

THE BATTLE FOR TOTAL CONTROL OVER THE FRAMES OF POLITICAL DISCOURSE



Nader'08
Gonzalez



Past Futures: Assuring Failure Again and Again By Vigdor Schreibman

What is the procedure in a democracy that allows everyone to win? **Integration!**¹ This is designed “**to form a more perfect Union**” of the whole people. Let's do that.

Modes of Association

Representation is not the main fact of political life; the main concern of politics is modes of association. We do not want the rule of the many or the few; we must find that method of political procedure by which majority and minority ideas may be so closely interwoven that we are truly ruled by the will of the whole. We shall have democracy only when we learn to produce this will through group organization -- when young men are no longer lectured to on democracy, but when they are made into the stuff of democracy.²

Under the **law of democracy** established by the Republican form of government, “all power derives from the people.” The **leaders of democracy**, have not yet discovered the procedures needed to enabled citizens to exercise their sovereign democratic powers, so that “**we are truly ruled by the will of the whole.**” There have been various prominent modes of association in the political life of the United States e.g.: **Direct Democracy and Representative Democracy, Crowd Politics, Investor-driven Politics**, and the **Politics of Symbolism**.³ None of these modes of association produce anything remotely resembling “**the will of the whole**” or any legitimate democratic government “of the people, by the people, for the people” also described as the “consent of the governed.”

1 *Mary Parker Follett The Prophet of Management* (A Harvard Business School Press Classic, P. Graham, ed., 1996): pp. 73-86, 188-189 (describing the importance of "integration" for the winning decision-making strategy).

2 Mary Parker Follett, *The New State*, Chapter XVII, “**Democracy Not The Majority: Our Political Fallacy**” (1918) (Republished by Pennsylvania State University Press).

3 See e.g., Robert Dallek, *Ronald Reagan: The Politics of Symbolism* (1984); George Lakoff, *Whose Freedom?* 252-253 (2006) (explaining how Richard Whirthin, Ronald Reagan's chief strategist for the 1980 and 1984 elections, used the **Politics of Symbolism** to defeat progressives, despite the fact they did not agree with Reagan on the issues).

What is the result? When the cruel American civil war, which cost a vast amount of treasure and blood, was nearing its end, in 1864, President Lincoln foretold of a crisis that caused him to "tremble for the safety of my country." This is what he said:⁴

As a result of the war corporations have been enthroned and an era of corruption in high places will follow, and the money power of the country will endeavor to prolong its reign by working upon the prejudices of the people until all wealth is aggregated in a few hands and the Republic is destroyed. I feel at this moment more anxiety for the safety of my country than ever before, even in the midst of war.

In the early years of the 21st century the destruction of the Republic has reached its final stages, as Nobel Laureate Al Gore relates in his book, *The ASSAULT ON REASON* (2007):

Now that the conglomerates can dominate the expression of opinion that flood the minds of the citizenry and selectively choose the ideas that are amplified so loudly as to drown out others that, whatever their validity, do not have wealthy patrons, the result is a de facto coup d'etat overthrowing the rule of reason. Greed and wealth now allocate power in our society, and that power is used in turn to further increase and concentrate wealth and power in the hands of the few.

We have not developed our social and constitutional values for systemic success but for systemic failure. Effective political power has not been centered in the citizens of democracy who hold sovereign power. Instead, all political power has been centered in the decadent capitalist system favoring "Big Money" corporations that have no constitutional authority whatever to exercise control over the dominant channels of political communications, to which the political life of the nation has become captive.

Privatizing control over the channels of one-to-many electioneering communications (EC) (i.e., cable, broadcast, or satellite communications) has been engineered by the Federal Communications Commission. This was achieved by a robbery sanctioned by the Federal Courts over the use of the great broadcast spectrum, by granting broadcast licensees legal discretion to exercise monopoly control over community programming without any community participation in these decisions.⁵ Similarly, the electoral system is now under the total domination of "Big Money" also sanctioned by the Supreme Court of the United States. The "melt down" in law and "regulation" pertaining to campaign contributions, once recognized and purportedly reframed by the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002 (BCRA),⁶ was promptly overruled by a new cabal of plutocrats dumped on the US Supreme Court by the Bush Administration, guided by John G. Roberts, Jr., and Samuel A. Alito, Jr.⁷

Instead of challenging this absolutely illegitimate social and constitutional values system many **leaders of democracy** paradoxically now support the **myth of neutrality** so that the status quo is maintained. In the election of 2008, it's the "Myth of America" told by a charming woman, Governor of Alaska, Sara Palin, that provides the hot symbolism grabbing

4 Letter from Abraham Lincoln, to William F. Elkins (Nov. 21, 1864), *reprinted in* Archer H. Shaw ed., *The Lincoln Encyclopedia* 40 (1950).

5 See **US Court abdicates law for media ideology**, in FINS (15 November 1999); V. Schreibman, *The Marketplace of Broadcasters' Ideas* (1987).

6 116 Stat. 81, (a.k.a, the McCain-Feingold Campaign Finance Law), upheld in the main in **McConnell v. Federal Election Commission**, No. 02-1674, slip op. At 118 (Dec 10, 2003), 540 U.S. 93, 129-130, 224 (2003).

7 **Federal Election Commission v. Wisconsin Right to Life Inc.**, No. 06-969, slip op. (June 25, 2007) 551 U. S. ____ (2007).

people, **literally by their brain**,⁸ to adopt yet another **past-future**. This is the kind of cognitive symbolism that gave Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush their inspiring moment of demagoguery and despicable cold lies, made to bring America to its knees, subservient to the theories of action that define **decadent capitalism**.

This is the roadmap either to continuing deep social failure or spiritual transformation. Republicans love the roles of pathological liar, kleptomaniac, assassin, and mass murderer used to get their way and remove anyone who gets in the way. That the rest of us get sucked into their tyranny is a comedy made of stupidity and horrors. We need change, real deep spiritual change, not corrosive political symbolism, and empty slogans about change.

CORRUPTED BY FEAR

By Aung San Suu Kyi⁹

The quintessential revolution is that of the spirit, born of an intellectual conviction of the need for change in those mental attitudes and values which shape the course of a nation's development. A revolution which aims merely at changing official policies and institutions with a view to an improvement in material conditions has little chance of genuine success. Without a revolution in spirit, the forces which had produced inequities of the old order would continue to be operative, posing a constant threat to the process of reform and regeneration. It is not enough merely to call for freedom, democracy and human rights. There has to be a united determination to persevere in the struggle, to make sacrifices in the name of enduring truths, to resist corrupting influences of desire, ill-will, ignorance, and fear.



Spiritual transformation comes only in the midst of crisis, confrontation, and revolution, when the seeds of decay reveal old values breaking down in the search for a more appropriate state of human existence.¹⁰ This is how the early 20th century philosopher and polymath Charles S. Peirce described the choices:¹¹

Surprise and shock bring about the destruction of certain habits of thought in a manner very much like the sudden changes in environment which produced, according to some scientists, the rapid adaptation of species, say at the beginning of the glacial period. Something brute takes place which upsets established patterns. Either those patterns are given up or extinction ensues. Only those things develop which remain plastic enough in their habits to change them in the face of experience.

⁸ Cognitive scientists have discovered that by constant media repetition of ideas they can change the cognitive frames -- not just in people's minds but also in their very brains -- that determine how individuals think about economic policy, religion, science, foreign affairs—and freedom. G. Lackoff, *infra*, note 3, at 9.

⁹ **Aung San Suu Kyi**, is leader of the democratic opposition to Burma's military government. The quoted text is from an unpublished essay posted on the Internet by her late husband that were (doubtless) smuggled out of Burma. Image courtesy **FreeBurma**

¹⁰ Clare W. Graves, "Levels of Existence: An Open System Theory of Values," in *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, Fall 1970, Vol. 10, No. 2: p. 142; Saul D. Alinsky, *Rules for Radicals: A pragmatic primer for realistic radicals* xix-xxii (1971).

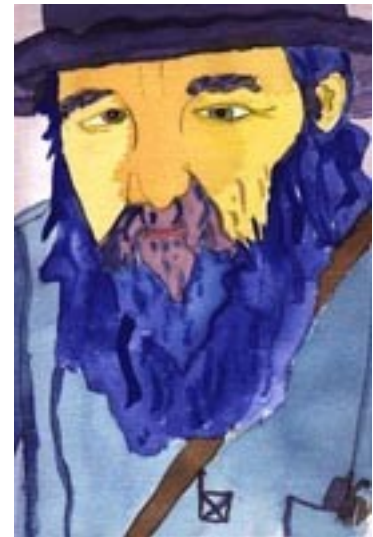
¹¹ Vincent G. Potter, S.J., *Charles S. Peirce, On Norms & Ideals* 177-184 (1997).

The really big story of the present moment concerns an offer of more of the same past-futures demagogy and despicable cold lies, now dressed up for political attack on the citizens' mind and brain using cognitive symbolism and High Density TV in charming womanly form. Repeating the same failed strategy over and over again is insane. The McCain campaign is a **Blizzard of Lies**, Paul Krugman writes in *The New York Times*, September 11, 2008, "that anyone with an Internet connection can disprove in a minute." McCain hopes the truth will drown in the blizzard.

The founding generation established a charter of American government with the first principle of democracy "**to form a more perfect Union**" of the whole people. This remains a brilliant call for **futures-creation** that can liberate the human spirit and fill the heart of all Americans with pride based on the **mode of association** that can most likely empower the whole people. We certainly don't desire another war government deaf to the needs and interests of the whole people, serving a few at the top. Ask yourself, which one of these presidential candidates, is most likely to commit themselves "**to form a more perfect Union**" of the whole people: **McCain/Palin, Obama/Biden, Nader/Gonzales, or McKinney/Clemente?**

Rest your decision with deliberate care upon your natural civic intelligence. Don't allow anyone to bamboozle you into betting your future, and the future of your family and community, based upon blind **gut feelings**.¹² This gives misplaced reliance on cognitive symbols of failed past dreams that are insidiously manipulated by media.¹³ Examining political options intelligently, who would be stupid enough to buy the same pack of outrageous lies offered by Republican demagogy, over and over again?

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Cornelia P. Atchley, artist,
Portrait of Vigdor in blue 2001

¹² This is the way a human being can rely on unexamined implicit values of uneven quality handed down by their dead ancestors, which are based on conditions of their own time that no longer exist. See e.g., Joe Klein, **Sara Palin's Myth of America** (CNN/Time September 10, 2008).

¹³ See authorities cited, *infra*, note 8.