

Age of Fools

William A. Cook

Excerpt

“The Bush/Obama administrations, driven by the twin horses of the Apocalypse, the Evangelical Christian Zionists and Neo-Con Zealots, pulls America ever closer to the brink of disaster by wielding whips of righteous prophecy and self-serving lies.”

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William A. Cook

Publisher's Note

Foreword

Age of Fools offers a record of the first decade of the 21st century as the newly appointed administration of George W. Bush entered the White House and inaugurated a decade of deceit and destruction that catapulted the United States into a totalitarian dictatorship that ravaged the world at will. *Age of Fools* is not a historical study, a journalistic record, nor a study devoted to military strategies for world dominance. It is rather a literary record captured in poems, poetry, plays and polemics drawing upon the tools of the artist, reflecting therefore the attitude, the mindset and the devotion of those who record and archive the behavior of humans as they live out the values and virtues, aspirations, dreams and desires of all who lived through these years as the perpetrators or the victims of those who ruled.

Age of Fools draws upon literary tradition as the artistic format within which it provides insight, illumination and enlightenment as the source of its judgment about the events that hallmarked the Bush administration, thrusting the new century into unending war that continues into the second decade and shows no sign of abating. The Preface details some of that tradition beginning with Sabastian Brant's *Ship of Fools*.

But the tradition goes back much further in Western culture to Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, to Virgil's *Aeneid*, to Dante's *Inferno*, to Cervantes's *Don Quixote*, to Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, to Melville's *Moby Dick*; to all the master works that illuminate human potential and human failure, all establishing the value of a literary perspective if the immersion of contemporary events is to be understood in light of a meaningful narrative of human development over time. To this end it enlists in that narrative the universal truths, morality and principles that establish true advancement toward a common decency, a recognition of respect and dignity, and a constant concern and compassion for all who live; an umbrella if you will, of what is right and what is wrong to judge the foibles and failures of men and women caught in moments of time, ensuring thereby an enduring record for all, forever.

Age of Fools is structured into broadly outlined areas that stimulate probing of human thought and feeling regarding "Men of War," "Ministers of War," and "Retribution." Within each area, poems inaugurate the concerns that will reveal and unveil who acted, why they acted, and the consequences and justifications of those actions. The poetry speaks through psalms, songs, and monologues, while the polemics testify to the actions set against the universal values gleaned from literature over the eons of time. Altogether the work reflects the need to record for all victims of these actions, a sense that justice should be leveled at those guilty of inhumane acts lest they pass forever without retribution.

William A. Cook
Joshua Tree, California
2015

Prologue

Over 500 years ago as Columbus bumbled his way to the “new” world, Sebastian Brant published broadsides describing recent events, often in satiric lampoons, barbed with his personal philosophy, often with political significance, to enlighten the masses. They were wisdom crafted in verse and dressed in caustic commentary. In 1494, just two years after Columbus’s fateful voyage, destined to inaugurate the greatest holocaust in human history, Brant’s masterpiece, the *Narrenschiff*, appeared. This collection consisted of 112 verses in iambic tetrameter, each dressed out in rhyming couplets accompanied by magnificently carved woodcuts—companion pieces of polemical art that captured his times caustically and truthfully as the Holy Roman Empire entered the 16th century. It was a time of genocide abroad, of inquisition at home and of religious reform throughout Europe. Brant’s *Ship of Fools* conveys his lifelong desire to bring peace and harmony to his country by lambasting the fools—their failures and their infirmities—that ruled and gave acceptance to an earlier age of fools.¹

Edwin Zeydel categorizes Brant’s “preachments” under six headings: 1. Vicious or criminal offenses, 2. Insolence, 3. Riotousness, 4. Sloth, 5. Presumptuousness, and 6. Perversities; all “a telling picture of the infirmities of German society in 1494.”² Perhaps in the recesses of Brant’s mind, his voyage of fools had begun two years before when Columbus set sail on a voyage of profiteering and mayhem, the extent of which not even his experience could imagine. He knew of the medieval trope of the fools’ aimless life bereft of anchor, rudder and compass. He knew of the fools’ desires for a utopian life of greed, pleasure and power; he knew the corruption inherent in Spain’s wish to colonize the world and its infectious destruction of the preachments he railed against. And in consequence, he turned his ship of fools to an imaginary port of Narragonia, a land not unlike his own Germany, suggesting that the fools who made up his ship were destined to destroy the values that gave them meaning and replace purpose with fools’ gold.

It is Brant’s enveloping narrative that entices my interest in his work. While 500 years separates his efforts from mine, and the bridging of centuries offers parallels between the 15th and the 21st centuries, it is the embodiment of civilized progress in the hands of fools that captures his truth and awakens mine. That fools exist in the 15th century surprises no one; that they offer comparison with those in the 21st century offers delight for the cynic. But it’s the idiocy of today’s fools and their heinous impact on our lives, so much greater than that possible just 500 years ago, that must force us to contemplate the words “progress” and “civilized.” Brant’s narrative journey remained in the Roman Empire with Maximilian’s mantle covering a land mass from the ports of Spain to the castles of Germany. Today that narrative encompasses the entire globe ushered in by fools untethered to a government by election or appointment, and hence but rogue officials officiating for the people as they led

¹ Brant, Sebastian. *Ship of Fools*. Translated with Introduction and Commentary by Edwin H. Zeydel (New York: Dover Publications).

² Op. Cit., 18.

their nation to a feast of offal, the putrid detritus of millions charred by depleted uranium, white phosphorus, flechette bombs, “mother bombs”—carrying their children, drones, assassinations and lawlessness beyond contemplation. Such are the fools that have taken hold in our world.

Needless to say, Brant’s understanding of fools is not my understanding of fools. I do not disparage his choice of merchants who use usury, or men who seek vengeance, or those who cheat on their wives or employers, or those ungrateful to God, or those who give false council. I find these offenses mild when compared to the offenses of our fools in this 21st century. Here is Brant’s second plate:

*Who heeds what mighty men have said
And e’re by fickleness is led
Drives sows to vats before they’re dead.*

2. OF GOOD COUNCILORS

Full many exercise their wit
That soon in council they may sit,
Not knowing right or wrong at all
They blindly grope along the wall.
Hushai, alas, has long been dead,
Ahithophel has got ahead!
Wouldst others with advice delight,
Then counsel but what’s fair and right,
So you will not be like a slat
That drives the sow into the vat.
I truly say it is not fair,
Let judgment be a lesser care,
For it alone does not make right,
One must be searching, must be quite
Inquisitive of evidence,
Else right is wrong and bare of sense,
Else God will not accept your plea;
I give the warning earnestly.
If we could see the future clear
We’d not be rash with judgment here.
The standard every man’s applied
In life, by that he too is tried,
As you judge me and I judge you
Our heavenly Father judges too.
When he is dead a man will find
The judgment he once gave his kind;
Whose judgment injures others may
Expect his own grim Judgment Day.
The judgment spoke by cruel men
Will some fine day rebound on them;
Who does not render justice well
Will meet harsh justice down in hell;

No godless counsel God will praise,
No violent, sly, or crafty ways.³

Brant castigates those whose judgment injures another, for that councilor can “expect his own grim Judgment Day.” Would that were true in our time, for if there is a telling difference between the 16th and 21st centuries, it is that those who injure others, damned or not, suffer no retribution. Our fools accept no morality and hence no judgment day, having determined that they alone must rule and all others follow.

Today’s fools must be defined, as they are not human, not sympathetic to their brethren, not resident in a shared universe, not conversant with the equality that resides in each and every human walking the earth, not sensitive to pain or suffering awaiting those who are the recipients of their calculated and devastating slaughter, not conscious of a necessity to share the fruits of this earth with all, to seek solutions to the waste and destruction imbedded in their control of forces that devastate the planet. No, today’s fools must be seen as devoid of human spirit, as creatures that find worth within the mortal flesh that envelops their bones like a sheet of tissue draped as a shroud over their wasted minds bereft of emotions or hearts or souls, unable to think beyond self and the void that is their wasted life. Today’s fools would turn everything in the world into products for consumption, including any who obstruct their desires. Jehovah, God of War [see *Exodus*], and Saklas, the fool, the god of mindlessness, are false gods yet are their gods. Ruthless and reckless, our fools thrive on the misery and suffering in this world and negate the spirit that is the essence of existence.

Self-love propels them, flattery ignites their egos, pleasure and sensuality are but givens as their rewards, lip service anticipated as they flaunt their entitlement to act without interference from those outside their exclusive club. Nourished by vanity and intemperance, driven by madness and arrogance, claiming “exceptionalism” as a birthright as they buy favors and privilege, stealing souls as larder for their enjoyment, they are scavengers on humankind, finding in this world a banquet of riches for the few and leaving the rest to the wasteland beyond the walls they have constructed to block out any memory of their evilness.

Life in a Bifurcated World

Since I’ve undertaken this backward glance into the first decade of the 21st century guided by the hand of Sebastian Brant and his brilliant *Ship of Fools*, I believe I have a responsibility to the reader to give some background to Brant’s work that arguably was and is a best-selling text of human insight and delight. Edwin H. Zeydel translated and edited in 1944 the edition in rhyming couplets, a portion of which is quoted in this Prologue. In his Introduction he notes there are “six authorized editions of the *Narrenschiff* that came out in Brant’s life.”⁴ Zeydel used the Basel, 1494 edition for his work. Over the years multiple editions appeared with varying attention paid to the original.

³ Op. Cit., 64-65.

⁴ Op. Cit., 21.

“Early in 1509, or perhaps late in 1508, the English priest Alexander Barclay, probably of Scottish origin, got out the first English adaptation in stiff, uninspired Chaucerian stanzas under the title *The Shyp of folys of the worlde*... translated out of Laten, Frenche, and Doche into Englysse tonge.”⁵ Two points of interest for me in Barclay’s work: it is only 15 years after the original *Ship of Fools* and it has expanded the theme to “the worlde.”

Zeydel remarks about Barclay’s “subjective moralizing” as he translates with much freedom from Locher’s Latin edition and the various additions that have been made to the original text without positive or negative commentary. Barclay, it appears, did not use the Basel original edition at all. Consequently, Barclay’s edition is more a ship of 16th century fools than those satirized by Brant in Germany.

While I am but a passenger on board Brant’s ship, not engaged with translating his book or commenting on its “preachments,” I find Barclay’s interest in expanding its purpose in tune with my own. So let’s be clear: this is not a companion to Brant or a commentary on it, nor is it disparaging of his work in any sense. Rather, it is a testament to his wisdom as he realized how this world runs. Brant presented his work without references to particular identifiable people, nor did he condemn anyone to hell. I find myself, therefore, caught between centuries, floating back to Dante’s *Inferno* as it placed his enemies and fools in sundry but appropriate circles of hell’s damnation and Barclay’s desire to inflict his moralizing on all the fools in the world, an expansion I find particularly satisfying. With that in mind, let me quote from Barclay’s introduction [see below] this one poignant observation:

“I wyl aduertise you that this Boke is named the Shyp of foles of the worlde: For this worlde is nought els but a tempestous se in the whiche we dayly wander and are caste in dyuers tribulacions paynes and aduersitees: some by ignoraunce and some by wilfulnes: wherefore suche doers ar worthy to be called foles. syns they gyde them nat by reason as creatures resonable ought to do.”⁶

Note:

...this world is naught else but a tempestuous sea in which we daily wander and are cast in diverse tribulations, pains and adversities, some by ignorance and some by willfulness: wherefore such doers are worthy of being called fools since they guide not by reason...” It’s the willfulness I find truly sinful, willfulness to ravage others for self-gain. Such fools contend they are civilized, rational, purposeful citizens and dress the part; but dresses are but covers of the nakedness beneath that cannot cover the deceitfulness, the hypocrisy, the calculated mindlessness of their true selves that is neither visible in the dress nor in the nakedness. It is the rot within the distorted soul that lives like the wandering figure of legend, caught by Hawthorne in “A Virtuoso’s Collection,” “...there was a bitterness indefinitely mingled with his tone, as of one cut off from natural sympathies, and blasted with a doom

⁵ Op. Cit., 28.

⁶ *A Bibliographical Catalogue of Barclay’s Works. The Ship of Fools*, Translated by Alexander Barclay (Edinburgh: William Paterson. London: Henry Sothorn and Co.) “The Argument,” 18.

that has been inflicted on no other being, and by the results of which he had ceased to be human.⁷

This “Age of Fools” deserves more than a scolding, more than a reprimand, more than a chastisement for the world-wide wreckage they have inflicted. These fools deserve absolute castigation, nay more, damnation forever in the annals of human discourse. I offer in poems and in polemics my attempt to stamp that damnation on all the fools that have created the bloodshed, the mayhem, the absolute chaos that has attended the innocents of the world by these beasts that have roamed the world without a soul.

For thirteen years I witnessed a cabal of men, mostly men, shackle the peoples’ representatives of the United States by machinations and calculated strategies in an effort to control this nation for their ends. I wrote about this destructive purpose month after month, in articles carried in numerous Internet publications world-wide from America to Britain, to Canada, to the Middle East and in translations to China, Italy, France, and in Arabic to Egypt and elsewhere. I have been interviewed on radio and television in Chicago, Canada, Iran and Moscow and published two books on the Bush administration tracking the deception as it happened: *Tracking Deception: Bush Mid-East Policy*⁸ and *The Rape of Palestine*,⁹ and edited a third, *The Plight of the Palestinians*,¹⁰ that tracked the genocide in Palestine. This book, *Age of Fools*, presents that witness in literary fashion, using many of those articles as they typify and focus on the madness of these fools’ purpose, its depravity and its malignity.

But, immersed as I have been in the soullessness of these fools, I have also turned to fiction to capture their merciless behavior and the horror they have brought to this age. *The Chronicles of Nefaria*¹¹ tells of this age in a morality tale through the mind of the Prime Minister of Wickedness as he lies in a coma, and *The Agony of Colin Powell*¹² offers a lone voice crying in the silence of his internal monologue at the outrages in which he has participated, on behalf of this cabal of fools.

Poetry often speaks of truth, through images that raise specters of human depravity and impending loss as poets become prophets of doom. Yeats’s “Easter 1916” ushers in such

⁷ Hawthorne, Nathaniel. “The Virtuoso’s Collection.” Qtd in “The Boston Miscellany,” Vol. 1. Ed. Nathan Hale and Henry Theodore Tuckerman. January and July, 1842 (Boston: Bradbury, Soden and Co., 200).

⁸ Cook, William A. *Tracking Deception: Bush Mid-East Policy* (Mesa AZ: Dandelion Books), 2005.

⁹ Ibid. *Hope Destroyed...Justice Denied: The Rape of Palestine*. Expathos. Groningen, 9724CP. Netherlands, 2008.

¹⁰ Ibid. *The Plight of the Palestinians: a Long History of Destruction* (New York: Macmillan and Company), 2010.

¹¹ Op. Cit., *The Chronicles of Nefaria*..

¹² Cook, William A. *The Agony of Colin Powell*. Counterpunch, 2004.

impending dread, seeing the “terrible beauty” yet to come¹³; Auden’s “September 1, 1939” resurrects the fear of never again that cannot not be as the poet revisited his work after the fact and changed “or” to “and die,” thus negating hope¹⁴; and “November 11, 2011,” after 10 years of bells tolling “again,” “again,” “again”; the bloody beauty of man’s inhumanity to man tolling over the roof of the world as a lamentation of unending sorrow.¹⁵ Perhaps we can place our decade among those who have fulfilled the prophecies of Yeats and Auden with this glance backward when once again fools ravaged the earth, creating wastelands of homes and shops and schools and hospitals and churches and mosques and all that we hold of value; leaving only miles of cemeteries with their gleaming crosses and half-moons to populate the scene of savagery.

Easter 1916

W. B. Yeats, 1865 - 1939

I have met them at close of day
Coming with vivid faces
From counter or desk among grey
Eighteenth-century houses.
I have passed with a nod of the head
Or polite meaningless words,
Or have lingered awhile and said
Polite meaningless words,
And thought before I had done
Of a mocking tale or a gibe
To please a companion
Around the fire at the club,
Being certain that they and I
But lived where motley is worn:
All changed, changed utterly:
A terrible beauty is born.

That woman’s days were spent
In ignorant good-will,
Her nights in argument
Until her voice grew shrill.
What voice more sweet than hers
When, young and beautiful,
She rode to harriers?
This man had kept a school
And rode our wingèd horse;
This other his helper and friend
Was coming into his force;

¹³ Yeats, William Butler. “Easter 1916.” Project Gutenberg.

¹⁴ Auden, D. H. “September 1, 1939.” Poets.org.

¹⁵ Cook, William A. “September 11, 2011.” (unpublished).

He might have won fame in the end,
So sensitive his nature seemed,
So daring and sweet his thought.
This other man I had dreamed
A drunken, vainglorious lout.
He had done most bitter wrong
To some who are near my heart,
Yet I number him in the song;
He, too, has resigned his part
In the casual comedy;
He, too, has been changed in his turn,
Transformed utterly:
A terrible beauty is born.

Hearts with one purpose alone
Through summer and winter seem
Enchanted to a stone
To trouble the living stream.
The horse that comes from the road,
The rider, the birds that range
From cloud to tumbling cloud,
Minute by minute they change;
A shadow of cloud on the stream
Changes minute by minute;
A horse-hoof slides on the brim,
And a horse plashes within it;
The long-legged moor-hens dive,
And hens to moor-cocks call;
Minute to minute they live;
The stone's in the midst of all.

Too long a sacrifice
Can make a stone of the heart.
O when may it suffice?
That is Heaven's part, our part
To murmur name upon name,
As a mother names her child
When sleep at last has come
On limbs that had run wild.
What is it but nightfall?
No, no, not night but death;
Was it needless death after all?
For England may keep faith
For all that is done and said.
We know their dream; enough
To know they dreamed and are dead;

And what if excess of love
Bewildered them till they died?
I write it out in a verse—
MacDonagh and MacBride
And Connolly and Pearse
Now and in time to be,
Wherever green is worn,
Are changed, changed utterly:
A terrible beauty is born.¹⁶

September 1, 1939
W. H. Auden, 1907 – 1973

I sit in one of the dives
On Fifty-second Street
Uncertain and afraid
As the clever hopes expire
Of a low dishonest decade:
Waves of anger and fear
Circulate over the bright
And darkened lands of the earth,
Obsessing our private lives;
The unmentionable odour of death
Offends the September night.

Accurate scholarship can
Unearth the whole offence
From Luther until now
That has driven a culture mad,
Find what occurred at Linz,
What huge imago made
A psychopathic god:
I and the public know
What all schoolchildren learn,
Those to whom evil is done
Do evil in return.

Exiled Thucydides knew
All that a speech can say
About Democracy,
And what dictators do,
The elderly rubbish they talk

¹⁶<http://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/easter-1916>.

To an apathetic grave;
Analysed all in his book,
The enlightenment driven away,
The habit-forming pain,
Mismanagement and grief:
We must suffer them all again.

Into this neutral air
Where blind skyscrapers use
Their full height to proclaim
The strength of Collective Man,
Each language pours its vain
Competitive excuse:
But who can live for long
In an euphoric dream;
Out of the mirror they stare,
Imperialism's face
And the international wrong.

Faces along the bar
Cling to their average day:
The lights must never go out,
The music must always play,
All the conventions conspire
To make this fort assume
The furniture of home;
Lest we should see where we are,
Lost in a haunted wood,
Children afraid of the night
Who have never been happy or good.

The windiest militant trash
Important Persons shout
Is not so crude as our wish:
What mad Nijinsky wrote
About Diaghilev
Is true of the normal heart;
For the error bred in the bone
Of each woman and each man
Craves what it cannot have,
Not universal love
But to be loved alone.

From the conservative dark
Into the ethical life
The dense commuters come,

Repeating their morning vow;
"I will be true to the wife,
I'll concentrate more on my work,"¹⁷
And helpless governors wake
To resume their compulsory game:
Who can release them now,
Who can reach the deaf,
Who can speak for the dumb?

All I have is a voice
To undo the folded lie,
The romantic lie in the brain
Of the sensual man-in-the-street
And the lie of Authority
Whose buildings grope the sky:
There is no such thing as the State
And no one exists alone;
Hunger allows no choice
To the citizen or the police;
We must love one another or die.

Defenceless under the night
Our world in stupor lies;
Yet, dotted everywhere,
Ironic points of light
Flash out wherever the Just
Exchange their messages:
May I, composed like them
Of Eros and of dust,
Beleaguered by the same
Negation and despair,
Show an affirming flame.¹⁸

November 11, 2011

William A. Cook

I stand alone above the desert's floor,
Scanning a forest of Joshua Trees and Cholla,
Virtual survivors of eternal tortures and neglect,
Startling images of civilizations march through time.
Each tree a stark silhouette of missiles

¹⁷ Implicit lie to self as narrator caustically damns his lack of morals.

¹⁸ <http://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/september-1-1939>

Clustered high like ancient morning stars,
Each Cholla camouflaged in silver baubles
Luring the uninitiated to throbbing pain,
A standing history of human advancement and gain;
Terrible in their beauty and what they portend.

Today across this plain stand Baghdad and Jenin,
Twenty-first century symbols of modern crusades,
Tapestries of conquest and capitalistic enterprise
Depicted for all—lest we forget—
Through the magic of worldwide Internet;
The liquid screen replacing stones and glass
As the images of thoughtless license to kill,
Watching as our psychopathic state blesses
The evil done by those done evil;
Terrible is the beauty to the doomed and damned.

Eleven, eleven, two thousand eleven
Mirrors momentarily the end of all wars
A hundred years ago, and now forgot:
When Europeans pause to ruminate upon their past,
When Presidents lay their wreath for the quick upon the dead;
When Dominionists find solace in damning Muslims,
When Christians at last march triumphant over the earth;
When Zionists return in glory to Zion,
When all has passed that has been prophesied,
Then will the earth lay ravaged in savage beauty.

What dates propagate this millennium of hate?
What empires in the west orchestrate this carnage?
What resurrected crusade creeps again toward Bethlehem?
Oh, we have heard it all before—
The talking heads who defecate lies,
Seeking to obfuscate truth and reality
So none smell the decaying bodies of Jenin,
Or the orphaned children abandoned in Lebanon,
Or the assassin's executions of innocents on the Marmara,
Or the terrible beauty of death born in Gaza.

We all seek silence in the liquid screen,
Surfing for sanity in reality shows and satire,
Where alone we can suffer both news and pain;
We fritter life away in texting and pictures
Counting friends we do not know
To buttress the flesh that encases our bones.
So must I seek silence in this desolation,

Composing images of negation and despair,
To avenge the Almighty's creative act
And return to the terrible beauty of the void.

Unlike Brant or even Barclay, I write of Evil Councilors, for goodness does not exist in this world. Here is my version of Councilors for the 21st century:

Neo-conspirators arose,
Like bloodsuckers on ancient toes,
To suck sense from those in power.

Of Evil Councilors

Arrogance is the stepchild of privilege and stupidity,
It feeds upon itself, creating a mirage of superiority
That, like a drug, intoxicates those infected
 To see themselves like gods,
 All powerful, all knowing,
 Determiners of human fate,
 Of who to love and who to hate,
 Of what is good and what is evil,
 Of who will live and who will die.

Jehovah, god of war, and his fool Saklas
Created them and they worship war and madness,
For fools they are and in foolishness they reside.
Such men do not need their neighbors;
They live in myth and rule by myth
Forcing their subjects to obey through fear,
The oil that makes smooth their path
 To domination of the world,
While we, obedient fools, march to their drum.
Such men find fortification in fables,
 Purpose in parables,
 Meaning in mayhem,
 Truth in lies,
And damn as demons those who dissent.

One truth above all truths,
 One god above all gods,
 One power above all powers!
Such is their cry, and it carries across the seas
 And the trees, and the sand,
A cry in the wilderness of time,
 The cry of Alexander and Caesar,
 Of Napoleon and Hitler,

And all the little men who would subjugate
The spirit of those who walk upon the earth.

The offenses of these fools offend the sensibilities of common decency toward all humans even as they defy the guaranteed rights of all who live under the umbrella of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations. Their minds and hence their actions are driven by demonic forces that cater to no one and nothing that interferes with their ultimate goals, goals which are anathema to the welfare of people everywhere. There is need to understand these forces that seize a mind, freeze it against its fellows and seal out the natural sympathies of the heart. There is also need to comprehend the process by which these madmen took control of the United States, pirating the ship of state to policies and acts contradictory to its stated principles, turning it into an oligarchic, belligerent fascist monstrosity that sails the oceans of the world; plundering all without mercy, a veritable Ship of Fools. To that end I offer this guide that we might track the deception as the Bush administration and its attendant fools began this corrosive and calculated destruction of the United States of America in the first decade of this new century.

Insert Graphic # 1

**Place below the graphic the following:
“Requiem for Fools,” by Ed Beardsley**

Comedy of Fools: Enter the Arrogant

The arrogant entered this new century with full intent to destroy the country that gave them voice and made voiceless the true citizens of this nation as they burrowed into the chambers of the federal government: into state, finance, treasury and defense. They began by buying the Congress, having established power over them by coercion, bribery, and vetting the sins of their past, ensuring thereby obedience to their goals. A view into this process of unrepresentative democratic power is offered here to identify some of the fools that parasitically thrive on the flesh of this nation, infecting its innards and effectively bleeding it to death. [The following words introduced *Tracking Deception: Bush Mid-East Policy*, a work that unveiled the deceit of the first five years of his administration.]

Bush's America mirrors the consequences of arrogance that sees perfection in itself while it castigates its neighbors for harboring evil, projects its God protected beliefs on all the unbelievers in the world, presumes a holy covenant with God that proclaims His favoritism above all humankind, and assumes the judicial robe of righteousness. It willingly incarcerates individuals without charge or recourse to legal counsel, executes those it judges to be guilty without trial or presumption of innocence, and, finally, in all brazen hypocrisy, determines for the world what is good and what is evil. He is, after all, a disciple of the mindlessness of his personal god, Saklas the fool. [See the *Gospel of Judas* and *The Secret Book of John*].

America, in short, mirrors the arrogance of the Israeli state under Sharon and his right-wing Zionist religious groups that constitute his government. America has been reborn in the likeness of Sharon's Israel, and with Israel, driven by its god of war, we are the twin demons of destruction that live in constant fear of all peoples who would rather die than be subjugated, exploited, or oppressed.

What America was in its birthing, it is no longer. It once stood ideologically against the oppressor and now it is the oppressor. It began as a nation respectful of others' rights and now it determines for others what their rights will be. It designed a government tolerant of all beliefs, but now finds favor with an intolerant minority that proclaims to know the prophecies that are imbedded in ancient myth. It knew the hazards of militarism and imperialism; now it has become an imperial military dominance in the world. None of these realities is presented to the American people in these terms. They are couched in euphemisms, hypocrisy, and deception.

In September, 2002, with United States policy written by PNAC, Bush abandoned the community of nations by declaring his intention to invade Iraq, hypocritically hiding his intention by offering a resolution to the United Nations Security Council. He deceptively proposed the need to support the UN by enforcing their resolutions against Iraq, thus making that organization meaningful while failing to mention the nation that most flagrantly violates UN resolutions: Israel. Bush presented the American people with his administration's Strategy Report without deliberation by their elected representatives; he made no reference to his imperialist agenda. And that was just September.

Month by month Bush duplicity and deception mounted. His administration took America to war against a nation that had no intention of harming America, no means to harm America, and offered no threat to America. Yet he claimed all three. He concocted lies that convinced the American people that it was under imminent threat from biological, chemical, and nuclear weaponry when none existed. He fabricated an enemy force of considerable might that would confront American troops once the invasion started—when in reality Iraq had been devastated by 12 years of sanctions and had no army to field.

Bush justified his invasion as liberation of the Iraqi people, who would throw flowers at our soldiers as they brought liberation. These were lies manufactured by those with the most to gain: the Neo-Con Cabal and the expatriate Iraqis. Bush deceptively proved connections between Saddam Hussein and al Qaeda, knowing full well that Saddam hated al Qaeda as much as al Qaeda hated Saddam.

So America went to "war" believing Bush's lies. The result: Saddam out of power, Iraq now an anarchistic state flowing with "terrorists" from many countries that have a grudge against America, and our soldiers, sitting targets as they become the on-site symbol of America's oppression and collusion with Israel—America acting as consultant on how to occupy a foreign nation and control its people. Democracy in Iraq is a distant and hopeless dream as the various factions struggle to gain power—with the outcome a foregone conclusion—the creation of an Islamic "Democracy."¹⁹

As I write this passage looking backward, the U.S. military is in the process of removing itself from Afghanistan after 13 years; these words come from one of the most right wing media streams in the United States as it reflects, a rare moment in our media, on what we have left behind.

Meanwhile, in an all-too-rare front page feature documenting the Afghanistan War's ongoing impact on Afghans, the *Washington Post* recently dissected the consequences for the "rising number of children ... dying from U.S. explosives littering Afghan land." The *Post* set a scene similar to post-occupation Iraq:

As the U.S. military withdraws from Afghanistan, it is leaving behind a deadly legacy: about 800 square miles of land littered with undetonated grenades, rockets and mortar shells. The military has vacated scores of firing ranges pocked with the explosives. Dozens of children have been killed or wounded as they have stumbled upon the ordnance at the sites, which are often poorly marked. Casualties are likely to increase sharply; the U.S. military has removed the munitions from only 3 percent of the territory covered by its sprawling ranges, officials said.²⁰

In addition to this 20/20 vision provided by *The Washington Post* we have former Colonel Andrew Bacevich, a military historian, making these observations:

¹⁹ Author's opinion based on demographics of Iraq before the "conquest" when the Shia south outnumbered the Sunni or Kurd populations.

²⁰ Sieff, Kevin. "A rising number of children are dying from U.S. explosives." *Washington Post*. Kabul, April 9, 2014.

Apart from a handful of deluded neoconservatives, no one believes that the United States accomplished its objectives in Iraq, unless the main objective was to commit mayhem, apply a tourniquet to staunch the bleeding, and then declare the patient stable while hastily leaving the scene of the crime.²¹

Bacevich continues:

The fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq has exacted a huge price from the U.S. military—especially the army and the Marines...“More than 6,700 soldiers have been killed so far in those two conflicts, and over fifty thousand have been wounded in action, about 22 percent with traumatic brain injuries.

Furthermore, as always happens in war, many of the combatants are psychological casualties, as they return home with post-traumatic stress disorder [PTSD] or depression.

The Department of Veterans Affairs reported in the fall of 2012 that more than 247,000 veterans of the Afghanistan and Iraq wars have been diagnosed with PTSD. Many of those soldiers have served multiple combat tours.²²

We might also consider Thomas Friedman’s observation as presented in Ari Shavit’s article “The White Man’s Burden,” *Haaretz*, 4/4/2003, that the Iraq war “was disseminated by a small group of 25 or 30 neoconservatives, almost all of them Jewish, almost all of them intellectuals, people who are mutual friends and cultivate one another and are convinced that political ideas are a major driving force of history.”²³

In addition, Jewish historian Murray Friedman said that it was people like Paul Wolfowitz, Richard Perle, Bill Kristol, among others, who “helped to persuade President Bush to pursue the war on terrorism by invading Iraq in March of 2003.”²⁴

In the process, the neoconservatives, as Jewish writers Craig R. Eisendrath and Melvin A. Goodman argued, ended up putting the entire world at risk.²⁵

Bush claims even now that his "war" has brought more security for America, when he and the world know Iraq has become ground zero for terrorists, with Afghanistan rapidly returning to its state as a safe-haven. Bush defends his "war" as necessary to secure America against terrorists when he knows the expenditure of 150 billion dollars should have been used to deal with the causes of terrorist attacks. He belittles the intelligence of Americans by claiming the attackers "hated America's freedoms."²⁶

²² Bacevich, Andrew. *Breach of Trust*. New York NY: Metropolitan Books. Henry Holt and Co., LLC, 2013, p. 94.

²² Op. Cit., p. 105.

²³ Shavit, Ari. “The White Man’s Burden.” *Haaretz*, 4/4/2003.

²⁴ Alexis, Jonas E. “Neocon Intellectuals, the Lost Wars, and Sexual Politics.” *Veterans Today*, 6/4/2014.

²⁵ Jonas E. Alexis. “Neocon Intellectuals, the Lost War.” *Veterans Today*, 6/11/2014.

²⁶ Jett, Dennis C. *Why America’s Foreign Policy Fails*. (New York NY: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 144.

Bush's deception, like Pinocchio's nose, grew with each passing month. All members of his administration joined the lies: Rumsfeld, Powell, Cheney, Wolfowitz, Rice, Fleisher, Perle, Armitage, Abrams, Libby and all who worked for the administration or influenced the administration from the American Enterprise Institute and the Project for the New American Century. These men, almost all men, have subverted American Democracy, stolen the power of the people, and let personal gain and conflict of interest in their allegiance to Israel betray their positions as they effectively determined the fate of our soldiers who died. They also effectively determined the fate of innocent Iraqi civilians who died, the soldiers and civilians from coalition nations who died, and the devastation wrought on the countries of the Mid-East.