

# *the* EPOCH JOURNAL

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*CYBER CRIME, WARFARE,  
AND ESPIONAGE* by Wyatt Moreton

*MY NEW GLASSES:  
TECHNOLOGY EMBODIED*

by Patricia Locke

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*plus* THE SEWOL TRAGEDY &  
THE NEW CIVIL WAR

*The Epoch: On Technology*

## the EPOCH JOURNAL

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## Editor's Letter

Enough members of the Polity have asked us why we chose to put out an issue of *The Epoch* focusing on technology, especially after last year's edition on the Internet, that a few words about our thinking are not uncalled for. We'll spare you all the often-heard account of technology's pervasiveness in our lives. Such reports are usually dull and almost always unnecessary. Taking the presence of technology as a fact might be controversial to some, but this is the case only if we've already resolved ourselves to feel one way or another about it.

With that in mind, this journal does not purport to take an ideological position on the matter. It is not the anticipation of a perceived threat in or an imagined benefit from technology that makes it a worthwhile topic of inquiry and reflection. Polemical positions, both for and against, obscure technology's nature and frustrate any attempt to be genuinely thoughtful of its place and its role.

Technology's ubiquitous presence, however, is itself a good reason to give the Polity an opportunity to reflect on it. Like all things that take up residence amongst the everyday objects that populate our particular horizons, technology tends to fade into the background, to announce its presence with only the occasional exclamation (with the notable exceptions of new technology and broken technology; nothing reasserts the previously anonymous life of the machine like a new toy, or a dropped phone and a cracked screen). In this way, iPhones and magno-

lia trees have more in common than we would first expect. At St. John's, we pride ourselves on attempting to reclaim the moments of thoughtful wonder in which the objects of the everyday reveal themselves as mysterious and worthy of our attention. As technology in all its permutations, not merely the Internet or the video game or otherwise, takes on the guise of a given fact, there arises simultaneously (and hopefully in good proportion) the need for thoughtful re-inquiry into what has become common and obvious.

The *Epoch*, as a forum for broadening our questioning into the issues that are particularly and peculiarly contemporary, hopes to be the occasion for such reflection. To that end, this issue brings you an article on governance (or the lack of it) in cyberspace, as well as a reflection on the effect of technological innovation in embodied space. In addition, this issue contains a look back on the legacy of Abraham Lincoln and an account of the pervasive consequences for South Korean society following the sinking of a ferry and the death of most of the passengers on board. ■

—Robert George, Co-Editor-in-Chief



# FEATURES

## INTERNET AND GOVERNMENT

# Cyber Terrorism

*How do we regulate the rapidly growing Internet?*

BY WYATT MORETON

The Internet is a significant part of modern life and has allowed for unprecedented interaction between nations and their citizens. Currently, over 35% of the world's seven billion inhabitants have access to the Internet. When only a decade ago 14% of the population had Internet access, the rapidity of the Internet's growth is likewise astounding. However, this revolution in connectivity has also created new opportunities for international crime, espionage, and even warfare. While the technical details of these illicit activities are already difficult to track down, the foreign policy implications are even more rarely discussed.

Governments are seldom known for aging rapidly and Internet policy is no exception. While the Internet has become more settled than it was in its earliest years, there remain broad areas of Internet policy where the world's governments have simply not yet figured out how to act, particularly in international governance of the Internet.

This problem becomes more obvious when the extremely uneven access to the Internet is considered. In North America and Western Europe, access is approximately 80% or higher. In South America, Eastern Europe, and most of Asia, access is a bit below 50%. And in Sub-Saharan Africa and the remote portions of Asia access falls as low as 10%. This uneven distribution means that until recently, nearly all Internet users, and Internet issues, were found in

the United States and her close allies. The recent spread of the Internet across other continents is beginning to change this picture and is causing more pressure for clear standards in Internet governance.

The existence of the Internet depends on both the physical hardware that allows the various devices connected to it to remain in contact and on the complex software and protocols, which insure that the myriad broadcasts reach their intended destinations. Currently, the individual nations control their own physical infrastructure and regulate their own corporations. The software side is held together by an assortment of private organizations that are mostly concerned with research and development

rather than regulation. The closest thing to a regulatory body is the International Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), based in California, whose purpose it is to keep web addresses uniform. However, ICANN is still merely a facilitator lacking any regulatory power, and while it usually acts autonomously, the US Department of Commerce retains veto power over it.

Needless to say, this patchwork governance of the Internet has its flaws. Because every nation has different laws, as long as one does not break the law of the country that one is residing in, one is generally free to commit crimes in other countries. Here we must note that this is

*While the Internet has become more settled than it was in its earliest years, there remain broad areas of Internet policy where the world's governments have simply not yet figured out how to act.*





PHOTO: SCORPION SOFTWARE

not always a bad thing as many countries have laws that are extremely contradictory to American values. However, it has also allowed some criminals to remain virtually untouchable.

While precise numbers are impossible to obtain, it appears that the majority of cybercrime in the United States originates either domestically or from our allies. Domestically, the FBI leads the battle against cybercrime, heading the National Cyber Investigative Joint Task Force, which coordinates with dozens of local and federal agencies as well as private corporations. The portion of the threat originating from our allies has been largely addressed by various bilateral and multilateral agreements, including the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime, which insures law enforcement cooperation between the United States and twenty-eight other nations. Continuing to build and strengthen partnerships with other nations should be considered the most effective method of extending the reach

of our law enforcement agencies and reducing the number of safe havens for Internet criminals.

*Continuing to build and strengthen partnerships with other nations should be considered the most effective method of extending the reach of our law enforcement agencies and reducing the number of safe havens for Internet criminals.*

Politically, however, the greatest challenge comes not from the huge numbers of purely criminal incidents, but from the small number of attacks supported by other nations. International law has not yet settled on an answer to national cyber attacks, and there is currently no clear method of defeating or deterring them. However, national cyber attacks can be more varied than the profit-driven private cybercrime and can therefore require more flexible responses.

There are three broad categories of national cyber attacks. The first category is simply cybercrime on a national scale. While direct theft of money is rare, the theft of intellectual property in order to support state-owned corporations is quite common. The second is strategic espionage against foreign governments and militaries to better understand their capabilities and intentions. Finally, there is outright cyber warfare that uses computers offensively, either to support

military operations or to directly damage strategic infrastructure.

In the case of strategic espionage, being discovered is itself a deterrent; but, in the age of the Internet, the best solution to strategic espionage is the same as it has always been: maintaining our own intelligence and counter-intelligence agencies. Fortunately, the United States currently maintains a significant lead in cyber espionage capabilities. However, when it comes to industrial espionage and other cybercrimes, discovery is not much of a deterrent because any money or intellectual property that was stolen can still be used. Currently, the United States is extremely vulnerable to this threat, as she possesses a large number of advanced technologies combined with extensive use of the Internet for corporate communications. Further, there is no symmetrical way to respond given that the attacking nations generally lack technologies worth stealing, and the US Government usually refrains from directly assisting American corporations.

One counter to state sponsored industrial espionage that is occasionally suggested is to put economic sanctions on the offending parties. While the benefits and drawbacks of sanctions can be debated, the proportionality of escalating cyber incidents to the physical world should be examined. Cyber crimes unquestionably affect the physical world and cause multibillion-dollar losses annually, but there is a general perception that what happens in cyberspace is somehow intangible. This could lead to popular resistance in enforcing sanctions or similar penalties for national cybercrimes. Therefore, the better course of action could be to make it easier for American nationals and corporations to file lawsuits in American courts against foreign parties for cybercrimes. While actually obtaining any compensation won could prove difficult, awarding penalties through the courts rather than imposing them by Congressional action could positively influence public opinion.

The final form of national cyber attack is cyber warfare. So far the only cyber attack

*While cyber crime, cyber espionage, and cyber warfare will all remain dangers in the future, they are the dangers of a future that was created by the United States' invention of the Internet.*

known to have caused extensive physical damage was the 2010 Stuxnet attack on the Iranian nuclear research facilities that destroyed a thousand centrifuges. However, several less damaging incidents are also noteworthy. These include the use of cyber attacks to disrupt communications and spread propaganda during the 2008 war in Georgia and the widespread cyber attacks against Estonia in 2007 during a diplomatic incident between that nation and Russia.

An important aspect of all three of these actions is that the perpetrators were never discovered even though there were some obvious suspects. It is this deniability that seems to be the most desirable feature of cyber warfare. But plausible deniability in military actions is nothing new and the best way to deter such uses of force is to maintain an intelligence capability to trace them and a military capability to retaliate. Still, given the method of attack and the concerns about proportionality, both of these capabilities will probably need to be cyber

based as well. Fortunately, the 2009 formation of the United States Cybercommand has put America ahead of the curve when it comes to cyber warfare.

While cyber crime, cyber espionage, and cyber warfare will all remain dangers in the future, they are the dangers of a future that was created by the United States' invention of the Internet, and the United States remains the world leader in cyber technologies. This technological advantage, especially when combined with the economic and military power of the United States, gives American policy makers an edge as nearly any policy decided upon can be carried out. Though many of the details still need to be determined, the United States has made significant steps in combating every cyber threat, and nearly every national law enforcement, intelligence, and military agency wholeheartedly understands the importance of cyberspace. Nevertheless, the significance of the threat must be kept in mind and complacency should not be allowed to set in. ■



# My New Glasses

*Defining ourselves one alteration at a time*

BY PATRICIA LOCKE

I love them. Then the excitement wears off, and I forget I am wearing them. I forget that the world comes to me through ground lenses that are “progressively” guiding the range of my sight and compensating for my astigmatism. I forget that I am a technologically enhanced being, who requires upgrades and repairs. Of course, there are trivial reminders of Heidegger’s concept of “equipmentality” when I wake up in the morning and cannot “find my eyes,” which have fallen to the floor. The breakdown in what is taken for granted as already at hand sobers me. What does it mean to be human, as we increasingly wear, or incorporate, inorganic parts?

I notice too that I alternate between choosing unremarkable, albeit scholarly, gray metal frames and then breaking out the fuchsia ones. Is this akin to the new fad in prosthetic devices among war vets, to shed the flesh-colored fake leg for the fiberglass and chrome device with decals? One of my students, an Afghanistan war vet, said that his wounded buddies go through several prostheses during rehab, and use those months to expressively ornament their gear. These are legs and arms as political and/or fashion statements that are meant to be eye-catching. They are undeniable as alterations in human self-presentation and in self-understanding, in the face of new capabilities and limitations of the body. These vets show, rather than mask, the consequences of

wartime service. Their altered bodies do not call for compassion, but often are more in-your-face expressions of power and self-assertion.

I wonder if the examples of glasses and prosthetic devices are along the continuum of bodily manipulation and ornamentation, for example, by piercing or tattooing, which have long been a part of human life. Or is there a significant difference in incorporating non-living parts such as pacemakers or hearing aids, stents and metal joints, within the organic body, as well as visible elements such as chrome shins that remind us of motorcycle bumpers, or hands like a Million Dollar Man? Further, what about the adoption of other beings’ living parts, like hearts, livers, valves? I wonder how my self would change if I were to have a borrowed heart as well as synthetic veins, or contact

lenses that deliver medicine directly through my eyes.

Merleau-Ponty suggests that the human necessarily is intertwined with the surrounding field, whether of organic composition or not. To walk, we need a solid ground to push off from, air to breathe and a vital, perhaps social, destination. He thinks about the lived experience of the field in strong contrast to a Faraday-like analysis of a point in a medium, where the lived world is flattened into a crossroads of physical properties. So whether an established point is metal, flesh, air, or ink matters more in a whole, lived context—does that metal or flesh or air or mis-

*I wonder how my self would change if I were to have a borrowed heart as well as synthetic veins, or contact lenses that deliver medicine directly through my eyes.*

spelled tattoo foster human purposes?

Our purposes are embedded in a context, which is both temporally and spatially dense. Habits of speech, gesture, and cultural traditions all bring the past into present ways of doing things. So even my personal expressive gestures, and my own bodily development, are constituted by my life with others. I may be forgetful of this co-constitution, noticing only the new fangled devices and not the handed-down technologies. Getting used to new glasses, or new stiletto heels, or an artificial hand makes one emerge from forgetfulness. We get to experience learning to see, to walk, to feel, sometimes because parts break down, sometimes because we creatively reshape our bodies on purpose. These bodily alterations, whether desired or enforced, are a site for philosophical wonder. They make visible the gap between past habit, the familiar, and its inadequacy for the present situation.

What attitude will we take? Not just “technology good”—glasses and Google Gesture—“technology bad”—breast implants and Bed Head hair gel. Not just, “no technology,” all purity of position. We go to war, we drive a car,

we fall off bicycles and injury comes to us from the world. We may never again be able to ride a bike. We have to ask ourselves how we, as humans, want to take up our new situations, as people who have ridden bikes, whose identity is to a certain extent defined by that history.

My mother, for example, is gradually losing her sight, and recently discovered that she can no longer see paintings with small details. No glasses can replace that vision, which is in contrast to her memory of seeing Bosch’s *Garden of Earthly Delights*. We are, at bottom, limited creatures, no matter how many sensory or strengthening supports we welcome or resent. So we can explore the impact of technological supports to enable us to read the *Meno*, dance backward or drive forward, but our status as mortals, as limited by failures of bodies and mind, can only be compensated for by presence to others within a shared field. Human: an irreducibly embodied being that enfolds new technologies, mourns its limitations, and dances on.

Don’t get me started on how I feel about my iPhone. ■

PHOTO: ALAN BERNER





SOUTH KOREA

# The Sewol Tragedy

*The Far Reach of Grief*

BY WON SONG



PHOTO: REUTERS

It has been over six months since Sewol, a cruise ship with over 476 people on board, 325 of them being high school students, sank into the deep sea on its way from Incheon to Jeju island.

Although the initial shock and grief that held South Korean society in its grip is now subsiding, there are still yellow ribbons—the symbol of hope for the safe return of Sewol passengers—embroidering Seoul boulevards, reminding people of the tragedy that took away so many precious lives. This incident had a greater effect on society as a whole than any other incident Koreans have previously gone through.

Most of the people who died were teenagers. This invoked great sorrow and even a sense of guilt in the adult population, since they were not able to do anything for the young innocent students who, until the moment of their death, believed that they would be rescued. Over five hundred thousand citizens grieved in front of the pictures of the young innocent faces at the memorial altar at Ansan, where Danwon High School—which the victims of the Sewol incidents attended—is found.

The massive emotional effect of the Sewol tragedy on Korean society as a whole is also evident in the downturn of the economy that lasted through the first two months after the incident. As the mourning for the lost lives continued, the underlying depression preva-

lent throughout society—especially those who have children of their own around the age of the victims—led many to feel guilty enjoying themselves, oblivious to the pain and sorrow of others. They refrained from going to restaurants, traveling, or indulging in other entertainment. There is no part of the economy that managed to avoid being hit by this nationwide depression.

Department stores and other local shops suffered from the decreasing domestic spending. According to the *Jungbu Daily*, National Merchant Union statistics show that in general, sales in May 2014 have considerably dropped, compared to the months before the Sewol incident in April. Television broadcasters had to stop running their comedy shows, fearing that they would be

accused of going against the mourning atmosphere of the society.

The *Financial Times* reports that travel agencies cancelled 5476 group travels, resulting in over 26 million dollars of lost profit. It did not help the situation that major companies canceled their events in the following weeks—Hyundai Motors, for example, even as an official supporter of the World Cup team, could not make any conspicuous marketing project, tentative to disturb the mourning public with untimely festiveness.

Only psychiatry and the related medical fields have seen an unexpected boon, as patients suffering from depression due to the traumatic

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memory of the Sewol tragedy searched out for medical help and antidepressant drugs.

Even now, there are still 10 people yet to be found and still a shadow of the depression lingers in Korean society. Both psychologists and economists claim that unless Korean society manages to recover from the depression and guilt, it may be harder to bring the economy back to life.

Some people are suggesting that the tragedy's widespread effect is due to the media blatantly oversaturating the public with news broadcasts of the incident, such as showing the weeping parents of the students and running the heartbreaking stories of each victim. They claim it would have been more reasonable to distance the people from what's going on in order to prevent any excessive grief from spreading through the public. But one will not be able to say that such measures—concealing the truth of the incident, downplaying its actual effects, patronizing the public, and disregarding their right to know every facet of the issue—is the right way to stabilize the people.

In order for Koreans to fully overcome this national disaster, both for the sake of relieving their grief and for the well-being of the economy, they must take full responsibility for answering the questions raised by this tragedy: what caused this accident and what should be done to prevent such catastrophe from happening again?

The pain of the loss may subside as time goes by, but one cannot expect for time to heal everything. One sure thing is that Korean society will not be able to shake off the traumatizing memory of over two hundred innocent students drowning by simply 'letting it go,' or by giving oneself a cheap answer such as 'well, it was out of our hands.'

Since the tragedy, the Korean people are demanding that the truth behind the incident should be fully revealed to the public and that the government should pass new laws that prevent another tragedy like this in the future. One of the biggest projects aimed at achieving these goals is the Special Law for Sewol, which has been proposed by the family members of the dead passengers.

The law is largely divided into three parts, each detailing the work that remains regarding the incident: first to investigate the causes of the tragedy; second, to establish an effective safety system

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to prevent the reoccurrence of such a catastrophe in the future; and third, to make sure that the innocent deaths of the students are not forgotten. Korean society is currently buzzing with street campaigns asking for support in enacting the law. The surviving students themselves have marched from their school to the National Assembly Building, with numerous citizens joining them.

Yet many people are expressing their concern that the Special Law is being reduced to a political tool for the benefit of the government. The Sewol Special Law is losing its original purpose in the process, as it is being delayed in the Congress by different parties that have submitted their own separate versions of the Sewol Special Law. Some of them include an article that appoints the victims of the tragedy as 'Uisaja'—which means that they have died honorable death while trying to save other people's lives. This overly generous appointment of Uisaja is causing tension in the public.

There is no doubt that among the victims there are people who are eligible for the title of Uisaja. According to the testimonies of survivors, some students willingly sacrificed their lives by giving their own life-jackets to his or her friend. There are others who could not escape in time because they decided to rescue a child first.

Most people are confused why every victim of the tragedy should be considered as Uisaja. Although it is true that the lives of the victims should be honored and remembered by their loved ones, people are raising arguments against the victims' eligibility for the title. If the victims here are selected because their deaths were involved in an unanticipated accident, then some feel that the victims from other incidents—such as the soldiers

who drowned when the Cheonan battleship was shipwrecked by North Korean attack four years ago—also deserve to be classified as Uisaja.

Another argument against this law criticizes the parties of the Congress for suggesting the Uisaja law, not for the purpose of honoring the victims, but rather for political gain. They hope to win the people's support by providing the families of the victims with Uisaja's privilege. (By law, the families of Uisajas are rewarded up to as 240 times as large compensation.)

The presumption of the Congress went amiss. For as it turned out, instead of making the government appear sympathetic to the pain of the families, a majority of people are accusing the government of using the Sewol tragedy for their own populist display. Furthermore, the cost of compensation for the victims of the Sewol tragedy, if all 294 of them are selected as Uisajas, would take a considerable amount of tax money.

Lee Naeyoung, a professor of politics at Korea University, claims that applying Uisaja compensation policy to Sewol's victims was a rash decision, motivated by the rivalry between the parties to gain more votes in the upcoming election (which took place 68 days after the Sewol tragedy). The Uisaja issue is now provoking conflicts concerning the Sewol Special Law and even hindering the process of arranging any other practical measure for addressing the situation.

What the Korean people are now demanding of the politicians is simple: that they let go of their own interests and for once express a wholehearted respect for the victims. The last thing that the public wants is to tarnish the deaths of the young innocent students by making them a topic of a political dispute and a target for blind accusations. Instead of trying to use this tragedy as a chance to raise their popularity, the Korean government must refocus on the foremost matter: discovering the cause of the accident and establishing a safety protocol to prevent any future incident.

What action is to be taken for the captain and



A SOUTH KOREAN BUDDHIST NUN HOLDS A YELLOW RIBBON AS SIGNS OF HOPE FOR SAFE RETURN OF MISSING PASSENGERS ABOARD THE SUNKEN FERRY BOAT SEWOL DURING A BUDDHIST CEREMONY. (VIA DAILYMAIL.UK/AP PHOTO LEE JIN-MAN)

his crew who abandoned their ship and escaped before any of the passengers? What protocol is needed in order to enhance the competence of the rescue crews? How should the shipping companies conduct emergency drills in preparation for such a calamity? If the Korean government does not put these matters at the forefront and give them sufficient consideration, but rather engage in political theater as they do now, another Sewol tragedy is likely to occur again in the future.

The word 'Sewol' means 'time's passing' in Korean. When the parents of the dead students cry, "Sewol' has killed my child," it not only implies that the students have lost their lives in the shipwreck of Sewol ferry. It carries an even more significant warning: the memories of the children are in danger of being extinguished from people's memory as the time passes. It is now up to the Korean people and their government to decide whether to let Sewol kill the students, or make this incident worthy of their lives by establishing better laws for the safety of the future generation. ■



## HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY

# A New Civil War

### Who was Abraham Lincoln?

BY LEN SIVE, JR.

Several new books currently out on Lincoln purport to reveal the true man behind the mask. To adapt a line from Shakespeare: "They have come, however, not to praise Lincoln, but to bury him." These right-wing authors have ascribed the worst possible motives to everything Lincoln said and did. They have revised our history in a way I would never have thought possible, not even in the wildest imaginings of my youth. It is a sure sign that our nation is engaged in a new "civil war."

Disparate groups — the Tea Party, the NRA, the Republican Party, corporations, the largely right-wing media, fringe groups like those supporting Clive Bundy, the KKK (a virulent white supremacist group) — and other anti-government groups and individuals have declared war on our historical way of life. It is a new civil war, funded by the far right-wing billionaire Koch brothers, among others. And like the first Civil War, it's a fight for the future and soul of America.

What makes Lincoln our greatest American (and not just our greatest president) is that he was also a deeply loving and profoundly reflective Christian, who wrestled openly and honestly with the aspects of his faith which he could not understand, but who sincerely and reverently lived out that which he could understand. His was a costly and prophetic faith, to be relied upon to inform one's daily thoughts and actions in all the myriad trials, sufferings, temptations, and uncertainties which everyday Life presents.

But it was especially the struggles of wartime that deepened Lincoln's faith: the horrific suffering and innumerable deaths of so many soldiers, both Confederate and Union alike; the death of Lincoln's much beloved youngest son, Tad; and the weight of the inexpressible grief and anguish of both the North and the South, taken upon his own shoulders.

*To say that Lincoln was crucified by the war is only to speak the truth. He was no tepid, bland 'Sunday morning faith' that superficially satisfies so many Christians.*

To say that Lincoln was crucified by the war is only to speak the truth. His belief was no tepid, bland "Sunday morning faith" that superficially satisfies so many Christians. His faith burned hotter, and purer, tempered as it was in the intense fires of a fratricidal civil war, brother against brother.

I cannot think of another world leader, alive or dead, who endured what he endured — nor one his equal in intellect, faith, charity, and humility, which makes his demonization by the political right so profoundly disturbing. Moreover, Lincoln, unlike his many current denouncers, was absolutely incorruptible. His Tea Party and Republican accusers, on the other hand, have a long and sordid history of accepting cash for votes, from the NRA, JP Morgan, GE, Exxon/Mobil, et. al. These corrupt politicians, like Faust, have struck a bargain with the devil, while Lincoln alone stuck to the high, costly road of sacrifice, faith, integrity, and charity.

The following anecdote, which not surprisingly was left out of these books on Lincoln, unveils the authentic Lincoln, the deeply humane, caring, and giving human being that he really

was. I read about this incident a decade ago in a library in graduate school and here retell it from memory — faithful to the facts, but told in my own words.

Lincoln had spent a long day at an army hospital visiting and comforting the many Union wounded and dying. As day gradually turned into evening, an exhausted and emotionally depleted Lincoln departed the hospital, climbed wearily into the presidential carriage, and began the slow return to the White House, where a late evening's work still awaited him. A hospital orderly suddenly ran up to the presidential carriage and shouted out, "There's a Confederate soldier who wants to speak with the president." Lincoln, although clearly exhausted, stepped down from the carriage and with weary steps re-entered the hospital.

The Confederate soldier was a young man, who, upon seeing Lincoln in the flesh for the first time, remarked naively, "You don't look at all like the ape pictures I saw in the South." The two of them talked for some time. Then the young man asked if Lincoln would deliver a letter and heirloom to his family. Lincoln promised him that he would. Lincoln then said that he had pressing business still awaiting him, and was there anything else he could do for him. The dying soldier pathetically replied, "I was hoping you'd see me through."

So this impossibly busy wartime president shunted aside all official business, and forgetful even of his own exhausted state, stayed with this enemy soldier until the very end, ministering to him and comforting him, weeping as he clasped the dying soldier's hands in his own. True to his word, Lincoln made sure that the family received the young man's personal effects.

Need I remark that this is exactly how Lincoln would have treated the South after the war — with dignity, charity, mercy, and reason? What might our country have developed into with a Reconstruction based not on hatred and retribution but on mercy and charity for all?

This incident clearly and unambiguously reveals what kind of president he really was: a deeply caring, forgiving Christian who harbored no ill will towards the forces bitterly arrayed against him in an epic Civil War. He, so far as I am aware, is unmatched in the annals of history, ancient or modern.

The destructive fires of our new "civil war," which these revisionist histories of Lincoln are meant to stoke, continue today unchecked: ideological gridlock in Congress; hateful, petty Republicans calling for Obama's impeachment every other week; lies and half-truths on important political issues that are a staple of Republican incendiary rhetoric; adversarial politics of the meanest and vilest kind; the inability of the Obama administration to get its many, and important, appointments passed; votes openly bought in Congress in exchange for campaign contributions; a Congress subservient to the wealthiest 1% while caring not a whit for the middle or lower classes.

Two well-respected and very-influential political scientists, in fact, one from Princeton University and the other from Northwestern, in an empirically-based 20-year-long study of how Congress actually works, have openly declared that our democracy is dead. "We are now," they pronounced, "an oligarchy, a nation governed solely by the few on behalf of the interests of the wealthiest 1%." And they have the irrefutable evidence of over 20 years research data to back up their claim.

"Our democracy is dead." In these disturbing times, what we need are the intellect, courage, faith, charity, and moral stature of another Lincoln to guide us through these turbulent and treacherous waters. The future of our cherished way of life now hangs precariously in the balance.

Can we still reclaim the dreams of our forefathers and bring good, honest, intelligent, and caring government to every American citizen? Can we both as individuals and as a nation seek truth, goodness, and beauty with unflinching zeal and steadfast devotion, working daily for peace and concord among all citizens while disavowing diatribe, division, and discord? Can we once again prove to a skeptical world that our once-cherished and highly-regarded democratic way of life is not yet dead and buried: that our democracy can justly represent all economic classes; that it can honor and aid both our poorest and most vulnerable citizens as well as our richest and most successful; and that a government of the people, by the people, and for the people can, like the immortal phoenix, rise once again triumphantly from its own ashes! ■



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