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# "The Patriots' Legacy"

an essay by  
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## I: Introduction

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The political character of the Metal Gear Solid series remains largely ignored in conversation about the games. A host of topics prevails: How does Liquid survive in Ocelot's arm; why did Big Boss turn evil; and, inevitably, who are the Patriots?

The introduction of Big Boss's pre-Metal Gear experiences suggested answers to many questions left hanging after the conclusion of Sons of Liberty. At the very least, speculative answers to these questions have been wrought from information provided by Snake Eater. As the son of the Sorrow, Ocelot possesses some psychic power and may communicate with the dead, thereby allowing Liquid to speak through him as a medium. Big Boss established Outer Heaven to revolt against the Patriots, who abused his service and his skills.

And the Patriots—well, the answers here are only halfway satisfying. In order to understand the Patriots, we must first understand the Philosophers in Snake Eater. In order to understand the Philosophers, we must understand some of the historical context surrounding the Cold War as the continuation of the relationships established between states during World War II. The material may sound dry, but it becomes quite engaging—especially as one realizes that real-world philosophers and patriots have determined the quality of our daily lives. We must look to the series' political subtleties in order to answer the largest question—"Who are the Patriots?"

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## II: Snake Eater

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As established in Snake Eater, the Philosophers were comprised of societal elites from the United States, the Soviet Union, and China. These elites joined their influence and their fortunes to remake the world in the image of peace and economic contentment. The key to the successful execution of their plans was the Philosophers' Legacy: one-hundred billion dollars scattered across the globe in a variety of bank accounts. Volgin's father, a Treasurer for the Philosophers, embezzled the Philosophers' reconstruction funds—which Volgin then stole in order to finance his military organization.

Between the time when Volgin's father robbed the Philosophers and the events of Snake Eater, the absence of the reconstruction funds resulted in a loss of direction among the Philosophers. They argued and split according to national affiliation, and each respective faction ate away at its own innards. Younger elites assumed the positions of power as the societal elites who formed the Philosophers during World War II passed away. These younger elites lacked the temperance on hubris and ambition that the incipient members had earned during the hardships of the Second World War. While each faction's nationalist goals required the Philosophers' Legacy, the new Philosophers were still wealthy enough to remain involved in warfare across the earth. The new blood was hot and warmongering, and the Philosophers' Legacy would finance each nation's glory at the expense of the others.

In Snake Eater then we see the final showdown between the inheritors of the Philosophers' organizations. EVA was tricked into returning to China with a fake microfilm, and the Boss secured the real microfilm for America by infiltrating Volgin's ranks. For reasons that are unclear, half of the Philosophers' Legacy remained in Soviet Russia's possession until the end of the Cold War. The United States won the Cold War when it claimed the entire Philosophers' Legacy.

Snake Eater impressively dramatized the economic struggles of the Cold War without directly mentioning economics at all. However, the importance of economic ideals cannot be ignored with all the clues dropped in the game. Historically the Cold War was a conflict between the opposite economic ideologies of capitalism and communism, in addition to the nuclear arms race at the center of Snake Eater's plot. The "division between East and West" that "marked the beginning of the Cold War" (as explained in David Hayter's introductory monologue) was primarily an *economic* division. After World War II, Western nations formed economic relationships with each other via capitalistic exchanges. Most Eastern nations (the most significant of which were Soviet Russia and the People's Republic of China) became self-contained and shunned free trade with capitalist economies.

Implied social ideologies came with economic policies. Capitalist economies placed more emphasis upon individual achievement and identity; Communist economies placed more emphasis upon dedicating oneself to society's greater good and government service, in addition to sacrificing the spoils of one's work to the community's welfare. Individual accountability is everything in capitalism; in Communism, no one takes ownership of anything.

The Philosophers' fictional history parallels the development of the historical relationships between the United States, Soviet Russia, and China, as each nation redefined its stance toward former allies from the Second World War. During World War II, the United States gave economic and material support to

China, which (at that time) was not a Communist state. America supported the anti-Communist Chinese forces because China shared the Pacific War against Japan. The Soviet Union and America likewise shared membership among the Allied Powers mostly because of their coordinated wartime activity against Japan. Soviet and American military forces also shared the burden of resisting and counteracting Nazi Germany's continental aggression. The Soviet Union, non-Communist China, and the United States all shared the work of containing and neutralizing Nazi Germany and Japan. Both of these World War II Axis powers justified their wars according to ideologies based on racial superiority, holy war, and the desire to reform the world in their respective cultural images.

However, Stalin feared President Truman's America when he beheld the power of the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. He anticipated an America that would hold economic superiority over Soviet Russia because of America's superior weapons. Thus the arms race began. Around the same time, China's Communist leader Mao Tse Tung effectively won the Cultural Revolution. Non-communist China (which America had supported militarily during World War II) was put down and its advocates executed by order of the People's Republic of China. The Communist Chinese revolutionaries had been the United States' implied enemies; they naturally feared the economic consequences of America's superior weaponry. Thus the arms race gained momentum in China.

The drama of changed international relationships parallels the change in the Philosophers' relationships. The organization's fictional history illustrates developments in world history—but why then would the organization bear the name "Philosophers"? What type of philosophers existed in all of the major Allied Powers, determined the structure and methods of war, and was vital in post-World War II politics?

The answer: *Economic Philosophers*.

The organization's name bears a haunting similarity to the title of a highly influential book by Robert Heilbroner, *The Worldly Philosophers*. The book details the importance of economic philosophy and its effects upon both human behavior and thought. Knowing what we know about the shadow-government operations of the MGS Philosophers, the following excerpts from *The Worldly Philosophers* seem uncannily relevant.

This is a book about a handful of men with a curious claim to fame. By all the rules of schoolboy history books, they were nonentities (Heilbroner 1).

A few paragraphs later, we read:

[What] they did was more decisive for history than many acts of statesmen who basked in brighter glory, often more profoundly disturbing than the shuttling of armies back and forth across frontiers, more powerful for good and bad than the edicts of kings and legislatures. It was this: they shaped and swayed men's minds (Heilbroner 1).

It should be noted that Heilbroner does not cast his "worldly philosophers" as figures who lived as

insidiously and craftily as the MGS Philosophers. The essence of their significance remains nearly identical, however. Both the "worldly philosophers" and the MGS Philosophers remained politically invisible; both used the materials of the world in conjunction with their ideals to direct literal history; and both provided the foundations for the 20th century's major wartime history.

The historical and literary references paint the Philosophers as mythologized forms of each of the most powerful Allied nations' political and economic characters. The Philosophers amassed their Legacy to give motion to their ideals of global unity after World War II. As the last direct descendant of any of the original Philosophers, The Boss describes their vision best when she describes her view of Earth from outer space: "No nations, no countries."

However, the figures died whose ideals grew from suffering. Their successors were given mere power without the guidance of their predecessors' maturity as it developed during the Second World War. This coheres with the spirit of the entire Metal Gear Solid series. We can trace the theme of incomplete inheritance through the entire Metal Gear Solid trilogy: in Metal Gear Solid, Big Boss passes genetic power to Liquid Snake without the maturity to guide those genes toward true glory; in Sons of Liberty, Peter Stillman passes on his demolition theories to Fatman without the wisdom to use those theories best; and in Snake Eater, The Boss's relationship to Naked Snake revolves around the gift of knowledge without the communication of the values required to use knowledge for either virtue or vice.

As we learn in the epilogue to Snake Eater, the American Philosophers obtain the full Philosophers' Legacy and change their organization's name to "the Patriots." The transformation marks the death of all scraps left of the original Philosophers' values. The movement toward economic single-mindedness in American political life began.

A philosopher asks: "What should I do to make life better for all people? What sort of person must I become in order to live justly with respect to my neighbor? And, lest it go unnoted, all of humanity is my neighbor." A patriot however narrows his focus and asks: "What should I do to make life better for my countrymen, at the expense of other nations' populations? What sort of person must I become to live justly and respect the needs of my country? And, lest it go unnoted, my country is not the world."

The Philosophers intended to establish global economic relationships that would annul the possibility of future wars fueled by race supremacy ideals. We may deduce that their most concrete goal was to abolish any chance that one nation might use force to dominate the world in the interest of cultural reformation. (We should remember that both of these ideals were characteristics of Nazi Germany and WWII Sh•wa Japan.) The Philosophers' ideal was to establish a world wherein holy war could not occur: they saw the need to reckon all human beings as residents of Earth.

The Patriots intended to exploit all available avenues to advance American welfare at the expense of global welfare—even to the extent of reforming information according to their ideologies and controlling world culture. The Patriots used the Philosophers' momentum to achieve ends that the Philosophers specifically abhorred.

The Patriots no longer identify themselves as human beings at the end of Sons of Liberty. The transformation's literal process remains unknown within the context of the games. Nevertheless, we may infer the Patriots' development from the events described in the timeline provided before the credits in Snake Eater. The *Les enfants terribles* Project was the most crucial step in their evolution from "merely human" toward something indefinable and greater-than-human.

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### III: Metal Gear Solid

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The *Les enfants terribles* project was a eugenic experiment. Eugenics is the science of manipulating life in order to manifest a predetermined phenotype in the resulting offspring. The practical application involves two types of genetic manipulation: selective breeding (to coax the desired traits into future offspring) and genocide (to eradicate undesired traits from present and future generations).

The most historically recognized eugenics policy occurred in Nazi Germany at the behest of Ernst Rüdin. Rüdin was one of the most influential proponents of "racial hygiene." He is also responsible for the ideology that the Teutons were the rightful creators of human culture. Quoting Adolf Hitler, Rüdin spoke the language of both Liquid and Solidus Snake: "Whoever is not physically or mentally fit must not pass on his defects to his children."

*Les enfants terribles* was an American experiment that portended the same ends as Nazi eugenics experiments. It is hardly coincidental that the "successful twin" of the first experiment—Liquid Snake—expresses the phenotype of the Nazis' Nordic ideal: blonde hair, blue eyes, and creamy skin. The name of the organization strived toward by Liquid and Solidus Snake (as well as Big Boss) likewise carries overtones of the Teutons' mythic Valhalla: Outer Heaven, a paradise of eternal war.

The terrorists on Shadow Moses Island believed in the ideology of genetic materialism. The belief requires the abnegation of free will to strengthen faith that one cannot avoid biological destiny. By worshipping his genes as an oracle, Liquid Snake worshipped "wyrd"—the ancient Nordic ideal of fate.

The three Snakes were conceived and born as weapons of war. They were designed to help the Patriots achieve their goals as conquerors. The project's genetic conditioning ultimately expressed the ideals of Nazi totalitarianism through Liquid Snake.

The social philosophy most closely associated with eugenics is "social Darwinism," in which the theories of biological evolution are applied fallaciously to societal trends. Social Darwinism can only work when we delineate between "inferior" and "superior" genetic identities. The core idea holds that those who are fittest to survive socially have survived because they possess superior qualities that increase their odds of survival in society. If we take Social Darwinism one step further, we arrive at a cultural elitism whereby we recognize inferior and superior *social* and *cultural* identities. The *Les enfants terribles* project

forecasted the turn that the Patriots would take in Sons of Liberty.

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## IV: Sons of Liberty

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During the final revelatory Codec conversation in Sons of Liberty, the Patriots defined themselves as "[a] kind of consciousness formed layer by layer in the crucible of the White House." Again the Patriots invoked the language of evolution, natural selection, and genetic destiny when they compared their development to "the way life started in the ocean four billion years ago." They described themselves in a disturbingly intimate way: "We are the very discipline and morality that Americans invoke so often.... As long as this nation exists, so will we."

At this point many gamers gave up trying to understand the narrative of Sons of Liberty. Their reaction is understandable. Sons of Liberty invoked a political idea that is distinctly Japanese. The West has no analogous counterpart to the concept of *kokutai* [••].

The origins of the concept of *kokutai* are bound in Japan's mytho-political past. According to Japanese Shinto mythology, a direct genetic descendant of the sun-goddess Amaterasu occupies the Japanese imperial throne. Because of the uniquely biological relationship between the Japanese emperor and the fabric of the cosmos, the nation of Japan possesses a civic soul. This civic soul is the *kokutai*. The closest term found in American political language might be "patriotic spirit." Yet the ideas don't match perfectly. The *kokutai* is the living *presence* of the soul of a nation.

In a lecture presented in October 2000, University of Toronto history professor Dr. John Brownlee described one Japanese philosopher's ideal of the *kokutai*.

In Outline of a Theory of Civilization, Fukuzawa held more explicitly . . . that the concept of [*kokutai*] did not apply solely to Japan. Every country has one: China, India, and all the countries of the West (Brownlee).

Brownlee later quoted the Japanese political philosopher Fukuzawa directly.

The national structure of a nation is not something immutable. It is subject to considerable change. It can unite or divide, expand or contract, or even vanish entirely. Its existence or disappearance does not depend upon such considerations as language, religion, and the like (Brownlee).

The Patriots are the American *kokutai*, given birth from the Cold War following the Second World War.

The American economic and political developments leading up to the Second World War support the

claim that an American *kokutai* did not fully exist until the end of the Cold War. America had split in a Civil War less than a century earlier. After the Civil War, America was hardly uniform in its economic ideology: the West was regarded as a chaotic land of fortune; the Midwest and the New England states were established as cultural and industrial centers; and the Southern states had been dominated as the agrarian epicenter of raw materials for processing in the industrial North.

World War I prefaced the global economic depression that gave rise to industrial military states such as Nazi Germany and early Sh•wa Japan. America still had not achieved economic solidarity, however. The struggle between industrial and agrarian economies had reached its climax before the Second World War with a final bold statement published by twelve Southern men-of-letters—the book of essays titled *I'll Take My Stand*.

American culture accepted its identity as an industrial capitalist economy during the Second World War. The United States turned into an industrial military state in order to manufacture war supplies needed to fight both the European and Pacific fronts of the Second World War. The United States' economic boom following the Second World War solidified the national economy.

The nation became almost completely unified in its economic outlooks by the addition of a political and military enemy whose economic structure implied an ideology that contradicted "American discipline"—the Soviet Union. Through the Second World War and the Cold War—along with the progression from the American Philosophers to the Patriots—the American *kokutai* was born.

In Snake Eater, the American Philosophers broke away from their predecessors' humanistic economic ideals and quarreled clannishly with the Chinese and Soviet Philosophers. When they possessed the whole sum of the Philosophers' Legacy, they funded their outward transformation from a diplomatic pretender to humanistic concerns into an aggressive, nationalistic body that conscientiously exploited the whole world for the sake of its own maintenance. The *Les enfants terribles* project was part of this, as was the lapse into the practice of the same near-sighted nationalism of Nazi Germany and early Sh•wa Japan.

They fulfilled the Philosophers' nightmare. Yet the facts revealed in Sons of Liberty indicate the Patriots' oncoming collapse.

The Patriots' control of cultural information in Sons of Liberty allows them to condition the responses of future generations across the world. The Patriots have edited the histories of The Boss, Colonel Gurlukovich, Solid Snake, and the incipient Philosophers at some time or another. The Patriots edited this information in order to condition future generations' reactions to history. After all, unremembered history cannot educate children against the power structure. The Patriots took the general results from *Les enfants terribles* to the cultural level by manipulating memes, units of cultural information. Erasing cultural information for the purpose of controlling future society serves as an abstract form of genocide—a policy that the Patriots are keen to pursue.

Prior to the advent of digital information, the Patriots only needed to control cultural information abroad. With their ability to maintain control of history slipping, they proposed in Sons of Liberty to "create context" for the American people. The language used by the AI Colonel and Rose during the revelatory Codec dialogue tied together Snake Eater's theme of economic philosophy with Metal Gear Solid's theme of genetic materialism. They wed these ideas within the theme of human culture.

They use the language of genetic materialism when they say: "A small percentage of the whole [of human culture] was selected and processed, then passed on. Not unlike genes, really." They later imply the practice of racial hygiene when they say: "[Junk data] will only slow down social progress, reduce the rate of evolution."

They use economic language when they say: "The digital society... selectively rewards development of convenient half-truths." They later say: "The untested truths spun by different interests continue to churn and accumulate in the sandbox of political correctness and value systems." They intimately connect the Patriots' intentions to Snake Eater's theme: "Building a *LEGACY* involves figuring out what is wanted, and what needs to be done for that goal" (my emphasis).

The Patriots clearly regard cultural information as analogous to genetic information. They cheapened the dignity of life by manipulating it into preferred forms, and they proposed to cheapen the dignity of human culture by treating it likewise. Yet a more obscure connection exists between the American Philosophers' economic concerns in Snake Eater and the Patriots' cultural concerns in Sons of Liberty.

The Patriots described the accumulation of cultural information on the Internet with the ideological language that capitalists use to refer negatively to Communism. The Patriots criticized that no competition exists and that no clear winner can be determined between conflicting cultural values. The "[selective rewards for] development of convenient half-truths" suggests the triumph of a population defined by a lack of accountability. The Patriots have discovered that the Internet cultivates relativistic attitudes among people who do not share cultural memories. In other words, the Patriots have discovered that the capitalist ideology (according to which they directed American politics) has become undermined by a lapse in cultural competition. A new kind of "free market" on information is born in which failed competitors are *not* removed from the marketplace.

Heilbroner concluded The Worldly Philosophers with an overview of capitalism's health. The economic system did not seem as secure as many would have preferred. Stagnation was capitalism's biggest threat, and stagnation was ironically one of capitalism's resulting tendencies. The United States had no more frontiers like the Wild West; its population growth had noticeably slowed; and product invention had been overshadowed by product customization. Market competitors didn't need to create new desires for their customers—they only needed to customize existing products. Of course, even this failed to bolster capitalism since customized products were usually sold at higher prices. Prices decrease as a result of competition in a healthy capitalist economy. Excessive customization at invention's expense tainted the process of competition, capitalism's nourishment.

Heilbroner described the observations offered by economist Joseph Schumpeter.

For capitalism, to Schumpeter's mind, could maintain its forward momentum only as long as capitalists behaved like knights—or at least pioneers. Not all of them, of course: for every daring entrepreneur, there was bound to be a whole flock of timid followers. But the driving impetus for the system came from men of courage, men who risked their fortunes to implement new ideas, who dared to innovate, to experiment, to expand (Heilbroner 334).

Schumpeter regarded rationalism as capitalist gumption's main deflator. A rational individual quickly learned to doubt the truth of his own values which led to timidity in the marketplace.

"Money isn't everything," said the intellectuals, and in so doing they sowed a seed of doubt about the values of money-making as an end in itself. "Private property is no more sacred than the divine right of kings," said the intellectuals, and in so doing they exposed the basis of privilege in a business society to be no more necessary or inviolable than that of privilege in a feudal society. The romantic ideals, the sacrosanct ideology of business were thus held up to the harsh light of rationality, and the result was that the values of the business way of life lost their attractive glow. You cannot hold a jousting tourney if the audience thinks the whole performance is slightly ridiculous: even the most ardent of knights will lose his zest if no one applauds his success (Heilbroner 335).

In other words, capitalism's success tends to result in its own obsolescence. Comfort and excess lead to stagnation. The system remains viable through eternal competition. Only a free market version of Outer Heaven can keep it alive. The Patriots propose to create context in order to limit the population's cultural options and create genuine competition for truth.

The greatest indicator to the Patriots' real intentions lies buried in their rhetoric: "building a legacy." All of the games' ideologues use the concept of a legacy as their foundation—the idea of inheritance from a progenitor. Snake Eater revealed the Philosophers' Legacy and the inheritance of power remaining in the wake of World War II. The Sons of the Boss were included among The Boss's gifts to Volgin as materials to complete Volgin's collection of post-Second World War historical power. Metal Gear Solid revealed Big Boss's genetic Legacy. The Sons of Big Boss inherited martial power. Sons of Liberty prompted its audience to consider the informational Legacy that the Sons of Liberty fought for. The latter Legacy suggests the existence of an identity inherited through memories, whose forms are determined according to the information that an individual accepts as "real."

Raiden experienced the type of informational Legacy that the Patriots would build. They disregarded the emotions and reactions that Raiden felt during the Plant Mission as flotsam prompted by context that they created. As they defined the S3 Plan (Selection for Societal Sanity) near the end of Sons of Liberty, their Legacy was not a set of ethics and values. It was a method of manipulating human behavior and consciousness. By defining the specific information available for public consumption, they could create

boundaries for human awareness. Any information that found root outside those boundaries could be considered fantasy, since it would exist beyond the bounds of "societal sanity."

The Patriots' intentions through the S3 Plan (hereafter referred to as "the Patriots' Legacy") require the suppression of any other individual legacy. In Raiden's situation, the legacy of his past was supposedly erased to make him an improved vessel for emulating Solid Snake. A whole host of cultural information needed to disappear in order to empty Raiden of his memories: the historical erasure of a civil war, Raiden's recorded appearance in a foster home, and Solidus's leadership of the Army of the Devil. Likewise, in order for the Patriots' Legacy to establish itself, the Patriots must have disregard the emotional and psychological contradictions of Raiden's experiences as detritus. The S3 Plan's lapse in judgment comes through its inability to account for unquantified aspects of life.

The limits implied by the Patriots' Legacy are exactly the same limits implied by an epistemology based on market capitalism. Capitalism thrives on the exchange of currency for goods. The quicker that people exchange currency for goods and services, the better the economy becomes. However, capitalism's only way to understand meaning requires the conversion of *qualitative* meaning into *quantitative* meaning.

To get a better grasp of that idea, let's look at an example.

In a certain town, all of the houses are made of wood. Insects resilient to conventional pesticides have recently migrated to the area, and the houses have begun to deteriorate because of an increase in termites.

John and Rick are house builders. John builds houses out of wood; Rick builds houses out of materials that are not wood. In the town with the termite problem, Rick's business soars while John's business fails.

Two sides of the situation exist: the qualitative side and the quantitative side. The quality of Rick's work shows through because his customers do not have to worry about termites destroying their homes. They experience a cessation of anxiety, improved personal relationships because of less stress, and more physical comfort. As well, Rick experiences a boost in his self-esteem. He has greater relevance to his community because of his work's quality.

A strictly capitalist epistemology does not regard any of this as knowable. The only knowable information within capitalist epistemology comes through the expression of Rick's customers' satisfaction in numbers. Examples of these numbers are Rick's gross profit, his increased spending because of his greater wealth, John's fallen gross profit, and the community's relative decrease in home maintenance expenses.

With respect to the Patriots' Legacy, individual memories and experiences are not knowable because they are not quantifiable. The Patriots can create context and can condition an individual toward certain physical and mental reactions. However, they cannot directly manipulate the idiosyncratic reactions of the S3 Plan's subject.

They also cannot destroy the individual's desire for truth. We might call this faculty an individual's Will-to-Truth. Raiden's Will-to-Truth began dissolving the Patriots' masquerade after he met Solid Snake. When Raiden saw that Solid Snake existed, he knew that he (Raiden) could not also have been Solid Snake, regardless of simulated training. Raiden even asked Snake about the meaning of violence and terrorism. He would have feigned lacking these concerns if he were still maintaining the S3 Plan's fantasy at the expense of truth.

Still another flaw exists in the Patriots' Legacy. The S3 Plan clearly shows that the Patriots have not learned a thing from their past experiences. The economic circumstances that resulted from the American Philosophers' inheritance of the Philosophers' Legacy created war over limited industrial resources. The genetic condition that resulted from the *Les enfants terribles* project (as well as the Genome Army) was genetic symmetry, which compromised the health of both the Genome Army and the clones of Big Boss. It stands to reason then that the cultural circumstances resulting from the Patriots' creation of "context" will likewise result in sterility and the abscission of energy.

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## V: Conclusion

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Insofar as the technology of the Metal Gear Solid series reflects the development of wartime devices from the 1960's to the present, the games' themes also reflect the global concerns that have been pertinent to the given historical contexts. Though the games have all featured industrialist technology as the context of each conflict, the message that they evince suggests anti-industrialist sympathies. In all three games, a natural image contrasts the industrial culture of war: in Snake Eater, Naked Snake strains to grasp an elusive butterfly; in Metal Gear Solid, the wolves and the caribou represent Solid Snake's retreat from the battlefield; and in Sons of Liberty, Emma's parrot and Fortune's seagulls represent the freedom of memes from the battlefield of context control.

The protagonists all live within the industrial world. Human beings are part of nature, and the industrial world is also a human creation. Humanity is both industrial and natural. The interplay between these forces in the games creates the philosophy that gives each protagonist strength.

After Naked Snake has experienced his greatest suffering almost unto death, he awakens and strains his hand toward a butterfly. Later in the Shagohod hangar, Snake remolds a C3 plastic explosive from EVA's heart into a butterfly. The act practically illustrates the conjectured error that Big Boss made later in his life. He tried to realize the ideal of happiness found in nature *through* the industrial world. He finds his butterfly on the battlefield, and he overwrites human love in the process. In the end, his butterfly becomes a mere lump of plastic explosives—an incendiary dream.

After Solid Snake confronts his genetic identity, he leaves the battlefield and returns to his mush dogs. As Snake and Meryl sit astride the snow-ski before riding into the sunset, they notice the caribou. Snake describes their significance as Aleutians' symbol of life. The image of Snake's mush dogs pulling him on

a sled illustrates Solid Snake's character change. He allows the ideal of happiness discovered in nature to carry him through life. He may harness nature when he harnesses his dogs. Nevertheless, the act differs from the industrial world's domination of the natural world.

After Raiden confronts his memories and his cultural identity, he watches Emma's parrot fly toward the high windows of New York City's skyscrapers. Emma's parrot and Fortune's seagulls represent the memories and cultural ideas that will always escape the Patriots' revisions. Emma's love for Otacon and her memories as a human being have become part of the unalterable texture of Raiden's memory. Fortune's legitimate psychic powers likewise have added to the unquantified elements of the narrative. When all is said and done, the Patriots may know the head count of survivors and those who died, but they will still never know about the small life of a parrot that also left the battlefield. They will never know the qualitative aspects of the mission, because those are beyond their ken.

The Patriots are not the only figures who could have attained their positions of power. Nothing suggests that the People's Republic of China or the Soviet Union would have conducted their actions with the Philosophers' Legacy any differently. No—the real burden of responsibility does not lie with political bodies, because governments cannot be trusted to run the world on their own. The true responsibility lies with the mass of individuals who must "choose life, then live," rather than attempt to manhandle experience as though it were industrial fodder.

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