

one war, three views (view 1 of 3)

It's war. No, I don't mean the war or terror. That may be one of the faces of the great war that is going on. The great war is waged by the very few against everyone else. The uprisings in the Middle East are the model. The many are finally rebelling, resisting. Strangely, even Israel has seen thousands of protestors on the streets objecting to the dictatorial rule of Netanyahu. The people of Papua, now a province of Indonesia, are rebelling against their masters again. This battle has been fought for half a century and more. In Bahrain, an important US Naval base, the "rebels" are fought by charging doctors and other medical workers for helping citizens who got wounded by their own government. In the US the poor, now a third of all Americans are systematically criminalized for being poor.

Having lived in an occupied country for five years I am firmly on the side of all popular uprisings. I know what it is to be oppressed by another nation, it is worse when you are oppressed by your own. In this country it is a few fellow citizens who are now making war on We the People. The two political parties that make up American politics have finally taken opposite positions. The Republicans are better disciplined, they mostly follow what their only program for these four years is to get rid of this president. My guess is that the main reason behind that is that he is black. Of course he is only half black, and his white half seems to be presiding. Not surprising because he did not grow up in a black society, and did not grow up with a black point of view — he grew up in Indonesia and Hawai'i, both places where "black" means nothing. I hate politics so will make it short. The Republicans talk about Jobs, jobs, jobs, but it is very clear that they ban every attempt to actually stimulate making jobs, and concentrate instead on making ever more restrictive laws on abortion, and unions. Now they have locked on to the idea that the main problem of this country is the national debt. Government has to be downsized, by which they mean get rid of Social Security, Medicare -- but don't touch the Pentagon which is 59% of the total budget of this country. They are fiercely determined not to touch the low tax rate of very very rich and the subsidies the richest corporations in the world are getting. Why, because they get paid to say that. They call the rich people job-makers although the last two plus years have made abundantly clear that the rich are only interested in making money, and there is more money to be made by computers than by making jobs. The Democrats know — as we all should know — that our own history has proven beyond a shadow of doubt that this country was immensely prosperous when the rich were taxed 70% and higher, and did not complain. Jobs were plentiful, our education system was excellent, people could afford health care and more than enough to eat, a nice house, a vacation, travel. The less rich people were taxed, the worse the economy became, until under the previous administration the economy collapsed. That was under the Bush administration; Obama inherited that, as he inherited two or more wars, drones, torture, etc. For some reason that nobody quite understands that awful heritage has been continued and expanded.

All Nobel prize winner economists agree that debt is a problem that can be taken care of when the economy is blooming, that now the immediate need is for the government to stimulate jobs.

I suspect that the Republicans are very aware of all this, and that their current emphasis on blocking all tax increases as well as all efforts to create jobs (although that is what they talk about) is politics, pure and simple. Next year they will base their campaign on the fact that Obama has not created the jobs, therefore has to be replaced by whoever will be the Republican choice for president, who—if she or he wins—will finally destroy this country forever, and so the world.

I cannot imagine how anybody could seriously think that if a country's people are poor, cannot afford shelter and food, education for their children, health care, what needs to be done is take away what safety nets we have. Give the last penny of the middle class to the upper upper class. What kind of reasoning is that? It seems obvious that someone must spread money to make jobs. The rich are not doing that, so what's left but the government? Isn't that what government is about? To take care of We the People?

Enough of our politics that have become not only more ugly, but positively lethal.

Back to the Big War that is raging literally all over the world. Many of us are not aware yet because the MSM (main stream/street media) do their very best to talk nothing but the briefest of sound bites between propaganda wrapped in advertising to dull our minds with tiny bits of information and misinformation. Some of us are waking up and beginning to rebel. Wisconsin, a few other states. But thanks to the Supreme Court we now have to fight not just oppressive people, but all the wealth in the world. History, which of course is only a snapshot of the last few hundred years, has shown that in the end the people

always win; the elite, the barons, the hyper rich, the corporations lose. But the last wars of all empires have always been bloody and messy. Be prepared.

Yes, what I call the Big War is between the haves and the have-nots. It has also become between reasonable thinking and irrational thinking. Here and probably everywhere it has become a battle not only between points of view, but a battle of one kind of thinking and another kind of thinking. How do reason and unreason fight? As soon as you accept unreason, the fight is lost.

Time is on the side of reason, of fact. Climate change is here, it should be evident to any and all that summers are hotter than they were in human memory, winters colder, but shorter. Storms are fiercer, the ocean is rising. Those are not imaginations, but measurements. Yet the other side denies facts for beliefs. They cannot believe measurements. They are like the frog in a pan of water: he does not know the water is getting warmer, until it cooks him. But before the deniers will cook they can and do enormous damage. To our educational system, for instance. Science teachers all over the US are persecuted if they talk about evolution or now climate change. We are not allowed any more to teach our children facts, we have to give them "both sides of the debate." There is no debate. *What debate?* If more than 99% of all scientists in the world have made the measurements that, without any exception, show that the earth is rapidly warming, that the oceans are getting acid, that a thousand species a day disappear forever, that the ice of the poles and glaciers is melting — and less than one percent of scientists say that this has nothing to do with who did it — where is the debate?

There is much that I despise in *applied* science. We have used science to create monsters, biological, mechanical, electronic monsters, and with the many gadgets that fill our lives we have allowed ourselves to be brainwashed to a false way of thinking, of being. My children, the so-called Boomer generation, grew up in a world where everything was allowed and everything was possible. They were able to travel all over the world to try the latest surf spot when they were late teens. They were conditioned to believe that everything could be bought with credit cards. There was a time when credit cards frantically fished for new customers with offers of 0% interest for six months, a year. At the end of that period you just transferred your debt to another credit card. Until suddenly the credit card companies charged not 0% but 14%, even 36% interest. That used to be called usury — do we even remember the word? My children's generation got student loans that could be paid off in a few years. I read that today graduates from engineering schools on average owe more than \$25,000 on their student loan, and when there are no jobs how to pay that off? Think a modest 20% interest, that comes to \$5000 year added the first year. Beginning medical doctors owe considerably more, that is why all doctors now make 10 minute appointments. Of course a generalization, but close to the truth.

Those are not beliefs but facts. There is a difference. And I don't know that beliefs can trump facts. You may believe that abortion or even family planning, birth control, are bad, against Christian or other beliefs, but it has been and is a fact all over the world, that women use one or another form of birth control to be able to survive. Biologically a woman may be able to produce a child once a year, but how is she going to take care of them, who is going to feed them, who is going to educate them? In all aboriginal and indigenous cultures I have known, women had two or three children. In some populations they had eight, knowing that only two or three would survive childhood. People have always known that the earth can only support so many humans. They had to be aware of having to live sustainably. Now that we live in an almost exclusively male-dominated world we imagine we can have always MORE. Very modern, inefficient and obviously unsustainable. It is women who are the ones who are essential for the continuation of the species. The role of men is minuscule. With a few sperm banks women could easily repopulate the earth without men. All early humans were matriarchies, or at least matrilineal. It was the women who "owned" land, who saw to it that the household flourished, who worked the land, who educated the children. The men hunted when they had time between drinking and smoking or fighting wars. That our government is dominated by men, old men, is undeniable. They are the ones who slaughtered all the buffalo, all animals bigger than we are, who destroyed rain forests to make room to grow more beef to feed our testosterone.

I've tried to find the motive, or motives, for this war. Largely still underground, out of the Media. Wars always have many motives. We think of the invasion and occupation of Iraq as "because of" WMD. We found out in a few months that was not true. One motive probably was oil, although it would have been much cheaper, easier, and safer to buy oil rather than wanting to strengthen our "presence" in that boiling pot of the world. Or perhaps we invaded and occupied Iraq because it so obviously put three of our armies,

land and water, neatly around three sides of Iran. And who knows how many other reasons.

Or, and this is the most hidden and yet may well be the most obvious motive, the very very rich really *do* believe in lethal climate change and need to quickly accumulate all the wealth they can capture now to make refuges for themselves. There is no more important motivation than physical, bodily survival. Forget the survival of the species. But survival of a few at the cost of the extinction of the species is completely against human nature. All Life has one motive, to continue its form of Life.

Humans think they are no longer part of nature. How stupid can you get. Yet that is the crux of the war. Because we no longer consider human beings part of nature, we can no longer learn from nature. Nature teaches that we can only survive *together*. As aborigines and then a botanist told me, What one plant takes out of the soil its neighbor puts back in. That is why, what we call modern agriculture, is unsustainable. Mono-culture—one species on a thousand acres that draws all pests of that crop and in one generation destroys the ground— can only work with more and more modern chemicals that poison the ground, the water we drink and the air we breathe. That shows our arrogance, we think we know better. If we had learned from nature we would long ago have accepted that mono-culture does not work. We would long ago have learned that wars don't work, whether fought with more and more lethal weapons or more and more destruction. Nature, Mother Earth, taught us for thousands of years how to live sustainably, with small and mostly peaceful communities. The picture of *<the cave man dragging "his" woman by her hair with his left hand and waving a club with the right>* is pure Hollywood. We could not have survived for more than a hundred thousand years, as we did.

When I watch so-called news now and then I am left with the thought that just about everything we, and our leaders, do is exactly the opposite of what we should do if we were reasonable human beings knowing ourselves part of nature. How can we deny we are part of nature, we are the same stuff, we breathe the same air as all other life, we are the same atoms, the same chemicals. Our body is more bacteria than human tissue. We are not the boss, we are just one of the many many. We are no better-than because we have an unbridled, untrained, but deliberately stretched imagination that makes us believe things that cannot be.

I am quite sure that the great majority of all almost seven billion of us know what I know, that we humans live by nature, from nature. We must learn from nature. Our human nature is not greedy or competitive or mean or murderous. By nature we are friendly, collaborating beings. I know because I have known peoples who had not yet been converted to western civilization. We thought them poor and to be pitied. I found them much happier than we were, unaware of poverty, unaware that they were supposed to think themselves superior to animals and plants. They had a joy in living that we lost. What we found even stranger, they were healthier than we are despite what we considered severely limited diets, not enough of this or that protein or vitamin. But they lived without great stresses, they knew their neighbors as family, they faced the dangers of their environment with intimate knowledge and acceptance.

This movie says it better in 17 minute than I have written in more than 20 years.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n1mvI2hEzIA&feature=share>

And she is not alone. There are more and more of us.
Listen to the earth -- the final real reality.

This is about as much as a modern attention span can manage.

robert wolff, 10 august 2011

one war, three views (view 2 of 3)

If you want, the second chapter, or a separate essay. I will try to share my own search for what, how, and why we have become such a warring, mean, torturing, plundering species. That is something that has obsessed me most of my adult life, roughly 75 years. At age 17 I landed in a world at war that I, we, knew nothing about. Even my parents who must have heard of the rise of Hitler, did not realize what was happening to what they thought of *their* civilization. To me it was like an awakening on another planet. The first 17 years of my life I had come to accept that all people were alike, accepting minor differences with a smile and a hug. I knew all humans to be part of the animal kingdom, different from but the same stuff. As a blind man groping for something real, I searched for who we really were. Surely we could not be as bad as the foreign warriors then making our inhuman rules and regulations?

After the war when I changed my studies from medicine to psychology, I had to suppress my search in order to memorize endless theories about who or what humans were. Later still, when coming to the U.S. to get another PhD in social psychology, I learned that American psychology did not even share roots with European psychology. Americans were fiercely determined to make psychology a respected science, and that required measurements of observable behavior, none of that nonsense of people like Freud and Jung and a thousand other Europeans who had thought for hundreds of years about who we were.

A brain full of theories and statistics is not very clear. at least mine wasn't. In the back of my mind I always knew that none of the scientists I read were asking the right questions — although I did not know what the right questions might be. I had almost buried my own childhood experiences under mountains of western thinking, until we moved to Malaysia; I was 38 when I met again the people I knew. I had grown up across the Strait of Malacca, perhaps 100 miles away. The villagers I got to know for my study—as a witty Brit put it, “why people eat what they do and not what they should”—were the people I had grown up with. I spoke their language, understood their culture. They were as peaceful and happy as I remembered them to be thirty years earlier. \

And then I met aborigines, “primitives” they were considered. From the first I knew they were what all of us had been a few thousand years ago. I accepted them for what they were and they accepted me. I did not “study” them but got to know them as friends, important teachers. I have no claim on knowing them in western scientific terms. I never asked them the questions an anthropologist would. Who is your leader; I knew they did not have leaders. Who is married to whom, which are their children? I knew they did not marry and they did not know the year of their birth, or probably who was the father of which child. But I knew they were the quintessential human. They were happy, joyful. They lived life one day at a time, smiling, singing little songs. Sharing and caring.

When we left Malaysia I vowed I would not write about them for one generation. I admired them too much to invite tourists and scientists from spoiling their lives. I'm not sure I can explain that. Westerners think that they can only learn something if it has been studied, measured, compared, put in western terms, preferably with latinized names. To me the gulf was too wide. Rather than put these little people (5 feet tall or less), their culture, their smiles, in a western box. I needed to know them whole, as they were. I tried to be like them, to understand.

Not easy, probably impossible, in a western world. I have tried for half a century. To me it meant living as simply as I could, simple diet, simple life style, and I knew from the beginning I had to be as close to the natural world as possible. In the second half of my life I still had to earn a living to support a growing family, so I had a career. But as a professor I talked about ideas that were close to the edge—often over the edge—of even the 60s and 70s of the last century.

More and more that question deep in my head, why and how have we become so different? What happened to us? Where is the joyfulness that I found among the aborigines, but also on small islands of the Pacific, among minorities, oppressed people in large cities everywhere.

Toward the end of the last century when I began to seriously write stories and thought about making a book of stories, I had figured out that it began with what we call agriculture. We, humans, thinking we need no longer adapt to nature, but we are so special and so powerful that we can adapt nature to our needs, and soon to our wants. It is our divorce from nature that made us different, rude, cruel, aggressive, testosterone-driven warriors, making wars on anything and everybody. Tearing the earth apart, covering it over in concrete. Removing entire ageless forests. Moving rivers, cutting off mountains. And now, as supposed owners of this planet, everything we touch withers.

As all humans used to, I think of Life, all life, as anti-entropic. Matter as a form of

energy, scientists tell us, is bound by entropy: everything runs down, eventually slows to a dead nothing. Life is the opposite, it multiplies itself. Until eventually the sun fades or blows up, but there may be other suns and other planets. I cannot imagine Life as not belonging to All There Is. Not a western scientific thought perhaps. But I'm not very western any more, and so, not scientific. I think that we, modern humans, have become anti-life and that is a terrible thought. So I quickly add, it is not all people who live today, only a handful who are so bloodthirsty, paranoid, anti everything, and therefore destroying Life.

Early this century, when the internet first made research possible from home, I spent months and years trying to find out what we know about Neanderthal Man, a cousin supposedly, whom we eradicated 40,000 years ago. I learned that different branches of science have very different time scales. But we know that several ten thousands of years ago there was a kind of human not exactly like us, but perhaps sufficiently alike that we could interbreed. Some of us may have genes, parts of DNA, from Neanderthal people. I've read theories that Neanderthal people could not talk because something in their throats was not formed as ours is. Who knows. I do know that the Caveman that people like to write about as more beast than human, muscled apes are imagination. We who survived are more likely to have been those muscled apes.

I read *Shikasta* in the 70s, a sort of sci-fi book by Doris Lessing. Eventually there were five books in a series called *Canopus in Argus*. *Shikasta* tells of our world spoiled by experimentation on the people of this planet, directed from outside Earth. The pharaohs, and others in other cultures, are supposed to have thought about people from far far away. *Shikasta* ends when the youth of the world rebel against the despoilers; today? In the book the person from another planet helps establish towns that are in close harmony with nature and the forces of nature in a particular earth environment. A fantasy hard to get out of my head. An easy way to explain why we have become such different beings.

Nevertheless, the more I think about humans and this planet and the many billions of other planets there must be in this universe, I cannot imagine that we are the only one with Life, intelligent life. But on close inspection are we really intelligent? We are clever, we can and do invent ever more lethal ways of killing: plants, animals, humans, forests, the planet. We learned to kill them all. Is it only those bad people from some other planet who are doing that?

Or is it my neighbor, my relative? Is it our conditioning from birth to death that makes us hate and be suspicious of anyone who does not look like me, or thinks like me, believe as I do? That is a very western way of thinking. The bad apple argument.

The aspect of life, of being, that I learn more about every day is that the real world, nature, is a **whole**. I have learned to see and think in wholes. Not long ago I noticed something remarkable. By now my typing on this keyboard is very fast and entirely by touch. My eyes are on the screen, my fingers push buttons. A skill that did not take long to learn actually. My hands and fingers fly to usually the right buttons almost as fast as I can think. My computer has a spell checker that I can set to automatic. That means when my fingers make a mistake the computer underlines the word in red. That forces me to stop and go back to repair. Often I don't want to interrupt my thinking so I turn the spell check off. I noticed something odd. Amazingly often I type words with the right letters but in a wrong sequence. I write *wrod* instead of *word*. When I read that I don't notice that it is misspelled. Am I dyslexic? I don't think so. With longer words I rarely miss the absence of a double t, or n, or l, because I see wholes. I see the forest; seeing a tree is a separate action. I don't see a forest as a bunch of trees, but I see trees as a part of a forest. That is how we all used to see the world around us. I probably know every tree on this piece of land that I have lived on now for almost ten years. I know what fruit a tree bears, and when. I know when they feel good and when they're dying long before it is very visible. I know that the last two years we have added two new plants that were never here before. One of them extremely aggressive. It is a climber vine but a thick ground cover between uprights to climb on. That is how it spreads. Some guava trees make a long branch with a heavy weight of tightly together fruit that is so heavy that it bends the branch far from the tree. The fruit (seeds) fall ten feet away to make a new tree. What we call grass is really a hodge podge of sedges and ten different kinds of ground cover. It's all green but it does not all grow upward, much of it grows sideways. Many medicinal plants are weeds, or, many weeds have medicinal value, are even edible. The wonders of nature never cease, and they change constantly.

I am forced to see and think bigger and bigger wholes, because as soon as I concentrate on the parts of a whole I see changes. I feel the same inside me. I can think of my liver, my heart, an eye, my hair, because I was taught anatomy. I used to know all the bones, tendon, nerves, blood vessels, in a human body. Now I cannot imagine them separate from each other. My liver is intimately linked to everything else in my body. My brain is fed by the food I eat, and I see *through* my eyes. The seeing is done in the back

of my skull. I know the difference between left brain thinking and right brain thinking. I know people who had a stroke on one side and now live only through one of the brain halves. And even then the healthy half eventually learns some of the other half's functioning.

Now I am daily aware of how and where my body is falling apart, aging. But the next day it is different. My immune system has decided that it must make war on my skin (auto-immune). I am allergic to myself. I also know why. From early childhood I have been ashamed of my white skin. People tell me "it's all in your mind" meaning I can cure myself by thinking differently. Usually they also mean that they can teach me to love my skin. No, it does not work that way. It is *not* all in my mind. I think with my hormones, with my blood pressure, with a swollen liver, or painful legs. My thinking, seeing, is a *whole*. I am a whole, not a collection of organs.

Very hard to get that across to a western mind, I know.

But I also know that somehow we must get back to the old way of seeing. Seeing wholes, thinking wholes. We cannot survive as a species the way we have become. It's as simple as that. Has nothing to do with "going back to being primitive." Many people have told me that is impossible. I mean going back to who we really are. Who we were when we were born. Children see wholes. They have to be taught, this is an ear, that is a finger; a tree, a cat. They don't have to learn a frown means NO, a smile means LOVE. A raised voice means pain or fear. A slap means I am wrong, unloved, rejected, abandoned. The people I knew when I grew up never, never slapped a child, or even scolded a child. All children were loved by everybody. Held, touched, by everybody. We in the west cannot even imagine how that forms an adult, knowing deep down s/he is loved, accepted as s/he is. A sense of security we don't know any more.

We are taught from the first day that life is hard, dangerous, we have to be strong, we have to fight to stay alive. I have known whole populations in this country where young men "know" they will not survive into adulthood. They know they will either be killed or put in prison and that would be the end of their life because after prison there is only more prison to go back to. That is modern life.

I choose primitive. They don't live as long as we do, as I have. But they live joyfully, calmly without much stress. They die from an accident, a flood, a snake bite. They don't die from heart disease or cancer. Although now they die from the diseases we bring. Just by "discovering" the world in previous centuries we have killed probably more than half of all humans alive at the time. We spread plague, measles, syphilis, tuberculosis, diabetes, and so on and so on. All the islands of the Pacific responded to a first visit of an 18th century discoverer by a 70-90% die-off. After the two visits of Captain Cook in 1776 and 1778 70% of Hawaiians disappeared in the first 70 years, and in the century after the first visit less than 10% of Hawaiians survived. When Captain Cook landed on this island, twice the size of all the other islands together, there were probably at least half a million people living here. Healthy, strong, proud people living totally sustainable lives. Today the Hawaiian islands have a population of a little over a million people, only slightly more than 230 years ago, but 80% live in Honolulu, one of the smaller islands. On this island there are about 170,000 people now, and we import 95% of our food, and all of the other "necessities" of a modern world. The electric company proudly acknowledges that ours is the most expensive electricity in the world.

At the end of my life, after all that thinking and probing into who we really are, I believe that it is not an evil spirit, nor alien intervention, that has made us the war-loving paranoid beings finding terrorists in every nook and cranny. It is our civilization that makes us inhuman.

robert wolff, 11 august 2011

one war, three views

(view 3 of 3)

The first two pieces of this puzzle were about the war waged by the very rich, the corporations, against essentially everyone else, against even the planet. Leaving out consideration of the planet, this war then is the haves against the have-nots.

A little story. Once I taught at the School of Public Health, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. As many other students and teachers I had lunch at the EastWest Center, which has a great cafeteria in its basement. The EWC is a large building, with wide steps leading up to the first floor which is at least 8 feet above the ground. Large steps. At that time we made great effort to attract students from other countries, particularly from the Pacific and Southeast Asia. In my classes most of the time half and half, often more foreign students than American. I knew there was a difference between American and students from other countries, thought long about how I might learn about that. I thought I would just ask some questions. The first small survey I did was on the steps of the EWC building, as students poured up to have lunch. I asked "what would you do if a snake crossed your path?" In Hawai'i we have no snakes (keep my fingers crossed) but of course everywhere else this would show to rural urban differences, I imagined. So I added, usually before they had given an answer to my first question, a casual question about where they had grown up, city or country. I tried very hard to choose randomly. A man, a woman, old, young, obviously white, non white but that could be foreign or Hawaiian of course. For that first question I asked 256 students, I remember. The answers were suspicious because virtually all white students (98%) foreign and Hawaiian, said without much thinking "kill it." The non-white, and they would include Hawaiians, gave a variety of answers, "What kind of snake, is it looking at me; do I know whether it is poisonous; how large is it," etc.

So, I refined the study. The first survey was intriguing but a 98% of only 256 "subjects" is suspicious in statistics of that sort. For the second question, being even more careful in my sampling, I began by asking where they had grown up, by country or city. I recorded their answers on tape, but also made notes. This time I asked 212 people, as far as I can tell older, younger, men, women, different origins. The question seemed simple, "How do you see yourself ten years from now?" For some I had to explain, "10 years in the future." The answers were revealing, and unfortunately again too close to 100% to have value to pollsters and psychologists who want a more normal statistical spread. When I tried to publish my little surveys, all scientific journals rejected my figures. Here is what people said. 97% of all people growing up in the west had answers using *to have*. "I see myself having a career, a house, a wife, children, success, fame," etc. 88% of those who had grown up in non-western cultures gave answers in terms of *to be*. "I see myself being happily married, being a successful physician, friend, uncle, being more direct in coming to the point (two answered that), being more religious, being more skilled," etc. A small number of both groups gave answers using both verbs. "I see myself being happily married, with three children" which in our culture would be considered to mean "having" children. That is a part of our culture. I know at least one language in which it is impossible to say "my" children. Children, or a wife are not considered property. In fact, I think there is no word for "my" house, or other property, either.

Regardless of the validity of those little surveys, there is obviously a difference in thinking of yourself as *having* value or *being* valuable.

The Big War, I sometimes think the ultimate war, is all about having.

As long as we let ourselves be fooled in accepting that it is about having, we have already lost. "They" will soon have it all.

But life, survival, is not about having. It is about being.

How do we see what is going on today, thinking of it as different ways of *being*. The attackers, the haves, are ruthless, greedy, selfish, distant, and so on. If we accept that, it makes us, the have-nots, victims, poor, in pain, sick, dying.

Hey, wait a minute. I am not a victim. Yes, I don't have much money but that is not how I define myself. I am not poor, I am a person, I am who I am. What I have is dignity, maybe some knowledge, some understanding, but I am not a victim.

That changes the whole thinking about that war. Their war may be about money, but to me it is not. I am being stolen from. I am being insulted, continually persecuted, accused of all kinds of criminalities that I have never heard of. I, we, rise up with indignation, finally bursting out in frustration that you up there don't listen to us, don't see us, don't consider us. We are letting you know we ARE. You can and do shoot at us, you can prosecute the doctors who help us. You can kill us — but you cannot kill *being*, Life itself. Listen to us, look at us. We are humans, like you, we are your equal, we are all equal. We are ONE.

As I understand it, that is the only way we can survive. By getting across that this final conflict is about ***being*** not *having*. And it really is about survival, times are that dire. The havers have bought so much power that we and the planet are in great danger. But the planet is, and we are. What the planet has is less important than what it is. It is our home, our mother, the stuff we were made of. It cannot be owned, it cannot be destroyed, dismembered.

This war is between having and being.

Having can buy more weapons.

Being can only be. In the end, being, Life itself, must win. All there is, is being. All there is cannot be owned, cannot be had. Life is as much part of this planet as gravity is, or magnetic fields. Life is the child of sun and earth; as long as there is a sun and a planet there will be life.

If a few specimens of one species imagine they can own what is, they live an illusion. Illusions can have a quasi-life for a while but sooner or later they implode, melt into the nothing they come from. Owning is an illusion, a mirage, entirely in the heads of some people; owning has no reality. The haves have numbers in computers written in 0 and 1. Nothing-one or one-nothing — either way it is a figment of our imagination.

Plants and trees are. We may think they have food value, or beauty, or can be used, but that is in our heads. With our hands we can alter, manipulate, eradicate, kill, but it is our head that tells the hands what to do, even if it goes against ourselves.

If we are to survive we must put our thinking back to normal. We must know, and think from that knowing, that what is important is being. Being is surviving. How, in what form or shape or color we may survive, we cannot know. And that is all right because Life, being, cannot be known beyond right now.

robert wolff, 12 august 2011

This really is the end of this 3-in-1 essay.....

I wrote a severely abridged version that was published in opednews.com for a few days. I've appended it here...

The last war

Once I taught at the University of Hawai'i. The university saw itself as a center of modern learning for all the Pacific and the Pacific Rim as we said then. We encouraged and made it possible for a large number of students from many countries to attend. I grew up in an indigenous, non-western, culture and was increasingly aware of a subtle difference in the thinking of western and non-western students in my classes. I could not quite find the words to express the difference, so I did a little survey. I knew how surveys ought to be done: careful sampling, good questions, tight recording, complex statistics. But I thought I must begin by asking questions. On the wide steps of the building where many students and faculty had lunch I asked a simple question. I was careful to choose white and non-white, male and female, young and old. My question was: "*How do you see yourself ten years from now?*" To a few I had to explain that "from now" means in the future. I recorded the answers and made notes. My admittedly unscientific sample was 212 people.

When I began to study the answers something immediately struck me, but it took me a few days to realize what it was. Almost all (except one) "white" people, I assumed to be culturally western, phrased their answer using the verb to have. "I see myself having a good career; having a wife and two children, having a big house, having money."

Almost all non-white people gave answers using the verb to be. "I see myself being a successful doctor, being happily married, being respected in my community, being free to travel." Of the 212 only four people used both verbs, "being the husband of a wonderful woman and having three children, being a happy nurse and having confidence."

I knew of course that this was not scientific but I could not get this clear difference out of my head. Thinking of yourself as having, or thinking of yourself as being, is a very different mind set. It changes how we think of ourselves, and how we think of ourselves in relation to the world. An existential difference in thinking.

This war is being fought as if it is about having. It is not. There is only one humankind, not two. This war has many battle grounds, many faces, but it is one war. Haves against have-nots. All of us know that our problem is jobs. But government is caught in the trap of thinking in terms of having. Do they really believe we have a debt crisis? That we have too large a government? Sure, it could be much more efficient, but it is supposed to represent us.

Our lack of jobs affects our being. We need work so that we can live decent lives. I am convinced that our rebellion is about the fact that we are not heard, not listened to. Every poll I have read in the last year shows that up to 80%, four out of five Americans, want the rich to pay their share. 70% wants us to get out of the many wars we are fighting. Almost everybody knows that these wars have not made us safer, on the contrary we keep making more enemies. But the people who are supposed to represent us do not listen to us. We strongly suspect that they are the voices of the haves. A president who is a great orator, and obviously smart, trusts his financial advisors (bankers) more than us. Our rage is not about having, but about being, being ignored, being pushed down, being denied life itself.

London is burning. The Middle East is in an uproar of uprisings. In India, Indonesia, Africa, South America, people are objecting, rebelling, being shot at. Doctors are persecuted for helping people wounded by their own government. The first such uprising, in Tunisia, was so unexpected that it succeeded rapidly. The second, in Egypt, took weeks and now flares up again. Now all the dictators, the haves, now use whatever power they can buy to suppress, oppress and kill. Our so-called foreign policies cannot decide who to support and who to condemn. We have an important Navy base on Bahrain, so that is totally out of the Media. Syria, an enemy of Israel, we can be stern with it. Politics has become all about having, bought by the haves, ignoring the have-nots. Is it any wonder we rebel?

This is the haves against the have-nots. We are told to think we must accept their narrative. But if we do we have already lost, because pretty soon the haves will have it all. They can buy all the weapons there are.

But our indignation, revulsion, uprising, is not about having, it is about being. We fight for being human, for being heard, for being acknowledged as humans equal to all other humans. It is not even about what we believe. It is about who we know we are, *beings*.

When we are clear that what this war is about is being then we can win. Being is Life itself. For almost all the time of our being human on this planet we lived without having. "Owning", was not even a concept until a few thousand years ago, the very end years of our 100,000 or more years of being homo sapiens.

Let us be clear that it is about *being*, not *having*. We need to be respected as *being*, we need to be heard, we are just as important as those who have it all. Life cannot be owned,

We learned having from the haves; we learned being from nature. Let's learn from nature again. Plants and animals live in deserts, on the slopes of Mount Everest, on tiny islands, in the ocean, because Life, being, trumps having all the time everywhere. We don't need to have much to be. Life is being -- having is an illusion.