

Intelligence in General, if I Might
by JENNIFER SCAPPETTON

It exists in time—is not a product that can be encompassed and ensconced within an eternal present, nor is it a service cocked toward a future made hazardous for democracy. Gravity that resonates between bodies: such resonance ought to fuel the chronicle. Poetry, fueled by intelligence noninstrumentalized, is a chronicle

of wasted time. We thought the definition of intelligence was a no-brainer until our no-brainer at large—I mean our omniscient Prez—opened his Meet the Press remarks with some self-reflexive talk about it.

...first let me kind of step back and talk about intelligence in general, if I might. Intelligence is a vital part of fighting and winning the war against the terrorists. It is because the war against terrorists is a war against individuals who hide in caves in remote parts of the world...

Against the inscrutable world of terror, circumnarrates Muster Precedent, we must produce a free world of calculable risk. Our forward strategy of freedom requires intelligence as an instrument for predicting future attacks in order to preserve the futurity of the global state. Ush affirms that the 9/11 commission was

set up to make sure the intelligence services provide as good a product as possible for future presidents as well.

Our curiosity surrounding this notion of intelligence as product sent us to the site that defines intelligence as “knowledge and foreknowledge of the world around us.” As “evidence” that is culled and distributed to match the requirements of “consumers.”

Intelligence is... A body of evidence and the conclusions drawn therefrom that is acquired and furnished in response to the known or perceived requirements of consumers....

How is the intelligence commodity fabricated? The intelligence community is vague on that score. Intelligence, it tells merely, is raw data that has been polished; that has been stilled from that overall vertigo of information by which we are whirled.

Intelligence comes in Raw and goes out Finished.... analysts produce *finished intelligence* by analyzing, evaluating, interpreting, and integrating...information (*raw intelligence*) from various sources....

Through planning and direction by both collection and production managers, the process converts acquired information into intelligence and makes it available to policymakers, military commanders, and other consumers.

Such knowledge, delivered by the intelligence community according to consumer needs the intelligence community perceives, is a tautology. In its more baroque form, such knowledge constitutes the kind of chiasmus rehearsed by Umsfeld when he iterates, "the absence of evidence is not the evidence of absence."

"Ethical substance and personal being," Hegel wrote, "are made tautological in men or women who are lucid unto themselves, who are unruven spirits." Such people conflate their being with ethics, their intelligence with rite. In a time of crisis their tenets derive sublimely material ends.

According to the intelligence community's definition, knowledge is now indistinguishable from foreknowledge. This collapse leads the lingerer to cross-examine the temporality of intelligence in a time of crisis. What is a time of crisis? What is the temporality of crisis?

We inhabit a state of exception that has become the rule. Some performative fiction of war against an atavistic enemy that will deliver us future happiness (translating affluence into safety) allows USh to say to the Press,

It's historic times. A free Iraq will make it easier for other children in our own country to grow up in a safer world because in the Middle East is where you find the hatred and violence that enables the enemy to recruit its killers.

The intelligence of US's total administration roots itself within a preemptive present. Its timeless eye maps the surreptitious ways of the troglodytes. These people hung mercenaries above rivers cited in Chapter 1 of histories of global civ. But the intelligence of Ush's singular "historic times" has no

memory, only the meme of social truth suspended in a historical vacuum.

On 26 April 1999, at the Dedication Ceremony for the Center for Intelligence, its eponymous 41st President ended his bid for "more intelligence, not less" with the words,

It has been said that "patriotism is not a frenzied burst of emotion, but rather the quiet and steady dedication of a lifetime." To me, this sums up CIA—Duty, Honor, Country. This timeless creative service motivates those who serve at Langley and in intelligence all across the world.

Under the subheading "The business of intelligence," the Intelligence Community reports that "the process of creating reliable, accurate foreign intelligence is dynamic and never ending." The incongruous aspect of this dynamism is its unidirectionality: it has no past. The

Community offers five categories of finished intelligence: "current intelligence," which addresses day-to-day events, "estimative intelligence," which deals with what might happen, "warning intelligence," which sounds an alarm, "research intelligence," which compiles data on foreign countries, and "scientific and technical intelligence."

None of its categories allows that intelligence evolves or that one might learn from the past. Ice in fact dismisses the now notorious memo of August 6, 2001 regarding bin Laden's imminent attack by calling it a "historical" document, relegating it to a petrified past with no reverberation into the present epoch.

The temporality of crisis, as constructed by the "author[s] of freedom," consists of a fossilized past, a preemptive present, and a bad infinity of projectile paranoia extending into the free (unobstructed) future.

The United States, like all united nation-states, recognizes the value of conserving the past as triumph or as negative justification for present acts. It therefore supports the aesthetic masterpiece. Its Public Broadcasting Services welcome us to the ExxonMobil Masterpiece Theater.

In times of crisis, poetry's task is thereby restricted to the purview of the elegy. The poem is of use in encompassing the fossilized past or in embalming and taming recent disturbances of the narcotic chronicle. Conservative culture regards the poem as a monument and documentary writing as ephemera. Yet the programmed obsolescence

of print and the programmed permanence of the monument are equally falsifying manipulations of the past. The past is indigestibly nutritive. It courses through every present day into the future. The time of poetry is the time of lived social formations in the deep anthropological sense as opposed to the dehumanizing racist sense. The time

of its cacography is plural. Plural time is time-taking—one carries in it. Poetic intelligence is in motion, but not as hunter nor surveyor; it does not advance. It moves the bodies impolitic as bodies, in compassionate oscillation & ellipsis with other bodies:

LET mans Soule be a Spheare, and then, in this,
The intelligence that moves, devotion is,
And as the other Spheares, by being growne
Subject to forraigne motions, lose their owne,
And being by others hurried every day,

Scarce in a yeare their naturall forme obey:
Pleasure or business, so, our Soules admit
For their first mover, and are whirld by it.

Such waste of time hosts a feast whose effluvia engulf, dissolve the driven tautology at large—
opposing the triumphant singularity of the author of our fate.

The advance of freedom is the calling of our time; it is the calling of our country.... We
believe that liberty is the design of nature; we believe that
liberty is the direction of history.... And we believe that freedom -- the
freedom we prize -- is not for us alone, it is the right and the capacity of all

mankind. (Applause.) Freedom is finding allies in every country; freedom
finds allies in every culture. And as we meet the terror and violence of the
world, we can be certain the author of freedom is not indifferent to the fate of
freedom.

USh's move from the continuous present to the timeless present in this stultifying passage
recasts the forward strategy of freedom as prescribed fate. Meantime within the preemptive
present, the foreseen Intelligence Director will provide centralized amnesia to inoculate
administration against proof of its past political failures. It gulls

us with intelligence.

Intelligence, proximate to memory, resolve, ought to be riven as the inexorable heart.
Against the fatal tautology of freedom's prescriptions, inverse, differ. Fail them.

This poem constitutes the deemptive entropy of a talk first composed for the "Poetry in a Time of Crisis: Is Poetry Enough?" conference at UC Santa Cruz in April of 2004, later reproduced in "War and Peace," Volume 2.