Germans, not immigrants from another continent or people of foreign heritage.” The proverbial punch line: “Terrorists can also be called Fritz; we know that now.”¹

I share the Germans’ bewilderment and fascination. I experienced the same constellation of emotions for the first time 50 years ago.

1957 was a keystone year in itself -- all the more so in the life of a 13-year-old in seventh grade. President Eisenhower sent troops into Little Rock to integrate the schools; Russia sent Sputnik into outer space to astound the world. “Leave It To Beaver” premiered on TV; “West Side Story” debuted on Broadway. Albert Camus won the Nobel Prize for Literature; Jack Kerouac’s *On The Road* was published. Arturo Toscanini and Humphrey Bogart died. *The New York Times*’ Herbert Matthews discovered Fidel Castro in the Sierra Maestra Mountains: “It was easy to see that his men adored him....Here was an educated, dedicated fanatic, a man of ideals, of courage and of remarkable qualities of leadership....” At the movies, “Peyton Place” cohabitated with “Twelve Angry Men.” On the hit parade, Jimmy

Dorsey's "So Rare," said a last hurrah for the swing-era to Jerry Lee Lewis' "Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On."

It was a keystone year in a charmed place, Sarasota, Florida, with balmy sea breezes and sugar-sand beaches; coconut trees crawling with chameleons; a place where you did not lock your car or house, except when the circus was in town -- a walking, breathing, Florida-postcard so near and yet so far from what was taking place 90 miles from home.

It was like watching a movie, the Cuban Revolution, the way Fidel Castro and his tiny band of guerrillas escaped thousands of soldiers hunting them, then began their march across the countryside against the corrupt and murderous dictator, Fulgencio Batista. The world's hopes and prayers were with Castro as much as the odds were against him. For once, the odds were wrong. On New Year's Day 1959, Batista packed up and took off. I saved the *Sarasota Herald Tribune* announcing his desperate, midnight flight, and still have the newspaper -- brittle, sepia-toned pages with ads for Sealtest ice cream and Wonder Bread -- downstairs in the army surplus trunk I took to college in 1962.

The American idolatry of Castro faded faster than the newspaper, but for now let us recall the spellbinding promise of the period before he took power, and the unimpeachable fact that thousands of men and women were willing to risk their lives for what they believed in.² There was definitely something primordial involved because they made it so: something about destiny, about history, about something other than 8-to-5 jobs and retirement planning, about who we really are and who we can be, about ideals, about the meaning of life. It was all there, encapsulated in that tiny island. It was evident -- to me, at any rate -- that if you knew everything about Cuba, you would know everything about everything. And I learned everything about it I could, majoring in political science in undergraduate and graduate school to study Cuba fulltime.

Early on, something jumped out of all those books, TV documentaries, lectures, magazine and newspaper articles: a large number of Cuban revolutionaries came from middle class families. I was *pretty much like them*, e.g., Che Guevara was a doctor's son, like me. The phenomenon was not limited nationally or culturally: revolutionaries everywhere were conspicuously from middle class backgrounds.

Hence, The Question: is there something in the middle class milieu -- my milieu of doctors and lawyers, teachers and accountants -- that creates people willing to kill and be killed?

To this day, The Question is always met with suspicion, usually anger, sometimes hatred. How could it not be profoundly disturbing, when the middle class has been considered since ancient Greece to be the fountainhead of reason and compromise, of moderation and balance? I think it was the fervor of the hostility that clued me into the fact that the question evoked something acknowledged nothing more, something that was known but not consciously recognised -- something unexplored, deadly, touching the essence of Western civilization, if not humanity itself.

I would like to think that the existentialists were right in placing a supreme value on individual choice -- but gravity is not a choice. We look at a lake and want to know how deep it is; at a star and wonder how old is its light. Why? Something beyond choice or even desire drove me to find out and recount -- to witness -- what that something deadly was about the middle class. That need made any institutional affiliation impossible because, given the almost universal enmity to The Question, no university, government, or other institution would have supported the truly objective and independent inquiry that The Question demanded -- in fact, exacted.

Pretty much like them. Why do so many people who are willing to kill and be killed -- terrorists, revolutionaries, freedom fighters, patriots, anarchists, nihilists, call them whatever you like (for now) -- come from the middle class? Over the years, I discovered that The Question cannot be answered meaningfully without placing it in the greater context so concisely expressed by Paul Gauguin in the title of his signature painting, "Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going?" For it is that context that makes The Question significant, that is to say, worth asking in the first place.

After more than 40 years of investigation, this essay presents an answer. So near and yet so far, for as are all such answers, it is definitely only partial, hopefully only provisional. *Hopefully*, because if it does not enable you, the reader, to surpass what I did, then I have not done my job. Maybe I could do better, write yet more drafts and examine more cases and so forth, but I am 65-years-old; the bottom of

the top of the hourglass is now in full view. Some questions are too urgent for human survival to be tabled, even without prejudice.

Depending on where you are and which clock you are using, one minute can hold many years. Here, at this desk, 50 of them raced by in under 10 seconds. And when that last second shows up and not even time remains, what -- if anything -- is left? Maybe, this: Do it anyway. After reading this book, you may feel a need to follow a road less traveled. You will either feel the need or you will not, and if you feel it, you will know it. It takes the form of a fascination summoned from a faraway place that different people and different epochs have discovered in different ways: the Enlightenment, to mention only one, found it in the *plus ultra* beyond the *nec plus ultra*.^{*} The road less traveled is a question -- your question. It begins with a child's "I wonder what would happen if...?" Later, the question defines itself; you see it as a gap between two, widely-recognized points. You ask, "Why hasn't somebody...?"

Once begun, you will quickly find your road unheralded and misunderstood, if not reviled and obscure. You will also find it meaningful, exciting, sometimes terrifying. For what is at stake is less a matter of what you do than of whom you are. If you are lucky, you will put the two together.

What are you waiting for?

*Thomas Belvedere
Mulhouse, France
April 19, 2009*

* From time immemorial, Europeans believed that if you sailed west beyond the Straits of Gibraltar, you would fall off the edge of the world. The saying *Nec Plus Ultra* -- "There is nothing beyond." -- expressed that belief. But in 1492, Columbus discovered America; the facts spoke for themselves, and *Plus Ultra* -- "There is more beyond" -- became the saying of the Enlightenment.

NOTES: PREFACE

¹ Katrin Bennhold, "Letter from Europe," *International Herald Tribune*, published by *The New York Times*, Neuilly, France, September 13, 2007.

² One incident among thousands: on March 13, 1957, José Antonio Echevarría, a 24-year-old Havana university student and leader of the Directorio Revolucionario, led some 80 men in a daring assault on the presidential palace. They managed to enter Batista's dining room and presidential offices; Batista, who was on the floor above them, escaped. 35 rebels, including Echevarría, were killed that day; afterwards, an unknown number of attackers and other opposition members were hunted down, tortured, murdered.

If the final history of books on Cuban history is ever written, one of the five foremost works will be *Cuba: The Pursuit of Freedom* by Hugh Thomas. He observed that "the general attitude of the Directorio was anti-Communist, democratic, middle class, and basically Catholic...." Echevarría's testament declared, "We trust that the purity of our aims will attract the favor of God, to allow us to establish the rule of justice in our country." Hugh Thomas, *Cuba: The Pursuit of Freedom*, Harper & Row, New York, 1971, pp. 927, 930, 1,377.

PART I

THE ROAD NOT TAKEN TO TERRORISM

“Ideas, forms of thought, and psychic energies persist and are transformed in close conjunction with social forces. It is never by accident that they appear at given moments in the social process.”

-- Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*¹ --

Introduction to PART I: The Faun's Challenge

Why hasn't somebody...?

At the outset, it is easy to see why the road we are about to take is less traveled. The front gate is locked. If you look beyond it, you will see the road itself, grassy and covered in leaves. Quiet, deserted, the road goes to the source of terrorism.

This essay is about that source, middle class rebellion. It is not about terrorism.

I wish I could take you directly to the source, and skip not just this introduction but all of PART I. Hard experience, unfortunately, has taught me otherwise. To discuss meaningfully the source of terrorism requires a tectonic shift in certain perceptions before -- not after -- we arrive at our destination. That shift starts here, at the entrance.

There are several keys to the gate. One of them is the experiment performed in this introduction. To my knowledge, the experiment has

never been performed before. It is intended for a particular type of reader I know is out there. I taught hundreds of them at the University of Florida. It concerns something I wish somebody had shown me when I was a student; they would have spared me a multitude of wrong assumptions and misplaced values, of false leads, of transplanted thinking about middle class rebellion, the source of terrorism

Not faraway, there is another road. I think it is the first road Robert Frost saw and considered taking, the road more traveled that bends in the distant undergrowth. The experiment about to be performed involves a small forest creature Robert Frost might have seen had he taken that road: a faun, a Roman deity that is half-man, half-goat. Or, perhaps, thought he had seen...

Will the experiment work? Undoubtedly, some readers already have other keys and are inside the gate. If you are one of them, you are most likely not from the middle class. In that case, you will probably conclude that The Faun's Challenge is kicking a dead horse. If so, I apologize. However, I am not sorry for conducting the experiment. Why no regrets? Two reasons:

First, some things should not be left only to the mind to see. They must be shown openly, directly, immediately, to the heart. That is the only way I know to question meaningfully the usual way of seeing the source of terrorism -- a way that prevails among you who are reading these words and which is part of the very problem you seek to correct. A way that makes you *pretty much like them*.

And second, to those who see themselves already inside the gate, a word of caution is in order. When you wake up tomorrow, you might want to have someone look you over. You may have hoof marks running up and down your back.

If you are like me, you find viscerally obscene the very idea of brainwashing. Your values and ideas -- your families, schools, and churches all tell you -- make up your unique, individual personality, viz., who you "really" are. Personal and private -- unless you decide otherwise -- your values and ideas are often associated with a divine soul, ageless, timeless, immortal. Why that association does, should, or must exist, is unclear. In the end, we are told, the ghost in the machine cannot be explained. It is an enigma wrapped in "the miracle of life."

If your values and ideas are part of a transcendental soul connected to a transcendental entity -- e.g., God, history, destiny -- it stands to reason that if they were somehow secretly replaced by something fabricated in the outside, everyday world -- if you were brainwashed -- then you would not be yourself but a zombie, a slave. Somebody would have drained away your genuine self and poured into your brain box some sort of political slush. A monstrous hoax would have been perpetrated in which you would be thinking with somebody else's brain. That hoax is the theme of numerous science fiction and horror books and movies, among them *1984*, "Village of The Damned," and "The Stepford Wives."

For you, the situation is clear: either your values and ideas are your own or they are somebody else's. The sacred individual versus society and its profane indoctrination: it is an either-or proposition. There is no other possible option.

If you think like that, then we disagree.

In fact, I will go further and say you have been misled -- "brainwashed," if you like. I will show you how your either-or thinking and extreme individualism are socially programmed -- the very thing you deny and detest. By the way, they are also major parts of terrorism's source. In fact, terrorism cannot exist without them.

For now, though, are you already a robot? You are not sure how the programming is taking place, but your intuition tells you that it is happening, and not just in North Korea. Perhaps, at times you wonder if you have already been brainwashed, "processed." But if you wonder about it, you are not a robot -- not yet. No robot wonders how deep is a lake, how old is starlight. The reason is simple: to program wondering would risk subverting the programming itself.

So, is there an eternal, transcendental, unique soul inside you? Thousands of years of debate have arrived at one, apparently final conclusion. The ghost in the machine can neither be proven nor disproved. All I can do is show that even if the ghost is real, there are other realities which are also real...

To start with, to those who are absolutely convinced that their ideas and values are individual and sacred, I ask you to ponder the following possibility: what if the very idea you hold so dearly, that your ideas and values are individual and sacred, was not your own idea at all, but instilled from outside? Puzzling? Moreover, what if that same

outside source existed not only for your ideas and beliefs but also for many of what you consider your most intimate impressions and judgments, feelings and intuitions, perhaps even some sensations? Impossible? Finally, what if that outer source was neither God nor the semi-divine wheels of history or destiny, or any other transcendental force, but simply the greater society, the one you see and hear and smell everyday? Diabolical? Yes, you answer, because when all is said and done, the individual is sacred and unique, the ultimate kernel of value, of meaning, of Truth.

If you believe your ideas are truly individual and not social in origin, that they are independent in the fullest sense of the word, then -- I will say it again -- you have been programmed. On the most rudimentary level, ideas consist of words, and words are social in origin. You did not invent them; in fact, your idea that *ideas are not social in origin* consists of words, six of them to be precise; therefore, it cannot exist apart from society.

No society\no words\no ideas: I realize that pathway will strike a particular type of reader as cold, soulless. Hence, for those readers, I offer a way to experience directly a basic fact of existence. It concerns your identity.

I invite you to accept The Faun's Challenge. It is the experiment I mentioned that unlocks the front gate.

The Faun's Challenge concerns one of the most beloved artists in the world, Paul Gauguin (1848-1903). I have often wondered if Robert Frost had Gauguin in mind when he wrote "The Road Not Taken." Half-French, half-Peruvian, the son of a journalist, Gauguin quit his cozy bank job in 1881, separated from his well-off wife, and took off to pursue an artist's life. As to why he did it, here is his celebrated answer: "I wanted to establish the right to dare to do anything."* The financial and personal sacrifices Gauguin made attempting to establish that right are as legendary and monumental as the South Sea Islanders he painted in their color-saturated paradise.

Paul Gauguin. The right to dare to do anything. Sacrifices. Take note of your thoughts and feelings about those subjects. Courage? Admiration? Foolishness? Remember them.

Fortunately for us, Gauguin did not limit his art to painting.

* « j'ai voulu établir : le droit de tout oser. »

In 1997, Douglas Druick, the chief curator of the Art Institute of Chicago, saw “The Faun,” a ceramic sculpture based on a drawing in Gauguin’s sketchbook, in the home of a London art dealer. Druick bought “The Faun” for around \$125,000. The seller had acquired it at a Sotheby’s auction in 1994, for £20,700. As for the authenticity of the work, Sotheby’s had a letter from the prestigious Wildenstein Institute in Paris confirming that “The Faun” was included in its forthcoming *catalogue raisonné*, the authoritative list of known works by Gauguin.

What does the sculpture mean? Druick wrote that the “potentially phallic tail, but parted legs reveal the absence of the often flaunted sign of a faun’s virility, resulting in an aura of impotence. Gauguin evidently linked this iconography to his failing relationship with [his Danish wife] Mette.” The Institute’s curator of sculptures, Ian Wardropper, wrote that the features of “The Faun” were “bound up with the artist’s self-image as a ‘savage.’” Anne-Birgitte Fonsmark, the world’s leading expert on Gauguin ceramics, concluded that “The Faun” was “among Gauguin’s most satirical” works.

Sexual impotence. Savage. Satire. Once more, take note of your thoughts, feelings.

If you find the sculpture disturbing, intriguing, you are in good company. “The Faun” was included in one of the most highly praised and popular art exhibitions in the world, “Van Gogh and Gauguin,” 2000-2001. You may have been among the thousands of people from the general public, critics, and curators the world over who admired “The Faun” along with all the other artwork by two of the most revered artists of all times.

All the other artwork. What made “The Faun” so deserving of special attention was that it was not sculpted by Gauguin in 1886, but by Shaun Greenhalgh of northern England, in a garden shed in the 1990s. Greenhalgh was a member of a family of con artists. While on trial for forging another sculpture, he confessed to sculpting “The Faun.” He was convicted in December 2007, and sentenced to prison.

And so, whomever you are, along with all the art critics and curators worldwide, you were had.

As for the technical and artistic merits of “The Faun,” all the experts agreed that it was a creative, well-executed work. But perhaps the greatest tribute is to note a simple fact: if Greenhalgh had not been

caught in another forgery case, “The Faun” would most likely still be on display as a Gauguin.

Fraud. Forgery. Counterfeit. Once again -- and for the final time -- take stock of your thoughts and feelings. If you are from the Western world, most likely your reactions are disappointment, anger, a sense of betrayal. You may also feel like rejoicing, applauding Shaun Greenhalgh for having fooled a bunch of feigning and distaining connoisseurs and collectors. Being in it only for the money, the “bastards got what was coming to them.” But whatever your reactions were, “The Faun” today is exactly the same sculpture that the Vincent van Gogh and Gauguin exhibition displayed to thousands of adoring eyes. Whether sorrow or joy, or both, your ideas and feelings about the sculpture changed the instant I revealed it to be a hoax, not because the sculpture changed, but because you have certain assumptions and values about art, about corruption, about authenticity, about sacrifice, about rebellion, about the road less traveled. We know that your assumptions and values are cultural givens -- not eternal truths, not parts of some unchanging “human nature” -- for one, very simple reason: not all cultures share them. Ancient Egypt, for example, valued copying in its art, which remained basically unchanged for two thousand years, 2600 to 600 B.C.² Originality, art as the expression of the artist’s individual genius, art as an agent of change: such beliefs are relatively recent inventions still not found everywhere.

Your reactions come from a particular constellation of ideas, values, feelings, and attitudes, or *ideology*. It is an important part of the culture in which you grew up. Again, not all cultures are alike. Other cultures do not share your reactions to art forgery. I know how hard it is for Western readers even to imagine that people in other cultures could care less if an artwork is “genuine.” Two examples will illustrate my point:

(i) While working in the office of The Governor of New Mexico, I became involved in major amendments proposed to The Indian Arts and Crafts Act. The market for American Indian goods is enormous, and scammers circle around it like ravenous buzzards. The practical problems, however, in determining what is *genuine* Indian arts and crafts are as huge as the market itself. For example, if an Indian strung a necklace of beads imported from Formosa, you would cry “Hoax!” But if Indian arts and crafts must be 100% Indian-made from start to

finish to be genuine, what is to be said of an 1800s squash blossom necklace containing silver not from some legendary Indian mine but from the good old U.S. Mint, in the form of melted nickels? What about Navajo rugs containing not only yarn from wool from Indian-bred sheep grazing bucolically in mountain meadows but also strings from uniforms of Federal Soldiers killed in combat? I have seen those cases, and plenty more. In trying to come up with a working definition of what is genuine in American Indian arts and crafts, you are wrestling with an 800-pound marshmallow.

I will let you in on a secret. In private, the Indians with whom I worked all expressed this opinion: why worry about it? If you truly like a necklace, even if it is not genuine, buy it. And if you do not like it, do not buy it even if it is genuine.

(ii) Two decades later, I heard the same viewpoint expressed a world away, in Moscow's Vernisage flea market. We were wandering in a myriad of booths selling *икатилки*, the highly prized, miniature lacquered boxes. An Irishman in our group wondered aloud if the boxes were really hand painted, as all the vendors claimed, or if some bore photographic reproductions. "What difference does it make," a Russian friend responded, "as long as you find them beautiful?"

A cross-cultural experience will quickly show how your Western reactions differ from those of people from other cultures. That experience will show something else: your reactions are highly predictable precisely because they are not unique and individual but common and social.

Karl Mannheim's observation quoted at the start of this chapter, then, that "ideas, forms of thought, and other psychic energies" do not occur in isolation from society, is compelling. Whom you are -- and that includes your ideas and values -- is to a large degree -- although not entirely -- created and shaped by society. You cannot escape it; in fact, the idea of escaping it was created by society. Among those socially created ideas and other energies are your ideas, feelings, and beliefs about terrorism and its source. Most likely, you acquired them on the road more traveled. If so, their source is The Official Explanation, a hallmark of Western ideology and the subject of Chapter One.

An understanding of ideology is crucial to our subject because terrorism is the outcome of an ideology. As Chapter Three will explore,

every ideology has unconscious roots. That means it operates autonomously: it controls you; you do not control it. That is precisely what The Faun's Challenge was intended to show. You experienced firsthand, only a moment ago, the astounding power of ideology in the way your thoughts and feelings about "The Faun" changed drastically in the course of a single sentence revealing it to be a hoax, and did so beyond your control and independently of the sculpture itself, which is the same as the day it left Shaun Greenhalgh's garden shed.³ Could an ideology with similar – indeed, even greater -- power be the source of terrorism? This essay explores that question.

We will return to Paul Gauguin in PART III. If you are like me, you will conclude that the man who worked to establish the right to dare to do anything created a treasure no museum can hang on its walls.

Having passed The Faun's Challenge, you now have the key: most of your ideas and values -- including those pertaining to terrorism -- come from society.

With full recognition of that simple truth, you are past the front gate.

CHAPTER ONE

THE OFFICIAL EXPLANATION OF TERRORISM

“Here’s a good world the while! Who is so gross
That cannot see this palpable device?
Yet who so bold but says he sees it not?
Bad is the world, and all will come to naught,
When such ill-dealing must be seen in thought.”

-- William Shakespeare, *Richard III* --
Act III, Scene 6⁴

“Psychologically the attack of September 2001 came as a shock and enormous surprise, and the question arises why this should have been the case...[In addition to government intelligence agencies, the] role of the media should also be investigated....”

-- Walter Laqueur, *No End to War:
Terrorism in The Twenty-First Century*⁵ --

What is Shakespeare’s *palpable device*?
Why are we forbidden from talking about it, i.e., why must it be seen in thought alone?
And why was 9/11 such a *shock*?
The answer could be even more shocking.
The device and shock are inseparable. Together, they define the role the American mass media play in the War on Terrorism. Evidently, we will be observing a phenomenon found on the road more traveled.

No serious discussion of terrorism can avoid that role because in Western societies the mass media maintain and distribute ideologies to a decisive degree. One of those ideologies is the source of terrorism.

We begin our investigation of the media where our preface began: this morning's newspaper. French President Sarkozy stunned "60 Minutes" by doing the unheard-of. "'No, no. This is stupid... Goodbye,' he said, and walked off."⁶

Stupid, immoral, gutless, lazy, liars, hacks, packs, drunks: the lousy reputation of American journalists has a source far simpler than any of those words suggests -- or merits. Be prepared to be disappointed because the truth is actually not as bad as you think -- and potentially a lot worse.

In 1962, I worked as a copy boy at the *Washington Post*. The Cuban Missile Crisis transfixed the world; James Meredith, backed by U.S. Marshals, transfixed America as the first Black student at the University of Mississippi. Eleanor Roosevelt died; Jodie Foster was born. JFK affirmed the goal of putting a man on the moon by the end of the decade; the top-selling novel was *Ship of Fools*. Two oxymorons would prove to be more than just clever sayings: first, the words *personal computer* appeared for the first time in the media; second, the book *Silent Spring* was published, starting the American environmentalist movement.

Although my job at the *Washington Post* was for 10 weeks, the first 10 seconds in the newsroom told me most of what I needed to know -- perhaps you, too. There, on the desk of every editor, was a shining, twinkling copy of the *Washington Star*, the *Washington Post's* dreaded, detested, cross-town rival. The newspapers were so fresh you could smell the ink. It was a chemical excretion that would make the hardest Marine feel his breakfast start to warm.

As a supermarket tabloid put it, *enquiring minds want to know*. My enquiring, 18-year-old mind wanted to know how anybody at the mighty *Washington Post* could possibly care less about what its puny, feckless competitor was saying. We were the leaders, they were the followers -- that was all there was to it.

Or was it? No need to tell you what the *Washington Star* staff was reading that very moment.

Hence, The Echo Chamber Effect in which each journalist, in observing other journalists' stories, sees his own work. The news is

news because it is news, and moreover -- each journalist secretly rejoices -- because it is my news.

The Echo Chamber Effect is how, on a daily operational basis, the media define *news*. Given the colossal political power and megabucks at stake in that definition, if the media do not control it, somebody else will, most likely the government. However, journalists must also contend with another force: their owners, the media tycoons. It is a three-way battle without end.

The Echo Chamber Effect is preferable to outright government control. If you want to have the sensation of prolonging your life, read a *Soviet Life* magazine, a publication of the U.S.S.R. government, or *Amerika* magazine, a publication of the United States Information Agency. 10 minutes will seem like 10 years.

The Echo Chamber Effect is not without costs, some of which are becoming exorbitant, indeed dangerous:

To start with, all echoes are not created equal. In 1981, the *Star* burned out, bankrupt. The *Washington Post* bought its land, buildings, and printing presses.

Second, if there is a grain of truth in the charges of incompetence and corruption against the mass media, it is because those twin phenomena are becoming a major feature of Western society in general -- an increasingly necessary part. In PART III we will return to this all-important subject.

Third, the media's echo chamber is not hermetically sealed. New, important stories develop all the time because, among other reasons, there are people sitting on top of the echo chamber. Those people are not found in newsrooms; they have other ways of communicating. The ones I dealt with as a political consultant in the 1970s and 1980s liked to send notes under the table. *Don't forget this...Don't forget that...*[†] With a few exceptions, the general public does not know their names; they are seldom mentioned in the mass media. That lack of attention is hardly surprising. Do not ask CBS to investigate CBS.

[†] For those who believe that the small group atop the media's echo chamber always has the interests of the greater society at heart, I feel obliged to observe that, at least in their meetings with me, (i) they were obsessively diligent about closing the door, and (ii) notes, whether passed under or over the table, always constitute a closed meeting within a meeting, even if the second meeting is formally "open" to the public.

The lousy reputation of the American media, then, is mostly a consequence of The Echo Chamber Effect created and maintained by a daily work habit. How do we know that the major cause is not -- not yet, at any rate -- what it is so often claimed to be: stupidity, laziness, moral turpitude? The answer is found precisely in the long-standing *lousy* mystique itself. A mystique or mystification can only be sustained if one keeps looking for something that is not there. Robert Frost's poem, "The Road Not Taken," shows the underlying process. Logically speaking, the reader would expect the poem's title to be "The Road Taken" -- not "The Road Not Taken." But by choosing the latter title, Frost gave the poem a tension, a reverberation, a dynamism it would not have otherwise. In other words, a mystique.[‡]

The Echo Chamber Effect in the mass media is part of the larger rush to total conformity characterizing our epoch. That rush is an important theme in this essay, because absolute conformity and terrorism are inextricably bound together; you cannot have one without the other. I realize that conclusion for many readers is unbelievable. After all, its truth is neither intuitively obvious nor visible to the eye, nor felt, nor heard, any more than the truth is intuited or sensed that the earth right now is travelling at 67,000 miles per hour around the sun. Even I, who take note of that astronomical fact, looking out the window right now, have astronomical doubts.

The following investigation centers on The Official Explanation of terrorism reverberating inside the mass media's echo chamber. My purpose is to expose a fourth cost of The Echo Chamber Effect that is potentially catastrophic: the ideology that is creating terrorism remains hidden, unanalyzed. Its concealment is taking the most impenetrable form possible: an open secret.

* * *

We will look first at (I) the Shakespearian *palpable device*, then at (II) the *shock* of terrorism. We will subsequently (III) put them where they belong: together.

[‡] As did so many other artists, Robert Frost made an aesthetic technique out of a fundamental element of middle class ideology, the cult of contradiction. We will explore it in Chapter Five.

I. The Device.

Overt declarations of The Official Explanation of terrorism are extremely rare. 99% of the time, that explanation is what in journalism is called a “back story,” or subtext; I call it a classic case of reading between the lines. We have all heard that expression many times, but how does it actually work? We must answer that question, because what The Official Explanation means is inseparable from how it means it. Moreover, how it means it -- hints, implications, innuendos -- contains the first solid clue to the location of the real source of terrorism.

Two academicians, Phillip Blond and Adrian Pabst, wrote one of the few exceptions to the rule of not openly stating The Official Explanation:

The nature of the terrorist threat is unambiguously Islamic and is not so much a deviation from Muslim tradition as an appeal to it. Al Qaeda’s ideology draws on two traditions to legitimize itself: one classical, the other modern.

Regarding classical Islam, the oft-quoted remark that Islam is a religion of peace is false...Islam is linked from the beginning with the practice of divinely sanctioned warfare and lethal injunctions against apostates and unbelievers....

Al Qaeda’s modern origins go back to Wahhabism, named after the revivalist movement founded by Muhammad Ibn-bd al-Wahhab in 1744....

Faced with a decadent society, Wahhabism (not unlike some radical Protestant sects) reduced Islam to a scriptural literalism, an absolutism utterly hostile to other more medieval traditions. In this sense of direct rule by God, Wahhabism is a truly modern theology....

The essentially Islamic nature of this terror demands nothing less than a reformation in the name of an alternative Islam.⁷

ISLAM IS THE SOURCE OF TERRORISM: that is The Official Explanation. After stating their case, the two authors tack on this afterthought: “Recruits to the cause are not the excluded uneducated poor, they are intellectuals with a radical critique of Western society and its impact on Islam.”

Afterthought: a thought made too late to be useful. That definition, we shall see, is to be taken literally.

Blond and Pabst do not ask why intellectuals -- unlike uneducated and excluded poor people -- are inclined in the first place to take a violent, literalist, absolutist, doctrinaire approach, and thus become terrorists. The stakes are decisive, for if doctrinarism is less the cause of terrorism than the result of something else which is the real cause, then the authors' proposed solution of a “reformation in the name of an alternative Islam” is at least premature, at most ineffective without corresponding changes in what is creating terrorists in the first place.

For The Official Explanation, however, such doubts and objections are literally beside the point. We will not ask why -- the answer is obvious -- but instead, how does that denial occur? That question goes to the heart of how The Official Explanation, Islam is the source of terrorism, became and remains meaningful to millions of people around the world.

How does something become meaningful? Why does this and not that “make sense”? As the years passed, no conventional explanation of that question satisfied me. They all seemed to fall into the absurd, reoccurring pitfall on the road more traveled, pointed out by the artist Marcel Duchamp: “Explanations do not explain anything.”⁸ Nothing worked -- until I tried a totally unconventional, untraditional, and unaccepted methodology in the social sciences: musicology.

I know your eyes started to roll back inside your head when you saw that word. However, it is not as dreary as those rainy afternoons when, as a kid, you “had to” take music lessons, and you did not know why or what for. The only thing certain was that your parents thought it would be “good” for you. They had no idea of how music might actually achieve that end; in fact, had they really known, as the following investigation will demonstrate, in the interest of creating pliant children who uphold public tranquility, your parents would have...cancelled your music lessons forthwith.

Musicology...I promise to keep it simple and brief. A page or two will do it.

In both structure and function, The Official Explanation of terrorism is comparable to the root note, the tonal center or key in music. Tonal center, because all other notes in that key have a momentum to return to the root note. Even when in the course of a musical piece the key is deliberately changed -- known as a *modulation* -- we know that the change is temporary and that the original key will reassert itself. Modulations aside, once the key is established, all accepted and acceptable changes henceforth will be within that key, and those outside it will be heard as dissonant, off key: wrong notes, mistakes. Will be heard as: reason and logic have nothing whatsoever to do with that experience, which is a sensation. Reason and logic are truly beside the point.

A second contribution from musicology concerns another phenomenon closely related to a modulation. It, too, accounts for how something can change yet stay the same -- but this time, without a change of key. When the frequency of a note is either halved or doubled, the resulting note is strikingly similar perceptually to the original note. On hearing the new note, we have the feeling we have returned "home." The halved or doubled note, then, is heard as the equivalent of the first note (and even has the same name, "A," "B," "C," etc.) even though it is a different note because it is in a different octave. In the same manner, the word *Islam* can be played in other octaves -- "Arabs," "mosques," "jihadists," "neofundamentalism," "Isamofascism" -- and consequently be different yet remain the same note as before, at least according to our senses. I suspect that frequencies and how we perceive them explain how -- among other things -- words can serve as code words, how euphemisms, metaphors, and other figures of speech work, i.e., acquire meaning.[§]

[§] What gave rise to this nascent frequency approach to language? While studying in Mexico in the 1960s, I went six months without speaking or hearing English. One evening a friend and I were walking behind some tourists. "What language are they speaking?" I asked her. "English," she replied, stunned. I thought she was joking, so we walked closer to them. I heard every word. For half a minute or so, what they were saying was gibberish -- until suddenly the English broke through and I understood everything. The experience was as if a radio had suddenly tuned into a station; there is nothing else I can compare it to. It dawned on me that each language is a frequency or a combination of frequencies. Is this a new field awaiting development? I will not

What a musical key is does not exist independently of human perceptions. Those perceptions are conditioned socially but are neurological in origin. Again, music is not a rational process; in fact, music, the ultimate trump, trumps reason, even superstition. And it is the music of The Official Explanation that accounts for why reason and logic cannot disrupt that explanation, much less destroy it -- why and how reasonable objections to it are instantly overruled, discarded; why and how a certain afterthought remains an afterthought; why and how undeniable facts and valid conclusions contrary to The Official Explanation are perceived as dissonant, off key: wrong notes, mistakes. As we shall see, that same music is what is generating the shock, the enormous surprise -- or mystique -- surrounding 9/11 in particular and terrorism in general.

There are three major modulations or temporary changes of key in The Official Explanation. Without them, that explanation would become stale. Stripped of its charm, it would lose its formidable ideological power -- the kind of power you directly experienced in The Faun's Challenge.

(1) The Official Explanation often migrates into more traditional explanations of socio-economic problems, such as poverty. That explanation thereby gains in acceptability not because of any intrinsic merits, but by assuming the sounds of conventional wisdom. The listener is reassured and comforted by familiar refrains. In this case, not guilt but innocence is "proven" by association; the official explanation "must be O.K." if it is accompanied by a few of our old friends playing backup.

The journalist Craig Smith wrote:

More than half of Saudi Arabia's estimated 16 million people are under 20. Their prospects are bleak: Unemployment is 28 percent among 20- to 24-year-olds....Moreover, the economy is growing far more slowly than the population....Economic distress has already forced many poor Saudis into the

promote the matter here. Given the way things are, the major beneficiaries would be advertisers.

arms of Islamic charities...[which] often carry a politically laced message....The United States has alleged that some of the charities provide financial support for terrorist organizations.⁹

In Smith's economic-distress argument, Islam is not the source of terrorism -- yet it is. He does not argue that charity organizations *per se* create terrorism; one can only assume, therefore, that the charities he mentions create terrorism because they are *Islamic*. That is the deciding point. And so, after a cursory detour through economic distress, we return to the original key and its tonic note: Islam is the source of terrorism. The poverty modulation was only an interlude.

Curiously, Smith expresses an afterthought similar to that of Blond and Pabst: "Fifteen of the 19 Sept. 11 hijackers were Saudis, most middle-class young men who veered into religious extremism before becoming terrorists." Like Blond and Pabst, Smith does not discuss the terrorist-middle class link he acknowledged. As a result, in both articles the afterthought seems to...drop out of the sky. That absent discussion is all the more visible in Smith's article because he does not even attempt to show that his cause of terrorism, economic distress, afflicted any of the 9/11 hijackers.

Another journalist, Susan Sachs, also finds the source of terrorism in unemployment/economic distress, but she assigns that source to a more specific youth group, the well-educated one:

Unemployment, especially among college graduates, has been rising....Yet Egyptian universities continue to grind out graduates. Each year, 20,000 new lawyers hit the streets, swelling the ranks of what economists here call the 'educated poor.'...Predictably, the disappointed youth of Egypt and Saudi Arabia turn to religion for comfort.¹⁰

Predictably? Disappointed, well-educated youth in America and elsewhere also turn to religion for comfort, but they do not become terrorists; hence, there must be something different about religion in Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Of course, we all know what that something

is; no need to say it aloud. As in Smith's article, The Official Explanation is the musical key to which Sachs' modulation of unemployment and poverty inevitably returns: Islam is the source of terrorism. Like an absent host, the root note or key is present even when it is absent. Momentum: that is the question. Momentum is the secret to reading between the lines.

(2) The second modulation in The Official Explanation is that emotions are the source of terrorism.

The columnist Ellen Goodman challenges the explanation of Middle East terrorism as a response to misguided American policy: "This view comfortably ignores the fervor of religion." She elaborates:

It seems to me that the language of evil describes a conflict that is permanent and a condition that is immutable. The language of evil evokes, as Princeton's Elaine Pagels suggests, the apocalyptic view of God and Satan contending for the world.

In such a view, are not "God's people" justified in doing anything to "Satan's people"?¹¹

Goodman does not explain why only an incredibly small minority of people who have "religious fervor" and employ its "language of evil," her cause of terrorism, become terrorists. As for the question of whom that minority might be, she has the same afterthought as the other analysts: "[T]he pilots flying those planes were apparently not dispossessed young men but middle-class fanatics."

Is a pattern emerging? One begins to suspect that the afterthought about the link between terrorism and the middle class is a sort of Freudian slip -- the eruption into consciousness of an unconscious complex.¹² As did the other analysts, Goodman does not discuss that link; she acknowledges it, nothing more. And so, the afterthought remains an afterthought. The tonal home, Islam is the source of terrorism, keeps playing in the background.

Jessica Stern, a lecturer on terrorism at Harvard, also highlights the terrorists' religious fervor and language of evil: "Because the true faith is supposedly in jeopardy, emergency conditions prevail. The killing of innocents becomes...religiously and morally permissible."

Stern then attempts to go beyond the sulfurous language. Behind religious fervor, she finds other emotions:

I have begun to see that these grievances are often slogans for a deeper kind of angst. Fear of chaos and loose rules plus humiliation, envy and despair are the combustible ingredients of holy war. Leaders deliberately intensify and exploit these feelings....

What is especially tragic about the Palestinian situation is that it is no longer necessary to employ all these tactics to recruit suicide bombers. Trauma and humiliation have resulted in a kind of cult of death that has spread well beyond religious extremists.¹³

Stern adds that, coupled with those deeper emotions, a “selective reading of religious texts and of history” by terrorists -- not Islam *per se* -- is the source of terrorism. Nonetheless, The Official Explanation -- the tonal home or key -- reasserts itself in the conclusion of her article, in the solution she proposes: “Resolving holy wars may require that moderate and wise religious leaders help all sides in such conflicts recover the spiritual aspects of religion.” *Recover*: a telling word choice. At bottom, Stern’s solution is the solution offered by Blond and Pabst, i.e., a doctrinal problem demands a doctrinal remedy. Unlike them, she does not say what that doctrine is. However, the same weakness is apparent: if terrorism is not created by religion, then the involvement of religious leaders, no matter how moderate and wise, will not significantly reduce terrorism.

People in areas such as Latin America also fear chaos and suffer from humiliation, envy, and despair, but do not become terrorists. Therefore, there must be something different about the Arab world. No need to ask what that something is; it is right in front of us, between the lines. Indeed -- take a few seconds and actually look between the lines in Stern’s article cited above. What do you see? Nothing. Nothing is there. And yet...there is something. That something is seen in thought alone. It is the *palpable device* Shakespeare was talking about -- and objecting to. The implied Official Explanation stays implied. The

absent host stays absent, and by not showing up, becomes even more present.

By being omnipresent -- present even where it is absent -- The Official Explanation gains incredible power. Being omnipresent is only a small step from being omniscient. Only one thing is omniscient: God.

The Official Explanation has a second reason to stay off-camera. That explanation cannot rid itself of a highly charged syllogism: (i) Islam is the source of terrorism. (ii) Most Arabs are Islamists. (iii) Therefore,... The Official Explanation leaves it to us to string the last bead in the necklace. By remaining in the background, The Official Explanation avoids having to step up to the microphone and defend itself -- to present evidence, to answer questions, to justify its assumptions and consequences such as the syllogism -- in short, to be accountable. Is this not a case of what Shakespeare called *ill-dealing*?

Actually, the above statement is inaccurate. The Official Explanation of terrorism does not stay in the background. More precisely, because it is the root note or key, The Official Explanation is the background, the context.

The modulation that emotions are the source of terrorism ends up presenting The Official Explanation in a kinder, gentler key. How could it be otherwise? If trauma and humiliation are the root of terrorism, and if, as a result of the Palestine situation, trauma and humiliation are spread throughout the Middle East, then the emotions modulation casts an invisible net of meaning over that area's inhabitants, to wit: if all Arabs are not manifest terrorists, they are, by virtue of their trauma and humiliation, latent terrorists. I would add parenthetically that anybody who doubts the existence of that net has not been to an airport lately.¹⁴ No matter how much it is quieted down and cleaned up, then, the inflammatory syllogism remains inflammatory.

Finally, we encounter in the emotions modulation the same low level of differentiation and lack of explanatory power that troubles the socio-economic modulation. If trauma and humiliation cause terrorism, and if vast numbers of people in the Middle East are traumatized and humiliated, then why do so few of them become terrorists?

One senses that Goodman and Stern, as well as the analysts who evoke economic causes, are not entirely wrong, but that there is a huge gap between cause and effect, between economics and terrorism,

between emotions and terrorism. The opening question to this chapter, *Why hasn't somebody...?*, focuses on that gap. That type of focus is an identifying mark of the road we are on, the road less traveled.

(3) The third and final modulation or temporary change of key occurs when The Official Explanation mutates into cultural or historical transition as the source of terrorism.

The columnist Thomas Friedman embarked on a personal quest to find the origin of terrorism. At the end of his journey, he found himself among marginal émigrés:

We know whom Osama bin Laden is....We also know who bin Laden's passive supporters are -- all of those Muslims who sympathize with him....But who were the guys in the middle -- the killer pilots who went beyond passive support to become suicidal mass murders?

In search of that answer, I came to Europe....It's the same story: He grew up in a middle-class family in the Arab world, was educated, went to Europe for more studies, lived on the fringes of a European society..., gravitated to a local prayer group or mosque, became radicalized there by Islamist elements, went off for training in Afghanistan and presto -- a terrorist was born. The personal encounter between these young men and Europe is the key to this story.

A female Arab friend who studied abroad with young Muslim men described them this way:

"They are mostly men who grew up in an environment where the rules were very clear. They grew up never encountering anything that shakes their core. Suddenly they are thrown into Europe, and there is a whole different set of social rules that shakes their core. They don't know how to adapt because they've never had to, so they become more insular and hold onto their [Islamic] core even more."

Friedman quotes Adrian Karatnycky, President of Freedom House:

“Like the leaders of America’s Weather Underground, Germany’s Baader-Meinhof Gang, Italy’s Red Brigades and Japan’s Red Army Faction, the Islamic terrorists were university educated converts to an all-encompassing neo-totalitarian ideology....For them, Islamism is the new universal revolutionary creed, and bin Laden is Sheikh Guevara.”

Mr. Karatnycky is right. The real challenge of the West is to understand what is happening not just in Iraq or Saudi Arabia but also in its own backyard, in the chemical reaction between Western societies and their own mosques and Muslim diasporas. That is where the killer pilots were conceived....¹⁵

I know of no mosque that is not Islamic. *Mosques, local prayer groups, Muslim diasporas* are all euphemisms, code words, for *Islam*. We find here a case of the halved/doubled frequency phenomenon: same note, different octaves. The Official Explanation comes literally to the fore, as a prefix: *Islamic* terrorists. That prefix is free-floating; the frequency phenomenon that makes different notes sound like equivalents can occur anywhere.

Did the fatal weakness of The Official Explanation just come into view? I think so. If, as Karatnycky intimates, terrorists can and do adopt all sorts of doctrines and still be terrorists, then any specific doctrine, including Islam,** is beside the point. A fundamentalist religion can be made out of anything. A straight line will do.

Whenever we return to The Official Explanation, we return to its perennial afterthought. Friedman wrote that the archetypal terrorist *grew up in a middle class family*. Does being middle class somehow predispose people to become terrorists? If so, how? We are moving closer to an answer -- from the exotic Middle East to our *own backyard*. However, it is a stunted answer because it takes place within

** Or Christianity.

The Official Explanation: Friedman flies over the middle class connection and lands on *Islamist elements* in the birth of a terrorist. Nowhere does he openly deny that, when you get to the bottom of it, Islam is the root of terrorism. A modulation, we must remember, is only a temporary change of key.

The columnist David Ignatius comes to the same conclusion as Friedman and Karatnycky about the interchangeability of doctrines, but views the modulation of cultural transition as more of a historical one.

Although bin Laden's texts are couched in the language of Islam, they read like the flowery manifestos of the elitist bomb-throwers of the 19th century, people like Prince Peter Kropotkin or Mikhail Bakunin....

Bin Laden's detestation of the Western bourgeois order finds other strange bedfellows in the manifestos of the avant-garde movements that sprang up in Europe and the United States in the early 20th century. They, too, saw violence as a cure for a diseased and enfeebled world....

Bin Laden's terrorism is often seen in the context of Islam's failed attempt to engage the West....But bin Laden and his followers may instead be part of the painful transition to modernism, much as Kropotkin and Bakunin....

You could hardly find a more modern Arab than the suicide pilot Atta....He eventually left Egypt to study in Germany, where he became lonely and embittered and fell into bin Laden's orbit.

This is the standard biography of the disaffected elite, a hundred years ago or today, in Arabia or the west. For whatever complex psychological reasons, it can give rise to the terrorist impulse....In some respects it is not a new conflict, nor is it ultimately about the grievances of Islam. It is about the transition to the modern world.¹⁶

Ignatius transforms Friedman's *guys in the middle* from isolated men caught between two cultures into men caught in a larger, global/historical *transition to modernism*. He does not spell out who his *disaffected elite* is, aristocrats (Prince Kropotkin) or the middle class (Mohamed Atta), or both; he does not attempt to clarify what those *complex psychological reasons* and a *terrorist impulse* are, or even what *the transition to the modern world* is. Inevitably, the root note, The Official Explanation, reasserts itself in spite of Ignatius' direct claim to the contrary: if the *painful transition to modernism* and not *the grievances of Islam* is the source of terrorism, we need to ask: transition from what? Ignatius declares "it is certainly true that Islam has yet to find an easy co-existence with the freedom and secularism of modern [*sic*] societies." Islam it is, then. Ultimately, Islam is the source of terrorism.

Economic distress. Unemployment. Humiliation and despair. Cultural transition. Transition to modernism. Such is The Official Explanation in all its modulations echoing daily inside the mass media.

Now, what are the facts?

The majority of people who become terrorists have something in common not shared by the general population of Arabs or Muslims; something that is found not only in the Middle East but throughout the world, even in downtown America; something that is widely acknowledged by the mass media but never consciously recognized; something that accompanies The Official Explanation wherever it goes but remains outside it, as an afterthought. An open secret.

It is time to look closely at that afterthought.

Merely because it is an eruption into consciousness of an unconscious complex, the afterthought about the middle class is not *ipso facto correct*. What are the objective facts?

Well, they are routinely reported in the American mass media. Here are a few examples citing directly and indirectly the middle class origin of terrorists:

- Muhammad Naheem Noor Khan, a 25-year-old computer engineer, was working for Al Qaeda in Pakistan: "Khan would have had no trouble blending in. He is from a middle-class religious family in Karachi."¹⁷
- Mohammed Amir Atta Sr., a lawyer and the father of Mohammed Atta, the leader of the 9-11 attacks, recalled: "I told him I need to hear the word 'doctor'

in front of his name... We told him your sisters are doctors and their husbands are doctors and you are the man of the family.”¹⁸

- “As a teenager already in rebellion against his upstanding middle-class parents, who had raised him as a sort of Muslim choirboy, young Mohamed [Husain]... was an easy target.”¹⁹
- “Osama bin Laden’s Qaida lieutenants have included Egyptian professional men and Arab intellectuals. The men who carried out the attacks in the United States were Westernized mid-level technical people.”²⁰
- Regarding the attempted terrorist bombings in Scotland in 2007, “For the most part, the seven men and one woman arrested as part of the investigation into the botched bombings, were educated, middle-class Muslims...”²¹
- Dylan Klebold, 17, and Eric Harris, 18, in 1999, killed 15 people and injured 28 during a 4-hour shooting spree at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado. The two boys “lived in respectable neighbourhoods.... Their solidly middle-class background reflected the community as a whole, which found the tragedy particularly shocking because it imagined its school to be free of the usual urban blights of crime and dysfunction... Offering his condolences yesterday, President Bill Clinton said: ‘All of us are struggling to understand exactly what happened and why.’”²²
- After earning a Bachelor’s degree in business from Northwest Missouri State University (now Truman State), Charles Lee “Cookie” Thornton returned home to Kirkwood, Missouri, and opened his own trucking company. Financially ruined from lawsuits against the city, Thornton filed a federal lawsuit against the city for \$15 million for “willfully and wrongfully” denying his right to speak at a public meeting. On January 28, 2008, the lawsuit was dismissed. Ten days later, Thornton killed 5 people in a Kirkwood City Council meeting, before being shot and killed by police. “Witnesses told of a chaotic scene in Kirkwood, a middle class community of 27,000 people with a main street lined with shops and restaurants and many grand homes. As officers from departments from suburbs throughout the region swarmed into Kirkwood, many residents expressed disbelief and anger that such a thing could happen in [Kirkwood].”²³ As for the middle class nature of Kirkwood, one of the best proofs I can furnish is that on April 5, 1947, I was baptised there, in the Grace Episcopal Church.
- Steven Kazmierczak, 27, graduated in sociology from Northern Illinois University in 2007, and went on to the graduate school of social work at the University of Illinois. On February 14, 2008, he returned to NIU, stepped out from behind a screen on the stage of a lecture hall, and fired over 50 rounds into a geology class, killing five students before committing suicide. “‘We had no indications at all this would be the type of person that would engage in such activity,’ [University Police Chief Donald Grady] said. He described the gunman as a good student during his time at NIU, and by all accounts a ‘fairly normal’ person.... Mr. Kazmierczak grew up in the Chicago suburb of Elk Grove Village, not far from O’Hare Airport. His family lived most recently in a middle-class neighbourhood of mostly one-story tract homes before moving away early in this decade.”²⁴

Such acknowledgments of the middle class background of terrorists are numerous -- in fact, too numerous. Years ago, the proverbial camel's back was broken. With the last straw, quantitative addition created qualitative change, transforming the terrorism-middle class link into a banality -- albeit, given the mystique surrounding terrorists (to be examined shortly), a mysterious banality.

Consigning something to being an afterthought excludes that something while simultaneously including it. It is not denied or attacked; it is marginalized. As Chapter Two will show, marginalization is an especially effective device for dealing with the subject at hand, the middle class. And The Official Explanation must deal with that subject somehow, because to render the middle class source of terrorism anything more than an afterthought is...to abandon The Official Explanation entirely. Why? Well, to start with, in looking at the middle class, one is looking at what is there -- not at what is not there.

The columnist William Pfaff provides a case in point. He arrives at the following conclusion from his observation quoted above of Al Qaida men as professionals and intellectuals, i.e., middle class -- a conclusion in which he places the cold facts in stark relief against The Official Explanation and its well-funded solutions:

The response and long-term remedy for Islamic fundamentalism proposed by nearly every Western commentator and official is a big and cathartic dose of modernization: globalization, democratization, women's liberation, secular education, rural electrification, lots of computers and a market economy, and all that only for starters.

Yet the leading figures in the terrorist movement that brought down the New York Trade towers and attacked the Pentagon...were for the most part from the most modernized strata of the two most modern countries in the Middle East.²⁵

We have seen Pfaff's perspective before. It is the transition-to-modernism modulation but with a dramatic implication: if the 9/11 terrorists were mostly *Westernized, mid-level technical people*, and

if such people are created by modernization, will not the modernization recommended by the West not only not reduce terrorism but increase it? That is only one of many disquieting questions that arise when one begins to take seriously the middle class origin of terrorists. Such questions form the bedrock of the road less traveled.

In the end, Pfaff's overall perspective is only a temporary change for reasons already noted, i.e., *modernization* makes sense only if a non-modern place is the point of departure. Nod, wink: we all know what that place is.

We now come to the core of The Official Explanation. Logically speaking, the opposite of *modern* is *ancient* or *old-fashioned* -- not *Islam*; you will not find a dictionary in the world that shows the latter as an acceptable antonym of *modern*. What, then, is *Islam* doing in this picture? There is only one way *Islam* makes sense: if *modern* is a code word, a euphemism, for *Christian*. In The Official Explanation, the remedy, Christianity is the solution to terrorism, remains just as implied as The Official Explanation itself. We have felt its presence before, in the implicit, inflammatory syllogism. There is, however, at least one overt statement in the American mass media that Christianity is the solution to terrorism. The same two academicians who openly declared The Official Explanation, Blond and Pabst, furnished it:

Only a new settlement with religion can successfully incorporate the growing religious minorities in Western Europe. Secular liberalism is simply incapable of achieving this outcome. Paradoxically, what other faiths require for their proper recognition is the recovery of the indigenous European religious tradition -- Christianity. Only Christianity can integrate other religions into a shared European project by acknowledging what secular ideologies cannot: a transcendent objective truth that exceeds human assertion but is open to rational discernment and debate. As such, Christianity outlines a non-secular model of the common good in which all can participate....Thus the recovery of Christianity in Europe is not a sectarian

project but rather the only basis for the political integration of Muslims and peaceful religious coexistence.²⁶

Does the substitution of *modern* for *Christian* make sense? Are they the same thing? In reality, there are numerous countries which are Christian but not modern by any stretch of the imagination, so the two are not synonymous. As noted, however, for The Official Explanation that type of objection is beside the point.

It is time to recapitulate what has been said about The Official Explanation, the *palpable device* reverberating around the world via The Echo Chamber Effect in the mass media. To help with that recapitulation, there is no better tool than Albert Einstein's:

Guided by empirical data, the investigator...develops a system of thought which...is built up logically from a small number of fundamental assumptions, the so-called axioms. We call such a system of thought a *theory*. The theory finds the justification for its existence in the fact that it correlates a large number of single observations, and it is just here that the 'truth' of the theory lies.²⁷

On all of Einstein's accounts, The Official Explanation literally and figuratively does not add up. Why are so many single observations of the same phenomenon -- the terrorism-middle class link -- uncorrelated, unused? How can The Official Explanation be judged to be true when that lack of correlation exists? And what about The Official Explanation's dubious assumptions and illogical conclusions? Were the investigators guided by empirical data or by something else?

Conclusion: on any reasonable basis, The Official Explanation is indefensible. It is an explanation that does not explain anything (or very little). Nevertheless, millions of people around the world believe it. In the face of overwhelming contrary evidence, how is that possible?

The only reasonable answer is that...reason has nothing to do with it. Rather, a key, a root note, is involved. We are dealing with something that presents itself as a tenet, a theory, maybe even a

philosophy, but that operates musically, as a tonal center. That is the secret of its success. Even you, dear reader, who may consider yourself to be above such things, may catch yourself from time to time thinking the unthinkable thought. I know I did, but no longer.

The Official Explanation's total domination of Western thinking becomes manifest when terrorism occurs not in the Middle East, Kabul, Jakarta, or some other exotic spot, but in our own schools and city halls. In such hometown cases, where Islam can in no way be connected to the killings, you will invariably find this outcome: there is no explanation for what happened. Look again at the press reports cited above and at the news the next time a local terrorist strikes. Why did it happen? Why did he do it? The answer is always the same: nobody knows. All or nothing, then, and the void left in Colorado and Kirkwood or wherever The Official Explanation is blatantly not applicable, is total. When the music of The Official Explanation stops, only silence and mystery remain.

One can of course indirectly defend The Official Explanation by claiming that the local massacres are not *terrorism* at all. However, with every dead student, that defense is running out of gas. Already, there is not enough to get home.

II. The Shock.

Besides being accepted as the gospel truth by the majority of Westerners,^{††} The Official Explanation is extraordinary on another account. How, despite its divorce from reality, has it lasted so long? What keeps the palpable device up and running?

We turn now to the *shock*, the *enormous surprise* Walter Laqueur pointed out. It is not limited to 9/11. That shock hits again and again, wherever and whenever hometown terrorists strike in our high schools, universities, and city halls.

Any split between reality and an explanation of it generates a tension that can only be maintained by irrational means, i.e., a mystique and its music. Otherwise, either the reality will be ignored or the explanation will be discarded. The split ceases to exist; the tension disappears.

^{††} I will say the *majority* provisionally, pending survey research results.

The real enormous surprise of the 9/11 attacks is that they...continue to be an enormous surprise so many years after they occurred. In the face of so many conflicting facts, The Official Explanation's endurance can only be due to a mystique and its aura of excitement, bewilderment, fascination, awe, surprise, mystery. Remove the mystique, and The Official Explanation vanishes. Literally, it loses its enchantment.

But if a mystique is behind the endurance of The Official Explanation, what is behind the mystique, the excitement, the mystery? What is creating the music?

Let us explore further the complex of shock, mystery. That complex will lead us to the music's source.

No real explanation, the biggest conundrum, baffling: the British journalist Alan Cowell expressed the lingering shock created by the British Muslims, most of whom were of Pakistani descent, who carried out the 2005 London bombings: "But, for many Britons the mystery is why a handful among those same young men -- with potential access to the same schools, movies, sports and setbacks as any other young Briton in the post-industrial era -- should congregate secretly to plot mayhem and self-destruction."²⁸

No real explanation. Having handed us the biggest riddle, Cowell cannot leave without trying to solve it. His explanation is the modulation of cultural transition, viz., the "British policy of multiculturalism...leaving people of different backgrounds to nurture their imported identities, breeding separateness and isolation." As with Stern, Goodman, and all the other analysts, I sense that Cowell is onto something important; nevertheless, there is a gap between his observations and conclusions, between the *isolation* and the *mayhem*. After all, many people are isolated, but few are terrorists; it is a long way from there to here.

It seems that the orbit of Cowell's cultural modulation went too far out, was too risky, because it was suddenly called back home: "another element," he adds, "feeding on this alienation and unease, is the blend of faith and technology that binds jihadists to the broader world of Islamic extremism." Well, without Islam, Islamic extremism is impossible. Once again, the root note, The Official Explanation, shows its face as a prefix. And so, the biggest conundrum leads us back

to that explanation: Islam is the source of terrorism. The cause of the mystery is called upon to solve the mystery.

The columnist Roger Cohen expressed a similar -- how else can I describe it? -- shock and awe about both the London and 9/11 terrorists:

Put the video images of the four London suicide bombers side by side with that of Mohamed Atta entering the airport at Portland, Maine, on Sept. 11, 2001, and the resulting collage could not be more banal....

Almost four years separate the images..., and yet the essential mystery of the videos' nondescript normalcy remains as troubling.

We crave some clue to what is about to happen and we find none. We look into those eyes and we see only blankness. We seek some sign of madness and encounter only the mundane. In short, we are frustrated in our search for meaning.²⁹

Blankness, normalcy, a mysterious banality: that is where The Official Explanation ends. Or rather, almost ends. Again, it is bad form to leave us readers frustrated, so, as did Cowell, Cohen attempts to explain the *essential mystery* of the terrorists:

What remains are questions: Who are these people who live in our midst and deceive even their own families? Who are these people dressing as we do, conversant with our habits, healthy, capable of rational thought, ready, in the name of their interpretation of Islam, to kill themselves and as many citizens of the infidel West as they can?....

Look again at those images of the killers. Why are their features so featureless? Because they are at peace with the idea they have embraced.

What is *the idea* but two code words for *Islam*? Thus, in Cohen's last sentence, The Official Explanation reasserts itself, and you, too, if

you have embraced that explanation, feel in some strange way you cannot describe, home again, at peace. *Pretty much like them.*

The biggest conundrum, the essential mystery, the mystique is what steps forward when you ask The Official Explanation to explain itself. But that explanation cannot explain itself, anymore than Hitler or Lee Harvey Oswald -- two other mystique-veiled entities -- could explain themselves,^{‡‡} and for the same reason:

When a viewpoint or theory simply does not add up but its wrong assumptions and conclusions are repeated anyway; when proven facts and valid observations are either heard as wrong notes and mistakes or are acknowledged but ignored -- then, behind it all, an unconscious complex of emotions has seized control. In its constellated form, that complex assumes the form of Shakespeare's *palpable device*. A screen.

A background with a reflecting surface, the screen is the message. Beyond the flickering celluloid, the lights and the sound, the screen is what is really there. That message sparkles, but does not flicker: Islam is the root of terrorism.

Troubling, baffling, *nondescript normalcy*: in talking about the mystery of terrorism, could it be that Cohen and Cowell and all the other analysts are expressing something else? Islam, so long ago and far away, is a perfect screen onto which all sorts of "bad" unconscious contents -- that is to say, things inside ourselves we feel are unacceptable -- can be projected. We thereby lighten our burden and get relief, at least temporarily. In this particular case, projection spares us of an additional burden: taking responsibility for the obviously non-Islamic terrorism occurring in our own schools, universities, work places.

Why was the Islam screen erected now? As Karl Mannheim observed, ideas and other *psychic energies* never appear accidentally in the social process. The Islam screen was unpacked and set up in our epoch because of social forces to be discussed in Chapter Two, forces which are potentially far more devastating than 9/11.

The endurance of the mystique veiling Islamist terrorists became even more apparent in 2007, when they struck again -- two years after the publication of Cohen's article about *the idea*:

^{‡‡} If they could have explained why they did it, would they have done it?

Following the fiery Jeep attack on Glasgow's airport a week ago, much of Scotland has been thrust into stunned self-reflection....

Iain MacWhirter, a columnist, described Scotland's identity crisis in *The Herald* two days after the attack: "Scotland has been left with a sense of 'why us? We're different, aren't we?'".

One thing that stands out in Scotland is the general assessment that its Muslim population of about 60,000 is well integrated into society....³⁰

MacWhirter's question, *We're different, aren't we?*, could be a major turning point, a crossroad, on the road more traveled. That question exposed for the first time in the mass media a basic reality: it is impossible to be disenchanted without having been enchanted in the first place. And it is impossible to be enchanted if basic assumptions and tenets are seriously questioned -- a questioning that none of the exponents of The Official Explanation of terrorism undertook. In truth, because of their role as *cultural maximizers* discussed in the next chapter, they cannot undertake that questioning even if they want to.

But there is a second reality revealed by MacWhirter's *Why us?* It brings the problem of terrorism home, where it belongs. For it is home that ultimately explains the complex of feelings and attitudes of shock, surprise, excitement, puzzlement, fascination, awe, mystery -- in brief, the whole unconscious complex comprising the mystique. One thing and one thing alone can create it: unconscious recognition. A mystique is impossible without it.

What is it that is unconsciously recognized in the terrorists? *Pretty much like them*. No wonder there is shock. I think Scotland called the tune: stunned self-reflection. If true, Scotland showed it is in fact different. The American media, to the contrary, continue looking for something else, something "out there." And they are condemned to keep looking for it because that something is not there. It is here -- inside you, me, them.

That irreconcilable difference in perspective is why communications between the two roads are, at best, difficult. I call out

to those on the road more traveled, “Where are you going?” Their answer: “It’s five o’clock.”

In truth, the call for a look inward is not new. President Kennedy remarked in his Commencement Address to American University (June 10, 1963):

Some say that it is useless to speak of peace or world law or world disarmament, and that it will be useless until the leaders of the Soviet Union adopt a more enlightened attitude. I hope they do. I believe we can help them do it. But I also believe that we must re-examine our own attitudes, as individuals and as a Nation, for our attitude is as essential as theirs.³¹

III. Device and Shock Together.

It is time to connect The Official Explanation -- the *palpable device* -- with the *shock* -- the mystique. One does not exist without the other. That existence is impossible on a global scale involving hundreds of millions of people without The Echo Chamber Effect of the mass media.

The closest the American mass media ever came to casting aside The Official Explanation and its music/mystique was an article by the columnist David Brooks. He concludes that it is not, as The Official Explanation insinuates, the facts that are beside the point; rather, it is all three of that explanation’s modulations that are beside the facts:

In the days after 9/11, it was commonly believed that the conflict between the jihadists and the West was a conflict between medievalism and modernism. Terrorists, it was said, emerge from cultures that are isolated from the Enlightenment ideas of the West. [Modulation number three: cultural or historical transition]

They feel disoriented by the pluralism of the modern age....They are trapped in stagnant, dysfunctional regimes,

amid mass unemployment...[Modulation number one: economic distress].

Humiliated and oppressed, they lash out against America, the symbol of threatening modernity. Off they go to seek martyrdom...[Modulation number two: emotions].

Now we know that story line doesn't fit the facts... We know, thanks to a data base gathered by Marc Sageman, formerly of the CIA, that about 75 percent of anti-Western terrorists come from middle-class or upper-middle-class homes. An amazing 65 percent have gone to college, and three-quarters have professional or semiprofessional jobs, particularly in engineering and science....

In rejecting all three modulations, Brooks is close to rejecting The Official Explanation itself. Will he do it? Will he take down the screen and roll it up, along with its mystique? Everything depends on how he will use Dr. Sageman's facts. We have seen other analysts acknowledge the terrorist-middle class link, and nothing happened.

Brooks forges ahead. He observes of the middle class terrorists' home lives: "Rather than deferring to custom, many of them have rebelled against local authority figures, rejecting their parents' bourgeois striving and moderate versions of Islam, and their comfortable lives." Here Brooks' terrorists resemble middle class rebels. We are approaching the thesis of the book you hold in your hands.

Brooks' words *versions of Islam*, however, hint that he is about to go off in another direction, back into doctrine. Indeed, he proceeds to note that the terrorists

have sought instead some utopian cause to give them an identity and their lives meaning. They find that cause in a brand of Salafism that is not traditional Islam but a modern fantasy version, an invented tradition. They give up cricket and medical school and take up jihad. In other words, the conflict between the jihadists and the

West is a conflict within the modern, globalized world. The extremists are the sort of utopian rebels modern societies have long produced....

In his book "Globalized Islam," the French scholar Olivier Roy points out that today's jihadists have a lot in common with the left-wing extremists of the 1930s and 1960s. Ideologically, Islamic neofundamentalism occupies the same militant space once occupied by Marxism. It draws the same sorts of recruits (educated second-generation immigrants, for example), uses some of the same symbols and vilifies some of the same enemies (imperialism and capitalism).

Roy emphasizes that the jihadists are the products of globalization, and its enemies. They are detached from any specific country or culture, he says, and take up jihad because it attaches them to something....

An *invented* Islam is still *Islam*. An *Islamic neofundamentalism* without Islam does not exist. Islamic fundamentalism, then, is fundamentally Islam. And so, we come full circle and return to The Official Explanation. It remains the center of gravity, of momentum; all notes, played and unplayed, incline toward it. So steep is that incline that even in those rare instances when the mass media start to deny The Official Explanation, they end up confirming it. In so doing, as has happened to computer anti-virus programs, the solution to the problem becomes infected with the problem.

The Official Explanation in hand, what is Brooks' final destination? He just noted that 75% of the jihadists are from the middle class; therefore...what? We come to his punch line.

[T]errorism is an immigration problem. Terrorists are spawned when educated, successful Muslims still have trouble sinking roots into their adopted homelands. Countries that do not encourage assimilation are not only causing themselves trouble, but

endangering others around the world as well.³²

Brooks makes an important advance toward exposing in the mass media that The Official Explanation is divorced from certain *amazing* facts. However, enchanted by the music, he does not let those facts guide him. Consequently, he is unable to answer a plethora of questions he raises. Why do terrorists rebel against *authority figures*? Why do terrorists reject *their parents' bourgeois striving and moderate versions of Islam*? Why do terrorists resort to *some utopian cause to give them an identity and their lives meaning*? -- why do they feel they lack an identity or a meaningful life in the first place? We hear, correctly, that *modern societies* have produced such rebels for many years -- a reality, incidentally, which runs counter to the thesis that globalization, a recent phenomenon, is the source of terrorism -- but we do not hear why or how such rebels are created.

In the end, the empirical data Brooks cites confirm what we have heard many times before, that a majority of terrorists come from the middle class, but we are not given a clue as to why that is the case, how it works, what it means. The result is, the music plays on, the mystique stays in place -- the enchantment continues, the mystery remains. The afterthought about the middle class remains an afterthought. An open secret.

We are arriving at the crux of the matter. It is where The Official Explanation and the shock are united, indivisible. This question will lead us directly to it: is Brooks' explanation, terrorism is *an immigration problem*, correct?

Following Olivier Roy, Brooks says that terrorists *take up jihad because it attaches them to something*, and notes they feel unattached because they have *trouble sinking roots into their adopted homelands*. Here, too, the lack of differentiation and the lack of explanatory power are apparent: the history of America and elsewhere shows that most immigrants have problems sinking roots, but over 99% of them do not become terrorists. What, then, is different about Muslims? To phrase the question that way is, of course, to answer it; the conclusion is the assumption. Perhaps that is why Brooks does not even attempt to confirm Roy's thesis that most or even many of the *left-wing extremists of the 1930s and 1960s* -- America's Weather Underground, Germany's

Baader-Meinhof Gang, Japan's Red Army Faction -- with whom today's terrorists *have a lot in common*, were immigrants or even children of immigrants. This issue is crucial, for if the failure to assimilate immigrants does not create terrorism, then their assimilation -- Brooks' solution -- will not curb terrorism.

In fact, assimilation could have exactly the opposite effect. We need to ask: assimilated into what? The middle class? Dr. Marc Sageman's empirical data show a significant correlation between terrorism and the middle class. Simply stated, if the middle class is the source of terrorism, then assimilating people into the middle class will increase terrorism, not decrease it.

I know the idea just expressed sounds dissonant, off-key to most readers -- a wrong note, a mistake. Here, so soon in our journey along the road less traveled, we come to a turnoff. It is a path well worn; the leaves on it are black from footsteps. We must make a choice, and that choice is decisive. We can either (i) minimize, ignore, or reject the dissonant-sounding facts showing that terrorism is, at bottom, a middle class phenomenon. We thereby take the turnoff, cross over to the road more traveled and to The Official Explanation and its music, its mystique. Or, (ii) we retain the facts, and wonder about something: What key is making The Official Explanation of terrorism, despite all its defects, sound "right" to so many people? What key -- and it is necessarily the same key -- is making facts and ideas contrary to that explanation sound "wrong"? Asking those disquieting questions means staying on the road less traveled. It also means removing the shock, the surprise, the fascination, the excitement, the mystique surrounding terrorism and terrorists.

The foundation for an answer was laid at the start of this chapter. A note sounds dissonant, off-key, wrong, because another key, a tonal home, has been established. No note in and of itself is "wrong"; it only sounds wrong in terms of a context, a key. The above questions, then, all boil down to one: what key have we been attuned to?

One key immediately, impressively, presents itself. It is a key to which millions of Westerners have been attuned for almost a 1,000 years. The Crusades of the 1000s-1200s were simultaneously a religious spectacle, a military exploit, and a public spending feat. They were one of the most powerful forces in world history. The Crusades

pulled Western Europe out of the Dark Ages. What event could be more revolutionary?

Could such a seminal event take place without leaving residues? I doubt it. If residues of the Crusades are still with us, they certainly are not limited to The Official Explanation of terrorism. Could they take the form of a general Western predisposition toward war as a way to solve problems? The War on Poverty? The War on Drugs? The War on Cancer? The War on Crime? The War on Terrorism? Looking at all those wars, I cannot help but recall Carl Von Clausewitz's famous dictum: "The subordination of the political point of view to the military would be contrary to common sense, for policy has declared the War; it is the intelligent faculty, War only the instrument, and not the reverse."³³ Nevertheless, and against all common sense, could it be precisely the subordination of politics to war that is taking place in numerous Western societies, particularly America? Otherwise stated, are politics becoming the continuation of war by other means, not vice-versa? And if so, are residues of the Crusades behind that subordination of politics? Did the instrument gain the upper hand over its operator? What if in the movie "2001: A Space Odyssey," Hal The Computer had won the struggle against the astronauts for control?

We come to the crux of the matter, the device/shock unity:

The Official Explanation works like an icon on a computer screen: click on it and a huge, hidden program emerges. But The Official Explanation/Crusades relationship is even more inextricable. William Butler Yeats expressed in his poem "Among School Children" the essential dilemma awaiting anyone attempting to separate the two:

O body swayed to music, O brightening glance,
How can we know the dancer from the dance?

The Official Explanation of terrorism resonates Crusades residues residing in the deepest sediments of Western civilization. Those resonations are how that explanation works as a tonal center, a music key; as such, they are how that explanation becomes meaningful. Traveling from a primordial place nearly a millennium old, those resonances produce the mystique, the music, shrouding terrorism; that mystique in turn serves and protects The Official Explanation by overwhelming all disquieting questions. The astounding power of those

resonances is due to their deep, mostly unconscious condition, a universe of pure potential, unfathomable, of no known limits, shared by millions and millions of people across many generations.

The Crusades: everybody knows it; nobody says it. Well, almost nobody. In the heat of the moment, five days after 9/11, President George W. Bush declared, "This crusade, this war on terrorism is gonna take awhile."³⁴ He was swiftly and resoundingly rebuked for using the word *crusade* to characterize America's response. The rejection was so imposing that to my knowledge neither Bush nor any other American official ever said it again in public.

The word *crusade*, in other words, is taboo, a phenomenon explored in the next chapter. That leaves the only people who employ the word openly and regularly to be...Al Qaida. That fact in turn leaves the Crusades as the only thing President Bush, Al Qaida, and this author agree on.

Why hasn't somebody...? I believe we now have the answer. The unification of The Official Explanation with its mystique/music accounts for why the road less traveled is less traveled. To take it is not merely to question The Official Explanation of terrorism; it is to question the entire 1,000-year-old Crusades standing behind that explanation -- and crusades do not like to be questioned. Primordial, imbedded, legendary, powerful: who wants to face such music?

The Echo Chamber Effect, along with The Official Explanation and the music reverberating inside it, will not be altered by anything said here -- not until the life circumstances generating them change.

What, then, are those circumstances?

The Official Explanation of terrorism has enormous economic and political repercussions. To mention only two, it serves to legitimize (i) domestically the enhancement of power of the Federal Government in general and of the executive branch in particular;³⁵ and (ii) internationally the gigantic United States military presence in the Middle East and Europe.³⁶ Those repercussions are only two reasons why The Official Explanation, when all is said and done, is Official.

Turning to the journalists and other analysts who propagate The Official Explanation, a major clarification is in order:

As has been noted, the mass media, universities, and other institutions on the road more traveled acknowledge the terrorism-

middle class link, but do not -- cannot -- consciously recognize it because of their societal role. That lack of recognition, however, does not mean that their work is without value. On the contrary:

I have yet to see a serious discussion of terrorism that did not offer something constructive. On the road less traveled, the challenge is not to find what is wrong, but to find what is right and to assemble it, develop it, make it meaningful. Professor Leonard B. Meyer believed, as did Einstein, that positive approach to be essential to finding the truth: "Hypotheses gain in plausibility not only through the corroboration of other investigators and through correlation with other fields of inquiry but also by accounting for facts observed but hitherto unexplained theoretically."³⁷ *Not the excluded uneducated poor. Scriptural literalism. Language of evil. A deeper kind of angst. The word "doctor" in front of his name. From the most modernized strata. Trouble sinking roots. On the fringes. Separateness and isolation. Painful transition. In rebellion against his upstanding middle-class parents. Not a new conflict. Utopian rebels. Avant-garde movements that sprang up in Europe and the United States in the early 20th century. University educated converts. Complex psychological reasons. Terrorist impulse. Our own backyard. Could not be more banal.* Such facts and realities observed by analysts on the road more traveled provide a richness of text. However, their observations and insights need to be brought together and made coherent in a logical system of thought -- a theory -- based on facts and a few basic assumptions, to become meaningful. That theory as presented in this essay: terrorism is an outcome of an ideology, middle class rebellion.

Our road less traveled starts by moving what heretofore has been an unconscious afterthought -- the middle class-terrorism link -- to front row and center; Islam, to the periphery. The veil must literally be removed. With that change, the entire context changes for the simple reason that the instant an afterthought is used, it ceases to be an afterthought. We must start to look at what is there, and stop looking at what is not there -- "genuine" fauns included.

That change is the only way we can turn off, even if only briefly, The Official Explanation and its mystique/music -- the *palpable device* and the *shock*. That change is the only way we can transform things that presently must be seen in thought alone into things that can be seen elsewhere, in open discussion.

That change is the only way we can stop being surprised, shocked, and murdered.

Post Script

The Official Explanation caught my attention because it is contrary to everything I saw and heard as a child. I guess it depends on where you grew up and when. All I know is that in the 1950s and early 1960s, there were Moslems and people of Arab backgrounds in Sarasota, Florida, and nobody discriminated against them, unlike the Blacks. To the extent we thought about Arabs as Arabs at all, it was that they were (i) from a faraway, romantic, adventure-filled place with flying carpets and magic lamps, deserts and daring/good-natured/fun-loving rogues, of pyramids and mummies and camels (no doubt impressions formed by Douglas Fairbanks and Rudolph Valentino, Boris Karloff's "The Mummy," Humphrey Bogart's "Casablanca," "Lawrence of Arabia" with Omar Sharif, and the books *The Prophet* by Kahlil Gibran and *1001 Tales of The Arabian Nights* with stories of Ali Baba and Sinbad The Sailor); and (ii) good businessmen: a prominent family with an Arab surname owned a large furniture store. As a child, I never heard a single derogatory remark about Islam or Arabs. Never. I am absolutely sure because I would have remembered it. And I would have remembered it because it would have been maximally weird. It would have been the equivalent of hating somebody because he was from New Zealand.

How does that mid1900s scenario fit with the Crusades as a foundation of Western civilization? Looking back on Sarasota at that time, the innocence of it all strikes me. The extreme nature of that innocence hinted that something not so innocent was boiling just beneath the surface. When something is repressed, it is not destroyed; rather, it resurfaces repeatedly in more puerile forms. The plethora of simple-minded, slapstick comedies of The Marx Brothers, Abbott and Costello, Laurel and Hardy, and The Three Stooges that used the Middle East as a backdrop [*sic*], as well as Ray Steven's 1962, top-ten song, "Ahab The Arab" with his camel named Clyde, are telling examples. Such was The Echo Chamber Effect of the period.

Throughout the Cold War, anti-Islam and anti-Arab feelings were channeled into fighting Communism and the Soviet Union. The latter

stirred up and reverberated the residues of the Crusades in Western culture, forming a screen onto which all sorts of unconscious contents were projected. So deep was the substitution of Communism/Soviet Union for Islam/Arabs, that in 1968, little was made of the fact that it was a Palestinian, Sirhan Sirhan, who murdered Robert Kennedy. Can you imagine what the reaction would be if a similar event happened today?

Innocence is innately superficial, and the superficiality of our innocence became manifest when it was completely blown away on a moment's notice. That is more than a figure of speech. Sarasota, in case you have forgotten, was where President George W. Bush was visiting a school when an aide whispered in his ear that the 9\11 terrorist attacks had occurred.

NOTES: Introduction to PART I and CHAPTER ONE

¹ Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., New York, 1966, p. 248.

² A.L. Kroeber, *Style and Civilizations*, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1963, p. 38. Cited in Leonard B. Meyer, *Music, The Arts And Ideas: Patterns And Predictions in Twentieth-Century Culture*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Illinois, 1994, p. 109.

³ Material for The Faun's Challenge came from: Martin Gayford, "Fake Gauguin 'Faun' Fools Curators, Critics," Bloomberg News, December 20, 2007, http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20670001&refer=home&sid=a2_c; Carol Vogel, "A 'Gauguin' added to a long list of fakes," *International Herald Tribune*, December 14, 2007; Arifa Akbar, "British family of forgers fooled art world with fake of Gauguin 'Faun' sculpture," *The Independent*, December 31, 2007, http://news.independent.co.uk/uk/this_britain/article3247554.ece.

⁴ William Shakespeare, *Richard III*, in *The Norton Shakespeare: Histories*, edited by Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard, and Katharine Eisaman Maus, W.W. Norton and Company, New York, 1997, p. 373.

⁵ Walter Laqueur, *No End to War: Terrorism in The Twenty-First Century*, Continuum, New York, 2004, p. 120.

⁶ Katrin Bennhold, "Sarkozy lets loose in a US. Interview," *International Herald Tribune*, op.cit., October 30, 2007.

⁷ Phillip Blond and Adrian Pabst, "The roots of Islamic terrorism," *International Herald Tribune*, ibid., July 28, 2005.

⁸ « les explications n'expliquent rien. » Related by Paul Matisse, « Avant-Propos », in Marcel Duchamp, *Notes*, Flammarion, Paris, 1999, p. 9.

⁹ Craig S. Smith, "Poverty and little work drives young Saudis toward radical Islam," *International Herald Tribune*, op.cit., December 18, 2002.

¹⁰ Susan Sachs, "Behind the Extremism: Poverty and Frustration," *International Herald Tribune*, ibid., October 15, 2001.

¹¹ Ellen Goodman, "Evil and Blowback: No, Sharp Focus Can't Be Simpleminded," *International Herald Tribune*, ibid., October 29, 2001.

¹² Sigmund Freud analyzed such eruptions in *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*. Carl Jung referred to "unconscious interferences in the waking state, ideas 'out of the blue,' slips, deceptions and lapses of memory, symptomatic actions, etc." C. G. Jung, "The Transcendent Function," in C. G. Jung, *The Collected Works of C.G. Jung*, Volume 8, R.F.C. Hull, translator, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1981, p. 77. (Paragraph 154).

¹³ Jessica Stern, "Get to the roots of terrorism," *International Herald Tribune*, op.cit., April 26, 2002.

¹⁴ That net is cast far beyond backwater MidAmerican airports:

NEW YORK. I wrote a few months ago about a bitter debate in New York over a new school to be called the Khalil Gibran International Academy, an Arabic-English dual-language middle school scheduled to start up with its first 60 students this year....

But, sadly, the school opened without [Debbie] Almontaser, whose brainchild the school is...[S]he voluntarily stepped down as principal.

What happened was this: in mid-August, a group of Muslim women in Brooklyn with no connection to the Khalil Gibran Academy were selling T-shirts that said "Intifada NYC" on them. The group was given office space by a foundation of which Almontaser is a board member.

Asked by The New York Post to comment, Almontaser seemed to want to express the opinion that the woman's group, despite the word "intifada" on the shirt, did not advocate a violent uprising in New York.

"The word basically means 'shaking off'," Almontaser said.

It was an error of judgment on her part, probably an error of somebody not used to speaking to reporters. In other words, given a chance to denounce Arab violence -- the intifada, after all, is synonymous with the Palestinian uprising in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza -- she blew it, playing into the hands of those who were out to get her anyway.

Sure enough, the headline in The Post...was "Intifada Principal," and the headline was followed by a series of editorials, one of them titled "How do you say in Arabic, 'Close It down.'"

What does it all mean? For one thing, the episode occasions a thought about the meaning of diversity, and its limitations...[W]hat becomes of our principles when we are confronted with a

pricklier sort of diversity represented by Muslims?

The second thing the incident exposed: the readiness of the post 9/11 American debate to descend into a kind of hate-mongering and hysteria...

Indeed, the organized hysteria and vitriol that set the trap that Almontaser fell into was itself a kind of terrorism. We were behaving exactly the way Muslim radicals say we behave....

Richard Bernstein, "Letter from America. Back to (Arabic) school: A debate over diversity," *International Herald Tribune*, *ibid.*, September 10, 2007. Although The Official Explanation may not expressly encourage hate-mongering, its net of meaning readily lends itself to that outcome.

The source of the incredible energy manifested in anti-Muslim/Arab hysteria bursts through the surface in Bernstein's last paragraph. That source, noted in our preface, is a central tenet of this essay: *pretty much like them.*

¹⁵ Thomas L. Friedman, "The Pain Behind Al Qaeda's Europe Connection," *International Herald Tribune* *ibid.*, January 28, 2002.

¹⁶ David Ignatius, "See the bin Ladenites as Excrescence of a Painful Transition," *International Herald Tribune*, *ibid.*, October 29, 2001.

¹⁷ Amy Waldman and Salman Masood, "2 arrests show ease of hiding in Pakistan," *International Herald Tribune*, *ibid.*, August 4, 2004.

¹⁸ Jim Yardley, Neil MacFarquhar and Paul Zielbauer, "A Shy Child's Journey to Fiery Mass Murder," *International Herald Tribune*, *ibid.*, October 11, 2001.

¹⁹ Jane Perlez, "Ex-radical turns to Islam of tolerance," *International Herald Tribune*, *ibid.*, June 2/3, 2007.

²⁰ William Pfaff, "Silly Question: Support the Palestinian Authority or Hamas?," *International Herald Tribune*, *ibid.*, December 13, 2001.

²¹ Serge F Kovaleski and Ariana Green, "Presence of suspects puzzling to Scotland," *International Herald Tribune*, *ibid.*, July 9, 2007.

²² Andrew Gumbel, "Dylan Klebold, 17. Eric Harris, 18. The misfits who killed for kicks," *The Independent* (London), ProQuest Information and Learning Company. http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qn4158/is_19990422/ai_n142.

²³ Monica Davey, "Gunman Kills 5 People at City Council Meeting," *The New York Times*, February 8, 2008. This article can be found at the following address: http://www.nytimes.com/2008/02/08/us/08missouri.html?_r=1&ad.

²⁴ Deanna Bellandi, "Gunman's past gave 'no indications at all,'" *Associated Press*, February 15, 2008, The Globe and Mail, CTVglobemedia Publishing Inc., Toronto, Canada, 2008. <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/RTGAM.20080215>.

²⁵ William Pfaff, "Silly Question: Support the Palestinian Authority or Hamas?," *op.cit.*

²⁶ Philip Blond and Adrian Pabst, "Integrating Islam into the West," *International Herald Tribune*, op.cit., February 15, 2008.

²⁷ Albert Einstein, *Relativity: The Special and General Theory*, translated by Robert Lawson, Dover Publications Inc., Mineola, New York, 2001, pp. 148-9. The scientist Stephen Gould had the same acid test for truth: "The mark of any good theory is that it makes coordinated sense of a string of observations otherwise independent and inexplicable." Stephen Gould, "The Piltdown Conspiracy," in Steven Rose, Editor, *The Richness of Life: The essential Stephen Jay Gould*, W. W. Norton and Company, New York, 2007, p 201.

²⁸ Alan Cowell, "Perceived humiliation links cricket and plots," *International Herald Tribune*, op.cit., August 26/27, 2006.

²⁹ Roger Cohen, "A deadly idea defies any simple doctrines," *International Herald Tribune*, ibid., July 20, 2005.

³⁰ Serge F. Kovaleski and Ariana Green, op.cit.

³¹ <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/jfkamericanuniversityaddress.html>.

³² David Brooks, "Trading cricket for jihad," *International Herald Tribune*, op.cit., August 5, 2005. Brooks referred to Marc Sageman, who concluded from his sample of over 100 terrorists: "Members of the global Salafi jihad were generally middle-class, educated young men from caring and religious families, who grew up with strong positive values of religion, spirituality and concern for their communities." Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terrorist Networks*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 2004, p. 96.

For readers interested in the quantitative approach to terrorism, along with Dr. Sageman's work, Alan B. Krueger's *What Makes A Terrorist: Economics and the Roots of Terrorism* is required reading. Krueger's data led him to conclude that terrorists "tend to be middle class or upper middle class..."; that although "the world's attention is currently focused on Islamic terrorist organizations, they are by no means the source of terrorism. No religion has a monopoly on terrorism."; and that "low education, poverty, and other economic conditions" are not significantly correlated with terrorism. Alan B. Krueger, *What Makes A Terrorist: Economics and the Roots of Terrorism*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 2007, pp. 77, 81, 89. For more on the connection between the middle class and terrorism, see in particular Krueger's first lecture, pp. 11-52.

³³ Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, Penguin Books, London, England, 1982, p. 405.

³⁴ Manuel Perez-Rivas, "Bush vows to rid the world of 'evil-doers'," CNN.com, September 16, 2001. <http://archives.cnn.com/2001/US/09/16/gen.bush.terrorism>.

³⁵

Washington: One day after releasing a set of memorandums from the administration of President George W. Bush claiming sweeping presidential powers to bypass legal constraints, Justice Department officials said Tuesday they might soon disclose more secret opinions

about interrogation, surveillance and other national security policies....

The secret opinions, originally issued by Bush administration lawyers after the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, included assertions that the president could use the U.S. military within the United States to combat terrorism suspects and to conduct raids without obtaining search warrants.

They also asserted that the president could unilaterally abrogate foreign treaties, ignore any guidance from Congress in dealing with detainees suspected of terrorism, and conduct a program of domestic eavesdropping without warrants.

Neil A. Lewis and Charles Savage, "Bush memos show vast grab for power," *International Herald Tribune*, op.cit., March 4, 2009.

³⁶ In November 2007, the Defense Department decided against recommendations made three years earlier by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld to cut back the number of U.S. combat troops stationed in Europe.

"What's changed is we're in a longer war," said [David] McKiernan, commander of U.S. Army Europe. "In this era of persistent conflict, we have some fault lines that are there in the European Command."

And McKiernan, speaking of army forces in Europe, said that their "geographic positioning gives us advantage," adding, "They can get to certain places in the world faster."

Thom Shanker, "U.S. to freeze plan for further troop cutbacks in Europe," *International Herald Tribune*, *ibid.*, November 21, 2007.

³⁷ Leonard B. Meyer, op.cit., p. 32.

Every time a middle class person becomes a terrorist, the same question arises: Why? Each time, only mystery and silence remain. Until now. The Source of Terrorism: Middle Class Rebellion breaks the code of an otherwise inexplicable, deadly phenomenon.

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