Lieutenant Pinkerton and Empire: Calling for a new La Convivencia in a Post 9/11- Hegemony

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Post 9/11 events not only exposed the visible and invisible aspects of the often interwined self-interest of political, economic and especially religious elites but presented a practical and ideological vacuum susceptible to “once and for all” opportunistic fantasies of ultra and Neo-conservative, cum religious, fanatics.

While the endless flow of Neo-liberal and Christian-fundamentalist propaganda destroyed hard-won civil ideals and democratic freedoms, there are dangerous signs of continuing hubris and the intrusion of lost, or discounted, multiple histories and (in)visible portents of a future other than the triumphalism of Western, especially “exceptionalist” U.S., interests.

Desperately needed is a political and policy discourse based on the recovery of what Wheatcroft (2003, p. 165) refers to as the “double history” of what is visible on the surface and the “buried history” of what is invisible. Unless this happens, the great age of tolerance and co-existence between Muslims and Christians - La Convivencia - cannot, and will not, be re-countenanced.

Key words: Empire; Invisibility; La Convivencia; Madame Butterfly: Neo-liberalism; Religious fundamentalism; Terrorism.

CODA

Whilst not much democratic rhetoric coincided with a Victorian/colonial era combining patriotic images of colonized empires, Japan was one of the last countries to be forcefully opened to imperial and ideological vacuum and enchantment, at least with religion and exoticism. There are many depictions of this fixation with Japanese eroticism. Julien Viaud (1850-1923), as a career naval officer, authored Madame Chrysantheme, in 1887, setting narratives for Westerners acquiring a temporary Japanese “wife” in Japanese treaty ports. In 1898, an US lawyer/writer John Luther Long wrote the sort story, Madam Butterfly – a more romantic depiction of the money-obsessed treaty port wife. Lieutenant Pinkerton ‘banished from a Mediterranean to an Asiatic station’ finds a house and wife converts her to Christianity and banishes her relatives from their lives. When returning to Japan with his new American wife, Pinkerton does not bother with his Japanese wife and son. Long received much criticism for his depiction of a U.S. officer – coarse, crude and patronizing with this depiction of dishonour and deception prevailing in Puccini’s operatic version of the exploitative narrative associated with Madame Butterfly throughout the 20th Century. A 1993 staging, for example, is set in Nagasaki of the late 1930s where Madame Butterfly is clearly a prostitute longing for all things “American”. This rendition of colonialism has a bomb exploding over Nagasaki with the operatic stage filled with corporate logos of modern Japan.

As Obama destabilizes yet another society (Pakistan) in the interests of the American empire, monotonous talk of the end of American hegemony is mostly a way of avoiding mounting serious opposition to it (Ali, 2010, p., 68). Continuity of American foreign policy across administrations contrary to claims that Bush/Cheney years were exceptional rather than conventional. Obama’s conduct has provided it. With his further escalation of the War on Terror – or Evil as Obama prefers - has American drones and special forces busier than before not only in Afghanistan and Pakistan but also in Somalia and Yemen as newer terrorist locations. Rendition is upheld as a practice, domestic wire taps continue, yet another coup is under-written in Central America and Japan continues to be treated as a client state (Ali, 2010, p. 69). Obama shows no signs of easing the occupation of Japan – Hiroshima and Nagasaki is clearly not enough as the assault and rape of Japanese women in Okinawa continues the “butterfly” effect. Little of American imperial dominion has changed under Obama.
Historically, the model for the current variation of imperial presidency is Woodrow Wilson, no less a pious Christian whose every word was peace, democracy or self determination whilst US armies invaded Mexico, occupied Haiti and attacked Russia and his treaties handed one colony after another to partners in war (Ali, 2010, p. 73). Against the metaphoric “Wailing Wall of Democracy” (Witt, 2010), Pinkertons and empire resonate and much transgression continues to occur. A great deal of hubris and, even more, hypocrisy permeates heavily conflicted national interest and religious, fundamentalist posturing. To expect Obama to prosecute members of the previous administration is absurd. He is an imperial president and all those who run empires commit crimes (Ali, 2010, p. 116).

INTRODUCTION

This paper proposes that the putative “unending” “War on Terror” involves a form of enchantment (Bettelheim, 1991), a rhetoric of “evil” (Kellner, 2007, p. 624; Ivie & Giner, 2007, p. 580) and a fear from within and without (Thorne & Kouzmin, 2007/2008; 2010). This enchantment leads many to consider that is it possible and, in fact, essential to go into combat with a concept (terror) or a form of warfare (terrorism) to the end of time. What is required to break this “Monster Myth” (Warner, 1994) is to locate within the “War on Terror” those matters which are not delusional but represent “vigorous” ways of leading one to “make sense of universal matters” (Kellner, 2007; Warner, 1994, p. xiii).

Such disenchantment should recover the universality of hiding pragmatic self-interest within mythic formulations -- to remind one that elites flux both visibility and invisibility to serve specific interests (Thorne, 2005; Thorne & Kouzmin, 2004; 2006; 2007a). Specifically, this disenchantment should locate the purposeful, hegemonic interests of empire (Hartnett & Mercieca, 2007; Johnson, 2004) and imperialism (Thorne & Kouzmin, 2004; 2006) within the pervasiveness of a presumed unending “War on Terror” (Ivie & Giner, 2007).

President Bush [...] begins his second inaugural address with a subtle nod to born-again Americans and all those who saw 9/11 not as an event with specific economic, historical and cultural causes but as evidence of the coming apocalypse. In short, we are not in the time of political parties [...] or citizen action -- we are in God’s time (Bush, 2005; Hartnett & Mercieca, 2007, p. 609).

Post 9/11 mythology, corporate media -- inspired “fear campaigns”, specifically the media becoming the “weapons of mass hysteria” (Kellner, 2007, p. 627), stabilized related enveloping, hegemonic Neo-liberal, and Post-modern-condoned, fantasies of a post-Cold-War era of global integration, based on the supremacy of Western notions of democracy, free markets and information and communications technology (ICT). Yet Al-Qaeda’s surgical strikes for maximum effect, demonstrated the persistence of age-old antagonisms based on religion, race, ethnicity and geography. Al-Qaeda’s actions evidenced that theocratic “Arabism” (Ali, 2008; Telhami, 2008) was not simply melting into the global, supposedly secular, cosmopolitan, social compact. The reactive “Coalition of the Willing” manifested the enduring military power of chauvinistic nations. Events post the 2008 Global Financial Crisis (GFC) continue to evidence the grave dangers of the Neo-liberal inspired, unregulated, worldwide spread of “free-markets” that were supposedly no longer constrained by any earthly, economic physicalities (Thorne, 2010). More recently, the rise of the “Arab street” and the yearning for “democracy” remains constrained by the existing Western dominated geo-political order that allows/supports uprising in some locations but not in others. The politics of oil are still tainted by the gunships/drones of empire.

Even after the second Bush presidency, the range of ideas considered in contemporary, American public affairs is very limited, slanted, in many ways, to benefit elites. No serious observer of American politics, for example, expects President Obama to be able to re-cast this Bush “consensus” and take U.S. policy in radically, new directions’ (deHaven-Smith et al, 2010, p. 134). ‘Political-economic - [military] complexes pose moral hazards - criminogenic temptations - for top leaders in business and government because available assets can be used to wield dominant control over the national political agenda and the long-term prospects of the political and economic interests involved” (deHaven-Smith et al, 2010, p. 137).
"Patriotism", "manifest destiny" and "exceptionalism" continue unabated. The refusal by President Obama, in a speech on national security, to formally investigate the abuse of power and the Constitution by the Bush/Cheney regime (Obama, May 21, 2009), indicates a sense of plus ca change (Thorne & Kouzmin, 2010) in foreign policy platforms. Obama’s "promise of a democracy where we can find the strength and grace to bridge divides and unite in common action" is essentially a scriptural confession conditioned more by the Old Testament than the sermon on the mount or any notion of La Convivencia (Obama, 2008 cited in Alter, 2011, p. 2).

These post 9/11 events not only exposed the visible and invisible aspects of the often intertwined self-interest of political, economic and, especially, religious elites, but presented a practical and ideological vacuum susceptible to "once and for all" opportunist fantasies of ultra and Neo-conservative, cum religious, fanaticism for whom the U.S. administration "represents the Godly side in the "war on terror" as well as the multiple cultural wars at home; hence anything [...] that is said [...] is justifiable in advancing the cause of good over evil' (Kellner, 2007, p. 641).

This emptiness promotes a "generative multiplicity" of martyrs (Wheatcroft, 2003) which assumes mythic proportions and threatens to continue forever. Essentially, one finds oneself in a seemingly unyielding, now-eternal, crisis where any conviction involving common humanity, and its ability to mitigate conflict, has been compromised by the exposure to hegemonic forms of religious fundamentalism and secular, economic imperialism within the mythology of the global commons.

The most pressing danger is that one is left with unwinnable wars and/or an unsustainable peace, with an operant mythology of unceasing conflict between perceived "infidels" which presages a return to the Cold-War doctrines of Mutually Assured Destruction. Far more preferable would be to confront the a-historic, unending "War on Terror" enchantment with a much more real-politic, historically-resonant formulation of La Convivencia or co-existence among religious and/or ethnic groups which existed in Spain and the Levant for centuries (Karabell, 2007; Menocal, 2002; Webster, 2004; Wheatcroft, 2003).

Although some may consider this a simplistic accommodation, such a de-mythologized, "integrationist" examination of the "enemy in the mirror" (Barkai, 1984) promotes a much more vigorous understanding of the nature of physicality; purposeful networks; permeable and non-permeable boundaries and barriers; and the enduring visible and invisible enchantments cast by elites. What must be continually renewed are those visible and invisible assumptions that maintain La Convivencia - those structures of concession that counterpoint imbalances in power in both religious and secular social compacts and which are attuned to refreshing co-existence.

THE NEVER ENDING THEOCRATIC “WAR ON TERROR/EVIL”

Post 9/11, the epochal (in)visibility, associated with the most extreme "ideal types" of global, virtual and individual sovereignty is unstable, if not waning. There is no non-hierarchical, flexible and empowered "new world order." Furthermore, many of the institutional and other structural aspects of modernity and corporate capitalism remain relatively undiminished within the Neo-liberal/Post-modern haze (Thorne & Kouzmin, 2004). Over two years since the GFC the Obama administration has deliberately kept in place the links between Washington and Wall street, banks and other corporations are still deemed too big to fail and no major player has yet to go to jail (Alter, 2011).

There is no evidence that subsequent to the Washington Consensus the extensive freeing of markets and the unleashing of individual empowerment has ushered in a new age of unrivalled productivity. Instead, traditional aspects of modernity are more prevalent than ever; few markets are free; the sovereignty of nation states has not disappeared; global markets in new and old industries are about the concentration of supply and the manipulation of demand; individual sovereignty is no assurance of economic or social success; and most
employees, even those working in cyberspace, remain un-empowered and working longer hours than ever. Supposedly liberating cyberspace is increasingly exposed as the control space par excellence (Thorne & Kouzmin, 2007a). The destructive power of the GFC is pervasive in both the physical and cyber economy(s).

The exploitation of 9/11 by U.S. Neo-conservatives to grasp the historical opportunity to remake the world is more and more perceived as counter-productive forays into old and new forms of unilateral imperialism (Harvey, 2003; Johnson, 2004). The seemingly new, visible resurgence of Islamic and other religious fundamentalism re-energize seemingly invisible, divisive and outmoded notions of “Millenialism;” the “Apocalypse;” the “End of Time” (Kirsch, 2006); “Holy War,” “Crusade” or “Jihad” (Armstrong, 1991; Lewis, 2004); the “Clash of Civilizations” (Huntington, 1997); and the confrontation between now “visible,” extremist, Islamic theocracy with another, supposedly “invisible,” Judeo-Christian theocracy. ‘The swamp of apocalyptic imagery, agency-defying fundamentalism and millennial dissembling’ (Hartnett & Mercieca, 2007, p. 612) pervades the discursive, political ontology.

IT is increasingly evident that prevailing elites are, themselves, resiling from globalization, virtuality and individual sovereignty. The ‘amalgamation of evangelical religion, apocalyptic time, Neo-liberal economics and imperial politics’ defines contemporary rhetorical discourse (Hartnett & Mercieca, 2007, p. 612; Klein, 2007). Secular manipulations of the flux of visibility and invisibility by elites have moved on to incorporate the more open reliance upon religious, nationalistic and other oppositional justifications to the use of naked force and military power to eliminate opposition and to drive out putative “darkness”. Following 9/11, the invocation of the “pure” Ottoman Empire and the “true” Koran (Ramadan, 2008), professed by Al-Qaeda and the Taliban, have encouraged and intensified the evangelical Christian fundamentalism underpinning the military and imperialism’s drive for global hegemony. ‘God is expropriated to legitimate military and economic programmes – God justifies U.S. imperialism’ (Hartnett & Mercieca, 2007, p. 610).

God told me to strike at Al Qaeda and I stuck them and then He instructed me to strike Saddam, which I did, and now I am determined to solve the problem in the Middle East (President Bush quoted in Solomon, 2007; see also, Hartnett & Mercieca, 2007, p. 611).

Comments by Pope Benedict XVI have evoked the triumphal crusader mythology and the need to confront Islam as a misleading, inherently dangerous, theocratic and political system. “Rapture” is upon one and Israel must be protected as the site of the Messiah’s return to earth. Europe must be kept Christian. The Moorish, Turkish and Mongolian excursions into Europe and their threat to European “Western” civilization must not be forgotten. The literal word of “God” is the bulwark against the Koran (Ramadan, 2008). The Reformation is forgotten (MacCulloch, 2003). “God’s Curse” on America - “Muslim oil” - must be removed once and for all. The Koran must be burnt. The battle for the end of time has begun.

Just as democracy, free-markets and information and communication technology (ICT) were about to usher in the Kantian epoch of human perfectibility and enduring peace, the “Dark Ages” are upon us once again. Despite injunctions within their respective holy scriptures, Islamic and Christian fundamentalists have re-merged religion and politics. ‘However dangerous it can be, capital is not inclined to die […]’. [Current] U.S. policies across the board [are] motivated not only by purely economic logic but by the rapturous eschatology of the quasi-Christian ultra-right’ (Miller, 2006, p. 189) […] policies pursued by the Administration’s “Stealthy Angels” who are both theocrats and plutocrats at once’ (Miller, 2006, p. 190). Sharlett (2008, p. 19) also outlines how “regular prayer groups, or ‘cells’”, meet in the Pentagon, Department of Defence and other government agencies.

The renewed emphasis on Sharia law by the Taliban replaced a limited form of secularism with autocratic theocracy. The invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq required military power to support a religious, cum political, ideology. This overt use of military might for non-secular ends exposes the degree to which the “religious right” and conservative economic/political forces, especially, evangelical Christians, and Neo-conservatives, have moved essential decision-making and socialization functions of the secular state to religious groups and conservative quasi-religious groups (Kellner, 2007, pp. 641-642). Public discourse has
become saturated with the need to protect oneself from “Islamic terrorism”, the putative failure of secular humanism and the need to disparage tolerance as a secular virtue.

Most intriguingly, throughout the “West”, this approach largely mirrored the extreme positions of the Islamic zealots who are still being fought. Anyone not displaying the requisite religious fervour, or patriotism, is attacked. Evangelical Christianity, and other conservative forces, disparage secularism as part of on-going “culture wars,” ignoring debates over structural, political and economic issues. The Iraqi, the Afghan and other related wars to come remain unwinnable and/or any peace in Iraq, Afghanistan or elsewhere is unsustainable. Despite the proclaimed “peace dividend,” public affairs remain within financial and other constraints serving an unceasing conflict between perceived “infidels” which presages a return to Cold War doctrines - with the “Islamic” bomb replacing the “Soviet” bomb.

LA CONVIVENCIA IN MOORISH SPAIN

There is a need to confront the a-historic, “unending” “War on Terror” and eternal theocratic war enchantment with a much more real-politic - an historically-resonant formulation of what Castro (1954) termed the La Convivencia, or living together, between Christians, Jews and Muslims which existed in Spain and the Levant for many centuries (711-1492) (Karabell, 2007; Webster, 2004; Wheatcroft, 2003). The eight/nine-hundred-year involvement of Islam and Muslims, mostly northern Moors, in Roman-Catholic Spain, is most instructive. Webster (2004), in his extensive examination of the inter-relationship between Moors, Christians and Jews in continental Spain, discovered extensive, visible and invisible, co-mingling between them at every level. Most noticeable was the long-standing connections between Africa, especially Islamic Africa, and Europe, especially Catholic Europe. Webster (2004, p. 276) found it almost impossible to determine whether Casablanca was ‘an Arab version of Spain, or if Spain was an European version of Morocco’.

Webster (2004) exposes age-old visible and invisible trade and economic networks such as those between Morocco and Spain. Historically, during times of labour shortage, such as after the re-conquest, Christian landowner’s sought workers and held the view that that ‘[m]oors are worth their weight in gold’ (Webster, 2004, p. 68). Even now Moroccans are lured by "mafia"-type organizations into illegal, low-or no-wage, slavery on Spanish farms. Webster (2004) also recovers the hidden history of Moorish Spain. His examination of the invisible story of the proto-typical "Christian Warrior” El Cid is illuminating:

Born in the northern, Christian town of Medinaceli, Rodrigo Diaz, an undefeated general, had wandered round Spain fighting for both Muslims and Christian Kings at different points in his career before finally taking over Valencia as a kind of personal fiefdom at the end of the eleventh century [...]. He ruled Christian subjects according to ancient Visigothic laws and Muslims according to the laws of the Qur’an.

The title by which he was known was simply the Spanish pronunciation of the Arabic al-Sid - an honorific meaning ‘lord’ or sometimes ‘saint’. Was he Moor or Christian? - it wasn’t easy to say. Although when the epic poem about his life, the Poema de Mio Cid, was composed some hundred years after his death, all mention of his having served Muslim rulers, such as Al-mu’tamin of Saragossa, was systematically left out (Webster, 2004, p. 57).

In a direct contrast, even an affront to Huntington (1997), Webster (2004) recounts that Clark (1969), in his book and television series on “Civilization,” pronounced that Spain had contributed little to the development of the human mind. Webster (2004) considered that Clark’s error was in not perceiving the contribution made by Muslim Spain.

Webster’s (2004) extensive investigations located Moorish influences in the physical appearance of “Spanish” people; language (hola/ole from wallah/Allah); poetry in both form and subject matter; literature where Ibn al-Arabi influenced Dante’s Divine Comedy (Alighieri, 2003); astronomy; music (Islamic and Gypsy instruments and rhythms in flamenco); dance; medicine; chess (Iran via India); architecture; toothpaste; bathing; and mathematics. The
remains of the medieval Moorish masterpiece, the Alhambra, demonstrate that this wondrous construction was one of humankind’s greatest achievements. Moorish administrative systems still persisted within contemporary Spain. For example, the operation of the Valencia irrigation system is administered, even now, by the original Islamic system. The Tribunal de las Aguas meets outside the Gothic Cathedral, the site of the former Mosque, every Thursday at noon - the traditional time for Islamic meetings.

According to Webster (2004), ‘perhaps the only emblematic thing in Spain that did not have Moorish origins was bull fighting’ (Webster, 2004, p. 116). Jativa, in Spain, was the location of the first paper mill in Europe established by Muslims from interaction with the Chinese [see also Hobson’s (2004) comprehensive study of the Eastern Origins of Western Civilisation]. It is highly possible that with no paper and no printing press, then, maybe, no “Western Civilisation”. Three of the greatest thinkers of medieval times - Averroes, Maimonides and Ibn al-Arabi - were Spanish Muslims or Spanish Jews. Moorish Spain was notable for the city of Cordoba, the centre of the Tenth-Century Golden Age. Karabell (2007, p. 69) extolles the “[c]onstructive relations between Muslims, Christians and Christians as being emblematic of the “genius of Cordoba”.” Cordoba was inhabited by 500,000 people; had street lighting; five hundred mosques; fifty hospitals; and seventy libraries. This was the era of La Convivencia where the inhabitants of Moorish Spain shared the same “spiritual space”.

For centuries, as Wheatcroft (2003) distinguished, Christianity and Islam ‘were interwoven in a landscape’ and ‘[t]he two faiths lived side by side, not in amity but in a kind of equilibrium’ (Wheatcroft, 2003, p. 157). As Wheatcroft (2003, p. 77) observes, ‘La Convivencia was not a “grand theory” or a “fixed and settled entity.”’ Instead, La Convivencia was “a structure of concession in which there was a dramatic imbalance of power between the majority and the minorities and ‘the terms were constantly shifting in the equation between the minority and majority populations,’ yet legal protection was extended to minority groups (Wheatcroft, 2003, p. 78). In Webster’s (2004) view, Europe was lifted out of the “Dark Ages” because Muslims, Christians and Jews integrated in Spain. Webster (2004) presented the Toledo (the former Visigoth Capital) translating centre as a model of La Convivencia, where for some 150 years, under nominally Christian leadership, Muslims, Jews and Christians came together peacefully in cultural and intellectual pursuits’ (Webster, 2004, p. 217). This translating centre sparked off one of the most important periods of interchange between Christians, Muslims and Jews. Toledo became a “nodal point” and a major centre of translation into Latin of Arabic learning. According to Ali (2007), such La Convivencia approximated the separate, but equal, negotiated accommodations between Protestants, Catholics and non-religious liberals evident in post-enlightenment Holland.

Within Moorish Spain, La Convivencia did not exclude overt separation of racial, ethnic and religious groups or financial and other inducements for Christians and Jews to convert to Islam. Yet this separation revolved around relatively equitable toleration and co-existence rather than discriminatory, South-African-styled Apartheid. Christian, Jewish and Islamic cultures acquired ‘characteristics in common, while still maintaining their distinct and separate identities’ (Wheatcroft, 2003, p. 72). Each religious and/or ethnic group certainly considered themselves the most significant and ‘where they enjoyed hegemony, they accepted the other faith[s] only on sufferance’ (Elliott, 2009). Yet daily life was integrative, educative and cultural and other boundaries were permeable whatever the state of conflict or conciliation between the elites. As Karabell (2007, p.72) distinguished, Moorish Spain was a complicated and ambiguous time when ‘pragmatism trumped theological concerns.’ While religion was central to individual and collective identity, ‘faith did not create absolute barriers to interaction’ (Karabell, 2007, p. 73). Most evident was a vibrant society notable for “unexpected and jarring interactions with strangers” (Karabell, 2007, p. 76). This disorderly (see Sennett, 1996) interaction ‘where people are forced to confront alien groups, different habits, and unfamiliar customs’ prevented individuals from becoming ‘rigid, brittle and complacent’ (Karabell, 2007, p. 76) and was fundamental to individuals, groups and social compacts achieving psychological and other forms of maturity.

Later, Muslim rulers and civil administrators sought to prevent the Christian Martyrs in Cordoba protesting against assimilation into Islam by adopting the most lenient interpretation of these transgressive acts until the offences could not continue to be ignored. Much later,
nearer the “Re-conquest”, Jaime I, nominally the Christian conqueror of Valencia, who reputedly dabbled in Islamic mysticism, continued the practice of dividing cities into Christian, Jewish and Islamic sectors. Legal and other frameworks which were nominally discriminatory against non-Muslims and, then, non-Christians, were not rigorously enforced. Al-Andalus was suffused with an invigorating liberalism towards sexuality, wine and hashish. Even now, in supposedly Catholic Spain, there is a concern that one could be isolated within separate groups. There was a settled society which permitted multiplicity. In the Eight Century, Christians and Muslims shared pervasive physical ease and sensuality, with ‘little sense of living in a country of perverts’ (Webster, 2004, p. 136).

CHRISTIAN RE-CONQUEST AND LA CONVIVENCIA

The “re-conquest” of Spain by Ferdinand and Isabella, in league with the Catholic Church and the Pope, did, over an extended timeframe, slowly and Moorish military and administrative rule. The intellectual and other diversity evident under La Convivencia was deemed expendable. A religiously-unified society was fundamental for the development of the new, imperial state. Although expansionary Spain was the richest and most powerful nation in Europe, the new Catholic, ruling family considered that their position was insecure due to threats from European religious reform movements and the intrusion of Muslim Turks elsewhere in Europe.

The intention was to remove “fifth columns” based on Muslim and Jewish minorities to destroy the ‘grudging culture of toleration’ and to eliminate the long tradition of liberal thought within the Iberian Peninsula (Karabell, 2007, p. 108). This involved the increasingly forceful conversion of Jews and Muslims [generally termed Conversors or Marranos (more specifically Jews) or Moriscos (more specifically Moors)] to the Catholic faith and way of life and to their eventual removal from Spain. Not only were the forces of “purity” plagued by the almost impossibility of distinguishing between a “real” or “feigned” conversion but [...] [of] these numerous converts inevitably upset the delicate balance [of] uneasy coexistence among the people of the three faiths’ (Elliott, 2010, p. 22).

Strangely, Wheatcroft (2003) recounts that the removal of the Moriscos from Christian Spain coincided with the lowest level of the real, or imagined, threat from the Ottomans in the Mediterranean. This evidenced the use of what Wheatcroft (2003) identifies as maledicta - the “demonising”, “dehumanising”, “either/or” and fundamentally polarizing discourse which so often accompanies violence and, especially, military action. Starting with the Jews, and eventually spreading to Muslims, the Inquisition ‘with its bonfires, instruments of torture and spreading of fear’ (Wheatcroft, 2003, p. 87) became the symbol for the removal of these “impure”, wild elements from Spain, the conversion of Jews and Muslims to the Catholic faith and the removal of all forms of disloyalty and heresy.

The Inquisition started as means to reign-in Christian monarchs and to make Christian radicals warrant their allegiance to the “true” faith and descended, in Catholic Spain, to the tortuous pursuit of religious purity and the ruthless control of a divergent population via the infliction of physical torments (Kirsch, 2008). However, the Inquisition and the other exclusionary methods adopted by Catholic Spain, including the obliteration of genealogy, the removal of children from families and the stripping of wealth and property were not successful. The visible and invisible components of the nine hundred years of Muslim presence in Spain were not easily made transparent or completely eliminated. For example, Columbus’s fleet, so emblematic of Spanish, Christian imperialism, included two vessels - the Pinta and Nina - which were Arab caravels. Even with the fear instilled by the Inquisition, the use of mass, forced conversions and the banning of reading and writing Arabic did not eliminate all the Moors in Spain or eliminate Islamic culture from Spain. Even those who were genuine converts to Christianity ‘did not lose their connection to their family and friends’ (Wheatcroft, 2003, p. 145). Other individuals and families ‘found innumerable ways of escaping from beneath the shadows of the statutes’ by cleansing their genealogy. Those unable to bribe, seduce or attract corrupt or sympathetic officials just lived a ‘warrantless’
(Riggs, 2004; Hutchinson, 2006), “dual existence” plagued by the ever-present possibility of exposure (Elliott, 2010).

The expulsion of openly-Muslim individuals from Spain was not complete, even by the late 1500s. This expulsion was most ruthless in Granada where the Moriscos were killed, moved to Castile or hid in the mountains. This policy left Grenada without its former inhabitants and “this once prosperous region became a burden on the Spanish state” (Wheatcroft, 2003, p. 151). This policy of “leave, convert or suffer the consequences” was not universally supported throughout Christendom or within Spain.

The French Cardinal, Richelieu, considered the approach barbaric. Valencia nobles built secret mosques for workers who feigned conversions. Many individual and cultural practices slipped past these fanatical investigations precisely because they were disguised, rendered invisible to the persecutors and even heralded as “Christian”. The Inquisition never fully stamped out the secret practice of Judaism or Islam. Just as the Muslim rulers had discovered, it was extremely difficult to distinguish a genuine from an insincere convert. As Webster (2004, p. 90) reminds one, Cervantes (1986), in The Adventures of Don Quixote De La Mancha, the classic of Moorish and Christian Spanish cultures, and the in-between world which the two had once combined to create, demonstrates the comic futility of fundamentalists attempting to drive out all visible and invisible opposition to their convictions.

RE-IMAGINING/ RE-CLAIMING LA CONVIVENCIA

Wheatcroft (2003) notes the parallels between the Spanish Inquisition’s treatment of Jews and Muslims, the Seventeenth-Century hysteria over witchcraft and the contemporary panic over terrorism. As Hansen (1971, p. 260) suggests, “...but new figures have arisen to take the spectral place in popular fears vacated by the witch”. Relying on Hansen (1971), Wheatcroft (2003), recounts that even the most virulent of moral and social panics may be overcome. “[W]estern civilization stopped executing witches when the literate and balanced portion of its members stopped believing in their capacity to do harm” (Wheatcroft, 2003, p. 359). Hansen (1971, p. 260) emphasized that “this was engendered through debate and argument, by a war of words, until eventually the very belief in witches became synonymous with a barbarous past”. However, does contemporary civil life present any certainty about the availability and decisiveness of reasoned discourse or the intellectual diversity evident under La Convivencia in Al-Andalus? Or is one seeing another re-run of social engineering ‘articulated within a religious argument’ (Wheatcroft, 2003, p. 157)?

It is possible that the Neo-liberal world (Thorne & Kouzmin, 2004; 2006; 2007a; 2007/2008; 2010) may be entering into an era where ignorance is driving out reason in a way analogous to what supposedly happened in Europe before the Enlightenment and in Europe and the Middle–East after the fall of the Western Roman Empire. For example, Berman (2006) considers that the American empire has entered an inescapable final phase. In Berman’s (2006) view, the post-9/11 endless “War on Terror” and the military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq have left the American economy burdened by an insurmountable debt (see also Tanous and Cox, 2011) which threatens an imminent economic and social collapse. This is apart from the crisis proportions of the collapse of any global, “moral” authority, oligarchs and many public administration academics attach to American “exceptionalism”.

While the endless flow of propaganda (Deillo, 1984; Brock, 2004; Hartnett, & Mercieca, 2007) destroys hard-won civil ideals and democratic freedoms, there are dangerous signs of hubris and the intrusion of threatening lost and discounted multiple histories; clear difficulties in overcoming time and space; the intrusion of a more unwieldy physicality in current events; and visible and invisible portents of a future other than the triumphalism of Western, especially “exceptionalist” American, interests inter-related with “exceptionalist” religious fundamentalism. This does not mean, however, that the self-interest of elites that benefit from a globalization-virtuality-individual-sovereignty discourse (Thorne, 2010; Thorne & Kouzmin, 2006; 2007a) is in any meaningful sense in retreat or hibernation. The struggle over the ability to project (in)visibility and to challenge others who remain defiant is still, more than ever, asymmetrical.
The gravest concern should be directed to all forms of military violence being further unleashed in domestic and international spheres, with elite, economic, self-interest being even more dependent upon market concentration and physical and non-physical exploitation - with a contest over differing fundamentalisms replacing the overt, seemingly restraining, emphasis on market and individual freedoms. The gravest possibility is that the futuristic cyberspace fable does not easily co-exist with newly, visible depictions of age-old antagonisms and that the conflicting formulations of light and darkness, visibility and invisibility become destructive rather than symbiotic.

These fears and concerns will require a political discourse, and a public affairs, prepared to resist fundamentalism, able to utilize every possibility for administrative discretion, and attuned to enacting every possibility for ethical “hesitation” (Farmer, 2005) or “love” (Catlaw, 2007a) - a public affairs able to recognize and respond to elites and other interest groups and their essentially hegemonic networks. Such public affairs questions, even rejects, acting on the visible and invisible interests of opportunistic elites; is aware of the amoral nature of corporate capitalism; resists exclusionary nationalistic, ethnic and/or theocratic ambitions; and actively prevents any diminishment of secular society.

Overall, what is required is a capacity to calibrate whether the enveloping flux of militarism, economic self-interest and religious and other fundamentalisms, is enveloping and destructive to social capital and the public domain (Kouzmin & Dixon, 2006). Public affairs must be aware that ‘transparency […] dance[s] endlessly across the same terrain as […] suspicion, hiddenness, and treachery’ (Sanders & West, 2003, p. 12) and that transparency involves elites constantly contending over what is made visible and what is rendered invisible (Neyland, 2007). One aspires to a political discourse that does not drive out “spots”, or commingling, and other supposed blemishes or imperfections – a discourse based on the recovery of what Wheatcroft (2003) refers to as the “double history” of what is visible on the surface and the “buried history” of what is invisible (Benvenisti, 2000, cited in Wheatcroft, 2003, p. 165).

Unless this happens, the great age of tolerance and co-existence between Muslims and Christians will not be renewed. As Elliott (2009) cautions, it is most important not to over sentimentalize La Convivencia. Everything was not uniformly harmonious - war and persecutions were not unknown and the long periods of peace were both “fraught and fragile”. All too commonly intolerance shadows tolerance. Yet even during the Spanish Inquisition there was a subculture of dissent. Elliott drawing, on Schwartz (2009), locates individuals and communities that welcomed back Moriscos that had defied the 1609 expulsion decree. This persistence of La Convivencia is most inspiring especially when events such as 9/11, the Madrid and Bali bombings and the continuing “War on Terror” and their accompanying purposeful political fluxes/outright untruths such as ‘weapons of mass destruction’ and ‘Basque terrorists planted the bombs’ render the full recovery of its precepts exceptionally urgent.

It must be acknowledged that the contemporary forces of separation and/or destruction remain exceptionally strong. Muslims are continually reminded by extremists of their obligation to leave Europe and other lands of unbelief. Christians and other unbelievers are continually reminded by extremists of their obligation to leave the Muslim lands. The treatment of the general population, and especially captives by both sides in the Iraq and other conflicts, recalls the worst abuses of the Inquisition. Once again, individuals are not being informed about the identity of their accuser and torture and/or abuse to extract a confession is not unusual. Fortunately, the persistence of Moorish Spain is a testament to the inability of three hundred years of unrelenting Spanish, Catholic theocratic and ethnic cleansing to obliterate the visible and invisible Moorish and Jewish influences from the Spanish landscape and culture.

**HESITATIONS/CONCLUSIONS**

One must not allow the present pervasiveness of the discourse of Maledicta by religious and other fundamentalists to promote militaristic violence that destroys centuries of social, cultural
and spiritual understanding and development. One must not allow the culture that produced the medieval masterpiece of the *Alhambra* to be dismissed as decadent. One must set against the "exclusionists" and actively preserve the straight between Africa and Spain as 'a crossing point, a gate way [...], a geographical crossroads; not a wall for keeping people in or out' (Webster, 2004, p. 173). One must reclaim and place in context "buried history" (Benvenisti, 2000) or be haunted by ghosts and memories which will not fade into the landscape.

As Wheatcroft (2003, p. 356) conveys, the greatest lesson of Lincoln's first inaugural address was to summon 'the better angels of our nature' and to sever the link between military action and the discourse of *Maledicta*. Like Lincoln, one must speak and act in terms of reason. One must personify 'the enemy as if in a mirror, human like [ourselves], fallible and capable of error' and one must assertively confront all challenges to 'our common humanity and nature' (Wheatcroft, 2003, p. 346) without recourse to the corrupting language, images and acts of hatred and evil. *Maledicta*, and fundamentalism, must not be allowed to again ferment into exclusion, carnage and war. For, as Wheatcroft (2003), drawing directly on Bakhtin (1986), warns, there is no limit on dialogic contexts: "[n]othing is absolutely dead: every meaning will have its homecoming" (Bakhtin (1986), cited in Wheatcroft, 2003, p. 352).

Perhaps, the greatest challenge will involve going beyond *La Convivencia* and asserting that 'moral framework[s] for humanity can exist which [are not] religious' and that Godless infidels are not 'synonymous with immorality' (Ali, 2007, p. 231). Ali, herself, suffered the physical and psychological scarring and disfigurement associated with being an unthinking true believer and, then, a critically-thinking infidel. She realises that these moral frameworks require 'contesting the whole basis of the idea of God's power on earth with reasoning that is beautiful and compelling' (Ali, 2007, p. 232). This reasoning revolves around collective and individual life(s) on earth. Conjoint, yet separate, life(s) 'valued in the here and now' with rights and freedoms recognized and protected by an overwhelmingly secular, enlightened state (Ali, 2007, p. 232).

Yet, despite Ali's (2007) faith in secular society and "sweet reason", the inter-woven globalization-virtuality-sovereign individual discourse, which Neo-liberal hegemony presents as the scientific/technological heir to the Enlightenment, has not prevented the post- 9/11 resurgence of theocratic and military fundamentalisms. Unfortunately, even Obama's much feted 'Cairo' speech is one-directional rather than diachronic focused on transcendent universals such as "one rule that lies at the heart of every religion--- that we do unto others as we would have them do unto us" rather than any notion of watchful coexistence or constructive disorder (Obama, 2009? cited in Alter, 2011, p. 350). This narrow construction of our "commonality" is accompanied by an "understated and respectful" yet, ever so familiar, recitation of U.S. positions on the two-state solution for Israel and Palestine, halting Arab nuclear ambitions, increasing democracy, ensuring religious freedom, liberating women and promoting Neo-liberal forms of economic development. The *Maledicta* towards "infidels" is every-where and the Inquisition is having another "homecoming". The state has not "withered away" but has been summoned back from cyberspace oblivion to provide security from terrorism and to impose violence upon citizens and non-citizens. Elites flux power to maintain hegemonic positions and also make uneasy alliances with age-old and newly emergent fundamentalisms.

Does one save humankind by merging corporate imperialism with evangelical Christianity to prevent universal Islamic theocracy? Is one certain as to who are the infidels or false-infidels in this scenario? Grey (2003) suggests that one should not trade in religious and secular, scientific and technocratic, discourses involving "hopes of unity" and transcendence. 'We should be learning to live with conflict', to live with the impure rather than constantly striving for purification and to imagine multiple futures without destroying this world and without yearning for another non-earthly existence. Does one need to re-discover the "homecoming" of the pagan/ancient acceptance that 'humans will always lead different ways' and 'no way of life is binding on all' (Grey, 2003, p. 103)? One must resist what Grey (2003, p. 115) terms, the 'proselytising fury of faith,' both religious and secular and limit one's hopes to maintaining a more fragmented, often violent and uncertain, yet saner and civilized, world.
One must reject religious promises of “salvation in the world hereafter” and secular promises that ‘survivors will live in a world better than that has ever existed’ (Grey, 2003, p. 117). Most of all, one must continue to resist ‘the apocalyptic passions of religion’ returning or merging with ‘projects of universal human emancipation’ (Grey, 2003, p. 116). This resistance exemplifies the watchful and insightful psychological [and societal] maturity which Bettelheim (1991) considers was the most important use of actual enchantment throughout human history and builds upon the visible and invisible assumptions that maintained La Convivencia within Christian and Moorish Spain - especially those structures of concession which counterpoint imbalances in power and which are attuned to refreshing co-existence.

The mythological infidels conjured by religious and secular oligarchies must not be allowed to do us harm. One must constantly renew ‘[t]he modus vivendi [of tolerant coexistence] between religions which has flourished intermittently’ within human history (Grey, 2007, pp. 208-209). Within a putative, post-enlightened, progressive existence, neither God nor Jacobin-inspired, eschatological, global terror is capable of creating ‘a morally homogenous society’ - such terrors have even less prospect of ‘creating a homogenized world’ (Grey, 2007, pp. 208-209).

The “siege mentality”, with an “evil enemy”, has been invoked since 9/11, replacing “cold war” paranoia whilst dramatically altering the “democratic deficit” within the contours of an expanded “imperialism” in an age of xenophobia, patriotism and ambiguously-defined enemies (Thorne & Kouzmin, 2007/2008; 2010). As Marrs (2006, pp. 166; 259) outlines, Al Qaeda, literally translates as the “data base” – ‘Al Qaeda was a computer file of thousands of Mujahedin, recruited and trained to defeat the Russians, in Afghanistan, with the help of the CIA; then under control of the U.S. Vice President, and former CIA Director, George Bush, Sr., who “controlled” the U.S. government following the shooting of President Ronald Reagan. Al Qaeda is a computer list of Arab mercenaries/freedom fighters/terrorists for hire’. The Taliban emerged from Afghan Mujahedin whose heroism had been lauded by the U.S. during the 1980s (Atwan, 2006, p. 80), whilst Saudi Arabia ‘has produced some 70 per cent of Al Qaeda’s fighters, as well as the leader himself’ (Atwan, 2006, p. 235).

As in most authoritarian contexts, ‘the manifest function of stem policies, declared to be the eradication of terrorist threat, was playing second fiddle to the latent function of shifting the grounds of state authority from areas that the state could not, nor dared to, control to another area […] under public applause’ (Bauman, 2006, p. 153). Currently, democratically-inclined citizens must continually question the privileging of the “borderless”, “New World Order” and the related, “them or us”, “War on Terror”. State condoned regime change/political assassination discourses which eliminate all alternative acceptance of identity, representation (Catlaw, 2007b) and community. Contemporary Liberal-democratic, political discourse is yet to confront this challenge. U.S. government and political power are now more invasive and less legitimate – shared realities are more fragile, disconnected and vulnerable (Catlaw, 2007b). This suggests that what is left of public affairs (Scahill, 2007; Shane & Nixon, 2007; Singer, 2003) will not escape being further coerced in the on-going, Neo-liberal, and now fundamentalist, enthusiasm for “capture” and the systemic, crisis-driven, shock-therapy nature of “economic genocide” being committed within many, too many, sovereign economies over the last three decades (Klein, 2007, p. 239).

The more Western Society reacts to terrorist assault with illegality, the more it depletes the very spiritual and political resources which it takes itself to be protecting. Claiming that those illegaliies have been launched in the name of “democracy” or “freedom” or “the infinite justice of God” only renders the whole post-9/11 narrative more shameful (Eagleton, 2005, p. 50).

Similarly, the Madrid bombers, and others, must not be allowed to ignore La Convivencia and to justify the death of innocents by conjuring the memories of the Spanish Crusade against the Moors, the expulsion of the Moors from Spain and the suffering at the tribunals of the Inquisition (Tremlett, 2006).

Is a Christian/imperialist hue (Hedges, 2008, p. 21) ‘a mask for a fascism [of] patriotism and the pages of the bible’ (Hedges, 2008, p. 194) and a pre-destined course? Or is
contemporary Anglo-American foreign politics ‘a tri-horned fascism – part Christian, part military, part corporate’ (Bageant, 2007, p. 176) cloaked with a veneer of Liberal-democratic rhetoric, and hubris, for global and domestic consumption? All too often power tends to confuse itself with virtue and a great nation is peculiarly susceptible to the idea that its power is a sign of God’s favour, conferring upon it a special responsibility for other nations [...] to remake them [...] in its own shining image (Blum, 2005, pp. 8-9). ‘Freeing the world to death [...] the military budget of the U.S., in one year, is equal to more than U.S. $ 20,000 per hour for every hour since the birth of Jesus Christ’ (Blum, 2005, p. 99).

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