

The Myth of Patriotism / Nationalism

Moral development progresses through four levels: 1) *what is good for me* 2) *what is good for my in-group* (family, nation-state, religion, gender, race, social class, etc.) 3) *what is good for humanity* 4) *what is good for Earth* (entire **Web of Life**). Patriotism/nationalism is level 2 **in-group** morality using *artificial borders* to separate 'us' from 'them'.

"Tribal nationalism [patriotism] always insists that its own people are surrounded by 'a world of enemies' - 'one against all' - and that a *fundamental difference exists between this people and all others*. It claims *its people to be unique, individual, incompatible with all others*, and *denies theoretically the very possibility of a common mankind* long before it is used to destroy the humanity of man." -Hannah Arendt, *The Origins Of Totalitarianism* ~ "Seas of blood have been shed for the sake of patriotism. One would expect the *harm and irrationality* of patriotism to be *self-evident to everyone*. But the surprising fact is that *cultured and learned people not only do not notice the harm and stupidity* of patriotism, they *resist every unveiling of it with the greatest obstinacy and passion* (with no rational grounds) and *continue to praise it as beneficent and elevating*. In its simplest, clearest and most indubitable signification, patriotism is nothing else but a means of obtaining for the **rulers** their *ambitions and covetous desires*, and for the **ruled** the *abdication of human dignity, reason, conscience* and a *slavish enthrallment to those in power*." -Leo Tolstoy ~ "Blind patriotism has been kept intact by rewriting history to provide people with moral consolation and a *psychological basis for denial*." -William H. Boyer [*blind patriotism, like violent war, is redundant*]

"A patriot sets himself apart in his own country under his own flag, sneers at other nations and keeps an army of uniformed assassins ('troops'/terrorists) on hand at heavy expense to grab slices of other people's countries and keep them from grabbing slices of his. In the intervals between campaigns he washes the blood off his hands and works for 'the universal brotherhood of man' with his mouth." -Mark Twain, *The Lowest Animal* ~ "One of the great attractions to patriotism, it fulfills our worst wishes. In the person of a nation we are able, vicariously, to *bully and cheat* while feeling [and proudly proclaiming] we are profoundly virtuous." -Aldous Huxley ~ "Patriotism means *advocating plunder in the interests of the privileged [elite/ruling] class of your country*." -Ernest B. Bax ~ "Patriotism is the belief that *your country is superior to all others* because you were born in it." -George Bernard Shaw ~ "Nationalism is a silly cock *crowing on his own dunghill*." -R. Aldington ~ "Patriotism is *flag-cheering national self-assertion* with no constructive duties." -H.G. Wells ~ "Patriotism/nationalism *divides* humanity into *competing* nation-states; love *unites* humanity into One Family." -dragonfly ~ "A nation is a *society united by a delusion about its ancestry* and a *common fear of its neighbors*." -W.R. Inge ~ "To me, it seems a dreadful indignity to have a soul *controlled by geography*." -George Santayana

"Patriotism is a religion, the *egg from which wars are hatched*." -Guy de Maupassant ~ "Patriotism is the principle that *justifies wholesale murder*." -Leo Tolstoy ~ "Patriotism - the *virtue of the vicious*." -Oscar Wilde ~ "Patriotism is the *willingness to kill and be killed* for trivial reasons." -Bertrand Russell ~ "Born in iniquity and conceived in sin, nationalism has *never ceased to bring humanity dissension and distress*." -Thorstein Veblin ~ "Patriotism is a *pernicious, psychopathic form of idiocy*." -George Bernard Shaw ~ "Nationalism is an *infantile disease*." -Albert Einstein ~ "Patriotism is a *menace to liberty*." -Emma Goldman ~ "Patriotism is a *survival from barbarous times* which must not only be evoked and educated but which *must be eradicated by all means - by preaching, persuasion, contempt and ridicule*." -Leo Tolstoy ~ "Patriotism is *fierce* as a fever, *pitiless* as the grave, *blind* as a stone and as *irrational* as a headless hen." -Ambrose Bierce ~ "The time will soon come when calling someone a patriot will be *the deepest insult*." -Ernest B. Bax ~ "Love dispels the delusion of *separation* that patriotism/nationalism instills." -dragonfly

"Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel." -Samuel Johnson ~ "I submit that patriotism is the *first* refuge of a scoundrel." -Ambrose Bierce ~ "It is even worse - I submit patriotism is the *first, last and middle range of fools*." -H. L. Menken ~ "*Fundamentalism* is the last refuge of a patriot." -Subir Ghosh ~ "I submit that mindless fundamentalism is the *first* refuge of a patriot." -dragonfly

"Patriotism is a superstition *artificially created and maintained* through a web of *lies and falsehoods*, robbing us of our dignity and increasing our *arrogance and conceit*." -Emma Goldman ~ "This *disgrace* should be done away with at once. *Heroism on command senseless brutality, deplorable love-of-country stance* and all the *loathsome nonsense* that goes by the name of patriotism." -Albert Einstein ~ "Patriotism is a *superstition*, one far more *injurious, brutal and inhumane* than religion." -Gustave Herve ~ "What produces war is the desire for the exclusive good for one's own nation - what is called patriotism. To abolish war it is necessary to abolish patriotism, and to abolish patriotism it is necessary first to understand that *patriotism is an evil*. Tell people that patriotism is bad and most of them will laugh and say: 'Yes, *bad* patriotism is bad, but *my* patriotism is *good!*'" -Leo Tolstoy

Immersed in Orwellian *doublethink* (the act of holding two *opposing and contradictory beliefs simultaneously* while fervently believing both despite being *notionally aware*, or even *willfully unaware*, of their *incompatibility*) we are taught the equivalent of WAR IS PEACE: **PATRIOTISM IS LOVE ~ PEACE IS PATRIOTIC ~ DISSENT IS PATRIOTIC ~ PATRIOTISM IS UNITY**. Patriotism - conditioned belief in imaginary borders/nation-states - is the *antithesis* of love, peace, dissent and unity. The etymology of 'patriotism' (*patriarchy*) is 'allegiance to the *fatherland*' - i.e. *allegiance to artificial borders* (and the *nation-state/fatherland* thus formed) that *separates* 'us' from 'them' (level 2 *in-group* morality). Patriotism/nationalism is loyalty/allegiance to a nation-state, *NOT* *loyalty/allegiance to elected rulers* ('leaders'/'representatives'). A patriot may or may not agree with elected rulers, but it is *not* 'dissent' that makes the patriot or defines patriotism - it is *identification* with *imaginary lines* ('borders') and the resulting imaginary *nation-state/fatherland*. Patriotism promotes the delusion that being born on 'this side' of an imaginary line (an 'american') makes one *inherently different* than being born on the 'other side' (a 'mexican'). In addition, patriotism/nationalism (like racism, sexism etc.) instills a subtle or even blatant belief in the *superiority* of one's nation-state/fatherland. Further, intense and relentless lifelong patriotic conditioning promotes the unquestioned belief that patriotism is an unequivocally supreme *virtue*, compelling us to *redefine* patriotism (*doublethink*) as 'love', 'peace', 'dissent', 'unity', or even 'sense of place' (a natural bond with one's *immediate bio-region*). I know of one longtime *anarchist* who is so deeply immersed in patriotic *fatherland doublethink* that he proudly declares being "patriotic to *Mother Earth*" - setting himself up for a classic case of *cognitive dissonance*. The time has come to move beyond the adolescent, arrogant, patriotic/nationalistic belief in *imaginary borders* that separates humanity into 'different', 'incompatible', competing, warring nation-states/fatherlands - and begin to create a **non-hierarchical, cooperative, community based global village** rooted in an awakened realization of the fundamental **unity/oneness** connecting all Life.

"There are a thousand hacking at the branches of evil to one who is striking at the *roots* [borders/nation-states/patriotism...]." -Thoreau