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Where Was Luke Skywalker On September 11?

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And the giant grey monoliths will stand, in clusters in the distance like monuments in a cemetery, half covered in vines, reminding us what we did, and could do, but won't.

fight for absolute victory or defeat, and one in which different perspectives, respecting each other as equals and as subjects not objects, fight to negotiate balance.

The latter is the way it works in nature, the way it's worked for tens of millions of years in the system that created humans and countless other wonderful species, some of them not even extinct yet, that you can read about from your little cubicle. The former is a habit that humans picked up — we still don't know how — a few thousand years ago, and the rest is history.

When Luke Skywalker blew up the Death Star, and James Bond killed the head villain, and Islamic secret agents, as the story goes, took down the World Trade Center, they were mythically enacting the same dark ritual that civilized humans have performed on natural humans, non-humans, and each other for all of "history" and we're still not slowing down. It's the ritual performed in every war and genocide you could name, even the "war on illiteracy." It was performed on your soul by parents, teachers, employers, and television, or else you wouldn't be fit for this little world.

The ritual is not "violence" — it's much more precise: to clear a gap between "self" and "other", to blame the dissatisfaction caused by this disconnection on some key other, and to eliminate it and win relief and happiness. Wait! I'm still not happy. It must be because of that other thing — better eliminate that too.

After a few thousand years of this, we've wiped out numerous pests, diseases, degenerate races, noncompetitive cultures, restaurants other than McDonald's, and we've almost licked your chronic depression that lowers your work efficiency. Next we'll beat drugs and terrorism, and finish assimilating the whole world into one society like the industrialized West, and even let the liberals "eliminate" poverty and "abolish" racism by blending us into a uniform race with mandatory full-time employment. And we still won't be satisfied.

If I suggest that the evil thing we really need to destroy is civilization itself, I'm still not out of the box, but I'm close. The way out is to abandon the whole "beat the enemy" paradigm, not to call civilization "other" and destroy it, but to recognize it as part of ourselves, and understand it, and carefully not choose it.

The forbidden truth about the 9/11 operation is not that it was planned by powerful insiders, not that elements in the US government collaborated to raise popular support for repression and war, not that the planes were flown by remote control and the hijackers were there as a cover, not that military jets would have intercepted the planes in minutes had they not been intentionally weakened and delayed, not that flight 93 was shot down, not that Osama Bin Laden never stopped working with the CIA, and not that the bombing of Afghanistan was planned months in advance. At least half of that stuff is quite true, but it's far from forbidden — it's all over the underground media, and given enough time it will be all over the history books, if we still have history and books.

The forbidden truth is this: First, nobody cares about the dead people. I mean, of course the people themselves cared, and most of their friends and family, and if you were actually in lower Manhattan at the time, and saw people jumping from the buildings, you probably got an emotional shock I can't imagine. This doesn't apply to you. This applies to the 200 million Americans who saw it on TV and didn't know anyone involved.

You don't feel bad about any of those people. You might think you do, but then why don't you also feel bad about the dead people in the trumped-up bombing of Afghanistan, or the much larger number of dead people in the massacres in Rwanda or East Timor or Cambodia? Why don't you feel much worse about the much greater number of dead Americans killed by bad job conditions or cancer from industrial chemicals or "side" effects of pharmaceuticals? It's not a rhetorical question. Why don't you? And what would happen if you did?

Imagine this alternate history: On the morning of September 11, 2001, a great fire broke out in a poor section of New York City. It spread quickly, and by the end of the day it was thought that more than 6000 residents and firefighters had been killed, though this was later revised to 3000. Now come back to our own history and look at all the flag-waving convulsionaries, veins and blank eyes bulging with forced anger and suppressed bafflement, supposedly over the dead people. Now shift to alternate 9/12 and hear what they say: "They've been covering the fucking fire for two days now. I had to miss the baseball game because of all their bleeding-heart whining about the dead people. (whines) 'We have to do something.' There's nothing we can do. It's over! Get over it!"

I don't completely disagree with such honest insensitivity. Liberal guilt-mongering is just as phony as fascist hate-mongering. Liberals don't feel bad about the actual dead children in Iraq any more than conservatives feel bad about the 9/11 dead, because *we do not feel bad about suffering we do not see of people we do not know.* That's forbidden truth number one.

If you do feel bad about remote suffering — and the test is that you feel equally bad about all people everywhere — then you are a saint, and if there were enough people like you, we would have to have you all killed so we could get on with progress. Oops — we already did!

Our feelings about events involving people we do not know are not based upon empathy for those people, but upon the symbolic meaning of the events, or the projection, onto those events, of our personal emotional issues. So I feel angry and distressed about the post-9/11 (and post-Columbine) tightening of violent control in this country, because I am replaying my feelings about the thousands of times I have had to submit to violent control or be punished. And for the same reason, when the World Trade Center, a global symbol of violent control, fell down, I noticed myself feeling good, while conservatives felt good.

That's not a mistake — that's the other forbidden truth. We felt good about 9/11. Almost everybody did, all over the world, even the people who also felt bad because they had ego investments in the power-sucking pattern that the World Trade Center symbolized. And the better they felt, or the less they could afford to notice themselves feeling good, the more they covered it up, hid it from even themselves, by amplifying their rage and indignation and depression.

We were especially prone to feel good about that particular kind of catastrophe because we've been practicing it for decades. Has anyone here seen a movie called *Star Wars*? At the end, when idealistic outsiders in flying craft totally destroyed that giant grey monolithic structure representing the control of a great empire, did it even occur to you to grieve for the many victims inside the structure? Did you desire to hunt down every last rebel, especially that bearded man from the desert who inspired the attackers, until the rule of the Galactic Empire was absolute? No! You felt good, as you were intended to.

Or consider the film *Independence Day*, where Randy Quaid's character, who begins the movie flying a crop duster, ends up intentionally colliding a jet plane into a giant grey structure representing an empire that wants to conquer the Earth and consume all its resources. This totally destroys the structure, and his allies around the world imitate him, defeating the oppressors. And you loved it, as you were intended to.

Now I'm not saying the destruction of the World Trade Center was just the same as the destruction of the Death Star. There is exactly one important difference: that one was fiction, experienced by every person as a show, and one was in our very own reality, experienced by many thousands of people as the shocking death of themselves or a loved one — and experienced by a billion more people as a show. As it was intended.

So, do I think the Grand Magus of the Illuminati called his friends in Hollywood and had them make movies glorifying the demolition of giant grey structures by flying rebels, so that when the real thing happened, nationalistic Americans would have their brains shorted out by propaganda dissonance, while opponents of the empire would become both inspired and subtle, giving them the power to destroy the USA, a ritual sacrifice to channel away the people's fury and distract them from the continuing exploitation of all life through different agents?

It's a good story but I'm not so literal-minded. To avoid insanity while exploring the fringe, I've learned to think of reality itself as a branch of metaphor; so the movies, and then the real event, and then the naming of the response to the real event after the sequel to one of the movies ("America Strikes Back") were all manifestations of a movement in our collective consciousness.

A deadly and insane movement. I really don't think the World Trade Center demolition was good because the Death Star demolition was good, or that we were right to feel good about either, but that both were disturbing psychological operations, and we have been sliding into madness, and we need to pull out of it.

We have a choice, not between the American corporate-military complex and the latest conveniently resource-rich uppity country, not even precisely between totalitarianism and freedom, but between two patterns that lie deeper, two paradigms of conflict, one in which good and evil

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