

EMOTIONAL IGNORANCE

Part 2

By Lincoln Stoller



Lincoln Stoller is a NASA astronomer from Berkeley, CA (1978); with a PhD in Quantum Physics from the University of Texas at Austin (1985). His education also includes Neurofeedback Training (2006-2009). LENS at Stone Mountain Center, Tilson, New York; 2006 and EEG Institute, Woodland Hills, California; 2007: The Enhancement Institute, Houston, Texas (2009). His hypnosis education includes successful completion of the hypnosis courses taught at HPTI and ICBCH

Mentality

What are the roots of a tyrant's mentality? What are the roots of the craving for power? Are these social aberrations or the dark side of ourselves that we deny? Just as winning athletes are not people with normal psychologies, neither are leading politicians. These are not personalities that develop without a social context. We create them.

Wars are a cultural event. It makes no more sense to blame one individual for causing a war than it does to credit an acorn with causing an oak tree. Pontius Pilate may have condemned Jesus Christ, but Christ's execution was the will of Rome. To understand wars and other horrible behaviors we have to understand the collective action of people to install and obey sociopaths.

"The most essential fact to bear in mind is that the key to Western European society in the Central Middle Ages was land, or, more specifically, the ownership of land. As a result, the interests of landowners often shaped warfare." — from *Warfare in Western Europe in the Central Middle Ages*, <https://www.swansea.ac.uk/history/history-study-guides/warfare-in-western-europe-in-the-central-middle-ages/>

Many of us contribute to forces we don't believe in, averting our eyes from the ill uses of our labor. This comes so naturally that we don't think twice. I knew a gentle grandfather who worked on missile launching systems at Los Alamos and an enthusiastic colleague in hydrodynamics whose theories happened to model uranium projectiles passing through steel. The pacifist Einstein triggered the atomic arms race.

Vladimir Putin ordered the invasion of Ukraine. Major General "Buck Turgidson" (Kubrick, 1964) Curtis LeMay ordered the firebombing of Tokyo. We blame them. But it was hundreds of peaceful people like I.M. Pei, the architect of Washington's National Gallery of Art, who developed the incendiary devices that burned 16 square miles of residential Tokyo in the most destructive act of war in history.

Acts of war are defensive in theory, but offensive in practice. By the time war is conducted there is no room for discretion. The intellect is driven by a will to prevail and emotions are driven by fear. The message is not only that we're willing to support this, but that we're willing to support situations that lead to it, leaders who accept it, and participation in cultures and economies that engage in and condone it.

It should be clear to us all that as long as we're paying for the armies to fight wars, we are responsible for them. We will say, "Yes, but we only fight just wars!" This is exactly the point: the people we install are capable of justifying anything, and we think that's okay.

It's not really the tyrant's mentality that's the problem. There will always be sociopaths and there will always be nice people making destructive machines. The problem lies with those of us who either support building the machines or give sociopaths the power to use them.

Change

I see three causes of this problem:

1. the power to wage war, which is a power that we create;
2. the authority to wage war, which is an authority that we fail to control; and
3. a collective feeling of responsibility for each other and our environment, which is a feeling that we don't have.

These all point back to our individual failure to integrate our darker nature. This is closely related to our resistance, fear, and sorrow. We are afraid to develop a full emotional awareness of our effects on others, our environment, and ourselves. This stems from our own emotional sorrow in fully remembering and empathizing with our past and our own low self-esteem.

Just as we build weapons to protect our territories, we build armoring to protect our egos. The seeds of indifference grow into culture-wide attitudes of entitlement. Some of us try to improve ourselves more than others and there's nothing wrong with failure when we try, but many of us avoid recognizing the collective indifference of which we are a part. We don't recognize the separation we maintain and the isolation we endorse.

To go down another layer, emotional disconnection is considered good professional practice. As managers we watch the bottom line leaving morality to religion. As therapists, we're told, "Don't make friends with your clients." Have unconditional positive regard, but don't make a personal investment. Much of what the therapy profession does maintains the status quo. I don't support this status quo and I won't toe this therapeutic line.

Nations go to war because citizens don't care about their neighbors and don't heal their own families. Healing isn't always happy, it can also mean setting boundaries, starting over, or opening up to one's own disquiet. It means entering the dark side. This is not simply transference and counter-transference, matters of incidental reflex and projection. There is always a dark side. A real therapist takes a real risk.

Major dysfunctions at the top of Maslow's pyramid of needs—that area of spiritual discretion—have their roots in thousands of smaller dysfunctions at the base—the realm of necessity. That is to say, in the foundations of our personalities and our unexamined needs. Intellect is the boat we sail but emotions are the currents of the ocean. As Homer wrote in the *Iliad & the Odyssey*: take any boat you like but the ocean will determine your fate.

Greater empathy starts with each of us. We all can become more sensitive. We don't have to know why gain more power from it or notice a change in those around us. Small changes won't make big differences, and even big differences don't change anything immediately. The pace of change is set by the currents that distribute it.

We can be subversive and we can cause change but we have to stick our necks out. As a hypnotherapist, I'm told to avoid giving unrequested suggestions, but I find that unacceptable. I'll drop the seed of greater empathy into my client's unawareness without waiting to be asked. I'll plant seeds in an effort at reforesting empathy.

Healing has many levels and there are many perspectives to any story. As a therapist, I've learned that the presenting problem is a symptom. The real problem lies deeper down. The problems of culture lie further down still, in the dark, but you can see them if you know where to look.

In his book *LSD and the Mind of the Universe*, Christopher Bache (2019a), a morally well-grounded and otherwise innocent professor of religious studies, arranged over 70 carefully planned and supported LSD excursions into the depths of his psyche. These gradually deepening excursions took him to the depths of humanity's hell and left him asking himself, "Where is this place and why am I here?" He concluded that it was really there. Events remind us that it is.

"We have to face our shadow in order to get to the gold on the other side of the shadow...how many of our children and grandchildren are going to have to die before we will be willing to make the changes that we are not willing to make today?"

— **Chris Bache** (2019b)

We can ask our clients, "How would your situation change if you had greater feelings for others, and they for you?" We can implant the suggestion of a growing concern for the safety of others and suggest others have greater concern for us. We can explore a world of greater empathy by saying, "You see and understand others more deeply, and enable others to develop similarly toward you."

If the situation permits, we can conjure a person's angels to bring a kind of self-love and support that naturally enlarges spirit and balances emotions. The shamans say it is the angels who do all the healing. I suspect they will heal our cultures too. Delivering our clients to the angels is the most responsible thing we can do.

We are never healing just one person. Every person who comes to us represents part of our whole species' thought-form. Big healing works to heal what is big, but it also heals us as individuals.

"Most of us Westerners are afraid of spiritual phenomena. They are strange to us. We need some conceptual context to help us make sense of these phenomena so that we can be more at peace with our own and more supportive of others' spiritual awakening."

— **Emma Bragdon**, psychotherapist (2006)

References

- Bache, C. M. (2019a). *LSD and the mind of the universe*, Diamonds from heaven, Park Street Press, Rochester, VT.
- Bache, C. M. (2019b, Jan 1). Conversation with Christopher Bache, *Journal for the Study of Radicalism* 13 (1): 155–178. <https://doi.org/10.14321/jstudradi.13.1.0155>
- Bragdon, E. (2006). *A sourcebook for helping people with spiritual problems*, 2nd Edition, Lightening Up Press, Woodstock, VT.
- Gedeon, J. (2022, Feb. 23). Trump calls Putin 'genius' and 'savvy'

for Ukraine invasion, Politico.com, <https://www.politico.com/news/2022/02/23/trump-putin-ukraine-invasion-00010923>

Kingsley, P. (1999). *In the dark places of wisdom*, Golden Sufi Center, CA.

Kubrick, S. (1964). *Dr. Strangelove or: How I learned to stop worrying and love the bomb*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LNC0YwuGLqg>

Matthews, C. (2022, Mar. 8). 'Xi is using Putin as a test tube.' Here's how China is assessing the U.S.'s Russia sanctions as it eyes conflict with Taiwan, MarketWatch.com. <https://www.marketwatch.com/story/xi-is-using-putin-as-a-test-tube-heres-how-china-is-assessing-the-u-s-s-russia-sanctions-as-it-eyes-conflict-with-taiwan-11646766286>

Powell, J. (2014, May/June). Woodrow Wilson's great mistake, Cato Institute, <https://www.cato.org/policy-report/may/june-2014/woodrow-wilsons-great-mistake>

