

Myth versus Hypothesis

Double Space

~~12~~
~~10~~

Since his reelection, George W. Bush has been more impressive in his personal appearances, more sure of himself, more—it is an unhappy word in this context but obligatory—he seems more authentic, more like a President.

I would warrant that before this last election he has always been the opposite of what he appeared to be, which is to say that he ~~was not strong~~ ^{had to work} ~~and not seem secure in his own skin~~ ^{has worked with some skill} ~~rather he worked~~ to pass himself off as a facsimile of macho virtue. That

is not unlike a screen star who has been alcoholic but is now, thanks to AA, a dry drunk who is able to look like ~~hell of a tough guy~~ ^{and ready} on the screen.

He never wavers when in peril. He is inflexible just like the last four years of George W.

Get this position

I would ~~push, however, to~~ ^{actually} assert that inflexibility is not at the root of

Inflexibility

the President's character, ~~no more than honest machismo is the secret of~~

~~many a screen star. Inflexibility serves, instead, as the royal robe that~~

~~blanket (to cover) the awful that smoke) Of course, to~~
~~to cover all too many/arrant impulses which still burn within. They can be~~

dominated only by the inbuilt imperative to keep all that stuff to oneself ~~it~~

is not a happy condition for a Commander-in-Chief. ~~Inflexibility can be the~~

stubbornness of those who are so weak in one part of themselves that they

~~can't admit or for for the buried dirt in the psyche will spring~~

~~loose. In the First World War, there were English generals~~ like that,

the famous, even notorious Sir Douglas Haig, for one. He kept sending

Tommies out across No-Man's-Land ~~where they were killed by the~~

~~in order to German~~
thousands before gaining the long french one hundred yards away. Then the

The son, out of necessity perhaps, developed his own kind of ego. He turned out to be as vain as sin, and as hollow as unsuccessful sin. For some,

drink is the best enhancer available when you are not quite sure who you might be, and are short-suited in the nicest strength of your upper class—which is to feel some reliance on the enrichments of culture that a good education has offered.

If this sense of Bush's character is well-based, then one must accept the increment of strength that victory offers to such a man. He now feels as entitled to national respect as the dry-drunk screen star after a big box-office smash. ~~It is no accident that half men strive with manic intensity for such~~ ~~big~~ certification of their worth. One can see the magnitude of George W's personal happiness now. The smirk is gilt-edged these days.

In contrast, the woe one encounters among Democrats is without parallel ~~in my recollection~~. Just as no President, not even Richard Nixon, was ^{so}detested so strongly by so many of us, so was the belief implicit, just the week before the election, that no matter how deadlocked the polls, it was inconceivable that Bush could triumph. *This conviction* ~~That belief in victory~~ was most intense among the young. Now, the prevailing mood among many young Democrats is not unlike the disbelief that attends the sudden death of a mate or a close friend. One keeps expecting the deceased to be sitting at the table again. Or, the door-bell will ring and there he will be. But, no, he is not there. Bush is the victor, not Kerry. It is analogous to the way people ~~kidnapped~~ *little intensity of a* who have been transported by a dream have to keep reminding themselves on awakening, "I am not in Katmandu. I am in my own bedroom. There

will be no deliverance from George W. Bush. I will have to see his face for the next four years."

Of course
It is useless to suggest that if Kerry had won Ohio and *had* become

President despite a deficit of several million votes, *that down the road* the situation could have

proved disastrous
been *worse* for Democrats. Kerry, given his 50-50 stand on the war, would

have had to pay for all of Bush's mistakes and vanities in the quagmire of *in Iraq. He would then*
have inherited ~~the~~ *what may* ~~not~~ *yet* be Bush's
Iraq final title of Lord Quagmire!

The truth is that

had The truth is that neither candidate was ready *had* in the rhetorical mail of

Indeed
the last election to begin to say why we are really there. Yes. Why? Why,

indeed, are we in Iraq? It is likely that a ~~great~~ majority of Americans are

looking for that
still ~~unable~~ to offer an answer, no matter whom they voted for.

Undeniably

I am one of them.

I have probably spent a fair part of the last two years brooding over

this question. Obviously, I am not unique in this. Like most large topics

which present no quick answers, the question becomes obsessive. ~~Even~~
~~among those who voted for Bush, many had deep reservations about the~~
~~value and purpose of the war.~~

This afternoon, let me make ~~add~~ one more attempt. I would ask,
however, that you allow me to do it through the means by which I think.
That takes a few minutes. I do not come to ^{my} ~~new~~ conclusions ^{with the} ~~via the quicker,~~
mental skills and intuitions of a politician, a columnist, a journalist, an
academician in foreign relations or political science, no, I brood along as a
novelist. We novelists, if we are any good, have our own ~~cognitive~~ means.

What may establish some mutuality with this audience, however, is
that we ^{do} ~~also~~ have ^{one firm} ~~a firm~~ basis in common. Good novelists and good
journalists are engaged, after all, in ^a ~~one~~ parallel search. We are always

trying to find a better approach to ~~what has become the established truth.~~ ^{established truth}

~~For that~~ truth is usually skewed by the needs of powerful interests.

Journalists engage in this worthy ^{tricky} venture by digging into the hard

earth for those slimy creatures we call facts. ^{that} But facts are rarely ^{clear enough} hard and

^{to be} false or true, ^{clearly} almost never undeniably false or true.

Novelists work in a different manner. ^{we} They begin with fictions. That

^{we} is to say, they make suppositions about the nature of reality. Put another

^{we} way, they live with short and long term hypotheses which, when well-

chosen, can enrich ^{our} their minds and—it is always a hope—^{on some} their readers'

minds as well. Hypotheses are, after all, one of the ~~most~~ incisive ways by

which we try to estimate what a reality might be. Each new bit of evidence

^{we require} that comes in serves to weaken the hypothesis or to strengthen it. With a

good premise, we may even get closer to reality.

sooner or later, ^{has} to be discarded.

Take, ~~for example~~ the unhappy, but super-excited state that a man or woman can find themselves in when full of jealousy. Their minds are quickened, their senses become more alert. If a wife believes her husband is having an affair, then every time he comes home, she is more aware of his presence than she has been in previous weeks, months, or years. Is he guilty? Is the way in which he folds his napkin a sign of some unease? Is he being too accommodating? Her senses quicken at the possibility that another woman—let us call her Victoria—is the object of his attention. Soon, the wife is all but convinced that he is having an affair with Victoria. Definitely. No question. But, then, on a given morning, she discovers that the lady happens to be in China. Worse. Victoria has actually been

teaching in Beijing for the last six months. Ergo, the hypothesis has been
confuted. If the wife is still convinced that the husband is ~~actively~~
~~is~~ ~~unfaithful~~ ~~another~~ woman must be substituted.

The value of an hypothesis is that it can stimulate your mind and
heighten your concentration. The danger is that it can distort your brain.
Thoughts of revenge are one example. The first question may be: Am I too
cowardly to exercise this revenge? One can wear oneself down to the bone
with that little suspicion. Or, one's moral sense can be activated. Does one
have the right to seek revenge? Hypotheses on love usually prove even
more disruptive. The most basic is, of course: Am I really in love? Is this
love? How much am I in love? What is love, after all? To a family man,
the question can become: How much do I love my children? Am I ready
to sacrifice myself for them? Real questions. Questions that have no quick

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to sacrifice myself for them? Real questions. Questions that have no quick

answer. Good hypotheses depend on real questions, which is to say

questions that do not always generate ~~useful~~ immediate answers.

Patriotism offers its ~~own~~ ^{set of} doubts. For some, it is not enough to wave a
~~flag~~ ^{The people in fascist} flag. Fascist countries ~~after all~~ always wave flags. So, some Americans

are still ready to ask whether it is false patriotism to support our country

under any and all conditions. Others, a majority, no doubt, seem to feel that

one's nation ~~always~~ demands an unquestioning faith, and so you must

always be ready to ~~declare~~ ^{believe} that the people of our nation are superior—by

their blood alone—to the people of other nations. In that sense, ~~is~~

patriotism ~~not~~ ^{is} analogous to family snobbery. Indeed, ^{one can ask whether} (patriotism ~~is~~ ^{is} a poor

^{is the poor} man's equivalent of ^{the} ~~a~~ ^{inbreed} upper-class sense of superiority?

These questions ^{can us to ask: what} provoke anxiety. ~~What, after all,~~ is the nature of my

country now? ~~Is America in its own moral peril, some of us will ask? Do~~

~~Do~~ we have the right to be in Iraq? Why are we there?

Before we look at the familiar answers that have been given to us by

the administration, the media, and the opposition, allow me to ^{an} go on one

~~more~~ excursion. I will say that, ^{good} what intrigues me most about hypotheses is

that ^{good} ~~at their best~~ they bear a close relation to serious fiction. The serious

novel looks for situations and characters who ^{can} will come alive ^{enough} ~~efficiently~~ to

surprise the writer. If he or she starts with one supposition, the actions of

the characters often lead the story some distance away from what was

planned. In that sense, hypotheses are ^{not only} like fictions ^{but can be compared to} of news stories — they

~~once the situation is presented,~~
~~posit a situation where~~ subsequent events can act like surprisingly lively

characters ~~the or~~ ready to prove or disprove how one thought the original

322T Bor

situation would develop. The value of a good hypothesis, like a good fiction, is that whether it all turns out more or less as expected, or is altogether contrary, the mind of the reader as well as the author is nonetheless enriched.

~~322T~~
yes, yet

A good novel, therefore, like a good hypothesis, becomes an attack on the nature of reality. (If attack seems too violent for some, then translate my

notion
a word here think

of it as) ~~Call it~~ intense inquiry.) ~~The~~ basic assumption is that reality is

But the

ever-changing. The more intense the situation, the more unforeseeable

will be the denouement. Reality, by this logic, is not yet classified. ~~Implicit~~

The honey

the value of rests on
in a serious novel is the assumption that the explanations our culture has

are not profound working on a
given us on profound matters do not go deep enough. As one works on a

novel, one feels oneself getting closer and closer to new questions, better

ones, questions that are harder to answer. It's as if in writing novels, you

14a

At ~~regret~~ ^{laid out} this much ~~good~~, I am
a (most ready to ^{leave this long introduction} ~~enter~~ ^{to what I have yet to say,} ~~conclude~~
~~that~~ ^{and} ~~presume~~. But for the sheer
fun of the next nation, let me
present it as a beguippe, not
necessary for my argument, but there
~~certainly not without~~ ^{for} its flavor.
So, I would claim that ~~there is~~
one more interesting bond
between hypotheses and ~~serious~~ fiction
~~journalism~~ ^{is that} ~~and~~ ~~serious~~ fiction.
~~They~~ ^{is that} they both have something
to say about

P 14 b

don't assume there are absolutes or incontrovertible facts. Nor do you

expect to come to a firm or final answer. Rather the questions are pursued

in the hope they will open into richer and more useful insights, which in turn will bring forth sharper questions.

Let me then repeat ^{the} point. Novelists approach reality, but they do

not capture it. No good novel ever arrives at total certainty, not unless you

are Charles Dickens and are writing A Christmas Carol. Just so, few

hypotheses ever come to closure. Not every Victoria teaches in China.

[Another and most interesting bond between hypotheses and serious,

fiction is that both have a great deal to say about the living forms of sex.

For a long time, I've amused myself with the notion that the poem, the short

story, and the novel can be compared to phases of sex. The short poem,

certainly, is analogous to a one-night stand. It may come off as brilliant, or

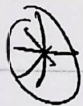
it can be a bummer. A love affair of reasonable duration is, all too often,

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and insert
we will then have 13, 14, 14a, 14b

LOSER head of p 13

Durayn*

p14b



like a short story. What characterizes most short stories is that they look to suggest something fundamental by
~~say one thing at~~ the end. In their crudest form, when young men write their
early pieces, the last sentence almost always has its echo of: "He felt old,
and sad, and tired." ~~The short story usually tries to make its point.~~ By
analogy, it may be fair to say that few affairs come to an end without being
characterized—usually uncharitably—by the participants. Marriage,
however, like a novel, is closer to a metamorphosis of attitudes. The end of
one chapter may leave the husband and wife ready to break up; they cannot
bear each other. In the morning, which commences the next chapter, they
discover to their mutual surprise that they are back in the sack. Reality
varies from chapter to chapter.

I wonder if I have used this as a device
~~I have gone to this length in order~~ to suggest that many of us who do

not hold fundamental beliefs approach our sense of reality, therefore, by

~~and even by our literary sources~~
 way of our working hypotheses. So, on the road to Iraq, we were engaged
 It is certainly true that on the road
 to Iraq we were offered more than a few narratives
 with a series of varying suppositions for why we were so obviously hell-

bent for war.

In the beginning, some said that George W. Bush, was trying to
 validate his father by occupying Baghdad—others argued that he wished to
 appear superior to George H.W. Two opposed hypotheses. Each made a
~~one-page~~ neat article for one or another ~~open~~ magazine.

Another hypothesis which soon arose was that such a war would be
 evil. Shed no blood for oil ^{that} became the cry. Quite likely, it was correct in
 part, at least, but it was ^{as} harsh in argument ^{as} like the prose of any ill-written

tract. Others offered a much more virtuous reason: Conquering Iraq would
 democratize the Middle East. Problems between Israel and Palestine could
 be happily settled. In the event, this proved to be nearer to a fairy tale than

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a logical proposition. All the same, it was much favored by all the logical neo-cons, plus a surprising number of liberals like Bill Keller of the New York Times, David Remnick, and David Pollack. [CK]

In its turn, the administration presented us with weapons of mass destruction. That lived in the American mind like an intelligence thriller. Would we locate those nightmares before they blew us up? It became the largest single argument for going to war. Colin Powell put his political honor on the chopping block for that assertion.

There were other hypotheses—would we or would we not soon find *which* Osama bin Laden? *That* became a short story like "The Tiger and the Lady"—no ending. *On the eve of war,* *night* ~~Early on~~ there was a blood-cult novel in the ~~air~~. It was

Shock and Awe—had we driven a quick stake through the heart of Saddam

Hussein? Good ~~patriotic~~ Americans could feel they were on the hunt for Dracula.

Vivid hypotheses. None held up. We did not learn then and we still do not begin to agree why we embarked on this most miserable of wars.

Occam's Razor does suggest that the simplest explanation which is ready to answer a variety of separate questions on a puzzling matter has a great

likelihood of being the most correct explanation. One answer ^{can} ~~does~~ emerge

then from the good bishop's formula: it is that we marched into a full-sized

war because it was the simplest solution the President and his party could

find for the immediate ^{impress in which America found itself} problems of America. ~~This does not mean that there~~

~~So, it was not that~~
~~was only one reason that drove us forward, one cabal behind the war.~~

Yes, how much we needed
~~Rather, the administration's intensity came from the need for a solution to~~

our developing and ~~major~~ problems as a superpower.

(Fix = idea - a war would overthrow his florida presidency.)

The first problem, which could ^{yet} become the most worrisome, was that the nation's scientific future, and its technological skills, ^{seemed to} might well be in distress. American students at STEM ^{studies} subjects—S.T.E.M., science, technology, engineering and mathematics—^{appeared} no longer seem to be equal to those Asian and European students who ^{were} ~~are~~ also studying advanced courses at our universities. For pleasure-loving American students, STEM subjects ^{have seemed} may ~~seem~~ too difficult, too unattractive. Moreover, the American corporation was now ready to outsource its own future, even eager to do so. Given drastically lower factory wages in Third World countries, there may have appeared no alternative to maintain ~~continued~~ large profits. All the same, if American ^{factory} jobs were now in danger of disappearing, and our skills at technology were suffering in comparison to Europe and to Asia, then

relations between American labor and the corporation could go on tilt.

That was not the only storm cloud over the land.

Back in 2001, back before 9/11, the divide between pop culture and fundamentalism was gaping. In the view of the religious right, America was becoming heedless, loutish, irreligious, and blatantly immoral. ~~More so every year.~~ Half of all American marriages were ending in divorce. The

Catholic Church was suffering a series of agonizing scandals. The FBI had

males in their woodwork, who
been profoundly shaken by the recognition that one of its most important
worked for the Soviet, and by a
and Mafia hitler on close terms with
their own agents on the scene.
and trusted agents, a career man of the finest sort, a devoted anti-

~~Communist, had been a Russian agent for a decade and a half. Up here in~~

(big league)
~~Boston, FBI men had been working with a Mafia informant who happened~~

~~to be a skilled professional killer, and they knew it.~~

~~In the face of such clouding of our horizons,~~ ^H posed with the spectre of
^{our own super-power}
 a superpower, economically and spiritually out of kilter, the best solution ~~is~~

~~hand for Compassionate Conservatism~~ seemed ~~willy-nilly~~ ^{That} to be War. ~~War~~

^{an}
 would offer ~~the liveliest~~ avenue for recapturing America—not, mind you, by

unifying the country, not at all. By now, that was close to impossible.

Given, however, that the country was deeply divided, the need might be to

separate it further. ~~That would work if one could do it~~ ³ in such a way that

one's own half could become much more powerful ^{for that,} than the other. But ~~is~~

^{For that, Americans had to be encouraged}
~~implement this venture, democracy must be altered. The time had come to~~

^{to} live with all the certainties of myth while by-passing the sharp edge of

^{inquiry}
 inquiries implicit in hypothesis.

The difference is crucial. An hypothesis opens the mind to thought,

to comparison, to doubt, to the elusiveness of truth. If this country was

founded in great part on the notion that enough people possessed enough good will, and enough desire for growth and discovery to prosper, and this most certainly included spiritual and intellectual discovery, then, or so went the premise, democracy could thrive more than monarchy or theocracy.

Of course, all these political forms depend on their myths. Myths are tonic to a nation's heart. If abused, however, they are poisonous. For myths are frozen hypotheses. *Serious questions are* ~~The question is~~ answered by declaration and will not be re-opened. ~~There can be no search to find a better premise.~~ The need is for a morality tale *a child's interest* ~~at the level of a child's tale.~~ Good will overcome a dark enemy. For the Bush administration, 9/11 came as a deliverance. The new myth even bore some relation to reality. ~~Islam was, indeed, our enemy.~~

There was no question that Islamic terrorists were opposed to all we stood for, good or bad. They did not call us the Great Satan for too little.

Nonetheless, the danger presented by this enemy had to be expanded ~~for~~

Our paranoia had to be intensified. We were encouraged to worry about the American consumption. The security of every shopping mall in America,

~~was in~~ had to be put into question. Now, the overriding myth was not merely the

implacable danger of Islam, but its nearness to us. To oppose the fears we

generated in ourselves, we would call on our most dynamic American

myths. We had had, after all, a lifetime of watching action films.

The possibility of weeding terrorists out through international police

action never came into real question. We needed much more than that. War

is, obviously, a mightier rallying ground than a series of local police actions.

Yet, half of America was opposed to our advance toward war with Iraq.

Half of us were asking one way or another: "How much goodness has

America brought to the world? How much has it exploited the world?

The President, however, had its own imperatives. Keep America fixed on myth. He went all the way back to Cotton Mather. We must war constantly against the invisible kingdom of Satan. Stand at Armageddon and battle for the land. It was fortified by a belief which many Republicans, some of the most intelligent and some of the most stupid, accepted in full. It was the conviction that America was exceptional, and God had a special interest in America. God wanted us to be a land superior to other nations, a realm to lift His vision into greater glory. So, the myth of the frontier, which demanded a readiness to fight without limit, became part of our exceptionalism. "Do what it takes." No matter how deeply one was embedded in near to inextricable situations, one would complete the job! "Bring 'em on!" ~~Yes,~~ the myth was crucial to the Bush administration. The

last thing it needed was to contend with anything like a ^{real} closer approach to reality.

This attempt to take over the popular American mind has certainly not been unsuccessful, but it does generate a new and major hypothesis which would argue that the people of the U.S. were systematically, even ~~have been~~ programmatically, deluded from the top down. With a determination that

only profound contempt for the popular mind can engender, we were sold the notion that this war would be honorable, necessary, self-protective, decent, fruitful for democracy, and dedicated to any and all forms of human goodness. I would suggest that there was close to zero sincerity at the top.

The leaders of this country who forced the war through, were neither idealistic nor innocent. They had known what they were doing. It was basic. Do what it takes. They had decided that if America was to be able to

Beginning

Karl Rove ^{was there by} may have been one of the first thinkers in power to

recognize that there were substantial powers ^{to be obtained by catering to} available to stupid stubborn

people, and George W. Bush would be the man to harvest such resources.

George W. was not stupid, but he understood stupid people very well. They

were not dumb, their minds were not physically crippled in any way. They

^{had chosen to be stupid because that offered its own}
were stupid out of choice. Stupidity was a species of power. To win a great
own kind of power.

many small contests of will, they needed only to remain stubborn, to ignore

all evidence. Bright people could ^{break down} ~~cannot get~~ (trying to argue with them.

Bush understood this, he knew how to use it. ^{this took} It would enable him to

~~maintain his power while he cultivated a personality that would encourage~~

~~stupid people to believe he was one of them~~ If the leader of the country is no

~~better and higher waster,~~
brighter than me, then, what the hell my son also has a chance.

~~what was out there. Rove had said~~
~~that his mission was for the Republicans~~
~~to be in power for the next twenty years~~

solve its problems, then the country had to become an empire. For American capitalism to survive, exceptionalism rather than cooperation with other advanced nations had become the necessity. From their point of view, there had been ten lost years of initiatives, ten years in the cold, but America now had an opportunity to cash in again on the great bonanza that had fallen its way in 1991 when the Soviet Union went bankrupt in the arms race. At that point, or so believed the exceptionalists, America could and should have taken over the world and thereby safeguarded our economic future for decades at least with a century of hegemony to follow. Instead, these exceptionalists had been all but consumed with frustration over what they saw as the labile pussyfooting of the Clinton Administration. Never have liberals been detested more. But now, at last, 9/11 had provided an

opportunity for America to resolve some problems. Now, America could embark on the great adventure of empire.

These exceptionalists also happened to be hard-headed realists. They were ready to face the fact that most Americans might not have any real desire for global domination. America was pleasure-loving, which, for exceptionalist purposes, was almost as bad as peace-loving. So, the invasion had to be presented with an edifying narrative. That meant the alleged reason for the war had to live in utter independence of the facts. The motives offered to the American public need not have any close connection to likelihoods. Fantasy ^{was} ~~could~~ serve better. As, for example, bringing democracy to the Middle East. Protecting ourselves against weapons-of-mass destruction. These themes had to be driven home to the public with all the paraphernalia of facts, supposed confirmative facts. For

that, who but Colin Powell could serve as the clot-buster? So, Powell was sold a mess of missile tubes by the CIA. Of course, for this to work, the CIA also had to be compromised. That was there to be done. Most people in the CIA are career-motivated. Advancing one's career does not often have much to do with getting the right stuff in intelligence. Successful people in the Agency, as in many another bureaucracy, get to where they are by knowing what is wanted at the top. While intelligence, in itself, is ideally an ascetic activity, it can, like most ascetic endeavors, be miserably corrupted. Doubtless, that is true of every intelligence agency in the world. They end up producing what they feel is needed for their country, for their own career, or just for their next step. When such factors are at odds with each other, intelligence pays the price. So the CIA was abominably compromised by the move to go to war with Iraq. Most analysts who had

information that Iraq had very little or nothing in the way of WMD gave it up. The need at the top of the Agency to satisfy the President cut them off.

So we went forward in the belief that Iraq was an immediate threat, and

were told that hordes of Iraqis would welcome us with flowers. Indeed, it

was our duty as good Americans to bring democracy to a country ^{long dominated by} ~~(long dominated)~~ by an

evil man.

Democracy, however, is not ^{an antibiotic} ~~a magical serum~~ to be injected into a ^{polluted} foreign body. ^{serum} ~~It is not a magical serum, rather, democracy~~ Democracy is a grace. In its ideal state, it is noble. In

practice, in countries who have lived through decades and centuries of strife

and revolution and the slow elaboration of safeguards and traditions,

democracy becomes a political condition which can often withstand the

corruptions and excessive power-seeking of enough humans to remain

viable as a good society.

It is never routine, however, never automatic. Like each human being, democracy is always growing into more or less. Each generation must be alert to the dangers that threaten democracy as directly as each human who wishes to be good must learn how to survive in the labyrinths of ~~the confusions of~~ envy, greed, and ~~moral~~ judgment. Democracy, by the nature of its assumptions, has to grow in moral depth, or commence to deteriorate.

~~Democracy is social levitation.~~ ^{So} The constant danger that besets it is the ~~document~~ unadmitted pull of fascism. In all of us there is not only a love of freedom, but a wretchedness ~~and confusion~~ of spirit that can look for its opposite—as identification with the notion of ~~total~~ order and ~~total~~ control from above.

The real idiocy in assuming that democracy could be brought to Iraq was to assume that its much-divided people had not been paying spiritually for their compromises. The most evil aspect of fascism is that all but a few

are obliged to work within that system or else their families and their own prospects suffer directly. So the mass of good people in a fascist state are filled with shame, ugly memories of their own small and occasionally large treacheries, their impotence, and their frustrated hopes of revenge. Willy-nilly, their psyches are an explosive mess. They are decades away from democracy. There is no quick fix. Democracy has to be earned by a nation through its readiness for sacrifice. Ugly lessons in survival breed few democrats.

It is all but impossible to believe that men as hard-nosed, inventive, and transcendentally cynical as Karl Rove or Dick Cheney, to offer the ^{likeliest} ~~best~~ two candidates at hand, could have believed that quick democracy was going to be feasible for Iraq.

We are back to oil. It is a crude assertion, but I expect Cheney, for one, is in Iraq for just that reason. Without a full wrestler's grip on control of the oil of the Middle East, America's economic problems will continue to

expand. That is why we will remain in Iraq for years to come. ~~Nothing will justify the investment of trillions of dollars. We know that it will not. For nothing will be gained if we depart after the new semi-oppressive state that is cobbled~~

~~Even if we pretend it is a democracy we will together will be ready to call itself a democracy. That will be only a nominal victory, and we will have to return and face all the problems which~~

~~led us to Iraq in the first place, plus the fact that a couple of hundred billion dollars were spent doing just that on the quagmire.~~

~~Let me use a novelist's privilege again and make the attempt to enter Cheney's mind. I think, as he sees it, it will be crucial to hang in~~

~~will be crucial.~~ New sources of income are going to be needed, new

trillions, if for nothing else than to pay for the future social programs that

will have to take care of the humongously large labor force that will remain

endemically jobless because of globalism. That may yet prove to be the

final irony of Compassionate Conservatism. It will expand the role of

government in our economy *even as it searches for empire, and in our that*

For Cheney's looming question will be then
In the interim, the question for Cheney is how to contend with the

~~Iraqi oil companies of the oil~~
~~and the western world.~~
~~Iraqi oil companies of the oil~~
how to bring off of Iraqi oil *profits*

be at his best to bring off some sizable capture. Of course, he is no weak

man, he is used to doing what it takes, no matter how it smells, he is full of

passed along by all these the collective
the hard wisdom received from wealthy Republican bankers whose gene

who stream has been fortified for the last hundred and twenty-five years *have been*

foreclosing on widows who cannot keep up with the mortgage on the farm.

Cheney knows

He has learned. You cannot stop a man who is never embarrassed by

Cheney
himself—he will be full of bare-faced virtue over why—for the well-being

of all—we have to help the Middle East to sell its oil properly. We will

deem it appropriate that the Europeans are not to expect a sizable share since, after all, they do not deserve it, not given their corrupt deals with Hussein under so-called UN supervision. Yes, Cheney will know how to sell the package for why we are still in Iraq, and Rove will be on his flank, guiding Bush, ~~assisting loyalty, showing~~ ^{an} how to lay it out ~~equitably~~ ^{equally} for the American people.

It seems to me that if the Democrats are going to be able to work up a new set of attitudes and values that will better serve for their future candidates, it might not be a bad idea for them to do a little more creative thinking about the question for which they have had, up to now, naught but ~~puny suggestions on how to get back a~~ ^{which is how do you} ~~puny explanations. It is the vote of the fundamentalists.~~

^{pick up} ~~pick up~~ ^{little of the fundamentalist's vote,} ~~pick up~~ ^{come near to} If by 2008, the Democrats hope to pick up a meaningful fraction of such voters, they will have to find candidates and field workers who can

spread the word down south—that is, find the equivalent of Democratic

all those good people
missionaries to work on a ~~true segment of fundamentalists~~, those precisely

who may be in awe of Jehovah's wrath, but love Jesus, love Jesus so much

more. ^A Worked upon with enough zeal, some of the latter might come to

~~do have~~ *live much more closely*
recognize that these much-derided liberals ~~actually live in the spirit of Jesus~~
than the Republicans in the real spirit of Jesus,

whether they believe every word of Scripture or not. ~~Most fundamentalists,~~

it is still they
~~forced to choose at the cost of their souls, will, of course, cleave to the~~

~~printed word of Scripture, but those for whom the spirit of Jesus is truly~~

~~paramount might actually be ready to wonder whether it might not be the~~

~~It is that~~
liberals rather than the Republicans who worry ~~more~~ about the fate of the

those liberals,
poor, the afflicted, the needy, and the disturbed. ~~They~~ even care about

~~sinner~~ and the well-being of criminals in our prisons. They are more ready

to save the forests, refresh the air of the cities, and clean up the rivers. It *might*

for a good fundamentalist
~~would~~ be agonizing to vote for a candidate who did not read the Scriptures
yet every day, *yet he ready to* some of them might say: I no longer know where to place my
 vote. I have joined the ranks of the undecided.

More power to such a man. More power to all who would be ready
 to live with the indecision implicit in democracy. It is democracy, after all,
 which first brought the power and virtue of good questions to the attention
of the people rather than restricting
~~of humankind~~ *the matter for the upper classes.*

Long may good questions prevail. Thank you.

