

- **A society is a building.** A society can have a “foundation,” which may or may not be solid, and it can “crumble” and “fall.” The World Trade Center was symbolic of American society. When it crumbled and fell, the threat was to more than a building.
- **Standing.** We think metaphorically of things that perpetuate over time as “standing.” During the Gulf War, George H. W. Bush kept saying, “This will not stand,” meaning that the situation would not be perpetuated over time. The World Trade Center was built to last ten thousand years. When it crumbled, it metaphorically raised the question of whether American power and American society would last. And that was why it was attacked.
- **Building as temple.** Here we had the destruction of the temple of capitalist commerce, which lies at the heart of our society.
- **Our minds play tricks on us.** The image of the Manhattan skyline became unbalanced. We were used to seeing it with the towers there. Our minds imposed our old image of the towers, and the sight of them gone gave one the illusion of imbalance, as if Manhattan were sinking. Given the symbolism of Manhattan as the promise of America, it appeared metaphorically as if that promise were sinking.

The Freedom Tower now stands at 1 World Trade Center. It’s not as distinctive and its meaning is not the same. It does not represent the stability of normal life in America.

- **Hell.** We had the persistent image, day after day, of the charred and smoking remains: hell.

The World Trade Center was a potent symbol, tied into our understanding of our country and ourselves in myriad ways. All of what we know is physically embodied in our brains. To incorporate the new knowledge requires a physical change in the synapses of our brains, a physical reshaping of our neural system.

The physical violence was not only in New York and Washington. Physical changes—violent ones—have been made to the brains of all Americans.