



# The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus

n-depth critical analysis of the forces shaping the Asia-Pacific...and the world.

## Coming to Jakarta and Deep Politics:

### How Writing a Poem Enabled Me to Write *American War Machine*

#### (An Essay on Liberation)

Peter Dale Scott

For Mark Selden

For most of my life I have felt split between two conflicting approaches to reality: 1) as a researcher trying rigorously and methodically to understand violence in the world, and 2) as a poet, responding to intuitive impulses to say what moved me, whether rational or not. But recently my editor Mark Selden suggested that I write about the role of *Coming to Jakarta* in my political thinking. In responding to his request I have come to realize that the two sides of my life have become synergistic, each side not just facilitating the other but indeed enabling it. Because each can be characterized as an attempt, using radically different methods but towards the same goal, of becoming more aware of forces in our life that are not easily understandable by normal rational investigation. So that each is an exploration, if you like, on the same frontier between the known and the unknowable.

In particular I have had to acknowledge to myself that I could not possibly have depicted the scene in the opening pages of *American War Machine* if I had not first, with some pain, written *Coming to Jakarta*. This poem is often presented (even by myself) as my response in 1980 to the anguish of knowing facts I was unable to share, about U.S. involvement in the 1965 massacre by the Indonesian army of over half a million Indonesian men, women, and children. But it was also a confrontation with the disturbing reality that there is a gap between the world as we think we know it, and darker, more inscrutable forces at work both in the world and in ourselves. As I wrote in 2000,

Soon ... I was looking at the same process of denial in myself: I had once discounted my own university's support of elements working with the army. In this way *Jakarta* took the form of an argument, at first with the external world, but increasingly with myself<sup>1</sup>

Mark's request was a timely one. Just then I was attempting to write in prose about what I consider the failure of structural (or what I call Newtonian) social science to deal adequately with deep unstructured and unarchived forces in our society, such as the international drug traffic. I was also studying the prose writings of the Nobel-winning Polish poet Czeslaw Milosz, who helped inspire the Polish Solidarity movement, and later wrote that the social task of the inspired poet is "to transcend his paltry ego," and remind the "soul of the people" of "the open space ahead."<sup>2</sup>

The first draft of my poem *Coming to Jakarta* was written in an intense burst of energy thirty years ago, as I strenuously wrote myself out of a near mental breakdown. A decade later, when the poem was honored in an issue of the literary review *Agni*, I attempted to analyze the diverse sources of my mental discomfort:

The first was a growing self-hatred for carrying around a headful of horrors which most people (including my former editors and publishers) were less and less willing to hear about. An afternoon talk in 1980 with Noam Chomsky about our increasing difficulties in reaching audiences, right after each of us had had a book suppressed by its publisher, did indeed help trigger the very real personal crisis at the opening of the poem, the fear that I might be at the point of losing, like some close friends, my personal sanity altogether.



**Major General, Suharto (right, foreground) attends a funeral for generals assassinated on 5 October 1965. (Photo by the Department of Information, Indonesia)**

But deeper than this external frustration with publishers was the sense that my own judgmental head was in some profound sense not right, my disgust (which can still haunt me) at "giving one last broadcast too many/ about...the heroin traffic." Unlike many Americans whose prevailing discomfort in this era was guilt, my own nausea (I now believe) was from the poisonous facts I had assimilated and could not disseminate.

The first eight sections of the poem record my search for the source of this nausea, and my delayed recognition (in II.iv), that it derived, not from knowledge reiterated, but from knowledge and emotions held back. By appealing to a more human and less compartmentalized audience, poetry, precisely poetry, allowed me to trace more inclusive relationships than those authorized by orderly prose analysis.<sup>3</sup>

Today I am more confident than before that my psychic rebellion against using prose to describe our society—and our world— was legitimate from the point of view of truth-seeking, an existential critique of the political science methods in which I had been trained at university. Section ii.iv, to which I referred, was an autocritique for limiting myself to archival sources about the great Indonesian massacre of 1965, and the subsequent murder in Cambodia five years later of my friend Malcolm Caldwell, who had first encouraged me to research that massacre:

II.iv

I am writing this poem

about the 1965 massacre

of Indonesians by Indonesians

which in an article ten years later

I could not publish

except in Nottingham England with

a friend Malcolm Caldwell who has since

himself been murdered

no one will say by whom but I will guess

seeing as this is

precisely poetry

the CIA's and now Peking's Cambodian

assassins the Khmer Serai

In that article I estimated

*a half-million or more*

*killed in this period*

it took Noam in a book

suppressed by its first publisher

to quote Admiral Sudomo

of the Indonesian junta

*more than 500,000*

and now Amnesty International

*many more than one million*

so much for my balanced prose <sup>4</sup>

Liberated from the need for rational documentation, my poem (using the catalogue *topos* of ancient epic) wandered freely through the manifold deep forces affecting American politics and my own depression, not excluding references to my suppressed prose book -- which Pocketbooks, despite a written contract, had failed to publish.

My book would have asked

as the Warren Commission staff

working for Allen Dulles

was unable to

why Levinson's pit boss

McWillie *gambler and murderer*

*23 WH 166*

from the old Binion gang

in Dallas and Fort Worth

who *had a fix with Mr. Big*

*I don't think we'd better*

*go into that phase of it*

*Reid 156-57*

twice brought to Havana

*most likely as a courier*

*AR 151*

his close friend

Jack Ruby

A dumb subject

The book went into galleys  
and was photographed  
for the Pocketbooks spring catalogue  
but never published  
freeing me  
to write this poem.<sup>5</sup>

More and more, the search for relief and empowerment from voicing what was bottled up inside of me led to the recovery of other suppressed memories. Some of these were from childhood; but one, which should have been unforgettable but in fact was swiftly suppressed, was only a decade old. The fact that I had suppressed it (as I wrote later) "constituted evidence that there were darker forces at work in our society than I would normally allow myself to admit."

Perhaps the most powerful of these suppressed memories, and certainly the very last to be recovered, is near the end of Section V.ii, reprinted here. It was of a witness to opium flights in Asia who, after agreeing with Alfred McCoy and myself to be interviewed, changed his mind overnight. And for good reason: in those hours someone had warned him by burning a hole in the steel door of his M.G. with a sophisticated implosion device. One might think that such a vivid and incongruous message could hardly be forgotten. The fact was that I had totally suppressed my memory of it, even through the first two years of my determined poetic search to recover such memories!

And so, as I rightly suspected, had Al. In the preface to the latest edition of his monumental classic, *The Politics of Heroin*, he writes in prose about his own suppression of the same facts. At the risk of seeming self-absorbed in the context of larger tragedies, I would like to quote his prose account of an unforgettable event almost instantly forgotten.

I landed in San Francisco for a stay with poet and Berkeley professor Peter Dale Scott. He put me in touch with an ex-Green Beret, just back from covert operations in Laos, who told me, over the phone, of seeing CIA aircraft loading opium. He agreed to be interviewed on the record. The next morning, we knocked at his door in an East Palo Alto

apartment complex. We never got inside. He was visibly upset, saying he "had gotten the message." What happened?

"Follow me," he said, leading us across the parking lot to his M. G. sports car. He pointed at something on the passenger door and named a chemical explosive that that could melt a hole in sheet metal. It was, he said, a signal to shut up. *I looked but cannot recall seeing.* The next day, I flew to Los Angeles, visited my mother, and then flew on to Saigon, forgetting the incident. *I refused to recognize the reality of this threat until, 20 years later, I came across a passage in Professor Scott's poem, Coming to Jakarta:*

but that clean morning in Palo Alto  
the former Green Beret  
who just the night before  
had said he would talk to us  
about opium in Laos  
showing us the sharp black hole  
in his M.G.'s red steel door  
the floorboards hardly scorched  
and saying that hot  
an imploded thermal charge  
must have come from my old unit<sup>6</sup>

I presented these remarks at a 2003 conference on "Literary Responses to Mass Violence," with discussions of massacres in Auschwitz, South Africa, Rwanda, and (in my case) Indonesia. One of the emergent facts from those discussions was the recurring denial among those coping with the psychic pain of traumatic (or even difficult) experience. I was made aware of a vast literature on the widespread phenomenon of cultural trauma, and on psychological repression as a response to it. To quote Arthur G. Neal

The enduring effects of a trauma in the memories of an individual resemble the enduring effects of a national trauma in collective consciousness. Dismissing or ignoring the traumatic experience is not a reasonable option. The conditions surrounding a trauma are played and replayed in consciousness through an attempt to extract some sense of coherence from a meaningless experience. When the event is dismissed from consciousness, it resurfaces in feelings of anxiety and despair. Just as the rape victim becomes permanently changed as a result of the trauma, the nation becomes permanently changed as a result of a trauma in the social realm.<sup>7</sup>

I remain fascinated by the fitness of this account to my own anxiety and attempt, in writing *Jakarta*, "to extract some sense of coherence" from my disturbing experiences -- even though my experiences were minimally traumatic by today's standards. It is as if all of us, at least in the so-called "developed" countries (a term I reject after having lived in Thailand) can be to a lesser or greater extent traumatized by the nightmare shadow of our expensive paradises, and find in art a means to either escape from the nightmare, or attempt to understand it.

Al McCoy's account, as much as my own, reveals that these forces working for self-preservation by the repression of indigestible truths are internal as

well as societal. This speaks both to the repressive origins of deep politics and also to the social function of poetry: the space where we return to thoughts so pure and alien that they cannot be easily shared in the normal discourse of a corrupted society.

Thus I believe that poetry, in its own mysterious way, is part of humanity's heuristic approach to truth. More particularly, my poems are often an antechamber to a subsequent more engaged treatment in prose. For example, this episode of the firebombed MG in Palo Alto, recovered by writing *Jakarta*, now constitutes the opening episode (and containing metaphor) of my latest and perhaps most ambitious prose book, *American War Machine*.<sup>8</sup>

In our mutual repression of the discomfiting bombing memory, and my eventual recovery of it in writing *Jakarta*, one can see clearly both how the phenomenon of deep politics – the sphere of the unmentionable – arises, and also how poetry and the imagination can be of use in recovering access to this sphere (the result in this case being *American War Machine*, which I very probably would otherwise not have written).

In saying this, I am not privileging poetry as more veridical than prose. On the contrary, it was only after much rational reflection that I concluded that the Palo Alto bombing was (as I wrote in *American War Machine*) an example of

what I now call deep events: events that are systematically ignored, suppressed, or falsified in public (and even internal) government, military, and intelligence documents as well as in the mainstream media and public consciousness....In earlier versions of this book, I attributed the sanctioned violence of the Palo Alto incident, like the Letelier assassination I discuss next, to the CIA's global drug connection. But that statement does not solve a mystery: it opens one up. As a matter of description, it sounds more precise than terms I have used in earlier books: "the dark quadrant" from which parapolitical events emerge or "the unrecognized Force X operating in the world," which I suggested might help explain 9/11. But the precision is misleading: in this book I am indeed attempting to denote and describe a deep force, or forces, that I do not fully understand.<sup>9</sup>

In this passage I was retreating from my earlier attribution of such deep events (in *The Road to 9/11*) to the influence of the "deep state" – a term which, following the Norwegian social scientist Ola Tunander, I borrowed from Turkey. I was now in effect admitting that the term "deep state" was itself reflective of the social scientific structural bias – the urge to reduce all social phenomena to definable structures -- that was my explanation for the resistance of intelligent critics like Noam Chomsky to studying deep events at all.<sup>10</sup> That is why I have since preferred to refer to "deep forces" – a term free of the structural connotations implicit in the word "state." I am coming now to envisage deep politics as revealing a realm beyond that of social structures and systems, much as Einstein's seminal early essays unsettled and looked beyond the Newtonian assumption of an ordered or structured universe.<sup>11</sup>

I was extremely fortunate to have Al McCoy in particular as a corroborating witness to this event, since Al, by writing and rewriting his classic *The Politics of Heroin*, was unusually aware of the forces at high levels in our society protecting the drug traffic, and thus more capable than most of recovering our shared memory. For example he had already, by the time I recontacted him about the episode, reported how the warnings in 1980 of Carter's White House drug adviser David Musto, against providing support to the opium growers in Afghanistan, had been systematically ignored (as they are still being ignored today), and his access to information denied.<sup>12</sup>

There are other examples in *Coming to Jakarta* of what I now call deep force interference.<sup>13</sup> Unfortunately the witnesses who might have corroborated them were not nearly as sensitized as Al to the presence of a controlling irrationality in our daily affairs. Almost all had forgotten what they had witnessed (as had Al and I), which was to be expected. But unlike Al, almost none was able or willing to recover the memory when I urged them. So I was rendered cognizant of the widespread social conditioning of our thoughts, which were and are largely constrained to what can be easily shared. And *Jakarta*, from this perspective, had represented a revolt from within against this social conditioning. *Le coeur a ses raisons*.

All this leads to the current thinking about all art as a form of corrective *alterity*, "reminding us" (as I have written in a lecture on Milosz) "that as humans we are more than settled furniture in the architecture of the status quo."<sup>14</sup> In that lecture I quoted from the social critic Theodore Adorno's account of a dialectical engagement between the other world of poetry and this tangible, secular world. In Adorno's words, "Even in the most sublimated work of art there is a hidden 'it should be otherwise.' As eminently constructed and produced objects, works of art...point to a practice from which they abstain: the creation of a just life."<sup>15</sup>

However (in the tradition of Schiller and Marcuse) I disagree that art, or at least poetry, always *abstains* from the creation of a just life. As a poet I have tried to reinforce a tradition of socially engaged poetry. The poetry I taught as a professor, from Virgil's *Aeneid* to Wordsworth's *Prelude*, was poetry I taught as examples of how great poetry could exert leverage upon the world, by showing it a vision of something imaginably better, a "space ahead."<sup>16</sup>

*Coming to Jakarta* reads in places like the chronicle of a nightmare:

*the disposal of the corpses*  
*has created a serious sanitation problem*  
*small rivers and streams*  
  
*have been literally clogged with bodies*  
*river transportation*  
*has at places been impeded*                      *Time 12/17/65*<sup>17</sup>

It is perhaps not a very brilliant example of showing a space ahead. The poem does however end prospectively:

let there be the courage  
.....not just to have seen  
  
but to ease into the world  
  
the unreal  
.....breathing within us<sup>18</sup>

I do believe that the whole arc of the poem had led me to a glimpse of what Buddhists call original mind (or *anatta*), where we get back to the purity we begin with. And that this glimpse, like Dante's passage through the very bottom of the *Inferno*, was the beginning of a return to a healthier view of life.

By the time these lines were written, I was already well embarked on the next volume of what would eventually become a trilogy, *Seculum*, continuing to explore the process to which I had been opened by writing *Coming to Jakarta*. The next volume, *Listening to the Candle* (1992), moved antithetically to some of the good things in life, and the third, *Minding the Darkness* (2000), to a reconciliation of the two first volumes – through the process of

language and humans

endlessly

redefining each other...

the earthway

where we struggle to discover

what has always been known<sup>19</sup>

I wish I could say that it has always been self-evident to me that a poet should love the world, and therefore should wish to change it. In fact my vision has been frequently occluded by crises, like the one occasioning *Jakarta*, at which times I could think only about changing myself. But it seems self-evident to me now that these two urges, to heal oneself and to heal the world, are ultimately one and the same.<sup>20</sup>

*It is for this reason that my poem "Changing North America," one of my latest, begins with the same Milosz quote that opens this essay.*

## **Changing North America**

### **I. We Are Not As We Are**

For Walt Whitman and Allen Ginsberg

Having helped initiate

the liberators of Poland<sup>21</sup>

Czeslaw Milosz said to a Harvard audience

that in every era

the task of the *inspired* poet

is to *transcend his paltry ego*

and remind *the soul of the people*

*of the open space ahead.*<sup>22</sup>

His example – sorely needed --

of overcoming the *schism*

*between the poet and the human family*

was Walt Whitman<sup>23</sup>

*his simplicity and power of the word*<sup>24</sup>

but Whitman could never speak

to the whole of America

the way Mickiewicz or Milosz

could unite Poland

in the face of a foreign oppressor

It was Whitman's fate

to address an America

at war with itself

His version of freedom  
was not whole-heartedly received  
even by Emerson  
who warned him America  
*was not prepared for a poet*  
*who celebrated prostitutes and masturbation*<sup>25</sup>

much less in the South  
where his self-confident expansiveness  
provoked the Confederate Sidney Lanier:  
*Whitman's argument seems to be*  
*that because a prairie is wide,*  
*therefore debauchery is admirable*  
*and because the Mississippi is long,*  
*therefore every American is God.*<sup>26</sup>

Whitman could never assume the mantle  
of Adam Mickiewicz  
(whose wife was a Frankist<sup>27</sup>  
believing *all laws will fail*<sup>28</sup>)  
the poet of national liberation  
foreseeing the sun of freedom  
and the wind that would blow off  
the frozen cascade of tyranny<sup>29</sup>  
like Milosz a century later  
with his commitment  
to a poetry that can *save nations*.<sup>30</sup>

Whitman knew how best to praise the world  
not how to change it  
although much later he walked  
under the pale green leaves of the darkened republic  
to the hermit thrush's abode  
*in the pine trees*<sup>31</sup>  
with the *sacred knowledge of death*<sup>32</sup>

And your fate too Allen Ginsberg  
was to address an America  
still at war with itself  
when as you wrote *The world*  
*has a soul America*

*is having a nervous breakdown*  
*and you asked by what authority*  
*we are not as we are*  
*What fiends determine our wars?*<sup>33</sup>

The liberation of *Howl*  
was welcomed by us poets  
when we had been reasonable so long  
you seemed to open the doors  
to a crazy wisdom from the east

I think of you with your squeezebox  
chanting cross-legged on a stage  
with Tibetan Rinpoches  
or chanting in the face of tear gas  
and of your testimony to Congress  
that psychedelics gave you *the power*  
*to stop hating President Lyndon B. Johnson*  
*and start praying for him*<sup>34</sup>

just as John Leonard described you  
*his ultimate role*  
*at every engagement*  
*in our second Civil War*  
*was as a nurse*  
*like his buddy Walt Whitman*<sup>35</sup>

The court's decision when *Howl* was seized  
was welcomed by us poets  
as a liberation of all language  
but thanks to the ACLU<sup>36</sup>  
which defended *Howl* and *Ulysses*  
the law always clumsy  
moved swiftly from liberating  
Ginsberg's four-letter words  
to the imposition of them  
on reluctant small-town libraries

Having been raised in Quebec  
with its exotic mix  
of individual and group identities  
the freedom I want is neither

that of the ACLU  
which defended the right of Nazis  
to march in Skokie Illinois  
past the homes of holocaust survivors<sup>37</sup>

nor that enforced in Canada  
where a man was *held in solitary confinement*  
*for two years in a Toronto jail*<sup>38</sup>  
and then deported  
for denying the holocaust.

Least of all is it  
Allen's notion of freedom  
which led from his arrest for stolen goods<sup>39</sup>  
to the AIDS-ridden sangha of Chögyam Trungpa  
until in the end he wrote  
*Nobody does anything right!*  
*Gods, Popes, Mullahs, Communists, Poets, Financiers!*  
*My own life, scandal! lazy bum!*  
*with how many boys...*  
*trapped in nightmare....*<sup>40</sup>

Ginsberg the wise man among us  
you saw more clearly the limits  
of Flatland social science  
than the space ahead

Awakened by Milosz's  
messianic question  
  
*what is poetry which does not save*  
*nations or people?*<sup>41</sup>

I want that freedom  
which Gandhi said  
*is like a birth*<sup>42</sup>

to a world changed  
by satyagraha  
*the power of truth*



## Changing North America

### II. Stopping History

For Leonard Cohen, Joan Baez, and Daniel Ellsberg

In our lifetime we saw it  
how Poles crowded the doors  
of their parish churches  
to chant in unison the Nicene Creed  
even those words *sitteth*  
*on the right hand of the Father*  
until with the aid of mobilized  
atheists Jews and  
(according to Adam Michnik)  
the poetry of Czeslaw Milosz<sup>43</sup>  
their solidarity was able to expel  
the Soviet army

What gospel what lyrics  
what blithe psalm  
will unite the peace-loving  
Northern Agrarian disciples  
of the Canadian Tory George Grant<sup>44</sup>  
and those of Allen Ginsberg to the south  
to ensure that the armies of our continent  
for whom that border hardly exists<sup>45</sup>  
will never again anywhere commit  
preemptive war?

Will it be mystical  
like Leonard Cohen's  
*bird on a wire*  
or Czeslaw Milosz's  
*bird thrashing against a window?*<sup>46</sup>  
Or as simple and direct  
as when we used to sing  
*we shall overcome*  
while nonviolent leaders were beaten  
and killed in the deep South?

As Americans white and black  
slowly began to wake up  
from the unspeakable traumas

of slavery  
and the war that ended slavery

the FBI found the bodies  
of Chaney, Schwerner and Goodman  
with the help of a contract murderer  
from the Colombo gang in New York City  
who extorted the facts with a razor<sup>47</sup>  
and although the ringleaders eluded jail  
for another forty years  
it was obvious by that time  
that the nonviolent in their simple  
preparedness to die  
had changed forever  
that region of America

What will it take  
to make the same FBI  
stop protecting the murderers  
of those antiwar leaders  
Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy  
and to cleanse the Dallas Police  
who let in a peon of the mob  
to shoot Oswald the designated patsy?

Allen Ginsberg you sat on stage  
at the Human Be-In  
with its rock music kites and balloons  
where I was sure I glimpsed  
what Milosz saw in *Pan Tadeusz*  
*an image of pure being*<sup>48</sup>  
*and a home for incorrigible hope.*<sup>49</sup>

I remember looking up  
at Carol our baby-sitter on my shoulders  
and above her my young son Mika  
who in the ocean sunlight  
seemed ablaze

I was going to reprove you Al Purdy  
Canada's *national poet*  
in a *copybook country*  
that has *bounced no rockets off the moon*<sup>50</sup>

for having so little to say  
on this matter of liberation

but then I remembered Leonard Cohen's  
*like a bird on a wire*  
*I have tried in my way to be free*

that calmed the angry crowds  
more than five hundred thousand of them  
at the Isle of Wight Music Festival  
who had just set the stage on fire<sup>51</sup>

Joan Baez said later  
*only Leonard could have done it*  
*it was his poetry*  
*magical*<sup>52</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

Dan Ellsberg you told me  
*it is as human to be cruel*  
*as to be kind*  
there are no prior inclinations

I said that as a poet  
I could never accept  
that hate is just as natural as love<sup>53</sup>

and now I ask you  
when the skies in the sixties  
opened up for a glimpse  
of a gentler America  
before violence closed in on us

and you saw a *chance*  
*of bringing about real change*  
*away from violence and revenge*<sup>54</sup>  
were you not also caught up  
in a moment of *pure being*?

I ask this of myself

Joan Baez

left the cover of *Time*

to march with King at Selma

and sing in the fields by the side

of Cesar Chavez and the migrant farm workers

Leonard was at the Isle of Wight

on a burning stage

... *calming tigers*

despite that electric

excitement in the cool air

of a San Francisco beach

I remained frozen

between the sensibilities of Hamlet

and the challenge of the Situationists

who forced the Paris uprising in '68

*you have to maim a horse*

*on stage to remind these people*<sup>55</sup>

You Dan were out there at the Rocky Flats

Nuclear Weapons Plant

having discovered *ahimsa* nonviolence

like Gandhi from Thoreau's words

*a minority is irresistible*

*when it clogs by its whole weight*<sup>56</sup>

knowing you might be killed

you sat on the railway tracks

and the train stopped

## **Changing North America**

### **III. The Space Ahead**<sup>57</sup>

Allen Ginsberg you were the wise one among us

the fiercest preacher against Moloch

you saw clearly the limits

of our sixties' protests

that p.r. revolution

of Flower Power

The Summer of Love

beautiful slogans

not all of us survived

at the time of the nonviolent

civil rights events in the south

and *la révolution tranquille*

liberating Quebec

from its nostalgic *messianism*<sup>58</sup>

backed by Quebec's long-time premier

the former lawyer for Shawinigan Water and Power<sup>59</sup>

a time of high drama

but our *movement*

we pretended to think was a group

of like-minded people

seems in retrospect more like

a social convulsion

in which our roles were predetermined

although not as yet written

in which a few not seeing

the open water

of the space ahead

proclaimed with the elitist

arrogance of the Weathermen

a violent class war

provoking as should have been seen

the reaction of the Powell Memorandum

urging the rich to respond

as they did with the Four Horsemen foundations

and the Council for National Policy<sup>60</sup>

so we now have a class war

more naked than for a century

in which as Warren Buffett observed

*it's my class, the rich class,*

*that's making war,*

*and we're winning.*<sup>61</sup>

High-level corruption and theft

are worse now than in the fifties

with thousands of children in the world  
dying every day from hunger  
we have as a matter of policy  
diverted a quarter of our corn crop  
to make gas for our SUVs<sup>62</sup>  
(and subsidies for Big Oil)

While Jeffrey Sachs the former  
director of the UN Millennium Project  
has observed *The world is drowning  
in corporate fraud,  
and the problems are probably greatest  
in rich countries  
with supposedly "good governance"  
Every Wall Street firm  
has paid significant fines*<sup>63</sup>

the unions are struggling  
supported by MoveOn  
to preserve what remains  
of the Democratic New Deal  
while the Tea Party suburbs  
whether or not they know it  
mobilize behind the Koch brothers  
to restore the inequalities  
of the Gilded Age

the real choice  
one so obvious  
most people never mention it  
is the one we face

between a world  
where the rich go on getting richer  
*the combined wealth  
of the 225 richest people  
already nearly equals  
the annual income  
of the poorer half of the earth*<sup>64</sup>

or the alternative  
redistributing wealth and power

the only way  
to ward off food riots  
desertification  
the collapse of secular order  
*(Civilization cannot survive  
the loss of its soil reserves)*<sup>65</sup>

and as a first step  
the choice in America  
between a social security  
where no one is forced to be homeless  
and the freedom of the Pentagon  
to fight still more wars  
in whatever countries it pleases

the freedom of Moloch  
which if not opposed wholeheartedly  
by a *strong and single will*<sup>66</sup>  
is on track in the end  
to bring down American empire

as abruptly as greed brought down  
the fallen empires of Spain  
France the Netherlands  
and Great Britain in our time<sup>67</sup>

leaving us at last  
with the *space ahead*  
that third *who always walks beside you*  
as the *thrush sings in the pine trees*<sup>68</sup>  
without whom we are not who we are

that necessary Other  
the Alternity  
both within and beyond us  
we can never see completely  
lost in endless rational disagreements

whether from instinct  
for the roots of our language  
we still call it *ineffable*  
*beyond all description*

or now with the spreading

leafwork of the Internet

we seek to discover

Truth

Peter Dale Scott, a former Canadian diplomat and English Professor at the University of California, Berkeley, is the author of *Drugs Oil and War*, *The Road to 9/11*, and *The War Conspiracy: JFK, 9/11, and the Deep Politics of War*. His most recent book is *American War Machine: Deep Politics, the CIA Global Drug Connection and the Road to Afghanistan*. His website, which contains a wealth of his writings, [is here](#).

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Dale Scott, "Afterword," *Minding the Darkness*, 245.

<sup>2</sup> Czeslaw Milosz, *The Witness of Poetry* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1983), 28, 25, 14.

<sup>3</sup> Peter Dale Scott, "[How I Came to Jakarta](#)," *Agni* 31/32 (1990), 297-304.

<sup>4</sup> Peter Dale Scott, *Coming to Jakarta: A Poem about Terror* (New York: New Directions, 1989), 24-25. The [complete section](#) is online at Poetry Foundation. My suspicions in the Caldwell murder have since expanded to include Indonesian secret services, who in the 1970s were much more influential in Cambodian politics, and massacres, than is generally recognized. See Peter Dale Scott, *The War Conspiracy* (Ipswich, MA: Mary Ferrell Foundation, 2008), 238; Peter Dale Scott, *American War Machine: Deep Politics, the CIA Global Drug Connection, and the Road to Afghanistan* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2010), 128.

<sup>5</sup> Scott, *Coming to Jakarta*, 102; quoting from Warren Commission, *Hearings*, Vol. 23, p. 166; Ed Reid, with Ovid Demaris, *The Green Felt Jungle* (New York: Pocket Books, 1964), 156-57; House Committee on Assassinations, *Report*, 151. The [complete section](#) is online.

<sup>6</sup> Peter Dale Scott, "The Sleep of Reason: Denial, Memory-Work and the Reconstruction of Social Order," in [Literary Responses to Mass Violence](#), (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University, 2004), 38-39; quoting from Alfred McCoy, *Politics of Heroin*, xii (emphases added); quoting in turn from *Coming to Jakarta*, 147-48.

<sup>7</sup> Arthur G. Neal, *National Trauma and Collective Memory: major events in the American century* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1998), 4. Cf. Neil J. Smelser, "Psychological Trauma and Cultural Trauma," in Jeffrey C. Alexander, *Cultural trauma and collective identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 31ss.

<sup>8</sup> Scott, *American War Machine*, 1-5.

<sup>9</sup> Scott, *American War Machine*, 3, 5. In June 2010 I quoted this last sentence to a Russian authority on drug trafficking, after he confessed to me that he had been studying the traffic for thirty years, and had come to realize he did not know who the enemies were.

<sup>10</sup> See for example, Peter Dale Scott. "[9/11, Canada, left gatekeepers & Zelikow](#)."

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Walter Isaacson, *Einstein: His Life and Universe* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2007), 90-94, 323, etc.

<sup>12</sup> Alfred McCoy, *Politics of Heroin*, 461-63.

<sup>13</sup> See especially Scott, *Coming to Jakarta*, 133-35; [online here](#).

<sup>14</sup> Peter Dale Scott, "Poets Who Grow Gardens in Their Heads," Stronach Lecture, 2010 (Berkeley: Bancroft Library, University of California Press, forthcoming). Cf. "Art as the Experience of Alterity: Theodor W. Adorno's Aesthetic Theory," *Poiesis* XII, 2010 [not seen].

<sup>15</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, "Commitment," *New Left Review* 1/87-88, September-December 1974; in Terry Eagleton and Drew Milne, *Marxist literary theory: a reader* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), 202. One can perhaps see in this an echo of Marx's thesis on Feuerbach: "Philosophers have hitherto only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it."

<sup>16</sup> Consider for example the closing lines of *The Prelude*: "What we have loved, /Others will love, and we will teach them how" (*Prelude* XIV. 446-47).

<sup>17</sup> Scott, *Coming to Jakarta*, 109, quoting *Time*, December 17, 1965; cf. Scott MacPhail, "Poetry and Terror in Peter Dale Scott's *Coming to Jakarta*," [Chicago Review](#) (1998), 41-50.

<sup>18</sup> Scott, *Coming to Jakarta*, 149-50.

<sup>19</sup> Scott, *Minding the Darkness*, 242-43

<sup>20</sup> Cf. T.S. Eliot, "I believe that at the present time the problem of the unification of the world and the problem of the unification of the individual, are in the end one and the same problem, and the solution of one is the solution of the other." (T.S. Eliot, "Religion Without Humanism," in Norman Foerster (ed.), *Humanism and America: Essays on the Outlook of Modern Civilization* New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1930), 112; misquoted in Peter Dale Scott, *Listening to the Candle*, 68; cf. Peter Dale Scott, "The Social Critic and His Discontents," in A. David Moody, *The Cambridge Companion to T.S. Eliot* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994], 63).

<sup>21</sup> Peter Dale Scott, "Czeslaw Milosz and Solidarity; or, Poetry and the Liberation of a People," *Brick* 78 (Winter 2006); citing Adam Michnik, "In Search of



- Lost Sense," [Sign and Sight](#), 9/21/05. Cf. Adam Michnik, *Partisan Review*, Winter 1999, 19.
- <sup>22</sup> Czeslaw Milosz, *The Witness of Poetry* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1983), 28, 25, 14.
- <sup>23</sup> Milosz, *The Witness of Poetry*, 26, 14.
- <sup>24</sup> Czeslaw Milosz, *The Land of Ulro* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1985), 120.
- <sup>25</sup> Paul Zweig, *Walt Whitman: The Making of the Poet* (New York: Basic Books, 1984), 320.
- <sup>26</sup> Sidney Lanier, *Select Poems*, ed. Morgan Callaway, Jr. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1899), xxxix-xl.
- <sup>27</sup> Jadwiga Maurer, *Z matki obcej: Szkice o powiazaniach Mickiewicza ze swiatem Zydów* (London: Polska Fundacja Kulturalna, 1990), 31. Cf. Ezra Mendelsohn, "The Frankist Novels of Isaac Bashevis Singer," in *Literary Strategies: the Jewish Texts and Contexts* (New York: Oxford UP), 1996), 125, 128. Milosz doubts that Mickiewicz's Jewish mother was Frankist, but asserts emphatically that his wife was (Milosz, *The Land of Ulro*, 116-19).
- <sup>28</sup> Jacob Frank, trans. Harris Lenowitz, *The Collection of the Words of the Lord*, Saying 103; Jacob Frank, trans. Harris Lenowitz, *Selections* (Berkeley, CA: Tree, 1978).
- <sup>29</sup> Adam Mickiewicz, "Digression," in Wacław Lednicki, *Pushkin's Bronze horseman: the story of a masterpiece* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1955), 122.
- <sup>30</sup> Czeslaw Milosz, *To Begin Where I Am* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001), 351; Peter Dale Scott, *Poets Who Grow Gardens in Their Heads* (Berkeley: Bancroft Library, University of California, forthcoming); "Czeslaw Milosz and Solidarity; or, Poetry and the Liberation of a People," *Brick 78* (Winter 2006), 67-74.
- <sup>31</sup> Eliot, "The Waste Land," v. 357.
- <sup>32</sup> Walt Whitman, "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd;" Harold Bloom, *The Best Poems of the English Language: From Chaucer Through Robert Frost* (New York: HarperCollins, 2004), 904.
- <sup>33</sup> Allen Ginsberg, "[Poetry, Violence, and the Trembling Lambs, or Independence Day Manifesto](#)," *Deliberate Prose: Selected Essays 1952-1995* (New York: HarperCollins, 2000), 3-5.
- <sup>34</sup> Francis X. Clines, "[Allen Ginsberg: Intimations of Mortality](#)," *New York Times*, November 11, 1984.
- <sup>35</sup> John Leonard, *The Nation*, April 28, 1997.
- <sup>36</sup> American Civil Liberties Union.
- <sup>37</sup> Philippa Strum, *When the Nazis Came to Skokie: Freedom for Speech We Hate* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1999).
- <sup>38</sup> [CBC News](#), February 15, 2007. The man, Ernest Zundel, was eventually deported from Canada to Germany, where he was sentenced for the same offense to five years in prison under German law.
- <sup>39</sup> Aaron Latham, "[The Lives They Lived: Allen Ginsberg: The Birth of a Beatnik](#)," *New York Times*, January 4, 1998.
- <sup>40</sup> Allen Ginsberg, "Elephant in the Meditation Hall," *Cosmopolitan Greetings: Poems, 1986-1992* (New York: HarperCollins, 1994), 43-44.
- <sup>41</sup> Czeslaw Milosz, *New Collected Poems* (New York: Ecco, 2003), 77.
- <sup>42</sup> *Young India*, December 15, 1921; in *Mahatma Gandhi, The Essential Gandhi: His Life, Work, and Ideas: an Anthology* (New York: Vintage, 1963), 150.
- <sup>43</sup> Peter Dale Scott, "Czeslaw Milosz and Solidarity; or, Poetry and the Liberation of a People," *Brick 78* (Winter 2006); citing Adam Michnik, "[In Search of Lost Sense](#)," *Sign and Sight*, 9/21/05. Cf. Adam Michnik, *Partisan Review*, Winter 1999, 19.
- <sup>44</sup> Ron Dart, *George Grant: Spiders and Bees* (Abbotsford, BC: Freshwind Press, 2008).
- <sup>45</sup> United States Northern Command, "[U.S. Northern Command, Canada Command establish new bilateral Civil Assistance Plan](#)," Press release, February 14, 2008: "SAN ANTONIO, Texas — U.S. Air Force Gen. Gene Renuart, commander of North American Aerospace Defense Command and U.S. Northern Command, and Canadian Air Force Lt.-Gen. Marc Dumais, commander of Canada Command, have signed a Civil Assistance Plan that allows the military from one nation to support the armed forces of the other nation during a civil emergency."
- <sup>46</sup> Czeslaw Milosz, "Treatise on Theology," *Second Space: New Poems*, trans. Czeslaw Milosz and Robert Hass (New York: Ecco, 2004), 47.
- <sup>47</sup> Sandra Harmon, *Mafia Son: The Scarpa Mob Family, the FBI, and a Story of Betrayal* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2010), 57-64.
- <sup>48</sup> Czeslaw Milosz, *The Land of Ulro* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1985), 122.
- <sup>49</sup> Milosz, *Witness of Poetry*, 13-14.
- <sup>50</sup> Al Purdy, "On Canadian Identity," in Al Purdy, *Poems for All the Nanettes* (Toronto: Contact Press, 1962), 47, 48.
- <sup>51</sup> "[Leonard Cohen Live at the Isle of Wight 1970](#)" [movie].
- <sup>52</sup> "[Leonard Cohen Live at the Isle of Wight 1970](#)."
- <sup>53</sup> Cf. Thomas Merton, *Life and Holiness* (New York: Image, 1963), 37: "Man is neither a devil or an angel. He is not pure spirit, but a being of flesh and spirit, subject to error and malice, but basically inclined to seek truth and goodness;" Dante, *Paradiso* 2:19-21.

<sup>54</sup> Daniel Ellsberg, *Secrets: A Memoir of Vietnam and the Pentagon Papers* (New York: Viking, 2002), 214.

<sup>55</sup> Peter Dale Scott, *Rumors of No Law* (Austin, TX: Thorp Springs Press, 1981), 43.

<sup>56</sup> Ellsberg, *Secrets*, 263.

<sup>57</sup> "The fate of poetry depends on whether such a work as Schiller's and Beethoven's 'Ode To Joy' is possible. For that to be so, some basic confidence is needed, a sense of open space ahead of the individual and the human species" (Czeslaw Milosz, [*The Witness of Poetry* Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1983], 14).

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Michel Brunet, "Trois dominantes de la pensée canadienne-française: l'agriculturisme, l'anti-étatisme et le messianisme," *Ecrits du Canada français* (Vol. 3, 1957), 33-117.

<sup>59</sup> Maurice Duplessis, Premier of Quebec from 1936 to 1939 and 1944 to 1959. His Union Nationale Party opposed the Liberal Party program of nationalizing Quebec's electrical power companies.

<sup>60</sup> Peter Dale Scott, *The Road to 9/11: Wealth, Power, and the Future of America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 22.

<sup>61</sup> Ben Stein, [New York Times](#), November 26, 2006.

<sup>62</sup> Lester R. Brown, *World on the Edge: How to Prevent Environmental and Economic Collapse* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2011), 60-61.

<sup>63</sup> Jeffrey D. Sachs, "[The Global Economy's Corporate Crime Wave](#)," *Project Syndicate*, April 30, 2011, .

<sup>64</sup> Scott, *The Road to 9/11*, 254; citing Daniel Singer, [Whose Millennium: Theirs or Ours?](#) (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1999).

<sup>65</sup> Lester Brown, "[The New Geopolitics of Food](#)," *Foreign Policy* (May/June 2011).

<sup>66</sup> Augustine, *Confessions*, 8:8:19: "For to go along that road and indeed to reach the goal is nothing else but the will to go. But it must be a strong and single will, not staggering and swaying about this way and that--a changeable, twisting, fluctuating will, wrestling with itself while one part falls as another rises."

<sup>67</sup> Peter Dale Scott, *American War Machine: Deep Politics, the CIA Global Drug Connection, and the Road to Afghanistan* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2010), 32-33; citing Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (New York: Random House, 1987); Kevin Phillips, *Wealth and Democracy: A Political History of the American Rich* (New York: Broadway Books, 2002). Cf. Thucydides, *History*, III.45.4, III.82.8; Lucan, *Pharsalia* I.158-70.

<sup>68</sup> T.S. Eliot, "The Waste Land," vv. 357, 360. It has been suggested that Eliot identified the hermit-thrush "in the neighborhood of the Eliot family summer home on Cape Ann" in Massachusetts (Ronald Bush, *T.S. Eliot: A Study in Character and Style* New York: Oxford University Press, 1984], 250n; cf. Martin Scofield, *T.S. Eliot: The Poems* New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988], 13 ["This derives from a New England memory"]). But Eliot's own notes to "The Waste Land" specify that he heard the hermit-thrush "in Quebec County" – i.e. on Lake Memphremagog, where he spent a summer about ten miles from my own family summer home and camp on Lake Massawippi in the Eastern Townships, Quebec, visited also by Leonard Cohen. In my mind this cross-border experience strengthens the analogy to Milosz's "thrush on a branch" (*New and Collected Poems*, 569), if not also Cohen's "bird on a wire."