

Persistent Fictions:

or

Varieties of Religious Delusions:

Ruminations on-Mytho-politics, Anti-Science,

Deceptive Ideologies and Totalism

(1996-2018)

In Three Books

By Mark Koslow



“What a tailor can do”.

By Francesco Goya,

(In an aquatint image that generalizes to all the religions, Goya shows people deluded into praying to a cloth god. The god is just a sheet, and draped over a broken tree, made by a tailor—it is Goya’s comment on the tendency of people to fall prey to superstitions and delusions. It is a perfect image of religion which involves deceit, gullibility, props, fictions and fear.

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Book I
The Political Nature of the Religions

Introduction:

**Roll Over, William James: Ruminations on Reactionary Religion and
Why I am Writing about it**

“Religion “allows otherwise normal human
beings to reap the fruits of madness and
consider them holy” Sam Harris

“By simple common sense I don’t believe in god.”
Charlie Chaplin

“I expect to live to see the evaporation of the
powerful mystique of religion. I think that in
about twenty-five years almost all religions will
have evolved into very different phenomena, so
much so that in most quarters religion will no
longer command the awe it does today.” Daniel
Dennett

My Involvement in Religion

One can only learn so much in one life, and as we have only one life, I thought it would be good to say some of the things I have learned about a certain range of subjects in this book. It is not everything that I have learned, but it is a large range. It is clear the world must change and those who run things now must be stopped so the changes can be made. CEO's are ruining the world and must be removed or regulated out of existence, like the kings of old. What happened under global capitalism is that the rich destroyed most of the middle class jobs by shipping them over seas, causing suffering all over the world. This made everyone but the corporate rich angry, understandably. But the result was that the rich offered a solution in hurting the poor even further, creating "persistent fiction" blaming the problem on immigrants instead of CEO's who actually did the harm. So the rich start blaming races and the poor, the EPA, a good health care system that serves patients more than administrators, taxes on the rich and the government itself. They want to abolish all unions and hurt freedom of inquiry, destroy the public education of critical thinkers, deny enlightenment values and turn journalism into 'alternative' lies. So this is the right wing world that follows upon global corporate rape of nature and the world's markets.¹ The far right relies on religion to do this, obviously, but they also rely on Classical economic ideology, which is another toxic belief system. Locke's idea of making an insured form of investment beyond change was a great help to the slave trade.

So the persistent fiction of giving more money for the rich because of their "merit", while stealing from the poor and middle classes is ridiculous.

¹ Donald Trump is only one such far right ideologue that promises to destroy our world even more than globalizers have done. There is Marine Le Pen in France, as well as far right parties in Hungary, Finland, Sweden and many other places. Some call this a rise of a neo fascism. There is some truth to that.

There is no “merit” in being a ‘money expert’ who makes wealth out of producing nothing and steals from the real workers to feed the unreal rich. How has the wealth of the wealthy become more important than the existence of earth threatened under climate change? How has the obscene wealth of the very few, become more important than health care for all, education, good government for everyone, democracy in the humanitarian sense, the environment, nature, art or the alleviation of poverty. In short the world is heading in a very bad way towards a sort of psychopathic greed and classism, as well as more war--- This is exactly what many saw happening in Germany in the 1920’s. Good government, education, care for nature, democracy, are all good things. Yet the far right is against what is good and favors tax breaks for those who harm the U.S. and the world.

Democratic care of nature, the arts, humanities and education are far more important than the egotistic greed of some unnecessary CEO’s, generals or Presidents. It is clear that the so called “leaders” of our world are often insane psychopaths and we should ignore them out of office.² We must simply not obey their laws and go on as if they are not there, or at least vote them out, or shout all at once how worthless and self-serving they really are. In their denial of care and science about our world they have committed themselves to hurting their own grandchildren and their future as well as harming most beings on earth. Children, democracy, health care and nature matter more than Kings or CEOs. CEO’s like Trump hide behind the persistent fiction of a hypocritical Christianity, and claims a right to steal from the poor to give to the rich. They are the Sheriff of Nottingham, not Robin Hood. So these

² For instance to recent appointment of Brett Kavanaugh, an abusive drunk and misogynist to Supreme Court stacks the court with far right nuts, sex offenders and pro-corporate free market fundamentalists. The only way to stop this is to invalidate the Court, which means that current judges and lawyers would have to boycott their decisions and rulings. How likely is that, not very, given to cowardice of most judges and lawyers.. It would be a good idea to put the current president on trial and put him in jail, however. He created what is now a very dangerous court. The problem is the presidency itself, and the autocratic nature of this king-like office,

books side with Robin Hood and try to bring the far right into question.

But there are simpler motives for doing these books too. One of my favorite series of books I have read to my young children, both scholars who love science, is The Magic School Bus. In that wonderful series, the main character, Ms. Frizzle, tells her students, very wisely, “Get Messy. Make mistakes”. I have made lot of mistakes and this book is partly an effort to assess and correct them. Others might differ with me, even oppose what I say, but this is what I have learned so far about ultimate questions and actual things and people, systems and ideologies. I am, of course, responsible for these mistakes, as I am for mistakes in these books, and have spent years trying to correct both, with difficulty and so; this remains a work in progress and one that I might not ever really finish.

These three books are asking deep questions. What are the origins of religion and why does it have such a close relationship with politics? Why did it all go so wrong, not just for me personally, but for the earth at large? Religion in our society is not so much a public affair, as it was in Rome or Medieval France, when religion and politics were inseparable. It is clear that the roots of current cruelty to animals and hatred of the environment reach back to Egypt, Rome and Greece.³, and indeed, go back before to the agricultural societies of Harappa or early China. It is clear that abuse of animals begins with “civilization”. Gone is the near worship of animals one sees in Paleolithic caves and early art of many kinds. If indeed, it was worship, since it cannot be ruled out that those ancient images are the beginning of our problems. My way of thinking is wide and ongoing, and I never seem to come to a really final understanding, so these books cover many things and my conclusions are always provisional, even if I struggle towards certainties.

³ Book 2 of Herodotus’ History is clear about how animals were regularly abused for religious rites, bloody sacrifices and the origins of speciesism are obvious there, in early centuries, 2400 BP. He wrote very poor history, often more myth than history, but he is clear on this.

However, by now, religion has become a private and personal or subjective matter. But politics in America is also subjective. Cults, superstitions and private consciences are delicate areas and religion in modern life lives there, in the closets and private lives of most people in our society. We are free only in our delusions while the rich take from everyone and give little back, stealing our treasure and putting it in offshore banks where they pay no taxes.

To really question religion one must burrow down into the subjectivity of writers and people over long periods. I have to make surmises that may not be correct or based on too little evidence. The motives at the basis of religion have to do with political opportunism, sexism and even deeper into the realm of human psycho-social dynamics. Examining this will no doubt offend some, but this is where I have lived too, and to do this is unavoidable and inevitable.

I write out of my actual experience in these books. Most academic works on religion strive for the impersonal, as if religion were an objective or real thing. But there is little that is objective in religion. The pose of impersonality is not always superior. Religious books rarely grapple with real questions, but merely pass along fictions as if they were real. This is why so little good work has been critical of religion in the domains where it actually lives, in Churches, Mosques, religious studies or, most importantly, in the intimacies of people's lives. Since religion in our time is a private affair one must question the personal domains of various people to explain it. That is difficult and hard to do. Yet at the same time religion is a public phenomenon too and so one must grapple with the very public history of religion and the history of evolution.

Public and private became confused areas in religion in the modern world. Israel and Iran pretend to have an impersonal theocracy, but actually these are very subjective and romantic states, which have hitched themselves to old delusional systems of belief as part of a political program. Islam says, for instance, that any Muslim who

questions Islam is an apostate and should be killed. Like the Koran the Bible also threatens Hell for unbelievers. Psychological blackmail is standard in most religions and promotes persistent fictions. This is hardly the behavior of evolution, but rather of religious thuggery. Using fear like this makes religion an imposition on every person. What is offensive in Islam is this very public effort to control everyone's private lives. The Inquisition is famous for torturing anyone who questioned Christianity. Even now questioning religion is kept at bay by the questionable authority of the First Amendment, which many use to protect the domain of delusions. The purpose of the ideology of immortality is to make sure that humans are the one species that is exceptional, who has a "soul" and lives forever. This ideology is false and a lie, but it is protected. Why?

The right to be deluded shall not be infringed. This is good news for advertising executives who want to delude everyone to make money. Political parties pander to the wealthy classes mostly, while pretending they are 'populist'. Today, corporations often act with impunity and few question their power to do so. Humans are animals but deny that they have any relation to other animals, making themselves the one species that is unlike any other, and only humans are accorded rights, nearly all others can be killed with impunity. This too happens because of legal fictions created by corporations and judges, which falsely allow the corporation to be an immortal "person", actually a sort of god. Indeed, the idea of personhood was applied to the Sikh holy books, Rivers, Hindu deities and Moslem Mosques.

Questioning these fictions takes some courage, and I do my best here to have this courage.⁴ The purpose of the first amendment is not to

⁴ The Whanganui River in New Zealand was granted personhood status in 2012 and Ecuador has given special status to its forests, lakes and rivers too. This makes some sense, whereas giving it to holy books or gods or corporations does not. However, it is not necessary to call a river a person, to grant it equal status. The notion that "person" is a superior category to which rights must be accorded is highly questionable. Rivers or oceans should have rights as oceans, the

“protect religion” as the religious like to maintain. The purpose of the first amendment is to force delusions out of the public realm and to allow religion and other delusions only in the strictly private realm.

So, this is and is not a personal book. I explore personal matters when that is necessary and break the rule that persons are off limits in intellectual work.⁵ The impersonal can be an affectation and thus a cloak for power motives that are all too personal. The Mafioso is famous for saying “it is not personal, it’s just business”, when they kill someone. Actually, killing persons is as personal as one can get. Impersonal government and business agencies also use the impersonal as a cloak to harm or fleece others. Impersonal inquiry is only good when it does not serve hidden power agendas and merely acquires the facts. Bird ID books are impersonal in this way and very useful. However each bird observation is personal, between the one who saw the bird or behavior and the animals itself. These are books about actual experiences, with an effort to be objective. This is not to say that I have achieved the impersonal truth of ID books. I lived a thoughtful life up to now and see

atmosphere, elephants, and ecologies all deserve their own ‘status’. To define things as persons still is to define humans as superior to rivers or ecologies, when they are not. We need to avoid this sort of speciesism. Nature’s rights does not require the concept of persons to be effective. Beings and physical aspects or processes of nature like climate or ecologies deserve protections as do species of all kinds. The problem is here the notion of persons, not the notion that nature too deserves equal status, as indeed, why should it not? It is corporations that are not persons, not rivers or Forests. The term “protected beings” might be better than ‘persons’.

⁵ The “impersonal truths” of religion are neither truths nor really impersonal but actually subjective projections, or psycho-social constructions. The tension between the impersonal and the personal is unavoidable as truly impersonal forces, such as evolution, physics or forces, or chemical facts are so much part of our lives, yet we live within our minds and have a self. Or at least we do so long as we are in health. I learned from my mother’s Alzheimer’s that one can lose oneself. When she first came down with the disease and could still use language she often said, “I am lost” or “I am losing myself”. And later, when she was largely gone, she had sudden moments of lucidity and one day, late in her illness, she woke out of it and I saw this and said, “I miss you so much” and she said, “I know you do honey”, to which I replied, “I wish you could come back, I long to talk to you.” And she said in a matter of fact way. “It is too late”. And she closed down again and said nothing even remotely cogent after that. Though she expressed love for me and my wife and child with her eyes and hands, often. I knew she was still there, and one day I even told her she can die if she wants to and I love her and wish her no pain. She died a few weeks after that. The “self” is a fragile thing, and is nested in physical facts.

no reason to hide the facts about it. I studied people like the poet Jack Hirschman, Schuon or the work of Chomsky with close attention to their persons in relation to their work, as much as possible. These are three ideologues and I will talk a lot about them. I will talk about what I learned and not cover up anything.

But this is only marginally a book about me. I only explore my own person insofar as it relates to specific concerns of my thesis. I have been very faithful to the main thesis of these books and followed the inner logic of the ideas central here as best I could. My effort here is to question the private realm of delusions and experience, and compare them with the public realm of tested and evidentiary science. So strictly speaking this is and is not an intellectual autobiography. It is mostly a study of mythic fictions, ideas and religion. It only uses my biography insofar as it relates to religion and ideology, as an example of someone who has studied in order to change himself. So while these books discuss personal matters, at the same time, this is an impersonal study of religion and ideology in the latter part of the 20th and early 21st centuries.

Thus, this is a limited intellectual autobiography in some ways, dealing my struggle with people and ideologies. It tries to tell what I have learned and explores questions I have asked. It is personal in this respect only. Anything worthwhile is to some degree personal. But at the same time I am pursuing this inquiry in quite a detached way, when I can. So both the personal and the impersonal points of view is also explored as well as questioned. If this is confusing, well, read on and you will see what I mean. I mean to imitate actual life and mix the personal and the impersonal closely.

I have always been of a philosophical bent, which means I have been in a battle with myself and the times I live in, trying to understand myself and what the world is about. I used to think philosophy was a search for wisdom, but have found this uneducated idealism is not really

true. Is anyone really wise? Certainly not those who claim wisdom. As I get older I find no one really knows the whole truth about anything. Many pretend to and gain followers. I have no followers. A good deal of world philosophy over the millennia is really about power structures in the places and times such philosophies were developed. I will be discussing this fact in many places, about thinkers as diverse as Aquinas, Plato, Confucius and many others. Rare is someone like Bertrand Russell who said that philosophy is not much good at having answers, but “ has at least the power of asking questions which increase the interest of the world, and show the strangeness and wonder lying just below the surface even in the commonest things of daily life.” This emphasis on daily life is very accurate.

Some people maintain that philosophy is dead. It will never be dead because no one really knows much about the world we live on, turning in space. It is only a little over a hundred years since we learned about galaxies and that we live in one. It would be preposterous to say one knows it all. We have not even understood our planet as yet, even while we are destroying whole parts of it. Certainly academic philosophy is prone to esoteric and arcane sleepiness. But thinking about the world is a good thing, and is best done one’s whole life long. Those who favor business above all else want to eliminate philosophy from universities. But this undermines critical thinking, which is essential to education and more important now than ever. The young need to learn how to think, feel and question. The best philosophies are close to science, thoughtful excursions into the facts of things. This might occur in people who are not philosophers at all, such as Darwin or Thoreau, though both men were really doing biological philosophy.⁶ One must think through things with facts, and keep in mind philosophy is not science.

⁶ A good discussion of the harm done by academic philosophy as compared to philosophy done on the basis of or in conjunction with science is this by Ricard Carrier. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YLvWz9GQ3PQ>

Efforts to improve life on earth for all species is certainly important and philosophy in our time is partly about thinking this through. In our time philosophy is not about dogmas or elaborate intellectual constructions, but about evidence, facts and arguments made in support of these. Some philosophy is quite objectionable and some should be opposed and I will discuss this too. To some extent these books are the story of what I have rejected, though by implication it also tells about what I have embraced, as learning involves both knowing what you love and knowing what is not lovable.

For me, philosophy is partly an anxious, worried and somewhat neurotic response to life being difficult and rather threatening. Capitalism and its close partner communism have the entire world of

⁷ Richard Carrier defines this well

“Philosophy needs to be rigorously demarcated from pseudo-philosophy, and philosophical error needs to be more consistently ferreted out. Just as science is from pseudo-science, and just as science tries to find and fix its mistakes. Not all philosophy is pseudo-philosophy, or in error, but there is no easy way to tell (it's all published in the same journals and academic presses, and presented at the same conferences, and wins the same professorships).

Error is just error: like in science, identifying and eliminating it is a form of progress.

What is pseudo-philosophy?

Philosophy that relies on fallacious arguments to a conclusion, and/or relies on factually false or undemonstrated premises. And isn't corrected when discovered.

All supernaturalist religion is pseudo-philosophy. Religious philosophy is to philosophy what "creation science" is to science.”

<http://www.richardcarrier.info/philosophy.html>

nature under attack.⁸ One seeks answers because life is so problematical and equilibrium so hard to find and nature is full of beauty, surprise and creative freshness but also violent and terrible.

Philosophy is partly born of these conflicts, and partly of joy at existing. I have struggled daily with the world I live in and thought about everything I have encountered, though not without error on occasion. My philosophy has grown organically out of the process of making mistakes and recovering from that. I find things that I thought even a year or two ago need going over and correcting. I try to learn from my mistakes, and these books are partly an effort to show this learning. For a time I accepted the greats of philosophy as authoritative, but I outgrew that. The so called Great Books should indeed be questioned, and if necessary, denied, even if they are 'great literature'

Evidence matters more than authority.⁹ I certainly do not believe there is some extra-earthly "Platonic" or Taoist or Wittgensteinian wisdom that only amazing and elect philosophers can tap into, beyond time and space. I have found that those who claim this, are pretenders and in many cases con-men and women. But I have lived reflectively, as well as seeking refuge in the concrete and nature in opposition to this

⁸ Communism has become a subset of capitalism. The United States now socializes or 'bails out' destructive corporations at the same time as communist nations (China, Vietnam) are made into workhorses to create wealth for the same corporations, with state enforced bad labor laws and lack of environmental regulation. This is hugely destructive both to the local workers and to the environment, helping cause global warming.

⁹ I have often thought of late how absurd the hierarchies are that I see around me. CEO's are worshipped in this society and way over compensated, when, actually they do little and act as a drain on decent people who actually do the work for companies. Workers who do the bulk of work are way underpaid. This is obvious in nursing homes, hospitals and factories. But it is also true in banks, insurance companies and wall street speculators among many others who profit from the corporate system. Universities have been taken over by corporate marketers and overpaid administrators and they should be gotten rid of. Teachers should organize and get rid of all administrators who bloat costs and gouge students and their families and over pay themselves. Teachers can run universities for little. Universities should not exist to profit administrators but to teach students in the best and freest way. Other ways should be found to run companies that are fairer to workers, mandatory profit sharing, as well as restrict and regulate profiteers. I am not sure rule by committee is all that good as an alternative, but it is worth thinking about.

very reflectivity. So while I might philosophize, I am not a philosopher, and sometimes I will even oppose philosophy, if actualities and evidence dictates a different conclusion. The freedom of thought this gives me is enormous and worth protecting. I began with my own existence, as well as the existence of things and beings around me, and unlike Descartes I see no reason to doubt this.

The intellect¹⁰ is in some ways a defensive faculty. Some people have made illusory mountains out of metaphysics that are not even there. Philosophy easily becomes a crutch, an escape or a bulwark against life. There is more to life than thinking, though reason plays an important role in living too and may be one of the rare aspects of the human mind that is born of evolution. But way too much is claimed for evolution.

Thinking things through has many positive benefits. Since my father died when I was young, I sought out many teachers. I have learned from many good ones. But I found myself rejecting some of these teachers, at a certain point, when I realized they too do not understand life as well as I imagined, have clay feet, or are just plain wrong on the very things. I once thought they were so right about. There are no saints or elect men, and those who claim that are charlatans. Everyone makes mistakes. Teachers can only teach so much and at a certain point one either leaves them gracefully, and remain friends, or, if they are of a very narrow and fanatical bent, one leaves them with disappointment or acrimony. A student should surpass a teacher at a certain point, but occasionally one will have a teacher who is utterly mistaken, immoral or one has to reject utterly. Such teachers harm their profession. I have only had a few of

¹⁰ I mean the ordinary reasoning mind, here, of the sort that carpenters use to solve building problems or cooks use to plan a good meal. I do not mean the medieval, Aquinian and Platonic construct of the “Intellect”, which is a fiction and harmful fabrication, as I will explain in the course of this book. Generally, I will use the capitalized “Intellect” to specify this medieval fabrication used often by the Traditionalists. The lower case ‘intellect’ merely refers to the reasoning mind--

those. I have often had to be my own teacher and I have been wrong lots of times too, learning from my own mistakes.

These three books are probably wrong in various ways too. I apologize for this at the beginning, though I do not know yet how it is wrong, or why. My teachers used to tell me to never begin with an apology. But these three books are in some ways an accounting of mistakes I have made, so I do begin by apologizing. These are books about being mistaken, and accepting the consequences of that and seeking to think through and amend my mistakes. Of course, these books may be more right than even I know, in other respects. But such is the world, full of promise and hopes dashed, truths held out and then proved to be mistaken, or vice versa.

Mistakes can lead to real discoveries, and new points of view never seen before. Science is nothing if not an endless process of self-correction, and this self-correction is necessary in the personal domain as well. The scientific attitude should even infuse the personal domain. In the end, it is the process that matters. We make small improvements over the last generation of failed, but well-meant attempts. The world does not get better all at once; but what is valuable in reading history is that you can see some things are markedly better than they were a hundred years ago. You will find in this book that I have taken Darwin seriously, and reaffirmed parts of his thought that have been neglected for an over a century and a half. I do not pretend he is perfect. I have raised animals and nature to equal status with humans. This has many implications, as you will see. I see great value in Darwin's ideas, but I do not see the theory of evolution as a panacea, merely a great aid in thinking about the planet and all that lives on it. It accords with evidence, that is all. Reading Darwin's evidence is itself a joy, even when he is mistaken, as he was regarding the causes of the raising of the

South American land mass, or, when he is right, as in the sad plight of the Tortises of the Galpagos Islands. ¹¹There is so much we do not know about so many things. If there is one thing that needs to be questioned everywhere on earth it is the arrogance of human supremacy.

Being of an inquiring and open mind, I was willing to try nearly anything in my youth. I had the notion in my teens that knowledge was like a tree and I would follow out all the branches I could, come what may. This is a fruitful procedure, if somewhat dangerous. There were lots of blind alleys and groping in the dark. I made mistakes, and suffered from it, and made discoveries too and wrote about, drew or painted both the mistakes and the days of discovery. There are those who will blame me whatever I do, and to them, I only ask to see evidence, but they rarely have any.

I was aware of the wonder and mystery of things, and already loved science from an early age, nature and biology in particular. I wanted badly to know what the world was about. So, I studied everything I could, even things beyond me at the time, like the philosophy of math, logic, physics or the life of Da Vinci. I knew Marx, Freud and Darwin had questioned religion for good reasons. My father had been Catholic and my mother was more skeptical of religion, and the stronger part of me¹²

¹¹ Darwin writes about the plight of these animals and noticed their abuse by both sailors and islanders. 3 or 4 of the 14 species are extinct due to this abuse as well as the presence on the island of rats, cats and pigs, animals brought there by humans..

¹² My grandmother on my father's side, Gertrude, was very Catholic and often went to Mass every day. Her husband worked for American Can Co. and got pretty high in that company. But he was bitter, as he felt he should have gotten higher yet. He was a not a very nice man and was unfaithful to her. Her religion was an escape from reality for her and gave her a sense of illusory permanence. She hated the world she lived in and the changes wrought by the 1960's. The conservative politics of her class more or less dictated her views and so she favored a Latin Mass and its pretense of eternity and permanence. Her son had died in the war in 1944 and was shot down in a B-24 by the Germans. She never got over that. I remember driving into New York City with her one day and she was so upset by the appearances of change in the city that she demanded going to a church in Manhattan, and I went with her. Her rosary was a way of staving off her anxieties. Religion for her was both a political and psychological tool that gave her security but also cloaked the reality of her life from her, so she lived in a dream world. This made her anxieties worse. She once told me she and her husband went of the Queen Mary 23 times, but

came from my mother. I was curious about the other side, however, being curious by nature. So I explored religion: to my sorrow. But it is better to know than not to know. I needed to know what it was.

When I consider why young women in London join an Islamic cult or why people join other fanatical groups, it is partly because something in our society fails them. Religion supplies an alternative and this alternative might seem like a good thing to one who is young and uninformed. It might even be a way to get free of parents and rebel, as happened to three London girls recently who left their families and joined the Islamic militia cult called Isis. A very foolish thing to do, but no different than those who join any cult. Corporate capitalism is indeed an authoritarian system that lauds the greedy and rewards those who abuse the planet and their workers. It wants people to join capitalism as much as any religion. It is a grotesque fact that our society rewards the greedy corporate psychopath who hates others and punishes the good man who helps others. A hero like Ralph Nadar is smeared and slandered while a neo-fascist psychopath like Donald Trump is loved and lionized. It is not surprising many do not like it. I reject it too and longed for a better, more equitable system that does not exploit and marginalize the natural world. But few, as yet, grasp the religious roots of corporate injustice that I will outline in these books. So tracing the roots of these systems, corporate and religious, will be one of the primary purposes of these books.

The roots of religion in America was partly about seeking alternatives, even creating one's own way of seeing and living, and partly about wealth generation, often at others expense. Religion is granted a sort of inquiry-exempt status in America, because to the idea of 'freedom from' and 'freedom of' religion enshrined in the first amendment of the

whether that is true or not, the world she knew was gone. The last time I saw her was at my sister's wedding, which was not traditional, and Grandma was in a tizzy over it, suffering deep and relentless anxiety. "Who are these people, what are they doing, I don't belong here" she kept saying.

US Constitution, as I was saying earlier. In many quarters, this cannot be questioned. This is a rather outmoded nod to a the religious age of the 1700's, when freedom from the Inquisition and Catholic suppression was dearly sought, and rightly so.

The argument between originalists (Scalia) and constructionists is really an argument about unjust power. The originalist position is absurd and retrograde and helps corporations stay in unjust power, as corporations are anti-democratic, neo-aristocratic entities which should be denied status, their rights removed by charter. Originalism is just Platonism in disguise, a belief in the immutable constitution, fixed in the 1780's like the Mosaic Tablets of The Law. Jefferson's view that government is fair and must change periodically is the right one. The long term changes of laws reflects the will and experience of generations. I have not seen a good history of law, but my own reading of legal history shows that law has largely served the wealthy classes and only in the last 200 years has this been seriously brought into question.¹³ English law largely served the estate owners, Enclosure, kings and merchants, and it was not till the abolition of the slave trade that human rights became an important consideration. In England the king and his 'lords' owned most animals and rights to hunt. America advocated for greater largesse in the right to kill animals and own guns. The U.S. Constitution enshrines many absurdities, but over time these have been brought into question in different ways. Originally the "right to bear arms" was merely the right of militias to fight the English during the Revolutionary war. The right to

¹³ I have looked for but have not been able to find a good history of the law that looks at it as a social history from the point of view of civil justice. Hammurabi's code supports slavery, as does other legal systems up till 1807 when Wilberforce helped stop it in Britain (abolition did not go fully into effect until 1833). Labor history is not well examined. Too much history is the history of elite men and the military. The study of the treatment of women in the law is very interesting with many backwards laws still on the books today in many countries. Greek and Roman Law were very misogynist. Islamic law started out better than other notions of the time but has since degenerated in many places, like Saudi Arabia, where women's behavior is still closely monitored by men.

bear arms does not mean the right for everyone to own guns, it only applies to militias owning guns. But it has been changed to the right of corporate gun sellers to sell automatic guns to whoever wants to buy one, resulting in large profits for gun sellers but paid for with constant and horrible killings, more than any other nation. ¹⁴ The government is unwilling to consider the absurdity of their own legislation.

President's keep starting wars (War Powers Act) without permission of congress, yet this gets justified and the constitution corrupted: Vietnam, Korea, Iraq and other wars were never declared and were illegal and criminal, created by a corrupt executive branch and presidents. The effort of the legislature to destroy unions is another obvious anti-democratic move and that should be stopped too. The history of efforts to stop exploitation goes back before the Plagues in the 1300's. We need a major change of our patrician government which has been corrupted by corporations. The Executive branch is corrupted by power. The Presidency is just short of the Kings of old and could be removed. The leader should be easily deposed,. We might even try a government that has no leader at all, as Jefferson perhaps though in lucid moments. Those who hold office should be also restricted to short terms and not allowed to work for lobbies in or out of office.

So the law is easily corrupted and laws meant for one thing have turned into something else entirely. Laws are heavily human centered. Religious delusions are given rights while nature and animals have none and can be killed at will. Our highways are covered with their corpses. No one cares. This makes no sense at all. Protecting delusions while destroying mountains, climate, species and oceans makes no sense. In this respect the first amendment seems merely a perverse anticipation of

¹⁴ Is the NRA a terrorist organization? Yes. It promotes the use of automatic weapons and these have been sued to kill people in mass, as in the Killings in Orlando, Florida and Reno Nevada, In June 2016. And 2107

‘separate but equal’ doctrine,¹⁵ as it sanctifies delusions, and makes them free to thrive, while denying rights to beings in places that really matter. The separate but equal doctrine kept racism alive and made African Americans unable to prosper. The free speech doctrine now is used to insure only corporations have speech and all else can wallow in the delusion of their “choice”. Congress, now in thrall to corporate corruption, no longer ensures the freedom and equality of all, but acts on behalf of the few, giving the ultra rich majority power, when in fact they are an extreme minority.. The first amendment, as well as the 14th, set up to protect former slaves, have been perverted to protect corporate personhood and corporate greed. This is not an accident. Money is defined falsely as “speech”. State support of delusional thinking becomes a kind of symbol of a false freedom to be deluded, which is not freedom at all. Scholastic hair spitting, misusing language and perverting justice has become the main legal strategy of corporate law.¹⁶

¹⁵ The separation of religion and the state was a progressive thing when it begins in earnest in Holland in the 1600’s. Before that religion and politics are really one thing. My contention in this book is that they were formed as part of the same impulse or causation, born of an abuse of evolutionary tendencies which allows an abuse of children’s gullibility and the need of social organization. Dawkins idea that children and many others he does not say this but I include slaves, cult victims the poor, widows, followers, workers etc) are duped is correct. The separation of Church and state is a cultural change. It occurred in reaction to the excesses and war mongering of Spanish Catholics against the Low countries. The separation of religion and the state is partly an effort to get free of the war mongering of religious states and partly a fact of nascent capitalism. There is no problem with keeping religion separate from the state. Religious states are invariably toxic. The problem in the U.S. arises when religion is allowed to freely prosper in any environment outside the state and this lets a thousand cults thrive as capitalist institutions akin to and often in alliance with corporations, Scientology being one of the worst of these. But there are thousands of churches, cults, corporate entities and religions.

The ‘separate but equal’ racial doctrine of Jim Crow had also to do with capitalism but in this case was about preventing African Americans from getting economic footing and thus keeping them in a quasi-slavery. Keeping religion separate from the state also had a discriminating intention, but in this case it was to prevent the abuses that occurred when the Catholic church had power over princes. Now it is little more than permission to support corporate rule and lies in advertising and for cults and delusions to proliferate wildly.

¹⁶ A critical history of the law would show I think that law over the centuries has had absurd shifts and twists that reflect upper class and corporate abuse of justice. Corporate CEO’s and the police are rarely indicted, but the poor suffer the burden of police and courts, for instance. The

The first amendment had its day when Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson advocated for freedom against the cult leader and protestant authoritarian John Winthrop. But now that even corporations are basically cults, and CEOs are cult leaders, delusions are promoted everywhere as advertising and money is declared to be political speech, so only the rich have a say.--- So, it is logical to ask if religious freedom a good thing anymore? After all, cult leaders are little more than arbitrary dictators, and that is what CEOs are too. Corporations have become the money and tax haven churches of our world, the de facto real ‘individuals of the United States, holding superior rights of all kinds. Congress does little or nothing to limit the “free exercise” of the corporations and their rule of Congress and the state. We live under a corporate state and not a democracy. Corporations are a belief system corruptly enshrined by law and thus they break the other part of the first amendment which says congress shall not make laws establishing religion. So the Corporate State forms an alliance with far right religion, and the the freedom of religious lying and corrupt corporations shall not be infringed. A delusional state controls us, or tries to. The current government in the US is a farcical corruption of the constitution, rewritten to serve corporate and religious motives.

The original impetus of the French, English and American revolutions was to be free of kings arbitrary dictators.¹⁷ We are not free yet. Bosses

Law, under “Jim Crow” insured a semi-slave state in the American south from 1865 to the Civil Rights act on 1965. But these injustices, I am sure, could be traced back to England and Rome. The hugely inflated compensation packages of CEO’s is the result of corrupt corporate law. A critical history fo the law shoud go back this far, as well as trace the injustices of the present.

¹⁷ Immanuel Wallerstein discusses this in his books. See also Ferenc Feher, On the French Revolution. He writes that “the French Revolution did not change France very much. It did change the world-system very much. The world-scale institutional legacy of the French Revolution was ambiguous in its effects. The post-1968 questioning of this legacy requires a new reading of the meaning of the popular thrusts that crystallized as the French revolutionary turmoil.” He also notes that “we still remain within the world of 1789, and with the problems posed during that celebrated year by an Assembly that had been convoked for other purposes, but which still speaks to us today as if it were only yesterday. But he merely discusses the humanist revolutions and has nothing to say about nature and animals, as if they did not matter. Global

continue their arbitrary rule of what will enrich them, no matter who they fire or hurt. The corporate workplace is still a medieval or Inquisitorial institution. The first amendment is good in that it removes religion from central authority, yet it is not good it makes it sacrosanct and untouchable in the private realm of delusions. Anything is preachable.¹⁸ Because of this bizarre political construction, America is the world's leader of the most diverse panoply of bizarre beliefs, irrational cults and arbitrary spirituality, advertisements and public relations lies and fabrications, corporate "persons" and arbitrary dictatorships, CEOs and cult leaders. While this is preferable to theocracy, it still allows irrationality a great deal of power. Indeed, the arbitrary dictatorship of the CEO is a sacrosanct illusion. This needs to be questioned in law. Business exploits nature without consequences to itself, nature suffers, and organizing against the powerful is nearly impossible. Unions are actively lied about and destroyed. Illusions are allowed to reign, but only big business prospers and the middle class pays most taxes. The earth is being destroyed, animals, birds and insects are going extinct, and the "conservation" movement is clearly a failure. Nature too is taxed and no

warming and the high rate of extinctions changes the emphasis on humanity to all of life. They do matter, now more than ever.

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¹⁸ In Waco Texas a dangerous cult that stockpiled weapons was attacked by the U.S. government with the predictable result that the cult leader had the whole place burned in an act of defiant suicide. Over 80 people were killed, 28 children. I thought this was horrendous at the time and do not support government persecution of groups of this kind. But nor did I support the Koresh cult, which was horrible, and brought this disaster on itself. Right wingers who try to make Waco into a victimized cult are also wrong. Two power systems collided with fatal results. Other things could have been done, but weren't. A lot is known about cult leaders and other things could have been done rather than a military style action. A similar event happened in Jonestown where 900 people were killed by the cult leader. Cults and corporate structures have a great deal in common and both tend toward unethical self-deification.

one counts the damages or the corpses. These abuses follow from abuses to the Bill of Rights, as well as the insufficiency of it.

America started in one narrative, with the Puritans. They were a toxic cult who liked to punish those who were not religious enough with torture, stocks, or banishment. Nathaniel Hawthorne showed this in his book, The Scarlet Letter and Arthur Miller in his great play the Crucible. But even they only scratched the surface of the harm done. Cults have been supported ever since Salem created the nightmare of the state murdering so called “witches”. State supported delusions go back to the beginning of U.S. history. One would not want all beliefs other than official ones to be punished, as they tend to be in Saudi Arabia, Israel or Iran. Fundamentalist Christians hate Moselms, Mormans, Buddhists, Hindus, gay people and anyone that does not fit their narrow minded religious fictions. Obviously freedom of thought is important. But freedom of thought is not the same as freedom of religion. The state should not be involved in sanctioning delusions.

Freedom of religion in America has become freedom of corporations to exploit the whole world, take from the poor and give to the rich, hurt workers and endanger species and the planet itself. While the pose of freedom of beliefs makes for a seeming diversity, actually the economic sphere is still controlled by unjust business elites who restrict real diversity in economic arrangements, suppress unions and move jobs overseas to avoid dealing with real demands from real people suffering economic hardships here. Trade laws are written to service corporate elites and exploit local populations. This should stop. A diversity of delusion is allowed in excess in America while real fairness is avoided.

The easiest way to deal with all the problems created by the 1st Amendment, is to change the amendment. All it needs to say is that ‘Congress shall make no law establishing belief systems’. This would include establishing corporations as persons, since they are clearly not

persons. Corporate personhood should be abolished in politics and law. We would be well rid of the phrase, that congress shall not “prohibit the free exercise” of religion. This socially sanctions delusion. We do not need an amendment that allows people to be deluded, this will happen in any case. Socially sanctioning delusions is a mistake. This is unnecessary and merely gives religion an excuse not to pay taxes. It also allows dangerous cults and businesses to thrive, when they need to follow the same laws everyone else does.

It might be useful to digress briefly on the subject of religious tax exemption:

The “free exercise” of religion cause in the Constitution does not mean that religions should be tax exempt. The free exercise clause had to do with preventing bigotry among dissenting Christian enclaves. (as Washington said) It was never about supporting religion itself financially by giving them money through tax exemptions. Of course, if one believes there is no god, supporting tax exemption of any kind for religious sects is hypocritical, since it means supporting delusions. The best and clearest example of an anti tax exempt point of view is the government of France which states that:

France

Article 2 of the 1905 law states that the: “Republic does not recognize, does not pay, and does not subsidize any worship”.

And then there is the Netherlands, who did what the US should do:

“The traditional obligations of the State relating to the salaries and the pensions of religious ministers was abolished in 1983, when the Parliament voted a law to end the financial relations between

the State and the Church. No form of government funding is permitted to religious communities. However, they can benefit from indirect funding such as: public donations which are tax deductible; religious structures are maintained by the State, the provinces and the communities; many social activities organized by the religious communities, are financed by the State or local communities.”

This also is a rather enlightened view

Italy and Spain support the Catholic church with tax money, and the UK like the US does also through Tax exemption. This is hypocritical. But how this support of religion grew up is itself a history of corruption, not of enlightenment. “Non-profit, non-political charitable groups which advance religion for the public benefit qualify for privileges afforded by governments in the UK, including tax-exempt status.” This is true of the US. Too. It is a violation of the US Constitution which does say that congress “shall make no law ..concerning the establishment of religion”. Giving Tax exemptions helps establish religion.

The US should thus be more like France, where the “ Republic does not recognize, does not pay, and does not subsidize any worship” The fact that on May 3 2017 the NYT stated that “Trump Is Expected to Relax Tax Rules on Churches Endorsing Political Candidates” shows how arbitrary and political all this really is. Trump is doing this because religion tends to support far right candidates. For an atheist group to accept money this way is to accept a corrupting influence and to be unable to participate as a group in our democracy by direct action, endorsement of candidates as so on. Tax exemption is clearly a way for the government to support religion indirectly, and to do so dangerously. The government gives money to Scientology, Jehovah’s Witnesses, or other dangerous cults, or far that matter, far right churches, Baptists, fundamentalists,

as well as giving corporations more rights than they already have. The idea of the “corporate person” is a religious mythology, and their declining tax rate of corporations is tax rates is part of the prejudicial and unfair systems of benefits that accrue to religious organizations, corporations and CEO’s.

Not only should religions be taxed but corporations should be taxed even for off shore hidden accounts and global trade. Only the rich have freedom in America, by design. Liberty has been stolen by them. The rich should be heavily taxed, “soaked” even. A billionaire should be taxed to 90% of his income, for instance. A billionaire taxed to that degree will still have 100 million dollars and that is already too much for anyone. In America, one is free to be as deluded as possible while the wealthy get rich and the poor and middle classes are kept poor paying high taxes. The poor are encouraged to explore all sorts of compensatory nonsense. The rich pay little tax and none if they can get away with it. The solution is to rewrite laws, stop “trickle down” economics which is is merely rape of the middle and lower classes, , get rid of the second clause of the first amendment, abolish the CEO and his prividges and bonuses, and dissolve the fiction of corporate personhood, which would give everyone equal status.

Being honest about this is bound to bring charges of arrogance or atheistical conceit. The rich hate being brought to heel and will complain in just this way. The far right is largely an organization of liars who attack anyone who points out their corruption. If one opposes the accepted delusions that prevail in American life, they will seek your destruction. But as Mark Twain showed, a certain cynical disdain for the common ignorance is not out of place in America. Promoting delusions and ignorance is essential to American business, sales and politics and opposing this is hardly a new tendency. Corporate personhood and institutional delusions are everywhere promoted as electoral fact and rampant advertising. Business wants ignorant consumers, not literate

citizens and thinkers who can use critical thinking skills. Education is therefore a threat to big business. "Positive thinking" is promoted as part of corporate propaganda. One cannot question them. Corporations make a religion of no religion and then set themselves up as gods of it.¹⁹ Twain said rightly "'There are many humorous things in the world; among them, the white man's notion that he is less savage than the other savages."

There is no reason to give specific 'protection' to religion in the Constitution. The Constitution does not protect unions, eating, sex, money or marriage. Unions, sex and eating are far more important than religion. Why protect delusional thinking? This ends in encouraging cults and corporations organizations which limit the freedom of others. I have met many people each of whom think that their little experience of superstitious mystery or religion is the true one, even though they are all totally contradictory and specious. Subjective freedom, which is largely a delusion, is reached for and fought for, while real freedoms go by the wayside. People have had all kinds of "experiences" in William James' term, that convinced them of ghosts or that gods really talked to them or appeared in their hallway or their dreams. Or they thought their astrological chart did not lie or Jesus was really listening to them, or Jesus and Satan both lived equally in them or the Dalai Lama knows about the mystery of consciousness which is closely connected to

¹⁹ What could be done is corporations should be sued for violations of the First Amendment. Corporations are effectively "gods" who are theoretically immortal, since they do not die and do not get sick. As 'gods', corporations claim that they have special rights, as in the legal case called "Citizen's United" which gives them the false idea that "money is speech". This is false and shows that corporations have violated the separation of church and state by erecting their own godlike speech above those of ordinary people, subverting our democracy. Corporations have huge amounts of money and in a society where the fiction of god like 'corporate persons' rule, only they can talk effectively. If money is speech only the rich can vote and that destroys democracy. This violates the separation of church and state, since the state supports their right to "free speech" The state itself has violated the first amendment by allowing this monstrosity to exist. So there are really two violations here and both cases should be brought at the same time.

quantum mechanics or brain science. No one questions that the myth of Satan is as much a myth as Christ and that both were inventions of long ago. Harry Potter and Elvis are alive and well and Jesus sits beside a couple in cowboy hats riding in their Chevy pick-up, with a gun set up across the back window.

The list of delusions promoted in America is nearly endless: past life regression, the myth of money, the presidency,, exceptionalism, Iridology, Tarot, I Ching, wall street laws governing the need to profit at expense of the earth, Reiki, Rolfing, Magnet Therapy, free market capitalism, chopped off Rabbit's feet at Bingo games; presidents as alpha males, the flat tax, Sacred Geometry; pyramids and their secret powers, corporate persons, Nostradamus; telepathics and their trick spoons; crop circles; aliens at area 54 are real; Chinese medicine; Chiropracty and homeopathy, to name a few debunked frauds. Holism is a new religion, just as esoterism is supposed to be a real thing, and not just another fiction, which is what it really is. All this nonsense distracts from the fact the "Free Market" is itself a delusion, and corporations have taken our jobs and moved them overseas, the rich have tax breaks and the middle class has none and unions are actively prevented by government fiat since the Taft Hartley Act of 1947. Religion flowers in the politics of social irresponsibility, they government takes care of the rich and hurts the middle class and the poor. Escape is one way out of this mess, many think, even though it gets them deeper in the muck of delusions. In America, one is required to be "positive" which means to not be critical or to think, but to approve the status quo and accept all the nonsense dished out in the interests of big business, which is ubiquitous.

Thus, an arrogant and often misguided Subjectivism reigns in private life in America. They want you to dream big dreams ignore that you are giving all your labor to the rich who exploit you. The world itself has become a global field of exploitation for the ultra-rich. Profits matter more than the entire planet. American workers are pitted against the

Chinese and people from India and Bangladesh are pitted against Mexicans in a rush to pay the workers the lowest rate and enrich the rich beyond measure. People die, oceans and air are polluted and all so a few absurdly rich people can get richer. It is not good for them or us, they even know it, hiding their mansions behind gated communities. The cult of the CEO thrives largely unchecked.²⁰ William James' idea of solipsistic religious experience is made paramount. Outside scientific inquiry ²¹random subjectivism, unfortunately equated with 'freedom', rules in cultural, literary and artistic circles.²² Carefully cultivated

²⁰ The CEO replaces kings as arbitrary dictators. They are the single most destructive element in the world now. It is not just the CEO of course, but the Boards that support them and the shareholders that profit from what they do and to whom they are legally obliged. This constitutes a kind of legal cult and one that has very destructive consequences. Profits matter more to them than the entire planet, animals and the poor, who are treated as an externality and on which they displace the harms of their schemes. They serve themselves, harm the environment, cause global warming, destroy nature, drive species to extinction, corrupt governments, create pollution, harm workers, and amass huge fortunes which perpetuate all the other harms they do. They play one group of poor people against another, turn nation against nation and worker against worker, exploiting whoever they can to make more money. They turn people into slaves, and deny healthcare, hurt the old, young and the sick. They have stolen the first amendment and made money seem like speech, when money is not speech. They need to be regulated out of existence, their off shore trillions seized or taxed and used for better purposes. Global warming needs to be stopped, extinctions of species stopped, corruption of governments stopped. Labor laws that support local control are needed. Global warming could be stopped if the CEO were downsized. As Naomi Klein has shown these monsters even make money out of disasters, they lie and cheat and take what is not theirs to take.. See her book Shock Doctrine

²¹ This is reflected in the rise of science and the increasing tendency of mis-called "secular" themes in Netherlandish art, as in Vermeer and De Hooch. The latter is in some ways the father of the former and did some marvelous depictions of domesticity and women's lives. Indeed as much as I admire Vermeer, I admire De Hooch more. The first three works in Vermeer's work are probably not Vermeer's at all, but may be art dealer scams. Vermeer is too eternal, whereas De Hooch is more domestic and real. But there are many interesting artists who reflect the rise of science, Gerard ter Borch, Da Vinci and Rembrandt among them.

²² Since subjectivism is erased of any real socially meaningful content, one can see this reflected in corporate art. Corporate art is largely meaningless as you can see if you look through the major art magazines, Art Forum, Art in America etc.. It is severely restricted and dogmatic to art made only about art itself or its materials and processes and is based on some artist's random and, unusually unreadable subjectivity. The result is corporate abstractions which have no content, yet are used by corporations as symbols of rich investment and their individualistic freedom. An aesthetic of abstract meaningfulness becomes institutionalized. This is the heritage of Warhol, Reinhardt and Duchamp and is religious in the sense that it justifies the fiction of the corporate "individual". The corporate individual is basically a 'god' a fiction that does not exist and who

delusions about the ‘freedom’ of the rich is stressed over the stability of the middle class and the health of the poor.²³ The delusions accompany the cultish reign of the CEO and many species and the planet itself are endangered by the greed and exploitation. CEOs are the new Jesus: both are myths based on the magnification of symbols. Art is also made to serve useless delusions. I will speak more of this arbitrary and illusory freedom and of William James shortly.

Why are so many attracted into this realm of make believe in an age where science prospers? Why has the far right prospered in a time when the injustice of class systems is well known? John Dewey told me at a young age that religion is all about insecurity and the need to feel secure. Indeed, Dewey’s analysis of things informed my whole enterprise of researching religion and thought from an early age. Sometimes consciously and other times unconsciously, I was pursuing inquiry as a scientific tool in order to understand the world I live in from as many perspectives as possible, primarily to see what was true and not true. What were the consequences of a given system of belief?. What did it actually mean?,: how was it used? Dewey taught me to think things through. Such thinking is not infallible. Indeed, over twenty years I have thought through aspects of arguments in these books and changed them and then changed them again when new facts came to my attention. I have taken on points of view, changed them and then again, all in an effort to be as clear and factual as possible. Am I still sometimes wrong? Certainly. But sometimes I am not, and hopefully, the preponderance of

does not die. It is a modern religious construct which is also a political and legal fiction.

²³ These terms freedom and stability were used by an economist whose name I forget, in regard to comparing the US system devoted to freedom compared to the European system devoted to stability. This is basically the neo fascism of Ayn Rand who admires the state that “utterly represses **Equality** ... to the revitalization of individualism and **liberty**” This is a return to a virtual slave state, rather like what Plato wanted. The historian Charles Beard thought that this preference for prosperity of one class very extreme and opposed it, and I have to agree with him, seeing what harm it has done to so many people.

my arguments is largely correct.

Adults need make believe religions and superstitions²⁴ because they are “insecure”. In America where corporations rule by legal fiat, and lie in advertisements to keep their wealth, it makes total sense that delusions would be encouraged and irrationalism rules. To be deluded insures the status quo. Delusion is the child of despair and suffering, as well and the result of persuasion and propaganda advanced by interested parties. The rich need religion and delusions to keep the poor in line, keep wages down, and to allow as little “freedom” to the poor. Inequality thus favors the rich and harms the poor though increased need of delusions to shield themselves against the suffering the rich cause to their lives. The rich need lies to dampen the will of the poor to rebel. This is not a Marxist view but merely an observation of facts in America: TV, religion, competitive games, computers, texting, standardized education, are just some of the means that keep the population ignorant and willing to toss away critical thinking which is necessary to democracy. .

“Free Market” ideology is itself a religious delusion. Parents teach children to rely on delusions like Santa Claus or the tooth Fairy, “fate”, Jesus, Muhammad or astrology. People have difficulty facing their own lives and they were taught this dependence on fictional delusions by

²⁴ The origins of the word ‘superstition’ are interesting, It was originally used to describe excessive religious belief, or religious beliefs not one’s own, The Roman described the Druids as superstitious or the Christians said the Romans were superstitious. This culture centered view of it survives rather absurdly in the Catholic Church. But in the Enlightenment all religious belief came to be seen as superstition, which is correct. B.F Skinner did some interesting experiments that showed that animals are capable also of unreasonable rituals...., His experiment is described thusly”

“One pigeon was making turns in its cage, another would swing its head in a pendulum motion, while others also displayed a variety of other behaviours. Because these behaviours were all done ritualistically in an attempt to receive food from a dispenser, even though the dispenser had already been programmed to release food at set time intervals regardless of the pigeons' actions, Skinner believed that the pigeons were trying to influence their feeding schedule by performing these actions.

their parents. This is not just in America. In England for instance, a Pakistani boy is likely to gravitate toward Islam as a matter of identity and there be exploited by Muslim fanatics and maybe even kill someone, as happened recently in London. Another man, in America blew up some Marathon runners, to push an Islamic grievance to its maximum. The Arabian desert is an extension of the Sahara, the worst desert in the world and it brought forth this patriarchal religion of brotherhood, authoritarian hate and hardship, self-sacrifice and misogyny. Religion and politics are flip sides of the same coin and to understand one is to look into the heart of the other. Unjust political and economic arrangements help foster religious ideology and fictions.

Dewey was the truest thing I read at 16. I struggled very hard to read his Experience and Nature, even though it was well over my head. It was a discipline that helped me learn to think. Early in my teens I rejected religion. Steven Pinker echoes Dewey when he writes that the “ubiquitous belief in spirits, souls, gods, angels, and so on, consists of our intuitive psychology running amok”. This appears to be quite true. Rather like Skinner’s ritualistic pigeons, who tried to influence a machine to give more food by elaborate bows, humans posit agents, and pray to spirits or ghosts where there are none. They imagine causes that did not occur. But I was not prepared to understand only Dewey at 16, even though he was more truthful than others. I wanted to know all sides. I really knew nothing. I started reading William James and Aldous Huxley’s books, two very opposite authors in many ways.²⁵ I started

²⁵ William James’s Varieties of Religious Experience and Aldous Huxley’s the Perennial Philosophy. This book you are now reading, in part, is a refutation of the theses of these two books and similar ideologies.

James promotes the ‘experience’ of religion as if it were a real fact, rather than the subjective fiction it really is, and Huxley tries to explain all religion as having the same transcendental message, similar to Advaita Vedanta, Plotinus, Plato, Shankara, Eckhart, Kabir, Chang Tzu and the other usual suspects of total knowledge via total subjectivity. Huxley is a suburban promoter of subjectivist ecstasy in the form of a globalist mysticism. Huxley posits an Absolute Mind of

reading James very early, also when I was 16.²⁶ My search into the truth or falsehood about religion got more earnest in my late twenties. I spent time in monasteries. I visited and spent days in a Russian orthodox monastery in Ohio, practicing their rituals.²⁷ I milked their cow and watched as they made beeswax candles and got up at 4:30 in the morning to say the Lauds prayers at 5, then other prayer times: Prime, Sext, Nones, Terce, Vespers and Compline, and sometimes Matins. I did this in a Trappist monastery in Iowa too, also staying some days, though I did not get to share the full day of the monks as I had in Ohio.²⁸ I

an impersonal “ground”—and this is the means by which one undergoes mind control. To integrate your own mind with that of the Absolute Mind, you have to negate yourself, of course, the ordinary ego being the ultimate ‘evil’, according to this system. This effort to eliminate the “contingent” is the source of much that is destructive in all the religions. Huxley pushes an impersonal and universal notion of god as far as he can into delusion. This thesis too fails. The fact that all religions claim to give access to a “transcendent” state or being of some kind, hardly means such a being actually exists. Transcendence is really just inflated subjectivity. This can carry meanings about being human as in Beethoven’s music, but when it starts trying to dictate reality as in religion, it ceases to appeal to truth. The contingent world is all that really matters, the “absolute” is a fiction that serves a social agenda.

²⁶ ²⁶ I don’t mean by the phrase “Roll over William James” in the sense of “roll over in his grave” as when John Lennon said “roll over Beethoven”. I don’t believe in after life. Also I rather doubt Beethoven would have been intimidated by the young John Lennon, as much as I admire the older Lennon, post-Beatle. I mean rather that I am literally rolling over James, in the sense that his theory of religion is clearly and easily left behind us, shown up to be not just inadequate but mistaken. It is too subjectivist and justified all sorts of nonsense. As I will show, James theory is the most important of the 19th century and presages the writers on religion, such as Huston Smith, Eliade, the traditionalists and others in the twentieth and twenty-first century who continue the service of the subjectivist program. Showing that James is wrong pretty much undoes the whole of religious studies from the 20th century onward. This not an arrogant pronouncement, as those who are religious or unaware might imagine, but merely a fact. Religious studies in more or less dead as an effective department in our universities, and survives merely as a hypertrophy.

²⁷ I liked the fact that Orthodox priests could marry. In monasteries where I stayed, I could see how the catholic monks were deformed by their celibacy. No amount of praying stopped their desires. Among the Catholics this is clearly a part of the tendency to abuse children. I was myself abused by a priest in Pittsburg when I was 12 or 13 and my mother had been abused by one in the 1930’s when she was quite young. I came by my repugnance for religious people abusing children quite honestly, it goes back several generations. My mother, I think would be proud I wrote his book, as she never wanted much to do with the Catholic Church.

²⁸ I was interested in that because of Thomas Merton and Ernesto Cardenal, two Trappists who had a big influence on the Liberation Theology movement. They opposed American wars of

worked at a convent as a handy man off and on for some years.

I looked into Zen in San Francisco and went to zendos in Berkeley and elsewhere and to the Vedanta retreat center in Olema. I did the Jesus prayer, which I learned from a Russian orthodox teacher in Santa Rosa. I practiced a Sufi form of Islam for two years, doing the five times a day prayers and the incessant prayer.. I visited Native American reservations and practiced various Native American rituals. I practiced Tibetan Buddhism for a time, as well as various Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox rites. I did not know then that prayer is utterly useless and gives people the false notion that they are doing something when they are not.

I concluded about monasteries that they radically distort and deform the minds of those who stay there for long periods of time. They are systems of indoctrination, not unlike military boot camps. Meals are done with minimal talking, usually a reading from Bibles or Patristic fathers, and times of day are rigorously supervised and dominated. Sexual abstinence causes all sorts of problems. No stray thoughts are encouraged. While this might have made sense in 9th century Ireland, when monastic communities were the only virtual colleges, and one of the few places where knowledge was encouraged, these are very repressive institutions and deform people to serve a doctrine. When monasticism is considered worldwide, there are many corruptions in Tibetan monastic life of a sexual kind, for instance. In India it is the same. Boys and girls often being given to monasteries as children and they are sometimes abused. Drugs are particularly a problem in India's temples and among the sadhus use of Ganga. Monasticism has had a

aggression in Vietnam and Nicaragua. My interest in them in the early 1980's was political more than religious and indeed, now that many years have passed they both seem more political than religious figures. Their religion is almost irrelevant. Or rather, one should say that religion is really politics by another name. One can be religious and still have a decent politics, but it is rare. The religion itself is not the cause of a politics based on fairness.

certain parasitic relationship to societies and it is increasingly hard to justify in our age. In my own case, I was attracted to monasteries for various reasons. One was simple curiosity. But there was also a large element of nostalgia for the Middle Ages and the escape that monastic life provided, partly nurtured by Pre Raphaelite painting probably. The romantic attraction also had roots in Hugo's Notre Dame and Thomas Merton who I admired at one point. Many monks and nuns think that it will help their sexual frustrations, thinking, wrongly that sexual tensions could be relieved by total abstinence. In the case of nuns, escape from the world of men has its attractions as does the sentimental addiction to religious images, baby Jesus or Krishna or the love of an imaginary Christ. These fill the voids of loneliness and lost love, offering an escape from life. I found a similar escape psychology among men on the ships I worked on and evidently people who want to hide from life and disappointment find the occupations that serve this desire.

Thus I have had plenty of direct experience in religion. These books are a sort of over view or catalogue of the delusional individuals, ideas and practices of religions. Sandwiched into this catalogue are searches into evolutionary theory, science and a theory of religion, as well as philosophic reflections and observations, speculations on myth and literature and history and excursions into adjacent and personal concerns. I knew from an early age religion was make believe and false, but I wanted to try it. Maybe something in it was true? Maybe I was wrong to reject it in my teens? Was Jesus real, and did the "holy spirit" talk through people in tongues??, was there really a "wisdom of the east"? What was at the basis of Hinduism's wild and prolix religious imagination? Why did Rumi write so many wild analogies into his poetry?, or rather, was it really interesting or was it a Sufi scam? What is poetry and who does it serve and why? Emerson seemed to think there was an "oversoul", was there? Was Plato really a spiritual genius, as I was told in college class, or a man on a mission to create a fascist state?

What is government and who does it really serve, and what are corporations and who is really destroying our earth? I pursued the questions and religion in depth to try to figure these things out. Most of the answers turned out to be 'no', indeed, few, if any, of the claims of religion and ideologies turn out to be true. Once the falsehood of religion and corporate structures is understood, then begins the process of trying to figure out why human beings need these delusions and what social function they serve.

I did not know what to make of writers like Aldous Huxley who despise the "world of appearances" and imagine a fictional and Platonistic "divine ground", as he called it, which satisfies their rather precious and effete rejection of, or need to escape, the actual world.²⁹ But I wanted to understand it and indeed, set myself to do so when I read this book in Marietta college in 1975, a very young man, trying to figure out a world I did not grasp at all. My father had just died not too long before. I was so full of questions I could hardly sleep at night.

My religion period was not very long. I can date it more or less to a 7 or 8 year period and only 4-6 of those years had intense involvement. 1985-91, more or less. But the stage was set for this over a longer period of time. I was led to it by reading James, Huxley, Jung and even such novels as Thomas Mann's Dr., Faustus or Joseph and his Brothers, Joyce's Finnegan's Wake and Ulysses, the former so much like Jung, as

²⁹ Huxley mentions Coomaraswamy and Guenon in his book, written in 1945, but only very superficially. It is clear that the idea of a 'ur-religion' - or 'super religion' was a common one then as the religions were all beginning to fade into oblivion and resurrecting them as a sort of common "divine ground" might give them a last leg up. But reading Huxley's book now shows me how wrong this idea was, as there is no common ground or "esoterism" and his need to escape into Platonic other worlds now seems, well, escapist and absurd. The world is not "slime", as he an ancient system of thought imply. What is slimy is the offering of fictional metaphysical panaceas, when in fact there is nothing there at all. Huxley's book is Huxley's personal and quotable bible of illusions. Now it seems to me a sort of dictionary of the delusions of the world religions. That was not his intent, but it is the inescapable fact of the matter..

well as others from Rilke to Kafka. I was devoted to both Rilke and Jung in my early 20's.³⁰

The Faust myth had a huge effect on me in my teens. Marlowe's play and Mann's book provoked a long term interest in the Faust Myth and a desire to unwrite it.³¹ Indeed, I think my interest in the Faust myth was partly an effort to get religious mythology out of my life. I was a Faust myself, interested in science but held back by religion. I did not know it then but I was reacting to my studies in the subject. The Faust myth is really a condemnation of youthful curiosity and exploration. The myth put me into a quandary since as a young man I was nothing if not curious. Faust has to suffer forever because he made a few youthful mistakes. Is this to be my fate? I took the myth very personally. So when I came to write about it I found myself deconstructing the whole myth and slowly I wrote myself out of it, as I would eventually do for religion in general. Indeed, my will to write myself out of central and controlling myths was very strong. I was attracted to them and felt them deeply, but at the same time wished to subvert them. I saw them, rightly, I think, as suffocating and constraining mechanisms meant to undermine the very

³⁰ I wish I could reproduce my youthful devotion to these authors who now seem so absurd to me. In 1979, in San Francisco, I carried Rilke's books around with me like little bibles. The Duino Elegies in particular—and Malte and Letters to a young Poet too. Even earlier, Jung led me into many artistic lacunae, and inspired my art of those years (1976-78). Both authors seem rather childish to me now, and indeed, I was 20 to 22 when they had sway over me.. It would be interesting to try to show exactly what it was that dilated and made me ecstatic in these authors. I recall the deepest emotions, especially in Rilke. In the end that is what these authors are: creators of inward illusions, masters of mental mirage. I enjoyed their mirages for a time, drank their verbal elixirs, but in the end it was false in more ways it was true.

³¹ I wrote a little book called Deconstructing Faust, in 1980, which turned into several notebooks and essays, some more cohesive than others. In some ways this effort thinks through the mythic and reduces it to nothing and begins to face what is actual in life, and thus is really an early version of this book. It also explores the bankruptcy of modernist art, which I rejected. One refraining line is "everything is possible and nothing can be done", which sums up what the art world did to art: It made it a replay of its own death over and over again. I overcame this eventually and brought art back into health again, dealing with the reality of my life, far from the art world. I will speak of this in a later chapter.. The logical question is why the modern world needed to destroy art. I will try to answer this in a later chapter on art.

aspects of my person that were best in me. I wanted freedom of inquiry and the Faust story is a myth constructed the late medieval period effort to undermine that. Indeed the whole traditionalist and religious project is already present in the Faust story: sexual repression, control, religion as a politic of power dynamics.

I think the Faust myth is really a reactionary myth of the Dark Ages thrust into the modern world as a sort of guilt trip, an effort to control young people minds and make them behave. Faust was an early effort to damn science. The rise of curiosity at the time of Leonardo and then into the Enlightenment is huge and can be measured in the rise of museums, collections of natural objects and explorations. In Marlowe's version of Faust (1600) he is still trying to thrust us back into the guilt tripping of the medieval mind. In Goethe's version (1800) there is still a strong medieval flavor in the early pages, which is slowly undone by his later enlightenment neoclassicism as Goethe ages. Goethe is a sort of educated New Ager, at odds with himself and caught between the medieval and science.

But in Thomas Mann's book the old medieval obsessions take hold again,--- I think because Mann was early on a very conservative man, in some ways a Nietzschean. His Faust is based on Nietzsche's biography. Faust in Mann is a post-modernist musician as it were, an anti- hero who is very much a conservative revolutionary, a "post-modernist" we would say now, rewriting Schoenberg's modernist music as medieval version of Michelangelo's Last Judgment seen through the reactionary eyes of a Savonarola. . Nietzsche of course, prefigures the traditionalists in some ways too, inventing a super-religion or a sort of "esoterism" which he calls Zarathustra. I was charmed by Nietzsche at one point, his mad poetry in particular--- but outgrew that too. But I will discuss Nietzsche in a later chapter.

My desire to unwrite the Faust myth was really a desire to shake off the gothic and Catholic guilt, anti-science, and loathing for life and sex

which was so central to this myth. I was awash in the myths still circulating in our age, left over from bygone ages. I wanted to find my way through the thicket and the “wasteland”³² of it all: Durer’s Melancholia, Kafka’s Trial and the Mythic Hero. I also wished to get rid of the modernist failure of art and the post-modernist tendency to inauthentic pastiche. Rejecting Faust was really a good thing, part and parcel of rejecting romanticism and modernist spirituality. Goethe’s Faust was the best in many ways. It seemed to say: ‘be curious, takes safe risks, fall in love, make mistakes, get a little dirty, look the stars, and try to do what is in your heart. If you can’t then try something else.’ Damnation is yet another religious delusion, I finally figured out. The Faust myth is a bit of cultural baggage that is well thrown overboard. It was just a blackmailing bit of medieval Catholicism meant to undermine youthful curiosity and the inquiries of science and cast it as a guilty light.

In my teens and twenties I very much saw myself as a Faust, and felt guilty about that, as one is supposed to. That is the whole point of the myth, even in Goethe, though he tries to redeem Faust. . I was a Faust and wanted to be unashamed of it. Faust it turned out was just a human being, no one special, but very special too, like everyone, like me. It was everyone that religion seemed to want to condemn, casting them into fictional hells. Faust was a myth that had to be undone if I were to survive as myself. But in the end I decided the Faust story had to go and I ceased identify myself with it, seeing it as a moral tale advocating a morality I know longer find cogent or meaningful. The “Faustian” tendency of modern science which the traditionalists love to condemn, is

³² The Wasteland of Eliot was an important poem to me, as it seemed to indicate a way out of the modernist angst I felt so much in my youth. It was in fact a far right poem advocating for the way Eliot himself went deeper into a traditionalist aesthetic that contained at its core Eliot’s own very repressive and imprisoning spiritual fascism. It is a rejection of science and a backwards leaning piece of anti-enlightenment repression, closer to De Maistre than Darwin. It took me many years to see this.

what is good about science, the refusal of authority and dogma, the open-minded embrace of nature and curiosity, the search into nature

So there were many influences on me in my youth and I was trying to negotiate a way in the world, and overcome the heavy weight of culture upon me. I was led to it by the Beatles too, especially George Harrison, though John Lennon would teach me to question religion around the same time.³³ The Hippie movement, from Ram Das's "Be Here Now" to Stephen's Farm (I read one of his books about the Farm in the 1970's) had a large influence on many of my generation and taught us to question authority and injustices like the Vietnam war.. There was a good deal of rebellion against my father who was a 'no nonsense', steel engineer and salesman, not unlike Willie Loman, and rather prone to reactionary views about art and life. My mother, who was better educated, who got a Wellesley scholarship and was summa cum laude, understood more than my father did about what was at stake. She also was against the Vietnam war and was a progressive democrat, unlike my father, who saw too late that Martin Luther King was right, the problem is capitalism.

So my inquiry into art and literature, which followed more my mother's interests, was inevitable, given the distantly Oedipal nature of my relation to my parents. One could reduce my ideas to simple Freudian constructs I suppose, but the reality of life is not so simple. My parents were from different religions, my mother was nominally Protestant, but really had no religion and my father was Catholic and conservative. It was only because my dad's Catholic mother forced my mother to sign an agreement to bring us up Catholic that I was brought up Catholic till I was 11 and then was free to do as I wished. My mother told me many years after she opposed our going to the Church but had

³³ Lennon's song "Imagine" holds up whereas almost nothing by Harrison does, except maybe "here comes the sun"

to give in to my Grandma to please my father. Both my mother and I had been abused or molested by priests. This brought us closer, as she had no real respect for priests as “intermediaries” and neither did I. So my house was like Ireland and divided against Protestant and Catholic. My mother was very bright and well educated and loved learning and books, politics and thinking through things. None of these tendencies are Catholic virtues, where you are told to accept everything as dogma and not be curious.

In art, my great loves were Rembrandt and Van Gogh. I was waylaid by Kandinsky and Duchamp for a brief time, who did a lot of harm to me. Both of them tried to subvert the love of objective beauty, nature and craft, which were some of my deepest inclinations. Their notion of ‘non-objective’ reality was a fiction that was basically religious or “spiritual”³⁴. I was influenced by them in art school and that took me some years to get over. I will discuss the negative influence of spirituality on art in a later chapter. They still have a very toxic effect on the art world to this day. So, were it not for William James, a professor in Marietta college, Jung, Kandinsky, Rilke and Ananda Coomaraswamy I probably would have stayed away from religion.

So my exploration of religion was really quite deliberate and conscious. I was systematic about it too. Early on, when I was 15 or 16³⁵ I was influenced by Coleridge’s idea of the Imagination, which was also held by Blake. His notion, stated in his Biographia Literaria, was that imagination is “a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM”. He says that perception is imagination. For

³⁴ It would be interesting to isolate when the “spiritual” and the religious separated. This is itself one of the tendencies that developed out of Protestant objections to Catholicism. In America one often hears someone say they are spiritual but not religious and this shows how much the Jamesian supermarket of religions has become internalized. A fluffy emotional and vague mysticism is allowed, but a rigorous dogmatism is looked down on. Questioning both tendencies is rather rare.

³⁵ I bought a copy of his Biographia Literaria when I was 16 in

him it was, since he was addicted to opiates, and lived in a dream state. This is a Platonist idea, though I did not understand Platonism when I was 15 or 16. Plato says in his Theaetetus , as I found out some years later, that perception is knowledge . This is wrong too and results in the very human centered philosophy of Plato, which will help destroy so much of the earth by our time. But of Plato I will speak of more later. Here, all I want the reader to grasp is that I was young and trusted writers who really had not explored their own thought very well. I was led by then into embracing subjectivity as the source of knowledge and truth. The world is vast and the inner life of human is really a small fraction of it. The subject is not everything, not even close to a tiny fraction of everything. So I was led into see the so called created world as an effect of the imagination, This was mistaken, but it would take me years and a great deal of experience to see why. To see why, I would have to question religion to its roots.

I did a painting in 2012 of the E.P. Dutton, 1908 edition of this book I bought in 1972. The dead bird's skull on it, done from a real skull I found in the woods recently, perhaps a morning dove, is there to brood over the ephemeral nature of Platonic and metaphysical speculations of all kinds.



I moved through Coleridge, Blake, Keats and many others, tracing the roots of romanticism. My original interest in Coleridge had unconsciously led me into the depth of modern Platonism and its influence on romantic thought. Getting through this was no small matter, and still retaining some measure of sanity. I had no guides really and the ones I found actually did me more harm than good. I tried reading Kant too, but he was way over my head at 16, though I wrote about his ideas on the imagination anyway, trying to grasp what they were all talking about,

I could actually make a chart of these influences, I was so systematic about this study. Poe-(1971), Baudelaire, 72-74, Coleridge, 72-73, Kant, Thoreau, Russell and Dewey, 73, Eliot and the metaphysical poets, 75, Yeats and Joyce, 72-76, Aldous Huxley, 75, Jung, 76, Rimbaud- 77, Hirschman 77-80, Hiedegger, 80, Plato 81, and so on. There was a counter exploration too, which is why I include Dewey, I studied his logic at 16 oand 17, among others things, and I should include Leonardo too, as well as Russell and Feyerabend, as well as the French Realist artists. From 1980 to 91 I was involved so much study I will not try to chart that here. But it was clear by 1991 what I had done. I was no longer in the

Romantic school.

But it took a long time to work myself out of romanticism, or even to see the need to do so. My concern was to try to understand “the mystery of existence”, as I called it then. Or rather I called it “the sense of existence”, a phrase I still like. This was especially acute both before and after my dad died in 1973. I was only 17 and had a hard time understanding something so awful as his death. Why did I exist and where would I go and what would I do?³⁶ I was in the midst of the adolescent dilemma that was very real and concrete. Could religion or poetry deal with this, as they claimed. I was right that there is indeed a mystery, but the question was, how to deal with it and examine it. These three books are, in many ways, my deepest answer to that inquiry which began when I was 15. I rejected the bulk of romanticism even if I still sometimes enjoy reading Joyce or Yeats³⁷.

I was very attracted to the effort of science to understand the mystery of the ‘nature of things’ too. But the answers of religion did seem far-fetched, but how could I be sure? I had no precedent, other than my intellectual uncle, who had died of epilepsy and whose books I had inherited, including William James Varieties of Religious Experience. So I read James, Dewey and others. I was studying Delacroix’s paintings on the same day I was reading Dewey’s Logic. Later I was reading Ayer or Wittgenstein on the same day I was looking at Genet or Sartre. So there

³⁶ My daughter has asked me a number of times why she is here, and what it all means. She was only eight when she started to ask such questions. They are entirely natural and logical. I asked the same questions at that age. The question is how they are answered. Religions abuse this natural wonderment at existence. The main thing is to nurture this love of why we are here and let it develop naturally, as it really is not a “spiritual” question at all, but a natural one which connects us to all nature. Existence is marvelous and tragic and this life is really all that matters. This is not to deny its horrors, which certainly exist too, but the struggle to make life better for all beings is why we are alive. One of the great delights of existing is having children and I was brought to that by the delight of watching animals and birds have babies, which charmed me into a deeper love of reality than anything else on earth.

³⁷ I read Yeats’s A Vision, in my teens and early twenties and thought it rather silly. Poet’s efforts to deal with death are not convincing. Thought sometimes, if they stay factual, they do offer a certain awareness of reality which I like.

was no way to find out other than to seek into myself and do it as completely as I could. Early poems show that I was doubtful about religions fictions very early at age 20, for instance. One poem even offers the idea that Jesus is a fiction too. My exploration of religion was from the beginning based in doubt before it was based in belief. I wanted real proof, by which I meant direct evidence that I could understand, that religion was false. I think I found that in plenty, but it took a lot of seeking, time and research.

So in those 7 years between 84 and 91, I practiced Christian, Islamic, Hindu, Zen, Tibetan Buddhist, Native American and other religions, including some of my own making. I even made my own partly ironic “Bible” at one point, in 1978.³⁸ . But I should add, my ‘Bible’ was partly satire and tongue in cheek. Making up your own religion is condemned by every religion, yet they all did that precisely, and instinctively I knew this and made up my own synthetic combinations, typical American that I was. I was as conflicted in myself, as the society I lived in and these conflicts, were reflected in my studies as well as my private life.

In terms of actual practices I made up, one had to do with facing the four directions and thanking the earth, a harmless activity that is really about landscape and partly derived from Native American practice. I did this for some years, wherever I went and whenever I was alone. It was a simple acknowledgement of existence and of wonder at the aroundness of things and our planet. I think I enjoyed this practice more than any other I did from any religion, as all of them seemed foreign forced and false and ideological on some level, and here I am speaking of the Tibetan Chod,

³⁸ I developed a mystical relation to creativity and did so partly beginning in my teens with Coleridge’s and Blake’s idea of the imagination. I even wrote a sort of tongue in cheek parody of the idea of perception being imagination in a book called the Creation Cycle, which plays elaborate games between Leonardo on the one hand and Duchamp on the other. Finding my way through these thickets consumed much of my time and study. Trying to explain what I was doing was practically impossible, however. This remains a hidden and solitary endeavor to this day.

the Eucharistic rite or Islamic prayers all of which I did often, some of them at the same time.

But, to tell a long story short, after a great deal of searching, questioning and pain, over a twenty year period, I ultimately rejected religion. I also rejected James and Huxley, Rilke, Schuon, Muhammad, Christ, Buddha and many other writers on religion or myths as having any real relation to the truth or to actuality. By age 35 I was done with myth and religion³⁹, completely.

Someone wrote me and suggested that I rejected religion because I rejected traditionalism, a subject I explored for some years. Wrong. I rejected traditionalism because I had had enough of all the religions, and all systematic mythic structures of any kind, many of which I had learned about and participated in. Traditionalism was merely the straw that broke the camel's back. It was not just traditionalism that was a lie. Plato, Aquinas, St. Francis, Buddhism, Hinduism, power systems, and ideologies in general--- I began to see through the lot of them. I rejected aspects of literature too, which, since Dante, has been closely allied to religion. I had run the gamut of religions and had been quite promiscuous in my pursuit of any one that offered what seemed to be a truth. I visited a Hari Krishna temple that was no less unknown to me and interesting than a Russian orthodox monastery, which was fascinating. I memorized the Tibetan Chod ceremony and did Native

³⁹ This includes fiction to a degree. But I still like some fiction, it depends on what it is and how close to reality it is. There are fictions that are good stories even if they are in some way repulsive, like the Lord of the Rings, by Tolkien, which really pushes a version of the European Feudal system of caste. Its view of nature is false and its heavy indulgence in superstition. The Star Wars concept was used heavily as a metaphor for destructive political posturing by Ronald Reagan. But it is clear that people need stories. Dickens is often good, and other writers. But America's addiction to sex and violence is very vapid. English stories tend to be better thought out and reflective of real social concerns and their actors are usually better. Defining what fiction is and what are good uses of it might be a task for the future. But it is heavily abused, and little that is promoted now is very good and some does real harm. This is true of art too which I will discuss in the third book of this series..

American prayers. I could say, as is the fashion currently, that these religions are based “counterintuitive concepts” but that is just another fancy academic way of saying religions are delusional.⁴⁰ What matters to me is reality, not different ways of looking at it. Some ways of looking at it are more truthful than others. What I learned in my experiences of religion is that these ways are not ways of knowing but are rather ways of deluding oneself and others. For a while I even exulted in the embrace of delusions, I wanted to know about all of them.

In the contemporary world proximity of travel and the spread of populations made mental migrations from one religion to another quite easy. I was able to move from one to another in short space of time and without any unease or guilt. When I lived in Point Reyes I even tried making my own religion up out of various elements derived from native American, Buddhist and Christian traditions. I was myself deluded in precisely the ways I am discussing here, so I know whereof I speak. Indeed, what becomes evident after much study is that the religions are systems of delusion and changing from one to another is merely a matter

⁴⁰ For instance Stephen Atran follows Pascal Boyer in writing that ideas about gods or magical beings are

“counterintuitive concepts and beliefs, as long as they come in small doses, [which] help people remember and presumably retransmit the intuitive statements, as well as the underlying knowledge that can be inferred from them. Thus, we hypothesize that cultural evolutionary processes, driven by competition among groups, have exploited aspects of our evolved psychology, including certain cognitive by-products, to gradually assemble packages of supernatural beliefs, devotions, and rituals that were increasingly effective at instilling deep commitment, galvanizing internal solidarity, and sustaining larger-scale cooperation.”

Atran is imagining evolution somehow served to create religions. I doubt this is accurate. I differ from him in that I think religions were/are a tool of power and used delusions to obtain power for certain in groups. This does not mean it was necessarily created by evolution, or that it religions increased survival possibilities. I doubt it did. Rather, certain parts of human cognitive faculties were misused to allow some groups to prosper at the expense of others. It is not clear at all that this had any benefit, indeed, the contrary might be true. Religion did harm to human evolution. I prefer to say this outright rather than hide it behind academic nomenclature. “Counterintuitive” is a fancy academic word that really means superstitious or delusional. I prefer Darwin to Atran who does not make these kinds of sidestepping excuses for religion.

of learning the codes and lexicon of the make believe. Religions are above all systems of language, myth and images meant to control behavior and thoughts. They are amazing as created entities, systems of stories and symbols, created by humans, of course, however toxic they might be otherwise..

What follows is only intermittently personal, mostly I am questioning the ideas that are the basis of fictional systems of belief--- but I do my best to face up to what religion really is, in my experience. I am not opposed to subjectivity as a means of understanding reality. William James held that it to be factual that people “Feel themselves to be related.. to higher powers” and wrongly deduced that these powers might therefore be real. Experience can lie. But if one consciously strives to be accurate and avoid delusion and double check facts, something like the truth can be approximated by telling ones experiences. I agree with John Dewey that experience is a determining factor in art, science and education Dewey⁴¹ writes that

...An experience is a product, one might almost say by-product, of continuous and cumulative interaction of an organic self with the world. There is no other foundation upon which esthetic theory and criticism can build.[\[3\]](#)

I am an artist, devoted to realism and Dewey’s comments ring true to me. Of course there are degrees of verisimilitude. From outright delusion to pin point accuracy and measured perceptions there are degrees of perspicacity or keenness of perception. El Greco pictures Spanish mystical fictions which he wrongly thought were real, whereas

⁴¹ Dewey’s notion of experience is very different than that of William James in his Varieties. James is subjectivist—almost solipsistic-- in his theory whereas Dewey is trying his best to hold on the objective and the outside world. He does not deify subjective experience and try to make it a “fact” as does James.

Ter Borch pictures 17th century Dutch middle class perceptions accurately. El Greco is closer to cartoons and Ter Borch is closer to actuality. I can take Ter Borch seriously, whereas El Greco is merely mystical Church propaganda. El Greco must be bracketed and reduced to the transcendent delusions that served him socially, whereas this need not be done for Ter Borch. I loved El Greco at one point and saw a huge show of his work in Toledo, Ohio, but in the end, his distortions are delusional and say more about the horror of Spanish politics in the age of the conquistadores and inquisitors than anything else.⁴²

Creating paintings is an engagement with reality, and give and take between oneself and nature. What I love about art is just this reciprocity with reality, the closer the better, as it enables one to inquire deeply into the nature of the world. Art is an inquiry and engagement with small things, apples, sunlight coming through a peeled orange, children's faces, learning the violin, coffee pots, strawberries, a book, baby bottles, dilapidated old houses, light on a human knee, a dying old woman, a bird washing itself. These are what matters. Religion in contrast is experience of things that are not real. James was wrong, personal experience does matter, religious experience does not. Religion is the politics of unrealities, fictions that seem true only because one has not tested them against the real. I have shed these unrealities.

On the personal side of my story what follows is a tale about what I have learned. I agree with the women of the 1970's who said that the "personal is political", by which they meant, I think, that the personal is not the marginal and the irrelevant, but has a status that approaches science and fact, while not being either science or fact, but which strives for accuracy. An artist must be honest and self-questioning. In other words reality is not defined by hierarchical elites but by actualities, experience and everyone who has a true story to tell. Deliberate

⁴² Sept. or Oct. 1982.

experience, in Dewey or Thoreau's sense, is thus key. I consider my experience with religion to have been deliberate, systematic and thorough and believe it universalizes across many domains, Occasionally I speak in personal terms about religion, but otherwise the personal story is there by implication. It is a tale of abandonment and loss and critical insight into things many held onto without any really good evidence or reason. It is also an example of one who learns from his mistakes has turned from religious delusions toward the earth, nature, art, science and facts. "Eternity" is an abstraction and a fiction promised by religion and is thus an empty category. What matters is actuality or our daily life on earth. Those who find ordinary reality trivial or meaningless need to learn how to see small things, as the 'small' is the majority.⁴³

.....

I've thought about these things for many years. This is not a quickly written series of books book at all. I chewed and chewed each paragraph. If these three books begin with a mention of garbage, it also starts off with uncharismatic animals. Some of my favorite animals are ruminants. Contrary to stereotypes, the big predators--- Lions. Tigers Eagles and others--- are a rather effete and delicate bunch, and survive only with difficulty and high maintenance. They have my sympathy, of course, since all of them are in danger these days, murdered by hunters, poachers or dealers in Chinese or Indian "traditional medicine", a bogus category of knowledge that is superstitious and destructive to the animal world. But, Red Tail Hawks, Peregrine Falcons. Snow Leopards and Grizzly Bears are all highly specialized animals who depend on a certain population of prey. They are not "noble" at all. The notion that animals

⁴³ See the Smaller Majority, by Piotr (Peter) Naskrecki, an amazing book that tries to show the importance of small insects, spiders, ants and other overlooked being in our world. Much is to be learned from the very small and the study of insect orders is endlessly fascinating and frees one from the prejudices of so many humans toward to unknown world we live in.
<http://www.insectphotography.com/>

are “aristocratic” is a projection of human class systems on nature. The caste of aristocrats was unjust and brutal in maintaining their undeserved elitism. The “noble” animals are falsely presented to be such by nostalgic aristocrats, Social Darwinists, or the Disney corporation. These animals are predators and they kill in brutal ways, but not in excess or for pleasure so much as for necessity. This is not to say they do not have their rights to exist and thrive too. Human hunters are far worse than any animal and they have decimated many of these species, since hunters are sadists who want to kill beings for pleasure, who they wrongly fantasize are like themselves.

So I admire all animals but I stress ungulates, or ruminants here. The calm Elk munching grass in the mists of the seaside cliffs or a family of Deer in the forests or Pronghorn on the prairie are peaceful animals and I love them. I have been a vegetarian for over 10 years and I no longer see such animals as meat. It amazes me how much eating meat conditions how people think or don't think. Meat eaters see much of the world in terms of their bad habits, and do not generally realize it. A great deal of killing of other species on earth is done because meat eaters feel it is their right to kill anything that moves. Ruminants or ungulates are placid beings and I admire them for living their lives so well, but this also makes them easy targets. Elephants are not ruminants exactly, but they are like them in that they have fit into their world without harm and live long and thoughtful lives if unmolested by humans, their only enemy.⁴⁴ I like Okapi and Giraffes on the savannah for similar reasons. I like their steady thoughtfulness, their long winded stride, chewing the cud as they rest on the hillside or looking out over the plain at twilight. In any case, this book is full of ideas long chewed on. I will talk about how religions affect the treatment of animals in this book too.

⁴⁴ The taxonomy of ungulates has undergone a lot of changes. The category has largely dissolved. Elephants, which were once classified with them are now in a suborder. DNA has suggested they are related to Hippos and Sea Cows, as well as the small Hyrax.

I've written this book like an ungulate⁴⁵, taking my time, chewing it over, not in a rush about it at all, not even writing it for a current audience in particular. Indeed, I wrote this book over a long period of time, off and on for nearly two decades. So it is long and thought out. Indeed, sometimes it seemed I would never finish it, and perhaps never be entirely happy with it. Traditionalists have already shown hatred for early versions of this book, which is expected and not surprising. It is hardly written for them, indeed, I expose many repulsive and repugnant things about these groups. There are die-hards who still believe in religious nonsense. I don't write for them either. I am not Richard Dawkins who seems to get something out of responding to religious cranks. I see no point in trying to convince them. They live in their dream worlds. I even find people like Noam Chomsky, who is supposed to be very smart, confused and arrogant.

Some academic religious studies professors see this book as a threat to their eager need to promote falsehoods in view of making careers for themselves. It is not written for them, though they would be nice if they could look at religion as an object of disinterested and scientific study instead of a creed to promote. Some New Agers who have seen this too have been horrified by it and wish I had not written it. New Agers should be called Dark Agers, since what they want is really backwards not forwards. To me their dislike of my thesis adds to the credibility of these books. I don't expect much of an audience in the near future. My purpose is to record the search for truth as I have lived it and let history be my judge. I think I am on to something here. Some will call it crazy, but that hardly matters. Delusions die hard.

⁴⁵ African ungulates are particularly interesting. The ones that eat the thorny acacia tree for instance are the Dik Dik, the Impala, the Gerenuk and the Giraffe. The Elephant can knock it down and eat, though it appears not to be directly related to the others.

I came to the conclusion that religion is a kind of mental virus or system of delusions after years of studying it. The idea of mental virus is just an analogy, of course. I will discuss this more in a chapter on Dawkins and a later chapter on Totalism. But I bring it up here to show that my point of view on religion is one born of scientific skepticism and disbelief. Historians have obligations. There is a lot of history in these books. I am not attempting a history of the religion, though there is plenty of that in this book. I have my theories. Since my main concern is human and nature's rights in relationship to science, that is my "point of view", and I maintain, the only reasonable one. To study religions from the point of view of religions or *a* religion is ridiculous. It is like trying to understand disease by being that disease or trying to overcome mental illness by becoming schizophrenic. Various writers on religion I will look at in this book, like Arthur Versluis, Mark Sedgwick as well as the traditionalists write histories of religion from religion's point of view. This is literally crazy. Mark Sedgwick says in his book that he is writing about of Traditionalists from "from their point of view". Corporate histories written by the corporation itself are usually pretty bad too. Writing a history of the mafia from the mafia's point of view is a rather a waste of time, except if you are in the mafia and wish to please the mafia Don and write a book for them. But the book will have little or no journalistic value at all. I am not at all interested in writing a history of traditionalism from the point of view of the traditionalists. There are several of those already and they are bad histories, written by cult members who are generous in their lies and myth making. Nor do I wish to write history of religion from the point of view of the religions. To do this is to be a servile and "embedded" journalist: a sort of proselytizer by default.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ On his website Mark Sedgwick sets himself up as a sort of pope of Sufism. But really Sedgwick is merely another religious proselytizer. He writes all sorts of nonsense. One example from his website he writes that "In Sufi terms, then, the Maryamiyya is probably "valid" to the

There are points of view that a decent historian should avoid. Writing history from the point of view of the Nazis or Slave-owners, is possible for instance, but should one do it? Obviously not. One could do a critical assessment of such things I suppose. Writing history from the point of view of a cult is likewise questionable. Many cults, including the Schuon cult or the Catholic Church have many books and publications that have no objectivity at all but are pure advertising and promotional PR.⁴⁷ A proselytizing journalist is a very poor journalist. I am a skeptic not a proselytizer. On the subject of traditional religion I wish to create critical insight and doubt, not belief.⁴⁸

extent that Schuon's vision of the Virgin Mary in 1965 was "valid." . His vision was a fiction of a disturbed mind. Schuon's visions were legion and had whenever he needed one to justify himself, which is also true of Muhammad. What Sedgwick leaves out is that all "tariqahs" religions or cults are invalid. These and all systems of make believe. The "validity" of any cult is always in question and to claim that any religion or cult is "valid" is done on the basis of reams of phony criteria. Many Moslems sects trace back to how a given school of Sufis relates back to Muhammad, who was himself a very questionable character and who appears, like Christ, to have a dubious historical existence, and is very likely an invention or fabrication. The historical person, if there was one, is utterly eclipsed in myth and make believe of later followers, Sufism is really just the aggregate name for these collections of elite believers in these fairy tales. Sedgwick's is a scholar who devotes his life to the make believers. This is hardly a good thing to do and no doubt misleads and perhaps harms some students.

⁴⁷ For a few years I watched Schuon write articles for his books and could see in each article he wrote that they were largely autobiographical. His true intentions were hidden behind high metaphysical rhetoric. His tone as impersonal Guru was a fraud, a fiction and was designed to make him seem larger than life, a prophet. This are highly constructed works. His works were fiercely edited by wives who had the same inflated purposes in view. Religious texts offer a presence erected on a lie at their core and thus are really a literary productions, often made over several generations. This is what the Bible, Koran or the Bhagavad Gita are. They were carefully constructed texts made by priests and propagandists of the time. I will discuss how this was done later.

⁴⁸ I write out of my actual experiences with religion. I learned many things about the Schuon cult no one else knows, even older members still in the cult. So I can write with some factual authority. But believers who write to justify the brand of belief as it were fact are a very different story. History written by the religious is a biased history that seeks to further the interests of religious academics or Churches. Catholic self-histories are a good example, as are military histories. I maintain that spiritual academics belong in religious schools not in universities. They should be in such places as the Temenos Academy, Iranian schools, Catholic colleges, Esalen⁴⁸ or Naropa, for instance, these latter are two questionable left leaning examples of biased and partly bogus schools that push a spiritual point of view. If such things are to be taught in universities then they should be in sociology literature or anthropology. The latter at least has some scientific

I also supply a philosophical overview of religions and some of their metaphysical justifications. Metaphysics is the history of human delusions about the facts of reality. I saw this back in early 1990's and I "turned around" in a reverse "metanoia", ---rejecting the transcendental and the immanent--- and turned toward science from then on. Can I still be wrong now, in other ways? Certainly. It is quite likely I am mistaken in various ways, I just don't know what they are yet.

So these books have few fans in the spirituality camp, thank goodness. Those who already realize religion is a failure or who are interested science and history have rightly seen this book as an addition to history and a thorough critical analysis of right wing thought in the 20th century, as well as a look at the lethal nature of conservative thinking over many centuries. I am writing from a science friendly point of view which tacitly assumes that human rights and nature's rights matter. But such people who understand these things probably don't need to read this book. This book is an inquiry into transcendental delusions, cults and bogus spirituality, all of which they have already discounted, wisely. I am not writing for scientists either, since they already know or intuit much of what I say here. So why do this book at all? Hardly anyone would be interested. The simple answer to this is I did it because I had to. They are books that I needed to write, not just for myself, but because no one else has. Thinking through matters like this might be unnecessary at the moment, but in the future I think there will be some value in it.

So partly, it is a meditation on my intellectual searches and inquiries. The "unexamined life is not worth living" as Thoreau liked to quote Socrates. Partly, I am writing a meditation on failed religions as a way of reflecting on right wing movements of many kinds as well as

standards so that one must have evidence to push a point of view. If they are in literature than they can only teach fictions, which is appropriate. I'll speak more of this in the chapter on Arthur Versluis..

conservative religious systems or institutions of the far past. I cannot stress enough that traditionalism is not an important movement. It exists primarily to keep a small contingent of right wing religiophiles alive, who act as a justifying mechanism for right wing governments and mythical thinking. I use traditionalism as a series of examples to address the larger failure of religion in general. I write using my own experience as a test case and I follow the evidence of my own searches and inquiries into further fields or inquiry.

When I was young I thought so much was before me, but now that I am getting old and being young seems like yesterday, I realize that these meditations really cover very little of life. All I can write is what I know and I know that all that I have thought is little of what life actually is. I knew I could be very wrong about things. Correcting what I thought then became a major effort in my life. I left my study of religion on its own terms in 1991 and returned to college, where I spent 5 years studying from a more objective point of view. I wanted to look hard at how things really are. I began the critique of the Great Books then. I began the inquiry for these books you are reading in 1996. Then in 1997 I was very sick, and on the hospital bed I saw myself on the train to Auschwitz, --- It was my body telling me I had better stop dreaming and look at what really matters in life. I nearly died and this made me turn towards a scientific study of nature, which resulted in a lot of paintings, among other things. I studied the lives of individual birds and animals intensely for a number of years. Then my mother got very sick and that took some years, taking care of her. I had my own children then, partly inspired by watching bird and animals mothers and fathers take care of their young. Animals and birds had become as much a part of my life as my mother and wife and children. After a few years of not being able to study and research very much, because I was so busy caring for my mother and children, I began again to study and paint paintings. I worked on these books off and on since 2006. I began my studies again in California and

when we moved back to Ohio, I continued working on this when I could. So I have never really stopped studying, just slowed down to serve life's demands.

So in these books I write about theories about religion, the religions themselves and use the little known movement called traditionalism as a way to talk about world religions, ideology and mythic fictions. The days of religion as a real force are done, but religions continues as an escape and a social organizing force that is reactionary and fanatical. In many places now, religions act as "vestigial states"⁴⁹ within secular nations and there help support reactionary entanglements in the state itself. A few still hold onto traditionalist myopia, limping into a diminished future. Traditionalism decays into ruin and dreams of what it might have been, a few old stragglers clinging to it as if to Guenon's corpse, buried in Egypt.⁵⁰ I merely use traditionalism as a way to approach all the religion, it does not interest me in itself.

The second book here is about Guenon's delusions, mostly. I write about this hoping to add to the growing critique of myth and religion in general, in view of leaving a record of a battle against delusional systems of knowledge. I like Guenon very little, and this is probably obvious. But studying him closely allowed me into the psychology of an entire movement and this was important. The third book deals with misuses of ideology and how some of the ideas I discussed in the first two books play out in specific domains, first in abuses of science itself, then in Chomsky's rather odd Cartesian and speciesist rationalism and lastly in misuses of ideology in art history. So this is indeed a book for history. Eventually, I think religion will fall away, or at least become rare. The delusional make believe of its fictions will become better known. This is

⁴⁹ See Naomi Goldenberg's work

⁵⁰ Mark Sedgwick had an adoring picture of Guenon's grave on his website for a while, I don't know if it is still there. I'm told a statue of Schuon's sexualized Virgin Mary hovers over his grave in Bloomington. I do not know if that is true either.

a long meditation on why it failed.

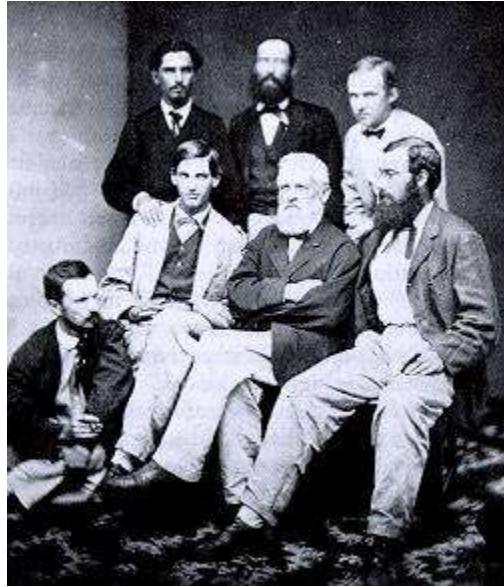
William James' Theory of Religion

(note: this short essay sets up a sort of leit-motif that carries through all the books. It is about subjectivism and anti-science)

The title of this book, Varieties of Religious Delusions and Fictions, derives partly from inverting the title of a famous book by the American philosopher William James: Varieties of Religious Experience . I mean to undo what James did. It continues to surprise me he is taken seriously at all. This is certainly do to the common promotion of delusions in America, so accustomed is the population to the falsehoods of corporate advertising and churches. James was a closet-case spiritualist, not that far from Madame Blavatsky in some ways, of the very sort that Harry Houdini, the great escape artist,⁵¹ was intent on debunking when he debunked “table tappers” and other spiritualist con-artists who exploited those who grieve for the dead. James’ father was a Swedenborgian, and by all accounts, very far into the purple dawn of early spiritual

⁵¹ Houdini is a very interesting man. He became an expert “séance buster” and exposed many fakes and charlatans, some of them very well known. He even incorporated some of their tricks into his stage act. He once said “I have always wanted to believe. It would have meant life to me.” Which is a testament to the sincerity of his searching. I understand his desire and felt that way myself for many years, until I finally grasped that religion really is make believe. Spiritualism supplied the delusion of a life beyond death that had no hell and which also avoided facing the fact that there is no life after death. Alexander graham Bell tried to make phone calls to the spiritual world, but failed to contact his dead brother. Michael Faraday exposed the table moving fraud of séances too. He created a brilliant box with glass rods in it that showed if a table was being pressured horizontally. Faraday was a Christian and did not questioned his own religion, unfortunately. Of course there is a lot more evidence now that Christianity is also a fraud and its gospels and founder probably fictional creations.

awakening of the 19th century, or what I might call Symbolist and New Ageism now. William studied with the largely discredited creationist Louis Agassiz, an enemy of Darwin, and even went on an expedition with him to Brazil in 1865. I will have occasion to speak of Agassiz in the final chapter on Science.



James is lower left with cigar,
literally sitting at the feet of the confident ‘master’

James’ Varieties of Religious Experience pretends to present religion in a quasi-scientific, anthropological manner, but actually his application of science to religion is a caricature. He proposes to study literary sources of religion, which turn out to be ‘geniuses’ and says: “I must confine myself to those more developed subjective phenomena recorded in literature produced by articulate and fully self-conscious men in works of piety and autobiography” (Pg. 4)⁵² In short he was studying people like his father, or like himself. He specifically excludes ordinary people, who are really the bulk of religions and says of ordinary man that “his religion has been made for him by others, communicated to him by

⁵² James, William Varieties of Religious Experience, New York. 1902 Modern Library. I use the same edition my uncle gave me

tradition, determined to him by fixed forms by imitation, and retained by habit..” So religion for James is about the subjective delusions of geniuses, basically, and “tradition” is merely a flophouse for these more august delusions made palatable to the masses. But James does not call them delusions, he is seduced by the chimera.

Unfortunately, James had a huge influence on me when I was 16. I was very attracted to him and his writing and poured over them at home and in the high school library. I was given my dear uncle Jack’s copy of the book, among many other of his books, by my grandma. It was this and other books from my uncle that helped me further into philosophy and cultural studies. Within a few years, by my early 30’s., I have explored many proliferating beliefs and practices of the Sufi, Vedantic, Jewish, Holy Roller, Tibetan, Native American, Catholic, Byzantine, esoteric, Hare Krishna, monastic and new age, among others. This was the Jamesian universe self-multiplying into a Herman Hessian magic theatre of delusions.



Self Portrait by William James 1866⁵³

James states that

The religious phenomenon, studied as an inner fact, and apart from ecclesiastical or theological complications, has shown itself to consist everywhere, and in all its stages, in the consciousness which individuals have of an intercourse between themselves and higher powers with which they feel themselves to be related. [p 465)

⁵³ James was early on an artist, according to his brother Henry in his autobiography. James gave it up, even though he had real promise,-- as this really fine self-portrait shows-- and took up medicine. He studied with William Morris Hunt. Too bad, he would have been a far more interesting artist than philosopher.

The problem with James begins with this concept of the “inner fact”. The ‘inner fact’ of religions is not a fact at all, but merely a thought like thinking of pink elephants. It hardly means they actually exist. “Feel themselves to be related” is the operative phrase, as there is no actual relationship, because the higher powers do not exist. What James does is try to assert that religion is based on subjectivism, and anything subjective is ‘real’ simply because we experience it in our heads or minds. Religions therefore are ‘real’, he says.⁵⁴ There is nothing factual about the inner fact, other than that someone is thinking something. The content of what is thought is most likely fallacious, if one is thinking religion.

This fallacy is the bedrock of James’ theory of religion. He does not account for the fact that our belief-producing faculties are not reliable. Indeed, largely disconnected from nature and living in cities where human language distorts everything in accord with the interests of power and wealth, human are strongly prone to delusional beliefs created out of language or thin air. Multi-cultural subjectivism thrives, encrusted with dreams and falsehoods. If one lives say, in New York City, there is hardly a square inch in one’s life that has not been designed by a con-man or a designer. Everything one sees is planned with profit in view. It is one of the most anti-natural and controlled environments on earth. It is a human bubble of self-reflecting profiteering and sensory exploitation, typified by Times Square. James tries to make a virtue of this tragic fact of poor social planning and bad education. Americans will believe almost

⁵⁴ This fallacy connects him with Kant, F. H. Bradley, Afrikans Spir, and Hans Vaihinger, among others, in that it depends on a notion of subjective impression, rather than demonstrable truth. This rather idealist philosophy was largely anti—empiricist and anti-science. In Spir’s case he absurdly denies reality to things altogether. Something is true it has a benefit, to someone. This theory is really about preserving religion by letting it back in the back door. Vaihinger wants to say we construct reality out of our minds, and we do not really know reality. But anyone who has had children knows reality is out there and must be cared for and quickly. Other species are there, and the world itself is not merely a sense impression. Woodpeckers and squirrels know trees fall in the woods when no people are there.

anything and are encouraged to do so. Telepathy, Pyramids, telekinesis, cosmic consciousness, the holy spirit, astrology, divination, amulets, homeopathy, Tarot, Crop circles, life after death. It is all part of the great William James market of promotable delusions.

James sadly endorses the same solipsistic transcendentalism one finds in Guenon and Schuon too. Following Agassiz, James is one of the fathers of the spiritual supermarket.⁵⁵ He thinks that whatever the mind thinks is real, is real, and therefore religious fictions are real because the mind thinks they are real. A pink elephant is the same as a god in the mind. If you believe in pink elephants will cure you of cancer, well that is a good belief for you, never mind that it is not true. I believe because I believe and that is that, "the heart has reasons". Pascal famously said.

But James is mistaken to think that his theory this has anything to do with truth. While it is true that humans tend to live in imaginary worlds, it is necessary that we try to stop doing that. The real world is suffering under our delusions and we are destroying the planet with our make-believe systems. Religions are magnified delusions, no matter how many millions think the content of religion are real. The delusion is real, in the sense that someone has them and the delusions often have horribly and tangible effects on the world. In this James is right. But these figments of imagination remain figments, not realities. There are no pink elephants, in fact.

⁵⁵ This notion of individual consciousness as paramount and supreme, is at the basis of a lot of spiritual ideology. It was Whitall Perry's main idea, as he told me himself, following Schuon's similar idea. It is the origin of most anti-science ideology too as the individual is seen and the summit and objective truth is negated--- or so they imagine. Ayn Rand's neo-fascist ideas also put forward the supreme individual as the ultimately conscious one. Olavo De Carvalho write on his website that "the most solid shelter for individual consciousness against alienation and reification can be found in widely varying degrees in the ancient spiritual traditions." This is spiritual fascism in a net shell. Here the self is a supreme fiction, promoted as spirituality, and the world be damned. What is really protected in religion and what William James sought to protect was the right to believe subjectivist delusions.

James says he wants to “reduce religion to its lowest admissible terms” . These terms turn out to be that god, gods and other “hallucinations” “faith states” and all these are the contents of the “subconscious self” James says.⁵⁶ They don’t exist of course, but James’ problem is to resurrect what does not exist and to honor the subjective. The historian Yuval Harari does this too, when he posits that myths matter and the “common imagination” is to be honored as real. The natural world is not our construction. It is hard to see how this is a good idea. The natural world is not our construction. Making the world over in the image of humans is a mistake. Species are going extinct and the climate of the earth is faltering due to these delusions. A genetically modified earth made serviceable only to humans is a gross and untenable thing which involves huge injustices against nature to pursue. Violating natural species for human gain is unethical.

. James is trying to prove that these hallucinatory faith states are products of the imagination, or ‘useful delusions’, to paraphrase. The fiction is that the “higher self” is a ‘doorway into the subject”, and James does not mind that this is a denial of scientific reality.⁵⁷ Religion becomes

⁵⁶ William James prefigures the post-modernist pan-subjectivism that is popular now in New Age circles. David Fideler calls this pan-subjectivism “epistemological pluralism”, by which he means that everything is part of knowing the universe. He thinks that utterly bogus systems of knowledge like Orphic or Pythagorean numerology and cosmology have something to tell us about reality. (His book Jesus Christ, Sun of God relies heavily on numerological fantasy, gematria, so called “sacred geometry”, temple architecture, musical harmonics, Platonic solids, as well as linguistic conceits such as names of Jesus and gods as aspects of representation of the universal Logos(the “sun”. This is all quaint analogies about symbolism and gods who never existed. “All modalities of knowledge contribute to our understanding of the whole.” He writes. This of course is a make believe philosophy that tries to make crack pot ideologies somehow equal to biology or chemistry. The Platonistic holism of the sort Fideler advocates has many problems. I have no sympathy for this point of view. As it demands equality between science and myth or science and spiritual fictions. Darwin cannot be squared with creationism any more than physics or math can be squared with the myth of the new age Jesus that Fideler tries to sell us.

⁵⁷ James announces his belief in the fiction of the subjective ‘truth” of religion, the idea of “useful delusions” in the last chapter of Varieties of Religious Experience, (1902 edition) pgs. 475-509

an affirmation of what he calls the “hidden mind”, which is not the mind at all, but rather the individual or collective delusions created by extreme emotional states and religious fancy. Buddhism posits just such an imaginary “mind” as a ‘void’. These states might be real to those who experience them, but they are not real in fact.

This does not mean that all perceptions or emotions are delusional, but only that imagination is not reality and one must be careful to distinguish between the two. Myths are ideological constructions and not reality. They are useful fictions to those who have power, but should be opposed by those who have fairness and justice as their goal. Seeing actual beings, say Salamanders or Prometheus Moths is one thing, they are real. But the abstract idea “Beyond Being” is a fiction and no one knows anything about it, as far as its actual meaning is concerned. “Beyond Being” is a magnified delusion. The idea of Beyond Being or Gods are the invention of metaphysical, literary imaginations of the very sort that James lauds. For James the actual religious experiences of individuals are reality, even though they are delusional. The fact that such experiences have some features in common is not at all surprising, humans being one species, but it hardly follows that religions treats of reality. James writes about the religion of elitist and subjective delusions, as does Guenon, Schuon and many others.

James exalts subjective delusions as real. Giving reality to the unreal is the very nature of American advertising and religion and the two are often the same, both protected by a poorly written constitution. James was thus one of the fathers of the idea that in America one could buy any brand of religion in the metaphysical supermarket and they are all valid. For James, religion is an affair not of public existence but of the market of private fantasy. In this he is indeed a ‘prophet’, as there is a growing arena of marketed delusions rampant in capitalist societies. Managing

perceptions is now part of big business, indeed, it is one of the departments in most corporations, where they manufacture illusions, do PR, create ‘brand recognition’ and defend illusory property rights falsely defined as ‘intellectual property’. This is the world James helped make, a world where one can take a ‘Course of Miracles’, Channel Ramtha, or ‘be here now’, without being responsible for anything.

James was trying to create, as were Guenon and Schuon, a transcendental unity of delusions. He was sure that his beliefs were real like facts. He thought his subjectivity was truth merely because it exists in his mind. He thought that subjective delusion was as important and may be more important than science. The ‘Will to Believe’ is the will to accept these delusions, in short. For James, this means that delusions and fictions are real, even if they are not.

The frightening thing about this view of religion, is that it makes delusions normal, and allows capitalism to prosper alongside the completely separate realm of private delusions. Indeed, the privatized delusions become utterly meaningless distractions and enabling devices to allow rapacious entrepreneurs who can then do their business unquestioned and unabated. The glory of the Jamesean era of subjective delusions is that private spirituality acts as a dumbing down mechanism so that they rich can continue to exploit with minimal criticism. Everyone revolves around the pivot of their private delusions, to which they are given a right by the Constitution in the ‘freedom of religion’ and meanwhile the economic freedom which alone would make them really free, is largely taken from them, given unjustly to corporations, whose ‘personhood’ is a delusional fiction in exactly the way religions are a delusional fiction. Indeed, the modern religion is the corporation itself and the major religions are all pawns now in the corporate game. Metaphysics has been enshrined as non-empirical private fantasy almost by definition. Spirituality and corporations collude in keeping society

complacent, unthinking and in line, so the real business of the rich getting richer can go on without too much criticism. .

Employing a really dumb “optimism” James tried to “redeem religion from unwholesome privacy”, in his own words. This wish to erect into social reality what in fact is only fiction is terribly problematic, to say the least. He wants to erect delusion as a public right. But in the age of Robber Barons, there were worse delusions promoted as for the good of Americans, and James as a professor at Harvard, appears to have made it easier for them to be Robber Barons. Keep the people deluded and it will help the rich. He wanted to erect religion on a scientific foundation and to do this he had to falsify religion and science, and I am sure that he failed, as others have since James time. ⁵⁸

James should have seen that religion is deceit and has economic ramifications. Religion encourages either an individual subject deceiving himself or an institutional promoting of delusions in the interests of class politics.. Private fantasy at home and public lying at large is the world James helped make. TV, computers and cell phones create an imaginary ‘cyber-space’ that rules most people’s lives. James does sometimes come close to admitting the falsity of all this, but then veers off. For instance he admits that “it may well prove that prayer is subjective exclusively”⁵⁹ which obviously, it truly is. But he can’t or won’t admit it. In another passage James admits that there are mystics and then notes that those who are sure of their visions might yet suffer from subjective illusions. He notes that besides mystics such as one finds in Christianity or Sufi orders, there is “the other half who have not accumulated traditions except those which the text books on insanity supply” He sees little difference between the great mystics and those suffering from “delusional insanity” He finds in one as the other:

⁵⁸ James, William Varieties of Religious Experience, New York. 1902 Modern Library, page 423

⁵⁹ Ibid. pg. 455

“The same sense of ineffable importance in the smallest events, the same texts and words coming with new meanings, the same voices and visions and leadings and missions, the same controlling by extraneous powers;”⁶⁰

Well , now he is getting somewhere. Indeed there is little difference between a Saint Teresa, canonized by a church and an ordinary women whose visions are not so useful, who languishes in a mental hospital alone. There is no real difference here in fact, though one gets canonized and the other dies in shame and despair, the only difference is an institution treats one as an advertisement and neglects the other to her death. Teresa, Francis, Lenin, Mao, or Jesus are all useful fictions or myths. Indeed, James’ book is itself an example of this: he extols the virtues of unusual mystics and eccentrics and tries to make Protestant saints out of them. Ordinary people, animals and nature are ignored.

George Santayana rightly criticized James fanciful notions about religion as having a “tendency to disintegrate the idea of truth, to recommend belief without reason and to encourage superstition.” Exactly right. Bertrand Russell comes to the same conclusions. He accuses James of being hopelessly “subjective”, and quotes James rather ridiculous statement that “an idea is true so long as to believe it is profitable to our lives”.⁶¹ If it is useful to believe a delusion than go ahead and believe it, James thought. Santa Claus is useful, therefore I believe it is true that he exists. God is useful, therefore he must exist. Russell rightly shows this is an erroneous argument.

But much of the logic behind James’s Varieties of Religious Experience is of this kind. James’ book fails to prove his case, and indeed, ironically his book is a useful exercise in showing how religious

⁶⁰ James

⁶¹ Russell, Bertrand, quote in History of Philosophy see page 816-818

thought is a ‘useful delusion’. James was sure that his beliefs were real, like facts, simply because he wanted to believe things for which there were no evidence. This ‘pathological subjectivity’ is at the root of all the religions, its true “esoterism” as it were. In this book I will be showing various ways in which religious delusions are useful to various churches, religious institutions, cult leaders, social networks, academics, reactionary and national politics, and charlatans, in addition of course to ordinary people--- who also have multiple reasons to delude themselves. I do not exempt myself from this description and this book is itself a testament to the ways I was once deluded by religion, but I woke up out of that. This book is the opposite of James book and seeks to reverse the corrosive uses of spirituality that James sought to justify. (this book is actually three books but here I refer to it as one thing, which it is too)

James does not question religion at its root. He mystifies the notion of experience, which is a very important notion. Our experience of life and the world is the basis of science. But in James this notion is torn from its roots in reality and made to serve fictional and delusional ideas. He is rather like a junkie trying to write objectively about the opium he is still addicted to. He tries to make up a “science of religion” but ends in showing how bankrupt religion really is. I am concerned here with viewing religion from a much further distance than James and with no admission that the realities it pretends to describe are real. I have much more extensive experience of the practice of religions than James ever had. I can show how they are bogus and why they are not true. There is nothing commensurate between religion’s ideas of god and the facts of evolution. Nor is or the truth of ordinary physics in any way the same thing as Buddhism or Hindu ideas, as I will show later.

In this book James’ the Will to Believe” has been negated, there is no reason to “believe “ anymore. The will to believe has been merely the will to ignore reality and dream fictions. Religious experience is misread and misinterpreted by the religious. The delusional nature of religion is

evident. What I have done here is to turn the “Varieties of Religious Experience” on its head and shown, I hope, that the notion of religious experience as having any truth in it is fallacious. I see no reason to negate truth as James does and celebrate religious delusions as a wonderful thing. Hence the title of this book.

The standard definition of religion in the Oxford Dictionary is “the belief in and worship of a superhuman controlling power, especially a personal God or gods”. But this so vague as to be useless. The etymology of the word is more helpful .

“English (originally in the sense ‘life under monastic vows’): from Old French, or from Latin *religio(n-)* ‘obligation, bond, reverence’, perhaps based on Latin *relegate* ‘to bind’”

This is better in that it implies social control, “obligation” is power relations and thus a ‘cult’ or an obligatory set of beliefs and social requirements and rules of some kind. The point of religion is the control and direction of subjectivity along lines that please an elite. This defines religion correctly as a form of politics conditioned by mythology. A more accurate definition of religion thus might be:

“a shared system of symbols and superstitions that is based on falsehoods, myths and fictions that tries to normalize relations between people in view of a power structure”.

Or to change this definition slightly:

‘a non-evolutionary but shared system of delusions and transcendental pretentions based on imaginary or symbolic data that has little or no basis in reality, and which is unfalsifiable and unverifiable, and which is used to separate groups of people and discriminate against an out-class on the basis of the fictional ideology of an in-class’.

Yes, these definitions capture the bifurcated, dysfunctional and split-minded schizophrenia of religion pretty well. Gods are unfalsifiable and unverifiable, since no evidence can be found for their existence, nor can

one say that they do not exist, also because of lack of evidence, other than vague feelings or false inferences of agency. People often say that god is evident because who else could have created nature, for instance, but actually there is no evidence at all that anyone “created” nature. This is the symbolist argument. People then say that they just “know” that god exists, when they do not know this at all. This is the subjective argument.

Religion occasionally does do good things, despite its firm grounding in delusions and make believe. It gives people a crutch to help them shoulder their losses. It occasionally helps the poor in soup kitchens of flop houses and helps the needy, all praiseworthy things, though it usually gives much more to the rich, and helps the poor stay poor. It comforts the widows, but only if they show signs of being willing to convert. It does wedding and funerals and this helps some people. Religion also creates a system of prejudices that people must follow, and punishments if they do not. But it remains is a form of social control, even in the current milieu where there is an obligatory non-denominational “spirituality” that requires an escapist, feel good, laissez faire openness which implicitly endorses the status quo and rarely questions authority.

Darwin, Pascal Boyer and the Evolutionary Theory of Religion.

Note: Along with the essay on anti-science in the last book and the essay on Chomsky's linguistics, this essay deals mostly with science. It dissents from the theories of Boyer and Dennett, among others, and claims that religion is not an evolutionary development but merely one of cultural development, power and social control, and even then it is hardly necessary and can be done without quite easily and well.

Is religion and adaptation and due to natural selection, or not?. I think not, and I will explain why. Much of religion derives from symbols imposed on nature or evoked by nature. This process of imposing artificial or cultural beliefs on the world goes way back, certainly, and appears to be motivated mostly by social needs. E.O Wilson thought religion was adaptationist because it involves “bonding”. But this tells us very little as bonding happens without religion, as anyone who has children knows. Religion is not necessary to bonding. Oxytocin is a hormone that helps a woman bond with their babies and does far more than religion could ever do. Killing children in times of famine or because of deformity was common. These were Darwinian reasons to do it since it helped others survive. Killing children out of malice is a very different thing and is denounced everywhere.⁶² In actual fact men are awash with oxytocin when they have a child, just as the woman is and this is one of

⁶² Hating kids among old men is a curious phenomenon, apparently due to plain dried up grouchiness and probably comes from watching too much football, man caving, having too much beer, obsessing about the job, or other less obvious reasons. Men in many species are loners, thrive on being out for the kill and think children are women's business.

the most powerful feelings in human and animal nature. It is more common in women than men and certain men seem to have little oxytocin, but then, such a man would be a very bad choice as a mate. Having experienced the Oxytocin rush myself with both my kids, I well know it is one of the best experiences in human life. It makes one love one's kids with little expectation from them. Those who missed this have really missed something very important and which ties one to all of nature.. Those who are not matured by such experiences are likely to still not mind killing animals for meat. Once one starts understanding nature and relations between mothers, fathers and children in many species, it is quite easy to give up meat. It becomes nearly impossible to make stupid jokes about eating animals too. One learns to respect their lives and all that they give for their young.

Indeed, the Virgin Mary images exploits just this kind of closeness that mothers can feel for their babies. Is an exploitation an adaptation? I think not. A few years ago I did a painting of a mother and child and women in general loved it. They responded just as I have seen women respond to portraits of the Virgin Mary and there was nothing at all religious in my work. So the Church is indeed exploiting an evolutionary response to children, which it overlays with its own delusions. To say that religion is evolutionary in this case is false. What is created by evolution is the human response to images of children. Church images of the Virgin are a lie into which is projected a real emotion and feeling that goes with parenting and being a mother or father.⁶³

⁶³ A good example of this is an essay in the New York Times written by Michale Peppard. He tries to claim that an ordinary image of a woman done around 200-250 CE, and drawing water from a well, is actually the Virgin. Not only is his interpretation of this image bizarre and unwarranted, there is no evidence such a woman ever existed. She is a myth which Mr. Peppard, and the Times, is trying to pander. Religions arise out of just such erroneous speculations.



Painting of my Wife and Son, oil, 2011
by author

Darwin thought religion is just an accident and not an adaptation. He writes that “It is... impossible, as we have seen, to maintain that this belief [in religious entities or gods] is innate or instinctive in man”. Darwin rightly maintains that various parts of human culture have an evolutionary basis. But he never says that all human behavior is evolutionary. Those who think this, and I have met some of these, are mistaken. Religion is not evolutionary, it is delusional, and depends on mistaken inferences. Jesus did not help anyone have a good day, find their keys, or hit a home run at a ball game. Such ideas are delusional. God does not watch the intimate thoughts or behavior of anyone, that too

is delusional.

Darwin thought many changes occurred in inherited characters and only a few became real adaptations. Religion was one such method of social organization, but it was not an adaptation.⁶⁴ Nature is full of possibilities and attempts and most are dead ends, or empty tries that did not work. One loves Mozart's music because it has a beauty of heart and this comes from the man himself. It hardly makes his music less because it is a product of people whose genes underwent adaptation. One loves it because it expresses something lovely and profound in humans and our world, just as science does. The fact that Mozart himself fell for myths of various kinds is beside the point. However, the Masonic myths he used in *The Magic Flute* are not adaptations, even if music itself is. Mozart's Masonic tendencies are merely mistakes of perception, social niceties and artificial constructions made up to keep an organization in thrall to the hierarchy, as well as to supply him with a story of hero worship. The roots of that may come from his authoritarian father, Leopold, and his reliance on aristocratic patrons, but that is not evolution, it is merely servitude for money.

Culture supports the artificial, symbolic constructions called religions as part of a social power system. They are not part of nature. While cooperative behavior does have adaptive value, religion is only one attenuated and extreme form of cooperative behavior and inessential. One could argue that it is not cooperative but more tribal, divisive and

⁶⁴ I will discuss many writers who think that religion is adaptive, Dennett, Boyer and others. Another writer who I do discuss in a different context, anthorology, is Nicholas Wade, who wrote a book, The Faith Instinct . The subtitle shows this is an apologia for religion "How Religion Evolved and Why It Endures" claiming that religion is evolutionary or adaptive, which I will show, is not the case. Claiming religion is evolutionary is a conservative position that is primarily about trying to justify current wealth and power relations, rather than question them. His book A Troublesome Inheritance: Genes, Race and Human History, was iedely accused of racism and shoddy schoarship, and he only possiitve review of it was by the racist author of the Bell Curve, another racist book.

warlike. While the drive for power may be an adaptation, this hardly means that tyrannical governments or religious myths are. A common mistake in all religions is making up verbal or visual symbols for things that are not real. But is this mistake due to evolution or a misuse of language as a symbol making faculty? Is Raphael's Jesus in his paintings a delusion--- yes, I think it is. I doubt that the ability to believe in the reality of make believe, is an evolutionary step for humans. Indeed the contrary might be true. But let's back up a few steps.

Rather than use the word "counterintuitive", as Dennett and Boyer do, I choose to describe religion by a simpler word: delusion. A delusion is defined as "a belief held with strong conviction despite strong evidence to the contrary". One can believe that the moon is green cheese but that does not make it so. As I will show later, the existence of Muhammad and Jesus are probably delusions of a similar kind, and certainly, their miracles and divinity are delusions. It has long been clear that religion is partly an effort to fool people into thinking death is not a fact and existence persists after death. Is there an immortality instinct? I think not, it is clear that the concept of immortality is a lie told to make humans superior to all other species, when, in fact, we are not superior at all.

This effort to lie to people is usually done for people's benefit, it is believed. Some so ardently believe this lie, I have heard people say that would wish to die if they did not believe there was life after death. Life after death is a fiction, as there is yet not one shred of evidence anyone has ever come back, so this is a belief that is certainly delusional. Gods are delusions. Anti-science is delusional. Even the notion that religion is evolutionary or that it has good results are possibly but arguably delusional beliefs.. Beliefs against global warming or evolution as well as all sorts of magical thinking, superstitions, visions and other mental fabrications and fictions are delusional too, once one sees the evidence.

James was wrong: merely imagining something does not make it so. There are many kinds of delusions, many of them discussed in these books.

William James was wrong, religion is not true because it is useful, it is useful because it is a lie. The beauty in it is always stolen beauty and so is irrelevant in its truth or untruth. Deluding people is useful to those who want power or who need a crutch. George Lakoff contends that narratives become brain structures, or patterns of thinking. If something is repeated enough it become worn paths in the brain. Repeated often enough, delusions seem to become facts. But this is dubious. Gambling reiterates the point of addiction, but this hardly means gambling a good thing to do, or that gambling is an evolutionary adaptation. Thinking Buddha was enlightened under the Bodhi tree or Queen Mary assumed into heaven hardly means these things are real. These are fictions that became “true” though being repeated over and over, even though such things never happened. This process of repetitive memorization, gambling or prayer, is useful to those who need delusions for psychological reasons or who want power over others. For some, simple delusions are preferable to more nuanced or complex truths. But repeating falsehoods hardly makes them true. There is a lot of evidence for this, as I will discuss throughout these three books.

This book completes my investigation of the subject of religion and draws conclusions about it. There has been a reversal of my views from 25 years ago. These three books are the record of that reversal. I tried on the certainties of religion and discovered religion can only be approached with doubts, from a point of view that favors science and evolution. Daniel Dennett notes in his Breaking the Spell that “Only when we can frame a comprehensive view of the many aspects of religion can we formulate defensible policies for how to respond to religions in the future”. Pascal Boyer’s Religion Explained, Dennett’s Breaking the Spell

and Richard Dawkin's the God Delusion and other books, including this one⁶⁵, begin comprehensive critique of religion based on science, but it still does not go far enough. Some of these books have some serious mistakes in them, which I will discuss. My point of view is not that of William James, however, as I do not grant religion reality.

William James tried to look at religion through science and failed miserably, as I will show. Dennett is certainly right that religion must be assessed from a Darwinian point of view, but exactly what this means is still an open question. I think he is mistaken in various ways. The problem with Dennett is that unlike Darwin he shows no real understanding of animals and denies we can know much about them, so he cannot be taken very seriously as a Darwinist.⁶⁶ E.O. Wilson also suggested such a study earlier. A proposal is one thing and actually doing it is another. This is not a new idea and has been started in Anthropology and Sociology to a limited degree. There are people in evolutionary psychology who have started looking at religion via the Darwinian model and that is a good, if questionable, thing. But, I do not find the current attempts to do that very satisfying and I will say why. I will ponder some of these proposals throughout these three books, in this long series of texts.

Some of these studies are so far disappointing, as they appear to tacitly endorse religion as a social construct, and even claim it is adaptationist, even while they appear to assess it from a non-religious

⁶⁵ My book differs from the "four horsemen" in that there is more knowledge of the actualities of religions, since I practiced many of them myself. My book is weaker in that it is less focused on one way of looking at the subject and covers a very large range of subjects. This might confuse some people. But I mean to cast a wide net here. I did not approach religion as an academic and will not write about it just as an academic. I mean to appeal to ordinary seekers too as well as scholars of wide and eclectic learning. I have always been interested in philosophy, and this book is a philosophical text that is not based on academic study but on lived experience in the real world. It crosses the usual disciplinary boundaries and I do not apologize for that.

⁶⁶ See his essay Animal Consciousness, what matters and why. 1995
http://instruct.westvalley.edu/lafave/dennett_anim_csness.html

Darwinian point of view.⁶⁷ Some of these researchers see religion as parasitic upon cognitive systems, a “by-product”, and that is probably not very accurate though the claim seems to be common. Religious concepts and norms are not exactly a “by-product” of evolution, but more likely a maladaptive by-product, perhaps.

Politics and religion are two sides of the same coin, both about social control—which generally means the preservation of power in an interested group. Is the will to power evolutionary? Since humans are now destroying large parts of earth’s beings and ecosystems it is hard to see most culture as adaptive. Language gave humans a symbolic means to magnify certain of its members over others and this had truly horrible as well as creative results. Normalizing or legitimizing power is the peculiar function of religion in political economies or even small human groups. Ideologies are systems of abstract thought, class concepts and myths are programs applied to public matters. How can any of this be said to be evolutionary or adaptive?

Language is another conceptual system that is political by its very nature. Once one sees just how such systems operate one is cured of them. Mythic or ideological constructions make their concepts central to religion and politics. Implicitly, every political, religious or economic tendency implies an ideology whether or not it is propounded as an explicit system of thought. The evolution of religious claims grows up as part of political strivings, behavioral control and the growth of ideologies. Christians claim a new world order, Buddhists claim to be able to save the world. All religions try to model behavior and force consequences on

⁶⁷ For an example of this see the example of this see this essay by Scott Atran and Joseph Henrich “The Evolution of Religion: How Cognitive By-Products, Adaptive Learning Heuristics, Ritual Displays, and Group Competition Generate Deep Commitments to Prosocial Religions” On the other hand it appears that “group selection theory” which also tries to explain religion, will fail, as I will explore later.

others via linguistic and social dictates. The function of religion is to magnify the motives of leaders and make them seem more powerful than they are. Religion and politics are symbiotic and symbolic.

The destructive capacities of language use are as yet unanalyzed. Certainly male testosterone plays a part in this, as generally social hierarchies are made mostly by and for men. Male competitive drives produce all sorts of delusional products, bragging, insults, pejorative constructions, inequalities, clubs and governments. The earthquake in Haiti in 2010 showed that men tend to hoard food and try to sell it, whereas women tend to distribute food equally. Metaphysical systems are by and large, and with a few exceptions, male centered systems of ideology, which denigrate female qualities and tendencies, center power in male images and denigrate nature and ecologies as female. There is an essay about male centered metaphysical systems below. (see: “Metaphysical Misogyny and Nature Hatred in Tantra, Buddhism, Christianity etc.”)

Moreover, notions of “eternity” and transcendence are designed to magnify motives, and they are used to give the patina or illusion of constancy and eternity upon a social class.⁶⁸ The claims of the religious

⁶⁸ To be specific about this, look at the 1485 painting of Mary, Queen of Heaven, by The Master of St. Lucy, whose name is unknown. See here:

<http://www.nga.gov/collection/gallery/gg40/gg40-41595.html>

and compare this painting to this 1638 Van Dyck here:

<http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/anthony-van-dyck-lord-john-stuart-and-his-brother-lord-bernard-stuart>

The fiction of the Virgin Mary presents her as a “Queen” who has transcended to ordinary world below and ascended into the musical heavens. The uses of “eternity” by the upper classes were many. Like the claim of the Mandate of heaven, the ideology of eternity is meant to ossify a social class into permanent rule. The Van Dyck presents a pair of young Lords, whose “transcendence” is more secular but who have also ascended bodily in the sense that they are extraordinarily tall and overdressed in Satins or silk. The one painting glorifies a symbol of religion that is also a symbol of monarchy and the other glorifies two young men of the Aristocratic class who would later be killed in the English Civil War of the 1640’s. The Stuarts, of course, were on the side of Charles 1 and the idea of Divine Right. Both paintings are political

are that they are 'beyond time' and this allows them to pretend superiority. They take on a patina of immortality or timelessness, as if reality required them. This is delusional. mortality has resulted in the killing off of billions of animals, forcing extinctions and spoiling most of the earth. This is not adaptive, indeed, immortality is an anti-evolutionary ideology. It is also an essentially political claim, based on specious and symbolic magnifications. Spirituality can be defined as sublimated politics . Once one understands how ideas of transcendence are used socially, one begins to grasp the need to transcend transcendence. Even the claim to be beyond politics is a political claim, since such a claim functions as a claim to superior power or to be beyond ideology. I will spend a lot of time showing how such magnified claims operate in various chapters in these three books.

It appears that the idea of "group selection" ⁶⁹ is probably false, as there is no evidence for this. E.O. Wilson supports this, mysteriously. Groups do not evolve, only sexual families and species evolve and change. This is because evolution is an affair of genes and individual couplings over time. Bat wings change because individuals bats who use them do better over time, if the design is effective. But religion is a social

and both are intended to glorify a certain class. Religious symbolism is thick in the first one but is sublimated in the second.

I find Van Dyck rather a repulsive painter because he seeks in most of his works to glorify the aristocratic classes using the same sort of distortions, elongations and propagandistic malformations as one sees in El Greco or in a different way in Michelangelo. In all these cases transcendence is basically a political concept that is adapted to 'spirituality' when necessary. Spirituality can be defined as sublimated politics. Transcendence, to "stand out from" is a political construction that implies superiority. The same is true of the concept "eternity". The purpose of eternity being to make a given class or deity permanent and thus to claim superior status to ordinary people who grow sick and die. Today's corporations make claims to be nearly divine persons too, as if they were beyond death and beyond the law. These all make believe fictions.

⁶⁹ see also David Sloan Wilson's "Darwin's Cathedral: Evolution, Religion and the Nature of Society" in which an evolutionary theory is coopted. The notion that religion is an "adaptation" is not any more accurate than to say the Darwin created a "cathedral".

and psychological phenomena, not a genetic one, and even if it falsely appears to be driven by biological aspects of the human mind. At the moment the Darwinian assessment of religion is rather sketchy and vague, but still promising in ways 'group selection' is not. Religion according to Darwin was not adaptive, and those who think it is, have to prove it, and they have not.

Dennett mentions the work of Pascal Boyer and Scott Atran.⁷⁰ I will be exploring some of the ideas of Boyer in this work but not Atran. Dennett endorses Atran in his book, and likes his approach and one can see why, as it is mentalist and offers some promise as an academic study. But since neither Boyer or Dennett know much about nature or animals it is very hard to take them seriously. Most people who have abused Darwin are deeply resentful of his notion that animals matter and we are animals. Religious studies is largely 'mentalist', in the sense

⁷⁰ Atran's work seems very flawed. Atran claims, mistakenly, in my view, that "religion is basically a neutral vessel", as if delusional superstition, outright falsehood and delusional fabrication could be neutral. There is nothing neutral about religion, indeed, politics and religion are flip sides of one coin. Religion does not reflect the nature of the human mind so much as it spells out ways to use and abuse various human tendencies and capacities. Atran's work appears to be almost an apology for religion and in some ways a justification. He writes for instance in an essay *How religion Creates Moral Society*, that "De Tocqueville surmised, correctly it seems, that religion in America would give its democracy greater endurance, cooperative power and competitive force than any strictly authoritarian regime or unbridled democracy." This is nearly a republican view of manifest destiny and I find it repulsive. His book *In Gods we Trust* has a similar point of view and tries to marry religion and science is a stew that embraces religions a political brew. Atran appears to be a true believer and even writes in his book that "lying and deception...which endanger the moral order, also provide the hope and promise of eternal and open ended solutions via representations of counter-intuitive worlds." (pg. 268) He is saying that the deceptions lies and delusions of religion give people great hope and sustain the moral order. In some ways this makes him like the Grand Inquisitor, who held something close to the same point of view, in Dostoevsky's *Brothers Karamazov*. It is good to lie to people because they are stupid and only want bread and circuses. Lies are good because they give people hope. Delusions are good because people need them, since they are stupid sheep and not much worth educating. I think this combination of religious deception and politics is exactly what needs to be dismantled and what the present book seeks to dismantle.

that it tries to explain abstract delusions without judging them, and thus assume human superiority and isolation. Religious studies is based on an assumed belief in the subjective superiority of humans. But there is no evidence at all that human subjective superiority is a real thing, it is merely a false, self-serving supposition, an ideological construct.

Actually, religion is closely akin to politics and if there is any ‘genetic’ aspect to religion that is found, it will be closely allied to the genetic factors that suggest human political arrangements or the creation of money systems or other useful fictions.⁷¹ “Useful fictions” are of course useful to a given class. I doubt religion is itself genetically based, just as money is a social creation. Language appears to be largely this too. While all living processes are ultimately evolutionary, this tells us very little. I see no direct correlation between evolution and religion, as there appears to be between music and evolution, for instance, where sexual selection is probably important, though there too, music is not essential to mating and the raising of young, as it is with birds.

According to Pinker, for something to be evolutionary, it must have a “complex design for some function, and the absence of alternative processes capable of explaining such complexity.” Money⁷² and religion are not directly created by evolution but are artificial social creations,

⁷¹ If there is any politics suggested by genetics it is the bottom up political system implied by embryology. The fetus does not develop by a top down blueprint, but by a bottom up shuffling of genes. Dawkins discusses this in his Greatest Show on Earth, at some length, (pg. 211-250). Nature too appears to be organized around a model of creative anarchy, with each species trying to survive on its own terms relative to the survival of other species, who are also trying to do what they can on their own terms. It is not an authoritarian or hierarchical relationship. Social Darwinism is incorrect and serves a corporate agenda, but that is not how nature works. Predators are actually the “bottom” of the “food chain”, and only survive if the plants and small animals do well. CEO culture is not at all a natural phenomenon, but basically an unfair and arbitrary dictatorship that should be jettisoned from politics, and human life, as well, as it is destroying evolved beings at a rapid rate.

⁷² Money is easily dispensed with, like religion. The times that I have used the barter system of trade, where no cash changed hands were very pleasurable and involved getting to know people well and spending time with them. I’ve done this trading fine carpets and art objects. I could easily see that the barter system has real advantages compared to capitalist greed, gouging, discrimination against the poor and centralization of money in monopolies.

like political systems, that serves class or clan preferences or parental fictions told to children. Some music appears to be this too, particularly that which serves powers.⁷³ The “Star Spangled Banner” is not a song that has to do with evolution; it is a song that celebrates America's killing of its own kids in political battles. Religion serves no inherent biological function. Money does not either. Both are human centered class and cultural creations. The excess incomes of the upper classes need not be awarded to them, indeed, it harms everyone that excess money is given to the rich. The financial system in America is largely in the hands of large investors who use computers to maximize stock market trades. It has little or nothing to do with “free trade” and lots to do with control of markets for the ultra rich. There is no biological imperative in this, it is merely greed for its own sake and technology run amok. The rich should be taxed heavily, and the fact that they are not is proof that their control of the governmental system is a burden and increases the danger the rich present to our continued well being and existence. It is easier to see the social function of music in its use in courtship and dance, or social gatherings, than it is to see the evolutionary function of wealth. Indeed, wealth, like religion, is an anti-evolutionary fact..

Religions are political organizations and ironically trace back to group dynamics in Chimp or Bonobo societies.⁷⁴ Jane Goodall claims human

⁷³ Donald Stout records in his History of Music (pg. 4) that Aristotle wrote

“ Let the young practice even such music as we have prescribed, only until there are able to feel delight in noble melodies and rhythms, and not merely the common art of music in which every slave or child and even some animals find pleasure”.

Sounds in which animals, slaves and common folk find pleasure are music too, and indeed, might even be better music than that of the elite, in some cases. But notice how he defines music as a class phenomenon. A good deal of culture is just this sort of class pretension.

⁷⁴ That religion is a ‘by product’ theory is useful in many ways. But it is not well worked out yet, and I doubt it will be. For instance, there has been as yet no real investigation into the animal basis of wonder. Jane Goodall shows marvelous footage of a chimp watching a waterfall struck with amazement and wonder at it, and this is clearly an antecedent to those emotions of reverence and wonder, devotion and rapt mystical attention that religion exploits so effectively. Darwin speaks of the evolutionary functions of wonder and beauty in his Chapter 3 of *Descent of Man*, a

societies are just more complex examples of similar tendencies. Religion is a speciesist derivative of misunderstood Chimp social dynamics, perhaps. She says humans are a mixture of Bonobo and Chimp genetics and we can choose either path, socially. We can be more matriarchal like Bonobos or more conflict driven and war like, like Chimps. Obviously, the more Chimp like way is killing us and the earth and has to be slowed down and discouraged.

In either case, religion appears to be a secondary phenomenon that grows out of service to ruling classes or clans. Power systems that support the uber-rich are no longer useful. Through religion the magnifying and hyperbolic nature of language creates fictional abstractions to exalt a given class or clan.⁷⁵ This means that religion is not a “by-product” really, as that term is more or less meaningless. Religion is merely a secondary mistake loosely derived from political misunderstandings and hyperbolic language use.

So while humans evolved means to communicate and create social orders, religion was not necessary to this. While one could say that political organizations are derived from the need to organize groups, religion is only indirectly a result of these needs, not directly related. This secondary and ad hoc nature of religions explains their widely diverse expressions as well as the fact that humans do fine without it at all. It is not an evolutionary need, it is a result of cultural conditioning. We do not need fictions like Santa, Christ or Zeus, and the creation of them is artificial and secondary, like comic books or money. Religion happened rather as an accident of our linguistic, sexual and mental make-up rather than as a genetic predisposition. Myth and religion have their

chapter I will refer to many times in this book. But while the capacity for wonder is evolutionary, the exploitation of wonder by a religion is clearly a social construction.

⁷⁵ To some degree music often serves ruling classes too, as does some, even most, art. In reading a History of Music recently I noticed that the author credits Christians with having destroyed nearly all record of Greek and Roman music notations.

origins in dreams, visions and delusions which combine with social power in irrational and unpredictable ways. While having night dreams is certainly a genetic predisposition in all humans and animals, assuming dreams to be real is a culturally conditioned thing. Dreaming is a genetic tendency but what is dreamed is not.⁷⁶ The immoral love of violence which characterizes most myth and religion is itself a kind of irrational dreaming, however testosterone based it might be. While dreaming is certainly an occurrence founded in us by evolution, religion is a secondary or even tertiary phenomenon that is not needed at all. It is easily dispensed with, like all the dreams we have, forgotten in the morning.

The same is true of money, which is not an inevitability at all, but a fiction created by banks, nations and interested parties. While sex, language and mental predispositions are instinctual or genetic in some sense, religion, money and politics are not. They are all highly malleable products of brains, sex or language—in short of social networks and thus serve power relations. So I will also explore the close relationship of religion and politics throughout this book, which I think might be a more fruitful approach. I see Boyer's approach to religion as the most interesting and thought provoking, even if mistaken, and so I will be looking at that too.

War, for instance, is grossly magnified by religion, which functions to escalate cruelty far beyond what chimps are capable of doing. Killing off up to 30% of neighboring tribes seems to have been a regular feature of ancient human and chimp tribes. But Chimp tribes are small and humans can kill millions and often do. While testosterone drives war for

⁷⁶ It has been shown that human sleep patterns are very similar to animals and even Bearded Dragons, a lizard. From this it follows that we are very close to animals of all kinds, and our dreams are not special or indicate some divine election. The products of sleep patterns are based on memory acquisition and not evolution. Once again, the supposition that dreams, visions or myths have some sort of factual basis is false. They are mistakes of interpretation, and thus are fictions.

both chimps and humans, human war is escalated by mind control techniques applied in boot camp and religious justifications that stigmatize the enemy as inhuman and “evil”. Language here shows its magnifying function to create deceptive, abstract concepts.

This is partly why I recommend religious studies be abolished as a department, and subsumed under a more scientific overview.⁷⁷ I question the purely academic study of religion in a few essays in this work. The scientific study of religion should not be directed by those who wish to propagandize for religion, as there is little or no objective merit to most religion and it can be very harmful if allied with nationalisms as it inevitably is. Science is opposed to religion because of religion’s irrational and “counter-intuitive” values, in addition to science being intrinsically opposed to the “transcendental” of all kinds. The ‘transcendent’ is itself a political fiction, a way of magnifying the motives of individuals and institutions. Much more work needs to be done to spell out how the bloody performance of these cultural ideologies have their basis in physical, bodily genes and structures. This has not been proven as yet and may not ever be. Since religion magnifies human tendencies and socializes them to be useful to certain people to the exclusion of others, it is clearly a form of exploitation and not a genetic disposition or adaptation. While there is evidence that aggression and group dynamics have a genetic basis, there is no evidence that religion does. Religion appears to be an irrational phenomena that grows from delusional

⁷⁷ Atran writes that "Science can help us understand religion just as much as it can help us understand the genome or the structure of the universe," This is perfectly true, but when it comes to dealing with harder issues, like the role of religion in history and contemporary conflicts Atran tries to minimize the role of religion and takes a “balanced” approach” which strikes me as facile and false, Atran’s idea is that religion and ‘sacred values’ inspire achievement of great virtue and great vice, in spiriting folk to glory or forcing them under the will to power is way of looking at religion that does not question it and really is not science. This neutral way of looking at religion without judgment is false and implicitly denies the empirical falsity of religion. Atran’s writings tend to sound like apologetics for religion. Atran is an apologist for the irrational and says that the ours is a “fundamentally irrational world”. He wants to meet the irrational with the irrational, which is a post-modernist point of view that unfortunately infects some anthropology these days.

thinking and myth, and gets adopted by political entities as a way of social control.

The “meme” theory, created by Dawkins, in 1976, has some interesting features. Dennett likes this approach too. But I have not used it in this book as I saw no reason to. It did not help to analyze the data I am exploring in this book, which is far too complex. Meme theory is artificial in many ways, and tries to impose the idea of evolution on ideas and information, where they do not really fit, as ideas are diffuse and not specific and transmission of them is not precise or even traceable in many cases. The meme theory is based on analogies. This is interesting and brings out some features about how ideas “evolve”. But one is dealing with things that are sometimes fictions and sometimes not and meme theory throws the idea of “truth” out the window. ⁷⁸ Religious delusions are stubborn and do not die easy deaths. True believers are willing to go through fire rather than give up their favorite delusion. There is some truth to meme theory in the sense that people cling to their ideologies, and ideologies propagate by apparently “evolving” transformations, but this is not a Darwinian evolution. It is merely “influence”, as in Van Gogh was influenced by Jules Breton, for example. Indeed, Meme theory might just be an aesthetic theory or sorts, a way of judging relationships and transformations in preferences. But how this happens is a hugely complex matter and is not a matter of how species differentiate at all.

The analogy with Darwinism fails in Meme theory. Victor Stenger tries to uphold the idea on the basis that memes are “information” just as DNA is. This is quite true, but there is a mistake here. An idea is not a

⁷⁸ One author calls them “worthless cultural viruses” which might be going too far, as ideas are not viruses- again memes are merely analogies. see <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/12/07/memes-dreams-and-themes/?action=click&pgtype=Homepage&clickSource=story-heading&module=opinion-c-col-right-region®ion=opinion-c-col-right-region&WT.nav=opinion-c-col-right-region>

living thing, but merely a thought. It hardly means that use of a circus act by one circus ‘evolved’ into a slightly different circus act in another circus. There is no selective advantage here. There is a chance that it might make more money for the circus. Making more money is not the same thing as growing wings to fly or eyes to see with. In the transmission of ideas, there is not actually a physical change, as there is in true evolution of species. It is hard to see nonphysical things as having physical properties. Meme theory mistakes ideas for evolved natural processes. While this analogy enables one to trace car or barn styles, it is not an evolutionary theory, it is merely a useful aesthetic or historical game to play in looking at the changes ideas or things go through over time.

Meme theory makes a mistake akin to the fallacy of misplaced concreteness. Ideas are not things. While Meme theory is interesting as a sort of thought experiment, I have doubts about it applying to actual behavior and history, though someone applied it to tracing the development of the Tepee, or the history of different barns found in America. It could be applied to pie recipes or car designs. Again this is merely aesthetic appreciation of influences. So this is really a form of aesthetic analysis and not a very fruitful one. It certainly has no scientific merit. It is merely a pursuit of analogies and influences and thus is an explanatory device. I will show a much deeper way to analyze aesthetic phenomena later in these books.

Darwin’s notion of cultural evolution was more nuanced and does not imply a neutral attitude of ideas or meme participating in evolution. Rather he implies that pathological cultural variants, such as religion, are not instinctual, but counter-adaptive. I agree with Darwin and not with Dennett on this.

However, Pascal Boyer’s thought begins an inquiry into the role of evolution and cognitive development in religions, traditions and

institutions. He tries to answer whether “religious thought and behavior constitute an adaptation or a by-product of adaptive cognitive function.”(2008) In other words, is religion evolutionary? Of course to begin such an inquiry hardly means that such an inquiry has merit. It appears unlikely that evolution, in the usual Darwinian sense of natural selection, has had much effect on religion as religion is not very old. It is probably not an adaptation, but a “by-product” which tells us nothing, as every living thing is a product or secondary “by-product” of evolution. Tracing the ‘fitness’ of a given religious ideology is nearly impossible in such short time spans as the last few thousand years, 20-30 thousand years at the outside, since behavior that can be construed as religion began. So Boyer and others suggest that religion is a by-product of other, evolved faculties in the human brain. This is no doubt true in one sense, as all things mental or social come from our bodies and brains ultimately. Fake burping by 10 years old kids, or slap stick comedy can be said to be a by-product of evolution. But neither slap stick comedy, money nor religion are directly a result of evolution, they are artificial creations made by kids, social classes, clans, groups or elites in their own interest. They have no more reality than the content of dreams and myths, which in fact are what religions are. So by-product theory is not just questionable, but probably false.⁷⁹

There is no denying that humans are creative, and make things up. My kids are amazing at doing this, far beyond what I can do in my old age. This is not a good or bad tendency, but the products of dreams or make believe are not themselves the result of evolution, but merely a secondary effect, like farting or burping are secondary effects of eating. Religion is perhaps a tertiary by product and even more distant from our

⁷⁹ Gould tries to say that Bird wings were originally meant for something else and so are exaptations or spandrels, by-products, in short. But actually bird wings were adapted from gliding wings and before that, arms, and all this, arms, gliding and wings, is adaptive, so there is no need to complicate this or other adaptations with such terms.

physical make up than burping or farting. Dreams are necessary to maintaining health, certainly, but the content of dreams is not, and appears to be dictated by biology and the conflicts of the dreamers conscious life. Boyer mentions, for instance, the tendency of humans to infer agency. If someone dies something must have killed them. This is a logical slippage, a kind of mental mistaken misreading or dyslexia. Imagining a spirit who might have killed someone is not a big leap for the human mind—it is a sort of dreaming, perhaps a paranoid leap. Sometimes the logic in such inferences is sound and sometimes it is wild and make believe. So, people make up stories about hidden agents or forces that may have caused the things that happen to them, such as illnesses or imagine, falsely, that devils tempted them, angels helped them through a trouble, or to win at a lottery, or spirits that brought about calamity or made them lose their keys. This is neither logical nor factual. By product theory does not distinguish between sensical, empirical and irrational or nonsensical inferences. Religion begins with such “counter-intuitive” inferences, mistakes, or delusions, if you like. The religious believer thinks their ‘god’ made their favorite baseball team win, or got them the well paying job. Their god made them see the car they wanted so they bought one of those. But that hardly means religion is a product of evolution, it is merely a category mistake, an illogical slippage. Eating the dead god in the Eucharistic rite is no more effective than a homeopathic pill, it is merely a placebo with no active ingredient at all. Gods are just that, pills with no matter in them, mere placebos, make believe, pure and simple. In H.L Mencken’s excellent essay “Memorial Service”, he answers the question about the whereabouts of the Dead Gods. He ends by saying that “All were theoretically omnipotent, omniscient, and immortal. And all are dead.” If Zeus, Quetzacoatl and a hundred other big gods are not just dead, but never really alive, what can one say of Jesus or the god of the Bible or Bhagavad Gita or Koran? There were thousands of them and they all were merely the fictions of

yesteryear. Is religion evolutionary, no, no more than any absurd system of paranoid thought, or slippage of logic. They are merely the conmanship of former regimes of social control and power.

⁸⁰

What becomes clear once one has read enough of what Boyer says is that he is playing an academic game. He tries to write as if religion were evolutionary, when really he knows it is all fiction. He says this in his blog. He writes:

“we have to engage in a particularly delicate rhetorical exercise, showing that cognitive science and evolution have a lot to say about what people usually call "religion", and gently leading people to the realization that "religion", like aether and phlogiston, belongs in the ash-heap of scientific history”⁸¹

This is dishonest “rhetorical” game playing and does Darwin no credit. Darwin does not mince words like Boyer does and clearly calls religious fictions, “strange superstitions” ⁸² Darwin also does not try to justify these superstitions, but rather compares them to a dog growling at a parasol being moved by the wind.⁸³ . In other words he thinks such figments of imagination are irrational or delusional, as they are. This Darwinian thesis against religion is very fruitful, and I have adopted

⁸⁰ There is a list of over a thousands dead gods here:
<http://www.graveyardofthegods.org/deadgods/listofgods.html>

⁸¹ <http://www.cognitionandculture.net/home/blog/35-pascals-blog/764-why-would-otherwise-intelligent-scholars-believe-in-qreligionq>

⁸² Darwin Descent of Man, Britannica Great books, #49 Chapter 3, page 303.

⁸³ Darwin’s analogy of a dog chasing and barking at a parasol is a good one. Similar experiments were done with pigeons and the pigeon would wrong associate wing flapping with getting food. False association like this are common in humans and sometimes occur in animals too.

aspects of it in this book, but I think it is very young as yet, too narrow and incompletely explored. Darwin does not think, as Boyer and Dennett do, that religion is evolutionary. Changes in religions are more akin to change in politics or fashion than to actual physical evolutionary change.

Darwin's view of these things is rather different than Boyer, though Boyer takes his basic ideas from Darwin. The shortcomings of Boyer's theory are clear, as they are the same as the shortcomings of Stephen Jay Gould who probably originated the "by-product" theory. Gould claimed, wrongly, that "natural selection has almost become irrelevant in human evolution. There's been no biological change in humans in 40,000 or 50,000 years.". This is hardly accurate, since we now know that humans mated with Neanderthals during this time. His by-product theory seems to have the intention of creating a homocentric speciesism of the sort that Chomsky would later adopt. This is very wrong, and millions of genetic changes have happened to humans. Gould's attempt to erect by-products in place adaptations is false and has no science behind it. So, I do not think evolutionary psychology has gone far enough yet in its analysis of the evolution of religion.⁸⁴ It is still stuck in notions of "by product", "memes" "exaptations" and "spandrels", none of which are very helpful, or even real categories. They merely attempt to describe adaptations of adaptations, or even worse, they sometimes describe things that spontaneously generated from who knows where, like fashion, money, religion and language. They are products of culture, not

⁸⁴ Angleus Selisius' notion that the "the rose does not ask why" does not justify spirituality, as he thought. On the contrary, the ignorance of the rose of the processes by which it was made is all about evolution. It's beauty belongs to itself and is not a symbol. It was partly the result of both natural and artificial selection. Both of these are largely inchoate or unconscious processes. It is important not to confuse the unconscious with the spiritual as the first is merely ignorance of physical process whereas the second is a pretence to know something that does not actually exist. While they seem similar on the surface they are not at all. Religion often employs these specious analogies and is largely based on these illogical slippages and sloppy thinking..

evolution.

Boyer follows Gould's theory and treats religion as if it were a fatality of human evolution, as if we had no choice but to be deluded. Exactly how god "lives in our heads" and became the silent ruler in the human brain is easily explained by propaganda and proselytizing by the priests or shamans. Exactly how 'by-product' theory physically works is nowhere stated and the basis for it in non-human animals is not very defined either. One reads Boyer's book and feels that there is no escape from the delusion making faculties of the human mind, put there by evolution. People create religion and give "airy nothing and habitation, and a name", he thinks. This is not science, but ghost hunting. He writes that

People do not adhere to concepts of invisible ghosts or ancestors or spirits because they *suspend* ordinary cognitive resources, but rather because they use these cognitive resources in a context for which they were not designed in the first place. ⁸⁵

People are merely delusional in communities, obviously. Why should illusions be adaptive? Why should the human tendency to superstition be adaptive? It is not, and calling it a by-product, does not dignify it with evolutionary status either. Boyer says that religious ideas and fictions "are firmly rooted in the deepest principles of cognitive functioning." Really? But this is simply not true as Darwin himself understood. Darwin says clearly that belief in God is not an adapted instinct in humans. It is not programmed, it is learned and laboriously learned in different ways in different cultures. It is nowhere the same. What similarities there are merely accidental analogies—illogical slippages.

I can see this in my children, who do not infer agents at all, as they

⁸⁵ http://www.csicop.org/si/show/why_is_religion_natural

have never really been taught to. Inferring agency is not an inborn mechanism as Boyer claims, but is taught as a way of stratifying social contexts. One can easily escape the delusion making tendencies of human language, politics and culture. There is no inevitable fatality in it. There is no “invisible hand” of evolution that presupposes people to religious delusions, as Boyer claims. Boyer’s use of this capitalist market term does not belong in a discussion of religion. Nor strictly speaking is religion literally a “by-product” which is a term used in meat factories to describe unwanted organs or animals parts, which were, indeed, created by evolution. When I use the term ‘by-product’, I just mean that religion is a social creation that arises from the misuse of language or cultural/political/psychological fictions to create an ideological system. But it is far too ambiguous a term to employ regularly. Religion is by no means an inevitability of biology. It is a by-product of sloppy thinking, false analogies or magical thinking, misplaced concreteness or social engineering. This means that religion is not real, it is a mistake, a non-adaptive fiction created to seduce or deceive, for whatever reason. It is not a “by-product”, much less a product of natural selection, as a Giraffe’s neck is.

Darwinian evolution does not apply, convincingly, to recent cultural changes, though one can extrapolate backwards to origins of behavior in the brain and thus back to evolution. But this merely means that mistakes have been made in how information and language have been processed. Ideas are not genes and can be changed or altered at will. Darwin noted that languages and species both develop by natural selection.⁸⁶ He does not say that there is the “same” process that accomplished this, as Dennett claims. Darwin actually says that language and the species development are “parallel”. Parallelism is not sameness. There is merely an analogy between language and evolution.

⁸⁶ Descent of Man, Britannica great books, pg. 300, chapter 3, section on language

Dennett and Boyer should know this. But they seem to have forgotten it.

Elsewhere Darwin notes that language has to be learned and thus “language certainly is not a true instinct” as is the development of species. The word “instinct” in Darwin is more or less cognate with the idea of genetics now. This is to put language in a questionable or ambiguous domain compared to species. Boyer and Dennett and Pinker misunderstand this, as does Chomsky. Note that Darwin says that language and religion are not “instincts” and are probably not genetic. I don’t know if he realized that religion and language are so closely related phenomena. They are not adaptive even if they ‘parallel’ adaptive processes.

It appears that humans have evolved to have language, both in their brains and to a lesser degree in our throats. But the ability to acquire a language requires a good deal of training, and thus is to some degree is not a genetic inevitability, but rather a propensity that requires a great deal of education and that developed late in human history. This appears to be the case in birds too, and no doubt other species in different ways. Dennett uses the analogy of the parallelism between language and species to try to further his Meme theory. But to do this he has to stretch the theory of evolution beyond reason. To go ahead and claim religion as a “natural phenomena” certainly does not follow any real evidence, indeed, the evidence suggests otherwise. Religion appears to be entirely artificial, and a form of fiction, and that means it is not at all a biological fact, but a mistake that grows out of our language, our political culture and our imagination or our brains abilities to imagine, dream or obey our parents.

. Organized religion as it is known today is not much more than 4,500 years old, going back to the Indus civilization in Harappa and similar state religions in Egypt and early China. One could stretch it and imagine it goes back to the origin of agriculture, supposedly in the Near East, among the Natufians around 11,000 BP. This was a warrior society

that used religion to keep social control. Somewhere between the Natufians and the Harrappan culture is when religion really begins.⁸⁷ Other theories try to say that ancient burials show symbolic orientation or rudimentary art, and that is true. But it is not yet religion. Religion begins when social hierarchies started replacing equalitarian foraging that was the main political reality of most of human prehistory. Priests and accountants are administrators of surplus injustices. Religion begins with the ability to magnify injustices and deceit by administrators and priests. It is the creation of bureaucracies of injustice.

There were no doubt mystical tendencies—expressive superstitions--- in tribal cultures before that, all the way back to Chauvet in 35,000 BP. But in that case religion is not organized but largely depends upon the irrational trance states of Shamans or medicine men and women as well as the superstitious agency that Darwin speaks of. Nearly all early art is either about birth giving or animals, and as such is about those very things that are rejected by “metaphysical systems from Hinduism and Christianity to the Tao and Allah, which are male centered constructions that deny procreation and animals as “lower” phenomena. ‘Higher’ reality in religions is the metaphysical nonsense of the priests and seers.

Magical thinking, really mystical fictions are probably as old as language and I think it is probably an effect of the easily generalized abstract character of language, which allows for, and even encourages, symbolic mistakes of reasoning and erroneous analogies and suppositions. Eating goat testicles will not increase virility, but ancient Roman and earlier men thought it would, as men in China today

⁸⁷ Nicholas Wade seems to think religion began with language which may go back to 45,000 years ago. I doubt that is the case. What does go back 45,000 years is the use of symbolic speech or objects and this involves a certain ability to be abstract, and thus to deceive or pretend falsehoods. Language of another simpler kind seems to go back to Homo Erectus, hundreds of thousands of years ago. Many anthropologists brag about human capacity in using abstract symbols, but it is by no means a good thing in all ways. It is very destructive in many ways.

foolishly think Rhino horn will help them get erections. One can also ask questions about the social value of theatrical presentations, where language and gesture are used to create emotions and propaganda. For these to occur there needs to be language and again I suspect that the origins of religion goes back to sometime after the origins of the widespread use of language.⁸⁸ Neither Chomsky or Boyer address these concerns, as far as I can tell. I will talk about this in this book in various places.

Also, Pascal Boyer mostly stresses local and tribal religion rather than large scale religions of the historic period. This avoids the messy politics of dealing with early settlement of agricultural religions or Islam and Christianity. Boyer skews his evidence, as it enables him to avoid the political questions, for the most part. But any theory of religion needs to explain both. Ascribing ‘agency’ and inferring intentions to something that does not exist is a common mistake in human psychology, as Boyer and others show.⁸⁹ People imagine they have souls which migrate beyond death. This is opportunism and not evolution. They believe one can talk or ‘pray’ to an ancestor or a fictional ‘hidden deity’ in words, even if that abstract character does not exist or is dead or gone. Why people need this is ignored by Boyer.

⁸⁸ Roy Rappaport studied this in Tsembaga Maring tribe of Papua New Guinea and theorized that language and religion may have common origins. The origins of language evolved as part of human physiology and brain development, he thinks. Religion is not like that. Religion was apparently something of an accident brought about by political opportunists, an effect of social organization and the need to exclude those who were not fitting into the social hierarchies that developed in various societies. This suggests that religion was a political construction primarily and injustices created by religion in part flow from the insider/outsider dualism it creates. My theory is that religion and politics are basically of one cloth, though they emphasize different matters in the modern world. But the separation of church and state is an artificial distinction. Ideology and money merely take over the place once accorded religion. One could theorize that religion is the archaic part of economic/political thought which is dying off now. This also explains why many of the problems created by religion are not gotten rid of by non-religious states and corporate structures..

⁸⁹ See Pascal Boyer’s Religion Explained, which goes into this in depth.

Making unwarranted inferences about the intentions of deities is a common tendency in humans, as Boyer points out. In hunter gatherer societies spirits were thought to be everywhere, for good and ill. In settled societies the man in the next village might be trying to do evil to you by spells. In our society the same mechanism is in play with those who imagine 'Jesus loves you',⁹⁰ for instance. Shared and public declarations and avowals of affirmations in faith through ritual or ceremony helps to fix the fiction in the group. Blood sacrifices such as a piece of a penis in the genital mutilations of Jewish and Christian circumcisions supposedly help prove the "faith" of the believer, and mark innocent children for life with their parents cruel beliefs.

Boyer claims that such unwarranted inferences might have been useful to our species and the survival of groups and thus important in the formation of religion. I doubt that were useful to our species but rather were useful to gaining power of groups or individuals in social contexts. It is arguable this helped the group itself. How exactly did the murder of young people by the Aztecs help the society as a whole? One can only demonstrate that it helped the priests sustain their unjust power. Religions and politics grow together and both contribute towards creating power relations in a given society. Religions helped cement social castes or classes by exploiting the tendency to "counterintuitive" delusions, and thus might have aided human development in ways that might or might not serve our evolution. It is only clear, however that such views served certain elites at a given time and place, but that such views do not do so now. One could easily argue that religion had a negative value on evolution, as a positive one. The truth also might be that it had no effect on our evolution at all. But it can be said with certainty had a very negative value on those who did not belong to elites.

⁹⁰ I recently saw a Church sign that said "Our Jesus loves you more than other churches" which pretty much sums up the effort to sell religion as a group therapy or a capital enterprise with Jesus as the fictional snake oil that is to be sold.

It is hard to see the evolutionary benefit of an exclusivist elitism, caste or religious warrior mentality. It has a negative value for most people.

Indeed, I think the case can be made that religion helps harm social networks and has an overall negative value in terms to survival of both our species and non human animals. Yes, it helps the powerful stay in power, but can only do so by lying, cruelty and fear.

In its current formulations Boyer's theory raises many interesting doubts and questions. It has been developed out of work in experimental psychology, developmental psychology, and cognitive neuroscience, all converging toward a description of mental functioning. But it has not proved that religion is evolutionary, it only has suggested that delusions were useful to certain groups or individuals in social contexts. The "by-product theory" seems to be an utter failure and to explain very little.

Dennett tries to compare adopting a religion to the fact that human evolution presupposed humans to like sweets rather than bitter things to eat, so we have to force the discipline of not eating too much sugar, which is not good for us. Dennett says we accept religions because our mental makeup makes us prone to do so, as we desire sugar. But this analogy is false, as eating sweet things is a chemical and physical process and not at all like accepting the ideology or myth that Jesus died for your sins. Parallelism without sameness again. There is nothing physical in the mental accepting of a religion's fiction. People accept religions because of lack of education. Religion is not a natural phenomenon like eating, it is a highly artificial and emotional sleight of hand --- a mythical fabrication. It is merely a word game created by inflated terms, meant to seduce into a way of thought and myth based living behavioral codes. It is emotional coercion, not natural or even artificial selection.

Religion does appear to be a "by-product"—in the sense that it is a misuse of brain functions, but not an adaptation. Boyer cannot explain things like the Inquisition or caste, dangerous cults or non-religious but

destructive organizations like Stalin's Russia or corporate "personhood" that does great harm. Certainly, evolutionary explanations of religion or destructive systems of ideologies is now in its infancy, or should one say that it is merely a doll, and not a theory that will bear real fruit. It may be that the leap based on analogy that Dennett and Boyer make to have religion be a "natural phenomena" is just too unlikely, as Darwin already suggested. Darwin writes that religion is a result of mistakes in imagination and reasoning as well as dreams. Making mistakes or having delusions is not a "natural phenomena" but merely a mistake of perception. Such a theory might please William James who imagined truth only had to be useful and not real. But a scientific theory of truth requires reality, and Boyer, Dennett and James are not up to that requirement.

So it is my surmise that we must go beyond Dennett and Boyer and their thesis,-- it appears to me that religion is partly an outgrowth of misused brain capacity, as Boyer contends, but it is also a result of power relations in social contexts, as well of the abstract character of language. This hardly means that religion evolved as a way of misreading facts or employing magical thinking. Evolution seems to have nothing to do with it.

One common feature in all religions is the fallacy of misplaced concreteness. Early people misunderstood the abstractions of language as literal facts. Religious people today are still treating abstract things as concrete, committing the 'fallacy of misplaced concreteness', making category mistakes..⁹¹ Plato was wrong, there is no archetypal, abstract

⁹¹ I use this term rather wider than A.N. Whitehead did, who coined it. His meaning for it is peculiar and he applies it to space and time and I suspect was too loose with the idea. He appears to have thought that something in the present could not apply to the past and thus induction is questionable. But that seems quite illogical. I take the phrase to mean that abstract ideas should not be considered to mean something concrete unless they are proven to be so. This means that

'TREE', that is the mother or origin of treeness in all trees. There are only individual trees and species of trees. The "archetype" of tree is a fiction. The god idea is a similar example of misplaced concreteness. God is merely all analogies piled into one huge mistaken perception. There is no god, there is only the fictional ascriptions of infinite qualities to a linguistic term.

Religious fictions and delusions are partly the result of the abstract character of language. Language allows the inflation of fictional concepts such as the "body of Christ" to be placed over a metaphorical piece of bread or a church, at the same time, as if this metaphor were a real thing. This rather extreme example of magical thinking conflates a cannibalistic metaphor with both eating a thin piece of bread and a little wine and a community of people. This is basically a political metaphor and depends on never really being defined or spelled out, lest the fiction be exposed. Human DNA shows that people once ate a lot of people, and this is part of our genetic make-up. It is taboo now.⁹² But the Eucharist exploits that taboo to involve people in a bizarre and moving ritual. The white wafer exploits human fears and need of belonging by making a metaphor literal.

There is no "Christ" or God who is the "father" of all gods. These are misapplied metaphors extrapolated from misunderstandings and inappropriately ascribed agencies. Most of religion depends in some measure on the slippery and abstract character of language. I will discuss this shortly and I will be questioning the baneful role of Platonism as well as role of language in the formation of religion,

science must have real evidence of something existing. Science needs what Whitehead called a "critic of abstractions", and much of this book is about subjecting abstract ideologies to criticism.

⁹² "there is "strong evidence for widespread cannibalistic practices in many prehistoric populations," the researchers say. Frequent epidemics of prion disease caused by cannibalism in ancient populations would explain the existence of the protective genetic signature in people today, they conclude." <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/04/11/us/gene-study-finds-cannibal-pattern.html>

throughout this book.

So, going beyond Boyer and Dennett, another approach that has been very fruitful in studying religion as a social and psychological phenomena the work of R.J. Lifton. Lifton goes beyond Boyer in many ways, and avoids Boyer's many mistakes, though he wrote well before him. Lifton is known for his psychological inquiry into the causes and effects of war and political violence and for his theory of 'thought reform'. He was an early proponent of the techniques of psycho-history. This offers a better and less theoretical, real world example of an effort to create a science-based critique of religion.

The mis-named "anti-cult" movement is sometimes blamed on Lifton, Margaret Singer and others, but actually the -freedom from mind control movement, as it should be called, is completely reasonable and a good thing. Those who oppose it, are, in every instance I have seen, cultists, or far right fanatics, scientologists, or otherwise connected to repressive or far right regimes of unjust power. Those who have not experienced mind control techniques and how effective they are, thus do not know what they are talking about when they say such things do not exist. The critics of it are politically motivated. Cult deniers and apologists are a particularly backward group of people, akin to holocaust deniers, creationists and evolution deniers.

Lifton, Singer, Madeleine Tobias and others did some amazing work to outline the structural and psychological milieu and techniques of cults and religions. This approach had a basis in empirical observation of actual cults and organizations. It is wonderful work that has led many people to see through dangerous organizations, religions and governments. The critique of authoritarian leaders is invaluable. This science work has been little studied by Dennett, Boyer and others. I will devote a whole chapter to Robert J. Lifton and others who examined cults in this book. This book you are reading is primarily concerned to

examine the relation of religion to unjust powers systems and social control. Boyer and Dennett's thesis is very weak on that and needs bolstering. In any case, when appropriate I will be using all these modes of analysis in this book, from language analysis, to Lifton, and others and social theory. I do not think religion is either an adaptation for social reasons to insure group survival⁹³, nor is it a by-product of misused cognitive abilities. Both these theories are wrong. I do not swear by any one mode of inquiry and will use what I need to, to try to get to the truth if I can. I begin from Darwin's premise, which was that religion is superstitious and delusional and that gods are in no way the result of human adaptations.⁹⁴

This book is likely to be accused of being "biased" against religion. I consider the criticism false and to be biased by the delusions of religion. Being "for" religion is an untenable position. One cannot be 'for' illusions, one can merely be sucked into them or tolerate them or in the case of a good magician, enjoy them knowing they are tricks. The attempt to be neutral about religious delusions, as Atran and Boyer are, seems absurd to me, a sort of convenience of living in a lie. One cannot be neutral about what one knows is not true. One has a responsibility to question delusions, except in cases where a person might be too far gone to allow this, or too dangerous to question. Questioning a Taliban militant might get one killed.

Delusions are hard to enjoy and usually evoke pity or contempt. I seriously practiced various religions myself and didn't just look at them from outside as Dennett, Hitchens and others do. I understand how they functioned in my own mind and how I fell for their sleight of hand and

⁹³ Societies survive just fine without groupthink religions to keep them deluded. Societies that are deluded in contrast do not seem to do very well, as in the History of Papua New Guinea, which had nearly constant war and cruelty, most of it sustained by religion,, for instance.

⁹⁴ I maintain that both the adaptionist theory fo religion and the byproduct theory of religion are not only wrong but are contra-Darwinian, and Darwin would not have liked them either.

mind altering manipulations. I am not sure it is possible to look at religion with a “bias” against it, as religion has no real substance against which one can be biased. To be ‘biased’ against delusion is moral and decent, whereas to be in favor of “counter-intuitive” fictions and delusions is very odd and requires rather twisted explanations, if not outright dishonesty. Some Anthropologists need to be questioned about this.

To be “for” religion is a bit like being for the tooth fairy or Santa Claus, it is certainly possible, but it is an absurd position that involves lying to one’s kids. One’s kids figure out the sham eventually.⁹⁵ In my case, my wife and I decided never to lie to our kids about Santa, Tooth Fairy or the multitude of gods cultures have made up. My daughter bravely announced in her pre-school class that “there is no Santa, it is your parents”. This was quite correct and some of the parents were horrified she told the truth so openly other kids. We were reproached for

⁹⁵ Scott Atran writes an essay claiming that gods or religions are different than Mickey Mouse and Marx. He is wrong here. There are degrees of delusion, certainly. Religions are merely deeper forms of delusion that have been nurtured over centuries whereas Mickey Mouse is a corporate fantasy and Marx is a quasi-religion that has some basis in actual observation, however Marx’s conclusions may be questionable. Certainly state Marxism is a fairy tale, and very similar to a religious cult. Indeed, Stalinists I have known have been indistinguishable from cult leaders I have known in respect of their need of power and dogmatic ideology that structures the world in terms of Them and Us.

Interestingly, Stephen Jay Gould, who is not always mistaken, wrote an essay about Mickey Mouse in which he demonstrates that Mickey was in fact based on evolutionary adaptations which bring religion into question. These fairy tales tell about religion. Mickey, in the 1930’s, was originally a nasty little fellow, not at all the infant like charmer Disney eventually made him into. The large eyes and bulging forehead of human babies is made use of by Disney to get people to respond to Mickey as if he were a baby. This helps sell cartoons and tickets to Disney land. Disney was using the same device as the Catholic Church used in its many depictions of the Virgin and Child. This image was meant to win hearts to the Church by explaining what in fact an evolutionary and innate capacity for parents to fall in love with their babies because they are so “cute”. The reaction to cuteness being hardwired into parents to help the species survive. This is the case with many species and Konrad Lorenz showed. Baby Krishna also is exploited for this reason in Hinduism. Baby Jesus/Krishna and Mickey Mouse are closely related exploitive images. As Jeff Kripal has shown religion and comic books have a great deal in common. He fails to note that one should be as dubious of one as of the other, as both exploit young minds.

to read Gould’s essay see
<http://www.monmsci.net/~kbaldwin/mickey.pdf>

stating the obvious. Religions are maintained by just this sort of righteous self-delusion, where people try to force others to accept the nonsense they believe.

Even images like “Superman” or “Batman” have qualities of a civil religion about them, attempting to condition boys especially to accept hierarchy, violence in imposition of social norms and a certain quasi-militarism. If the Superman fairy tales reflected the myth of American exceptionalism in the age of Eisenhower and the Vietnam War, what was Christ or Buddha in various times and places but a local projection of motives on a fictional superhero? The history of art has a lot to say about this and I will be using art to reflect on culture a lot in this book

When one opposes religion one really just wants to clear the air of fictions and illusions. The fact that religions were useful in organizing societies into unjust power relations is hardly a factor in its favor. Survival was very likely done more harm than help by religion. Religions grew up to create hierarchies and they usually supported the upper classes, or the class that would supplant the upper classes.⁹⁶ I am creating a critique of the religious need to service power. This is an effort to give an anatomy of how belief systems operate to serve power. I am justifying science in this book. Many of my observations of religions are first hand and not merely derived from books. There is an attempt at an empirical approach here, and though it is far from systematic, it has been an ongoing inquiry for many years. So, with this provisional summary in mind, let us continue....

Most of what happens in religion is cultural and still largely

⁹⁶ Chinese dynastic successions are good examples of this, Often new religious ideas or variants of the old Confucian Taoist or Buddhist formulas would be part of what helped bring the new dynasty in. one finds a similar tendency in Sufi ideas, which would sometimes embody ideas anathema to the current ruling classes.

outside of scientific inquiry, even if some work is now underway to look at religion from a Darwinian point of view. Stephen Jay Gould's notion of "overlapping magisteria" now seems ludicrous. Science and religion are not commensurate entities. Indeed, there is no way to compare religion and science and sound reasonable. There are many attacks on religion by science, starting with Marx⁹⁷ and Darwin the 19th century, but really going back to Descartes the Nominalists and the Greeks. But there is as yet no thorough examination of the attacks religion as a whole makes on science, though creationism has been extensively studied and debunked. I outline some of these attacks in my third book and show how Darwinism's implications for religion are at the center of these attacks. The credibility of all those who attack science is seriously brought into question. As I will show there are even 'scientists' whose work is brought into question because of its allegiance to bogus cosmological ideas or the free market ideology of corporate personhood. Much of my book will be examining ideologies and practices of religions, in view of showing how religion is closely connected to power systems, historical forces and

⁹⁷ Early Marx is a very interesting writer. Peter Ackroyd, Dickens biographer notes that Marx wrote to Engels that "Dickens had "issued to the world more political and social truths than have been uttered by all the professional politicians, publicists and moralists put together" – This is a profound statement from Marx and is true about Dickens and shows that Marx, at least early on, was really paying attention to the plight of the poor and working classes, as was Dickens. Dickens by Peter Ackroyd, page 720.

My problem with Marx is in his solution, which gives all power to the state, which results in a situation as bad or worse than capitalistic greed. This letter to Engels, published in 1854, here: <http://marxengels.public-archive.net/en/ME1912en.html>

is not entirely right about Gaskell and Dickens. Somewhat yes, but Dickens did not have the courage of Gaskell and his support of the Strike at Preston was both weak and cowardly in various ways. Ackroyd discusses this at some length in his book and it makes one rather ashamed of Dickens who was too supportive of the upper classes at times. Marx is right about Dickens over all, but Dickens is a mixed case, as is shown for instance by his taking the Confederate side on the Civil War. But even this is complex, as Dickens is right that the North was not primarily interested in freeing the slaves as it was in taking wealth from the south. Many things in American history boil down to questions of greed, and the Civil War is one of these. It was an unnecessary fight about money, and the slavery issue should have been already done away with during Ben Franklin's time, who was already opposed to it. The English managed to get rid of it without a war: we should have too.

politics. I have added a chapter on Chomsky to show how even a secular thinker can take on a religious aura and become a cult like figure. I also wanted to examine how ideology become a kind of pseudo/spiritual brew with politics, all stirred together into a system that has no real basis in evidence but proceeds by dogmas and tacit assumptions

Religion is a drug of feelings projected in symbols⁹⁸ and nurtures mental constructs of magnified fictions and delusions of myth. The Creation myths of course, are political justifications allied with ideologies promoted through stories. The myth of Jesus is a story, for instance, about submission to a God ideology and eventually becomes the state religion of the Roman Empire. Evidence shows Jesus seems to never have existed, but was a mythic invention. The fiction of his life was penned by unknown people somewhere between 100 and 200 years after the Christ was imagined to have lived. You can see the myth grow over centuries until it becomes the ornate fiction you see in Renaissance and Mannerist painting of the 15th to 18th centuries. Now Christianity is a mostly a Protestant fiction, often used now as a justification of capitalism. ⁹⁹

⁹⁸ There are millions of examples of this, but one random one just to clarify is El Greco's paintings. (Domenikos Theotokopoulos) (Greek, 1541–1614) They are heavily distorted by mannerist elongations and distortions that are partly the result of Michelangelo's Platonist distortions as well as others of the "mannerist" school of that time. But there is also an element of Spanish mysticism in El Greco. The distortions of the body are inspired by a mystic hatred of reality and nature. This is reflected in the statement of El Greco's companion, Giulio Clovio that "daylight disturbed his inner light". This stress of inner "truth" is the source of many delusions. The fact that one feels something is not proof of anything. Many religions are based on cultivating inner delusions.. St John of the Cross is a similar example of the punishing and anti-natural tendencies in Spanish mysticism. from the same period. St John of the Cross and El Greco are not far in their zeal from the Inquisition. Theresa of Avila is in the same camp, as it were, all of them evidently inspired by Sufi mysticism to some degree and however obliquely, This is William James domain of religion as delusional subjectivity once again.

⁹⁹ A typical example is the claim made by far right republican ministers that Jesus said, the "poor we always have with us" and the "laborer is worthy of his hire" and these statements are used to justify destroying the middle class and giving huge tax break to the ultra-rich, who do not need them. Jesus was used to justify slavery in the same way, since he said, "servants obey your masters". The fact that the guy probably never existed is irrelevant, the main thing is that he justifies power and always has done.

Once the mythology is decoded, it is possible to look at what purpose the story is serving to the society that it arose in. The thesis put forward in evolutionary psychology that religion is a “by-product” of evolved brain processes, such as the dependency of children on parents and the abstract character of language may be correct, though yet to be fully developed. But by-product theory is questionable, as I have shown. Clearly myth developed to serve powers and hierarchies and to serve as an indoctrination tool and create behavioral models. Religion provides illusory security to a weak species who is easily afraid of the dark. Humans are fragile and vulnerable beings, with impossibly long childhoods, where they are utterly dependent on the truths or illusions of their elders during their early years. Enlightened education systems are still in infancy and often do badly in teaching the young critical thinking skills and independent scientific thinking that they need. Millennia of illusions have amassed in the minds of each new generation and get passed on in our languages from one generation to the next. Only in the last 400 years has this mass of illusion started to be cleared out and examined based on tests and counter-tests and compiling and comparing real evidence. Support of religions is support of eons of illusions. It is not at all surprising that many of these delusions still exist and exert powerful influence in our world.

Religion is useful to the far-right for various obvious reasons, as I will show in this book. But however religion might be useful to the far right, it is not true, as James thought, merely because it is useful. Magic tricks are useful but not true, novels are useful but not literally true, and political lies are useful but not true. Religions are part fiction, part magic tricks and part political lies. Machiavelli could write a good satire about this.¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰ I think Machiavelli's The Prince is actually a satire not a serious work of statesmanship as Henry Kissinger, Hitler, Lenin and other practitioners of cruelty in politics have thought. Indeed the list of those who take the book on its own terms is itself an example of shameful leaders and

The mystery of things is best dealt with by an approach that is scientific. I state this conclusion up front, so those who are still stuck in religion and hate science can jump ship here. Those of a more open mind will be able to traverse the whole ocean of delusions that the religions have created over several millennia. I begin to “frame a comprehensive view of the many aspects of religion” as Dennett called for. Though I do not pretend that this is done rigorously enough. I am basing my conclusions of reams of evidence and research over decades. I have not yet answered the second part of Dennett’s hope for the future. He calls for a way we can “formulate defensible policies for how to respond to religions in the future”. I am not sure I can speak to the future, though the future is welcome to all that I have learned.

I do not yet know how to deal with religious delusion in a systematic way, beyond convincing one mind at a time, by reason. That is a very difficult task, as religions have mechanisms to prevent any questioning of them. Religions like to call anyone who criticizes them a devil, or evil. Doing that is a form of guilt tripping thought control. Religion is not truly a “by product” of evolution, but a misuse of human capacities for political purposes that serve an in-group against an out-group. To criticize religions really means to criticize those who derive authority and power from the promotion of delusions.

In any case, I will be wandering the globe from religion to religion, into valleys and mountains. Analyzing and comparing, stretching the limits of my own mind to explain the evidence I have here compiled about

their twisted beliefs. Praise of the Prince as a book of politics on its own terms is a litmus test for bad leadership. “Realpolitique” is really lazy statesmanship that is good for those who want to excuse immoral political power seeking. I think there is evidence that Machiavelli was really a very moral man and his immoral picture of the Prince is really a diagram of what a Prince should not be. It appears to be a satirical portrait of the Medici family, who had their Mafioso characteristics praised, ironically, in the Prince. The Medici had tortured Machiavelli. I doubt that when Leonardo and Machiavelli became friends it was because neither of them admired Caesar Borgia. As Garrett Mattingly wrote “The Prince contradicts everything else Machiavelli ever wrote and everything we know about his life.” It is a satire and to think otherwise is to malign Machiavelli and embrace , cruelty, brutality, deviousness, lying and treachery in politics.

the history of religion. I do not subscribe to “pluralism” when it comes to religion as Muhammad Legenhausen and David Fideler do. The belief in the various religions all having ‘their truth’ fades when you begin to see that they are all make believe. When I was a small child Christianity seemed all embracing and scary, and when I was six images of the bloody crucifixion, blood dripping down the side and feet of Jesus, made me want to vomit or faint in Church. My parents forced us to go to Church until I was eleven. Now Christianity itself is merely an historical aside and rather a digression. I do not take it seriously at all. Indeed, it is largely a negative force that holds back progress, even if it does sporadic good here or there for homeless people or encouraging ‘morals’. The crucifixion was an image that exploited suffering to benefit an institution. It is a powerful image, but it is not history, it is mythology, adult make-believe.

At a certain point one grows up and begins to distinguish myth and fiction from fact. In a chapter below called “The War between Christian and Islamic Fascism and the Myths of Jesus and Muhammad” I will discuss the fact that both Muhammad and Jesus are largely, perhaps entirely, fabrication and myth. These myths are a series of stories created over centuries. It is doubtful Christ ever existed as a person. Fundamentalists seem deluded to the extreme and persist in their delusions despite any reason, and claim, as Pascal did, that “the heart has reasons that the reason knows not of”, which is a clever sentence but which again shows that religion is fundamentally delusional. There is no valid history of Jesus. The reasons for this are fairly clear, as I will discuss. He is a myth and not a history. Delusions of a religious kind give its addicts a sense of power.

Blaise Pascal was quite a mathematician and unfortunately gave up science to join the Jansenists. He seems to have realized this might be a mistake and calls the group a “cult”, at one point, which of course, it was. But reason kept leaving him and he dallied with this cult for some

time. It is too bad that he could not give it up entirely as he gave real contributions in his science and could have done much more if he had not wasted himself in religious controversies.¹⁰¹ He felt an irrational power in religion. But if one gives that ‘power’ up, one outgrows religion like one outgrew diapers or childish nightmares. The “heart” that has reasons can be quite stupid and when one is able to think about what one feels, and not merely feel it, matters can improve. One can decide which emotions are based in reality and which ones are not. There is no cognitive need of religion, even if there are cognitive needs for power plays, sexual selection or survival depending on group chauvinism.

But having researched and studied it for years, I have long felt an obligation to face up to the failure of religion and tell others what I know and have experienced. I hope to save a few from having to go through all I went through. This book has been written very slowly and with a deep sense of duty. But I took no joy in the subject of religion and the far-right itself. Indeed, I find the domain of religious studies rather ridiculous, and this is not a religious studies book, on the contrary. I think religious studies scholars, by and large, and with a few exceptions, are irresponsible people who lie to students and preach delusions in public universities. Few of them have any objectivity and most promote all sorts of unanalyzed myth and superstitious rubbish under the guise of being “balanced”. Many “balanced” studies tend to accept absurd ideologies like creationism or climate change denial and set these up against the vast evidence of evolution and climate change

¹⁰¹ I read the Pensees in my teens and liked what I understood of the wonder and amazement he expressed. I picked them up a few years ago and found them well written nonsense. Indeed, what shines in them is the rationalist and what fails in them is the converted zealot. He occasionally speaks the truth despite himself as when he says in the Chapter, “the miseries of men without God”--- “I cannot forgive Descartes. In all his philosophy he would have been quite willing to dispense with God. But he had to make Him give a boost to set the world in motion; beyond this, he has no further need of God.” But this is exactly what is good in Descartes, who saw more deeply than Pascal. Descartes is the begging of science and the end of the medieval period and has the good and bad of both. Pascal did not see this is and is thus less deep than Descartes.

Religion as a subject should be subsumed under science and not be its own department. It has been over twenty five years since I had any interest in religion as a “believer”. I would rather ignore the subject if I could. But out of duty and a sense of wishing to help others, I have worked on it for many years. What little joy I have gotten from it is not from the subject itself. There is joy for me in the scope of the scholarship and the intricacies of truth seeking that have involved me in researches and inquiry. I like study and history, art and philosophy and these things helped fuel my interest.

The thesis of this book is compelling and has led me to many discoveries. I love knowing and the following out of knowledge. However, this task was never a happy task, however seemingly unending. Religion is indeed an object of scientific inquiry to me now, and not a subject to be considered as of value in itself. Religion is not at all a “natural phenomena” as Dennett contends. Indeed it is largely the opposite of that. It is anti-natural, by and large, and seeks to supplant natural observation with mythic ‘facts’ that are not real. One could say that parts of Taoism is natural in that it uses nature in a symbolic way in paintings and poetic metaphors loosely based on nature. Similar things can be said about indigenous religions, like Aboriginal Australian myth or Native American myth and belief. Magical thinking is the tendency to imply causal relationships between actions and events when there is none. Chinese medicine implies Rhino horns increase virility simply because they are associated with penises, but this is erroneous, and Rhinos are nearly extinct due to this stupidity. The Tao Te Ching(11) is full of magical thinking. says that “thirty spokes gathered at each hub, absence makes the cart work” is a clever idea but that is not why wheels work at all. Actually, wheels reduce friction and create leverage, and that is why they work so well. It has nothing to do with the absence between spokes, wheels have been made that have no spokes and they work just as well.. Contagion is not caused by evil eyes or witch doctors getting a lock of

your hair. But if one analyses these myths and superstitions carefully, it is clear that they mostly employ magical thinking. In Taoism, for instance nature is roundly condemned as having to do with the “ten thousand things”. Thus nature equates with the Hindu concept of Maya or the Buddhist ideology of Samsara, which are fiercely anti-natural constructions. Religion is not a natural phenomenon at all, but an artificial social and mythic construction, largely based on magical thinking. Many people in the West accept Buddhist or Hindu thinking without being aware of what nonsense they accept.

I literally prefer insects, frogs or birds to religion, but study religion as if it were another natural and distorted artifact, like say, alcoholism or racism. It is not such an artifact, exactly, of course. Dennett is mistaken to think that religion is a “natural phenomena” as say, trilobites were, or mushrooms are. It is an unnatural phenomena that pretends to be natural,--- its duplicity being part of its success. But it is not like a saprophyte, which can be harmless or beneficial to the host that is ‘parasitized’. Religion is a parasite to the lower social orders and a tool to oppress others for the upper orders. The parasite model is not quite accurate either, as parasites have a natural existence, whereas religions are parasitical without being natural at all. While religion is not a “by product” of some human mental faculties, but rather an abuse of them, the concept is highly problematic. The use of the “by-product” idea in Dennett, Gould and others is its questionable.

Far more interesting is the work of G.J. Romanes¹⁰², who was a follower of Darwin and who followed Darwin’s argument that there is not that much difference between animal and human intelligence. This idea

¹⁰² His Animal Intelligence is very interesting, and ahead of its time, as is his The Mental Evolution of Animals. <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/40459/40459-h/40459-h.htm>

More recently see the works of Marc Bekoff and David Quammen on animals and evolution.

was recently shown to be accurate in the proof that humans have some Neanderthal DNA, thus tying us back directly into evolution. This was the right way to go, and it was the way that Darwin himself wanted to go, but it was stopped by a speciesist version of science that was wooden and false., Newer attempts need to be more thoroughly done than has appeared up till now. Animal intelligence needs to be taken seriously and human conceit put down, and made to size with other beings on the earth. Darwin was very close to the natural world, not just in his voyage on the Beagle to South America and the Galapagos, but in his own life, studying barnacles, pigeons and many other species. He had much to say on how intelligent worms, or wasps are. He saw intelligence in vultures, where others only see rotting meat. This closeness of science to the actual animals was lost as academics mangled evolution with number crunching genetics and bogus ideas of human consciousness as supreme. There are people now trying to follow the line of inquiry that sees animals and humans are closely related and this the fruitful theory to follow in the future. .

The fault for the ruination of the Darwinian by speciesism lies partly with the false scientific speciesism of people like Conwy Lloyd Morgan¹⁰³, who insisted scientists limit all talk of “higher level” description of animal mentalities while exalting descriptions of human behavior that make humans the recipient of an evolutionary organ of godlike consciousness. His notion of “emergent evolution”, would have appalled Darwin and

¹⁰³ Lloyd Morgan wrote his “canon” Which states: *“In no case may we interpret an action as the outcome of the exercise of a higher mental faculty, if it can be interpreted as the exercise of one which stands lower in the psychological scale”* This became a kind of academic dogma. It autocratically insists that scientists that study animals only attribute the lowest level of mental ability required in their research on animals and nature. But for humans, no praise is too high. He says that consciousness attains in humankind its highest reflective or “supra-reflective” level. This is transcendental magnification and speciesism of a particularly odious kind, closely akin to the racism that was sparked by Spencer and others around the same time. Lloyd Morgan is in some ways the intellectual ancestor of those companies who alter animal genes for profit: Cows with extra stomachs or Salmon that are 4 times the size and become meat quicker and are raised in disgusting pens that pollute oceans..

gotten cheers from mystics like Teilhard De Chardin. It was later stripped of its spiritual associations but still stands today in the demeaning and grimy view of animals and equally ridiculous and exalted views of human consciousness, in such writers as Chomsky, Gould, Tattersall, Dennett and many others. This prejudicial and human centered speciesism went far to subvert progress across the development of Darwinian theory. It will be some time before Darwin's real insights are really grasped by many people. Religion is just one element in this bubble of self-aggrandizement in human intellectual conceit. Linnaeus already recognized the problem when he said

But I seek from you and from the whole world a generic difference between man and simian that [follows] from the principles of Natural History. I absolutely know of none. If only someone might tell me a single one! If I would have called man a simian or vice versa, I would have brought together all the theologians against me.¹⁰⁴

The religious have been reeling and straining against reason and science ever since Darwin drew the conclusion Linnaeus was afraid to say publicly. Animals in evolution are of equal value to that of humans. The notion of human supremacy is false. Humans are by far the most brutish and unjust of all animals. Each species is a unique thing, carefully becoming what they are through slow selection of traits that allow them to survive. Religions are not the "product" of evolution, but rather the product of mental faculties which have been abused for social relations and purposes. The same false pride that gives humans the

¹⁰⁴ Carl Linnaeus (25 February 1747). "[Letter to Johann Georg Gmelin](#)". *The Linnaean Correspondence*. Uppsala, Sweden, also see

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carl_Linnaeus#cite_note-149

belief in their own supremacy makes them killers and decimators of the earth. Darwin denies Boyer's claims and says flatly that "It is however impossible, as we have seen, to maintain that this belief [in gods] is innate or instinctive in man." This means that religion is not a product of evolution. Religion is hardly a necessary by-product, as it is easily abjured and abandoned. Indeed, it may not even be a by-product, but something akin to lying to children. It is healthy to overcome it completely. This is not at all like overcoming a sugar addiction, as Dennett implies, but more like giving up a childish delusions, except in this case, the delusion is murderous. It is like giving up meat. It is not hard to do, it is just something one does not need. It was an illusion that we need it.

Darwin was on to something when he implies that wonder, curiosity and the need of beauty, as well as reasoning are "adaptations". Why would they not be?. He never says religion is an adaptation, on the contrary he denies it, rightly. It is not an adaptation. He denies it has any value as an "instinct". I can see that religion is a 'by product', in the sense of being a waste product, since we really don't need it, but when I try to imagine giving up reasoning, or wonder or a sense of beauty, that is not possible. These cannot be eliminated without terrible results. Whereas, it is a good thing to give up religion and quite easy to do. Religion is closer to being a bad habit like lying than it is a 'by-product' of evolution. Giving up religion means giving up the addiction to human supremacy that language, religion and culture foster.

Religion is not like science or evolution at all as it does not contain real knowledge. It is more like politics and is similarly flighty and changeable depending on its purposes and what group it serves. It is led by interests and serves powers, not truth. Like politics it is a projection of motives and wishes, dreams and ambitions, greed and hopes. Gods are not real things but rather are receptacles of drives for power and magnified motives. So also like politics, religion gravitates into

corruption, becoming the reflection of upper class interests. Saying that religion is created by evolution is going too far. Natural selection created cognitive faculties and tendencies, but religion and politics are mutable and changeable according to culture, social conditioning and structures. Religions are accidents or 'by products' in the sense of waste or remnants, and not directly caused by evolution. Societies can and have done well without religion and with minimal political structures.

I do not think anyone will discover that religion is hardwired in the body or brain, as language seems to partially be. Boyer contends that "religion evolved as the plausible result of selective pressures on cognitive organization. In other words, these capacities are the outcome of evolution by natural selection". But he is wrong that religion itself is the result of natural selection even though some of the capacities used by the religious were created by natural selection. Politics clearly goes back to coalition building in primate 'tribes' but this does not mean religion is a evolved phenomenon, it is an extrapolation of coalition building made complex by misguided abuses of evolved human faculties. While a sense for "social exchange,.... An intuitive fear of invisible contamination, and a capacity for coalitional thinking," in Boyer's language, are all inborn tendencies they are exploited by religious institutions or individuals for very specific goals. There is nothing in the practice of ordinary religion that is directly connected with evolution. The Eucharist is not a product of evolution, it is a make believe ritual which uses bizarre analogies to force adherence to a rite.

I doubt that one can maintain that religion 'evolved' in the sense that bones or earlobes did. Religion is not so much a production of evolution as it is a product of social settings and constraints, which are a product of evolution. The distinction between a faculty and an abuse of a faculty should not be blurred too much. There are aspects of cognition such as inference or the ascribing of agency that are exploited by religions. Boyer claims that religion is a result of brain anatomy, just as

political systems exploit innate human tendencies to follow the leader or the parents. But this is to misunderstand the brain. It is a misuse of the brain and not a result of its evolution. Religion is a waste-product of social relationships and specifically of power relation¹⁰⁵s and mental manipulations. But it is an ephemeral 'by product' or a "waste product" that is easily changed or dispensed with unless severe punishments are erected to keep it the same, as was the function of the inquisition, Hindu castes or the Islamic Sharia in the madrasahs, enforced by the ulama or clerics. Religion persists by continuing the bad habit, the "traditions" the narrow minded exclusion of those who do not belong to it. If its constraints, habits and dogmas are not carefully maintained, it dies. This is not evolution or even the brain, but a sort of social addiction..

This is why a belief system like Corporate Personhood or Marxism has nearly all the markings of a religion, while not being one nominally. ¹⁰⁶Religion is really the flip side of politics and to the degree politics will be found to be evolutionary determined, so will religion. This is a major thesis of this book, and many of the chapters are structured as proof of this thesis. The involvement of Darwinian evolution in the development of religion will turn out to be indirect, more indirect than is the case with language, and it will be found to be primarily a social development. I would love to be proved wrong in this prediction, but I doubt I will be.

Religion is thus probably not a natural fact but a fiction,¹⁰⁷ not a

¹⁰⁵ The sophisticated adaptation of human vocal cords and a large complex brain to serve speaking skills are two such inherited characteristics.

¹⁰⁶ You can see this formation of a religious nexus around cult figures. Stalin had a nearly religious following, as did Castro or Elijah Muhammad. Chomsky did too. Even if I sometimes agreed with things he said, it was clear he had created something of a mild cult around him. Politics and religion are part of the same "meme" for lack of a better word. Perhaps we could say they are connected at the hip or that they of a genetic disposition towards grouping and following of autocratic elders. This seems to happen in chimp societies to some degree too.

¹⁰⁷ Boyer even admits this in his blog, if not in his books. He writes

"Our situation is difficult in that there is a great amount of social demand for naturalistic explanations of "religion", all the more so in a world made more dangerous by religious

fact of evolution so much as a misuse of faculties evolution created in human minds and bodies. "Religion", like aether and phlogiston, belongs in the ash-heap of scientific history" The practitioners of religions enter voluntarily or by coercion into delusional states, beliefs, rituals and thoughts. It depends on gullibility and involves the same duping of the naïve that parents often practice, harmfully in many cases, on their children when they lie about that tooth fairy or Superman, Princesses and Santa. Parents use Santa to try to force kids to behave. While this sort of blackmailing of children into correct behavior is ubiquitous, it hardly means that Santa or the tooth fairy is a real thing. Religion pretends to be actual like all fiction, and so has some value, rather as a shadow expresses the figure that casts it. This is to say that religion has mostly a negative value, as crime does, or the humor of Charlie Chaplin. Charlie makes a mocking humor about a character like Hitler, but at the same time he is deadly serious. Religion is deadly serious, not because it is true, as is Chaplin's critique, but because so many people believe its lies, and so it has value as a sort of Pied Piper of Hamelin, leading children by the ears to their own harm. Though it has to be stated that religion also does good on occasion, as does politics.¹⁰⁸ But I prefer the

fanatics. Obviously, meeting that demand does not imply that we believe in "religion". But simply deflating the misleading concept seems dangerously close to "having nothing to say about religion". People who are worried about the dangers of modern zealotry may tend to find the statement that "there is no such thing as religion" rather academic. So we have to engage in a particularly delicate rhetorical exercise, showing that cognitive science and evolution have a lot to say about what people usually call "religion", and gently leading people to the realization that "religion", like aether and phlogiston, belongs in the ash-heap of scientific history"

<http://www.cognitionandculture.net/home/blog/35-pascals-blog/764-why-would-otherwise-intelligent-scholars-believe-in-qreligionq>

My point is that someone who sees this should get out of the religion/academic business and stop this cynical discussion of something that is really not about evolution, as if it was. But then academics make up stuff to keep themselves in their jobs. He makes up stuff to keep himself working. Religion was a system of social control and was a way to keep people deluded..+

¹⁰⁸ Religion does resemble literary fiction superficially, but is also quite different in other ways. The novel is a product of enlightenment, largely, and is provoked by the difficulty of writing

‘pliant cane’ of Charlie Chaplin to religion’s falsehoods, but sometimes one learns by default or in spite of the lesson.¹⁰⁹ One can learn from mistakes. Religion is a mistake humanity made and is still making. Forget about Christ and John the Baptist, what matters is the “kitten in the wilderness”. There are lessons to learn from the fiasco of religion. The poet A. R. Ammons wrote in his interesting poem Garbage that

“Where but in the grief of failure, loss, error do we
discern the savage afflictions that turn us around:
where but in the arrangements love crawls us
through, not a thing left in our self-display
unhumiliated, do we find the sweet seed of new routes.”

Religion is a failure, and it was in the failure of God and gods I found lessons about the depths of humanity and nature and animals. Why did we need gods, and why was it necessary to give up the addiction and delusion? One could charitably say that religion was an effort to create cosmologies, but that is not really true for the ordinary run of humanity, where it served quite other purposes. Sometimes religion involved ancestor worship whereby old men obtained the worship they wanted. Or it offered consolation to the grieved, mostly by lying to them.

down true things about actual people, given their need for privacy, and anger when it is violated. Religion is not playing this game, but has other designs and purposes.

¹⁰⁹From Hart Crane’s Chaplinesque, part of which reads:

And yet these fine collapses are not lies
More than the pirouettes of any pliant cane;
Our obsequies are, in a way, no enterprise.
We can evade you, and all else but the heart:
What blame to us if the heart live on.

The game enforces smirks; but we have seen
The moon in lonely alleys make
A grail of laughter of an empty ash can,
And through all sound of gaiety and quest
Have heard a kitten in the wilderness.

Or it performed marriages and funerals to helping sustain the poor who needed to believe lies to go on in spite their misery. Religion is a social succubus, and attaches itself to desperation and fear, loneliness and the terror of death.¹¹⁰ Preachers of intolerance and repression clearly have something in their favor as they are able to force groups to act as cowardly units who will willing kill for the leadership. Did evolution create war mongering and the need of old men to kill young men in battle? One could say that murdering young men in war is an evolutionary “by product” of old men’s hatred of their own sons. But that is a stretch and hardly is a theory that could be demonstrated No, religion is the work of unjust elites and social classes. To claim religion is a “natural phenomena” is to ignore this important fact. War and religion share being the junk or waste of history, and a “by product” only in the sense that they are well gotten rid of and unnecessary, like garbage.

Boyer’s theory, among others, is that evolution appears to favor those who are overly sensitive to agents and religion is largely a result of this irrational favoring of superstitious excesses. But is this really so? It seems that repressive regimes do not last long, because people hate them and slaves revolt, Kings like Louis the 14th, 15th and 16th, were war mongers and repressive and greedy and worked peasants to death with high taxes.

¹¹⁰ Pascal Boyer records an interesting experiment where people were made to read daunting and forbidding literature that was about death and mortality. Others read innocuous material and all took a written test afterwards. Those who had just read the scary stuff were far more likely to favor the death penalty and to have repressive and punitive views towards outsiders. This suggests humans are hardwired to respond to fear with repression and social control. Boyer does not draw this conclusion but history suggests that this is well known among elites who manage and intimidate others and “might makes right” is common in repressive states, mafias, or churches that employ methods like the inquisition or caste exclusions. Savonarola knows this just as well as far right Hasidic Jews for Jesus obsessed preachers or fundamentalist Mullahs. Blake said “Damn braces, bless relaxes”, for this very reason. People thrive when free and shrivel and cower when intimidated. People become monstrous when they are afraid in groups. A recent documentary shows a Kabul crowd killing a woman who is wrongly accused of burning a Koran. They kill a real life because they make an idol of a book. The death penalty for anything should be eliminated, The death penalty is a “cruel and unusual” punishment. (See Boyer, Religion Explained, Perseus Books, 2001 pg 205)

They excited the justice and revenge motives of the poor. The monarchy was mostly killed off in the revolt in 1789, victims of their own excess. There was a brief “restoration”, but it did not last long. So the value of religious repression and absolutist politics is questionable, like the value of torture, which rarely has good results. Even Marxism, both of the Stalinist and Maoist¹¹¹ variety, which was nominally anti-religious, but behaved in every way like a fanatical creed, was undone by its own cult like behaviors, its cruelty and murder of innocents.¹¹² Religion is created by displaced desperations, panic, or inescapable miseries. Priests live on such terrors and fears, using them to create their churches.¹¹³ Fearing a lion will eat you or the man in the next village who means you harm makes people afraid and so they make up fictions and religions to try to make themselves safe, ward off the ‘evil eye’ or purify their house against imaginary witch doctors. They imagine god will embrace their dying child. The priest or Shaman will do the work of getting rid of the imaginary witch or do an imaginary healing by pretending to suck out illness. But what is the cost of these shames and lies, repressions and superstitions? It tears the social fabric apart and leaves resentment and hate all around.

Religion is partly an irrational effort to manage fears. Fears are all real things that religion attaches itself to and exploits and in doing so it exploits real people, my grandmother, your mother, your sister, your uncle, myself, you. I remember after my father died, my mother was often tempted by religion and she would quote the Bible and say “Oh Lord,

¹¹¹ Maoism became the perfect companion of late exploitive capitalism, when the US more or less took over China as a manufacturing proxy, both to break unions in the US and enable Corporate CEO to pollute as much as they wanted and harness the world biggest forced labor pool. Most Americans are not told how they have been abused by this horrible arrangement and the Chinese do not realize their revolution in 1948 turned out to be an excuse to enslave the population to American and European CEOs.

¹¹² Mao’s little Red Book is a good example of bible like texts and how they can operate to create a system of mental controls, behavior regulations and dogmas. Khomeini’s Green Book was similar. In the Schuon cult it was the “texts” that tried to control behavior.

¹¹³ Chomsky’s system of beliefs can be questioned too as it has various cult like characteristics.

help my unbelief” because she really didn’t believe all that nonsense, but she so needed help. I was her help, and she herself was her help. There was no god who helped her. She went to a psychologist a few times. He helped a little. But religion did not help at all. Most of what helped her was my sympathy and concern.

This is a book that is partly about finding new routes out of the “Garbage” or “Waste” of religion into the hope that we learn to help ourselves. I use the word garbage here to refer to Ammon’s idea something despised or rarely looked at might finally turn out to be something we have to admit is true and has to be faced. Religion is our garbage and we have to face it. At a certain point you have to face the garbage, failure or mistakes that you made. The garbage in question is the delusional nature of irrationalism and religion, corporate and spiritual elitism and the far-right anti-science and anti-education philosophies of the late 20th and early 21st centuries. All this has to be faced.

There is a lot that is beautiful in religion too, the ardent, useless prayers, the lovely rituals, the candles and incense, the wonders of gothic architecture, endless Tibetan chants in the mountains, and joys of contemplation, inner states in Sufi dances, Native American vision quests, moments of ecstasy and visions of the divine. There is much poetry in it, from Native American clothes and headdresses to Zen stones and gardens, silk paintings and monastic chants.

Even some of the delusions are beautiful, such as the man who believes that his ardent prayers saved his sick wife, child and mother, who were close to death. He did not, in fact, but he believes that he saved them and that has a beauty in it, even if it is false. But beautiful illusions are still illusions and cannot be believed on their own terms. But the beauty religion would still be in us without all the delusions and people would find ways to express the beauty within them without the mechanics of social control that religion engineers. The man’s ardent

hope that his wife mother and children survive is still beautiful, without his imagining Jesus or Mary or Krishna saving them Religion is a looking glass on humanity and we would not be less ourselves without it. It depends on us like a parasite and lives on our weaknesses and the beauty within us, as well.

In the end the thing we thought was the highest 'reality' is really the thing we have to get over and put behind us to survive. Religion is human garbage that contains real jewels, not in the religion itself, but in an analysis for why we needed religion to begin with. We can get rid of religion and look at our motives and needs for having it. This detritus of religion has been around for many centuries, growing deeper on the back of civilization each year. It is time we looked at it more objectively. The inquiry about the failure of religion might just lead to us to learn to value life itself, and instead of longing for life in the "beyond" we will learn to value our contributions to helping those in this world, which is all that matters. The ardent and beautiful prayers offered up to non-existent deities could be turned to ardent care for an ailing planet and all the fragile lives that live upon it. All the garbage in the world is our garbage and it is we who must clean it up. This book is partly the result of these inquiries, searches and questions. It is an attempt to burrow through the garbage and jewels and come out the other side into the only real world there is, this earth and all that lives upon it.

The fraud of religion would not be effective if there were not a bit of it that is true. I don't mean there is truth in the god idea, far from it. I mean religion had its seeming evolutionary purpose. We want to belong to a universe that speaks to us as we speak to each other. We want to be part of things and not merely animals on a lonely planet, which is what we are becoming since we are killing most other animals off. Religions extend make believe into adulthood. The story tellers and priests seemed to give us hope and helped us pass along our genes: they kept us in order and under control of a hierarchy. This may have been a

mistake in many ways, but it is a fact. But religion had its moment of usefulness and now it does far more harm than good.

The shadow of religion is about human longing for something that does not end in death. It is understandable humans wish of this, but the wishing for it does not make it true. The tragic nature of religion lies in its worship of the very things everyone wishes were true but are not. Everyone wants love and as most are lonely they make up a “God” who will embrace them. Everyone wants to be comforted and their fears allayed, and so they make up a god of mercy, Mary or Avolokiteshvara or the ‘holy spirit”, that will soothe them. The longing for eternal life is there, even though death cannot be overcome, so they make up a god who gives them life everlasting in an imaginary heaven. Heaven is oddly conceived as being up in the sky is a great danger to humans. Astronauts cannot last more than six month up there since lack of gravity begins to destroy the body.

The sadness of mortality drives us. No one wants to be sick and die, yet everyone will be. This ought to be the argument for socialized medical care, not for religion. Religion uses the fear of sickness and death to turn us against the “world” and life. The religious end in rejecting the very thing they wish could have had. They wanted life forever but end in rejecting the life they could have had in service of a god who does not exist. Religion is dysfunctional in this and so many other ways. Religion is beautiful lies.

There is no life after death. Immortality is a supremacist fiction and has resulted in the mass slaughter of billions of animals and biomes, world wide, including global warming. The beautiful promises that religion offers to make life better and easier and give us immortality simply are fictions and fairy tales.¹¹⁴ As my father died when I was 17 I

¹¹⁴ The education of the young demands a thorough criticism of the images and myths taught to children. It is not possible to teach the young about Santa Claus, Cinderella or Jesus without first telling them these make believe stories are not true. Fairy Tales have a disturbing history.

had real reasons to wish to find an antidote to death. It would have helped my mother to find that religion is true. But no god helped her, only I did. My search into alternatives to realism and science simply failed. None of them work or are based on reality. I found that Tibetan religion, Islam, Native American religion, Christianity, Buddhism, all are make believe, fairy tales. I knew this intuitively in my teens but needed to prove it to myself. I realized that religion is an essentialist lie and the utter humiliation of this fact, when I had tried so hard to love it so deeply, has taken me many years to recover from. I realized to my great humiliation just how wrong I was, and I was blamed for this realization too, by people who were ignorant of what I actually went through. What I went through was a good thing, but to those still stuck in delusions, I was seen as a heretic, psychotic, evil or crazy. Religious fanatics, capitalists or Marxists, like to use these kinds of labels to harm those who question their favorite creed.

I began to acquire an acceptance that this earth and our being here is truly all that we have. What I went through caused me to “turn

It appears that the Brother's Grimm distorted older Fairy Tales to give them a more aristocratic and elitist flavor. I have a young daughter and out of concern for what was going into her head I did research on Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty and other fairy tales. These stories are very classist, sexist and elitist are really not appropriate for children. The Disney version of Sleeping Beauty shows her falling in love with a “commoner” as the prince falls in love with a peasant girl. By coincidence they are instead both actually royalty – thus betraying a real prejudice against the poor and middle classes. This elitist prejudice is inculcated in young girls by the ‘princess’ ideology, where girls learn to see themselves as commodities in a system of pseudo-aristocratic capital exchange. Sleeping Beauty, Snow White, Cinderella, and Rapunzel cannot be saved except by an aristocratic elitist, namely, the “prince”, implying women have no intrinsic value apart from men and the marriage market. Other Disney movies like the Lion King show nature as a system of medieval, nearly Hindu castes, which ultimately serve a form of Social Darwinism,— which is not Darwinism at all, but a sort of fascist distortion of Darwin's theory in a way that justifies capitalist cruelty and injustices.

One footnote to this footnote: This explains why Schuon liked Disney so much. He loved Epcot and the pretend exhibit of other cultures. His own “esoterism” is really just a sexualized version of Disney-like esoterism, Schuon was a tourist of elitist myths and delusions. Indeed his “Transcendent unity” is really just the conceit of a metaphysical tourist, with a camera and Hawaiian shirt, beholding the make-believe of the major religions... The title of the book Schuon really wrote should have been “My Metaphysical Epcot—Essays in the Transcendental Delusions of the Religions”.

around” as Ammon’s says, in a profound way, towards nature and science. I realized matter is the truth of our actual existence, not the dream life beyond that religion promises and never delivers--- the actual life we live matters more to me than the humiliations of trying to tell the truth about religion to others who would not believe me. I realize not many will read this book. It does not matter, -that is OK. I know what it means to tell the truth and be ignored or to be despised and hated for it. The main thing is the exploration and the finding of what is the case. I also know as well the gratification of telling the truth even when it is embarrassing or hard. I helped a few silent and frightened people who listened or heeded the warnings about the Schuon cult. The purpose of this book is to help a few people escape from systems of unjust and false knowledge, mind control, far right religious indoctrination and mythical or religious fictions of many kinds. Questioning system of power and authority is what this book teaches. I want to encourage a way of thinking, a way of asking questions.

So this book is the result of my “turn around”, about how I turned against those who hate science. I found myself against romanticism, mythology, religious poetry¹¹⁵ and found that I had come to really dislike Plato, religion and systems of power. I formerly had thought these might

¹¹⁵ Most poetry is “spiritual” or tends in that direction and that is its prime shortcoming, in my opinion. “I too dislike it” Marianne Moore said of poetry, and I agree with this author of the “Octopus”, a marvelous poem that looks toward a poetry of science. I’ve been puzzling why poetry is a handmaid to religion and power for some years. I think it partly due to the inherently abstract character of language. Language is prone to a certain interior dialogue and solipsism and this easily generates glittering generalizations, so those who play with language tend toward spirituality which is mostly false analogies, magical thinking, superstitious slippages of thoughts and confused fictions. Dante’s endorsement of Catholic guilt tripping and sadism in his Inferno or Whitman’s endorsement of the murderous concept of Manifest Destiny in Leaves of Grass are examples of poets whose thought is confused and sloppy with false analogies, endorsement of destructive myths and destructive irrationality. Dante’s Inferno embodies the righteous malice of the Inquisition and Leaves of Grass contains hints and suggestions of the myths that murdered so many Native Americans. The same is true of Mayakovsky and his Marxist Leninism, which tragically helped him toward suicide. See also Osip Mandelstam who was persecuted and killed by Stalin. Mandelstam’s bizarre relationship to Stalin is itself a good example of the close relation of religion and politics.

have truth in them. I found myself turning against what is usually considered poetry and agree with Nietzsche that poets “all muddy their water that it may seem deep” ¹¹⁶ I literally ‘rolled over’ William James, and Huston Smith and other teachers of religion and culture, as well as poetic visions of “reality”.

I came to see human language has in it a capacity for abstraction. This is wonderful in some ways—at least as far a creative fiction is concerned, but it can also lead many astray into worship of mere symbols, misplaced concreteness, mythic and corporate personhood and unjust institutions of various kinds. The evolutionary theory of religion has not yet accounted for these facts. Jesus and Buddha are mythic abstractions of this same kind, as is the idea of Monsanto or some other corporation having rights like an immortal “person” in American law. Corporations and the CEOs that run them are the ‘gods’ of our world, and just as absurd as the gods of old. Gods are magnified abstractions as is the idea of corporate personhood. Gods, like the idea of corporate personhood, exists to inflate and magnify people who work in these institutions or who benefit from the lies involved in the magnifications. The corruptions of the legal world are the one place science does not touch often, and so it is unjust laws and courts that have allowed corporations to become “outlaws”, renegade thieves who take from the poor to give to the rich. The idea of corporate persons arose out of an abuse of the 14th amendment was created to protect the persons of ex-slaves.

Symbols are not reality: religions act as if symbols are real. Reification is”the ability of the brain to convert a concept into a concrete thing,..... or to bestow upon something the quality of being real or true, when it might be a mere figment of an imagination. Reification refers to the power of the mind to grant meaning and substance to its own

¹¹⁶ Zarathustra 39, on Poets.

perceptions.” These perceptions are often radically false, or wrong. Religions rely on these false beliefs, on the gullibility of the human mind to accept false images, like, say the “crucifixion” or the language of the Bible, as the literal truth. Such images and language use are merely dramatic flourishes exploited by institutions to promote themselves. As A.R. Ammons says “beliefs [are] the shadows of images trying to construe what needs no belief”. In other words, beliefs are extrapolations, surmises, fictions that would dissolve if the truth were known. When the truth is not known, the mind makes images and shadows of images, which are not real, just imaginary phantasms, fictions, make-believe--- and that is what religion is.

Religion is a failure of the mind to know. It is a making of imaginary, sublimated fetishes in the absence of truth. Religion is real to the extent that the needs expressed in it for certainty and safety, freedom from fear and desire for protections and help are all real. But the way these needs are expressed or met is false and a lie of sorts. The vulnerability that is at the basis of religion is real, the exploiting of the vulnerable by priests and churches is atrocious. So whenever religion is discussed what is really being talked about is codified fictions, imaginary constructions, make believe answers to real questions, superstitions based on surmises which are not real, but pretend to be real. The god idea is just such a magnifying abstraction and has no reality behind it—a mere shadow or projection of human interests, desires and wishes, class systems, hierarchies, exclusionary moralisms, racist preferences, and caste injustices. Religion is really political posturing, enshrining ritualized power structures.

This means that traditional metaphysics is fiction: a “transcendent unity of delusions’ . There is no god or gods, there are only fictional characters and make believe constructions. The god idea is finished and cannot be taken seriously on its own terms. The idea of Being, with a

capital “B”, is finished too. (Heidegger, Sartre, Rilke etc.)All that matters is actual beings, not Being. The Logical Positivists already grasped the death metaphysics. But they did not go deep enough. Their condemnation of metaphysics, while necessary, is somewhat shallow. I don’t think they understood just how much metaphysics played a role in the formation of systems of power in history. This is true not just of Plato but continues to be so in India, China and all the way up to Hegel, Marx and Heidegger as well as the corporate ‘free market’.. Showing this is part of the purpose of this book. ¹¹⁷

I agree with Darwin, against the less brave thesis of Pascal Boyer and others. Darwin wrote that

“The belief in God has often been advanced as not only the greatest, but the most complete of all the distinctions between man and the lower animals. It is however impossible, as we have seen, to maintain that this belief is innate or instinctive in man.” ¹¹⁸

I take this as Darwin’s denial that religion is evolutionary, an adaptation or genetic in its basis. He also implies, no he states, that there is no real distinction between humans and animals. Religion is an invention that creates a radical separation between the human and the animal. He implies a theory of cultural evolution more similar to Dawkins than Dennett. He implies religion is a pathological cultural variant, and not a

¹¹⁷ I was once accused of being a logical positivist, which I do not take as an insult. But I do not think of myself as one. They went far, and I admire Russell, Popper and others, but they did not go far enough to show how such systems actually operate and still operate now. Wittgenstein is not really a positivist, but is too much of a mystery monger and so helps metaphysics. Reality has its mysteries certainly, but they are not occult or usefully explored by a cult of Wittgensteinian “silence”. Zen’s “no mind”, Plotinus’s Nous, or the God idea serve specific purposes in social contexts and explaining this requires understanding how money and power are sequestered in certain classes. I think I make a start of showing how this injustice works in this book, but much more needs to be done.

¹¹⁸ Darwin 1871, pgs. 394-395, Vol. 2.

neutral or natural phenomena. According to Darwin is not evolutionary. Darwin's take on religion is implicitly a denial of some aspects of Boyer's theory too.

So, to conclude, it is possible to show that evolved human mental proclivities make humans prone to distort reality and deceive themselves or others in the interest of social power. It is also possible to show that humans see agents where there are not any, due mostly to language distortions. Yet it is a mistake to conclude that religion is a genetic or evolutionary adaptation. Darwin denies Boyer and Dennett's theory of religion as a by-product and says "it is however impossible, as we have seen, to maintain that this belief is innate or instinctive in man." Religion is a fictive array of superstitions and delusions created to supply social convenience to some at the expense of others, and it is often maladaptive and harmful to many to the advantage of the few.

Once one sees that religion is a "useful fiction" or a myth, that helps a given class sustain power and oppress others, it ceases to have any real meaning as a factor in evolution, and becomes instead merely a social construction. Boyer and Dennett are thus mistaken. Religion is not a fact of evolution, but a cultural fiction created by those who maintain and profit from it. Religion is as false as a genetically engineered fish or cow, merely the product of the greed of those who profit from useful fictions, here imposed cruelly on the facts of nature. ¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹ "In a 2015 World Wildlife Fund report, 1,200 marine vertebrate species, including fish like mackerels and tunas, declined by nearly half between 1970 and 2012". Genetically engineering fish while at the same time destroying natural populations is fundamentally immoral. It is like encouraging cancer at the same time as one tries to find a cure for it.

Richard Dawkins' Theory of Religion

My theory of religion shares a few features with the theory of Richard Dawkins religion in his book the God Delusion. . But there are differences too. Dawkin's maintains that religion is a "by product" a result of "accidental firing" and genetic drift of a kind. I doubt this is accurate. But human minds are like 'gullible children' Dawkins says. They are "vulnerable to infection by mental viruses".¹²⁰ To be more precise Dawkins says that religious behavior is an

"Unfortunate by product of and underlying psychological propensity which in other circumstances is, or once was, useful. On this view the propensity that was naturally selected in our ancestors was not religion per se; it had some other benefit..... if religion is a byproduct of something else, what is that something else?

I don't entirely agree with him, however. The idea of a "mental virus", like the Meme theory, is only an analogy and not really a theory that has any real physical weight. The idea of an evolutionary by-product seems questionable too, for reasons outlined in the previous chapter. It is hard to see the adaptive value of delusions, but easy to see the adaptive value of reason or imagination. Like the idea of "memes" the idea of evolutionary by products is really just a way of speaking—a metaphor---and not science. It is hard to see who benefits by the existence of religion as a by products, which is really just waste products. The by-product theory is a reach and a strange one, and hard to see how it could be a real theory of religion.

But it is different when Dawkins says that religion is a by-product of

¹²⁰ Dawkins, Richard God Delusion, pg. 188

the tendency of children to believe their parents, the notion of “trust your elders”. This makes empirical sense. It is hard to imagine any positive value to something that is a by-product of lying. So once I get rid of the idea of ‘by product’, I can accept what Dawkins says. Certainly gullibility in children is a genetic propensity, as anyone who has children knows. Here he is on to something. This trusting obedience is valuable for survival. But the “flip side of trusting obedience is slavish gullibility”, Dawkins says. Parents lie to their kids about Santa Claus, the Tooth Fairy, Jesus, Zeus, Muhammad, Krishna, Quetzalcoatl or some other fairy tale or myth and these myths “come from the same trusted source as the belief that it is good to go to college or that one should stay away from alligators and lions”. Factual information or real benefit--- like going to college or avoiding alligators--- are treated as important as superstitious nonsense. So then, in Dawkins’ model of how religions operate in evolution, he predicts that

“different arbitrary beliefs, none of which have any factual merit, will be handed down, to be believed with the same conviction as useful process of traditional wisdom, such as the belief that manure is good for crops. We should expect that superstitions and other non-factual beliefs will locally evolve, change over generation, either by random drift or by some sort of analogue of Darwinian selection, eventually showing a pattern of significant divergence from the common ancestry. Languages drift apart from a common progenitor given sufficient time in geographical separation ... the same seems to be true of baseless and arbitrary beliefs and injunctions, handed down the generations—beliefs that were perhaps given a fair wind by the useful programmability of children”¹²¹

¹²¹ Dawkins, Richard. The God Delusion. NY, Houghton Mifflin. 2006. page 174- 76

This is exactly right, I think. Indeed, I thought Dawkins book is the best of the various books that have come out in the last 10 years questioning religion. It is not the deepest, but it is well written and presented. All these books have an unstated political motive, of course, since the far right in American has been resurgent for 30 years, trying to roll back the advance for the middle class made since FDR. Great harm has been done to the middle class both by corporate elite and far right religiophiles such as George Bush Jr. Fundamentalist A surge of Christian cultism followed the late 1960's rebellions against the Vietnam war, alternative ideas, the rise of the New Age and the hippie movements. Christianity has adapted Christ to far right causes, showing once again the malleability of religion to politics, indeed, the seamless close relationship of religion and politics. The Christ of the new Testament, being a fiction, can be whatever anyone wants him to be. For the poor he condemns the rich and says the cannot get into the kingdom of heaven, but then for the rich he says the poor you always have with you" and justifies slavery and says "slaves obey your masters". He justifies Church wealth and says "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are Gods". Jesus is a fiction made up by ghost writers probably in the second century. I will speak more of this in a later chapter. But for now I just wish to make the point that Christian religion is merely a template easily adapted to far right or left wing politics. In America it easily becomes a parasite free enterprise capitalism. One would think Darwkins would be aware that corporations such as Microsoft are quasi-religious stuructures themselves, but he appears to be unaware of this. This is unfortunate and brings his thought somewhat into question. He serves somewhat they religion of greed in America, as for instance in his alliance with David Cowan, a "venture capitalist" who was brought p as a far right Christan but became a corporate capitalist and transferred the zeal he had for religion into the quasi-religion of

capital. He started the Center for Inquiry, which is a questionable organization that attacks far right without acknowledging the fact that the ideology of corporate persons is itself a violation of Church and State alliances. The takeover of democracy in America is largely a corporate takeover of government by the ideology of big business. Far right Christianity has allied itself with this ideology and done a great deal of harm on its own, stealing from the poor to give to the rich. Christianity in America is largely a far right parasite on corporate culture.

Religions are abstract stories that take advantage of the human brain and its linguistic basis in brain circuitry, which favor simple story lines and abstract ideology. The strength of these delusions becomes of such power that all presidents are required to say "god bless America" on every occasion. Religions are ideological systems that are social in nature and exploit brain circuitry to keep those in power where they are. This is not to say that religion is directly a product of evolution, Darwin did not think so and I don't either. Dennett and Boyer try to say it is but I think they are mistaken. Darwin denied that religion "is innate or instinctive in man." The greed impulse that is part of American Big business is not a fundamental drive either. It is a cultural construction akin to religion, hence their alliance. Dawkins serves this too much, in my opinion, since he has allied himself with Microsoft and corporate culture through the Center for Inquiry.

Religions typically try to impose themselves most vociferously on children,---as the Jesuits, known in history for their cruel missions and education practices, would say, "give me a child for seven years and I'll give you the man" with Catholic dogma irrationally imprinted on them. The Jesuits were among the worst of the abusers of Native Americans in Texas to California and down to South America, keeping them essentially as slaves. Many natives died of syphilis and other diseases given to them by the priests, or were chained and beaten when they tried to escape. Children were taught a slavish respect for Jesuit and Catholic

authority. Natives were bribed and held in forced labor, and if they tried to escape, they were rounded up by soldiers then whipped by the missionaries..

In many missions there were massacres and uprisings against the “Padres” and their imposed myths. The Franciscan missions were basically slave plantations, which required the Indian people to work for the Spanish under cramped and suffocating conditions where they were whipped and forced to sleep in mass so they got diseases. The Spanish considered Indians like children to be beaten and forced to behave by violence and force.¹²² Kept in prison like conditions they were forced to convert to Christianity. Infant mortality was high. The ‘gentle’ figure of St, Francis was used as a propaganda tool to hide the other side of Francis which was repressive and cruel. More recent examples of missionary activities occur in China, the Amazon and Africa, where Christians proselytize the locals in advance of a very exploitive capitalist takeover of these places, thus assisting in the ruin of the local markets and cultures.

A similar point is made in Nicholas Wade’s Before the Dawn, Recovering the Lost History of our Ancestors. While Wade seems to have taken a nose dive into defence of religion as “evolutionary”—when it clearly is not--- and racism in recent years, this early book of his is pretty good. Wade follows various anthropologists, and also sees religion as largely an issue of trust. He discusses the role of the hormone oxytocin in trust, which makes mothers and babies feel pleasure when they nurse—and this correlates closely with Dawkin’s theory of religions taking advantage of children’s gullibility. This is probably right, as it suggests the parental and political nature of authoritarian religion. Religion is a sort of breast milk for confused, disturbed. poor and

¹²² The Catholic Church recently canonized or made a “saint” of Father Serra, a horrendous man who enslaved and killed many Naïve Californians. This is not an atypical example of the absurdity of sainthood and its use as false advertising.

homesick adults. Cult leaders are referred to as “trust bandits” which is very accurate. Religions in general are trust bandits and take from their believers much of their individuality and autonomy, forcing them into prefabricated modes of thought and behavior. Once caught in this systems of behavior and belief it is very hard to get out. Indeed, there is a vast literature, largely untapped and ignored by the aforementioned critics of religion, of people who have left religions and cults and recorded their psychological reactions.¹²³ .

In any case, it is certainly true that religions impose themselves on gullible minds as if all minds were children’s minds. Many adults can never give up their childhood make believe, imposed on them by their parents. Christopher Hitchens puts this more forcefully and less charitably than Dawkins. Hitchens writes:

“Religion comes from the period of human prehistory where nobody---not even the mighty Democritus who concluded that all matter was made from atoms---had the smallest idea what was going on. It comes from the bawling and fearful infancy of our species, and is a babyish attempt to meet our inescapable demand for knowledge (as well as for comfort, reassurance and other infantile needs).” ¹²⁴

¹²³ Some of this vast literature was collected by Robert Jay Lifton, (see for instance, his Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism) and also Steven Hassan books, former scientologists have put together various texts, ex-Hare Krishnas, followers of Bagwan Rajneesh, ex-Mormans, ex-Muslims, victims of Tibetan Lamaism and many others. Ibn Warraq’s collection of writing of ex Muslims, Leaving Islam is interesting. To read these vast, detailed and personal accounts is very enlightening and shows in no uncertain terms just how destructive religion is to individuals. It is moreover, individuals that matter in our world, not institutions and states, which are abstract entities.

¹²⁴ Christopher Hitchens: God is not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything, Twelve Books, 2007 (p. 64)

Religion is the breast milk of make believe for adults. Or in Dawkins phrase, religions impose themselves like “mental viruses” on adults, implanting all sorts of unproven and unwarranted nonsense in their heads at an early age. Native Americans to this day preserve irrational beliefs about bad medicine men who can cast spells on people, make objects fly about, find keys, or do other magic tricks . Notions of malicious magic appear to be worldwide. Darwin discusses this at length in his great Descent of Man (Chapter 3). He compares various imaginary beliefs of tribal peoples to dogs who bark at an umbrella that accidentally moves it the wind. Ascribing agency to outside forces or imaginary people or gods is a common abuse of humanity throughout our history. But one can only go so far with the Mental virus or “Meme” analogy. The weakness of Dawkins book is in this, and in his ignorance of actual religions and he facts of how they operate. Moreover, Religion does not appear to have a Darwinian purpose. Darwin thought it was purely superstition and ignorance, not an adaptation. So why is it still with us?

One other thing about Dawkins which I find brilliant is his theory of embryology¹²⁵. He sees the development of the fetus as a bottom-up affair of local rules and not a top-down blueprint. This is the Darwinian point of view too. I agree with that and this has social implications too, as it brings all top-down systems of government and arbitrary dictatorship into question. This is an amazing discovery. He does not really take credit for it, as it is already implicit in Darwin, but it has to be mentioned, and I will be arguing that this is how nature functions in general, throughout these books.

Religion as a Mistake of Language.

¹²⁵ See his Greatest Show on Earth. There is a chapter on it. He does not draw the social conclusions or the fact that embryology itself brings into question the argument of creationists, which is a top down argument.

Note: this section explores language in relation to religion and it might be useful to read this along with the essay “Chomsky’s Cartesian Speciesism and the Failure of his Linguistics” in the third book, Persistent Illusions.

So to expand on what I was saying earlier—religion may still be with us, because it is an effect, or a mistake ---created by the abstract, magnifying, analogy finding and inflating nature of human language. One could say that religion is a wasted by product left over by the abuse that language makes of reality. Language by definition is an action that occurs between people and since politics is the affairs of the people, language is political by definition: so is religion. Linguistic behavior is a much overrated thing. It is in fact, a kind of whispering between people, mostly gossip and talking as an in-group behavior, inside families, social networks, and communities. If you look at human behavior from outside, as it were, from a perspective that is not human. Humans overrate their own language capacity. It is really a very transient and artificial phenomena that is full of errors and mistakes. Language helps people ascribe agency to things that do not have it, as a dog will bark at an umbrella caught by the wind, as Darwin suggests. Darwin suggests that religion is not a direct effect of evolution, but an accident of our perceptual foibles. Religion is based on many mistaken analogies. Religion is akin to literature, and full of mistaken similitudes, A is like B , so B must be like C. Some humans are like gods so particular humans must be gods. If that is the case, then what is religion but partly a mistake of language, or a mistake in the brain?

It is a wasteful mistake of language that elites found useful in exploiting as way of creating patriarchal systems, which most religions are. Language is inherently political in that politics and religion are largely based on convincing people that such and such a thing is for

their own good, and so lies, sleight of hand, myth and make believe are part of speech and part of religion. Religion is not a natural fact but a con-man's fiction, not a fact of evolution so much as a misuse of faculties evolution created in human minds and bodies. If this is the case, then finding "agents" on which early humans could project their needs and fears was a mistake of language use. It was born of the exaggerations, false analogies, and abstract and unreal implications of words and concepts. Gods were created from thin air, and Jesus and Buddha did not exist but were made up by skilled wordsmithing. This surmise is quite accurate and fits the distorted facts of the actual history of religions, as opposed to the myth purveyors.

Bertrand Russell thought something like this about religion, with good reason. He writes:

We want to stand upon our own feet and look fair and square at the world-its good facts, its bad facts, its beauties, and its ugliness; see the world as it is, and be not afraid of it. Conquer the world by intelligence, and not merely by being slavishly subdued by the terror that comes from it. The whole conception of God is a conception derived from the ancient Oriental despotisms. It is a conception quite unworthy of free men.

Language is merely words, but looking at facts is a good thing. Boyer implies that the belief in agency is some sort of necessary and fatal flaw in human evolution. But this is not the case at all. It is very easy to remove the bad habit of belief in the fiction of agency from one's brain. One only needs to resist metaphorical leaps and keep to the evidence and the facts. Ascribing agency to things or natural events is just a linguistic error, not a fatal flaw in human evolution. Language is made up of symbols and symbols are not the things they describe, but humans tend to think in terms of symbols rather than realities, and this makes for

living in a nearly a constant state of fiction making in everyday life. Chomsky's theory of language is very largely make believe and very close to a religion. Reality is not in words, but in things.

Timothy Fitzgerald notes that religion is basically politics and then raises the question of what is politics. He writes

"I suggest that the perceived self-evidence of politics as a meaningful category derives from an inherent ambiguity – and in this it is a mirror-image to religion. On the one hand, the term 'politics' generally simply means 'power' or 'contestations of power', and since power is probably one of the few universals in human relations we can see why it might appear intuitively convincing. However, on that understanding, it is difficult to see what is *not* about politics, because it can surely be argued that all human relations have always been about contestations of power."¹²⁶

Language, religion and politics are all basically about social control or power. Jeremy Bentham implied this in his "theory of fictions". He held that some of what humans make up about the world has to do with fictions created by language. Gods are inflated fictions, made up entities that depend on language. Bentham wrote that "it is to language alone —, that fictitious entities owe their existence — their impossible, yet indispensable, existence. " (works 8,198) ¹²⁷ This does not mean that

¹²⁶ <http://criticalreligion.org/author/timothyfitzgerald2012/>

¹²⁷ Discussed in Luiz Costa Lima's Control of the Imaginary: Reason and Imagination in Modern Times. See also "Of Fictitious Entities in: <http://books.google.com/books?id=hWlYAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA198&lpg=PA198&dq='To+language,+then++to+language+alone++it+is+that+fictitious+entities+owe+their+existence;+their+impossible,+yet+indispensable+existence.'&source=bl&ots=pNAW5yG3ES&sig=yWduNTITPsemYwc3lZCYzWocgVQ&hl=en&sa=X&ei=zsSfU6qTLyYxAT19YHoAQ&ved=0CCgQ6AEwCA#v=onepage&q='To%20language%2C%20then%20-%20to%20language%20alone%20-%20it%20is%20that%20fictitious%20entities%20owe%20their%20existence%3B%20their%20impossible%2C%20yet%20indispensable%20existence.'&f=false>

reality is a human construction, but only that some of what people make up, lawyers, scholastics, mythicists, theologians, poets, Chomskites, is indeed, a creation, a fiction, an abstraction. It might reflect something real, indirectly, or it might be utterly unreal. Bentham thinks that 'god' is exempt from this fiction making aspect of language, but this is not true. Gods are one of the best examples of this linguistic mistake.

The problem is the way language operates and is structured. Indeed, Nicholas Wade speculates that language and religion grew up together, during the so called Cognitive Revolution, about 70,000 BCE. Religion is a mistake that occurs because of misunderstandings and projections on words. People learned to believe in what does not exist, because it existed as words. Animals do not believe in such nonsense, to their credit. In the beginning was not the "word", but the priest or Shaman who wanted to convince others that he knew what should be believed and made up the myths to capture the minds of the gullible. In the beginning is the con-man. The origins of both language and religion goes back to when humans were mating with Neanderthals. There are indications that Neanderthals were the first artists and thus first users of symbolic expressions.¹²⁸

Christians and Jews think they are the 'chosen people', for instance. This is a political generalization to a whole people of a concept that really only applies to kids. Kids start to see others as outsiders around 6 or 7 years old. The function of these beliefs is partly to insure inside group safety, or at least the illusion of group safety. Nearly every culture has some sort of group solidarity based in an irrational prejudice like this. The slippage occurs when this understandable insider prejudice gets generalized through language. In this case, religion is a political affirmation of a mistake of language. The 'Chosen People' are the most special people, the best people, the people who are not inferior, the

¹²⁸ <http://science.sciencemag.org/content/359/6378/912.full> It is interesting that the long term speciesism that was prejudicial against Neanderthals is finally breaking down.

people who have the right fathers. But better than all others, as the “patriarchs” are the best. This is again a magnified abstraction: ‘our dads are the best therefore our gods are like our dads’..

Ritual has this national or tribal function too, as in the preservation of Native rituals like the Sundance or African American solidarity in gospel music. Those who perform these rites or practices get a feeling of insider solidarity and importance from it.. From this it follows that a theory about a “common origin” or “transcendent unity of the religions” is actually just a fantasy. There are similar systems of superstitious delusions that have grown up with similar features in different areas of the world, rather like different languages. Dennett might call these “memes”, though they do not really have a real existence, they are sideshows and smoke in mirrors.. The features that they share in common do not indicate an abstract “esoterism” at all. There is no need to posit a “universal religion” just as there is no need to posit a “universal grammar”, as Chomsky has done, but never managed to prove. Neither can be proven because there is no universal religion just as there is no language organ in the brain. Brain science shows us language is present in areas like Wierneke’s and Broca’s areas but also takes advantage of other parts of the brain too. As Pascal Boyer observes, religions seems to be similar only because they are based on a

“very restricted set of supernatural concepts: the ones that jointly activate inference systems for agency, predation, death morality , social exchange etc.. Only a small range of concepts are such that they reach the aggregate relevance, which is why religion has common features the world over.¹²⁹>

¹²⁹ Boyer Pascal Religion Explained, page 325

In other words, religion is common and it is a “useful fiction” in similar social ways all over the world and the same is true of language. The “transcendent unity of religions” is really an illusion. Boyer is right about this I think, with many far reaching consequences to be drawn. Though he does not specifically address these delusions as a mistake of language. He mistakenly thinks this is an evolutionary process when really it is just a social and political process.

Unfortunately Boyer still leaves too much out in this scenario, but he is headed in the right direction. Religion does appear to be something like his model of false inferences and imaginary agents imagined as helpers or imagined in fear of death. But he fails to stress that this imagining in fact is not a genetic proclivity but a mental conditioning born of a social and linguistic systems. Religion is also a set of false inferences involved with social life with others. This appears not to be the result of evolution so much as it is a mistake that grows out of language. The basis of religion is delusions and fictions of various kinds. But Boyer does not go far enough to explain the toxic character of religions, or its habitual and repressive features and attachment to political structures. Are delusions a function of social structures or do the structures arise out of previous delusions?. Boyer appears to think that religions arise from a mental set of proclivities, genetic in character, that suggest or infer delusory conclusions. I am sure this is correct in some cases, but it is more often the case that religions arises from imposed delusions made obligatory by an elite, fashions of delusions, as it were; spreading ideological drifts and mythic inflations maintained by culture managers in the interests of the upper classes. This is not a Marxist description but merely a description of the facts in our society.

Language may be at the heart of religious delusions, in the sense that the abstract character of language favors inventing categories and concepts that are have no basis in reality. When something appears in

language many people suppose it is real. Gods, Ghosts, Luck and similar make believe things are linguistic slippages, an effect of abstract, magnified Pronouns. The fact that we make up a “He” rather than a ‘he’ that is a god, and ascribe qualities to the abstraction, is an accident effect of language use. One dignifies with the high status of ‘He’ rather than ‘he’, to create class or caste distinctions, for instance. But it is still magical thinking and his is delusory, even if it appears real to followers or worshipers.

Another instance of this is the use of the word, “Heaven”, a meaningless concept in itself, as is the word “God”. The word, if it has any meaning, merely refers to things in the sky. But into this word gets poured all sorts of projections, containing fear of death, an imaginary life in the beyond, flowers, happiness, cessation of sufferings and all sorts of things, varying with different cultures and religions or different in the same religion. The Catholic Heaven pictured in Raphael or Michelangelo is very different that the Jehovah’s Witness heaven. The former shows a heaven peopled with aristocrats, partially nude or in Greek dress, acting like polite courtiers, of rather inflated musculature, in a structured hierarchy., In the Jehovah’s Witness heaven we see an American suburb with two cars, a green lawn, and some kids at a picnic with their 1950;s parents, right out of an American situation comedy or an advertisement. This is merely a projection of fears, politics and wishes, a dream, and hardly an example of a sublimated evolutionary tendency of behavior created by our DNA. Such visions of paradise are class based projections. In short religion is detritus, waste products of language projected into the bubble or our mental spaces.

The use of language helps create these imaginary illusions or useful fictions. Christians imagine that the “Word” is the creative origin of the universe. This is true only in the sense that the delusory “Word”, a generalized abstraction of language itself, is supposed to be the origin of

the universe. Actually it is nothing of the kind, it is merely a mind stopping abstraction. This abstract word, which really means nothing at all, is in fact the origin of the Christian fiction. The Hindus imagine that all things flower forth from the letter OM. This is a similar metaphysical fiction.

It is quite possible to show in great detail how a given language functions to legitimize transcendent fictions. A major part of religion is due to the delusions that language allows. Sutras, sacred Torahs wrapped in a cloth, Bibles, Holy Korans which must not touch the dirt, holy scriptures and language of all kinds are just this sort of useful fiction. Language functions in religions to legitimize inflated and fictional excesses and make believe, alternative worlds and consciousness. This is quite plain and obvious, for instance, in Hindu and Buddhist texts. One Hindu text that is used in Zen Buddhism and taken from the Sochanda and Malini Vijaya Tantras, as well as the Vigyan Bhairava.¹³⁰ This is made up of short Koan-like sentences the purpose of which is to stop thought and force a dissociated mental/emotional state in which inner emotions are fixated on abstract concepts of totality—generalizations in other words. So for instance, the reader is supposed to associate breath with “vanishing” or stopping the ears, with the “sound of sounds”. If one strings these generalized abstract words together one comes up with, “transcend”, “weightless”, “great peace”, “in your heart”, “beyond human” “limitlessly spacious”, “over death itself”, What we have here is a sort of formula for self-hypnosis that creates a dissociated state of being—an imaginary state of being, beyond time space and death. This is not the result of evolution, as Boyer might claim, but a psychological/linguistic trick for creating certain inner states which are actually fiction but which give calm and the otherworldly illusion of overcoming oneself and the world. It is the inner appearance of

¹³⁰ See the chapter “Centering” in Paul Reps Zen Flesh, Zen Bones 1961, 1989 Anchor books, (pg. 159).

overcoming that is evoked in Koans of the kind used here. One does not actually overcome anything in reality, one merely creates an inner fiction that is practiced as a habit until it becomes constant, or at least appears to be constant if done often enough. The “non-dual” state of mind is a state of mind without reality in it, a delusional state with no future or past, and this becomes a social symbol worn by Zen priests, Indian Yogis and new age gnostics who teach it to others in similar denial and submission. Non duality is merely an expression of abstract identity, “I am that I am”, thou art that, or “I am you”. It means nothing but seems to mean everything. This is a language based system of social controls and advisories.

This is Zen and Vedanta in a nutshell. The void or Sartori is a fictional state created in a subject by practice of technical and deliberate dissociations and forced analogies. Such linguistic entities, created in oneself by excessive “practice” are given reality by imagination and became “real” in peoples’ minds by the process of inference that Boyer traces so well. This is why those who say that Buddhism is not like Christianity or other religions are mistaken. All the religions are systems of magnified abstractions, whether they are personified abstractions or not. Gods are not different than sunyata or Sartori, they are merely different terms that describe subjective projections or magnifications of abstract concepts. But the process whereby the abstractions are created is not evolutionary at all. Language itself might be, though that is still uncertain too, but the investiture of words with delusional meanings is not about evolution but about culture and human needs expressed in political icons, Koans, prayers or practices. The mental/emotional states created in Zen become images of social authority and are taught by “masters”. This process gets quite baroque in Tibetan Buddhism for instance where the imagined gods—imagined with great care and detailed exactness, become ‘agents’ with purposes and designs, just like humans: Dakhinis, Mahakalas, Sambogakayas, Maitreyas. This is fiction on a

grand scale and produced elaborate bureaucracies in India, Tibet and elsewhere. The same thing happened in the Catholic Church, where abstract analogies become magnified and exaggerated in system like that of Aquinas or the poetry of Dante. These fictions created by linguistic generalizations are promoted into mind control techniques and social injunctions and practices: Inquisitions, Crusades, killing off other cultures that are different than one's own. .

Of course, language is very different than religion in that different languages confer real benefits whereas different religions are hypertrophies that distort social relations and create injustices. The ubiquity of languages proves the need to communicate,¹³¹ whereas religions proves nothing so much as the universal tendency of humans to make things up out of fear, loneliness or the need for power. Creating agents that are not there has a social purpose, and is not driven by evolution, directly, as might be the case with language.¹³² We have vocal cords adapted to speech and complexes of areas in the brain evolved for language, though our vocal cords are very little different than those of non-human primates. That does not mean that language is necessarily evolution based, but as there are brain differences, it may mean that. It has not been proven that is the result of evolution, and Chomsky and Pinker's systems might well be failures. But the fact that these areas are so fraught with conflicting theory that it appears that the truth is not really known as yet. Religion has no area in the brain, but rather appears to be a delusional effect of cognitive skills misapplied for social purposes.

¹³¹ Chomsky claims that language is not about communication, which is a little like saying that the sky is not about atmosphere. I am sure he is wrong about that. Communication with others is not really different than communication with oneself. It evolved to facilitate communication. I speak more on this in the last chapter on Anti-Science and in my essay "Chomsky's Cartesian Speciesism".

¹³² When people say "have a blessed day" they are invoking a deity who is supposed to bless them from a distance, giving them a good day over others who have a bad day. This is discriminatory and fictional at the same time, revealing the imaginary but social nature of the 'blessing'.

This means that Dennett and Boyer may be mistaken as to their thesis that religion is directly a result of evolution. At best it is a “by product” though that thesis is still questionable too. It is not really a ‘by product’ but a mistake or a false inference based on analogies. The politically fraught nature of linguistics studies suggests that the science is still largely incomplete and unresolved.

If the problem of religion does indeed lie in language, and religion and politics are indeed born of one impulse, then, there might be some justice in saying religion and politics are both a chimera. Schuon’s notion of the “transcendent unity of the religions” is a system of bogus similarities and false analogies between discretely separate fictions or fairy tales, all of them slightly different than one another. Schuon’s view is completely lacking in insight into brain science and evolution, which he opposed. Each religion is about social control, and each has their own methods of social control, local varieties, customs and evolved characteristics. There are similarities, as every human culture has similarities, since we are all evolved as humans. But the arbitrary similarities between religions are an accident of human genetic and cultural characteristics, not a sharing of a ‘Platonic essences’. Essences are merely imagined analogies. Guenon and Schuon mined the seemingly ‘transcendent’ data of the religions to draw correspondences or abstract similarities to make themselves king of the lot. This is hardly legitimate. Of course Schuon, who had few original thoughts, got this whole procedure from Guenon, and merely adapted it to his own peculiar needs and psychology, so the credit goes to Guenon for coming up with much of this nonsense. There is no super “primordial religion”, there are only convergent similarities between cultures due to similar genetic makeup, inherited characteristics and cultural needs. The control of language is the control of belief and the control of belief is the control of behavior.

In other words, religions are mistaken systems that are partly born of abuse of the trust that children have for their parents, partly

derive from power needs of the elites in these societies and partly derive from peculiarities of the language and the human brain which favor mythic constructions, simple stories or delusional systems of imposed belief.. Many adults retain this gullible trust and transfer it onto churches, cults, temples or corporations. We live in a society where many are not educated to think for themselves, often deliberately so. Corporations, the department of education, even universities are often loathe to teach critical thinking skills. Religions develop like mental viruses or languages and spread from person to person via parents, churches, books, media, T.V, corporate propaganda or whatever. Humans become receptacles of abstract ideologies, both political and “spiritual” via the religions they accept.

The Failure of the Traditionalist Theory of Religion

Among other things, the three books that follow, use the theories and actions of a minor movement among spiritual reactionaries in the 20th century to illustrate aspects of the religious mentality. They merely imitated what they thought was orthodox and combined religions into a Ur-religion, purely imaginary on their part. In other words they had no critical assessment of religion to speak of.

Traditionalism is a failure as a viable system of explanation of religion. It is perhaps the last gasp of conservative Scholastic and “esoteric” thought, expiring in the dust heap of comparative religion, as espoused by Huston Smith and others. Its main function is social in that it is a far right example of an ideology that opposes any liberal and progressive movements. It easily became a kind of poster boy for far right corporatism and neo-aristocratic wealth. Not very interesting in themselves I use them as an example to elucidate more general aspects of many religions. Its main proponents are now Moslem, which makes sense, as Islam is

still emerging from medievalism.

I don't think of myself as an "atheist" or as "secular", since these terms are created by religions to describe hated people or "profane" conditions. The Latin word *saecularis* meant "of a generation,--- belonging to an age". This was derogatory. The secular world for the Church was the place of sin and the "fallen" world, not the "real" world of imaginary gods, which was assumed to be eternal and unchanging. To use the term "secular" is thus to buy into Church ideology, which is bogus. There is only this world, and it is not a lesser world.

The phrase 'secular humanist', really describes certain hated and ambiguous people in the 15th or 16th century, proto-scientists in fact.. The notion of humanist had a rather different meaning then, whereas now being a humanist is more or less synonymous with being a speciesist, and I do not find that a good thing. Humanists tend to think the human race alone matters, and thus they are environmentally or biologically ignorant. Neither of these terms are very happy ones. I am a "reasonist", or perhaps an actualist, in the sense that I am concerned with actualities and reasoning about them. I prefer these terms, even if they are more or less synonymous with "atheist". I am not that crazy about the term 'atheist', as I don't wish to define myself by a negative, and theism is really a fictional system that cannot be taken seriously. Being against a fiction seems rather absurd and I do not wish to be defined by that.

So, this is a book about religions in general, with many allusions to the major religions, but also studies a specific group of cranks and reactionaries whose movement had its apogee in 20th century. Called the Traditionalists, they are strangely modern, motley crew of Symbolists and disaffected gnostics of the far right. No one serious can take them seriously. But they are a convenient way to analyze the religions as a whole, since they are 20th century revivalists of the various dying

religious traditions, about which they are often fairly accurate. They practiced “comparative religion”, or in other words made analogies between various systems of make believe.

. The Perennial/Traditionalist movement is largely splintered or dead now, with a few fanatic stragglers, hangers -on and dreamy eyed exegetes, some in universities, mostly in Europe and America. They all continue to sound their hopelessly cramped and narcissistic spirituality with “magisterial” stale air and excessive verbosity. Sophia Magazine is one of their online productions and is a good example on the inbred nature of their writing. Charles Upton, a hardly noticed member of this hardly noticed movement, in recent essays, which are eminently unreadable, even admits that the movement is about dead. It is not really a movement worth paying much attention to.

So I use traditionalism partly out of an autobiographical impulse, partly for pedagogical reasons. The movement is useful as a teaching vehicle to discuss the anatomy of religion, even if the specimen is largely dead. I got involved with Traditionalism briefly, (2 years) and watched various legal actions against them in the early 1990’s, so I know a great deal about them. I compiled yet more evidence against them, in later years, and proved the case clearly that Schuon’s Primordial Gathering did happen and children were involved.. Reviewing the traditionalists is a good way to review my intellectual mistakes and seek to correct them, refining a view of reality that is healthier, based in the actual and closer to science. I also wish to supply examples of critical thinking—including self-critical thinking--- so that others might apply such thinking to other irrational and bogus systems of phony knowledge.

And there is a journalistic impulse too. Many in my generation, inspired by examples like the Beatles, Zen flower arranging, or the weird death and sex of Tibetan Buddhism, fell for varieties of metaphysical nonsense and here I can review and perhaps correct the mistakes of a generation. Besides using this dying, archaic and nostalgic movement as

a spring board to discuss religions and systems of magnified abstractions in general, I also mean also to question the largely bogus discipline of “religious studies”. Religion is not a real category of knowledge, but is really a kind of political anti-knowledge,-- a set of “alternative facts” a way of learning that depends of false premises and compiled, “counterintuitive” (read: delusional) illusions and myth. As such it is partly a system of lies, or a disinformation discipline and is helpful to ruling classes in acting as such. This is partly why Religious Studies has long been a haven for fanatics and proselytizers of various sorts. It is about time that this was brought into the open and questioned outright.

I call the traditionalists reactionaries because they are the inheritors of the school of thought advocated by Joseph De Maistre and others, who despised the French Revolution, science and the Renaissance and wished to return to rule by priests and superstition. They are fundamentalists of an elitist sort, rather than of a middle class sort as one sees in fundamentalist Islam or Bible belt America. Like these groups they hate science and are Creationists, deniers of the obvious facts of evolution, haters of physics. They are rather creative anachronists, in that they seek to resurrect dead systems of myth as if they actually described something real. I am not an advocate for religion or orthodoxy, on the contrary, my express wish is to analyze and critique religion. I use the traditionalists as a springboard to a more general meditation on history, far-right spirituality and philosophy and political systems of many kinds.

The reason there are few critical assessments of traditionalism is not hard to find. Hardly anyone paid attention to them. Traditionalist writers willingly enclosed themselves in a small world of their own making, cultish and secretive. But their influence, on the Trump administration, for instance, is truly insidious. This is true of early Christianity, which was a cult, and early Islam as well. I got to watch as the traditionalists made up myths out of existing myths and pushed ideas that they found useful to advertise their campaigns and ideologies. I could see clearly there was

no truth to what they were saying, it was merely political posturing based on delusional thinking.

This gave me insights into how early Islam and Christianity were made up. There is no real difference between cults and religions other than size. Like the ideology of “too big to fail” the size of religions hardly means that they are true, just as the size of banks makes them any less corrupt. The Traditionalists have a very small following among those who, for various reasons, decided to despise the ‘modern’ world’. The inbred or hermetic insularity of the cults and groups that follow Guenon results in a Manichean world view. The traditionalists largely are lacking in real education, though many of them have read books, or even gone to universities, but they tend to read only within a narrow range of like-minded religious writers,¹³³ and none of them have much real scientific knowledge. I learned when in the cult that they hated universities and those that worked in them. As many worked in universities they despised their colleagues in secret. Indeed, the basic evidence based tenets and canons of academic work and inquiry are anathema to traditionalist values. Because they have so little understanding of modern science, they have no concrete understanding that real progress has been made in many areas of human knowledge, from biology to medicine. They believe in nonsense that is not falsifiable and cannot be verified, such as gods, voids, beyond being and other metaphysical fictions.

Most critics of Schuon, Guenon and Evola are far right fanatics of one orthodox stripe or another, fanatic Muslims, fanatic Catholics, far right nationalists etc. There is no god, there is nothing to be against, so as I said, being atheist is rather silly.. I am not a ‘secular’ either because there is no real normative notion of the sacred that I have rejected. I simply do not accept the reality of the religious and the “sacred” as defined by those who claim to know what that is. But I am not a theist

¹³³ Typical for a narcissistic cult leader, Schuon told his followers that there was little reason to read any books but his and those close to him.

and reject the notion of gods. Belief in religion seems untenable to me as a naturalist and historian, first because there is no evidence whatever that nature has anything to do with gods. Second I do not believe there is a god, and third I know how horrible have been the atrocities caused by the god idea. History proves that if there were a god, it would be necessary to deny his goodness and struggle against his dark need of power. The god of the religions was a psychopath, or in the terminology of this book, a theofascist.. Those who believe in gods like to say that god has mysterious designs in killing premature babies, murdering children in car accidents or leaving homeless men in freezing rain for whole days, until they die of exposure. But only a very bad person would do such a thing and a God who prides himself on killing kids for ineffable reasons is a monster that everyone should declare a fraud. If god existed, it would be necessary as William Blake showed, to seek redress against his horrible injustices.

So this book is only partly a meditation on a failure and decadence of a small religious and mythical system that grew up and largely died in the 20th century. I will be using them as a ready example,--a foil---typical of many cults and religions, against which I can compare other systems of ideologies.. Remnants of it remain on the fringes of our society, A few backward academics who ought not to be at universities are members of it, and the son of the King of Jordan is a follower of it, and Prince Charles supports it. But it is dying and has few followers. It is a very forgettable group of men, who created a throwback philosophy that sought to return to the Dark Ages. I got involved with the group briefly and was a witness in a trial against one of the leaders. It is not an interesting cult, really, but it is useful as a touchstone to reflect on religions at large, why they arose and why they are dying off, as well as more modern ideologies and how they function.

It is often called Traditionalism or the Sophia Perennis or Perennialism. Rene Guenon (1886-1951) had four main followers of note

in the generation between 1935 and 1950. One, Frithjof Schuon (1907-1998) was a self-styled “Sufi” who degenerated into a polygamist, cult leader and director of nudist gatherings. This group call themselves the Maryamiyya, but I never call it that. The image of Mary in this group is a cult image and there is a pathology at the basis of that, as I will explain in later chapter. I call this group the Schuon cult, which is what it was. The second was Ananda Coomaraswamy, (1877-1947) a Pre-Raphaelite, Platonist and medievalist, Hindu scholar at the Boston Museum of Fine arts who tried to rewrite art history as elitist mysticism and who was sympathetic to caste, and Platonist hierarchy. He hated the modern world, though in his early years, He did some of his best work as geologist before he abandoned science..¹³⁴

Lastly there is Rene Guenon.

Apples do not fall far from the tree. The main ‘apples’ that fell from Guenon’s ‘tree’ in the first generation after Guenon were Schuon and Evola, and numerically speaking, Evola is more popular than Schuon. ¹³⁵

¹³⁴ Some Schuon cult followers are able to produce amazingly baroque hyperbole about the object of their worship. Most Schuon groupies have a very distorted view of him. Most did not actually know Schuon on a daily basis at all, or merely met him in artificial ceremonies or appointments at Schuon’s house designed to exalt Schuon himself. I got to watch him on a dialy basis and could see clearly there was nothing sacred about the man and he was a fake. Such a cultic and largely ignorant view of the actual Schuon can be seen in the essay (below) by the fanatical Brazilian Schuon follower, Mateus Soares de Azevedo . He writes that ” Guenon was the pioneer and Schuon the consummation” ----though exactly what Schuon was a ‘consummation’ of is unclear: decadence perhaps, pretense and symbolist gatherings of a sexual nature? Or was he the consummation of narcissistic polygamy, cultic authoritarianism, being married to other men’s wives, obtuse prose, or glittering generalities ? The word ‘consummation’ is a strange word to use in respect of Schuon. It implies some sort of wedding ceremony or something. I knew Schuon and he was not a consummation of anything except the ability to pretend, pose and turn people into victims and accomplices in his psychopathic maneuvers. Azevedo is a fundamentalist traditionalist who is insufficiently educated. He hates science and wrongly thinks science is the same thing as other irrational systems of belief. He is a cult follower.
http://www.sacredweb.com/online_articles/sw10_azevedo.html

¹³⁵ One could include Huston Smith perhaps, though arguably he is from the next generation, or Martin Lings, who was heavily influenced by Guenon and Schuon. However, Huston Smith was really an advertiser and right wing promoter of an uncritical and largely New Age notion of religion as a shopping mart, pick your variety and sample the cakes and gurus. He was an uncritical cheerleader of religion and a creator or the bogus way of studying religion that usually

Julius Evola, (1899-1974), the fourth of Guenon's followers, was a wanna-be Nazi—who dreamed of reforming fascism along Guenonian lines. The Nazis rejected him but he went on to covertly adapt fascism to spirituality in post-World War II world. Evola wanted a Fascism advanced “from above” rather from “below”, which of course is what Coomaraswamy admired in Nietzsche's over-man or superman, and what Schuon meant when he saw himself as “the last manifestation of the Logos at the end of time”, in his own words. These men all wanted a “top down” authoritarian caste system, based on unjust anti-democratic and totalistic ideals. This is a complicated maneuver. These men hated the modern world so much that they wanted to radically alter it to fit nostalgic dreams of totalitarian system in the past which they wished to somehow implement on the plane of action. If this were not possible they wanted apocalypse rain down on everyone. “After me the deluge”, might be written on the Traditionalist flag.

When I think of Rene Guenon the first thing that comes to mind is his devotion to a dream of an eternal metaphysics that is now dated and crumbling into fiction and ruin and embarrassment. What comes to mind is his description of the “Wall” he believed circles the world and the “cracks” or “fissures” were appearing in the “Wall” in the 20th century. In his paranoid delusions he thought demons or other maleficent influences were pouring through the “Wall”, headed to attack the unaware, the “profane” the evil ones—which is what he called ordinary people, who are not counted among the “elite”. The belief that the universe is cracking up is a common belief in certain kinds of paranoid schizophrenia, which is

reigns in “religious studies”. There is little “original” in him. Guenon, Schuon and Evola are all ‘original’ in the sense that they are eccentric and extreme individualists who hate individuality. For Guenon ‘originality’ was a sort of sin because he loved abstract gods and fictions so much that he was sure that only there are real. He wanted to deny existence and uniqueness to the point of eclipsing the diversity of life. He hates ‘history’ and the “personal”. Yet he was extreme eccentric himself and an individualist in denial

probably what Guenon suffered from, or some variant of this illness. Evidently, for Guenon, these maleficent influences infested the whole earth. Because of this, Guenon thought many individuals or groups were after him, trying to take advantage of photos of himself, for instance. He thought people might use pictures of himself as witchcraft against him. When he came down with serious illnesses, probably due to his excessive smoking habit, he believed that people made him sick from a distance. This is not just primitive superstition. It went much further than that. He thought that coins that are uninsured by god are conduits of devilish “psychic entities”. Indeed, he thought “psychic entities” inhabited metals. One can say a lot against the institution of money, certainly, and the rise of capitalism. But Guenon really goes very far into purely imaginary excess. Guenon says the psychic entities that are associated with metals are “extremely dangerous for anyone to approach who is not of the required qualifications”. Thus, if you need a plumber, call a Guenon scholar, a priest and an exorcist next time your toilet clogs up, if you want to be safe! Or if you cross over a metal bridge like the Golden Gate: beware! Since metal is full of evil little demons, your whole mental structure might be in danger of profanation, via the pipes under your house or crossing over a bridge!

Seriously, these examples of Guenon’s thought are all symptomatic of a serious mental condition, either a Paranoid Personality Disorder or paranoid schizophrenia. Metal is merely one element and not a dangerous one. It is not to be judged by an article hierarchy of values. Indeed, blacksmithing is early science and fascinating and worth attention. Guenon declared that the project of the Enlightenment was dead and that we should abandon science and rationality. What possible good could this serve ?--- If Guenon got his will on this it would increase violations against human rights, subvert what is left of democracy and increase disease and ignorance, wars and environmental disaster. All that matters is our earth and how well we care for it and each other.

Religious hierarchy is an unfortunate accident of our history and indirectly of misuses of cognitive faculties created by our DNA. In the 2nd book below you will find chapters dealing with facets of Guenon and his milieu. One of these essays is an in depth critique of his bizarre book the Reign of Quantity. These chapters will spell out just how dangerous this author is

The first thing I think of when I think of Guenon's other main follower, Julius Evola is that he so admired the Nazis and that he really tried to talk the Nazi's into becoming Guenonians. He thought the Nazis and fascists were close enough to Guenon that there might be a real chance of making them Guenonian traditionalists. There is no overt mental illness here, but there is madness of a kind, both in Evola, Guenon and the Nazis. These people and their cults had a big influence on the European far right and I will discuss that too.

The first thing I think of when I think of Guenon's follower Frithjof Schuon, who I came to know well through two years of close observation, is the absurdity of his "Primordial Gatherings". In these gatherings 20-30 women dance around him in various stages of nakedness. Schuon pretends to be a Native American chief or an Indian Raja, penis exposed though a transparent loincloth. I will discuss these gatherings in later chapters. They are interesting as an example both of creating religious rituals, myths and secrecy. One of the chapters below will discuss these gatherings as part of a much larger discussion on women and metaphysics and how many metaphysical systems the world over denigrate women.

People who are susceptible to the considerable propaganda put out by the Schuon cult and Guenon and Schuon's followers are unaware that Schuon pretended he was someone he was not. However, when the facts are presented to most reasonable people they generally grasp that Schuon was insane. When I showed my mother some nude photos of

Schuon, she said right away that he looks crazy and that he is one of the ugliest men she had ever seen. I'm not sure how ugly he was. But I witnessed Schuon behind the veil his wives put up before him to hide his real character from others. I saw him in moments of high stress where he showed me who he really was. Few got into the inner circle of Schuon's wives, who cloaked the reality of this man from followers and the public. The wives function was to keep him looking the part of the spiritual sage and 'master of wisdom', preventing real understanding of who he really was. Books and bios of him are mostly fiction created by the wives or Schuon himself. Actually, he was a frightened man with huge insecurities and major shortcomings. His decisions were often very ill advised and caused the cult far more problems than they solved. It was Schuon's own bad leadership that led to the many break ups and ultimate failure of the cult

The Schuon cult has put out its own largely bogus or misleading histories, padded extensively with personal mythology, damage control and public relations, or in other words with lies and inventions. The Schuon cult does all they can to hide the truth about who Schuon really was at the same time and they pretend he is the great prophet of truth. They never note this contradiction. Liars sometimes parade themselves as truth tellers. I got close enough to Schuon to see how insane he really was. I am not the only one who was this close who has tried to tell the truth about what he saw; Cyril Glasse, Aldo Vidali, Maude Murray, Catherine Perry and others tried to do so too, but gave up when the road was too difficult. I cannot give all these voices a chance to talk in this book, as many people are too afraid of these cults to say anything. But I do express some of the point of view of some of the victims when I can. Many people have told me they are afraid to speak out about the cult and would not allow their names to be used. For the most part, unless there were good reasons not to, I have honored these requests. But I do use

some of their comments or evidence here and there.

The great Mathematician Paul Erdos liked to tell a wry joke that god is the “supreme fascist” (SF)----- it was a joke because he didn’t believe in gods. But there is truth in his joke. Religions are nearly all authoritarian and arbitrary. Any god who created the caste system, any god who allows species like the Ivory Billed woodpecker to go extinct or who allows the killing of young children who die in great numbers every year, or who tortures people in hell for small infractions or who designs a religion to support a “them verses us” mentality that kills people—, any god who does these things is a tyrant. As Robert Ingersoll wrote. “The doctrine of eternal punishment is in perfect harmony with the savagery of the men who made the orthodox creeds. It is in harmony with torture, with flaying alive, and with burnings.” It is wrong to believe in such nonsense. Christ’s espousal of the idea that “he that is not with me is against me”, fueled the Inquisition and the murder and exploitation of slaves and native peoples. The Christians who promoted and allowed the atrocities of the Inquisition or the cruelty of Catholic education are theofascists. I coined the term ‘Theofascism’, to have a word that explains the considerable difference between Nazism and the far right “spiritual” politics of the traditionalists, Dante, Plato, Augustine and other such tyrants of the sacred. Indeed, my original researches had more to do with trying to define the view so Plato and Augustine than with the Traditionalists. I will discuss many ‘traditional’ theories of political/spiritual, governments and their relation to religion in China, India, Medieval Europe and elsewhere as examples of theofascism.

Theofascism is in part what the god idea is about. The God of the Old Testament like the God of the New Testament and the god of the

Koran are all arbitrary tyrants, sociopaths and dictators.¹³⁶ It is hard to think of religion without thinking of those who killed Jews in ghettos like Warsaw or the Jews who kill Palestinians the ghettos of Gaza. Those who claim to be the elite and the chosen people claim the right to kill the outsiders with impunity. Murder is still murder whether it is done by a state or a person.

The followers of Guenon have created a hagiography about a man who was no saint. Scholars who write about him try to defend his ideas as if they were sacrosanct. A good part of these books is devoted to debunking this sort of mythological construction. Guenon supported caste system and hated science and reason. These two facts alone make him suspect, a supporter of irrational social inequality and a man who hated objectivity and preferred irrational claims of authority. However, there is so much else. Scholars sometimes lionize men who should have been forgotten or at least questioned. Religions are “insane” because they will rationalize abuse of children to justify their position and need of power. I will even discuss the role of myth making and lionization in figures like Praxiteles and Chomsky.

Look up images of Guenon on a search engine. Guenon was Boris Karloff skinny and zombie-like, a hashish addicted and anorexic esoterist, bloodless and life denying as if from the land of the world-denying dead. Not everyone remembers Boris Karloff. But he plays a vampire and charlatan in 1930s movies, pasty white face, bloodless and somehow purple with overwrought devotion to the symbolist nether-world. Like Artaud wanting to escape to Mexico, Guenon was a romantic looking to escape into spiritual principles”. Of course there are some

¹³⁶ The term Theofascism is more or less synonymous with spiritual fascism, ---- a phrase which was used by Guenon’s follower Guido do Giorgio to describe Guenon’s system. Spiritual fascism is not fascism, but rather a form of arbitrary “spiritual” dictatorship by priests or high castes and hierarchies, and this can be found in cults, the Vatican, the Inquisition, Dynastic China, Aztecs, Brahmins in India, the system of Dionysius the Aeropagite, or Tibetan Buddhism, as well as many other religions and political systems from Israel to Iran.

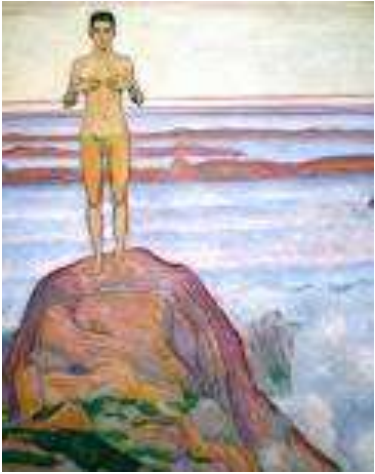
photos of Guenon with his two girls in which he looks slightly normal, even friendly, but even these show a man who is bizarrely at odds with the conspiratorial evil obsessed Manichean of the Reign of Quantity. It is hard to imagine Guenon changing poopy Diapers, just as it is hard to imagine Schuon doing anything at all for himself, he was so coddled and spoiled by his wives and followers. He was mollycoddled by his “wives”, who were more servants and ego builders than wives. Only one of his wives had children and that by a man that Schuon despised. One of the children was nearly brought into the family as a wife, and thus an attempt was made by Schuon to steal the childhood of this girl and make her his own. Everything had to serve Schuon’s narcissism. Indeed, his wives were not really wives at all, as I will discuss later. I used to wonder what would have happened to Schuon if he were left in Caspar, Wyoming without his entourage. He couldn’t survive without admirers and servants to bolster him up, feed him and make sure he kept his pants on, his wounded ego ever in need of lifting up. These were decadent ¹³⁷ men, half in love with ideas that are superstition and voodoo, half ghosts from the faded gilded age, symbolists with purple cloaks, weavers of metaphysical systems meant to dazzle and pervert, spoiled and helpless aristocrats who could not do anything for themselves.

Schuon was a decadent painter of the symbolist school, and his mentality in life was very much a decadent dreamer of the late 19th century. The photo of Schuon standing in front of the Matterhorn¹³⁸ sums it up: traditionalism is all pretenses, guilty associations of ideas that really don’t belong together. Schuon was a little guy with a big nose, not a Napoleon in front of a big mountain. Look up Schuon’s name in Google’s search engine and press “images” you will find him standing

¹³⁷

¹³⁸

against a mountain, not too different than these images, indeed, some of Schuon's artworks are nearly copies of these.



Hodler



Caspar David Fredrick

Covarrubias

I

There is a famous image of Goethe and Schelling before the Matterhorn and Klee and Kandinsky aping this image in a sort of parody.... Schuon's favorite painter Ferdinand Hodler did this painting (upper left) of a nude young boy on a mountain that closely resembles some of Schuon's paintings of Indians. Indeed, Schuon paintings are almost a copy of this. There is a similar image by Caspar David Fredrick of Faust on the Mountain. (right) Schuon's art is in line with this modernist 'tradition'. The Goethean world-weary and romantic misanthrope becomes the romantic paranoid cult leader, who tries to be and Indian chief. Greatest prophet at the end of time. This is the same thread of myth that inspired Novalis dream of the millennial poet prophet and Hitler dream of the Third Reich. These arrogant images picture the man as a kind of lonely alien god, very much a pre-fascist image of the romantic or Fictian "universal ego" alienated, exalted and above everyone. This is the Schuonian delusion in a nutshell. So I will use Schuon's art as a way of talking about Modern art in general and how corporate and traditional art are curiously linked in iconography.

Like Ferdinand Hodler, Schuon painted numerous nude young girls. Schuon also did paintings of nude pubescent of pre-pubescent Native American boys or girls and the poses are almost copies of Hodler. The other artist Schuon liked, besides Hodler and Gauguin was Miquel Covarrubias, who did nude women from Bali that Schuon was infatuated with. He had photos of seminude women from Bali which were models of girls used in primordial gatherings. His tastes in art moved along sexist, colonialist and racist lines. His aesthetic ideology was very much like that of Arthur Versluis who writes in his book Restoring Paradise that

This new paradisiacal earth is in the gnostic; it is generated through the creative power of Sophia and perceived through the gnostic imagination (pg. 15)

If you analyze this sentence carefully it is promoting fiction making. It is saying that the fiction of “paradise” is created by the creative fiction making power of the mythical being Sophia, and is ‘perceived’ by the fictional ‘gnostic imagination” which really does not exist, because gnosis is another fiction, a bogus claim to secret knowledge. So it is saying basically that the fiction making faculty of the imagination makes the fiction of paradise and by strength of delusions , if one can keep this fiction inside oneself.. The romantic notion of creation via secret faculties or goddesses that only the elect or ‘gnostic’ can get in touch with arises from delusional and emotional ‘visions’, in short. “what he is really describing here is the “sordid excellence of paradise” as Emily Dickenson rightly describes the delusions of the religious.

The aesthetic pictured here is very much like Schuon’s aesthetic. Schuon created his rather Salome like, Asiatic and vampy goddesses or devadasis out of just this fictional imagination—he calls it the “Intellect”--- and he piled imagination upon mythic constructions. ¹³⁹

Schuon was a rather angry and bitter megalomaniac who had fake visions and serious delusions of grandeur. Guenon was skinny, overwrought intellectually---frightened by life, defensive, paranoid and hardly the saint followers picture him to be. Evola was a cramped and militaristic intellectual with close ties to the Italian and German fascists. They were what the religions have always been, human pathologies seeking respite in phony ‘wisdom’, trying to assert power claims and acting as an ideological manager class for far right movements and

¹³⁹ The Sophia myth is a Platonist construction, made up partly out of the bible and the “wisdom” books of Solomon and partly from gnostic myths and Renaissance imaginings. It has been resurrected by New Age and Goddess groups in recent times. Sophia as a goddess is a weak character, resembling a classical version of the Virgin Mary, Its appeal was that it is a goddess who is not Christian, Christianity having been discredited by the far right and a history of abuses going back to the Inquisition.

politics. The Schuon cult ran on required adulation for the “master”. There is a similar if slightly lessened required adulation about Guenon. To many he is a “saint”. The Brazilian Website, Irgret, wrote of Guenon, for example:

Impassive and above all these noises, lies the impersonal authority of René Guenon’s work, up to date and not temporal, silent and eloquent, powerful and unshakable, alive as Tradition itself, because it is a crystalline and fulgurant expression of it.

Actually, Guenon was a very neurotically tense and nervous person, even obsessive in his writing, laboring to appear stylistically impersonal, but really on the verge of inner mayhem inside him, paranoid and holding onto logic to try to still the inner rush of psychotic fantasy and fear. He was not impassive at all. Like Schuon, Guenon posed at being impassive in his writing and photos. His works are personal projections hiding behind the pose of the impersonal. He is irrationally superstitious, prone to wild fantasy, but holding his madness in a Cartesian vice inside himself.

Guenon’s god is a god of mathematics and non-dual emptiness living on the verge of total collapse, grasping at apocalypse out of a hatred that goes back to before the Renaissance. There are no real “invisible masters” behind him, just reactionaries like Joseph De Maistre and con-men like Gerard Encausse. The Traditions he is supposedly “alive” with are actually all decadent, based on false premises and falling apart. I tried many traditional religions when I was reading Guenon and religion no longer works. Guenon’s attempts to keep it alive are partly maniac efforts, “fulgurant” expressions of a desperate reactionary trying to turn back the clock to before 1313 and the rise of science. An Anti-nominalist like Guenon does not make sense after the 14th century. His hand never

did any real work and his brain was too self-involved. The Platonist conceit was effete and “mind’ centered and disdained anything that was “contaminated by practical uses”. The Platonists of the middle ages uphold only mind as superior. That world hating and insular intellectuality fails and practical hands-on knowledge and technology begins to take over. Indeed, Plato was wrong, it is not the fiction of effete otherworldly truth that matters, but the nifty gritty of the everyday and the practical, the heft of the hammer and the feel of a pencil, fixing an engine or cooking for kids. Nominalism triumphed and left medieval Platonic “realism” and in the dust of history. That is a good thing too.¹⁴⁰ So I will discuss Plato’s ideas at length and in relation to many later developments and show how baneful the influence of Plato was.

There are those who want to say that Guenon and Schuon were somehow a mere decadent byway, not affecting the heart of the religions at all. In one sense that is true, religion has become irrelevant, and so Guenon and Schuon are irrelevant too.¹⁴¹ However, in another sense, I do not agree. Islam is not just as bad as Schuon’s use of it, in fact it is much worse, -- as much as I know Schuon was a fraud, cult leader and poseur, Iranian Mullahs and Afghani Taliban sheiks are just as bad and many much worse. For instance, only 12% of Afghani women are literate and they have a life expectancy of 44 years. This ignorance is enforced systematically by denying girls education. There have been cases of acid

¹⁴⁰ If you read the esoterists, people like Arthur Verluise or Schuon, what they are trying to do is ensnare reader is anti-technology and anti-science. They caricature technology as evil machines and try to uphold esoterism as anti-Christian new religions. This has an appeal to those seeing an “inner life”. It is an escape from reality of course, and the best way to have a good inner life is to study what is real in nature and humans, not the unrealities speculated on by Kabbalists, mystics and hermeticists. An inner life based on delusions does not satisfy for long.

¹⁴¹ As David Hall rightly wrote “no one can live within the womb of Islam or any other religion. ... The new start has to made elsewhere.” Hall, David. Islamic Mysticism, A Secular Perspective. Prometheus Books. Amherst New York. 2000. this is an amazing book which I highly recommend. David has put up very accurate arguments not just against Islam but against all religions, Indeed, this book brings all mysticism into question, in a way that I know was utterly sincere and well meaning. David went thought the delusional fire of mysticism and came out the other side wishing to help those still stuck in the muck of it.

being put on girls faces because they went to school. The perpetrators of this crime were Taliban officials. They are far right Moslems. Afghanistan has nearly the highest maternal and infant mortality rates in the world. This abuse of women is enforced by Islamic codes and norms. Similar figures have prevailed in India for centuries. So there will be a chapter on misogyny and its relation to nature hatred, below.

Guenon's paranoid insanity is more than matched by many apocalyptic Islamic and Christian fanatics through the centuries, who did so much to encourage world hatred and backwardness over the course of the last two millennia. Religion is a force for harm and unreason, as Goya already saw his great series of prints the Disparates, and Caprichos, Disasters of War and Black Paintings. So I will also discuss the invention of Christianity and its help in creating the Dark Ages and its opposition to Darwinism.

I am fortunate and I thank Guenon and Schuon for saving me from religion all together. They were excellent examples of all that is wrong with the religions, not just their little formulas of it. It must be said that Guenon and Schuon deserve credit for being an example of the corrupting fictions and subjective fantasy that is what religion really is. There are good things about both of them.¹⁴² They showed me a false

¹⁴² Since I wrote this I have been trying to think of good things about Schuon I remember, and frankly there are very few. I liked his collection of Native American shoes. Some of the Native American dances in his back yard were enjoyable, though Schuon didn't need to be there at all. It would have been just as fun if he wasn't there. He just stood there with his hands out trying to be priestly. There was a certain golden sort of beauty in the many cult houses, and that had its charm, though I have seen many more beautiful houses. The cult of nudity was what it was. At first I did not judge it as a negative thing, as we are all bodies. I like the human body, both male and female. Nudity in itself is a good thing, as we all have bodies and loving bodies is a big part of human life. As an artist I love seeing human bodies, far from perfect bodies in many cases, and many of the bodies of cult members were very imperfect, both men and women. But once he involved children I saw there was real illness in him. I did learn a great deal about religion and that was good only in that it helped me to reject religion. So really there was not a lot that was attractive or real about the Schuon cult. When I left it I realized that all I really missed was a woman I loved. I had quickly grasped what Schuon had to teach and saw it was a dead end and he was crazy. Schuon as a person was not a nice guy and had few virtues that I would recognize as virtues. He had many faults which the cult tried to sell as virtues. Indeed, Schuons whole moral

system of myths and beliefs that distort and falsify reality. They maintained their beliefs by elaborate efforts to create make-believe, manipulate minds, magnify myths, promote superstition, exploit ordinary human drives like pride, sex, or fear of death. It was not just a question of their exploiting “counter-intuitive conceptualizations”, though they did this in excess. They taught me about how the religions conceal, deny, lie and cover up. These methods were their stock and trade. Schuon and Guenon were bizarre charlatans, liars, and pretenders, but at the same time, they were human exemplars or great moral worth as seen by their followers, and thus exemplars of what was wrong with religion throughout the past: its misogyny, its despising of human rights, its elitist promotion of caste. This is not to overestimate them. They are pathetic in a fundamentalist way. But once you see through the lies that religions are, they are all pathetic and hardly worthy of academically inflated phrases like “counter-intuitive conceptualizations”, when really they are just systems of delusion.

Followers of Schuon and Guenon are deeply offended whenever their chosen guru is even slightly criticized. The same is true of followers of Chomsky who call one names as soon as you criticize their chosen Master. In the Schuon cult Schuon’s personality was grossly overestimated. He was really a lackluster and fanatical fellow in person, angry and petulant, glum, moody and forbidding. But the followers are lied to and told that Schuon and Guenon greatly surpass them, are wonderful amazing people, and they believe this, like dumb sheep. Schuon and Guenon were nutty or wacko, to speak in the vernacular, because religion itself is nutty and wacko. I do not mean to use this pedestrian term “nutty” in any literal sense. I like nuts, I even like some crazy people, in moderation. Terms like ‘Nutty’ are not scholarly. I just mean that when anyone is confronted with the literal facts of what

system—the Six Themes--- is premised on his own claim to be virtuous, but in fact, his system is questionable and his virtues were negligible or the opposite of what I would call virtuous.,

Guenon or Schuon actually believed, they are indeed, clinically unbalanced ---with a lunatic addiction to never admitting they were sick.

For Schuon committing himself to the ignoring of facts and evidence was a principle. To Schuon--- and to other Traditionalists and religionists, facts don't matter. Faith is irrational. Schuon writes --with amazing arrogance and ignorance at the same time--- that "the knowledge of facts for their own sake is, apart from practical applications of an always limited interest, without value" ¹⁴³ Actually facts are of primary importance but, for Schuon who made his living, as it were, selling fictions, only the abstract and the make believe matters. For Schuon, the world as it is was of "no interest" and is not factual for him, it is merely passed down lore about the "sense of the absolute"—which really is just vague intuitions about something out there that cannot be defined and would not be useful if it could be defined. The something out there that is not defined is an irrational feeling, and it is upon this easily delusional unknown that religions bases its right to "truth". For these men, abstract fictions are "facts" and "objectivity" is the study of delusional "facts", His metaphysics is thus a narcissism, a way of talking about himself and his feelings, however hidden they might be.

Actually there is no religious truth, there is only an avidity to believe in this make believe, in concert with others and as part of a chain of "memes" or tendencies. Schuon's devotion to the irrational allowed him to think himself the embodiment of the imaginary divinities. Sam Harris notes regarding the madness of the religious that "it is difficult to imagine a set of beliefs more suggestive of mental illness than those that lie at the heart of many of our religious traditions." Exactly. Most religious people are unaware they are devoting their lives to something that does not exist. Huge amounts of precious human energy goes into creating and sustaining these systems of political/spiritual delusion. As

¹⁴³ (Schuon. Eye of the Heart, unpublished typescript version, trans by Gerald Palmer Page 192,)

Harris says, “most religions have canonized a few products of ancient ignorance and derangement and passed them down to us as if they were primordial truths”,¹⁴⁴ What Guenon and Schuon call “esoterism” is only the inward dimension of alienated and magical thinking, crazy myths and figments of religious imagination. Henry Corbin called this realm of delusions and religious fictions the “imaginal realm”¹⁴⁵ Sam Harris is right that religion must come under question. The need for the “end of faith” as a survival priority for the species. “Esoterism” is merely a new religion that prolongs the harm done by earlier religions.

It is really quite irrational, and yes, even crazy, for Christians to think that “God’s son” Jesus died and somehow reproduces his body and blood every time a priest says a few Latin words mumbled over a glass of burgundy and a cheap, round cracker. It is irrational to think Mary was born in an immaculate conception or that she gave birth to Jesus in a “Virgin Birth”. It is likewise absurd to claim that Jesus was descended from David at the same time as one claims that god was his father, who impregnated Mary. (Romans 1:3).¹⁴⁶ Ibn Arabi thought he was having

¹⁴⁴ Harris, Sam. *The End of Faith*. NY. Norton 2005 pg. 72

¹⁴⁵ Corbin’s notion of the imagination is rather like Jung’s. Yuval Harari calls it the “common imagination”, unfortunately with no critical intent. It is all about dreams, visions and delusional and romantic “prophetic revelations”. It is an inflated poetry of the fancy. The Imagination for Corbin--is an organ of perception gives us access to a realm of delusional “being”, a subjective world that Corbin came to call the *mundus imaginalis*, the “imaginal world”. This is his neologism for the Arabic term *alam al’mithal* used by Ibn ‘Arabi and many others. But the “active imagination” is also *creative* imagination in the sense it creates magnified delusions of a mythic nature.. The exploration of the “subtle realm” requires an interplay between the human and illusion of the “divine” that pretends to be both a discovery and a creation. Really all this is just an invention or a fiction. Prayer is the activity of pretending these fictions are real. Corbin’s effort, Like William James, is an elaborate effort to pretend the unreal is the measure of reality, that delusion is fact. It is no mistake that Corbin’s original researchers were into Heidegger, Hence Corbin’s fantasy of a metaphysics outside history and hence he flirtation – or is it immersion---with far right ideology.

¹⁴⁶ The Gospel fictions try to claim that god was Jesus’ father, which makes no sense if he was descended from David. He could not be both. But myth is not rational, the religious would say. Saying it is a “mystery” is a common way of hiding the fact that none of this happened,, it is just mythic hyperbole in the service of useful delusions. The Christ myth is lacking in any real facts at all, as Robert Ingersoll wisely wrote:

sex with the entire universe, which Walt Whitman might think is poetic, but really such fantasies are really just exercises in imaginal excess. Schuon thought his sex fantasies meant he was a universal prophet. This sort of nonsense gets believed as being the literal truth by deluded and gullible followers. Schuon's followers thought that Schuon's penis conferred blessings of a Eucharistic sort, just as Guenon's followers thought that metals channel maleficent and negative spiritual influences. Muhammad thought he had the right to commit horrible atrocities and to marry a nine-year-old wife because he was the 'chosen prophet'. The world is crowded with god's prophets, all of them claiming to be god's chosen vessel and to beyond any laws. Just how the Christ myth arose, as well as the Myth of Muhammad is a subject of great interest nowadays and I record some of the findings about this in these books. See my essay below: "The Myths of Jesus and Muhammad and the War between Christianity and Islam"

In Tibetan Buddhism a female 'saint' Machig Lepdron and her associates did bizarre Chod ceremonies having sex in cemeteries on top of corpses, in order to feel themselves beyond birth and death.¹⁴⁷ This is a crazy procedure, when no one in fact is ever beyond birth or death

. We have listened to all the drowsy, idealess, vapid sermons that we wish to hear. We have read your Bible and the works of your best minds. We have heard your prayers, your solemn groans and your reverential "amens". All these amount to less than nothing. We want one fact. We beg at the doors of your churches for just one little fact. We pass our hats along your pews and under your pulpits and implore you for just one fact. We know all about your moldy wonders and your stale miracles. We want a this year's fact. We ask only one. Give us one fact for charity. Your miracles are too ancient. The witnesses have been dead for nearly two thousand years.
-- Robert Green Ingersoll, "The Gods" (1872)

¹⁴⁷ Tibetan Buddhism was a violent religion. As Victor Trimondi writes: "Lamaism's evaluation of war is fundamentally positive and affirmative, as long as it involves the spread of Buddhism. (We shall later demonstrate this through many examples.) This in no sense implicates a discontinuity between historical reality and the Buddhist/pacifist doctrine. *Vajrayana* itself cultivates an aggressive, warlike behavior and indeed not just so as to overcome it through mental control. Wars are declared — as is usual among other religions as well — so as to proceed against the "enemies of the faith"." <http://www.trimondi.de/SDLE/Part-2-09.htm#tibetans>

except in fantasy or delusion.¹⁴⁸ The psychotic exercises are meant to push the human mind into insanity, as religion requires insane delusions to exist. This is not evolution art work, but a technique ancient shamans already knew—you must derange yourself to convince others you know things they do not know. Religion in one sense is merely insanity channeled into myths useful in controlling the behavior and thoughts of others. Victor Trimondi writes of Tibetan Buddhism that

“In Tibetan Buddhism we have an archaic, magic-based religious system, which has remained to a large extent untouched by the fundamentals of the Western Enlightenment. This is also the reason it is so attractive for right-wing extremists. For centuries it has led to social injustices that any freedom-loving citizen of today would be forced to reject. The equality of the sexes, democratic decision making and ecumenical movements are in themselves foreign to the nature of Tantric Buddhism,”¹⁴⁹

Tibetan Buddhism is a bizarre combination of the indigenous Bon religion of the mountains and plateau of that area and Hindu and

¹⁴⁸ Similar useless and destructive attitudes can be found in some artists, whose empty sensationalism gives them fame with no content. Zhang Huan, for instance “witnessed the Tibetan Sky burial, in which a monk eviscerates the human corpse, leaving the flesh as food for vultures and smashing the bones into a grainy dust. The process is supposed to liberate the spirit from the body for peaceful transport into the next life. “Most people, when they see this ceremony, think it is gross and they cannot bear to watch,” Mr. Zhang said. “But, when I watch the ceremony, I feel this hallucination of happiness, and I feel free.” This willingness to hallucinate is characteristic of Tibetan Buddhism and other religions. What is involved here is an absurd transcendentalism that sees death and sacrifice as a desirable thing and can do so only by entering a kind of madness. Christianity does this same thing. Violence correlates with transcendental delusions.

http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/15/arts/design/zhang-huans-colorful-skull-paintings-at-the-pace-gallery.html?_r=0&adxnnl=1&adxnnlx=1379292653-WiIdwnSsFU1YmCDd+j724w

¹⁴⁹ <http://www.american-buddha.com/critic.for.htm>

Buddhist ideas imported from India. Tibetan religion served an hereditary theocracy kept in place by the absurd idea of reincarnated lamas and holy men and women. Misogynistic clan deities ruled the land in the persons of Lama run monasteries culminating in Lhasa, where the Dalai Lama lived. Tibetan history is rife with political religions and infighting. Religions are all fairy tales, fabrications, constructions or cultural inventions: fairy tales for adults. Buddhism pretends to present teachings that are beyond birth and death. They are not of course. Birth and death are part of the planet we live on and as much as they are difficult and painful, our earth and lives that are possible because birth and death exist. Without them we would not exist. The amazing thing is that priests, Rabbis, shamans, poets and “sages” sucker so many people into believing this anti-life nonsense—I even tried believing it myself, much to my continued embarrassment.¹⁵⁰

I tried on some of these beliefs for size, for a short time. I was a suckered fool too—I let myself be a suckered fool, partly out of curiosity, partly wishing it were all true and partly to find out the truth about these con-games. For instance I once thought the Tibetan “Wheel of Life” (Bhavacakra) held important truths. I first saw one at the Tibetan Museum on Staten Island, a propaganda museum for the Tibetans who were dispersed in the Diaspora. It was exotic and interesting. It is a

¹⁵⁰ The same appears to be the case for Victor Trimondi, who, according to his wikipedia entry, was a leftist, was disillusioned, explored religion and was disillusioned again. He writes that he came to the

“conclusion that political and sociopolitical activities alone are not enough to solve the pressing problems of human society once and for all. I saw a new and promising possibility in a — as it was described at the time — “radical transformation of consciousness”.”

He became an organizer of New Age conferences. He seems to have been somewhat disillusioned with this too. This disillusionment makes his writings on Tibetan Buddhism very interesting and accurate,—disillusion leads one to seek truth. I think. I don’t know about his current efforts to write a positive assessment of his beliefs. He says this has to do with “Eros”—but I don’t know what he means by that. He seems to be an idealist and a romantic who could use a deeper understanding of science. Trimondi birth name is Herbert Röttgen. He is an interesting writer and scholar.

conceptual diagram of Buddhist ideology. It seemed at the time like I discovered something. But once I finally studied it, it doesn't hold truths that seems true to me.--- it merely shows ideas which are misinterpreted and lied about to sucker in the gullible. It was a propaganda advertisement meant to condition minds to a way of thinking the served a ruling class. At the center of the Bhavacakra is a pig, snake and a bird. These are equated with the "three poisons", ignorance, attachment and aversion. This is speciesism of a rather rank sort. Animals do not personify human faults. Ignorance in the Wheel, refers to ignorance of Buddhism, which is not a bad thing, as the fundamentals of Buddhism are so distorted and delusional. The idea of Karma (caste) and that of samsara(life is illusion) are very harmful ideas. Attachment is a good thing as we only live once, and those close to us are what really matters. The only "poison" that makes sense is anger, which is rarely a good thing, though there are times where it is not a bad thing. Getting angry about abuses of business or government is essential to creating social change for instance.



Tibetan Wheel of Existence
(Bhavacakra)

Therefore, since I thought there might be truths in this ideology and I was wrong,, I am not lily white here. I too have made mistakes and believed beautiful lies. I admit I was fascinated by the intelligence put forth in these elaborate symbols systems. I wanted to decode them. These “technologies of the sacred”. However, I came out of it knowing I had the responsibility to say to others that this way is a way of lies, beautiful lies that really are ugly and malicious, once you get to know the truth about what religions really are. ¹⁵¹

¹⁵¹ Those who manage to retain only what is lovely in a religion are rather rare, but they do exist. There are nuns who have been wonderful people and priests who seems unusually kind or generous, such as are sometimes pictured in literature, Alyosha in Brothers Karamazov or the Priest in Les Miserable. In real life Fra Angelico seems to have been a very kind and gentle man,

Since I had been insider involved with the Schuon cult for a few years, between 1989 and 1991, and met various Guenonians, both then and since then. I have observed Traditionalists as a critic and as an outsider since 1991. Given these facts, I thought it might be a good idea if I reflected critically on what I have learned, aware that I would not be able to say everything that needs to be said. There are few who knew as many of these people as I have and still managed to retain some measure of objectivity. Indeed, there are none that I know of. I don't say this out of any pride, as I often wish I never met any of these people. It is a source of shame to me to write about this, and I do so with some regret. This book is one that causes me great embarrassment. But it is the truth telling that motivates me, partly against my own interests.

I heard various accounts from people who met Guenon that he was deeply paranoid and prone to paranoid fits, amounting to a mental illness. This is evident enough in his writings. I learned the hard way how the machinery of fabrication in the Schuon cult works and know that this is partly derived from the paranoid elitism of Guenon. The cult still exists though in much altered form and barely able to maintain their lies. I saw with my own eyes how Schuon was willing to lie, pose, create phony visions or have others lie for him, to protect his mythical delusions of grandeur and his cult continues trying to maintain this traditional of lies. There is similar machinery at work in Guenon inspired schools, though it is not exactly the same. My knowledge of Guenon is considerable but not encyclopedic, and some research materials, available only in Europe or unpublished, I have not seen. But I have learned enough over the years to have a well-informed opinion of what he

as was Seraphim of Sarov. These are exceptions that prove the rule, however, and they very likely would have been good people in any case, though perhaps not to the same exaggerated degree. The demand for saints in religions is very high, partly to justify its power needs, so exceptions such as these are to be expected.

did and why. In addition I have known a lot of the secondary characters in the traditionalist milieu, such as Rama Coomaraswamy of Wolfgang Smith. At the same time I have known many of these who left these cults. In addition I have knowledge of various religions I have practices in varying degrees of depth.

Writing this book is not a task I have wanted to accomplish but more one that I feel a certain duty to finish. To be honest I hate this subject and would rather be with my kids, in the woods, studying insects or painting pictures of my garden or in the National Park. But someone has to do it. In the main, outside the joy I take in scholarship, I have not enjoyed writing this book. I do it from a sense of duty. I feel there needs to be a voice that questions the rather toxic heritage left by religions and ideological systems from Marx to Guenon, Coomaraswamy and others. Further than that I mean to question the subjectivist culture of ‘post modernism’ in which I have lived most of my life. So I wrote the first version of this long essay in 1996 for one of my professors, David Adams. It was then called “A Pathology of Power”. I wrote it as part of an inquiry I was making into systems of Knowledge and Power. It was a long footnote to my book, The Empire of the Intellect. In that book I showed how ideologies and system of political and epistemological power occurred in large patterns of history, resulting in favoring some and causing atrocities toward others. I wanted to show how the “Intellect” creates atrocities. This study about religion as well as Guenon, Schuon and others was a minute exploration of a very specific and minor group of extremists in the 20 century and how they fit into religious studies as a whole. It was meant to chart the abuse of knowledge for power in a microcosmic way. I rewrote this 1998 and 99. I then dropped it, partly because Sedgwick had contacted me and claimed to want to write a critical assessment of traditionalism. For a brief period I was quite happy that he wanted the job and was swilling to take the burden from me. But his book did not do what I hoped it would, on the contrary, he partly

affirmed traditionalism and orthodox religion and used me in a cynical way. In 2006 I picked it up again and looked at the 120 or more pages I had already written again. I decided this should be put in some better state so as to be available to others. So I did a lot editing, cutting out about half of what I originally wrote. A Belgian friend, Denis Constaes, helped me with some of the text and translations of some quotes. But then I put it away for a few more years and then picked it up again a few years ago and work on it when I can ever since then, and it grew more complex and branched out in many directions. What I present here, in I hope a somewhat readable form, is a version of what I wrote in 1996 and 99. I have added 1300 pages of new material, since 2009 expanding it to range across the whole area of religious studies, science, philosophy, linguistics and art-- with the basic thesis still there. I did not have the intention to make it this long, it just became that long, now it is three books---growing out of its own momentum and according to my research. But I have covered most of what I have learned about religions and side issues much developed and expanded, such that now it is an overview of religion itself and covers the area from anti-science to Plato, biology, William James. And from Zen to Darwin and Pascal Boyer.

In what follows I assume the reader has prior knowledge about the major religions as well as who the Traditionalists are, especially Guenon, Schuon, Evola and Dugin. If not they should read Mark Sedgwick's Against the Modern World, a very flawed book, marred by Sedgwick's careerism and Islamic attachments but at the moment the best general over view of the traditionalist movement---- I hope another and better book will appear. But so for Sedgwick's is the only book that tries to assess the traditionalists from a somewhat objective, academic perspective. Virtually all other books written on this subject are biased, ideological tracts written by cult members or followers. (I offer a brief

review of Sedgwick's book below).

Furthermore, I should state that though I belonged to the Schuon cult for a few years, when I left it, I left religion too, shortly after, indeed, my attraction to Schuon to begin with was too all the religions, I saw no point in studying just one. It was quite clear to me that the revelation of the true character of Schuon which I had witnessed was not just the end of Schuon for me but the end of the whole traditionalist movement and of religion as a whole. I saw how Schuon's own particular formula of truth was bogus and in the process learned that religion as a whole is largely about studiously maintained fictions. But I had been a sincere practitioner of many religions outside of Schuon's influence and I saw they were all compromised. In the Schuon cult, I saw how they all fawned over Schuon, a man I could no longer respect, and how they fawned over Guenon, who I already knew was a charlatan. I saw Nasr's small minded ambitions and Ling's weakness. I saw in a deeply personal way, the narrow, far right and cramped dogmatism of Rama Coomaraswamy, and learned a great deal from him about his father. I really liked Rama and thought him a warm and caring person. Unfortunately his cramped and bigoted religion made his kindness moot. His dogmatic, John Bircher view of the world made his views extreme and intolerable. I learned from Wolfgang Smith how religion abuses science and how the far right imagination seeks to subject and deform observed truth and evidence. I wrote about all this too.

I told the truth about Schuon and Primordial Gatherings. They are still lying about it and denying it 20 years after, without answering any of the evidence I and others have provided which proves the case. ¹⁵²They

¹⁵² Charles Upton, whose wife is in the Schuon cult, admits it. He writes " Schuon himself characterized his primordial gatherings as the expressions of a personal predilection, not an integral aspect of his spiritual method". This is not accurate at all. Schuon's statements about this were merely PR posturing. In the inner circle of the cult the spiritual method was the essence of the " primordial dimension". It was the culmination of the spiritual method and the "themes". The

only deny, like holocaust deniers and cry “conspiracy”. Various people who have no evidence as I do, have come along and say I lied or I am a bad person, or it was not so bad what Schuon did. The severity of his crime is irrelevant now. What is a fact is that he had children involved in sexualized gatherings that were about his supposed divinity. I proved this and proved he lied about it. What this proves is the man was a sleazy character with delusions of grandeur and was no transcendental prophet at all. Those who continue to promote Schuon are themselves charlatans and liars.

I had the misfortune of witnessing just how controlling, megalomaniacal and delusional Schuon was in person. I watched the cultic apparatus hide the reality of his awful personality just as they hid his small stature and bad teeth, nurturing the myth of his holiness, even encouraging the myth of his handsomeness when he was hardly handsome. His public persona was and still is managed to a high degree by his wives and followers. In reality he was petty, selfish and mean and prone to fits of anger and childish tantrums.

These days I have no interest in Guenon at all, but since I know a lot about the groups and individuals that believe the nonsense he spills out in his books, I owe it to reality to account for what I have learned.

Guenon and Schuon both were devotees of the “gnostic” the “inward”¹⁵³ and the “infinite” and thought themselves beyond the law, infallible and blessed with the highest spiritual faculties of the age.

gatherings were presented as the ultimate esoteric act of Schuon and not merely a personal predilection, so that statement is just the usual damage control put out by the cult and the Upton’s were not privy to the real events and what they were about.

<http://traditionalstudies.freeforums.org/critical-review-of-schuon-biography-by-upton-t20.html>

¹⁵³ An example of the cult of inwardness fostered by romanticism would be the poetry of Wordsworth, Rilke, Rumi, as well as Heidegger and many others see also Patrick Laude: Pathways to an Inner Islam: Massignon, Corbin, Guenon, and Schuon. Laude is a cult follower of Schuon’s, so don’t expect much to be illumined by this book. Cult followers generally have little original to say and slavishly imitate their cult leader.

Whatever humility they may have affected on occasion, they believed themselves beyond change and vicissitude, a law unto themselves, “a man not like other men” as Schuon said of himself.

He says of himself that that “I was from the beginning a person different from the others, I was made from different material.” Actually he was rather a normal, rather small German Swiss. An unpublished paper, “*The Veneration of the Shaykh*” [written by Schuon and his fourth “wife” Sharlyn Romaine in conjunction with Schuon], says that Schuon is “an eminent manifestation of the eternal *sadguru* ... an ‘avataric’ phenomenon ... a ‘prophetic’ figure ... and a great bodhisattva”; that Schuon demonstrates “the qualities of Shiva and Krishna”; and has affinities with “Abraham”... “David”.... “Christ”, and “Muhammad....”---- Notice the endless listing of superlatives, obsessively and excessively enumerating his superlative qualities, as if they had to utterly convince cult members against the overwhelming doubts that inevitably occur. This encrusted piling up of superlatives and analogies with the supposedly great of history is obsessive in the Schuon cult. It is not enough to be merely a “manifestation” one must be an “eminent manifestation”. Schuon does not write good books they are “magisterial”. No doubt is possible and the excess mounts, and insanely, “avataric” is piled on top of “prophet”, “sadguru” on top of “Krishna”, on top of David, on top of Abraham etc. ---one on top of another like clowns in car or Russian dolls spilling out of a mad king’s closet. That is how it was in the Schuon cult: The man needed excessively endless praise and it had to be constant and plural, the whole group had to be devoted to tending his greedy and insecure hubris. ¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁴ There are so many instances of this praise for Schuon, but the excess of it is itself telling. Whitall Perry, whose wife Schuon stole from him, wrote of him that “I once told Schuon that I thought it possible he himself incorporated certain aspects at least of the Johannine function, and he did not deny it.” This identity that Whitall established with the man who stole his wife is very odd. Of course Whitall stole Schuon’s wife in return, and the whole game went on absurdly with all of them praising Schuon to cover up their own emptiness and corruption. Perry’s praise of

Both Guenon and Schuon claimed infallibility and the right to dictate to others out of their madness. Schuon writes his basic doctrine in one of his unpublished texts that

“I know with certitude that all phenomena, inward as well as outward, reflect the “absolute”, in itself or according to a given aspect...since there is a sole Reality... I know with certitude that evil derives from what is illusorily other than the Essence”¹⁵⁵

This is magical thinking. There is no all-pervading “Essence”. That is merely trick of language; no one has even discovered such a thing as the “essence”, neither Schuon nor anyone else knows anything about it. The Platonic/Scholastic idea of “essence” is merely a confusion and misunderstanding of language, as Bertrand Russell points out. So Schuon’s basic doctrine is false or wishful thinking from the very start. Based on this illusion of “certitude” about a linguistic generalization, Schuon deduces that the entire world is illusory, except the delusion he has singled out as the sole reality. So actual reality, the reality where we all live, becomes a lesser reality, mere “manifestation” and evil because of its “remoteness”. In other words, the idea of essence like the idea of quality, when applied as a metaphysical concept, is really an excuse to extrapolate ideas of hierarchy, caste and inequality. Schuon’s cult and his delusions of grandeur derive from this simple delusion.¹⁵⁶

Schuon was very odd since I know Schuon despised Perry, and according to Glasse, it was rather mutual. Glasse says he and Perry discussed Schuon being a con man and insane.. Perry was an alcoholic according to his daughter, who was violent with his children. Perry praises Schuon because if he didn’t he would have little standing in the cult, where mindless praise of Schuon is obligatory. This dual appraisal of the cult leader is very common and is called “doubling” but R.J. Lifton.

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/51122452/Sophia-vol-4-whithall-perry>

¹⁵⁵ Text number 249—these texts are given to disciples. Some of these have been published as letters but actually they were not that at all. Schuon and his cult are addicted to dissimulation.

¹⁵⁶ David Hall writes about the delusion of the “intellect”—which is the name Schuon and Guenon give to “atman” within them. – they both claimed “infallible knowledge

Conveniently, Schuon forbid anyone to question him. He said “no one may circumscribe the competence of the Shaykh”, since he is “infallible”. He claims to be beyond question, beyond the law, beyond criticism, beyond assessment. He is both prophet CEO and avatar. Rudolf Hess wrote of Hitler that:

The National Socialism of all of us is anchored in the surrender to the Fuhrer that does not ask for the why in individual cases, in the silent execution of his orders. We believe that the Fuhrer is obeying the higher call to fashion German history”¹⁵⁷

Silliness, of course, but silliness that had lethal results. This lethal hero worship—of the same kind that Schuon tried to induce in his followers--- is an inevitable development of romantic thought, and one finds the same thing under Stalin in Russia of Khomeini in Iran. The Fuhrer or Shaykh or the corporate CEO¹⁵⁸ is always right. But one realizes at last

based on this intellect, and this knowledge was self-authenticating. There is no credibility that can be attached to such claims as such claims led to delusions as was obviously the case in both Guenon and Schuon. David uses the example of the man who tries to shake the hand of a wax dummy in Madame Tussaud’s wax museum. He thought the person was real, but it was not. It was wax. “There is a difference between sense experience and its interpretation” David writes. “---“we should not accept the interpretations that mystics themselves give to their experiences.” ... “none of the religions are revelations but merely human constructs”. Schuon thought his feeling and thoughts were from the divine, but really they were an illusion, like a wax figure at Madame Tussaud’s. (see pg 153, in David’s [Islamic Mysticism: A Secular Perspective](#) by Ibn Al-Rawandi, whose real name was David Hall.

¹⁵⁷ Harris. Sam. The End of Faith. New York Norton. Pg. 100

¹⁵⁸ The psychopathology and cult leaders and CEOs is very similar. Concerning the psychopathology of CEO’s Paul Street observes that “In a study published by the British academic journal *Psychology, Crime and Law* six years ago, Belinda Board and Katarina Fritz on performed in-depth psychological tests on 39 senior managers and chief executives at leading British corporations.¹⁵⁸[\[26\]](#) Monbiot describes the chilling results:

that the Prophet, the CEO and the psychopath don't just have a lot in common. They are men who think themselves "laws unto themselves". The mindless subjection to an overarching totalism is characteristic of Hitler's Reich, the Schuon cult, the Catholic Church, some corporations or Stalin's Marxist Leninism. The Romantic ego of Fichte and Hegel must be universal and must reach the stars, be the ultimate exception, the absolute voice of the ultimate and absolute. Even when the "Supreme Leader" does harm it is for the good. Hegel said that history is "god's plan" and "that which does not accord with it is "negative worthless existence" ¹⁵⁹. Indeed, Mao and Guenon are not far apart after all, whatever the differences in the doctrines. Their doctrines almost do not matter, it is the power that is in their arrangement and purpose that matters.

Russell goes on to show that the Romantic belief in irrationality and "inwardness" as espoused by Bryon, Rousseau, Hegel ¹⁶⁰and others deified the irrational ego and in so doing set the stage for Robespierre, the Terror, the Nazis and Stalin's terrors in Russia. What "triumphs the future has to offer this ghost I do not venture to predict." ¹⁶¹ But the

"They compared the results to the same tests on patients at Broadmoor special hospital, where people who have been convicted of serious crimes are incarcerated. On certain indicators of psychopathy, the bosses' scores either matched or exceeded those of the patients. In fact on these criteria they beat even the subset of patients who had been diagnosed with psychopathic personality disorders."

<http://www.zcommunications.org/a-deal-with-the-devil-a-happiness-that-harms-by-paul-street>

¹⁵⁹ Quoted in Chomsky, Year 501. Boston, South End Press Pg. 109

¹⁶⁰ William James thought that it was only when he was under the influence of nitrous oxide that he was able to understand Hegel. It is the self-induced mysticism of Hegel's ideas that reminded James so much of being drugged state. Indeed, religion is an opiate. Marx thought this a bad thing whereas James wanted more of the drugged states it gave him. James got high on delusions. Indeed, James and Hegel both base their religion largely on the idea of "feeling" or subjective states. Romantic subjectivism is one of the last holdouts against science.

¹⁶¹ Ibid, pg. 701

“ghost” Russell refers to here is a form of what I am calling spiritual fascism or theofascism, or the irrational amalgam of anti-scientific religion and the social means of power and coercion.¹⁶² Aspects of culture in the United States and Europe, in this way, recalls Nazi Germany, which also fell into disenchantment with reason. America in our times maybe falling in a downward spiral of “a historic process in which resentment against a disenchanted secular world found deliverance in the ecstatic escape of unreason.”¹⁶³ The trick of Guenon and Schuon as well as other far-right ideologues is to convince people that their sorrows are not caused by the actual causes, but rather to deflect the real cause and blame their misery on the poor, the Jews, the “profane”, “liberals”, secular humanism or Osama Bin Laden or whoever.¹⁶⁴ The real problems that affect the West are much more

¹⁶² Muhammad Legenhausen quote Hegel as saying that “If we also say that feeling and devotion are essential [to religion], this is because there is a spiritual relationship or spirituality in this feeling”. This is the subjective nature of religion about which Russell is complaining. Legenhausen quotes another author about the meeting of Hegel and Von Baader, a devotee of Bohme and mysticism

“Baader visited Hegel in Berlin, and the two studied Meister Eckhart together. Baader reports that on reading a certain passage in Eckhart, Hegel cried “da haben wir es ja, was wir wollen!” (“There, indeed, we have what we want!”). ... Hegel then subsequently introduced a quotation from Eckhart into his 1824 Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion: “The eye with which God sees me is the same eye by which I see Him, my eye and His eye are one and the same. In righteousness I am weighed in God and He in me. If God did not exist nor would I; if I did not exist nor would he.”

This again is the narcissistic spirituality that is so much a feature of mystical projections and self-magnification, and defines the “pathological subjectivity” that I discuss throughout this book as being a defining feature of mystical excess, so called esoterism and theofascism. Romanticism exalts subjective feeling as paramount. This is also akin to William James’s subjectivism. See : https://www.academia.edu/6112017/Hegels_Spirituality

¹⁶³ This is a quote from Fritz Stern in a Chomsky essay called “Outrage, Misguided” (2010) http://www.inthesetimes.com/article/6615/outrage_misguided/%2010. Chomsky compares 2010 America to Weimar Germany in the 1920’s. He thinks people are deceived and exploited by the far right pundits like Limbaugh and other media minions of the corporate state. I think he is right about this. Part of the function of traditionalism is to enable just such far-right irrationality .

¹⁶⁴ This pattern plays itself out in history many times. The English Civil War was a just cause and well argued. Robert Filmer’s notion of Divine Right (see his *Patriarcha, or the Natural Power of Kings* , published in 1680 but written in around the time of the Civils Wars in the

internal to America itself. There is a refusal to hold the wealthy accountable, and an unwillingness to do good for the whole of the society including the natural world, rather than merely caring for the rich and their need of tax breaks, more money and more stockholder benefits. There is a deliberate effort to make the middle class assume all the risks for the rich. There is an effort to undermine education and universities and promote anti-intellectual ideologies. Scientific humanism of an enlightened sort is the one thing that does help people get out the holes the elites in society put them into. That is why scientific humanism is so roundly condemned by the far-right. The real problem is the greed and illusory grandeur of the élites, be it the corporate CEOs, the priests, the aristocracy or kings or the top castes. ¹⁶⁵

1640's.) was absurd and the English Monarch had to be reined in. But once Oliver Cromwell took power he soon becomes as corrupt as the Kings he replaced. His he helps kill King Charles I Stuart in an effort to free England of monarchical tyranny but unjustly goes on to killing of Irish Peasants. Robespierre in France and Napoleon later fall into the same trap of unreason and terror in the name of right. In France standing against Robespierre was Marat and Georges Danton and in England was Thomas Rainsborough, all of them more reasonable than most of the time.

Rainsborough said

" I think that the poorest he that is in England hath a life to live as the greatest he; and therefore truly. Sir, I think it's clear that every man that is to live under a Government ought first by his own consent to put himself under that Government; and I do think that the poorest man in England is not at all bound in a strict sense to that Government that he hath not had a voice to put himself under"

Tom Paine said similar anti-hierarchy truths and had insights into the corruption of power in revolutions too. Indeed, all the revolutions between Cromwell and Lenin to the current Islamic revolutions fails to differing degrees because in no case have the injustices of power been well and truly addressed and learned from. Power corrupts but it also can be seen through and seeing through power is real liberation. One gets free of it and then power becomes a kind of horrible and tragically humorous inevitability that one seeks to overcome.

¹⁶⁵ There is a concerted effort in America to make a sort of caste system with CEO's in one caste and everyone else lower than them by degrees, with the poor and lower classes used to suffer and work hard to absorb the risks of the irresponsible rich. There is a sort of socialism for the rich, and brutal capitalism for the poor and lower classes. The "supreme court" is partly responsible for this in cases such as Santa Clara and Citizen's United. This horrible injustice, with many dire consequences around the globe-- is due in part to the idea of corporation being "persons", which of course they are not. The solution to this is resistance and eventual dismantling of the corporate structure of laws and loopholes, tax breaks and privileges. For more on how corporations use disasters, hurricanes, and financial crises to exploit the poor and middle class for profit, see Naomi Klien's Shock Doctrine.. She writes:

So I will discuss the origins of some of these ideas in Romanticism and how Romanticism ended up being one of the roots of fascism and theofascism. Trying to understand the relationship of power systems to cultural creations in religion and art, literature and poetry will be a major part of this book. I will show in these books how traditional religious constructions helped create the Dark Ages and sought to restrain or destroy science, the one source of knowledge that has helped all humans and not just the rich. I will discuss Plato and how he inspired far right fanatics over many millennia and Hypatia, a woman who studied the stars and was murdered by Christians, and Dionysius the pseudo-Areopagite and how he and Plotinus sought to create a Platonist justification of unjust hierarchies. I will show how the Hindu caste system and Buddhist ideology served to justify killing and hatred and how Darwin's idea foiled all the religions of the world.

Most of the writing about Guenon is from the point of view of a supercilious certainty in Guenon's superiority, ----a baseless superiority adopted by those who belong to the various secretive cults, groups or loose knit right-wing associations of individuals who rather slavishly follow his work and treat it as if it were holy writ. The group-think in these little backwaters and cults is oppressive and their servile addition to Guenonian orthodoxy is tiresome. Unable to think outside the Guenonian or Schuonian box, there is little critical historiography of

"At the most chaotic juncture in Iraq's civil war, a new law is unveiled that would allow Shell and BP to claim the country's vast oil reserves.... Immediately following September 11, the Bush Administration quietly out-sources the running of the "War on Terror" to Halliburton and Blackwater.... After a tsunami wipes out the coasts of Southeast Asia, the pristine beaches are auctioned off to tourist resorts.... New Orleans's residents, scattered from Hurricane Katrina, discover that their public housing, hospitals and schools will never be reopened.... These events are examples of "the shock doctrine": using the public's disorientation following massive collective shocks -- wars, terrorist attacks, or natural disasters -- to achieve control by imposing economic shock therapy."

traditionalism outside these self-congratulatory or cultish sources. The slavishly biased sources are legion and are immediately viewable if you look up Guenon in the internet or look at Mark Sedgwick's site.¹⁶⁶

Traditionalism is a right wing, reactionary, upper-middle class and pseudo-aristocratic religion composed mostly of European and American arm-chair, suburbanite and academic 'metaphysicians' (as they pretentiously call themselves) who long for a return to archaic eternal worlds of their own imaginations. There are a few traditionalists in Russia, Brazil, Morocco, Iran and elsewhere. In their respective societies they are outsiders who hate the world they live in. they all live in a reactionary fog of denial and escape, caught in arrogant ignorance Guenon's claim to present the eternal "pure truth", a 'super-religion', turns out to be increasingly time bound, past tense, and retroactive. He pretended to desire only to express simple "traditional truths", when in fact traditions are far from uniform and where they overlap the cause is a similar devotion of aristocratic monism or polytheist monism. His false humility hides an enormous and vicious pride that wants the return of autocratic caste elitism. Guenon was a last gasp of the European aristocratic values, just as his Islamism was a last gasp of impotent rebellion against the inevitability to Enlightenment values coming to Islamic countries.¹⁶⁷ The whole notion of the "unity of religions" is a

¹⁶⁶ Here:

<http://www1.aucegypt.edu/faculty/sedgwick/Trad/index.htm>

I will critique Sedgwick's book below

¹⁶⁷ It might be worth noting here that the Christian resurgence in America is likewise a nostalgic movement for a power that in fact is leaving America. The real power in today's world is global corporatism, which does have resonance with Perennialism in that both the corporate and the Traditionalist view of the world is based on false abstract and 'universal' entities. Corporations are fictional persons, just as religions are fictions based on imaged gods and fictional principles.

modernist and romantic fabrication, an invention based on superficial correspondences between different religions. Guenon, Schuon and Evola claimed to be expositors and Prophets of the Great Tradition, when in fact they were merely inventors and manufacturers of a new mythos, a new cult, a new way to sell old fictions—an new way to insure the injustice of elite classes and unfair economics. “Tradition” is merely a code word for the habits of unjust elites.

Regarding the ideology of “tradition”, my first point is that the very notion of a “tradition” as used by the traditionalists is questionable. Traditionalism is a “Manufactured Mythology”, an invention. As Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger have shown in their book The Invention of Tradition, traditions are not born like Athena from the head of Zeus or impregnated through the ear of a Virgin Mary but rather are political entities dressed up as metaphysical ‘truth’. Traditions arise from various habits and misunderstandings of the historical record, sometimes going back only a few generations, sometimes longer. Hobsbawm and Ranger’s book attempts to show how many traditions were deliberately invented or fabricated, often to highlight or enhance the importance of a certain institution. For instance, they try to show how Welsh and Scottish ‘national culture’ was a recent creation. They show also how the elaboration of British royal rituals in Africa and India justified political regimes and ‘the empire’. In a similar way, the Catholic Church was founded on the forged Donation of Constantine in the 8th century.¹⁶⁸

Corporate personhood is as much make believe as the deity of Zeus or the fiction that the Japanese Emperor was a holy god.

¹⁶⁸ The forged document of the Donation of Constantine supposedly was written by Constantine, granting authority over Rome and the western part of the Roman Empire to the pope. Valla is an interesting man and is also credited with exposing the fraud of Pseudo Denys the “Aeropagite”. The document was often cited during the Middle Ages in support of the Roman Catholic Church's claims to spiritual and earthly authority. Italian humanist Lorenzo Valla was one of the first to expose it as a fraud. Valla writes

“I know that for a long time now men’s ears are waiting to hear the offense with which I charge the Roman pontiffs. It is, indeed, an enormous one, due either to supine ignorance,



Constantius appoints Constantine as his successor by Peter Paul Rubens, 1622. This is a typical theofascist image where god (through an ‘angel’) gives Constantine control of the world. Done with Reubens usual

or to gross avarice which is the slave of idols, or to pride of empire of which cruelty is ever the companion. For during some centuries now, either they have not known that the Donation of Constantine is spurious and forged, or else they themselves forged it, and their successors walking in the same way of deceit as their elders have defended as true what they knew to be false, dishonoring the majesty of the pontificate, dishonoring the memory of ancient pontiffs, dishonoring the Christian religion, confounding everything with murders, disasters and crimes.”

The Vatican ignored Valla and the fact of its own illegitimacy, of course, though the Protestants, like Martin Luther thought it proved Rome’s illegitimacy, which indeed it does. In any case this is proof again that orthodoxy is spurious and the notion of filiations back to a religions founder is also mere mythologizing.

fluidity, it is a picture of European self-regard of its own power in the
1600's

As a reviewer of John Julius Norwich says in his survey history of the Papacy, decent popes were “outnumbered by the corrupt, the inept, the venal, the lecherous, the ruthless, the mediocre and those who didn’t last long enough to make a mark.” ¹⁶⁹ He notes that the long age of the Papacy after makes it the oldest continuing absolute monarchy in the world.’ The Donation of Constantine gave rise to a long history of corruption overlaid with all the finery of overdressed and pretentious “tradition” . Indeed, many of the basic premises and relics of the Catholic Church are forgeries, fakes or fictions. The Lentulus letter , for instance ascribed to Publius Lentulus who is supposed to have lived when Christ was said to be a young man, during the reign of Augustus (27 BC-14 AD). This letter is a fake. It describes the guy with long hair and beard parted in the middle, like nearly all the paintings since the Quattrocento. The standard image of Christ is itself a fake, the result of this forgery. Probably most of the bones of saints, pieces of “true cross” and other relics in Churches all over the world are fake too The miracles of the saints, the visions, auditions and holy dreams are fake and the ones that are real are just dreams, delusions of sleep. Stigmata and forehead sores in the shape of crowns of thorns which are probably just psychological anomalies. Luther is supposed to have said that “Rome has enough nails from the holy cross to shoe every horse in Saxony. Eighteen out of twelve apostles are buried in Spain.” Even if he did not say these things exactly,

¹⁶⁹ Norwich, John Julius, Absolute Monarchs, a History of the Papacy

Though I think he overstates the dates. The Catholic Church is really only about 1200 years old, not 2000.

the falsity of relics is both accurate and much worse than Luther realized..

The invention of the Eucharist was an ongoing event in Christian history. I've written about this elsewhere.¹⁷⁰ The notion of an infallible "tradition" emanating from impeccable sources in any religion is utter nonsense. It is clear that the Gospels are later works patched together after the invention of the Christ myth by Paul and others, probably in the 2nd century, since Jesus was a myth that early Christian passed off as historical. The Koran after Muhammad's death was in many versions and even four centuries after Muhammad there was no agreement as to what the "Koran" actually said.¹⁷¹ It was written by many people. There is no definitive Koran and the "Hadith" or sayings of the prophet are spurious inventions. Sufism itself is in many cases hardly Islamic at all, and was strongly influenced by Christianity, Buddhism and even unbelievers and atheists. The notion of "orthodoxy" preached and adhered to by traditionalists is largely a romantic fiction. Being orthodox is merely being narrow-minded, adhering to traditions created by priest classes, who mentally jail followers in a system of arbitrary rules and laws. Orthodoxy is really little more than the payment one must make to conform to the men's clubs called Churches, Monasteries and other Patriarchal institutions. The usually all male priesthood that sustains these orthodox rules are anxious to hold onto power and they do so by an amazing variety of means, from threats of hell, to imposed celibacy to art as propaganda, elaborate prayer cycles, even incessant prayer.

The Traditionalists sought to invent a new mythic history based on

¹⁷⁰ <http://naturesrights.com/knowledge%20power%20book/eucharist.asp> The eucharist was not about saving anybody, it was about the consolidating the power of the Church around a 'symbol'

¹⁷¹ Ibn Warraq has a very interesting chapter of questionable origins of the Koran in his Why I am not a Muslim--- Chapter 5

a pastiche of other “traditions” largely in reaction to the rise of industrialism and the enlightenment, which they not just opposed but hated with passion. Guenon and his followers wanted to advance what has been called the “endarkenment”. They hate the enlightenment and seek to return to the Dark Ages: they want to restore superstitious orthodoxy, reinstitute fear of the hierarchy; they want to restrain or eliminate science; return our schools to Church control(trivium, quadrivium) and deny the facts evolution, undermine democracy and destroy human rights. All this has been amply demonstrated below. The traditionalists like to deny the importance of history--- (since they believe they possess the secret of being “beyond time”) —as part of their effort to manufacture the myth of their own perennial and eternal wisdom, a wisdom whose high, peerless, aristocratic eminence they never doubt.¹⁷² This is the religion of aristocracy, though none of the founders of this new religions were in any way aristocrats. However, their belief in their peerless wisdom is untenable and I saw no wisdom existing among them in practice. Therefore, their belief that they transcend history is merely a pipedream, a delusion, an example of the insanity of religions. The idea of “Transcending History” is above all a political ploy, based on a delusion and is always an effort to claim exceptional power and

¹⁷² A good example the Flat Earth Society and the ‘Return to Idiocy and the Dark Ages’ promoted by traditionalists is Harry Oldmeadow’s statement endorsing ignorance and embracing stupidity that

“it is preferable to believe that god created the world is six days and that heaven lies in the empyrean above the flat surface of the earth, than it is to precisely know the distance from one nebula to another whilst forgetting the truth embodied in this symbolism, namely that all depends on a Higher reality that determine us.” (Sacred Web 14, Science Scientism and Self -destruction.)

It is typical of these writers to choose some minor scientific fact such as the distance between nebulae rather than say, the existence of cells and DNA or the importance of vaccines, or the nature of heart disease. Oldmeadow knows nothing about any fictional ‘higher reality’. He merely makes that up following Schuon et al, in an effort of make himself a sort of academic priest, spouting things, when he doesn’t know what he is talking about. I am amazed that a man who writes this sort of anti-intellectual rubbish is allowed to teach at a university. He should be at the Gnostic School of Applied Disney Metaphysics along with other academics of the Traditionalist variety.

dominion. One can argue about history and what it might mean, but to be beyond history is ridiculous. We all live in time and evolution.

The traditionalists have no real historical sense: they are prone to revisionist, orientalist fantasies of worlds that never really existed. They are even anti-historical in many cases and try to pretend that their oracular pronouncements glitter with pretentious generalities, like diamonds outside of time. They speak from a non-existent eternity about things that do not actually exist. Many of the traditionalists, like Hossein Nasr, Ananda and Rama Coomaraswamy as well as Guenon were alienated and displaced individuals who were forced out of their parent countries or left it in the hopes of finding a romanticized and idealized culture elsewhere. They idealized the nostalgia they felt for cultures they romanticized as lost or on the brink of being lost. These idealizations are what they call “ traditions”. Coomaraswamy, both father and son, displaced from India and half Indian half English, dreamed of returning to the glory days of dying religious worlds. Back then, in their dream world, the Hindu world was composed of Hindu caste systems which Ananda loved, or Christian apologies for the Inquisition, like Rama admired. It could have been Taoist dreams¹⁷³ of immortal emperors and the “mandate of heaven”, or other figments of their reactionary imaginations. These were alienated men who wished to return to what they wrongly felt was lost, when really they hopelessly idealized India or

¹⁷³ Taoism has elements that grew out of the Shang Dynasty religious tyranny (1766 to 1122 B.C.E).. The Shang emperors ruled by claiming descent from the fiction of “Shang Ti”, a god of their ancestors. On the basis of this bogus claim they created an elect status for themselves and claimed to be able to shape events, control weather, harvests, economies, politics and virtually everything else. The Taoist Way has its roots in this autocratic fiction which leads to cruelty. The Shang rulers ended being hated by their people. The idea of the “mandate of Heaven” is a development of the Shang Ti idea by which they Chinese state claimed legitimacy based on a religion fiction. The ideology of the “Mandate of Heaven” is a central part of the Tao te Ching and of Chinese government and history. It is accurate, I think to say that Taoism enshrines a justification of state totalism in its founding doctrines. Later dynasties apply the concept back in time retrospectively, to justify their own claim to power, but it really is magical thinking and there is no such thing.

the dream-world Christianity of Miester Eckhart.

They divide the world into specious categories, such as claiming that “modernity” is profanity and tradition is “sacred”. The historical truth is quite otherwise: the world is a much better place that it was in 1000 C.E., and Pinker shows with elaborate statistics. But of course, they hate statistics and Guenon has a whole chapter against them. They hate science and claim pseudo-objectivity based on whether or not something “leads to god” when god, it turns out, is merely the subjective invention of the intellects of the Traditionalists themselves.

Traditionalism is a tiny and closed fraternity of privileged, narrow minded and self-serving men, a criticism that extends to the women in the cults as well, who by and large support the patriarchy and are willing to keep the secrets, lie, justify their submission and surrender, and do whatever it takes to protect the Traditionalist fantasy.¹⁷⁴ In his book In

¹⁷⁴ There should be some critical studies done about the treatment of women in Traditionalist ideology and social practice. Feminism is a good thing and has freed women from much suffering and oppression. Guenon’ of course was a Moslem and there have been many studies on the atrocious treatment of women in Islam, justified in many cases by the Koran or Hadith. One day when I was up with him in his study talking, Schuon said to me in a sneering tone with a thick German/French accent which was typical of him, that “feminizm ist zatanic” (“feminism is satanic”). and he writes against it in various places. I catalogued many of the abuses against women I saw in the Schuon cult and how Schuon justified his ill treatment of women in primordial gatherings and otherwise. For instance, in an obvious allusion to his own wives and use of nude women in primordial gatherings Schuon writes of “the throne made of human substance” - the harem, that is – “indicates in an eminently more direct and concrete manner the real of borrowed divinity of the monarch.” This very grotesque image of himself as a “prophet” or “monarch” drunk with power, sitting on a throne made of “human substance” reminds me serial killer trophies or Nazi lamp-shades made of human skin. Schuon saw himself as a prophet, the “summit of the human species”. It shows Schuon’s sexist attitudes toward women and his delusions about himself. (Esoterism as Principle and Way pg. 133)

See also Rama Coomaraswamy’s website for more example of Traditionalist sexism. Rama says of women that “within the social relationship, reflecting the relationship of the Church to Christ, she does have a subordinate position.” He says that “Like a king who rules by divine right - that is by God’s laws, so also the husband must rule [his wife]”. He talks a lot about “obedience” and condemns women who “rebel”. “Women was made of man to his glory, as his workmanship and image; therefore she is subject to him” This is basically the same medieval sexist and patriarchal attitudes about women that resulted in the burning of witches, legalized battery and the denial of women’s rights. It is this sort of nonsense that any sensible woman has fought against in the last century or two since Mary Shelley. Rama was a sexist, a homophobe and an Holocaust denier.

the Tracks of Buddhism, as in other writings, for instance, Schuon opposes the “emancipation” of Japanese women, and argues against feminism.¹⁷⁵ What they call “metaphysics” is really merely politics set up as faltering dream of fading glory stolen from dead or failing societies. In the end the Traditionalist fantasy is a self-mirroring world of narcissistic Symbolists who serve a far right political agenda, and in most cases, don’t even realize it. I would not know this, unless I had seen these people operate on a personal level, apart from their books. Even in my teens, I leaned to the left, sometimes to my father’s dismay and my mother’s joy, and towards humanism in my politics, but was one of those who did not know traditionalism was a reactionary political movement hiding behind spirituality.¹⁷⁶

I gave Guenon a healthy chance to sell me on his ideas. I read him too uncritically. He tried to sell me religion the way a used car salesman sells cars. I fell for it for a while. Or more accurately I tried on the belief system as I had tried on various belief systems to see what it felt like and to learn from experience. I agreed with Leonardo Da Vinci that one must experience something to truly know it. World Spirituality is a supermarket that sells many different system of belief. Buy what you want, it is all so many systems of superstition and make believe. I entered into many and left many such systems, like suits of clothes, like houses.¹⁷⁷ Guenon’s answer to the problem of modernism was to point

For more on Rama’s dreadful and reactionary views see

<http://www.the-pope.com/femveili.html>

See also <http://www.the-pope.com/coomcawr.html> and <http://www.the-pope.com>

¹⁷⁵ Schuon, Frithjof IN the Tracks of Buddhism. Allen and Unwin. 1968.Pg 113

¹⁷⁶ When I was 15 or 16 I had read Marx’s Manifesto and under its just concerns I asked my father, who helped run a steel making factory, to be better to his workers, and he did try to be. He painted their lunchrooms and workspaces.

¹⁷⁷ Like the Magic Bead Game in Herman Hesse’s novel, or like the Magic Theater in Steppenwolf, where the Hero enters into and out of many doors or worlds to try to find his way. I was a seeker in this surreal or Dadaistic sense of trying many worlds and seeking for the real in

the way to traditional religion. The problems presented by modernism cannot be solved by merely going to a church, mosque, reciting empty formulas or taking initiations.¹⁷⁸

However, I did not know this then. In order to explore Guenon's answer to modernism I had to explore the religions. I did that. I went to visit boring local Catholic and Russian Orthodox churches and tried not to be bored. I spent time in monasteries, joined zendos, temples and mosques, and stood above them, with my esoteric Guenonian cultural imperialistic ideology in tow, as I looked down on the exoteric plebeians below me. That is no way to treat others. Over the course of 5 or 6 years between 1984 and 1991 I explored the landscape outlined by Guenon, Schuon, Coomaraswamy and others. I traveled. I lived in England and studied philosophy, trying to find a way out of the desperate impasse that seemed to me to have overtaken the times I lived in. Through Scott

all of them. You can see this questing mentality in the poems of Arthur Sze or the mental calisthenics of Paul Feyerabend, whose Dadaistic relativism interested me in the 1980's. I ended up giving up these views, but for while they served my need to explore many different mental or ideological worlds. The wikipedia article discusses his rather weak attitude towards Nazism.

"Hesse was criticized for not condemning the Nazi party, but his failure to criticize or support any political idea stemmed from his "politics of detachment [...] At no time did he openly condemn (the Nazis), although his detestation of their politics is beyond question." ^[35] From the end of the 1930s, German journals stopped publishing Hesse's work, and it was eventually banned by the Nazis.

¹⁷⁸ I took initiations of various kinds. I was initiated into Buddhism and Islam (on Schuon's insistence), and then I was initiated into the Schuon cult. Initiations were the primary obsession of Guenon for most of his life. The reason for this is because initiations are all about hierarchy and power. They have no real content other than social relations. They pretend to be about actual transmission of something but all that is transmitted is tendencies, ideologies and superstitions. Initiations are mere symbolic and bureaucratic forms. In the Schuon initiation Schuon held his hand on my head and supposedly passed some invisible something into me. "The hand of god is above his hands" was said. But it was all about myth and hierarchy and in fact there was nothing there. I was too uninformed to understand this yet and thought there was reality in it. But it was all theatre and pose. Those who in the great room at Stan Jones' house with 70 other people who were at my initiation claimed to me afterward that it was amazing and full of "Baraka" or blessings, were merely part of the self-deceit of an entire group. It is all smoke and mirrors, with the Wizard of Oz behind the curtain waiting for the dog Toto to expose the fraud.

Whitacker, I met Huston Smith, (1919, Dec. 30 2016) in California who got me into the Schuon cult that Smith was also a member of, though I later watched as he lied about this and covered it up. I lost my respect for him. Smith joined the cult in late 1960's, has defended the cult on a number of occasions. I tried to inform him of the cult and its crimes, but he refused to acknowledge the evidence. He continues, as far as I know, as a disciple of Schuon, though he carefully did not mention Schuon in his recent TV series with Bill Moyers(1996). He did promote Schuon's ideology in this series, nevertheless.. Smith's cult name was "Jalaladin" Schuon gives new names to new members of the cult. ¹⁷⁹ You are not allowed to be who you were when you entered the cult. You are supposed to be mindless putty in his hands, or as he says, 'an empty cup'.

I entered the Schuon cult through Huston Smith, who recommended me to it. I made the mistake of trusting him. I thought he could be trusted, and did not realize that he himself was a promoter and a con man who believed his own rhetoric. As I learned Smith was a careerist who bent the truth to serve the needs of his fame. He was informed by me and others of Schuon's crimes and actively continued on serving himself and hiding the truth about it, as did Nasr and Lings too. They denied the direct evidence I collected to exonerate and help themselves, which showed them all to be selfish men. Since I knew in my bones what had happened and he denied what I myself had seen with my eyes, I knew he was not a good man, but a pretender. ¹⁸⁰ When many unpleasant things came out about the racist tendencies of Joseph Campbell he also

¹⁷⁹ I was given the name Faisal Jamaladin, which means the decisive one and lover of beauty, Schuon said. It did not matter what he named me, as he called me the decisive one because I chose him quickly, or so he thought. The name lover of beauty was given to me after he saw my paintings. When I left the cult he changed my name to "intrinsic swine" so his names were really just self-indulgences on his part, more a description of him than of me. Cults typically try to change the personality of their followers and replacing their names in part of this. I never much liked the names he gave me in any case, and easily dropped them, both the negative and positive ones.

¹⁸⁰

covered up for him. Andrea Chambers wrote that “yes, says Huston, he believes Campbell harbored some racial prejudice. But he will not elaborate. “He’s no longer living. I don’t think we need to probe those closets anymore,” Huston says. “Those things did not come out in the series, so why drag them out now?”. He likewise wanted to keep truth about what Schuon did in the closet, as I found out myself.

Huston Smith helped invent the fiction of “world religions”, as if such a thing existed. Smith’s idea of religion is a “ modernist sentimentalization of classical piety”, Russell McCutcheon said . This is quite true. There is little critical acumen in Smith, he writes as a true believer and proselytizer, about every religion, never questioning anything. He is a promoter not a truth teller, and willing to lie about each and every religion. Smith oversimplifies religion along Schuonian lines for unspoken religious and political purposes. He deceives people about who he really is and how much he was a follower of the Schuon cult. So in the end, I did learn something, even if at one point, I wanted to think highly of him. The truth of the matter was painfully clear. Smith was a con man, and willing to lie.

I met many Traditionalists of many kinds and lost my respect for them too. I had seen with my own eyes and very closely who Schuon actually was. I knew for a fact there was nothing “holy” about him and the cult was just another cult, one of thousands. I watched with dismay as my witness of facts was ignored, denied, altered, mythologized, lied about, minimized or elided and falsified. It is quite an experience to go through this process of being a whistleblower, who everyone calls crazy, when I actually wished I was, sometimes, but knew in my heart, I didn’t make any of it up. I was amazed that religious people really didn’t care about truth at all, they just cared about preserving their particular delusion. There was so much pretense and pride, but so little virtue or honesty, among all these people.

Cyril Glasse notes the lack of virtue in Schuon. He writes that

dinners with Schuon after Sufi gatherings¹⁸¹ were not enjoyable, “not because there were no refreshing sides to his character, but the narcissism, self-love, and pride were unmistakable, and difficult to square with elementary notions of what a spiritual master is”. Yes, I saw little virtue in Schuon’s character either. People have asked me then, “Why did I fall for him”. Why indeed, it was the biggest mistake I have ever made in my life. Though I learned a lot. I really was sincere in wanting to know if religion were true or not. I was willing to put myself on the line to find out. Does it reflect on me that I fell briefly for such garbage and lies? Yes, there are people who will not talk to me or forgive me because I made such a bad mistake and they blame me. Others think that Schuon’s corruption somehow stains me, but that is not true either. Whatever my faults are, I have done all I could to make up for it and to tell the truth and expose the fraud. People send death threats to me because I changed. People like to threaten killing of others. Human beings are a very questionable species. More I cannot do. The blame for telling the truth will always be mine, as it is with any whistleblower. There has probably never been one who did not feel guilty for doing what was right. It is hard to do and the suffering one undergoes because of it does not make sense.

I wanted to try out the spiritual and see if there was truth in it. There is not. I wanted to know if those who claim to know really do know. I learned that the whole notion of a “spiritual master” is questionable, as there is no “spirit” to master, the whole notion of it implies pretence and delusion. If you follow out the god idea to its conclusions you realize it is just emotions and feelings that end up self-revolving in personal delusions. God is a human construction, not anywhere an objective fact.

¹⁸¹ Dinners were a big thing in the cult. I must have gone 4 or 5 dinners or lunches a month at least during my two years there. I went to different houses, often bringing visitors from other countries. This was a major part of cult indoctrination and conditioning, as one’s prayers there and had one’s “character” examined. If it was found wanting in some way, one had to be instructed by one’s “superiors”.

I have met those whom I have expressed this to and they have said that without god, Allah or the Catholic Church, life is meaningless, “anything is allowed” and they expressed the wish to commit suicide. Actually this is just addiction to delusions speaking. The world does not collapse without religion. This is the argument of a childish adult, who cannot face reality. People who have no religion are not less ethical than those who do, indeed, they are often more ethical. Dostoyevsky argues that life without religion is meaningless in the character of Ivan in Brothers’ Karamazov. But he is wrong. Life is more meaningful without a fake god to steal the show of the wonder of actual existence. The fact that we are here, and alive, and plants are and trees, and the sky and our earth and even those things that hurt us, we have bodies that feel happiness and pain and it is the height of existence just to be alive. I knew that after I almost died. Matter is amazing, true, but life, life, biology, is even more amazing, and it should be the first science, not physics.

One must find the meaning in oneself and others without it being dictated by priests and gurus. Just as one wakes up one day and realizes our parents lied to us about Santa Claus, so one wakes up one day and realizes god, Jesus or Allah were beautiful lies too. Committing suicide for the fall or failure of a delusion is foolish. It is always good when delusions fail and one sees the truth, even if for a time it is painful. Love begins as a dream and ends in the fact of a child and this is wonderful, even if there is hardship raising a child. Life goes on and letting it go on is itself a sad happiness. This paradox is at the center of what life is in reality ---a happiness that is inevitably sad too: existence is an unfolding, giving and a passing away..

All spiritual masters are involved in manipulation and presumption, without exception. They are self-deluded too, so many are not aware they are fraudulent and their followers keep them in delusion by constant

adulation the power goes to their heads. This happens even with linguist like Chomsky, who fell in love with the adulation of his followers. Cyril Glasse notes that Schuon had an “egocentric side” and that “his capacity for self-delusion was nothing short of astonishing”. Schuon wrote a lot about the ‘virtues’ but possessed little of them himself. As David Lake, an English follower of Schuon, says in a very good open letter in which he refuses to participate further in Schuon cult because of the manifest “bigamy and adultery” and other corruptions. Lake also writes that Schuon treated his followers “in a manner incompatible with basic virtue.” Schuon was prone to lying, cover up, excessive pride, fits of irrational anger, selfishness, lack of generosity, self-pity and pettiness among other problems and hypocrisies.¹⁸²

The “capacity for self-delusion” that Glasse mentions as a strong aspect of Schuon’s character is also to be found in Martin Lings. I was amazed when I spoke with Martin Lings how willing---even eager---he was to deny direct evidence put before him and live in a cocoon of self-delusions of his own making. I lost all respect for him and saw him as a sad old man clinging to illusions. I was even further amazed when others praised Lings for “sanctity” when I knew him personally and saw how he lied to himself, fled from the truth and hid behind the cloak of Schuon’s delusions of grandeur. But in the end, I saw through the façade. The Emperor had no Clothes; the Wizard of OZ was a fraud. I was the little dog that pulled back the curtain. In other writings, I have outlined the

¹⁸² In the Glasse File Jacqueline Danner (wife of Victor Danner, who was forced out of the cult by Schuon’s destructive machinations in the early 1980’s) notes Schuon’s lack of virtue in a marvelous open letter in which she condemns Schuon of hypocrisy and says Schuon “forces others to deny evidence and tell lies.” There are many people who have witnessed and shown Schuon to have been a liar and to have supported his disciples in lying to others. The lying went along with the secrecy and with the secrecy went the pride and the will to deceive and cover up. There is a consistent pattern of all the critics of Schuon in the Glasse file who all say the same thing. There is no conspiracy here, it was merely objective observation about a cult leader. Of course where there are delusions there are those willing to be deluded. Many of those who left the Schuon cult ended up in other cults or religions, even Jaqueline Danner who ended up enamored of a Hindu guru, Ananda Moyi Ma.

corruptions of the Schuon cult. I will not go into all that here. Suffice it to say that exactly the same pattern of cult adulation, self-delusion, and psychopathology is to be found in other cult leaders, from Charlie Manson, Jim Jones to Bhagavan Rajnessh, Adi Da, David Koresh and many others on back to Muhammad and Christ.

When I left the Schuon cult in disgust, I also left Guenon, who I already doubted. I soon left Islam and eventually religion in general, all fairly quickly, as it was obvious that this was not just about Schuon. I went deeply into study for many years, trying to figure out what was wrong with Plato, Christianity and Hinduism. Between 1991 and 1997, I studied at great length in college. It was clear to me that religion was not true in any real sense, but rather was a system of falsehoods designed to serve social needs of certain classes or institutions. But how is it that these delusions are maintained and who profits from them? It is sure not merely a matter of evolution gone awry as Boyer and Dennett seem to think. Religion is about making mistakes and power relations, myths and social constructions.

Religions exploited human needs and the needs were true but the religions that used them were not true. They are parasitical, not fundamentally part of human nature. I found Guenon's answers to the question of modernism to be all wrong.¹⁸³ I had visited monasteries,

¹⁸³ I practiced religions very seriously for the 5 or 6 years I was involved with it—my religion period as it were. Prayer and contemplation were particularly interesting to me because they exploit real human desires and needs. What I found out in the Schuon cult is that in the act of prayer the method and object were illusory, but the activity itself was real—so for instance, I witnessed one of Schuon's followers, formerly his "wife", Maude Murray, pray to a nude portrait Icon of Schuon for months on end. I watched her rolling on the floor naked holding this absurd image of Schuon against her chest and praying desperately to it and god because she didn't want to stay married to Schuon. She used beads to count her prayers. He forced her to stay married to him against her will. This alone was tyranny. He forced her to watch him make love to his other wife. The real Schuon was a nasty man who treated her very badly, blamed her for things she didn't do and eventually forced her out of the cult unjustly. He set attack dogs after her when she asked him for help, according to her own testimony. The entire cult turned against her for doing exactly the same things Schuon had done. The Schuon she prayed to in the Icon was a lie. The

practiced various religions and studied deeply and without ceasing. I wrote a book about my findings and eventually realized that all I had written was mistaken, since the evidence did not support Traditionalist claims. I slowly came to see that the sadness I felt about Guenon's Reign of Quantity masked a sense of horror about just how mistaken Guenon was, and that his book was really the book of man that was mentally ill. His answers did not satisfy. Indeed, Guenon's solution was far worse than the problem he set out to solve. There are ways to solve the problems of industrialization and environmental destruction, but the answer was not in Guenon. The answer to the rape of the earth is not to return to the caste system or the medieval system of politics. More tyranny and hierarchy will help no one.

So, since it is obvious that Guenon is wrong, why is he wrong and where did he go wrong? What appeal does he still have and why are so many interested in following his ideas? In the process of exploring answers to these questions I will seek to explain religions themselves and who they appeal to delusions and why people want to be deluded. I will try to answer some of these questions here, though I doubt I will be able to cover all of this. So, I will write about this in later chapters. In any case, I hope others might continue this work and expand on what I have only been able to suggest.

god she asked for help was a lie. The only reality was that this man despised and ill used her. What she needed to do was to wake up to the illusion that Icons hide. Wake up to the fact that the man and god she prayed to were frauds. She didn't need prayer, she needed to look at the reality around her. The object of all prayer does not exist. But the petition and the petitioner are real. Maude's desperation was real. Prayer does not "fashion man" as Schuon claimed. The cult of Prayer fashioned Schuon's delusions and magnified the illusions of his followers. Prayer is a form of mind control and way of exploiting the real needs and desires of people. In the end I realized that spiritual longing is a false longing. What is real is us and our earth and our need to help each other on the earth. There is no god beyond. There is nothing to pray to. There is only this earth and on the wonderful beings on it which we must care for and sustain.

The appeal of Guenon arose in me because I was questioning science and the destructive tendencies of the modern world. I chose Guenon in a moment of despair or weakness about our society, when it seemed that nuclear devices and environmental degradation would never be addressed . It was a horrible mistake, but one, for better or worse I lived through and addressed as honestly as I could. It was obvious to me as it is to many that something is terribly wrong with our times. I was desperate for answers to this. I did not realize at first how deluded and paranoid Guenon's ideas were. Guenon was a mentally sick man who had identity problems of some kind and so he created elaborate self-defenses out of concepts and ideas in denial of his mental disability. He projected his personal fears onto others. As Adorno said "the hypnotic power exerted by things occult resembles totalitarian terror." ¹⁸⁴ this is exactly right. Guenon was a totalitarian hypnotized by the delusion of transcendence and his followers are hypnotized by his expertise in

¹⁸⁴ Adorno, Theodore " Theses on Occultism ". I have always had trouble reading Adorno, but in small pieces he can be interesting. This essay is full of small insights. For instance when he says "They take speculation to the point of fraudulent bankruptcy" this is certainly true. Guenon writes metaphysic like a medieval Aquinas writes on the head of a pin, -- it all amounts to empty words about an invented fiction that does not exist. " Or when Adorno writes "Their procedure is to be strictly scientific; the greater the humbug, the more meticulously the experiment is prepared." Exactly right. They write with scientific exactitude about that which does not exist. And there is this delightful joke: "The soul can soar to the heights, heigh-ho, / the body stays put on the sofa below."—yes that is Martin Lings on his comfy English sofa dreaming of things that do not exist. And then this "power of occultism, as of Fascism, to which it is connected by thought-patterns of the ilk of anti-Semitism" yes, Perennialism is all about first inventing and then hating the profane world just as Hitler hated the Jews. For the traditionalists "Superstition is knowledge, because it sees together the ciphers of destruction scattered on the social surface; it is folly, because in all its death-wish it still clings to illusions: expecting from the transfigured shape of society misplaced in the skies an answer that only a study of real society can give." Exactly right. There must be study of reality to achieve real knowledge. Occultism is cheap fetishes of knowledge, not the real thing. "By its regression to magic under late capitalism, thought is assimilated to late capitalist forms." Yes, Schuonism ultimately is Disney's Epcot Center, regurgitated culture colonized as a commodity fetish . Epcot was one of Schuon's favorite places in America. He saw himself there in Disneyland fantasy. Schuon liked Disney and Disney land very much. Cyril Glasse says of the inner circle interest in Disney that "Disney World seems to have become the spiritual retreat of the Schuon inner circle, who go there whenever the going gets rough". Yes that is correct. Schuon thought very highly of the place and went there with his various "wives", who also loved to be tourists down there at Epcot.

pandering illusion. Guenon was not the student of the charlatan Papus for nothing. He held onto the fantasy that daily life is somehow unreal. He imagined huge cosmological plots to explain away his deep and irrational fears. He was a sick man and the sickness resides in his philosophy. Guenon's sickness was communicated to his disciples, notably, Schuon, who had many of the same tendencies and traits. I did not know any of this when I first read the traditionalists and it took me years to learn about it directly. But I did wake up finally and escape the trap of self-delusions, and have been free of it for nearly 25 years now. Thank goodness.

Answering Religion with Science.

So, since Traditionalism fails as an explanation of religion we must look deeper into systems of ideological power, politics and their relation to language and religion. Since science has supplanted religion this cannot be left out of our inquiry. I will discuss this at great length, probably at too great length, through these three books. I apologize for the length and would have written more briefly if I were able. My skills as a writer are questionable. But then, good writers are often too in love with their craft to tell the truth, or they are more orthodox than I and are lauded because they conform to some kind of existing power. I am a better painter than I am a writer. So I made a rather complete index of subjects to help the reader move around. Moreover, these books are written to cover large areas of information, so it is really individual bits of research and meditation that matter here and there are thousands and thousands of them ere. These books are very much subject driven, so it would be entirely appropriate for any reader to read it in pieces, skipping from subject to subject using the find-tab or looking the index for what interests them.

These three books began as a mere illustration of my Master's Thesis, which was about abuses of knowledge and power and a history of atrocities in the last millennia. I realized eventually how many mistakes I made in that book. I had to try to face the subject more squarely and much more deeply. I continued to work on the subject only because it continues to turn up new and surprising details of corruption and truth about the religions, and about science. Indeed, it is a 20 year long research project that created these books. I could say it goes even further back than that as I started researching religion back in the early 1980's. No doubt there are still many mistakes. But basically I went through a sea change in my thinking rather as Newton did when he investigated alchemy for many years. Alchemy was his secret passion and it utterly failed him. Science was what he did well and his science still survives. I rejected the misery of religion and learned from my mistakes. I am not Newton obviously and do not wish to be, but the point of this analogy is only that I learned from my mistakes. I am not sure if Newton did.

The accuracy of a thesis is assessed by how well it predicts unknown relationships and facts. It is not science to write a book, but when one has a thesis and it continues to turn up new facts and predicts other facts as this one does, there is truth in it, even a sort of scientific truth. Not the whole truth, and certainly not the Truth. The thesis of theofascism is very pregnant in this way: it is a thesis that keeps on giving. New chapters have grown organically. I recently (2011) reread Guenon's Reign of Quantity, aghast at its sophomoric and superstitious paranoid invocations of irrational, even lunatic conspiracy theories. I wrote a new chapter recently reviewing this really ludicrous book of Guenon's, as you can see below. It is called "A Review of Rene Guenon's Reign of Quantity and the Signs of the Times"

Over many years, I have watched with a certain humor how

seriously many people take Guenon, quoting him like a scripture.¹⁸⁵ Like gullible children, they really believe he is an infallible source of information. They cannot question him at all. The religious mentality is proud of its adherence to bogus notions of tradition, orthodoxy, dogma and hadith, all of which are not just questionable but certainly false. It amazes me in the same way how Creationists believe that the dinosaurs lived in the Egypt of the Pharaohs. They see dinosaurs painted in caves from 30'000 years ago, hallucinating what is not there. Some of them imagine the world being less than 10,000 years old, even though this is obviously wrong as the dinosaurs went extinct 65 million years ago. They think dragons are were real, when in fact, dragons are make believe myths engendered by people finding fossils millions of years old. Creationism is held by adults who think like children and have not grown up. They think the Bible is the literal truth and want all art and science to follow that lunacy.

Orthodoxy is just a lack of imagination, an adherence to a system of make believe origins, rules set up by priests mostly meant to benefit them. The creationists want to believe the bible is the factual truth and are unable to admit it is make believe. "Esoterism" is merely another fiction built up on the lie of orthodox truth inherited from a 'reliable' source. I will discuss these ideas at length. What many do not realize is that Guenon was primarily a defender and advocate of repression and elite status quo. They imagine that Guenon takes us beyond the material age, to reconnect with a forgotten, idealized, transcendental, cultural

¹⁸⁵ A good place to see this cultic atmosphere around Guenon is the "Retour a Guenon" Yahoo groups site run by a certain "Isik" or "isikqukqumadevu" a rather nasty cultist who believes all Guenon's nonsense. He is also a cowardly man who is afraid to use his name, but who is basically a cultic cyberbully, a critical watchdog of a repressive and paranoid Guenonian orthodoxy, a sort of Guenonian Inquisitor as it were,--- not unlike Guenon himself he looks down on everyone. What a vicious, mocking and decadent man this "Isik" is, not unlike Guenon himself. Scarcely anyone can fit into his ideology of narrow cultic elitism and it seems no one does. Perennial Guenonism is just this dead end, that finally self-destructs in obsessive pedantry and a pride that eats itself with hate and disdain for others.

heritage that never existed except in imagination.

What this really means is he wants to go back to archaic forms of totalistic power and what he called “spiritual authority”, which is authority based on no evidence at all.. What Guenon calls the philosophical and spiritual gifts of antiquity are really just the mythic and metaphysical detritus left by unjust powers and repressive religious institutions, which served those powers. Guenon wants people in the modern age to rejoin the Catholic Church, as if the Catholic Church of the 12th century were not an unjust collection of corrupt priests and popes exploiting the poor and the ignorant in the name of orthodox dogmas. Guenon probably knew little about the elitist roots of Sufism either. The Sufis were, in many cases, the advance guard and protectors of the Muslim upper classes, mystic forerunners of world denying jihadists and sword carrying assassins of the holy book.¹⁸⁶ The notion of holy Sufi’s is pretty ridiculous, though there are a few. One of them was proably Ahmadou Bamba, of Senegal, a somewhat Gandhi like figure. But he has been magnified by all sorts of obviously mythical magic stories, so it is hard to tell what he actually did. But he was a pacifist, to his credit. Like Gandhi he seems to have been a good person in spite of his religion rather than because of it.

In any case, admirers of Guenon don’t see how ridiculous many of his writings really are, how superstitious and paranoid the man who

¹⁸⁶ An eventual Sufi social history will demonstrate this. In India for instance, the invading Muslim marauders were helped by Sufis who overlooked or assisted in atrocities committed by Muslims and acted as proselytizers for the religion and political ambitions of Muslim leaders. There also needs to be a study of the Sufi relation to state powers. Nasr was an advertiser and promoter of the Shah of Iran’s regime, for instance, which was an American client state and a neo-fascist monarchy . It should be noted that Reza Shah was removed by the Allies during the second world war for his support of Nazi Germany and people’s hatred of him. Reza Shah was a vicious dictator and father of the last Shah, who Nasr worked for. Schuon referred to the close relation of Sufis to Islamic princes and powerful leaders when he said that in medieval times the king would have killed Schuon’s personal enemies for him, and Cyril Glasse was one of the people Schuon said he would like to have killed by an Islamic prince. This maliciousness towards Cyril was utterly unfounded and based on Cyril’s justified reaction against Schuon’s own corruption, which he learned by being very close to the center of the cult, as I did too.

wrote The Reign of Quantity really was. Many do not see that Guenon was essentially a fiction writer, writing down paranoid fictions and religious delusions inherited from questionable “traditions” as if they were facts. This book is not for true believers of whatever stripe, to them it will merely be another example ‘downward tending’, ‘low caste’ or ‘diabolical’ nonsense. Guenonians tend to think that all those that do not think like them are low, inferior people who cannot understand their chosen master. But I am not writing for such people, who are in the various traditionalist cults or in other “spiritual” groups.

I wrote a new essay on the Traditionalists and Science, after rereading Wolfgang Smith’s recent works(2012). It is called “On Those Who Hate Science and Reason:

Anti-Science and Irrationalism in Guenon, Wolfgang Smith and Other Reactionaries. That is an important essay in these books, which I have meant to do for many years. It addresses a subject never before addressed in this way, I think. I wrote this essay to make it a critique of any effort to combine religions with science. It also is a justification of Darwin’s thinking and a debunking of those who deny his ideas and all that evolutionary theory has grown into. These critics of Darwin have failed utterly to bring any really valid criticism against science and Darwin’s theory. They merely make themselves look ignorant.

Darwin comes out of these discussions as the greatest scientist of the 19th century. He is in some ways the hero of these books. Indeed, I think anyone at all reasonable will realize that the anti-science people and traditionalists are prone to bogus theories and delusions and their works have no truth value. There is a chapter also about traditional theories of art compared to modern art and both are rejected and I explain why. There is another chapter on a speculative theory of mine that the Greek sculptor Praxiteles did not actually exist and from that I draw various conclusions about how classical historians and scholarship

might have been misused. This again is an example of belief parading as fact. Of course, I am not totally sure of any of this, I am just trying to understand.

There is also a chapter about Chomsky also, who might not seem to belong here, but I use him as an illustration of someone who pursues a belief when the empirical evidence does not accord well with his beliefs. I compare Chomsky to Darwin and find Chomsky wanting. Chomsky is a sort of cultist prophet of the Left. The Left is not immune to its own power posturing, and religion is above all power posturing. Just as religion can appear apolitical but not be, a politician like Chomsky can be totally political and actually to be a sort of Guru. This is a book about many things. Innocent III, Dante, myths, the Templars, Zen Buddhism, systems of mind control, cults, and also gurus of various kinds, including “secular” ones. I was interested too in seeing if the Chomskian left was capable of any self-analysis based on a belief that just as the best science questions itself, testing things over and over, should not individuals or groups also be prone to self-correction and weighing evidence? So I compared critics of Chomsky’s work in Linguistics, some of them by well-known men such as Dan Dennett or John Searle. I also did my own independent inquiry on Chomsky as was aghast at what I found. I found that the Chomsky group behave very much as a cult. The master cannot be criticized and when he is the cult circles their wagons and shuns the inquiry. Shunning is a typical technique used by cults and cruel organizations. Power corrupts people, even in small circles.

Religions are cultist and symbolist ideologies. So this whole book is an examination of various ideologies, looked at through a scientific lens. But to read further on this subject of why atheism is both a moral and a reasonable way to look at the world, I would recommend the reader to Richard Dawkin’s very fine and well-argued book, The God Delusion,

which is an excellent refutation of theism. See also Daniel Dennett's Breaking the Spell, though he endorses Pascal Boyer's rather limited critique of religion. Christopher Hitchens has done a compendium of recent atheist writing which is interesting: The Portable Atheist. These are all fine and well-argued presentations of the atheist case against religions. I came to reject religion on my own, many years ago now, but I respect these books and recommend them to open minded readers of this essay.

So at the outset of this study of religious delusions and fanatic preachers of comparative religion it is important to state where I stand. My sympathies lie with science: I do not believe in gods, mystic fictions or transcendental ideologies. I have been transcending transcendence for some years now. I do not believe that religious or theocratic governments can be good governments, as all of history as well as recent failures in Israel, Iran and U.S under the Bush administration amply prove. I do not believe in Plato's totalitarian 'closed society' as Karl Popper called it, or idealized versions of the Hindu caste system as justified by Shankara or the Bhagavad Gita or any other supposed "great books". I do not believe in Buddhism resold as a palliative--- a corporate Buddhism calming its followers into conformity. I do not believe in reactionary and violent Islam as a way to counter the excesses of capitalism. I believe in science, the earth, and a generous effort to understand the actual. I believe in democracy so long as other living beings are part of the democratic understanding of rights. There are no such rights as yet, but there needs to be.¹⁸⁷ I do not believe that corporations are people or that money is free speech, giving the rich more rights to speak than the poor.

I do not believe in "the body of the church", the "body of Christ" or

¹⁸⁷ There are marginal rights of a kind, such as protected forests, elephants in Africa, or limits on hunting or fishing, but as yet no plenary rights as human alone have at this point, unfairly. Ecuador passed a rights of nature, but that too is limited.

“being part of something bigger than yourself”. “Being part of something bigger than yourself” was a slogan used by the U.S. army to get recruits to join the killing machine. George Bush Jr. used this slogan in his Iraq war campaign and fundamentalist Christianity uses it too, to get people to join their far right political rallies.¹⁸⁸ Individuals and animals are beaten down by things ‘greater than themselves’ such as corporations, governments, dictators or religions. What really matters is not institutions of large groups but the small beings of the world, the Aye Ayes, Wallabys, Katydid, Bloodroot and Trillium, Golden Frogs or Prairie Dogs. What we need is to see through all transcendent fictions and look at actual things as they are. We are small people living with millions of other beings on a small planet in an ocean of space far beyond us. We are destroying our planet’s weather systems, forcing species into extinctions, endlessly ‘developing’ by cutting and killing off what is not ours to cut or kill. No one yet knows what is really out there, but certainly it is not gods or the fictions of metaphysics. Stressing “transcendence” in such a world is nearly always a power play and should be resisted.

In short, I am not even remotely transcendentalist, Guenonian, Schuonian or traditionalist. I am a naturalist and historian who loves science and who seeks to educate and share what he has learned. I am one who thinks transcendence must be transcended. I have never stopped studying, since I was in my teens. I have learned a great deal and treated life as a huge laboratory where experiences were also

¹⁸⁸ “Bart Ehrman recounts in some of his recent books how he started out adulthood as a passionate fundamentalist Christian, anxious to read the infallible word of God in its original Greek — and only when he did, and started studying its internal contradictions and the history of its composition, he realized that fundamentalist Christianity was untenable.” (Quoted from an article by Alan Sokal, who so eloquently brought post modernism into question, NYT—website, March 12, 2012—<http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/03/11/defending-science-an-exchange/>)

experiments. Trying to apply science to everyday life has been one of the joys of my older years and something I try to teach my kids.

I am one of the few who has learned about Traditionalist movements first hand and have survived mentally enough to assess and reject them and talk about them. I got to know the Schuon cult, the poetry world, academia and the cultish environment around Chomsky pretty well. So I talk about that too. Most of those who left Schuon ¹⁸⁹ ended up burying themselves in other Sufi Muslim or Christian cults, or denying their own history by inoculating themselves against their cultish past by reading mind numbing escapists like Eckhart Tolle or the Dalai Lama.¹⁹⁰ I know the art world pretty well too, and I talk about that, and I know a few things about nature.

This series of essays is not written for the true believers, Islamic, Christian, Chomskyite or otherwise. Nor is this written for cult followers of Guenon or followers of Schuon and Evola, who have expressed their dislike of what I say here, not surprisingly. I see little difference between Guenon and Evola, and think both of their respective followers to be partisans of separate insane camps. One of the Russian defenders of

¹⁸⁹ According to Rama Coomaraswamy, many who left the Schuon cult joined Nasr's cult, which is surprising. I find it hard to believe that anyone with a brain would take Nasr seriously about anything. However, I know Nasr as a coward and a liar, a man who called me up and begged me in tears to lie about Schuon's primordial gatherings so that he could be Schuon's successor and a Shakyh himself. Ever since then I have no respect for him. What I have experienced watching the lies and hypocrisy of Schuon's followers should be enlightening to anyone who has survived a system of cult beliefs or ideological controls. The lies of the Traditionalists continue unabated in many books, websites and yahoo groups. There is a veritable industry of liars in these groups and they all are promoters.

¹⁹⁰ It was distressing to see various former members others who left the Schuon cult, disappear into these escapist Buddhist sects and new age religions, rather like dogs return to their own vomit. Some went into other Sufi cults, some became Buddhists or Christians. One turned toward Eckhart Tolle is a thinker who wants you to ignore any critical thoughts and only live in the "present" as a positive state. This advocacy of mindless vacancy dumbs down the minds of his followers, making them passive little robots who support the status quo.. They are not supposed to have troubled thoughts or accept any conflict in their lives but live as perfect zombies. I speak of the Dalai Lama in this book in various places, search his name to find others things I've written about him .

Dugin had it exactly right when he said, “if Evola and Dugin are Traditionalists to the same degree as Guenon and Coomaraswamy , then why not proclaim Plato, Jerry Falwell, and Benito Mussolini to be traditionalists as well” ¹⁹¹ Yes, exactly. There is not that much difference between all these men. These are all right wing ideologues all interested in public power and correct doctrines used against ordinary people to keep them subservient. There is a wide similarity in all these thinkers and their movements, enough to warrant the consideration under one collective inquiry. Mussolini is not a traditionalist, of course, but he is a sort of adjunct to traditionalism. Ezra Pound was more or less a Confucian traditionalist in later years, concerned with the conservative “rectification of names” and with advocating a repressive social order as Confucius did. He was a devotee of Mussolini, rather as Evola was to both Mussolini and Hitler. ¹⁹² Schuon’s disciple and Guenon’s secretary Martin Lings admired the Spanish fascist Franco and saw him as an ideal traditionalist leader. Lings was the ‘quintessential” (they love this redundant word!!) traditionalist and his political views are characteristic

¹⁹¹ Andreas Umland “ Is Dugin a Traditionalist---Neo-Eurasianism and Perennial Philosophy”. Pg 16 see:

<http://ku-eichstaett.academia.edu/AndreasUmland/Papers/110691/Is-Dugin-a-Traditionalist---Neo-Eurasianism--and-Perennial-Philosophy>

¹⁹² Speaking of Pound’s racist diatribes during WWII, in which Pound advocated hatred of Jews and America, the novelist Saul Bellow wrote that “if sane he should be tried again as a traitor; if insane he ought not to be released merely because he is a poet. Pound advocated in his poems and in his broadcasts enmity to the Jews and preached hatred and murder. Do you mean to ask me to join you in honoring a man who called for the destruction of my kinsmen?”? It is a valid question in some respects, though the notion of “treason” or sedition” as well as that of heresy seem non-crimes to me. It makes sense in some contexts to oppose a given form of power, which invariably have unjust features that call for protest. Putting people in prison because they disagree with a given government seems absurd. I certainly don’t agree with Pound and think he was a maniac whose theories of coinage are as bogus as Guenon’s. And Pound’s advocacy of harm to the Jews is really horrendous. I also thought Schuon should have been deported back to Switzerland from the U.S. and there was talk in the government in Indiana that he might be. But in the end, was I right about that? No, it does not matter if Schuon was in the U.S. Foolish fanatics like Pound or Schuon are not that unusual. Let them talk and rant and say what they like. In the end they sink in their own rhetoric.

of the entire movement. Schuon loved Japanese theofascism during the World War II era.

Plato was probably the most important thinker to Schuon's peculiar brand of traditionalism, because of Plato's caste obsessions and theory of Archetypes, which dominated the whole of Schuon's thought. Schuon's thought is effete and self-centered and like Plato he disdained anything that was "contaminated by practical uses". Schuon's cult allies itself politically with the far right in America and Schuon demanded his inner circle vote republican.¹⁹³ I consider Plato and his influence in some depth. Rush Limbaugh, Bill O'Reilly and other far-right talk show fanatics in America continue a long line of fascist and quasi-fascist radio and other bogus "journalists" that go back to Father Coughlin. Coughlin was Catholic and fascist. Coughlin began used his radio program to issue anti-Semitic commentary, and later to rationalize some of the policies of Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini. The broadcasts have been called "a variation of the Fascist agenda applied to American culture".¹⁹⁴ This is what Bill O'Reilly and Rush Limbaugh's commentaries are too. They are paid liars and advertisers for the ultra-rich 1% of the population. It is quite accurate to compare Guenon, Schuon, Rama Coomaraswamy,

¹⁹³ I remember visiting with Catherine Schuon in their house and she was trying to preach to me about the importance of getting god back in American schools, the last thing our schools need—she even printed out a flyer against Madalyn Murray O'Hair, who had very little to do with the fight to get religion out of American schools, but who should be praised for helping. But her role was minor. But Catherine Schuon was not very bright and didn't do much research on this, she just wanted to blame O'Hair, because she heard from other cult members, who were right wing Americans and O'Hair is a favorite bogey woman of the far right in America and a scapegoat for fundamentalists. Schuon agreed with this nonsense and in general agreed with the far right in America. He liked Nixon, Falwell and Bush family. Those who say that Schuon was not political are just deluded. Of course Michael Oren Fitzgerald financial backer, disbarred lawyer and 'spokesman' for the failing Schuon cult, frequently tries to maintain that Schuon was not political as a public PR posture, in other words as a lie. But Fitzgerald has been caught lying about various things, as well as trying his best to silence any critics of Schuon's megalomania. Fitzgerald, his son and wife and Catherine Schuon all gave money to the Bush campaign, indicating certain hypocrisy, since they are farther to the right than far right republicans. Secrecy and lying is a regular feature of Schuon's cult and traditionalism, which is why no one reasonable should ever trust the promoters of Schuon and Guenon.

¹⁹⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_E._Coughlin#cite_note-5

Evola and their followers to far right fundamentalists in America, there are real overlaps between in the respective views of Rama and Limbaugh, despite significant differences. The views of the far-right are amazingly uniform and predictable. Schuon supported the Vietnam War; Nixon and Reagan, apartheid in South Africa, prayer in schools and other far right views. His support for prayer in schools was part of a hatred of democracy he had, since he was well aware the American constitution forbids prayer in schools.

So it is a long time since I had much respect or trust in the opinions of the people in these marginal cults around Schuon, Dugin, Guenon or Evola. I am not writing for them. They have been lying about Schuon and slandering me for years. Oddly, one gets largely used to being slandered, one almost expects it as a sort of complement from certain people. I wrote this book I also wanted to expand it into a not just a critical essay on an esoteric modern cult, secret until I exposed it in 1991, but also for those who wish to understand how delusional systems of thought express themselves in religions.. I think the experience I have had of these wacky organizations generalizes into something larger. So I began to write a book that is about ideological constructions of many kinds. I wish to show how religion misrepresents reality and leads to ignorance, lies and superstition. Indeed, a goodly portion of my intellectual work, since the 1990's is about deconstructing systems of knowledge that serve powerful ideologies, so I have written against Augustine, Aquinas, Plato, Creationism Sufism and so on. Thus a rather myopic study of a marginal writer like Guenon and his followers is a specific case in point where I can work though some of my larger ideas in relation to actual events on the ground—a ground moreover I have gotten to know pretty well.

In these books, or series of related essays, I intend to supply a critical assessment of religion itself. I will sometimes use Guenonian traditionalism as illustrations of my points. I wish to provide as an example for others, how to do such an assessment, outlining basic

arguments against traditionalism and religion and suggesting avenues of research others could follow. Doing the research on this book has been very satisfying because for the 15 years I have been writing it I have been amazed at how far my thesis for these essays generalizes across so many areas. A good theory must generalize over a fairly large area to prove its truth. Some people think I am mixing up things that do not belong together. But that is false. Traditionalism is one aspect of far right movements in the 20th century. It opens up inquiry into far-right movements and individuals of many kinds across many disciplines and enables me to write the kind of history I always dreamed I would. I can write about science art, math, biology and nearly any other subject and still address my central thesis.. It opens up the whole field of religion as an object of criticism. It is clear cult leaders and political leaders often have much in common with De Maistre and , Burke. The root of the far right go way back before into Romanticism,, Bonald¹⁹⁵ and back before the French Revolution. Indeed, the roots of reactionary politics go back to Anti-Roman Christian killers of Hypatia during the Roman times and those who hated the Nominalists, who were the early advocates of an anti-Platonic world view that would become science. Indeed, as we will see, the roots of the religious delusion go all the way back to Plato and before.

The fact is that the idea of “theofascism” or ‘spiritual fascism’ covers a very wide area but not so wide as to be vague and unmanageable. Applying this idea to divergent areas and cases as Ezra Pound, Guenon,

¹⁹⁵ Bonald was a far right Catholic and one of the leading writers anti- French Revolution theocratic or traditionalist school,^[3] which included de Maistre, Lamennais, Ballanche and baron Ferdinand d'Eckstein. I heard Schuon mention him approvingly once but did not know who he was. But now I know he was a science hater and like Schuon complained bitterly about the French Revolution for justly removing h the unjust power of the class system. They call this a “usurpation” of the power of kings and priests.

Martin Lings and Martin Heidegger and their advocacy of theocracy or fascist leaders rings true in each case. Nasr's hatred of evolution dovetails seamlessly with his love of irrational romantic poetry. So in this books you will find discussion of the politics of Nietzsche compared to Coomaraswamy or the political theofascism of Guenon compared to the fall of Rome. Prior to writing these essays I did not know that theofascism is a fairly common system of belief, and that its general features can be found in widely variant thinkers, poets and writers in different times and histories. For instance, I knew Schuon was a "theofascist" because I saw it in his face, his behavior and in his cult, but I did not realize the extent of Schuon's adulation and endorsement of the Imperial fascism of Japan during World War 2. Nor did I know that Martin Lings was a great admirer of the Franco, the fascist ruler of Spain. Nor did I realize that there is not that much difference between Heidegger and Guenon or between Eliade and Evola. There are differences, yes, of course, but they are minor and really are a result of these men all being romantics and each one fighting mightily to see themselves as the utterly 'unique' expositor of the "Truth".

These are all very similar thinkers and their differences are grossly exaggerated by followers and careerist academics who multiply distinctions beyond necessity, violating Occam's Razor. So, research for this book has taught me a great deal about how systems of knowledge work spreading through network of many individuals, as well as how persistent delusions are shared across a given political spectrum. The search for truth is a pedestrian affair by contrast and involves many people in a more direct fashion. I was very gratified to learn just recently that Karl Popper's original impetus behind his Open Society and its Enemies, was the need to question Great men, 'heroic irrationality' and romanticism both of the sort that led from Plato to Hitler as well as from Hegel to Stalin. This again confirms the basic thesis of this book.

In the 1990's I began my questioning of traditionalism by doing

exactly the same thing. I wanted to reexamine the ideology of greatness, Great Books, great men, the elitism of the arrogant. There was so much to learn if I was to understand how traditionalism related to far-right political movements. I really had no idea in 1991. I had gotten involved in traditionalism innocently and naively, following my intuitions. I learned that intuition is not a good way to proceed sometimes, if reason is lacking. I was not yet able to assess facts or judge via reason a vast network of complex information. It took me years to gain and use these skills. I am still learning this.

Traditionalism serves reaction in so many places because so many far-right fanatics have need of it. I did not realize, for instance, that T.S. Eliot, often thought to be a modernist, was in fact very far right-wing in his beliefs, nor that Byron was too---- as are many of the romantics, even up to recent romantics like Joseph Campbell. So I face some of this in my chapter on fascism. Indeed, I have begun to question the history of poetry up to the present because of some of these realizations and to do so beyond the confines of this study of a few 20th century thinkers. So my view of poetry has matured beyond what I ever thought possible. I have come to see that poets like Plato and Muhammad condemned other poets because of the conceit they had in their own transcendentalist verse. What is wrong with poetry is what is wrong with Muhammad, Christ, and Plato too. These poets were willing to destroy the world in their fiction by creating a magic world of literary delusions. They write theofascist poetry,,: poetry that serves power and delusions. Their poetry serves abstract delusions and generalizations born of words, human excess and speciesism and transcendental fictions. ¹⁹⁶ They convinced people these delusions were true. Religious “Tradition” is nothing more than the ongoing effort to sustain these delusions. However, I will not pursue my

¹⁹⁶ We need a poetry that stays on the ground, and one that is not seduced by the excessively subjective and abstract character of language. This might not be possible. Such a thing does not exist yet, and it is hard to imagine what it would look like.

thoughts on poetry here very deeply. ¹⁹⁷

But I will say that while I feel an affinity with Popper because he confirmed my belief that Plato is a reactionary, and his questioning of great books and men, I owe a greater debt to Bertrand Russell, who I began to read in my teens and who was so right about so many things. He showed that romanticism was a species of far right ideology.

¹⁹⁷ Poetry has been too close to religion and shares many of the faults that religion has. Neruda defines this pretty well in a poem where he castigates the rather effete and transcendentalist poet Rilke and his cult of inwardness. What good is the inward when so many are suffering. Neruda writes:

"what did you do
in the kingdoms of agony,
in the sight of nameless humanity
and their vexed acquiescence,
heads drowned in the offal, the harrowed
quintessence of life trampled under....
Flight and escape, nothing more.
You peddled the rinds of the dump heap,
probed for a heaven...'pure beauty', 'sorcery'."

In other words, in Rilke, the abstract world of perfections, ideas and aesthetic conceit was put higher than the actual world of natural and human suffering, agonies, poverties and deaths. Rilke "escaped" into the abstract and rarefied realm of spiritualized 'higher' conceits and imaginary flights of intellectual sublimity. He neglected the agony and nameless suffering of those trampled under. Pure Beauty and sorcery sums up Schuon and Guenon in a nutshell. They were sorcerers of comparative metaphors, creators of transcendental simile's of delusion (See Neruda, Pablo. Five Decades: Poems 1925-1970. (Trans, Ben Belitt.) New York Grove Press 1974



Bertrand Russell

Russell opposes the scientist and socially conscious person to the high-minded romantic---the individual mystic that romantics love to admire: the mystic is led by esoteric “inwardness” and cult of the transcendent leads the mystic into social irresponsibility. The mystic is one who:

“Becomes one with God and in the contemplation of the Infinite feels himself absolved of duty to his neighbor. The anarchic rebel does even better, he feels himself not one with god, but God. Truth and duty, which represent our subjection to matter and our neighbors, exist no longer for the man who has become god: for others, truth is what *he* posits, duty what *he* commands. If we could all live solitary and without labor we could enjoy this ecstasy of independence; since we cannot its delights are available only to madmen and dictators” ¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁸Russell, Bertrand. A History of Western Philosophy, Simon and Schuster, 1945, pg. 681-82

This describes various extremist and mystical charlatans fairly well. It is one thing to have feelings or intuitions about the beauty of nature or the wonder of existence. This is poetry or ordinary aesthetic insight. But once such feelings become the center of all thought and mind, inflated by grandiose subjectivity, mystical magnifications produces some really horrendous delusions. To arrogantly make a religion out of one's intuitions and rope others into the charade is a monstrous thing that happens with men like Muhammad or Joseph Smith or those who use the Jesus myth.

In a later chapter I will discuss the mythic nature of such figures as Jesus and Muhammad and some of the evidence that such men probably did not exist at all. This essay is called "The War between Christian and Islamic 'Fascism' and the Myths of Jesus and Muhammad" Bertrand Russell helped me see through these myths. What the mythic diversity of subjectivities does in our world, is create a mirage behind which the real power play of greed helps the wealthy classes take more and more from the poor and middle classes as well as from the earth. The corporate CEO is a virtual deity just as Jesus is a fiction that sorts the upper classes, for the most part. The CEO is "blessed" with more than anyone one else and all those who have little or nothing are supposed to pray to get theirs too and they might be "blessed" too. When in fact these no such things as those blessed and damned. It is all arranged by unjust institutions and laws. Getting rid of the fiction of the "Corporate Person" would make CEO's personally responsible for the depredations they cause to workers, the environment and cultures where they explain cheap labor. It would abolish transcendent fictions of all kinds. It would allow workers to unionize more freely, repeal the Taft Hartley Act¹⁹⁹ and

¹⁹⁹ Taft-Hartley Act, rightly called a slave labor bill, still in effect, was a horrible blow to democratic America. It was and is a means to seen as a means of demobilizing the labor movement by imposing limits on labor's ability to strike and by prohibiting labor leaders form

punishing CEO's with higher taxes who that locate their factories to other countries to exploit cheap labor. If fewer people spent time in pursuit of delusions, things like this could be easily organized. Human rights, animal rights, rights for the earth itself: nature's rights. There really is no real difference, the idea of rights is for all living things and this follows from the deepest inquiry began by Darwin over 150 years ago.

Defining Theofascism: in Cults, Religions, Institutions, Fundamentalism and Traditionalism.

a. The Question about Theofascism

So, in what follows, I meander through ruminations on the ruins, delusions and hardships caused by various religions of the world. I will also try to show the complex relation of religion and politics, I will be using examples like traditionalism and fascism in the work of Rene Guenon and his main followers, Frithjof Schuon, Julius Evola, Ananda Coomaraswamy Alex Dugin and others. But I will be going much further afield too into all the major religions. I will do this to show one of my thesis of this book that religion in fact is a close kin to and probably a flip side of politics. I will show that Traditionalism has some distant

organizing. It restricted the power of unions to call strikes that "threatened national security,". It also limited free speech and gave CEO unfair advantage to promote anti-union sentiment. It also stigmatized communist leaders form helping unions. This was a gift to big business and CEOs that continues to help them destroy workers' rights to this day. There is huge wage inequality because of if it and other laws which punish workers and favor the rich. It continues to not only harm workers but enable CEO to harm the world and the environment. It gave the executive bran unfair power to destroy unions. This is one reason among many why the executive branch of the US government out to be retried form American politics.

relation to the fascism of Hitler and Mussolini, which I will call ordinary fascism. But I will also show that traditionalism/theofascism is different than ordinary fascism in important ways.

What Guenon created is a form of meta-fascism, traditio-fascism or ‘theocratic fascism’--- or what I call Theo-fascism. I coined the term ‘Theofascism’, specifically, to have a word that explains the considerable difference between Nazism and the “spiritual” politics of the traditionalists. The term Theofascism is more or less synonymous with spiritual fascism, ---- which was used by Guenon’s follower Guido do Giorgio to describe Guenon’s system. Spiritual fascism is a far right, conservative and nostalgic form of “spirituality” that pretends to transcend ordinary fascism in being anti-science and but shares a lot with ordinary fascism basic characteristics. Theofascism is a form of totalism that seeks to return to theocratic and metaphysical autocracy and employs an oppressive apocalyptic and unjust government that employs questionable means to create hierarchies, harm people and subvert human rights, democracy, science and education according to science. In this definition, the Church of Aquinas and Augustine as well as the caste system of India or the government of Japan under Ieyasu Tokagawa or the various Islamic autocracies, as well as the ideology of Schuon and Guenon are theofascist. Religion magnifies political motives and tries to make them seem part of the structure of the universe.

Why do various neo-fascist groups and far-right individuals as a major influence or forebear claim the name of René Guenon? For instance Alain de Benoist, the French neo-fascist, claims him as a primary influence as does Troy Southgate, England’s resident racist and right wing hatemonger. Various far right Catholics with fascist leanings as well as some Islamists, Islamo-fascists, orientalist Sufis and far right cult leaders, such as Frithjof Schuon, also claim him, as does Massimo Introvigne, the Italian apologist and defender of dangerous religious cults

such as the Moonies, Scientology and far right Mormons.²⁰⁰ Introvigne has mounted an attempt at ‘affirmative action’ for dangerous cults and superstitions, defends extremist Mormons who practice polygamy.²⁰¹ He is also the far-right organizer of the Center for the Study of New Religions” (“Cesnur”).²⁰² Julius Evola, a fascist connected to both the Italian and the German fascist groups claims him, as does Andreas

²⁰⁰ It appears that the cult apologist movement was created by scientology and later picked up by Introvigne and others and from thence spread around the academic establishment, among those who want to defend dangerous cults, partly in an effort to defend their own jobs. A *cult apologist* is someone who defends the teachings and/or actions of one or more movements considered to be cults - as defined sociologically.

The term "cult apologist" is technical, and not derogatory -

Cult apologists generally defend their views by claiming to champion religious freedom and religious tolerance. But they are not tolerant toward the non-religious or those who are critical of criminal actions their favored group might have committed

Many cult apologists support cults, collaborate with them, have financial interests in them or use tactics that misrepresent or lie about the groups they defend. The head of Scientology, David Miscavige has been shown to be prone to violence against followers and condemned by many who left his cult, including close relatives. Scientology legally abused and then destroyed the excellent Cult Awareness Network which was a group that tried to expose destructive cults. “This just is David Miscavige,” Mike Rinder, a former executive of Scientology who is featured in “Going Clear” said of Miscavige: “His personality type is sociopath. He takes a lot of things that in the hands of someone else would be innocuous and uses those as tools of weapons to abuse people.”

Read more: <http://www.businessinsider.com/going-clear-wife-of-scientologys-miscavige-not-in-hbo-documentary-2015-3#ixzz3aEGAAqXT>

²⁰¹ Arthur Versluis would try to do the same thing in America, echoing the whole reactionary promotion of “religious freedom” as a pretext for advancing system of backwards irrationality.

²⁰² http://ArtInNature_New/knowledge_power_book/guenon.asp - [ftnref29# ftnref29](#)to study Massimo Introvigne’s and his associate Pier Luigi Zoccatelli far right connections see Miquel Martinez’s interesting website <http://www.kelebekler.com/cesnur/eng.htm>. According to Martinez “Introvigne is also a member of the militant Catholic splinter movement which he joined 18 years ago. The Aleanza Catholica (AC) is a daughter organization of the international Tradition, Family and Property [T.F.P.] an ultra-conservative club of rich, influential Catholics who are admittedly "ready to fight tooth and nail" against "perverted elements of society such as abortion, socialism, unions, drug use and homosexuality." CESNUR is a cult apologist network and religious studies professors belong to it or use its services. Prompting anti-science and subjective irrationalism is its main motive. Like Introvigne, Guenon was a catholic theofascist, with some ties to Masonic organizations. I will discuss aspects of Catholic fascism throughout this essay.

Serrano, the Chilean writer of the Hitler, the Final Avatara.²⁰³ The internet is full of references of the importance of Guenon to neo-fascist, New Right or far right “conservative revolution” movements. So what is the relationship of Guenon and his followers in the Traditionalist movement to fascism?

Before answering the question, let me pause on the claim by many Traditionalists that they have nothing to do with politics. It is Orwellian²⁰⁴ how many Traditionalist ideologues strenuously deny the fascism of their masters or try to say that it was only Evola who was a fascist. They “protest too much” of course and use Orwellian double-speak to try to deny the obvious. Some of them have even tried to say that the Traditionalists are “apolitical”, which is rather like saying the pope is not a Catholic.²⁰⁵ But then some Traditionalists, even assert the pope is not a real catholic! The pose of being apolitical was common to

²⁰³ Serrano derived his idea of Hitler as the Last Avatara from Guenon, whose apocalyptic notion of the “Lord of the World”, or some final manifestation of the Logos, would precede the “second coming”. Schuon also claimed to be a “manifestation of the Logos at the end of time” or to be a kind of ‘avatara’, also following Guenon. These fictional delusions are interesting as they show a similar mythic imagination arising from Guenon’s influence in different places. The delusions of grandeur involved invoke the similar cult of personality that surrounded Hitler, “the Fuhrer”, who, for a time, most of Germany worshipped as a kind of god. Hitler created a religion of politics and Schuon and Serrano created a politics out of religion. The same thing occurred around Napoleon, Hitler, Franco and other autocrats

²⁰⁴ Most cults are Orwellian, this term refers to the Orwell’s Animal Farm in which the autocrats declare that War is peace. Freedom is slavery. Ignorance is strength...this is double speak, or lying to justify horrendous behavior. Orwell wrote that “Every line of serious work that I have written since 1936 has been written directly or indirectly against totalitarianism and *for* Democratic Socialism as I understand it.” Orwell and R. J. Lifton had similar concerns, both of them opposing Totalism of all kinds.

²⁰⁵ Like Evola both Schuon and Guenon wanted a government that was founded on religion. Griffin writes of Evola that “According to Evola, Nazism and Fascism were doomed from the start because, instead of seeking to re-establish an ‘organic’ state on the Traditional model, they create its travesty, the totalitarian state, flawed in its very conception, both by the leveling forces exerted by the masses it had to enlist in its support, and in its exaltation of ‘modern’ technology and bureaucratic apparatus, not to mention the blinkered nationalism so far removed from a genuine ‘imperialism’” This is the criticism of Guenon and Schuon too. They wanted something like Franco’s fascism, which was a catholic fascism, which is what Martin Lings approved of, Lings being a sort of midway point between Guenon and Schuon.

Guenon, Schuon and Evola and their followers. The hated democracy and socialism and their politics were Pre- renaissance, so they had to pretend to be apolitical rather than show people what they really were: monarchist haters of enlightenment and freedom. They were all extremely far to the right---more fascist than the fascists as it were. This hiding behind the pose of “apoliteia” as Evola called it, was a ruse justified by the need to not ‘cast pearls before swine”, the entire modern world being demeaned as ‘swine’ or “profane” the lingo of Guenon and Schuon. ²⁰⁶ As a general principle those who say they are not political are usually to the right of the political spectrum. It means they endorse the status quo or something to the right of it.

What is wonderful about being a Traditionalist, from their point of view, is that they subjective idealists. They can make up their own reality,--- ironically, like the “relativists” they hate.²⁰⁷ They make their

²⁰⁶ Apoliteia is most explicit in Evola’s work, where he calls it “riding the tiger” that is riding though the modern world as a reactionary monarchist and theocrat without causing too many to despise you. Evola's belief was that despite the horror of the modern world, there always exists the ability for the individual person to live his life always looking "above" himself toward the “imaginal” realm of gods and projections. In other words for Evola, in his words “Apoliteia” refers “essentially to the inner attitude” whereby a reactionary who desires to live in a theocracy can pretend to be apolitical when in fact he wants apocalypse and revenge for his religious ideology. In yet other words, apoliteia is the way that spiritual fascists pretend to be unattached to politics yet plot their return to power in hopes of Armageddon

²⁰⁷. Some people confuse relativism with the theory of relativity or with moral and cultural relativism, all of which are different things. Some hate relativism and what they mean is they hate science because science needs no posit of imaginary “principles” to get the universe going.. Schuon hated “relativism” but was a moral relativist himself, however, and allowed himself all sorts of hypocritical license which would not allow to others. Of course sometimes those who say they hate relativism really mean they hate moral relativism which means they hate selfish behavior. But again, Schuon was one of the most selfish people I ever met so he allowed himself to be a moral relativist, taking extreme liberties for himself while denying them to others.. Schuon opposed the “relative “to the “absolute”, which is a false opposition or a false choice since there is no demonstrable “absolute”, though maybe gravity or the inevitability of taxes, are absolutes. Isaiah Berlin said not to “confuse our own constructions with eternal laws with divine decrees”. And this “is one of the most fatal delusions of men.” There is some truth to this sort of relativism, since people do influence the views of the world that they have. However, this sort of cultural relativism is limited too, as science at its best seeks to be adequate to reality, or to describe real things and facts. Reality is not a construction, DNA does exist and has measureable effects on organisms inheritance structures. When religions condemn “relativism” they condemn the “contingent world”, ---the world of things depending on other things. That is all the world

own reality based on make-believe Platonic categories and live in a delusional world where evidence and science are cast to the winds. It has amazed me over the years to watch how the various Traditionalists I have known persist in believing the most ridiculous superstitions. They are “true believers” in Eric Hoffer’s telling phrase. Hoffer writes that members of a cult are “deindividualized” and “incorporated” into the movement.

“When we lose our individual independence in the incorporateness of a mass movement, we find a new freedom—freedom to hate, bully, lie, torture, murder and betray without shame and remorse.”

The Schuon cult had a corporate and unified mentality like this, joined together by make believe and a common delusional ideology. The chose to hate the world outside the cult and consider as nothing those who are the “profane”. Being “apolitical” meant an inner attitude of indifference and detachment, bolstered by a habitual secrecy and if needed, a willingness to lie at a moment’s notice... They did this while at the same time claiming to be the most educated the most reasonable of people. But then Guenon wrote in a style that makes him sound reasonable even when he promotes the most malicious hatred of the world, and the most absurd and paranoid rubbish. People fall for the big Orwellian lie. The notion that traditionalism is not political is a lie.

But whatever superstitions and untruths the traditionalists

there is and such a condemnation of the actual world is the height of arrogance delusion. To such people only the imaginary “absolute” matters, which means that only the imaginary matters, reality for them is a lesser thing. This view denigrates the whole universe, and sees it as merely symbolic. Hating the relative in this sense is perverse, destructive and malicious. For them it is the hatred of the actual that really matters. Hating the relative is immoral and intellectual suicide. This hatred of the “ten thousand things” or “original sin” is a mental disease that is common to all the major religions. Most thinkers who hate relativism, basically hate the world and want to posit an imaginary monotheistic or polytheists god or gods. Relativism is then hatred for all that is contingent or relative. It can be said that only the relative is real, and those who hate the relative world need to have their delusions deconstructed, their thoughts unraveled, their hatred adjsuted to reality.

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endorsed and used to harm or exclude others, it is a historical fact that Rene Guenon got involved with the ideological roots of reaction and theofascism long before Evola and in some ways his involvement was much deeper. With Guenon fascism is not about Jack boots and swastikas, but about high-falutin symbolism and ideology of “them verses us”. As I will show here, Guenon is the origin of theofascist tendencies in traditionalism, Evola was merely his follower. Guenon created a form of what I will call Theo-fascism or ‘spiritual fascism’ that has long outlasted the ordinary fascism of Hitler and Mussolini. It is quite true, as someone said to me recently, that traditionalism is a trivial movement. Pay no attention to it. I don’t think much of it, actually, which is why it has taken me so long to write this book. I think it is only of important as an example or a good case study how a delusional ideological systems came into being in the 20th century. It is also a good thing to study to understand other right-wing movements. I merely explore here the psychotic character of a fairly trivial ideological cult, endeavoring, if I can, to show how it relates to most of the far right movement of the 20th century.

To use a concrete example of the Orwellian double-speak of which Traditionalists are capable, and the way some of them try to hide and obscure their repressive, right wing political agenda, consider the website Integral Tradition.²⁰⁸ This is a fairly typical neo-fascist website, one of

²⁰⁸ http://www.reocities.com/integral_tradition/vesting.html

This site states the following “ The main issues of this site are:

The Crisis of the modern World, Eschatology, Globalism, the New World Order and Kali Yuga
A conservative Revolution, Revolt against the Modern World
The Primacy of the Spirit, Hierarchy, Traditionalism and Metapolitics
Imperium Europa, the Eurasian Alternative, Geopolitics
Defending European heritage and identity “

dozens. It was evidently put together and maintained by Martin Schwarz. It also calls itself “Conservative Revolution” a term coined by Hofmannsthal and later used in Arthur Moeller’s book The Third Reich from which the Nazi’s got their concept the “Third Reich”. This webpage features a motley crew of biographies and some texts by an amazingly consistent group of extremists, right wingers, neo-Nazis, spiritual fascists, racists and hater mongers. Some of the most representative authors Integral Tradition publishes are Julius Evola, [René Guénon](#), James Cutzinger, [Frithjof Schuon](#), Oswald Spengler,²⁰⁹ Carl Schmitt ²¹⁰, Alain de Benoist, Troy Southgate, the British neo-fascist, Oswald Mosley, Ernst Junger, and Arthur Moeller as well as and many others. Moeller was a German Fascist and an influence on Hitler as well as current Russian fascism. Moeller was also an advocate of “Conservative Revolution”, which is one of many terms used for a Fascist, nationalist apocalyptic or revolutionary attempt to seize power. Alexander Dugin has a “Conservative Revolution” party in Russia built up on ideas derived from Guenon, Moeller and others.²¹¹

The “Integral Tradition” site also offers books pertaining to political topics such as the European New Right, as well as books related to the [Indo-European](#) (read; Aryan) cultural and religious traditions. Others

²⁰⁹ Who writes there that the “more fully matured the State, the higher the standing, the historical capacity and therefore the Destiny of the Nation. State-majesty, sovereignty, is a life-symbol of the first order.” This sounds very much like Guenon, Nietzsche or Hitler. It is a theofascist description of the state.

²¹⁰ From the same website I read that Schmitt wrote in the 1920’s that a “dictatorial methods can be not only sustained by popular acclamation but be seen as a direct expression of democratic substance.” Schmitt was here making an argument for neo fascist alternative established by ‘democracy’.

²¹¹ There are many other theofascist website that promote traditionalism. At random for instance is <http://www.cakravartin.com/the-purpose-of-this-site>

To find more sites of this kind look up integral tradition. Tradition Guenon Evola an similar terms. Sedgwick has an out of date list on his site

listed are fringe extremists like Francis Parker Yockey, an American right wing fanatic who supported the KKK²¹², and took inspiration for the 1930's right wing radio demagogue Charles Coughlin, a racist Catholic Fascist, precursor to today's Bill O'Reilly or Rush Limbaugh, Sean Hannity and Glenn Beck all far right demagogue on the corporate dole. There are many others on this website such as, Savatri Devi ²¹³, who like Schuon, was a romantically attached and mystical supporter of Japanese Fascism: Cornelius Codreneau: leader of the Romanian, fascist Iron Guard: Oswald Spengler, Nazi and historian and Charles Maurras who I will discuss at length later. The proximity of these writers is not guilt by association but a natural affinity between these various far-right ideologues. After all Guenon's first important teacher was a decadent spiritualist that worked for the Czar and Guenon is a creator of systems and ideology meant to justify the decadent upper classes and failed aristocracy of the 19th century.

The texts used as propaganda on the "Integral Tradition" website

²¹² Yockey is a repulsive racist of the worst sort, railing against Jews. Liberals and Blacks and invoking the destiny of the American national state. "We have seen the spirit of the white race: the spirit of divine discontent and self-help, the spirit of self-reliance, of fearlessness in the face of great danger, the feeling of racial superiority, the urge to great distances and the will to conquer all that lies between, the spirit of the Alamo. ...Of this feeling was every great American: Washington, Hamilton, Henry Clay, Robert E. Lee, Sam Houston. The American soldier shows in every war that even today this true American type survives." This sounds like some of Hitler's rhetoric and recalls the equally repulsive movie Birth of a Nation.

²¹³ Sivitri Devi born Maximine Julia Portas, (September 30, 1905 — October 22, 1982)She was an avid supporter of the Nazis, moved to India and romanticized both Hindu and Nazism. According to Wikipedia, not the best source available. "she had Nazi interest in occultism, Deep Ecology, and the New Age movement. She influenced the Chilean diplomat and Guenonian Miguel Serrano. ". On the Integral Tradition website she writes in praise of both German and Japanese fascists that

"Do not forget, dear Japanese friends, that Aryans, before being converted, were "*worshippers of the Sun*,"[like the Japanese] faithful followers of the cult of heroes, blood and soil, just like you! One of your fellow countrymen, who worked at the Japanese Embassy in Calcutta in 1940, was right when he told me, "Your National Socialism is, according to us, just a Western form of Shinto!"

Schuon also endorsed and supported the Japanese fascists as can be seen in his essay on Shinto. I will discuss this more later..

all support various aspects of the theofascist message. I select one text, a quote from Charles Upton. He is a far right fanatic Sufi with latent Catholic views, rejecting democracy, socialism and the Enlightenment. He is late and rather trivial follower of Guenon, Schuon and Coomaraswamy, and claims, falsely, that traditionalism is “apolitical”. Upton evokes Guenon’s Manichean paranoia, and writes that the “the evil of the world....the coming regime of the Antichrist” has established itself everywhere. Like Guenon, Upton imagines a world swarming with evil little demons, as if reality actually were J.R.R. Tolkien’s Lord of the Rings trilogy. For Upton as for Guenon, the evil of the world is this comic book “Reign of Quantity”. The evil for them is science and the “liberal/communist/ materialist” era, as Upton has called it. The only way to fight this, Upton says, is to express the “ principal Truth”. But the “Truth” that Upton and Guenon claim as their own is above all a political truth masked as metaphysics, and the “principles” involved are fictions. The “Truth” Upton apes comes from Guenon and religion and is THE TRUTH (capital “T”) that opposes democracy, human rights, science and the enlightenment, all of which are basically good things. This is a political ideology under a veil of pretentious metaphysics.

But Upton denies the obvious. Expressing this reactionary “ principal Truth”, Upton says, “is not and never can be a case of propaganda; it is not a social-political act, but liturgical one “. Upton seems to think that pontificating pontiffs are infallible! A liturgical act, for Upton, is one where reason, human rights, democracy and science, all good things, are called evil. In other words, no one may question the liturgy even if it is itself evil or harmful. This is absurd.

To look at this in more detail: Upton is claiming that such “Truth” as is expressed in Guenon’s and Schuon’s writings are beyond politics because they are based on the “liturgical” truth of the religions. But Upton is a bit obtuse here. There is no such thing as ‘liturgical’ truth,

what he is calling liturgical truth is merely make believe and wishful thinking. Liturgies are merely the passed down ritual of a priest caste or class. The word liturgy derives from a Greek word, *leos*, which means people and *ergo*, “to do”, hence liturgy to do service to or for the people. Liturgy is a political act by definition, however much it may try to create a fictitious sacredness. Priests can pretend it is a divine act and that is their belief, but that is a private belief. In fact, a liturgical ceremony is a sort of political sleight of hand or pretense. Its real purpose is to hold followers in a web of belief and fictions which at bottom is political propaganda, precisely. Religion is merely the other side of the coin of politics.²¹⁴ So Upton is merely a propagandist hiding behind religion as was Schuon and Guenon, and this is obvious if you read a few paragraphs of any of their books.

Upton’s views in his silliest and longest book, the System of the Anti-Christ are basically souped-up fundamentalism repackaged as propaganda for a “gnosis”---- along with a “esoterism”. “Gnosis” is a favorite all-purpose tag of the traditionalists. They claim a special and exclusive “knowledge” or gnosis, but actually possesses nothing of the kind. Both terms, gnosis and esoterism, are really meaningless. They use these terms to refer to a mystical monism that is solipsistic and to

²¹⁴ Chomsky observes that Hans Morgenthau wrote a book called *The Purpose of American Politics*. “Other countries don’t have purposes. The purpose of America, on the other hand, is “transcendent”: to bring freedom and justice to the rest of the world.” In other words Chomsky is claiming that the American political system is based on a religious ideology. Morgenthau claims that “the United States hasn’t lived up to its transcendent purpose. But then he says, to criticize our transcendent purpose “is to fall into the error of atheism, which denies the validity of religion on similar grounds” -- which is a good comparison. It’s a deeply entrenched religious belief. It’s so deep that it’s going to be hard to disentangle it. And if anyone questions that, it leads to near hysteria and often to charges of anti-Americanism or “hating America” -- interesting concepts that ought not to exist in a democratic society. “In other words to question American exceptionalism is to be like an” atheist” and to incur the wrath of the ideologues. I don’t know how aware Chomsky is of what he is implying, but he is quite right. Religion, like politics is basically a social phenomenon, not a genetic one. It is an ideological imposition. The notion of America’s ‘transcendent purpose’ is an irrational justification of power politics as well and a spiritual construction with no basis in reality. It is not different really, than a religion. see <http://www.zcommunications.org/the-paranoia-of-the-superrich-and-superpowerful-by-noam-chomsky>

mystify and exalt themselves. They want to make themselves sound like they are different than other rag tag, run of the mill, far-right groups and cults, who also invoke the holy spirit or other mystical subjective emotions. “Esoterism” claims a totalist autonomy with respect to religion, and assumes thereby the religions are legitimated by the invented “kernel of the kernel”. But the religions are clearly based on all sorts of fallacies, superstitions and outright lies, none of which the traditionalists face or admit. Esoterism claims for its innermost substance is the “Primordial Tradition” itself, as if there were such a thing. There is no such thing and the idea that there is really a 19th century invention later extrapolated by Guenon and others.

No one has anyone ever proved such a thing exists because it does not. Esoterism claims to be based on “pure metaphysics”, but that too is a false category, there is no “pure metaphysics ” other than confused inward states and feelings that no one has ever been able to prove or indicate has any concrete reality. Metaphysics is really about feeling and just because something “feels” right does not make it true. These are only fictions created by men who claim their fictions are pure and real when they are not. Miracles are often trotted out to prove it, but these are always questionable and specious.

Esoterism is magical thinking and claims its goal is the realization of the ‘superior states of being’ and finally the union between the individual self and the “Principle”. If one studies claims to “Spiritual Enlightenment” or satori, there really is nothing there. No one has a permanent state of realization because there is no god or nirvana to realize. There is no ‘principle’ and esoterism has never had “superior state” in any way, they just pretend and exalt themselves and make silly claims. Indeed, I have never met anyone whose claim to “superior” states actually manifested as being better than others, and often they are worse.

The rise of religious irrationalism in America and the appeal of writers like Upton, Schuon, Evola or the far right Christian novelists is defined well by Noam Chomsky when he writes:

“The rise of what’s called Islamic fundamentalism is to a significant extent a result of the collapse of secular nationalist alternatives which were either discredited internally or destroyed, leaving few other options. Something like that may be true of American society. This goes back to the nineteenth century. In fact, in the nineteenth century you even had some conscious efforts on the part of business leaders to promote and encourage fire and brimstone-type preachers who would lead people into looking in another way.” ²¹⁵

Upton is proud of looking the other way, and of being an American anti-intellectual, both as a wanna-be Beat poet and as a Schuonian. He thinks that because he does not understand how his belief system is political, it actually is not political. This is a sort of inversion of Cartesian inquiry. Rather than ‘I think therefore I am’, anti-intellectuals think, “I don’t think therefore I deny.”²¹⁶ This sort of arrogant ignorance is common across the board in far right circles. One can see it in Rush Limbaugh or Bill O’Rielly, those fatuous, neofascist, far-right, corporate propagandists.

This was exactly Evola’s strategy after World War II. He wished to turn fascism into religion and have it act under a banner of “apoliteia”, pretending not to be a-political, while in fact being totally political. Like many American fundamentalists he wanted to subvert the Enlightenment and Rationalist values that give us science. Upton’s idea

²¹⁵ <http://www.chomsky.info/interviews/1990----.htm>

²¹⁶ Somewhere Upton claims that Schuon was full of Baraka or grace. Schuon had no “grace” at all, but was temperamentally mean, cold and incapable of sincerity. I never saw him smile and few ever did. Maude Murray was his lover for 15 years and she never saw him smile. Upton just makes up what he wants to see and pretends it is there.

of disengaged religion is likewise based on the erroneous idea that liturgy is not propaganda and that religion is not political.²¹⁷ Liturgies are propaganda--- that is to say, they are a form of social control or manipulation-. Religions impose their propaganda deep into the body and the mind through rites, yogas, songs, art, prayers and other means. They impose propaganda and irrational belief through a politics of the 'inner life' as it were,²¹⁸ and implant there irrationalities and allegiances that no one can question or measure. For instance, The Christian liturgy is founded on the fiction of transubstantiation. Those who accept this make-believe are lost to reason and live apart from reality. To the Eucharist is to deny both the Universal ideas of Plato or the Universal

²¹⁷ One of the best writers on the way in which religion sublimates, hides and obscures its political agendas is Russell McCutcheon. It is well to read him rather than proselytizer's like Arthur Versluis and Huston Smith. See his Manufacturing Religion, for instance, or his more recent books. McCutcheon contends that the study of religion as an historical category participates in a larger system of political domination and economic and cultural imperialism. He shows how the claims to make systems that supposedly reflect an imagined metaphysical basis of the "real" are shot through and through with political assumptions, class interests and prejudices. This is obvious, but the traditionalists do all they can to cover up their real views. For McCutcheon such categories as "religion" or "faith" as well as such opposing assumptions as spirit/politics, private/public, essence/manifestation are rhetorical tools that involve specific types of social engineering, helping to create a very specific sort of world. I agree with this view of religion, having seen myself how Traditionalists claim power on the basis of their ideology and hide their political repressiveness behind metaphysical rhetoric. McCutcheon points out that there really is no 'esoteric' core to the many religions and that such essentializations are a form of colonizing tendencies. I have been saying this for years, but it was good to read McCutcheon and hear him concur in such an exact and well researched body of work. He states for instance that "The fact that essentialist and generally de-historicizing strategies operate so widely as to be virtually transparent to the mass of scholars of religion is the key to understanding the way the field as a whole has avoided confronting the charges of extreme politics." There is no denying anymore that traditionalism is based on extremist politics....

²¹⁸ Robert Orsi notes that those who experience the "presence" of god angels or whatever are usually poor. He says "Experiences of presence are delusions; children are susceptible to scary stories; desperate people do whatever they need to do to get comfort or relief. Furthermore, such experiences are shaped by class, race, gender, and by power generally. If you're poor and lack access to good health care, you're going to turn to the saints. We know this about religion. Among the poor and the marginal, who are more likely to experience presence than the rich and powerful, presence serves fatalistically to endorse and sustain the status quo." Religions exploit needs and sufferings. Orsi wants a religious studies to be about the "power of non-existent objects" but this is just not possible. It is a pipe dream of his.
<http://www.theamericanscholar.org/when-2-2-5/>

Substance of Aristotle as well, and this was tantamount to a denial of the act of transubstantiation. The eucharist act of eating the wafer imitates cannibalism. As Rubin writes in her marvelous book on the history of the eucharist

“We know too little about the inner workings of minds to be able to assess the impact of the invocation of the taboo of eating human flesh, the fears and desires related to it. But what we can assert is by combining the most holy with the most aberrant/abhorrent- the routine workings of sacramental power- an image of the fullness of live-giving which dwells in the image of utmost transgression- a very powerful symbol was created, -” ²¹⁹

Symbols are not always symbols of something real. In the case of the Eucharist it is a fabrication that has to be with getting an ideology implanted in people’s minds and emotions. To assert that what you eat in communion does not become Christ is to say the Church is a liar and a fraud. Well, yes it is....

In the eucharist, in the act of eating the wafer, the Church conflates fears of eating human flesh and conflates that with a barely veiled sexual union, and a wish not to die, or rather to die in an ecstasy of physical disembodiment in the “passion”. The Eucharist is primarily about the physical assimilation, through eating, of knowledge and power and through that the church more or less comes to ‘own the souls’ of those who eat its products. By doing this it secures a kind of thoughtless obedience. That is part of the genius of religion, of course, but also their danger. The purpose of repetition of eating the Eucharist like that of prayers is to stop thought and force conformity of outlook and belief. Eating the eucharist is a meaningless act, which only takes on meaning by association with institutional suggestions. As William James

²¹⁹ Rubin, Muri, Corpus Christi, The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture. Cambridge University Press, 1991, p. 361

noted “prayer... “Is the very soul of religion” but of course prayer is self-deception. It posits dissociated fictional agents or objects that do not exist and convinces those praying that these objects are real, when they are not. James also observes that it may well prove that the “sphere of influence of prayer is subjective exclusively”.²²⁰ Here his conjecture is correct and the “soul of religion” is a deceit, a subjective phantasm. But he ends in denying the obvious, which is partly why I write this book, to correct his error.

Still on the subject of prayer, a mantra or repetition of a divine name is inculcated as a way of ritualizing social and mental control. Those who take the eucharist are allegedly saved and those who do not are allegedly damned. The truth is quite otherwise, but these illusions are foisted on believers. This is pure politics—“them versus us”---- as well as superstition. No one is damned or saved. The whole propagandistic sleight of hand of religion is convincing people that this nonsense is true: Religions try to assert that Christians are better than non-Christians are, or Moslems are better than “kefirs” (unbelievers), that Jews who eat off clean dishes are better than “Goyim” who eat off unclean dishes. Religions try to say that the religious are better than those who love science and freedom of thought. Religion is this propagandistic sleight of hand, this system of prejudice and mental manipulations. Religion does not have the credibility or truth of something like physics or evolution, proof of which is beyond a reasonable doubt. Such books as the Koran or Bible are political propaganda at their core: they are promotional texts, even archetypal PR, as it were. ²²¹Metaphysics is a systematic imposition of superstition. Pascal Boyer suggests that ritual, on a deeper level, is an effort to sublimate fear of predation. He suggests that humans are hardwired for

²²⁰ James Varieties Of Religious Experience, pg 454--455

²²¹ Pinker argues against the attempt to posit a God gene, in his speech “The Evolutionary Psychology of Religion: Does the Brain Have a ‘God Module?’”

this through evolution and religion has grown up to exploit this tendency. Ritual and prayer exists to try to create an antidote to “ the potential danger from contamination, predation, and social hazard.”²²² Prayer and ritual is a by-product of the need to feel unafraid, protected by ones parents or village. This is basically John Dewey’s argument that religion is about the need of security. Certainly the point of ritual is to cleanse a given person or group against the influence of outsiders and those thought to be dangerous, as well as to cement a mentality. Boyer elsewhere loosely compares rituals to obsessive-compulsive disorders (OCDs).²²³ There is truth in this and I have seen people in cults perform rituals and prayer for weeks, most of their free time every day and not get what they wanted, and still be undeterred and continue with the rituals. OCD indeed.

Steven Pinker describes the Bible as “a manual for rape, genocide, and the destruction of families...Religion has given us stonings, witch burnings, crusades, Inquisitions, jihads, fatwas, suicide bombers...and mothers who drown their children in the river,” Noam Chomsky has said, “The Bible is one of the most genocidal books in history” and the irrepressible Mark Twain would agree.²²⁴ Twain said that “[The Bible is] a mass of fables and traditions, mere mythology.” Exactly right. So is the Koran, Bhagavad Gita and other scriptures. The mind is what the brain does, not the “soul” which is a fiction, as non-existent as Santa Claus in the melting arctic.

Traditionalism gives its addicts a sense of their own exclusive and supreme worth, over and above all the “profane people”, as

²²² “Whence Collective Rituals? A Cultural Selection Model of Ritualized Behavior”

<http://artsci.wustl.edu/~pboyer/PBoyerHomeSite/articles/LienardBoyerAA.pdf>

²²³ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rWI3i2M0zl8>

²²⁴ In Judaism, in the books of Leviticus and Deuteronomy the Bible advocates stoning women for adultery and killing or beating children kids for misbehaving. The god of the Bible is a violent sadist who destroys whole towns because he doesn’t like a few people in it. The god of the Bible supports slavery. Even Jesus supported slavery.

Traditionalists disdainfully call everyone who is not in the various Traditionalist cults or cliques. The Traditionalists I have known, all of them ordinary folks who went to high schools or British or French or other schools, read a few books by Guenon or Schuon and think no one but himself or herself will ever be so eminent or full of grandiose esoteric truths. They strut and puff themselves up, imitate Schuon's hand writing and beard and think they are the elite. One or two books elevate them above the rest of humanity, they believe. These books are like a heroin shot of pride and arrogance. Schuon claimed in my hearing that most of the world's people, 'profane people' "deserve to be killed" because they are unbelievers. He thought his disciples deserved a special heaven all to themselves.²²⁵ That pride, that arrogant willingness to destroy others, is what Theo-Fascism is all about. Guenon created this form of religion as a means of escalating and inflaming political and spiritual discriminations and prejudices while putting himself and his followers on top of the imaginary celestial heap.

Charles Upton's rather bombastic books are slavishly derivative of Guenon and Schuon. If they were dilettantes and they were, Upton is a dilettante's apprentice. Like them he assumes himself to be to be superior to all politics, when actually politics oozes from his tomes with a pathological subjectivity. He suffers from the same apocalyptic arrogance and proneness to narcissistic inflation that characterizes other spiritual extremists, from George Bush to Rene Guenon. Politics is nominally a lesser realm in the Guenonian ideology — politics is merely the affairs of the temporal realm, he says, as if the fictional 'spiritual realm' were a real thing that he knows anything about. I have met Upton and his wife and I can tell you he has no inner track on the secrets of the universe. On the contrary, he merely parrots other people's ideas, and books he

²²⁵ The disciples of Schuon used to worry that any airplane or helicopter that flew over them was spying on them. God was evidently looking down on the things they were doing that they felt so paranoid about with approval. But helicopters presented them with a real and present danger.

has read, pretending to be a ‘spiritual’ authority when really he is just another poet, dreaming of worlds that do not exist to flatter his own vanity and hopefully gain fame the approval of others. Religion grows out of bogus authorities, not on the basics of evidence. Authority in religion is hypocrisy by definition. No one who claims anything about religion in a madrasah or a Schule, a theology school or a religious studies department is telling the truth and the more they pretend the bigger hypocrites they are. They are merely custodians of delusion, keepers of the flame of organized deceit.

In fact, Guenon’s metaphysical infinities, his eternal thoughts, his “beyond being” are all very ‘temporal’ creations used to ultimately fuel a politics of hate and prejudice, superiority and disdain, caste and delusions of grandeur. Guenon’s system of spirituality involves the use of traditional religions as a vehicle, and methods of invocatory prayer and metaphysical dreams of other worlds as means of realization. Guenon’s rhetorical claim to metaphysical unity and oneness in the midst of his “Intellect” is a self-magnifying mythic fantasy. His “shinning realm of the pure intellect” is neither shinning nor pure, but merely a self-delusional projection---a self-magnification of his paranoid subjectivity. In Schuon’s case, the “Shining Realm of the Pure Intellect”²²⁶ was often a cesspool

²²⁶ This is the title of a starry eyed and naive thesis written by Renaud Fabbri. Fabbri is typical cult follower of Schuon, unable to think for himself and full of mindless adulation for the cult leader. He says of Schuon that his cult was “destined to communicate the quintessence of all possible religion” which merely says that religion is delusional across the board and Schuon one of the worst of deluded men. He also says that Schuon must be more than a saint when he wonders if the category of “sainthood” adequately applies to the type of Gnostic spirituality “personified by Schuon.” . He goes on to imply Schuon is a “major avatara” or some nonsense like this, the point being of course that Fabbri is a special guy, since he devotes himself to this charlatan This is a typical example of the sort of cultish adulation that Schuon inspires in certain duped followers people--- I witness a lot of this in the Schuon cult and know its signature very well. Schuon required this adulation as part of membership in the group. With no proof Fabbri also lies about and slanders some unspecified person who exposed Schuon’s nudist primordial gatherings of imaginary crimes of embezzlement and lying. This attempt to slander witnesses against Schuon is in lock step with the Schuon cult who have been slandering people with these fictions for years to try to cover up for Schuon’s real crimes. The witnesses against Schuon told the truth about his gatherings, and the cult tries to cover this up with lies. See

hidden by cult obfuscators. Because of this fantasy, he and his followers think themselves to superior to all that is “worldly”. Of course this is pure hypocrisy. ²²⁷ Guenon’s claim to be beyond all politics is, in fact, an enormously self-inflated claim to define all politics— this is the ultimate political claim. Edward Said defines “worldliness” as agaisint the ethereal, escapist, otherworldly, make believe of the religions and the upper classes. This is correct. The condemnation of worldiness is “meant to be a rather bludgeon like term to enforce the location of practices back in the mundane, the quotidian, the secular” Whereas actual worldliness is oneself, nature, work. He is right here, to which I add, the otherworldly is fiction, fraud, pretend. The “world” is all there is, and those who pretend they have knowledge of other worlds are fooling themselves and others.

Guenon is a fraud. There is no “higher” more conceited or more absurd political claim, and it is a claim that dissimulates itself as if it were not such a claim and not political. His followers fall for this nonsense. Well, the fact is, Guenon did not study with charlatans like Papus (Gerard Encausse) and Blavatsky for nothing. He learned from them how to dress up lies as rhetoric.

One need only read a few of Guenon’s or Upton’s paragraphs to see that these men believe themselves to be the ultimate deciders of worth and truth, a position they adopt that is really repulsively arrogant. I happen to have met Charles Upton once and know he is an unassuming man on the outside,-- a humble, honorable man²²⁸-- but his books show

<http://etd.ohiolink.edu/view.cgi/Fabbri%20Renaud.pdf?miami1175881809>

²²⁷ This is quoted in Edward Said, *Criticism and Society*, by Abdirahman Hossein. Some of this can seen here:

<https://books.google.com/books?id=9hxG7UmGCJsC&pg=PA160&lpg=PA160&dq=edward+said+human+beings&source=bl&ots=-COWZzvlQW&sig=c3iYtDe281mjR93c46mvtSJeFis&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiAw-SPoPjVAhVL5YMKHee2DwUQ6AEIWD AJ#v=onepage&q=edward%20said%20human%20being&s&f=false>

²²⁸ Was Shakespeare being ironic in calling Brutus honorable? That is the usual interpretation. But maybe Caesar was indeed a tyrant as Brutus suggests and maybe the authoritarian rule that he

him as a right wing, neo-fascist Moslem, fixated on “evil” with an ego many miles high. Like Guenon, his idea of god is flaccid and empty but his idea of evil is rigorous, extensive and pregnant. He was a New Age hippie for some years before moving to the extreme right. Now he is a New Age theofascist (who hates left New Age socialists) and who denies he is new age and denies he is theofascist.²²⁹ He is obsessed with apocalyptic ideologies as was Guenon.²³⁰ Guenon was a man drunk in

represented was a form of theofascism. Did Brutus serve the common man in killing Caesar? Perhaps. Of course in this age where political assassinations is so often practiced by corrupt presidents and prime ministers, it is a morally questionable thing to advocate it. Power does indeed corrupt and those who would kill those who kill end in getting corrupted too. It is much better to put people on trial than to kill them. Osama Bin Laden should have been put on trial and not murdered by Obama.

²²⁹ For a flawed but very interesting account of New Age spirituality that is full of critical insight about cults, see:

Geoffrey D. Falk. Stripping the Gurus

<http://www.strippingthegurus.com/stgsamplechapters/aftertheordeal.asp>

The book begins

“Ramakrishna was a homoerotic pedophile.

His chief disciple, Vivekananda, visited brothels in India.

Krishnamurti carried on an affair for over twenty years with the wife of a close friend. Chögyam Trungpa drank himself into an early grave. One of Adi Da’s nine “wives” is a former Playboy centerfold. Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh sniffed laughing gas to get high. Andrew Cohen, guru and publisher of *What Is Enlightenment?* magazine, by his own reported admission sometimes feels “like a god.” There is more on Ananda Moyi Ma, Ken Wilber, Bhagwan Rajneesh, Satya Sai Baba, Andrew Cohen, Jim Jones, David Koresh, Paramahansa Yogananda, Aurobindo, Krisnamurti, Mother Teresa and many other wackos and lunatics, -- (and even Schuon gets a little discussion in this book of cults and cult leaders) It is a delightful expose of the most kooky madmen and women of the 20th century

<http://www.strippingthegurus.com/ebook/download.asp>

²³⁰ Apocalyptic fantasies are fictions designed to threaten and thus control minds and behaviors. They are based on impossible standards of correct behavior or arise out of political and economic inequalities as in cold war apocalyptic scenarios. In the Apocalypse of St. John for instance John is poisoned by his own lust for perfection. His otherworldly sanctity (as represented in the Gospel of John) erupts in a diseased and self-righteous hatred of the world. This malicious literary Apocalypse ends with the cultish threat that any man who questions these prophecies “God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book.” This form of spiritual blackmail is

his own self-importance, hiding behind a pose of a humble man leading a “simple life”.²³¹ Upton read a few books and now thinks himself the supreme authority on truth and righteousness. Guenon and Upton claim to speak from the height of “Truth” and their words are supposed to rain down on readers head like biblical manna from heaven. Actually they are just bullies who impose bogus views without evidence. Upton is claiming in his writings that Guenon, Schuon and perhaps himself are speaking by “divine right”, or because the holy spirit tells him. The subjective delusion of the ‘holy spirit’ is never questioned.²³² Like a

common in many religions and cults. This is the way of a mafia or an Inquisition. Indeed, threats of the end of the world are all about the abuse of power. Anyone promoting apocalyptic ideology is involved one way or another in a con game, a manner of blackmailing others, a creating fear through threats to get what they want. I cannot submit myself to anyone who needs to resort to blackmail to convince me. Indeed, both the Koran and the Bible are full of such threats and this is one reason to deny them as “holy books”. They employ psychological strategies that are offensive and should be opposed by anyone with any sense. St John and Muhammad wrote books that desire to destroy the world in the name of love, and then to seek to blackmail anyone who objects to this tyranny of thought. Such an approach makes St John and Muhammad beyond reason, indeed, what they try to do is it is reprehensible. I find Guenon and Upton to be underhanded and scurrilous writers for the same reason.

²³¹ The French biography of Guenon is titled the Simple Life of Rene Guenon, trying to pose him as a St Francis like figure, But Guenon’s life had nothing simple about it. The Traditionalists often pose themselves in this sort of way; hoping followers will buy the pretense. Schuon has written a whole article on ‘holy childhood’ (“Reflections on Naïveté”) and often mentions the subject in other articles. Schuon certainly did not love actual children, the only child Schuon has shown evidence of loving is the child in himself. Schuon created childish cartoons and had a toy box, this was one of the “most esoteric parts of him” one of his wives told me. Schuon's toy-box is in his "treasure room" and is full of stuffed animals which he sometimes plays with. He had collections of marbles and other objects that a celestial child might have (little golden daggers, clear marbles, dolls, etc.,) The collection of toy animals is spread out across the table in the kitchen to greet him for breakfast Christmas. All this might be cute until one realizes that this man invited children to adult sexualized gatherings. His interest in naïveté was part of psychopathic psyche.

²³² The new testament even condemns anyone who questions the holy spirit, “And anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but to him who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven,” (Luke 12:10, Matthew 12:31, Mark 3:29). This is an in an obvious effort to create psychological black mail and force allegiance to the subjectivist and delusory nature of religion. The ‘mystery’ of the subject must be identified with an institutional construction. The holy spirit is really just a misunderstanding of one’s own life force or feeling of existence. The effort to make what is our very lives as if it were owned by a church is horrendous.

Baptist preacher seething over the existence of evil, Guenon claimed to have been initiated into the divine mysteries by secret masters. No evidence is given. He claimed that god speaks out of him directly and that all politics must derive from this “truth”. He claimed to possess the secret of all orthodoxies. This claim to speak out of or in the interests of the “absolute” is theofascism itself.

In fact, Guenon was obsessed with the idea of evil from an early age. One of his first pieces of writing was a poem about Satan, and notes for a novel in which he would gain tremendous spiritual powers. Guenon and Upton are writing fantasy novels presented as if they were true, rather like today’s far-right Christian novelists. Like The Christian apocalyptic novelists, Upton and Guenon are obsessed with branding all they do not like with the term “evil”, which is basically a political term in their usage.²³³ Like many religious people, their prime aim is to control

²³³ Evil per se, does not exist. I discussed the ideology of evil in The Empire of the Intellect, as follows:

”The concept of evil, like the god concept which it compliments, is an essentialization, an abstraction, a fiction extrapolated from experiences and reactions to real or imagined events. The concept of evil, like that of god, has a history and the history of the use of the concept of evil indicates that the concept is a psycho-social and mythological generalization whose purpose is to legitimize one form of knowledge/power while stigmatizing another. Evil is not a concrete existing event or force, as is power, murderousness, war or hate: evil is a mythological or political construct, whereas murder or the effort to exterminate is a fact. The concept of evil is an orchestrating mechanism which justifies actions. It is an element in a system of knowledge and power. The Nazis called the Jews 'evil' and the holocaust resulted in the deaths of 6 million Jews: 30-80 million Native Americans died in the Conquest yet the Native Americans were considered 'evil' savages lacking in civilization by the Europeans; or 4 million Vietnamese were killed in the American invasion of Vietnam to stop the 'evil' of "communism". The term evil is meaningless, or rather it hides an agenda of power and knowledge or politics. Continuing to refer to a metaphysical existence of evil merely serves to help perpetuate the illusions of beneficence and supremacy that have accompanied atrocities. Moreover, the concept of evil is a hindrance to talking about the history of atrocities. As Chomsky has pointed out, the US propaganda system “consistently portrays people abused in enemy states as worthy victims, whereas those treated with equal or greater severity by its own government will be unworthy. The evidence of worth may be read from the extent and character of attention and indignation”.

behavior. The Traditionalists play on the borderline between religion, fiction and politics and they do so as part of an effort to claim global authority on the basis of all religions and not just local authority based on one religion. This claim, is absurd, of course, and can only be sustained within a small and well policed, cultish world, where disciples, cult members and true believers alone are allowed to penetrate.²³⁴ The claim to possess the ultimate truth to which all others must submit is a claim to political and social power, however ridiculous it may be. This is the claim that Guenon made, and it is what makes Guenon sympathetic to neo-fascists and orthodox Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus and Christians alike. Like Guenon, Upton reduces the world into a Manichaeian dualism. For Upton, as for Guenon, there is the myth of the “Antichrist” set against the esoteric Truth represented by Guenon and his followers, in an absurd battle of modernism against tradition; “Them versus Us”.²³⁵

²³⁴ I’ve written about the whole issue of secrecy and lying and its relation to cover up and corruption inside the Schuon cult elsewhere. See also Hugh Urban’s writing on the role of secrecy inside Tantric Buddhist cults and sects in India, where he shows how secrecy in Tantric cults served a political agenda—specifically how the cult of Kali was actually about Hindu Nationalism. Kali was also used to hide unethical or illegal behavior. See his Tantra: Sex, Secrecy, Politics and Power. He also wrote an interesting study of how the apocalyptic ideas of George Bush influence his power plays. The essay is called “America, “Left Behind”” Bush, the Neo-cons and Evangelical Christian Fiction. Urban chronicles the relation of evangelical preacher Tim LaHaye and fiction novelist Jerry Jenkins whose books advocate a very “theofascist” message, though Urban is rather weak in drawing inferences from his own findings. Scott Atran seems to think that religious lying and fabrication has a virtuous aspect since it gives people hope and deludes them into a patina of social harmony. Such a false harmony serves no one really.

²³⁵ This paranoid “Them versus Us” mentality can be seen in Charles Upton’s rather ridiculous book the System of the Anti-Christ, when he says, for instance, that Traditionalist “groups and individuals who hold to this doctrine have been subjected to the immense degree of psychic pressure which observers on the outskirts of the Traditionalist School, such as myself, cannot fail to note. It is reasonable to conjecture that Antichrist would like nothing better than to subvert and discredit the Traditionalists....” (pg 490) This is self-fulfilling fiction where the author makes up falsehoods and then invents a boogiemane to fan the flame of his victim hood and create notoriety. Notoriety is what Upton is all about. The traditionalists have already discredited themselves and it does not take a fictional anti-Christ to accomplish the restoration of traditionalism to legitimacy. Upton is here claiming that his little formula of truth, the Schuonian ideology of the “transcendent unity of the religions” is under huge pressure because they are more or less lonely saints keeping the world safe against the

All the Traditionalists, Guenon, Schuon and others create their systems of thought based on a radical extension of the “Them versus Us”, idea. Christ’s statement, quoted earlier, “he that is not with me is against me”, is a paranoid statement meant to declare a war against critics.

Traditionalism, like many religions or cults is systems of moral blackmail. Similar threats throughout the Koran become the bedrock of the Traditionalist movement, fueling their certainty in their superiority--- a superiority that does not exist except in the minds of brainwashed followers. In their minds, the entire world reduces to a paranoid and poisonous war between good and evil, spirit and matter, quality and quantity. For the Guenonians, metal objects ooze evil influences, coins are full of harmful Satanist forces and archeological sites are centers of harmful effluents coming from evil worlds. For Guenon the entire world is a “great wall” and evil is seeping through the cracks or “fissures” in the wall like bad thoughts infecting the mind of a schizophrenic serial killer. Only the spiritual fascist, the ‘avatara’ will triumph in the end, armed like Nazi Warriors, like Siegfried, like Saint George and the dragon, like the Templars, like Mussolini, or like Schuon claiming to be the final prophet at the end of time, will survive the cataclysm. For Traditionalists, these delusional figures of myth and fantasy are real.

I use this example of Charles Upton’s fake claim to be apolitical on the neo-fascist website Integral Tradition to illustrate how the

mythical “anti-Christ”. What a make believe world of fictions Upton is living in!! This video-game view of history, or rather this history as a sort of Star Wars movie, is childish, bombastic and paranoid. Such paranoid nonsense has the purpose of making those in these groups feel important and elite. The truth is otherwise. The fate of the world has nothing to do with what the Traditionalists do or do not think. They are irrelevant. It is a trivial school of thinkers who have little influence in the wider world. The Traditionalists that I have known are hardly suffering--- Schuon’s followers were and probably still are spiritual materialists, upper middle class, live in expensive houses, go to nudist gatherings, swap wives, overdress in expensive Hindu and Moslem clothes and spend a lot of time going to expensive restaurants and thus suffer little pressure at all about anything. Upton too is indulging a kind of shopping mall spirituality, using multiple and stereotyped religions to inflate his imagination to a maximum degree of narcissist expansion.

Traditionalists can be extraordinarily pretentious. However, putting the penchant of many Traditionalists for self-delusion aside, the fact is that from its inception among figures such as Joseph De Maistre or Rene Guenon, the entire Traditionalist movement was fundamentally political. Their metaphysical claim to represent and promulgate the “fundamental”, “quintessential”, “magisterial” essence of “the real”, to use their own inflated language, was itself a grandiose political claim. They wanted to turn back the good done by the Enlightenment and the Renaissance and go back to the good old days of the Caste system, the Inquisition, the aristocracy, military backed priesthood and vast inequity, inequality and hierarchy.

b. Romanticism and the Origins of Fascism

(On Eliade, Jung, Heidegger and Campbell and others)

(Note: this is one of several essays that trace the history of a certain ideology, in this case, fairly recent history. Tracing how ideologies were created after the erosion of the major religions is an interesting tack and the evidence suggests that religion as indeed replaced by various power systems, from Nazism, Marxism, Free-enterprise capitalism to the Eurozone. Romanticism had a great deal to do with preserving aspects of far right religious ideology and the supremacy of human subjectivity, itself and ideology, which gave us speciesism. Other essays echo this concern such as the one on Nietzsche or the ones in the last book on Roman and Greek history or Christianity’s horrible suppression of science, discussed in.)

Bertrand Russell, in his History of Philosophy, devotes a large part of a chapter to show that Romanticism led to fascism. He specifically

connects the poetry of Byron to some of the ideas that led to Hitler and the Third Reich. This is quite accurate. Romanticism led up to reactionary political systems of the 20th century. Guenon, Schuon, and Evola share the same far right category as reactionaries like Mircea Eliade, Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, Jung and Heidegger. There are arguments and counter arguments for and against the connection of many of these Romantic thinkers the extreme right. It is a thriving area to consider the ties of these people to the fascist movements of the 20th century. With the passage of time, it becomes clearer that all these men are far-right in their basic thought, in deep and incontestable ways. To grasp the relation of these people to the larger category of Romanticism is a little harder.

The central Romantic ideas and forms of imagination were secularized versions of traditional theological concepts, imagery, and design. There is a slow change in romantic thought from the Middle Ages to the rise of totalitarian regimes exemplified in Byron and Hegel. As Russell point out, Byron and Hegel helped create or prefigured later movements in Nazism and Stalinism. Guenon and Schuon trace back to romantic and occult thought prior to the development of these totalistic regimes. They are, as it were, born of the same river. Figures like Madame Blavatsky, Rudolf Steiner, Yeats, Pound, Wagner, Stravinsky, Kandinsky and Rilke were concerned with ecstatic states and in which they claimed a sort of inner eternity, “eternity” here being an elitist magnified fiction. They thought they were creating a new form of consciousness to ‘save’ the West from what they saw as a process of spiritual decay. Pound for instance, claimed he felt a ‘light from Eleusis’ or the ‘gnosis’ of the Eleusinian mysteries. Schuon claimed this too. What they felt of course, was their own arrogance and need of power. This aristocratic escapism has a curiously reactionary quality to it, even if they were not out and out fascist as most of these men were not. This is a very murky realm, as Bertrand Russell indicates. The “gnostic”

pretensions of the romantics imply there might be a reality to the idea of “gnosis”. I do not think there is in fact. It is merely subjective elation gone amuck. Goya defined the process of magnification very well in his great Caprichos #52:

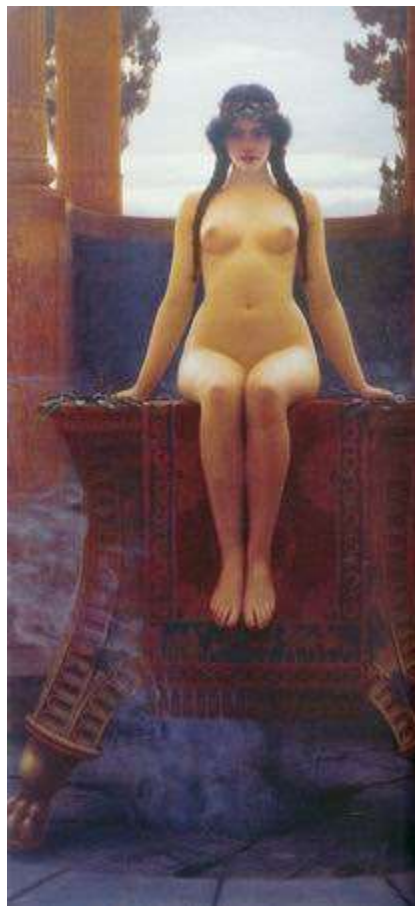


“What a tailor can do”

In this print a crowd of people bow down to a sheet put over a tree as if were a god. The title is “what a tailor can do”. Religions are good at doing

just this, creating a fake image for people to worship, myths and holy books, prayers and vestments to exalt and magnify priests and churches. This process of glorification of fictions is endless and constitutes of great deal of what religions actually do, from sermons, to dances, art to architecture on even the Summa Theologica.

The idea of gnosis traces very far, really back to before the Delphic Oracle and Pythian Sybil, an old woman hired for the deed, who was intoxicated by the gaseous vapors, probably ethylene, and the sibyl would fall into a trance, allowing “Apollo to possess her spirit”, or so the myth proclaimed. This was another form of fictional magnification.



The Delphic Oracle
A 19th century fantasy by

What this ideology of gnosis comes from is a mistaken perception that the human mind is somehow separate from the body. The disembodied “spirit” is just this deluded and bubble-like subjectivity detached from the actual facts of existence. It was only 500 years ago that people started grasping elementary things about how the body/brain works. Evolution made us rather dense when it comes to our own bodies. Religion deserves much blame for preventing inquiry about this. Much of what goes on in us, physically is largely unknown to us. Most of the processes that go on in human and animal bodies are autonomic. This fact explains why people have such weird and false ideas about the importance of human subjectivity and create bizarre and largely false notions of Chakras, Galen’s “Humors”, or the Chinese notions of Chi (Qi) meridians or Channels. These superstitious ideas dominated medicine for millennia. Actually science has proven all of that wrong and work is now underway to understand the brain and how it works inside the body, and not separate from it.

The ‘holy spirit’ of gnosis is really just this sort of emotional or subjective fantasy and intoxication, inspired by gases, drugs or auto-suggestion. This is what becomes central in romantic thought, the presumed divinity of the subject.

But for my purposes here let’s trace gnosis back to Valentinus, Basilides, and the “heretical” sects, such as the Donatists, that so angered Augustine that he thought they should all be killed. One of Augustine’s nicknames is the “Hammer of the Donatists”. Indeed, Augustine is an early example of Theofascism. He sets up a dichotomy of “them verses us”, Christians verses heretics, and then oppresses and

kills people in the name of a fictional god. For Augustine God is the “bestower of all power” and since the Church has “the authority of the mysteries” in its rituals, it is the supreme power.²³⁶ Of course, the reality is that there is no authority into those rituals, they are made to believe, so the power of the Church must be imposed by force, which is what has happened over several thousand years from the murder of the Donatists to the Inquisition to George Bush’s declaration of holy war against Moslem nations.

But the Christian hatred of gnosticism is rather arbitrary and represents the drive of early Christians to eliminate oppositional groups. Indeed, the term ‘gnosticism’ is problematical and ultimately meaningless. I mean by this that though the word means knowledge, the sort of thing that gnosticism actually refers to is not knowledge at all, but myth and fairy tales of union with a god who does not exist, the pleroma, and the journey to the beyond. Moreover, because the concept of gnosticism is used to describe too many different things it really refers to nothing meaningful. It is used to describe what the Templars claimed to possess--- but did not--- to Carl Jung’s mysticism, to the cults of the Black Virgin, legend of the Grail, and systems of knowledge from the Carpocratians to Marx, Blake and Nietzsche. Even science is referred to as “gnostic” by Eric Voegelin. There is really nothing that ties these very different things together other than a dreamy proneness to utopian, backward, mythical or imaginary beliefs.

In most cases “gnosticism” has been formulated as a reaction to dominant European powers, but often it joins these same powers in sects and secret societies. But in its various forms, gnosticism remains a will to power through false knowledge. Insofar as the term can have any meaning, Christianity is also gnostic religion, in the sense that it

²³⁶ [Essential Augustine](#) page 61 check ref

“assumes man’s alienation in the cosmos” ,²³⁷--- an alienation that can only be reversed through violence and social control. The notion that people are “alienated” from the entire cosmos is rather ridiculous and if anything is the result of religion itself, which radically separates people from nature. But then all the major religions are ‘gnostic’ in the sense that they all assume human alienation from the cosmos. This is precisely what is at issue with religion in this book and why I am opposing it. The gnostic wants to transcend and overcome the human state, which he thinks is low and unworthy. He hates evolution and science and wants to join a mysterious beloved beyond who is not there. But this is true of all the religions, more or less. That is exactly what is wrong with religion. All that matters is our ‘cosmos, our earth and we and all the other beings on it. We are only aliens from this if we alienate ourselves.

Should one call all the religions gnostic? Some do this and claim that the “esoteric”—namely the elitist and secret part of religions is ‘gnostic’. But then where does this stop? Nietzsche saw himself as a knower or a gnostic in that he thought he recreated himself out of the ashes of dead religion. Foucault wants to recreate himself as a “total innovation”—which is a totally Nietzschean project. Foucault also has an apocalyptic narcissism that recalls Foucault. Marx is also a gnostic in this sense, except that his concern is not merely personal transformation, as in Foucault, but totalistic social transformation. Marx is a religious figure. Anyone who has long experience of watching a Marxist thinker as I do, knows that Marxism is a religion with many cult like attributes. Stalinism is a form of gnostic utopianism, very much like the Catholic Church without its god.

One could perhaps speak of a gnosticism of the right and of the left. However, there is no clear dividing line. Schelling, Von Baader, De Maistre, Shelley, Coleridge, Novalis, Robespierre, Hegel, Jung, Guenon,

²³⁷ Voegelin’s definition of gnosticism

Lanz von Liebenfels, Wagner, Rilke, Pound, Guenon, Schuon, Jean Borella, Wolfgang Smith, Arthur Versluis ²³⁸ have all been considered 'gnostics'. However, what ties them together is actually a concern to advance an imaginary system of knowledge in view of gaining some sort of social power.

The word "gnosis" is Greek for 'knowledge'. M.H. Abrams writes:

"in romantic [or gnostic] thought, the mind of man confronts the old heaven and the old earth and possesses within itself the power to transform them into a new heaven and a new earth by means of a total revolution in consciousness". (Abrams. *Natural Supernaturalism* pg.334)

In short, for Abrams, history is merely an alteration of mental fictions. Understood in the widest sense, Christian symbolism aside, this 'gnostic' drive for total transformation is as much a part of Christ and Descartes as of Mao, Newton, Plato, Confucius and William Blake. Einstein, with his philosophy of hating the personal and the earthly in favor of the mathematical and otherworldly is a Gnostic when he does that. That is his personal belief system; his science of relativity is independent of this. Hinduism is gnostic in the sense of its radical hatred of the actual and its

²³⁸ Arthur Versluis tries to define gnosis rather narrowly and from a proselytizing and "spiritual" point of view based in a self-interest fails. . "Gnosis" is basically a system of esoteric religious fictions that seeks unity with an imaginary "non-dual" "principle, such as Brahma or god. The Advaitic formula "Atma is Brahma" is a 'gnostic' formula which means that an individual joins himself in his or her imagination to an imaginal construction that is 'god', "void", Jesus or the divine name or whatever—it could be anything. This is a form of imaginary or "virtual" self-magnification and is properly a psychological inflation, not an objective accomplishment. The process of gaining this "knowledge" which really isn't knowledge at all but a sort of imposture—involves the devaluing of the cosmos, since one "transcends the world" and seeks union with what one is not. One seeks union with what does not exist and in so doing denigrates all that does exist. Mystical "Gnosis" is thus a destructive thing, not a positive thing. The world become Maya or the "ten thousand things", as is stated in Hindu or Taoist thought. Gnosis devalues earth and the cosmos in favor of non-existence. Gnosis or esoterism is merely a new attempt to recreate religion in the modern age, using the same of tired fictions. Esoteric gnosis is just a new form of metaphysical sleight of hand. It turns reality into an imaginary construction

embrace of the imaginary and mythic “Self” or Atma. The romantic ideology of Nazis like Goering and Himmler is also gnostic. This is confusing.

What ties all these thinkers, poets, scientists and political leaders together is not gnosticism but the will to power through a variety of different kinds of fake or pretend systems of knowledge. Gnostics is a delusion of will, or fake ontology of the spiritual. What is called gnosticism appears to be little more than the romantic oppositional aspirations of a few poets and leaders of sects. It also appears to be present in the major religions. What it really is a vector in a power play. Gnosticism or “esoterism”, the two terms being roughly synonymous, is a widely various attempt to theorize about and seize and maintain power through erecting fictions. It is not merely a second or forth century heretical sect, defined as such by the Christians who hated them. Gnosticism is a subjective sate of spiritual delusion which occurs in many places times and individuals.

But though this definition has some merit, it is misleading, because it is too wide, diffuse and insufficiently descriptive.. So I state here that I do not think that the idea of gnosticism or gnosis has any real value at all. Like the category “esoteric” it is really a trumped up term to repackge religious mystifications and fictions for the 20th and 21st centuries . It is a meaningless term that is used by proselytizers and careerists who pretend to be talking about something real, where really they are making claims to know things they don’t know at all. So I will use the word or concept occasionally because it arises so often.²³⁹ But

²³⁹ I saw this phony knowledge fall apart clearly in various traditionalists. Schuon and R. Coomaraswamy presented themselves to me as gnostics, but I discovered at last that all that was pretense and false posing. In each case I saw the mask come off and their real self was really just a grasping human being pretending to be something they were not. Their tragic pretense made them intolerably at close quarters. Form a distance they might seem wise of good, but up close they were pretenders and weak. In all three cases I felt pity for them, but could not express it to them because they could not take off the masks they wore, unlike the Wizard of OZ, who

when I use such terms I am seeking to explain that ‘gnosis’ is not something real but rather a cloak for competing systems of ‘knowledge’ and power.

So gnosis or spiritual claims are a kind of dangerous romantic fiction that tries to insinuate itself into the mind and social fabric. So, how does gnosis become theofascism? There are various peripheral figures to the Traditionalist movement who demonstrate Bertrand Russell’s point that romanticism and fascism have clear links. Mircea Eliade²⁴⁰, for instance, supported the Romanian Iron-Guard, another far right anti-Semitic fascist organization with ties to orthodox religious ideology. Its leader was Corneliu Codreanu, a religious mystic who aimed at a spiritual resurrection for the Romanian nation. He killed many people. Mircea Eliade’s relation to Romanian fascism, the Iron Guard and anti-Semitism are well researched and undeniable. Eliade was important to the academic study of religion for years and the academy that he influenced still continues to try to ignore or minimize his relation to fascism. Because of Eliade and others aspects of theofascism survive uncriticized in religious studies departments of today’s universities. Eliade was also deeply influenced by Traditionalism and by Guenon, indeed, his interest in them occurs at them at the same time as he was attracted to the anti-Semite and fascist Corneliu Codreanu, Corneliu Codreanu and the Iron Guard. Evola had been attracted to the same man and for similar reasons. Eliade was a very secretive man and hid the fact that both Evola, Codreanu and Guenon

becomes humble when his mask is uncovered, as I uncovered Smith’s Coomaraswamy’s and Schuon’s.

²⁴⁰ In 1938, Eliade was arrested for being a member of the Iron Guard. He was on the parliamentary lists of the Iron Guard for the December 1937 elections. He held public speeches and participated in various rallies all across Romania, all of them very well documented. He was a virulent racist and propagandist for hate and murder

were central to his development. He corresponded with Evola and met him several times. Sedgwick says that “Eliade’s general model of human religiosity in effect was the Perennial Philosophy dressed up in secular clothes.” But Sedgwick’s fudges considerably on what was under Eliade’s clothes.²⁴¹ Sedgwick goes to some length to try to excuse Eliade. The theofascism²⁴² of Eliade was really quite extreme. Eliade wrote in his journals In 1936, that

“to me, it is a matter of complete indifference whether Mussolini is or is not a tyrant. Only one thing interests me: that this man has transformed Italy in fifteen years, turning a third-rate country into one of the world powers of today.” He also writes that “We know of several tyrants who have transformed stupefied countries into powerful states: Caesar, Augustus, and Mussolini.”

Eliade’s love of “mythological thinking” made Eliade, as well as Jung and Campbell, “essentialist” writers, which means he tends to stereotype, over generalize and pronounce in a far right manner. Eliade’s fascist politics discredits his foundational methodologies and theories as a

²⁴¹ Sedgwick’s discussion of Eliade is interesting because it shows some of the dilemmas Sedgwick faced in himself writing this book, Against the Modern World.. For instance, he writes that Eliade’s more or less lied about the deep influence Guenon had on him and did so because in order to “make a career as an academic he could not admit a debt to authors who were not—at least in academic terms—serious.” Pg. 112. “Eliade was irritated that Guenon was so anti-western and polemical—that is--- political--- and it is clear that this is Sedgwick’s irritation too. Sedgwick seems to excuse Eliade’s ties to fascism as some kind of justification for his own rather weak attraction and repulsion for traditionalism. Sedgwick can’t admit he is very much like Eliade, a sort of confused duplicitous character caught between spiritual fascism and academic careerism. I suspect Sedgwick invented to whole category of “soft traditionalism”—which its suggestion of “soft fascism”--- in order to put Eliade in it and exempt himself as well from “hard traditionalism”. Hence his book ends with an effort to justify the academic who is caught in postmodern rejection of science, yet who is not quite able to join in on Guenon’s version of theofascism.

²⁴² “There are a great many revolutionary impulses that have been waiting for thousands of years to be put into practice. That is why the Son of Man descended: to teach us permanent revolution.” All these quotes form Happy Guilt.: Source: New Republic, 8/5/91, Vol. 205 Issue 6, p27, 10p Author(s): Manea, N.; Bley-Vroman, A.

scholar of religion, or at the very least they indicate the reactionary and theofascist nature of a lot of the work that has been doing in universities on religion. Eliade is criticized in the writings of Ivan Strenski, Stephen Wasserstrom, Daniel Dubuisson and Russell McCutcheon, who explain his relation to fascism.

The writings of Bryan Rennie, on the other hand, who is the advisor for Mark Sedgwick's book on Guenon, which has many pages about Eliade, seek to apologize for Eliade's fascism in a similar way that many scholars try to deny Heidegger's direct connections to the Nazis.²⁴³ Apologists for a figure like Eliade appear to be mostly scholars who wish to sanitize or justify their own profession, such as Sedgwick. To look at Eliade's too closely is to bring the whole enterprise of academic religious study into question, --- as it should be under question. Steven Wasserstrom suggests that Eliade de-emphasized law, ritual, and social history in the study of religion and thus banished historical analysis and morality. This means that questions of the bogus origins of most religions or the religious abuse of power just don't get often discussed. Instead, like William James, he extolled the role of myth and mysticism, thus making religion a purely subjective phenomena. Eliade had disdain for an empirical-historical method of investigating religion. This makes sense if you want to keep delusions alive into the 21st century and this is what Eliade did. His disciples are basically apologists for delusion.

Many religious studies professors are advocates of a Eliadean concept of religion or various religions. There are many reasons that this is objectionable. Professors should not ambiguously pose as divines,

²⁴³ See also Stephen Wasserstrom's Religion after Religion for a discussion of the quasi-fascism of Henry Corbin, Eliade and others. Wasserstrom says that "While I would not claim that Corbin was fascist, I am saying that he cannot be understood historically unless he is seen in light of such contemporaneous themes in fascist thought" (155). This is exactly what one would expect, given that the same is true of Schuon, Guenon, Lings and, in fact, most conservative religious movements since 1945. The real question is not if this is so, but why this is so, This book is part of an answer. As I show in the book the question has to do with the far right character of romantic and irrationalist thought, from Plato to Heidegger and beyond to today's "gnostic poets".

priests or holy men, as Huston Smith or Schuon's follower James Cutzinger has tried to do, for instance. Huston Smith and Mircea Eliade both had secret alliances to far right traditionalists like Schuon or Guenon. In any case, the importance of figures like these to the religious studies profession, it is appropriate to question the validity of that profession as a whole.

Michel Valsan, student of Eliade and one of Guenon's main followers, as well as a disciple of Schuon at one time, also had a fascination with this The Iron Guard organization, according to Marcel Clavelle, who wrote a chronicle about Guenon's life. Sedgwick mentions this too.²⁴⁴ Every major disciple or follower of Guenon, advocates far-right ideology, was a Nazi, fascist or is somehow a participant in far-right organizations of some kind, some leaning toward fascism, some toward a reactionary religious monarchism, or far-right Catholic, Moslems or Masonic organizations. The far-right of the 1920's and 30's which created and sustained Guenon also created and sustained these other thinkers. Exactly how much they individually supported fascism is debatable in each case, but it appears that the weight of evidence shows that they were all more of less promoters and supporters of the far-right of the period, one of the most destructive examples of death and murder in human history. None of these men were ever honest or apologetic for their relationship to the far-right, indeed, they all excuse it and justify it, while trying to avoid discovery of further involvements. They all are prone to dissimulate their actual interests and allegiances. Current traditionalists, Eliadeans and many religious studies people tend to the far right as well.

There are also those who bear a close resemblance to Traditionalism but who are not part of it. Some of these men, are roundly despised by

²⁴⁴ Sedgwick implies this in Against the Modern World pgs. 112-115 and 136.

the traditionalists, who consider them part of the “counter initiation” or new age parodies. But actually figures like Carl Jung , Martin Heidegger, Joseph Campbell, T.S. Eliot, and Ezra Pound are close to Traditionalism in general outlook, and in many cases believe the same things. As a young man in art school, I first read Jung, Eliot, Pound and Campbell and reading these men led me naturally to read some of the traditionalists. There is a visceral continuity.

I read Jung because of his idea of “active imagination” which interested me as an artist for obvious reasons. I was also early enamored of Coleridge, Shelley, Poe and the romantics. I was terribly excited by Jung and gobbled up much of what I could read by him. Particularly his books Aion and Mysterium Conjunctionis, for his essay on Job and his interest in Alchemy as a psychological process. Jung sought to integrate subconscious things back into consciousness. I thought there was truth in this until I realized that he was resurrecting dead systems of knowledge like Alchemy as a way of resurrecting a deeply backward and reactionary way of thinking that will bring neither “wholeness” or good. When a writer like Geoffrey Falk²⁴⁵ writes that he sees through science and “ that consciousness is the fundamental reality at the basis of all creation”, he is merely uttering a delusional state. Falk thinks that Ramakrishna’s pedophilia and Hitler’s megalomania could never negate their ‘true realization’, if they had it. “Spiritual Enlightenment” is pure fiction. What Falk cannot grasp is that this idea rests on a very pernicious misunderstanding. The notion of ““ Spiritual Enlightenment””, “realization” or ultimate awareness or “consciousness” is an utter fiction. These people have nothing others do not have other than charisma, delusions of grandeur and acting skills. Their moral repugnance is not a symptom of “realization”--- which doesn’t exist--- but a fact of their

²⁴⁵ http://www.geoffreyfalk.com/books/The_Science_of_the_Soul.pdf

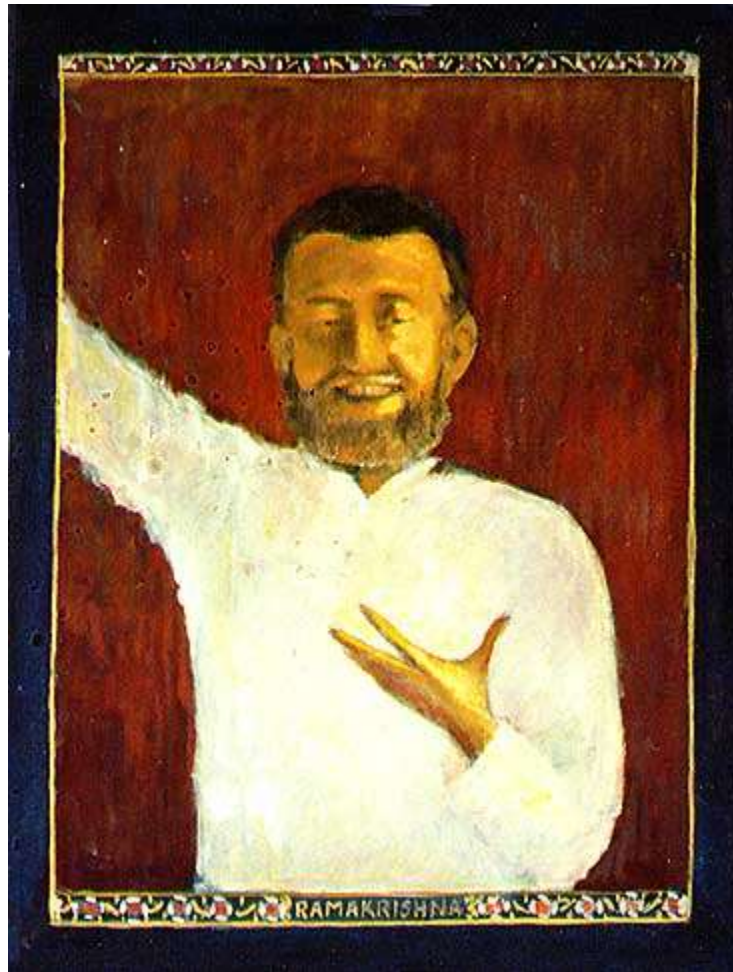
see intro

delusional and psychopathic condition. I could see in a daily and concrete way that Schuon had no “realization”, he just had the ability to create the illusion of it, the pretense to it and all the rest was left up to his gullible followers to create myths about it. Most everyone except the very sick among humans and animals have consciousness. But the magnification of consciousness into a supreme state is really just a narcissistic projection of wellbeing into a delusional transcendence.

This is true of every spiritual pretender I have met. I am sure it is true of Muhammad and Christ and all the other probably fictive originators of the religions. The illusion of an ‘eternal consciousness’ is projected onto the fiction of Christ or Buddha. The historical progression of charlatans, frauds, cult leaders, greedy popes, corrupt priests who become ‘saints’ and pretenders with a beatific smiles proves this. The notion of a supreme consciousness that is everywhere in the universe is just another god fiction, and not a very interesting one. The facts of consciousness are much more mundane and ordinary and “witnessing awareness” is really just self-hypnotized mirroring.²⁴⁶ Like the Sufi’s , or Ramakrishna,

²⁴⁶ Falk tries to claim that

“One could, in all seriousness, be the greatest living Realizer, and still be a pedophile, rapist or murderer. ...Conversely, no crime or misbehavior, no matter how heinous, perpetrated by such a great “sage,” could do anything to disprove his or her claimed realization. Thus, Ramakrishna’s pedophilia, for example, “only shows how difficult it is for people afflicted with that orientation to grow past it,” and says nothing about his realization: He was still “indubitably” a “great sage.” Indeed, his behaviors may even be used to validate one’s own comparable *sadhana*. (As to why Sai Baba’s alleged pedophilia would not be equally tolerable, given his fully comparable claims to divinity: it basically depends on whom you started out naïvely believing to be “authentic” in the sagely arena.) The likes of Da, too, even given all of his alleged abuses, could still be Self-realized, just “patterned by partying behaviors.”Hell, you could be Jack the Ripper, attain to non-dual awareness, and go right on ripping. You could be Adolf Hitler himself, not merely “mystically awakened” but non-dually enlightened, and it wouldn’t affect your actions one damned bit. “



Jung was wrapped up in the trance like irrationality of dreams, trying to make something of the mayhem. The chaos of dreams is easily systematized to fit any made up ideology that one likes. Transcendental consciousness is not a supreme state but merely an excess of inner self-

This is the conclusion of a moral idiot and shows again that the amoral consciousness of mystics is really just license to create a fictional world in which narcissistic psycho-pathology reigns supreme. William James' view of consciousness as subjective illumination is again shown to be a charade of excessive self-projection.

mirroring obsession with mind and emotion. As you can see in the picture of Ramakrishna I did many year ago, done from a photo of him in one of his excessive trance states. He was in a delusional state of the very sort that James thinks is a scientific condition, but really is just an example of visionary subjectivity as advertising. It is no more important than any other extreme state, such as extreme anger or sexual pleasure, jealousy or greed. Many mystics have used high subjective states as an excuse for amoral or immoral actions, not only in Zen Buddhism but in Krishna and Arjuna, Oppenheimer, Himmler and many others.

Jung was likewise enamored of what Freud rightly called “the black tide of mud” of occult mysticism. Getting out of the black tide is no easy matter.²⁴⁷ Even one of the critics of religion, Sam Harris, stumbles over the issue of mysticism and mystics and their tendency to be immoral. The problem was already discussed in William James. James < James rightly states that “Mystical states indeed wield no authority due simply to their being mystical states” since they are inherently delusional. But he is wrong to suggest that “It must always remain an open question whether mystical states may not possibly be such superior points of view, windows through which the mind looks out upon a more extensive and inclusive world.” I have believed at various points during my religion period that I “saw through the veil”, or lying under a tree, I believed the universe opened up into me. ²⁴⁸ The notion of a “separate

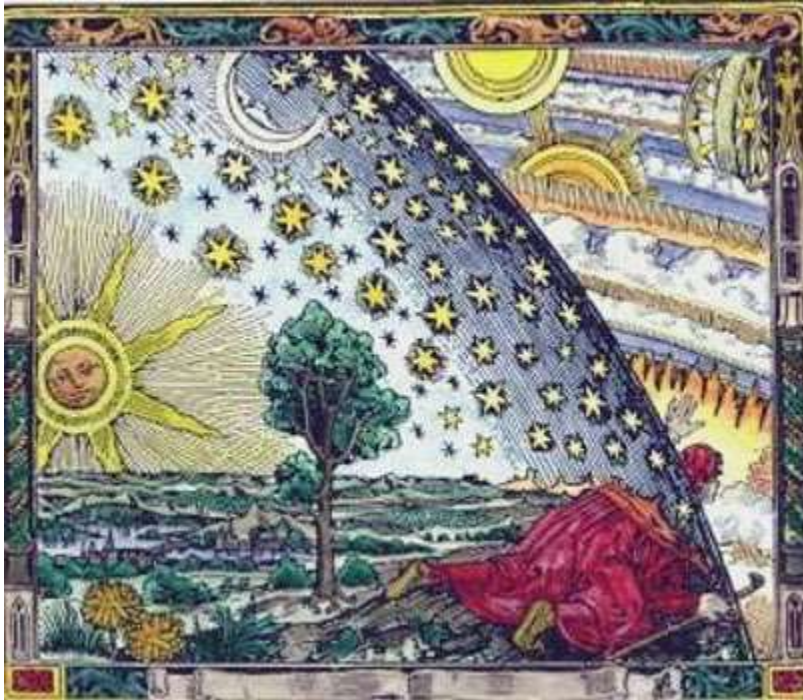
²⁴⁷

for more of James expressing his point of view on mystics see :

http://www.meta-religion.com/Psychiatry/psychology_of_religion/varieties_of_religious_experience_xi_5.htm#ixzz28SDyS35S

²⁴⁸ The original Vision had some truth to it of a poetic sort. It was a kind of vision of biological energy and sunlight. But later it became encrusted with all sort of other fanciful and “traditional meanings. I wrote of it in 1979 that”

reality” and one can pass through the Veil is itself a delusion and one that occurs in many cultures.



Sound: Air: Light: Fire: how the world glitters with these-- the veil that rubs and wafts, brushes and clings, blows, laces together with another veil. The pin points of the stars, how they look reflected in the rippled water, the shining blur of sun on water, scintillating moonlight, how all these are reflected in the old man's beard, on the woman's wet skin, how all matter is transparent and solid at the same time.....”

“The vision occurred in a specific place, while I was sitting up in bed in my apartment on Taylor Street in San Francisco. It was not a religious or a drug experience. It was merely an awareness of the energy that sustains being, a concrete experience of a sensitive mind trying to understand the world around him .” I have written rather extensively on this cultured delusion and its actual referents and how I extrapolated on the basis of here:

<http://www.naturesrights.com/z%20philo%203%20vision%20of%20veil.asp>

This is an example of how delusions get magnified and how they have some basis in reality, but get blown up and inflated. I am myself a guinea pig of sorts here. Veil imagery is ubiquitous across cultures. It involves a certain sort of mental dissociation or alienation and is psychologically caused.

I realized at certain point that these states could be manipulated, and I could control them to a degree. That is when I realized that consciousness of god was actually a produced thing, like crying or sexual ecstasy. The mind is a manipulatable instrument and it can be altered by methods and practices, emotions stirred by inner images and reality apparently changed such interventions. I lost interest slowly after I realized religion is mental, as I could see that there was no “there” there, as it were. It was all emotions and inner states produced by the mind, usually in extreme states and emotional excesses. James was wrong, there is no objective content in it other than the variety of human emotions and states. Consciousness is a biological thing, born of our brains and changes based on our health, tiredness, pathology and wellbeing. This book is an example of this, as it is a variable text written over twenty years, that embodies the thought of both a younger and older man, writing about the world in a healthy state of mind over many years. Some of it is wiser than other parts, some less well done or less well thought through than other parts.

The cult of “consciousness” in modern thought is an interesting phenomena. The need to section off consciousness as a separate, sacrosanct reality is common in New Age and esoteric religious fictions. This comes largely though the religions where this prejudice is common. There is no doubt that subjectivity is a fact, but it is a nebulous fact, and all sorts of things can be projected onto the fact of our “self” and our brains. If there were an awareness of no human consciousness too, or death and raw matter, one might think differently about all the twaddle that has been written about the glory of human consciousness. But in Ken Wilber and his many followers, for instance, we see the erecting divine subjectivity as if it were a first Amendment right. Schuon thought for instance that materialists were wrong to

“believe that the brain produces thoughts as an organ secretes fluids; this is to overlook what constitutes the very essence of thought, namely the materially unexplainable miracle of subjectivity: as if the cause of consciousness—immaterial and non-spatial by definition—could be a material object.”²⁴⁹

But this just shows Schuon’s ignorance of brain science and the fact that subjectivity is a function of brains not just in humans but also in non-human animals. Actually consciousness is in no wise a mystical thing. It is a factual thing, like, sex, eating or being alive. Animals are conscious as are insects and there is even an elementary consciousness in cells, as anyone who has watched the purposeful activity of Paramecia knows. Consciousness is a product of evolution, whereas spirituality is merely a social invention based on fictions. It is hard to see how Eastern spirituality can be of any use in helping science see deeper into consciousness.²⁵⁰ Buddhism is yet another fiction. How fictions develop out of the ordinary fact of consciousness is a complex question and my theory of magnification of mythic fabrications for social empowerment is partly meant to address this question.²⁵¹

²⁴⁹ Schuon, in essay traces of Being, Proofs of God in Roots of the Human Condition

²⁵⁰ Sam Harris thinks otherwise, and sees great value in Buddhist mysticism to brain science. I have doubts this is true, as Buddhism is so overwrought with delusory ideas about nature and the world. The self is not entirely a fiction and all animals have some version of it. Certainly the self can and does break down. But one must be careful of abstract and transcendental thinking as I have shown throughout these books. The Buddhist practice of self-analysis is really an effect of distorted language, where one convinces oneself one is beyond looking at oneself by negating every thought that passes. By so doing one tries to make analogy between the not-self and the cosmos, and thus exalt oneself as a transcendent being. This is delusional, in fact. The claim that this enables one to transcend suffering is absurd. It can be used to remove anxiety, but not change physical disease..

²⁵¹ Curtis White’s The Science Delusion is a clumsy attempt to deal with science as an ideology, but does not make clear distinctions between corporate scientism, which is mostly a salesman’s chauvinism and real science which is based on actual observations and close practice. The best science is hands on. He does not really understand romanticism either, and its destructive Platonic

The brain is a vehicle of being as is the body and both together tie us to the natural world. The notion that humans are superior to birds or aardvarks is absurd. Like us they live on our collective earth and seek to keep living. No one “owns” the earth, despite human conceit which tells them they do. Earth is the right to all the beings of evolution. This is one of the few really ancient, “primordial” truths. Human solipsism convinces many that we are the most superior of all beings, but this is mere vanity. Religion tries to erect this vanity into supremacist and speciesist notions of the “Intellect” as a divine agency in the brain. But such “first principles” have no existence whatever.

So the notion that consciousness comes in degrees and that those who are “more conscious” are superior is merely wishful thinking. Consciousness can be abused, inflated and magnified by mental tricks, myths and self-hypnosis.. Intelligence can be abused. In extreme versions of the consciousness myth the ideology of human supremacy of mind is projected onto the universe itself and it becomes the divine mind, as it were, the thing that ties all life and matter together in a totalistic subjectivity. A partial example of this, among many, is that Schuon thought he had sexual relations with the Virgin Mary in his mystic states, which, while ridiculous, is not novel as others have claimed the same thing. It is a delusion of one who wishes to be better than all others, since the Virgin is herself a delusion that is better than all other women, it is supposed. Hong Xoaquin and Da Free John, also claimed this to mystical/sexual union with the Virgin Mary. It was only their

roots. If he did he would not see the Romantic poets as he does. Darwin understood wonder as a fine thing and one does not need transcendental ideology to appreciate beauty or marvelous things in the natural world. A good scientist is one who has not stopped seeing with his whole self and not merely a camera. This is not to say that cameras have no value either. But romanticism has some very toxic features which are not dealt with by Curtus at all. White tries to say that “Our knowledge is never the thing. We are modelers, not knowers. We are condemned to life in the analogue”. This is simply not true, as a mother or father well knows when they have a child. One can know another to a very close margin of error, not perfectly, but well. Kant who said we can never know ‘the thing in itself’, never had children and does not seem to have studied anything closely. Had he done either, he would not have written this.

social abilities or ability to write separated them from ordinary schizophrenics who populate mental hospitals and prisons and who have similar delusions. But in fact, the Virgin does not actually exist and is a fabrication from early days of the Roman Empire.

Ramakrishna was a spiritual gymnast who was always getting into one state or another, obsessively flipping and twisting through emotions like an actor. It really means very little, as these are merely feeling states. People wrote in books in which the character of Jesus thought he was the son of god or Muhammad and Joseph Smith thought that God talked to them personally. There is no evidence for any of this. Followers of these myths and fictions act as if these delusions are true. They are elaborate fictions written many decades or centuries after the supposed facts. Countless mental patients of many kinds have similar delusions. Few get written down, but Gospels and holy books are just later extrapolations of fictions groups found useful to create and promote. It hardly means reality is constructed out of someone's feelings or that an overwhelming feeling of "transcendence" is a measure of facts. It is easy to have such feelings. I have myself had many visions and dreams and accord to them no superior meanings, though I too have accorded great meaning to these things, once upon a time. I had to learn how to have such feelings and visions initially and later I had to unlearn it. It is not evolution that causes this but social learned behavior suggested by culture.

Subjective and romantic states are merely states. Amazement at nature or the universe is an ordinary feeling for anyone who studies nature and this has meaning as far as it is grounded in actuality. But making a religion out of such feelings is nonsense. Feelings do not confer authority, they are merely feelings. What truth is in them depends on what one does with them and how one expresses them. To use them to gain superiority or authority is to abuse them. The best thing is to cultivate those parts of being human that help others, that creates and

which allows one to get closer to the springs of real lives and animals, trees and the earth itself. Education is really the exercise of one's faculties in view of deep experience of life and survival in our world.

It is true that what Jung wanted was actually healthier than what the traditionalists recommend, which is to exteriorize 'evil' and assume that evils are due to other lower caste people. But Jung is not much better. Indeed,, Jung's own insights tended toward theofascism too. In Jung's case, he was fascinated with the occult, just as the traditionalists were. The traditionalists despise him because he was "too psychic", too concerned with the "unconscious" and therefore not 'elite' or "solar" enough in his love of the occult.. Jung had the same hero worship of the ultimate prophets, heroes or supermen that one finds in Schuon and Evola. In one interview Jung praises Hitler, indeed, he sees him as the acme of his own theories.

"Only the self-development of the individual, which I consider to be the supreme goal of all psychological endeavor, can produce consciously responsible spokesmen and leaders of the collective movement. As Hitler said recently, the leader must be able to be alone and must have the courage to go his own way."

Jung had a powerfully positive response to Hitler as is revealed in a 1939 interview. Jung states that there are

"Two types of dictators the Chieftain type and the medicine man type. Hitler is the latter, German policy is not made, it is revealed. He is the mouthpiece of the gods of old. He says the word which expresses everybody's resentment. .. in Germany they still have dreams....hence the sensitiveness of Germans to criticism or abuse

of their leader. It is blasphemy to them, for Hitler is their Sybil, their Delphic Oracle”²⁵²

In other words Jung, at least during the War, saw Hitler as the manifestation of his own theory of the “collective archetypes”, the supreme individual embodying the dream revelation of the entire nation. Jung calls for aristocracy as his preferred form of government and his theories line up with the basic outline of what I am calling theofascism.

But like Guenon, Carl Jung’s relation to fascism is complex. In the 1930s he saw National Socialism as manifestation of his “archetypes” and wrote about fascism in glowing terms. In addition, there was also an authoritarian tendency in Jung. Like Martin Lings, Schuon’s follower, Jung was partial to dictators like Spain’s Frederico Franco. Jung also saw himself as a sort of magus, or spiritual prophet. In this Jung is very much like Schuon who thought he was god’s gift to women and the world. Indeed, in Jung adulation for Hitler one can see the outline of Jung’s whole theory of psychology

“There is no question but that Hitler belongs in the category of the truly mystic medicine man. As somebody commented about him at the last Nuremberg party congress, since the time of Mohammed nothing like it has been seen in this world. This markedly mystic characteristic of Hitler’s is what makes him do things which seem to us illogical, inexplicable, curious and unreasonable...So you see, Hitler is a medicine man, a form of a spiritual vessel, a demi-deity or, even better, a myth.....

²⁵² <http://www.scribd.com/doc/38245720/C-G-Jung-Speaking-Interviews-and-Encounters>
see pages 45 and 60

.... And thus Hitler, who has more than once indicated he is aware of his mystic calling, appears to the devotees of the Third Reich as something more than a mere man”²⁵³

Here Jung shows an important core of his theory that ties him with Hitler. One could say that Jung was merely diagnosing these characters, as he did indeed, reverse himself after the war. But he was clearly carried himself by this terrible movement and the later retraction would require much more elucidation than he gave.

Muhammad was likewise seen as a precedent of himself by Schuon. Muhammad is probably a fiction too. This need to adulate for the romantic man of impulse and aggression--- the prophet of total subjectivity, obviously has a political basis too it for both Jung and Schuon. It is the “Great Man” delusion. This is a Nietzschean/Fictian/Napoleonic excess combined with religious and theocratic delusions. William James would exult in such a theory too, great delusions for Great Men. Thus. Muhammad: Hitler: Schuon: Napoleon: Jung, all them are men devoted to a great delusional ideology that they hope will make them or their followers lords of the whole world--- this is theofascism in a nutshell.

The strain of thought I am developing here involving goes very deeply into the madness of the 20th century. To see the full extent of it one has to study across many fields of inquiry. The model of romantic and transcendental delusions as a means of political power is one that is predictable and has knowable features. I can apply it to Heidegger too.

²⁵³ [-Speaking-Interviews-and-Encounters](#)

See pages 117-118

Also found here:

<http://carljungdepthpsychology.blogspot.com/2012/02/diagnosing-dictators-cg-jung-1938.html>

The case of Heidegger's relation to fascism is also undeniable.²⁵⁴ Emmanuel Faye has written a deep and interesting book spelling out Heidegger's connection to the Nazis in great detail and insisting that Heidegger's books and ideas are shot through with Nazi ideology.²⁵⁵ I think Faye is right, though he has been mercilessly attacked by the many who are interested in promoting obscurantist ideologues like Heidegger. There is an increasingly tendency to right wing ideology as corporations gain more power and the defense of Heidegger may have some relation to this. Those who criticize Faye promote an absurd notion of a "pose of balanced history" as if it were OK to be a Nazi as long as one likes German forests "clearings" and House Fraus. Others criticize Faye because they don't see Heidegger's writings as hate speech. Faye makes very clear that Heidegger came to identify his crucial distinction and connection between "being" and "beings" as the connection between the Nazi state and the German people and other citizens of the Reich. This means that Nazism is central in his work and to the degree that this is true, Faye is right, Heidegger's work is fundamentally questionable.²⁵⁶ Heidegger certainly did advocate for the total extermination of the Jews. It is hard to excuse that on any grounds, just as it is hard to excuse a 'saint' who molests children, like Schuon or Ramakrishna, or a Church

²⁵⁴

See "A Normal Nazi" Thomas Sheehan, NY Review of books, Jan. 14 1993. which discusses Heidegger's relation to the Nazis. There is a huge and developing area of scholarship on Heidegger's Nazism.

²⁵⁵ Faye, Emmanuel. Heidegger: The Introduction of Nazism into Philosophy

²⁵⁶ There are similar defenses of Werner Sombart (1863-1941), who was also a Nazi sympathizer and who wrote absurd attacks on Jews going back to his first book The Jews and Modern Capitalism. The later book is clearly an antecedent of his later Nazi views and he is complicity in the Holocaust. There are apologists for Sombart's race hatred in Iran who have a similar political hatred of Jews. In these instances of racism one sees an inability to separate Jews as people from the Jewish state, which, like the Iranian state is a toxic religious state that depends heavily on conspiracy theory and religious ideology to maintain illegitimate control of people's minds. There are writers and academics in both Israel and Iran who fuel the fire of mythic differences and religious fictions which help stoke the fires of conflict and war..

that creates an Inquisition that lasts half a millennium. Heidegger is both a fascist and a theofascist, and his idea of Being is more or less identical to Guenon's idea of a fundamental metaphysical principle accessed through the Intuitive "intellect".

Faye insists that "Libraries, too, should stop classifying Heidegger's collected works (which have been sanitized and abridged by his family) as philosophy and instead include them under the history of Nazism"²⁵⁷, according to a New York Times article. Marx is usually classified under politics rather than philosophy and this could be true of Heidegger too. He is a Nazi philosopher. When Heidegger writes:

With each new moment the *Führer* and the people will be bound more closely, in order to realize the essence of their state, that is their Being; growing together, they will oppose the two threatening forces, death and the devil, that is, impermanence and the falling away from one's own essence, with their meaningful, historical Being and Will. (140)

It is clear that Heidegger's whole notion of "being" is bound up with Hitler. The great Leader is a construct of unjust power in Heidegger just as it is in Novalis, Nietzsche, Fichte or Schuon. Heidegger is only one case of a counter-enlightenment ideology being promoted by a right wing thinker. This book you are reading is akin to Faye's in some ways. I am concerned to supply a critique of religion and a group of thinkers and I am not trying to write in an immoral pose of balanced history but rather one that advocates a point of view that I have acquired after living and in depth experience. Oppositional histories are totally valid, and this is one. I write from the point of view of victims of cults and religions and systems of power. I do not write history to serve power, cult leaders or

²⁵⁷ http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/09/books/09philosophy.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0

religions. I differ from Faye in that my concern is to examine many such thinkers all of them advancing a far right agenda through different routes over longer periods of time. Faye's book on Heidegger helps mine and I recommend anyone who reads this book to read also Faye's and many other books I will mention along the way.

So it is useful to compare Heidegger to other far right ideologues, Schuon, for instance. On November 3, 1933, in his role as Führer –rector at Freiberg University, Heidegger issued a decree applying the Nazi laws on racial cleansing to the student body of the university.²⁵⁸ He turned in Jewish students and teachers to Nazi authorities. Heidegger's spiritual "volkish"²⁵⁹ ideology of "Being" deserves comparison with Schuon's metaphysical system. Heidegger told Herbert Marcuse that

"I expected from National Socialism a spiritual renewal of life in its entirety, a reconciliation of social antagonisms and deliverance of Western existence from the dangers of communism".

Heidegger thought the mystical Third Reich would establish the "truth of being". Schuon hoped the same thing for his system. In both cases the "being of being" is exactly the effort of create an "archetype" of reality, once removed, as we discussed earlier, archetypes are a delusion born of

²⁵⁸ Heidegger met with Henry Corbin in 1934, right in the middle of his Nazi period. Interesting that Corbin would write that "What I was looking for in Heidegger and that which I understood thanks to Heidegger, is precisely that which I was looking for and found in the metaphysics of Islamic Iran.". Yes, Theofascism and Islamofascism are close bedfellows. Heidegger's "truth of being" was quite compatible with Nazism and Corbin's Iranian Sufi truth is, in his own words, similar. And he claims that "I have not ceased to make contact with and to deepen that which is the spiritual culture and spiritual mission of this country." So the Germany of the Nazi period is evidently like the Iran that Corbin lived in? I recall Foucault's similar love affair with the right wing regimes in Iran . These analogies are not without interest and they indicate again that mysticism has many relationships to far right and repressive governments as I have shown to exhaustion in this book.

²⁵⁹ Heidegger wanted to replace the Enlightenment idea of the self or subject with the idea of Volk in order to despises with the idea of democracy, which he hated. The Volk are a manageable category, like "peasants". You can see in Nazi films the idea of the Volk as being a one dimensional stereotype, easily manipulated and controlled.

the abstract character of language. Schuon demanded his followers be an “aristocracy” just as Heidegger wanted to create a “new aristocracy”²⁶⁰

The basis for this is really just a metaphysical sleight of hand.

This is what Evola hoped from fascism too, as did Eliade. The similarities are definitive and inescapable and show again that we are dealing here with large scale tendencies in romanticism in Europe and its relation to the far right.

Schuon did not put hope in Nazism so far as I know, but he did put hope in Japanese theofascism. Schuon’s most important disciple Martin Lings endorsed the Spanish fascist Franco. Schuon, like Heidegger, Kierkegaard, and Rilke²⁶¹, is an extra-denominational religious thinker—someone who makes up his own religion. Religions is subjectivism made into a social force. Rilke wanted deliverance from Western existence and the imagined terrible ‘dangers of communism, science and democracy’. Heidegger wanted to universalize Rilke and make him a social force. Heidegger said that “democracy is the death of Europe”, which of course

²⁶⁰ Interview with Faye

http://an-archos.com/pipermail/heidegger_an-archos.com/2005-May/025579.html

²⁶¹ These thinkers share an extreme form of subjectivism, or inwardness, where nearly everything gets transplanted into an inward resonance, or poetry, and becomes of individualistic religion or sorts, though often denied to be such, that is what it amounts to. You can see in Angelus Silesius poem which states:

*I am like God and God like me.
I am as Large as God, He is as small as I.
He cannot above me, nor I beneath him be*

Selisius was a reactionary, Protestant turned catholic monk. Attaching a name like God to the fact of one’s subjective self is not an uncommon delusion. You can see a similar subjectivism particularly in Rilke’s Duino Elegies, and in Heidegger’s writings on “Enowning”. Rilke was fascinated by Muhammad, and monasticism, as he shows in the Book of Hours. His religion like that of Heidegger is an amalgam of subjective impressions. Hiedegger made up a sort of religion based on his idea of Dasien or Being, and made Rilke its prophet, with Holderlin as his John the Baptist. These thinkers make more sense once I realized that they all share William James’ devotion of the arbitrary and the subjective,. Delusions become facts simply by virtue of having felt them. Religion functions in just this way, though in more ‘traditional’ setting it is the parents who instill the subjective delusions in children even before they are aware of what a delusion is. The children grow up thinking what is in them is real, when actually it is merely make believe told to them in childhood..

implies that theocracy must be universalized and theofascism made into a transcendent unity, just as Schuon thought. Heidegger's "new aristocracy" is echoed in Schuon's silly aristocratic poses and private texts where he exhorts his middle class followers to behave like aristocrats. Schuon claims to be a 'monarch' in a letter. Heidegger calls Hitler, a "new dispensation of Being", a phrase that evokes religious association with Christ. Similar language would be used to exalt Schuon: I quoted this earlier where Schuon is adulated by his followers who call him

"an eminent manifestation of the eternal *sadguru* ... an 'Avataric' phenomenon ... a great bodhisattva"; has "the qualities of Shiva and Krishna"; "Abraham"... "David"... "Christ", and "Muhammad..." and to top off this absurd list Schuon calls himself the "final manifestation of the Logos at the end of time".

Indeed, Schuon, Heidegger and Hitler all saw themselves in grandiose and apocalyptic terms. Heidegger said somewhere that he was attracted to the "essence of the Nazis" an interesting phrase. It is an essentialization, like the 'being of being', and refers to what I am calling "spiritual fascism", which is not ordinary fascism exactly but meta-fascism. It is much greater, deeper and more total than ordinary fascism. An essentialization is something that does not actually exist. It is a convenience of language, a conceit of sorts, and a pretend abstraction.

²⁶² Metaphysics in Heidegger becomes an escape into a fantasy of Being", which is just another name for god: both are the subjective self-magnified by language. Theofascism is fascism as myth or religion that is not a nationalistic fascism, but rather is a universalized or generalized fascism, a sort of "esoteric" or 'gnostic' fascism. Theofascism is a political

²⁶² I will discuss the abuse of the idea of 'essence' later in this book, in the chapter on Reign of Quantity by Guenon. Suffice it to say here that I agree with Bertrand Russell who said that Essence and substance are merely "convenient ways to collecting events into bundles".

metaphysic that holds a reactionary political will at its center. It is nothing other than politics though it pretends to be so much else.



Martin Heidegger and the Nazis.

(Heidegger is 4th from the right, with the X in front of him)

Heidegger resembles Schuon in attitude and demeanor. Photos of both of them show them as autocratic, elitist and severe. Heidegger was “in opposition to the humanist thought of the Renaissance” as was Guenon and Schuon. Indeed there are very many similarities between Heidegger and Schuon. I can’t put up any pictures of Schuon as the cult is obsessed with copyright and likes to sue people. But Schuon looks a lot like the made up fictional actor Saruman in the movie “Lord of the Rings”. Heidegger Schuon and Saruman all look severe and mean, serious and forbidding, far right elitists who hate the world that they wish to alter in frightful ways. I imagine Savonarola looked similar to this too, big nose, prone to fits, angry most of the time.



Heidegger



Saruman

I hasten to add that the traditionalists were not overtly involved with the Nazis as was Heidegger. But like Heidegger, they despise democracy, equality and human rights. The traditionalists also justify the dispensing of large numbers of people because of their anti-humanist beliefs, as I will show in a later chapter. They all hate ‘modernism’, reason and science. All of them wanted to return to a medieval world before technology.²⁶³ However, they also justify the dispensing of large numbers of people because of their anti-humanist beliefs, as I will show in a later chapter.²⁶⁴ Heidegger “was nourished on National Socialism and served

²⁶³ Heidegger’s poetic prophet is Rilke, who he sees as a sort of priest of the New Age inwardness. Rilke has real theofascist tendencies, he admired Mussolini at one point and his effort to resurrect Roman imperialism. “Rilke believed that fascism incorporated and made visible the spirit of the old glory of Rome into the present, a spirit he hoped would bring Rome and Europe back to the time of Augustus”. See Between Philosophy and Poetry, Massimo Verdicchio, page 102. see also Heidegger’s Poetry, Language, Thought, which was sort of a Bible to Jack Hirschman, with its extolling as the poet as neo-spiritual Prophet. Rilke is discussed especially in the chapter called what are poets for? In which Heidegger tries to uphold Rilke and the Fuhrer or great reactionary of anti-modernism and hatred of technology.

²⁶⁴ In his Letter on Existentialism, Schuon shows he didn’t read Heidegger very deeply or well. He says that Heidegger, is a
“decadent philosopher [who is] no longer even Christian in any degree, being in fact, to put it briefly, an atheist; .”

it whole heartedly to the point of trying to reintroduce the racist basis of Hitlerism into philosophy”.²⁶⁵ Faye quotes Heidegger trying to justify the death camps. Heidegger excused the death camps because, in his estimation, “no one died in the death camps”.²⁶⁶ So Heidegger is an early holocaust denier. Faye refers to this as insane. It is. It is an outrageous thing to write and believe this. It reminds me that Rama Coomaraswamy tried to excuse the death camps to me once, saying that not many people died there. This sort Holocaust denial is repulsive and inexcusable. The facts are crushingly obvious. Heidegger also wrote about Jews that

to seek out the enemy as such, and to lead him to reveal himself, to avoid nurturing illusions about him, to remain ready to attack, to cultivate and increase constant preparedness and to initiate the attack on a long-term basis, with the goal of total extermination.
(Quoted in Faye, 168)

This desire for genocidal extermination is deeply reprehensible. Faye considers it bad enough to warrant Heidegger being excised from the serious consideration of those who study and love philosophy. I tend to agree with him on this. Faye suggests that Heidegger’s work not be “placed in the philosophy section of libraries; its place is rather in the

Heidegger is not an atheist, but a post Christian universalist, as was Schuon. He is believer in a universal system of “Being” as is Schuon. He made a religion out of this that differs very little from Schuon. Schuon further criticizes Heidegger that

“Heidegger “seeks” a mode of knowledge which goes beyond discursive thought; this is all very well, but discursive thought is worth infinitely more in itself than anything that a Heidegger can conceive of, seek, or find.”

Well this is on the verge of seeing that Heidegger resembles himself closely but then fails to see it. Ever the competitive ego-maniac, Schuon wants to slam down a thinker who is very like himself. Schuon almost gets it too when he says

“If the existentialists’ criticism of reason—or of rationalism—is justified, why do they not become Platonists or Vedantists? “

Yes, so in other words, narcissist that Schuon was, he wonders why Heidegger is not exactly like himself, since Heidegger is an irrationalist just as was Schuon. Letter On Existentialism: *Studies in Comparative Religion*, Vol. 9, No. 2. (Spring, 1975).

²⁶⁵ Faye, Emmanuel. Heidegger: The Introduction of Nazism into Philosophy Pg. 321

²⁶⁶ Ibid Pg 305

historical archives of Nazism and Hitlerism". He is right about this. Schuon and Guenon should not be in philosophy or metaphysics either, but in psychology or the history of cults, delusions and conspiracy theorists.²⁶⁷ I think religion in general should never be taught in universities as a subject of its own, but always subsumed under a disciple of science, even it is anthropology or sociology or history.

Carl Jung and Heidegger are roughly of Schuon's and Guenon's Generation, and like them are prone to a version of romantic, extreme right, spiritual politics. Like these thinkers, the case of Joseph Campbell, is another example of a thinker tarred with justified accusations of various charges of racism, anti-Semitism and bigotry. In a New York Times article it states

²⁶⁷ There are lots of conspiracy theories. Freemasons, who were actually a fairly trivial group and again church authority are sometimes seen as heads of a worldwide cabal that is Jewish and seeks to create or World capitalist order. Fundamentalist Christians also imagine a worldwide conspiracy of Jews and Freemasons. Sometimes is harms done by the U.S. government that spawn these theories, sometimes in is harms done by the Chinese, Israel or Britain or Iran. Daniel Pipes wrote a book about conspiracy theories Iran and he notes that

While the conspiracy mentality exists in all regions of the world, it is outstandingly common in the Middle East. Nothing is so false that someone will not believe it; and transparent silliness does not reduce the importance of conspiracy theories.....Conspiracy theories spawn their own discourse, complete in itself and virtually immune to rational argument. Five assumptions distinguish the conspiracy theorist from more conventional patterns of thought: appearances deceive; conspiracies drive history; nothing is haphazard; the enemy always gains; power, fame, money, and sex account for all.....In the Middle East, moreover, almost every speculation about the hidden hand ultimately refers back to two grand conspirators: Zionists and imperialists. And imperialism, of course, means primarily the U.S. government.

The answer to such conspiracy theories is to remove religion form the equation and to look at Nationalist exaggerations and do everything for encourage sharing and compromise. Between Israel and Iran for instance Jews have reason for fear and hate Moslems and Persians have great reasons to hate Israel and Jews, even though they are so much alike, No one reasonable should want to part of either side. The solution to it is to increase communication, downplay religion, stop supporting the far right nationalists in Iran and Israel and increase secularity and compromise of all kinds. Conspiracy theory grows out of resentment and hot beds of hatred.

“Roy Finch, a professor emeritus of philosophy who knew Campbell for 20 years at Sarah Lawrence, said Campbell was “a crypto fascist” who “could be reckless in expressing his views.” These remarks are in a letter he wrote to The New York Review.

In a telephone interview, Professor Finch tried to put Campbell into an intellectual context necessary, he said, to understand him.

Campbell, he said, was an admirer of figures like Nietzsche, Oswald Spengler and Ezra Pound, all of whom contended that Western civilization was threatened with the rot of decadence.²⁶⁸

Schuon and Guenon contended the same thing of course, neither of them willing to look at their own decadence. Like Campbell they claimed to be ‘apolitical’. He was anything but apolitical in fact. He was a reactionary with racist leanings. He was against any of his students taking part in Vietnam war protests. He hated the 1960’s counter-culture, feminism, socialism and anything of the left in the political spectrum. Campbell promoted the New Age idea of “follow your Bliss”, an anti-social narcissistic tendency as it involves a denial of any social responsibility, escaping into fluffy fantasy of myth and make believe. Follow your bliss and ignore the need to change the world by only working on yourself. Bliss became escape in Campbell. Finch says that Campbell promotes the one “do what makes one happy.....[and] sanctions selfishness on a colossal scale”, and he blames Reaganite narcissism for just this sort of “crypto-fascist” narcissism.²⁶⁹ He also says that for Campbell the most important thing was “the hero within,

²⁶⁸ New York Times, Arts section Published: November 6, 1989

²⁶⁹ This is accurate. There are many poets now who promote this “follow your bliss” spiritual narcissism, inspired by such quasi-religious poets as Rainer Maria Rilke or Robert Bly, Coleman Barks, Art Goodtimes or writers like Martin Pechtel or Judyth Hill, these writers are pied pipers of delusion who seek to seduce the young into escapist denial and reactionary religion. They claim to be “open minded” but actually want to open people up to superstition, tyranny, world hatred, and irrational hatred of science.

the god within, the Christ within you. And bliss was discovering that you are your own hero”—and Finch is right, this emphasis on the god “within”, is what the stress of romantic spirituality was all about, in Campbell, Rilke, Bly, Coleman Barks’ Rumi and many others. The escape into the delusional mythos of bygone ages is a way to avoid the responsibility of living in and loving the actual world you live in. The corporate elite have every reason to support such escapes, as it helps them solidify their power without opposition from the “people”, the “rabble” or in other words, ordinary folks who are just trying to live decent lives. ²⁷⁰

What ties Campbell, Eliade, Jung, Schuon, Rilke, Guenon, Pound together? They are all escapist, symbolist, romantic, anti-social and prone to grandiose narcissism. This is more than merely a group of romantic right-wingers and a heterogeneous group of eccentrics. Bertrand Russell is right, there is a tendency in romanticism that is toxic and that tends toward authoritarian amorality that quickly becomes disdainful, elitist and dangerous. Right-wing romanticism is a boon to elite capitalist culture and helps them keep their power and wealth.

²⁷⁰ Chomsky writes about the systematic corruption of corporate life as follows. Speaking of CEO’s he says they “have to try to maximize short-term profit and market share—in fact, that’s a legal requirement in Anglo-American corporate law—just because if you don’t do it, either your business will disappear because somebody else will outperform it in the short run, or you will just be out because you’re not doing your job and somebody else will be in. So there is an institutional irrationality.” In other words the corporations must be unethical and do things that harm people and the environment and the state and system of law uphold them and this arises from the very nature of the corporate charter and mandate. . Chomsky refers to economics as a “fanatic religious ideology”, which is accurate. You could see this in the figure of Allan Greenspan, who ran the federal reserve for a few decades. He was a devotee of the neo-fascist author Ayn Rand, who was a Libertarian in a sense but in a sense that goes into the territory of Social Darwinism and fascism. She is the favorite writer of the greedy misanthropes and financial thugs who are prone to be misers and who want the return of the caste system for the rich. Rand speaks of the “virtue of selfishness”, by which she means ‘screw your neighbor and everything is for me and nothing for everyone else and let old ladies die of starvation in disgusting nursing home and let children be neglected and racism thrive and slavery return’. This is the gospel according to corporate fascism.

See

<http://www.zcommunications.org/human-intelligence-and-the-environment-by-noam-chomsky>

Each most of these thinkers, their relation to fascism has been studied in detail. What they all share in common with Guenon and Schuon is that they are all romantic, reactionary and nostalgic for past myths and religions. They are prone to creating systematic theories based on essentializations, stereotypes, heroic elitism, as well as being prone to patriarchy or racism. They are misogynistic and skeptical or hateful of science or technology. They long for a social system of totalistic and controlled order. Like Guenon, all these thinkers are anti-rational and prone to belief in superstitious deities of whatever origin.

The Traditionalists are all anti-intellectual in the sense that Richard Hofstadter speaks of in his Anti-Intellectualism in American Life.²⁷¹ Hofstadter argues for intellectuals who are not seduced by power yet at the same time hold to independent critical thinking and science. The traditionalists are suspicious and resentful of the rational inquiry of the enlightened mind. They hate reason, science and free inquiry, original thinking and open questions of a critical nature. They have no peer review of their outrageous theses. They pass down their knowledge by fiat, cloaked in secrecy: fearful that their prosaic everyday selves discovered. They pretend to impersonal abstract truth and shun close personal analysis or even personal biography.²⁷² Anti-intellectualism arises because of a rejection of empirical evidence and the need to have truth arise “within”. This essentially romantic need for truth to be an inner reality rather than something found by science or experiment is what explains the irrational hatred of science or evolution that traditionalists have. They deny science and objectivity because they do not

²⁷¹ Hofstadter, Richard Anti-Intellectualism in American Life, New York, Knopf, 1963

²⁷² Schuon’s Memoirs or autobiography is an exception, published in German the Schuon cult regrets it being a public document. It is deeply embarrassing to them precisely because it is so ridiculous and outrageous in its grandiosity, myth making narcissism and pure fictional flourishes. It also admits aspects of Schuon’s bizarre sexual interests, cult of nudity and his ‘vision of the Virgin’ and other inventions of his perverse imagination. It is where he says that he is the Holy Spirit – and he is not a “man like other men”. It is a deeply pathological document.

want to be accountable. They live by fictions and lies and do not want this to be known. It also explains their attraction to rather primitive notions of symbolism and magical thinking. For them what matters are symbols or archetypes because these can be felt within as imaginary constructs. They do not need to be demonstrated in the world or subjected to any verification. Thus in romantic and symbolist thinking, any nonsense can be entertained as fact, however phony or superstitious. “The heart has reasons, the reason knows not of” is trotted out as an excuse for these delusions

Gold is not god, but it is bright like the sun and to the gullible, the sun is an analogy or symbol for fictional godheads. Gold became god's color, and Schuon has his disciples paint the interior of their houses with Sherwin Williams off-gold colors, believing by process of magical thinking that this is god's color. This sort of erroneous magical thinking tends to propagate further superstitions. Schuon approved gold tone of Polyurethane as applied to wood stairs, wood trim or wood furniture, believing it made their suburban houses sacred, despite the unhealthy off-gases such stains cause. This color is put on gold frames or on the nude Icons of Schuon, who is himself surrounded with gold halos and these silly Icons were claimed to glow in the dark preternaturally. Schuon was an textile designer for some years and basically had the mentality of an interior decorator. He spent large parts of his last years re-decorating the houses of cult members in Bloomington, going from house to house, “discriminating” between shades of cream lampshades and ivory carpets, other chairs and harvest yellow curtains.²⁷³ Cult members listened to each decision as if it were

²⁷³ Schuon could have had an interior design magazine called “Better Cults and Gardens”, I was enlisted in some of this work and became a sort of cult handy man and decorator. At the request of Schuon's wives I set up a frame making shop in my basement and I made frames for all the icons for cult members. I made endless copies of the same icons at local copy shops to send all over the world. I also painted houses, put up shelves, cleaned carpets and even painted a few full-size hand painted teepees to decorate the suburban lawns of the pseudo-Indians Schuon had

passed down by god himself. All this is ridiculous, but this is exactly what happened in the Schuon cult in the late 1980's and early 90's.

Anti-intellectualism involves a rejection of knowledge obtained by science and an idealization of the past. Anti-intellectualism is a common occurrence in totalitarian dictatorships and helps oppress political dissent. It is generally against education and likes to set up simplistic and dogmatic bibles or Little Red or Green books as the mirror of "Truth". So the Bible or the Koran, or the Bhagavad Gita Mao Red book or Khomeini Green book or some other emotional or irrational text that requires belief becomes the sine qua non, the be all and end all of what is real and not real. For Guenon and Schuon the irrational "Intellect"²⁷⁴ was alone real, and for them Intellect is irrational belief. So Traditionalism is really a species of romanticism and like the romantics Schuon and Guenon seeks truth "within"--- in their intuition and imaginary religious 'states'. They are akin to the romantic poets and philosophers. Schuon calls himself a romantic in various writings and claims he is not ashamed of such a designation. Perhaps he should have been. The romantic obsession with the "inner secret" is pervasive in Traditionalism. Jennifer Doane Upton writes that

To look for the love of God itself within manifest conditions is always to go astray. We spend our time in the world being

inspired his followers to be. Every house I went to Schuon had been there before me insisting so and so make this or that change to paint colors or change curtains, put up Japanese lamps or Moroccan pillows. It was all very silly and rather expensive. He could not trust his followers to choose their own ambience. It had to be his ambience.

²⁷⁴ It is hard not to use traditionalist language here. It is important to realize that Guenon and Schuon misuse the notion of the intellect badly. They use the terms in a way that recalls Ibn Arabi or Aquinas and not Bertrand Russell, Newton, Descartes. When they say intellect they really mean "heart-intellect" "super-rational intuition"—mystical flight of thought, dreams of intuitive quasi "prophetic" insights. In other words they mean by intellect the subjective view of their of their "transcendental" imagination. Corbin's term "imaginal" is more or less cognate with Guenon's "Intellect". It is the organ of delusion, par excellence.

attracted to this and repulsed by that, and all the while we are blind to this one secret love.

Ms. Upton, a victim of the California spiritual fads, crystal gazers and New Age bookstores imagines there is something beyond the “manifest” world. There isn’t, of course. But when you are a victim of a system of mind control or religious indoctrination, it seems as though the imaginary world beyond is more real than this one, the only actual world there is. To watch sunsets, grow old, care about one’s kids, parents, landscapes, animals, stars, chipmunks, for Jenny, is “to go astray”. Life is error and sin to these people. They hate life and really want to kill themselves and escape into the ‘divine’. It is a suicidal narcissism. All that matters to them is devotion to what does not exist. The very things that really matter are reduced to delusion. She wants us to care about abstract symbols, cold imaginary deities, frigid goddesses and religious fictions as if they were real. “To see god everywhere” is really to see nothing at all but the emptiness of narcissistic self-love projected on the universe. I have seen many people pursue this chimera. The actuality of real being is thereby insulted and neglected, denigrated and demeaned. This is the insanity of religion in a nutshell. There is only this world, I’m afraid. The delusion of a world beyond is a horrific failure of the earth and is probably responsible for many of the earth’s ills. As Christopher Hitchens wisely suggests

Against this insane eschatology with its death wish and its deep contempt for the life of the mind, atheists have always argued that this world is all that we have and that our duty is to one another to make the very most and the best of it. ²⁷⁵

²⁷⁵ Hitchens, Christopher. The Portable Atheist, Philadelphia, De Capo Press, 2007, pg.xvi

This excellent assessment of the insanity of after-life romanticism is exactly right. Why indeed, don't these life haters just remove themselves from the world and die. Well, some do, as happened in the Heaven' Gate Cult, where 39 people committed suicide for the same reason Jenny Upton cites above. They thought beauty and goodness resides elsewhere than on earth. They killed themselves in order to reach in order to reach what they believed was an alien space craft, who would take them to a better world. The cult leader told them how to think and the magical thinking of these delusions killed them. The same thing happened in the Jonestown cult, where 900 mass suicides occurred for exactly the same logic as is used by Schuon or Jennifer Upton. The other 'beyond' world is better, true love lies elsewhere and this world is garbage and nothingness.

I write this as Christopher Hitchens has just died.(December 2011). Poor man. Those who hate him say he has cancer as a punishment from god for his atheism. That is typical of these religious bigots. They like to blame people for the diseases they tragically get. Schuon liked to say that so and so got his disease because he did not follow Schuon closely or love him enough. Blame the victim is a common strategy of narcissistic cult leaders. Hitchens sad death is a death like anyone else's, and I am sorry to see him go

What I have been saying for years, in different contexts and ways, is that attachment to the "world" is all that matters—this world, the only world there is. This is the very thing religion condemns and equates with evil, or "women, animals and householders". Hari Krishna "non-attachment" is really an insult to life, a denial of what really matters which is "living the things of the world", having sex and children, relationships with others, entanglements, education, going through all life's changes and phases, living to the full. "Hating the world" as Christ, Muhammad or Krishna insist that we do, is monstrous. It is an escapist refusal to go through the amazing and sad journey of a human life. There

are only these kids, these parents, chipmunks, stars, waters, jungles, flowers, kisses and moments before we die. To care for the immediate is what matters. Looking for a “heaven” a Jesus, a Krishna, a Shekinah, a Manitou, a “beloved” beyond the actual world is fashionably Rumiesque, but phony, insane and foolish. There is no such thing. God is the optical illusion the traditionalists suffer from, seeking what is not there. So when Jenny’s husband Chuck Upton writes in his book on Romanticism:

“romantic love, which in its origins is essentially aristocratic (in Meister Eckhart’s sense when he said ‘the soul is an aristocrat’) find any place in today’s world? The truth is, it cannot. The world is too small for it. The place of romantic love is nowhere in this world; its place is in the human soul, whose own proper place is in the eternal self-knowledge of God.”²⁷⁶

This is a universalistic vanity and conceit. Metaphysical narcissism and self-mirroring. Effete aristocratic lovers disdain the world and wish to drink poison and die into the imaginary universal beloved, like the Jonestown and Heaven’s gate victims. This effort to spiritualize the tragedy of Romeo and Juliet is inane and destructive. Meister Eckhart’s mysticism is an elitist world denying form of Neo-Platonism. Upton is really sunk in a proud and ridiculous delusion of cosmic proportions. This delusion drove the Upton’s into the Schuon cult.

Schuon’s group in Indiana was very much like the Heaven’s Gate of Jonestown cults. It is very pretentious of an American to pretend to be an aristocrat! Thankfully we drove purple-stockings aristocrats out of America when Jefferson rejected Alexander Hamilton’s aristocratic

²⁷⁶ <http://www.sophiaperennis.com/shop/perennis/21.html>

federalism. Traditionalists in America are only welcome as betrayers of the Declaration of Independence and Paine's Rights of Man. Schuon snuck into the U.S. to hide in Bloomington Indiana. He despised the values that made this country. The police were talking about having them deported, since he really did not belong in the U.S. and he had committed a crime here, as has been proven, I think.. The cult had to lie when Schuon was caught committing a crime and say they were all "anthropologists". Here again we have an elitist vision of transcendent narcissism. They had to hold themselves apart in a conclave as did those in Jonestown and Heaven's Gate. Adi Da hides his cult on an Island in the Pacific. The Schuon cult considered that option once too.

The hatred of the world that the mythic Christ recommends poisons many minds and helps ruin the world. This apocalyptic delusion is one meant to glorify a certain group. The hater of the world or Armeggedonist magnifies his or her self or "soul" into bombastic proportions, imagining an "eternal self-knowledge" in a god that does not exist except in imagination.²⁷⁷ God loves himself when a man loves a woman. This is

²⁷⁷ The Upton's, sad to say, were recruited into Traditionalism by Scott Whitacker, an old friend of mine, who also recruited me into the Schuon cult through Huston Smith. Scott was a sad and wounded person who was too cowardly to join the Schuon cult, but pined for it like a lost dog for many years. He was sorely misguided by Huston Smith who used him as a sort of gopher to get him books and other small objects. Smith encouraged him into being a sort of promoter of the Schuon cult. Smith took advantage of Scott's many weaknesses, as did Charles Upton. Scott worked at Shambhala bookstore in Berkeley and sold new age books including Schuon. Scott appointed himself the arbiter of true religion there. The Upton's fell for this, as I did, briefly, but I managed to see through Scott, Smith and the Schuon cult, but the Upton's did not. Another w\who saw through it and were misled by Scott were Charles Reed. Scott was desperately sick with various illnesses and led both himself and others astray. His suffering was intense and self-devouring. He was prone to skin disease that ate his skin down to the bone, a sort of reverse AIDS he called it, where his body reacted to immunity threats with we not there.. Upton declared Scott a "saint" at one point, which is blackly humorous, as Upton used Scott's death as a pretext to promote his own imaginary spiritual acumen. Scott was hardly a saint just as Upton was hardly a Magus. But Upton is full of bombast and bubbly endorsements of the most high-falutin nonsense. He would fight to the death for any transcendental illusion we was sure was "True" capital "T", with the emphasis on capital, of course.... Upton is a self-made magus in the American mode of spiritual snake oil salesman. Upton is not yet a cult leader, but might be someday. The ability of religion to attract followers who will die for the most delusional nonsense

idealistic emptiness. How demeaning to the unique and specific man and woman. The antidote to this romantic and spiritual nonsense is shown in Barbara Ehrenreich's brilliant book, Bright-sided. She shows that bombastic spiritual gurus who wish to destroy democracy with a message of crippling fear and delusional spiritual optimisms are not new to America and it is important to patiently expose them, with objectivity and reason, as the frauds they are.

Schuon and Guenon were anti-intellectuals who hated universities and the followers of these men, even those in the universities hate them too and try to subvert them. Umberto Eco defines this anti-intellectualism as a characteristic of Ur Fascism, which is the same thing I refer to as Theofascism.

Eco says that :

“Distrust of the intellectual world has always been a symptom of Ur-Fascism, from Hermann Goering’s fondness for a phrase from a Hans Johst play (“When I hear the word ‘culture’ I reach for my gun”) to the frequent use of such expressions as “degenerate intellectuals,” “eggheads,” “effete snobs,” and “universities are nests of reds.” The official Fascist intellectuals were mainly engaged in attacking modern culture and the liberal intelligentsia for having betrayed traditional values.

There are many Ur Fascists among the romantics of the 20th century. T.S Eliot, was a late and decadent romantic. He endorsed Schuon because he sees in him the same romantic delusions. Evola and Jung were attracted to Hitler because Hitler too was a romantic. Heidegger belonged to the Nazi Party;; Campbell was enthusiastic about Nazism in his early years, and had an anti-Semitic disdain for Judaism. Eliade was

is amazing and still largely unexplained by anyone, though I think Lifton has seen deeply into this.

a practicing fascist in Romania. They all claimed to be elite, aristocrats or the special possessors of the most august, most transcendently immanent, magisterial, solar, highest, esoteric, universal knowledge. “I am not men like other men” as Schuon said, --- all these men hated,--- in varying degrees---- empiricism, objectivity, individualism, modernism, rationalism, and quantification. They all wanted to smear science, ---in varying degrees---- and revive dying systems of dogmatic and irrational belief systems. Obscurantist and occultist romantics, all these men, and many others, endorse a retroactive spiritualism that has fascist tendencies without actually being fully or overtly fascist. I find this sort of romanticism repugnant.

I have come across an example of a woman who appears to have seen through the reactionary spiritual romanticism that is at the basis of theofascism, at least to some degree. Maria Montessori was a scientist who studied education and children and developed a fascinating array of tools and techniques for teaching children. While John Dewey was a great theoretician on the importance of science and democracy an education, Montessori goes far beyond him in practical application of real teaching methods and materials that really get results for children. But despite her many laudable contributions to children education there are lingering accusations that she was a heavy handed autocrat and too interested in power. What is the truth in these accusations? While it is true that in many Montessori schools a school director or teacher with an authoritarian personality and outlook will be able to find in Montessori's works enough that is compatible with her authoritarianism, is Montessori a fascist thinker. I think the answer is no, she is a liberal and I will explain why.

It is certainly true that from 1926-1930 she fell under the spell of Mussolini for a time. It was the biggest mistake of her life. She even accepted an honorary membership in the fascist party, and allowed

fascists songs to be sung in her schools. Her biographer says that she was “apolitical” and naïve about how bad Mussolini really was. Or was she tolerant of Mussolini because she was herself rather autocratic in her leadership style? Her romantic and mystical side was at odds with her rational and scientific side. Her biographer Rita Kramer thinks Montessori was at odds with herself, and was her “own worst enemy” Which side would in?

It is clear that she was prone to mistake her own teaching methods with herself, as if good education did not belong to everyone and should instead be a brand name. Rita Kramer shows in various ways that Montessori was indeed “autocratic”. Kramer concludes her biography that Montessori created a sort of “Church” and her followers were “true believers” ²⁷⁸. Indeed, I have seen Montessori schools where the directress had a little clique of cult like true believers. Maria herself is partly to blame for this. Her immersion in cult like status tended to generate a certain dogmatism in Montessori education and schools. But it appears that this narrow-mindedness was only a part of Montessori’s complex personality. On the other side she really was seeking to create an open science of education for children and many things she uncovered appear to be true. Science in the end ruled the autocratic part of Montessori’s personality. In the end, whatever romantic and naïve part of her allowed herself to be deceived by Mussolini, the rational and rights loving part of her liberal mind triumphed and she rejected fascism and Mussolini.

I asked Angeline Lillard, the best contemporary author in Montessori education and she observed that Montessori may have been misled into thinking Mussolini and fascism were OK, or at least tolerable in view of her overarching hope of advancing good school in Italy. In short she compromised by questionable regime. At first she was evidently

²⁷⁸ Kramer, Rita, Montessori: a Biography, Putnam, New York, N,Y, 1976 P. 379

charmed by this charismatic dictator. She appears to have been seduced by his ideals and became something of a Catholic reactionary and Nationalist for a few years. Rita Kramer notes how misguided Montessori was in thinking Mussolini would help her create a where well educated children who would grow up and create peaceful world. “Mussolini was hardly interested in a nation of independent thinkers, in providing a prepared environment in which spontaneous activity would liberate the child’s potential to the fullest...” What is amazing is that she didn’t reject Mussolini’s world sooner.

But she did not fail to notice that the influence of fascism began to undermine her schools. When Mussolini demanded that all students in Italy join the Young Fascists, she was appalled. And the government insisted on uniform-wearing and fascist salutes in the classroom. She knew it was over and had to leave Italy..

Rita Kramer describes the end:

“Why Montessori drew the line at this particular decision is not clear. After all, she had closed her eyes to so much else. Perhaps the bloom of hope had rubbed off with the accumulation of small frustrations, the daily increment of observable repression and brutality that could no longer be denied. In any case, in a single day Montessori schools ceased to exist in Italy.”

Her training in science, logic, reason and medicine appears to have saved her from the dogmatic and illiberal fascism then steaming around her. She saw through Mussolini after a time and renounced authoritarianism of all kinds. She insists that a teacher be authoritative, “but never authoritarian” in guiding pupils. She closed down all her school in Italy and left the country.

She later had to leave fascist leaning Spain for similar political reasons and ended up in India via Holland, there to be hosted the Theosophical society, evidently unaware how reactionary this group was and how it had done a lot to support fascism and spirituality in Europe. She was unfortunately tempted by such spiritual fictions. But at least she was free of fascism and the survival of her pedagogy is due to its reliance on science and liberal thinking. In the end Montessori is the enemy of war and authoritarian power seekers, cults as well as fascists and militaristic thinking., She was a pacifist and an enemy of the corporate/military model of education. Instead she supported human rights and not just adult rights but even children's rights. In her final years she moved even more to the left of the political spectrum and wrote a letter criticizing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This document, certainly the most important document of the 20th century, outlines human rights for victims of war, workers. Women, expatriates and many others. Montessori points out it leaves out the child. She is right about that. It also leaves out nature's rights, which is the precondition of all human rights. This great document could be improved by these emendations.

3. Defining Theofascism: in Cults, Religions, Institutions, Fundamentalism and Traditionalism.

a. Defining Theofascism

David Hall wrote:

“ there is no doubt that given any kind of power there would be no shortage of traditionalists prepared to make the judgment and put a flame to the kindling. Beneath the neatly trimmed beards and the impeccable manners, the facility with Oriental languages and the deep learning in strange things, there lurks the sophisticated fascist prepared to excuse the monstrous”-----²⁷⁹

I was certainly in the wrong place and had made a huge mistake. I was never interested in fascism, my sympathies lying with the poor and the left. But I primped my new beard pretty often when I was in the Schuon cult. They all had primped beards, just like Schuon more or less, the primper extraordinaire. It was the fashion statement of the Shaykh, who was obsessed with fashion in a dandy like way. Nicely trimmed and fastidious, pretentious really, part pretend Vedantic scholar, part wanna be Sufi, part Indian Chief, and part nudist: that was Schuon. He was a pastiche of vestimentary styles, just as his philosophy was a Disneyland pastiche of cultures. He changed clothes to try to fit on different roles, become someone else, indicating the emptiness underneath. I sometimes wondered if really deep down he was gay.

Whatever Schuon did in the cult you were supposed to do too. Total man, he tried to be total model. He mostly hung out in old bathrobes in

²⁷⁹ Hall, David aka Ibn al Rawandi. “Esoteric Evangelicals: Islam and the Traditionalists” published in New Humanist Magazine, 1993? Pg 10 -12, This is a very perceptive an intelligent essay, one of the earliest to really begin to question traditionalism and its tendencies.

fact. He would wear them until he wore them out and covered with paint on the sleeves. Maude Murray, Schuon “third wife”, gave me a stinky old ochre or brownish terry cloth bathrobe Schuon wore for years as a sort of relic.²⁸⁰ I was supposed to wear it and be blessed with his baraka or grace. Yuk. The idea makes me a little bit ill now. Anyway, I had never grow a beard before and didn’t like it all that much and found myself cutting it more and more and eventually cutting off the mustache and the cheeks, it was so itchy , until I had an Amish sort of beard like Henry Thoreau. I only lasted with a beard less than a year. The first thing I did when I left the cult was to shave the little that was left off.

David Hall is right too that there was a concern with Oriental languages, especially Arabic. I studied it with a few younger men in the cult, at Dr., Mark Goren’s house, and learned enough Arabic to read parts of the Koran, which helped me realize I did not like the Koran or Islam very much. However, I will explain my feelings about “Islamofascism” in another essay. Suffice it to say here that what David Hall says above is true. This was a “designer cult” as Cyril Glasse called it, meaning it was a cult that was obsessed with correctness, correct beards, books, wallpaper, correct character and bearing, all of this making up for the empty content of Schuon’s message. Since Schuon’s messages were really just a lot of palaver²⁸¹ that amounted to little more

²⁸⁰ I tossed this in the garbage in 1991. The notion that relics “emanate” a sort of sacred perfume is ludicrous. Luther was right to condemn the worship of them. I was then speaking with Cyril Glasse who said that he had been given Schuon mattress by Maude Murray just as she gave me the bathrobe. Both of us joked that we should have sold the holy relics for hard cash. The notion of Schuon’s “spiritual fluids” being passed around had a really gross side to it. Maude and other members of the inner circle really thought his soiled old bathrobe and mattress were holy relic which could confer blessings. Schuon himself encouraged such nonsense. There was talk of his icons radiating influences in the dark at night. I was given such an icon myself and it radiated nothing at all except maybe the bad use of oil paint on paper. Schuon often painted on paper, which is neither smart or archival. I gave it back to Maude when I left the cult, disgusted with it. She said she sold it to the cults “spokesman”. She said it was worth ten thousand dollars, I didn’t think it was worth keeping for ten thousand dollars and gave it back for free. I could have sold it back, but chose not to. So much for the slanderous idea that I was after their money.

²⁸¹ A typical example being that Schuon says that “Atma become Maya so that Maya could become Atma”, which sounds profound until you realize that Atma is the fiction of the divine self

than grandiose claims about Schuon himself, meaningless things like how you dress and trim your beard became what they cult was really about. To slip up in this regard could have serious consequences. The ‘dignitaries’ of the cult were always watching and assessing behavior and the primary behavior that was ‘essential’ was to worship and extol the virtues of Schuon. I began to feel that I was living in a fascist organization, and indeed, I was.

In order to thoroughly check me to see if I was qualified to be initiated into the cult, I was hired at one point to paint the interior of the house of John and Maude Murray, Maude being Schuon’s third wife while she was supposedly ‘married” to Murray. However, she was not “married” to Murray according to everyone in the cult, who said she was Schuon’s third wife. She said she was Schuon’s third wife and not married to Murray. I was at the house nearly every day for months working and talking with Maude and John Murray. They made me lunch and sometimes dinner. It was not difficult to paint a house that did not need painting. But I did it, even as Maude was winding me into her spool as it were, and telling me more and more about Schuon and how lonely she was as his neglected ‘wife’. She continually stressed how harsh he was and controlling and how no one could be with him for long as he treated his wives as “doormats” or people without rights, as she put it. She started telling me that she was going to give me all the knowledge that Schuon wished to give me but could not as he was too old. That is what I wanted so I went along with her. I wanted to know who this man really was.

David Hall rightly calls the method and discipline and doctrine of the Schuon cult a form of “pious brainwashing”. The processes of brain washing or cult inculcation are very well studied, despite the bogus

and Maya is actual reality, and so what is really being said is Fiction became Reality so that reality could become fiction, and when it all got really boiled down to actualities, what Schuon ended up saying more or less, was that ‘God became Schuon so that Schuon could become god’.

claims of Scientology and other cults that they are not. I will not go into all the ways that cult members were inculcated here. I merely wish to point out that this cult's obsession with correct thinking and behavior had an inquisitorial aspect to it. Anyone who infringed on the construct that Schuon built around us was considered a heretic. People were thrown out of the cult for not thinking correctly. Some were driven to insanity as Paul Yachnes wrote in his excellent story about how his wife was driven mad by cult officials who refused her apology over and over again because they thought it was "insincere". ²⁸² Imagine saying you are sorry over and over and your accusers say they do not believe you. That is exactly what the Inquisition would do. This happened to Maude Murray too, who records her virtual torture by Schuon and his minions in many sad documents. She tells how her apologies were also not accepted and she was thrown out of the cult for doing exactly the same things Schuon himself had done. Schuon was repeatedly not faithful to her and she in turn was not faithful to him. Why should she be? He punished her because she was a woman. Schuon was a hypocrite. The theofascism of the Schuon cult operated on a very intimate and personal level. As David Hall correctly notes that

"In every single case the formal structure of a religion is a human construct that takes two or three centuries, or even longer, to be fabricated, thereafter anyone who infringes this construct is labeled "heretic" and forced to pay the penalty. ...it should now be obvious what kind of thing traditionalism is and to what kind of mentality it appeals. Anyone who is prepared to talk strait-facedly about 'orthodoxy' and 'intrinsic heresy', even while talking about religion 'as such', rather than one particular religion, is obviously a

²⁸² Paul Yachnes's cult name was Sidi Aswan. The document in question is called Safwan's story and occurs in the Dossier of Cyril Glasse

mental relic. All such talk for ever carries with it the echo of the Inquisition and the odor of the Auto-de-fe”

David Hall is very perceptive here and exactly right. The traditionalists are a throwback to the Inquisition and other system of totalism and human rights abuse.

So, let us go back to my original question, when I started doing research on this book years ago----- my question was “Are Rene Guenon and his followers fascists?” or put more broadly, “were or are the Traditionalists fascists?” The simple answer is a definite, yes, they are fascists of a spiritual kind: ---the are theofascists but not secular fascists.- I could equally well say, no, they are not secular fascists but they are theofascists. Both these answers are correct. So the question is not whether do they favor a far right and fascistic from of power: clearly traditionalism is a far-right conservative philosophy that is reactionary and overlaps with fascism in many ways, while go beyond it in other ways. It is a top-down aristocratic and anti-egalitarian organization. So the question is what role does spirituality have in it?. One would have to define what is meant by spirituality. There is no coherent answer to this, since the sort of thing that is referred to as “spirit” is inchoate and appears to have no reality that anyone can define clearly or give evidence of that has any concrete meaning.²⁸³ As Chomsky has noted ‘religion

²⁸³ Chomsky writes “Do I believe in God? Can't answer, I'm afraid. I'm not being flippant, but I don't understand the question. What is it that I am supposed to believe or not believe in? Are you asking whether I believe there is something not in the universe (or the universes, if there are (maybe infinitely) many of them), and that somehow stands above them? I've never heard of any reason for believing that. Something else? What. There are many concepts of spirituality, among them, various notions of divinity developed in the Judaeo-Christian-Islamic religions. Within these the concepts vary greatly. St. Augustine and others, for example, argued that one should not take seriously the Biblical account of God as an exaggerated human, and other Biblical accounts, because they were crafted so as to make the intended message intelligible to humans -- and on such grounds, he argued, organized religion ought to accept persuasive conclusions of science, a conception that Galileo appealed to (in vain) when he faced papal censure.... Anyway, without clarification of a kind I have never seen, I don't know whether I believe or don't believe in

has no clear meaning' Chomsky outlines a reasonable attitude toward religion. He says "I'm what's called here a "secular atheist," except that I can't even call myself an "atheist" because it is not at all clear what I'm being asked to deny." This is good. But Chomsky's view of religion is rather simplistic and lacks depth. The word 'spirit' is used differently in different contexts. To Schuon it appears to have meant his intuitions, mostly of a rather deeply emotional and often pathological nature. To a Baptist preacher it means feeling or "soul". Of course, they are really talking about the same thing. The Holy Spirit is merely the wind of feelings, the interior subjectivity of the "other" that seems to be inside oneself. Chomsky gets this but unfortunately writes:

"As for the various religions, there's no doubt that they are very meaningful to adherents, and allow them to delude themselves into thinking there is some meaning to their lives beyond what we agree is the case. I'd never try to talk them out of the delusions, which are necessary for them to live a life that makes some sense to them. These beliefs can provide a framework for deeds that are noble or savage, and anywhere in between, and there's every reason to focus attention on the deeds and the background for them, to the extent that we can grasp it." (source: *Science, Religion, Reason and Survival*)

I don't agree with Chomsky here, as his approach to religion is dishonest, elitist and condescending in some ways,--- cynical would be more accurate, as is the case with many of his views. I have met Marxists who view religion in just this way; a fool for their own Marxist religion. He wants to use the religious people he knows to push his views and so

whatever a questioner has in mind. ...I don't see how one can "believe in organized religion." What does it mean to believe in an organization? One can join it, support it, oppose it, accept its doctrines or reject them. There are many kinds of organized religion. People associate themselves with some of them, or not, for all sorts of reasons, maybe belief in some of their doctrines.

is silent on religion and allows it when it is useful to him. I find such an approach dishonest and opportunistic.

But Chomsky is also saying that religion magnifies motives and religious deeds might have bad or good motives at the basis of them, quite apart from the religious mythology, which is fiction. I agree with him about that. Chomsky says “religion is inherently irrational”. Yes, that is true. Individual people might do good or bad by way of their religion. But questioning the religion itself is a different matter. Chomsky observes:

“Take, say, the core of the established religions today: the Bible. It is basically polytheistic, with the warrior God demanding of his chosen people that they not worship the other Gods and destroy those who do — in an extremely brutal way, in fact. It would be hard to find a more genocidal text in the literary canon, or a more violent and destructive character than the God who was to be worshipped.”

A given religion offers beliefs without argument or evidence. Chomsky’s politics often does that too. Indeed, his politics has religious features in it. When Chomsky leaves the realm of demonstration and evidence, as he does sometimes, he is not too different than Schuon. Different religions offer equally arbitrary beliefs that have no evidence. Schuon compares different system of irrationalism and thinks that is a miracle. But his idea of “transcendent unity is merely a more universal form of fiction, like comparing Japanese cartoons to German cartoons to American cartoons. They are all cartoons and one can make up a “transcendent unity of cartoons”, but that hardly changes the make believe nature of the object of comparison. Religions are very like cartoons for adults. Chomsky writes that it is true that religion is part of

“every observable society,” if what is meant is that every society we know has sought to find some explanation for matters of deep human concern that we do not begin to understand (death, the origins of the universe, etc.), that’s doubtless true. If one wants to call the constructs developed “religion,” OK. I don’t see what that implies, apart from the fact — I presume it is a fact — that people seek answers to hard questions, and where understanding reaches limits (very quickly, in most areas), they speculate, construct myths, etc.

In other words, people make stuff up when they don’t know what is the truth and that is what religion is,-- the record of delusions and human make-believe. Religion is an ossified construct and a hardened fiction. But it is also more than that. In particular ways, it is a method of social control and not at all a method of inquiry. The traditionalists forbid inquiry as do most religions, as does Chomsky when pressed. But Schuon and Guenon are worse in that both hate both curiosity and science as well as science and rational inquiry. The great importance of curiosity as an inspiration for science and progress for humanity cannot be understated.

It is important to understand that theofascism is not fascism. To be more precise about the definition of theofascism: the Traditionalists are not secular fascists of the ordinary kind, such as one refers to when one speaks of the followers of Mussolini, Franco and Hitler. But they are not far from that either. Martin Lings loved Franco and recommends him as an ideal model of a traditionalist approved “principled Autocrat”. Lings posits the “principled Autocrat” as necessary for a traditionalist restoration.²⁸⁴ Schuon approved of Japanese fascism and Nasr liked

²⁸⁴ See chapter on Martin Lings’s version of Theofascism above.

Iranian monarchism which has a strong fascist element. But traditionalists despise Hitler's fascism because it is too modern and scientific, too populist and middle class, in short, too reasonable and enlightened!!.²⁸⁵ Traditionalist theofascism is a form of intellectual or "spiritual fascism", or theofascists. They are nostalgic monarchists. They want power to reside only in superstitious religious authorities, castes, or Kings that support religious authority. They want to return to the good old days when Kings could kill you for looking funny or for no reason at all. Traditionalist theofascism was defined well, if inadvertently, by M. Ali Lakhani, a follower of the Schuon cult, who says the essential government required by "esoteric" religiosity is one where "the Temporal Power of Might to be wedded to the Spiritual Authority of Right".²⁸⁶ This is really just a gloss of Guenon's book Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power which is a classic theofascist text. This is a well expressed formula for theofascism of all kinds, though it does not go quite far enough. But this does explain religious fascism of Dionysius the Aeropagite as well as Franco, the Japanese fascists, Plato, Shinto, Muhammad, the state of Israel, Iran, far right Christian republicans in the U.S. and Innocent the III the creator of the Inquisition as well as other spiritual monsters all are included under Lakhani's definition. Religious cults of all kinds combine Temporal Power of Might with the Authority of Right. What is left out of this definition is other totalist systems such as corporate culture or Soviet and Chinese communist systems which act in the same way but are not specifically "spiritual". But theofascism I mean such systems too and not just religions systems. A better definition of theofascism would thus be a 'system of government combines the power of might with ideological right, regardless of violations of human rights, or natures

²⁸⁵ Umberto Eco sees Ur fascism as having an element that does appeal to the middle class or populist irrationalism such as was rife in Italy and Germany in the early 20th century. This does not really apply to Guenon and Schuon who were never populists. ON the contrary they hated the mass, and loved only the elite.

²⁸⁶ http://www.sacredweb.com/articles/sw8_editorial.html

rights. This definition would include corporate personhood and communist states. Theofascism thus could also just be called ideofascism . But then Hitler and Mussolini were not exactly theofascists but they were ideofascists. So I mean to make a distinction between theofascism and ordinary fascism, so I will not use the term ideofascism often. ²⁸⁷

At the same time I want to explore how theofascism is a peculiar kind of what Robert Jay Lifton calls ‘totalism’. These questions about the nature of theofascism and totalism furthermore relate to my deeper inquiry as to what religion is. As I said at the beginning of this book, the new developing field of evolutionary psychology is basically right when it says that religion is a by- product of ordinary psychological processes that developed in human brains to allow children to trust their parents. As Richard Dawkins has suggested in his book The God Delusion, religion appears to be born of a confusion about trust in authority and in-group and out-group dynamics in human psychology. What Dawkins calls the “useful programmability of children” has been misused to justify elaborate mythic belief systems and authoritarian hijacking of whole societies by priests and Mullahs, Rabbis, Popes and Bishops. It is clear that religion evolved as a sort of unconscious cultural phenomena out of the tendency of the human brain to impose obedience on children and perhaps to fall in love in a storm of irrational beliefs. Institutions like the Catholic Church or Tibetan Lamas used human psychology against itself to harness power over peoples.

²⁸⁷ I like the term “ideofascism” rather than theofascism as this would eliminate the specifically religious overtones of the theofascist term. This seems legitimate to me. If I were starting this book today I would do this. But then it would be a very different book. I am happy with the critique of religion and am aware the term theofascism implies restrictions, but it will due for now.

While it is unclear how religion came about in evolution it is not unclear to me how this was done in the Traditionalist cultic environment. Guenon pushed fascism into realms where it had never been before, exploiting human gullibility. Schuon, Evola and Dugin and the Coomaraswamys, as well as lesser known followers like Nasr and Lings, Huston Smith and Charles Upton, continue to expand Guenon's ideology in new directions, applying Traditionalist poisons to new fields, globalizing it. Schuon is notable in that he exploited children in the cult directly and not just adult followers.

Fascism could not travel so long as it was merely national. Guenon's theofascism was an invention that survived the failure and defeat of secular fascism during the Second World War. Guenon and Evola created a political religion sufficiently flexible that it could appeal internationally at the same time as corporate globalism was extending itself around the globe. The rise of corporate globalism has some relation to the rise of a bogus attempt to create a "transcendent unity" of the dying religions of our day. Defining how such system of thought as like traditionalism attempt to promulgate and justify a global religious ideology involves making clear definitions. Therefore, since I have defined theofascism, it might be good to consider the definitions of others regarding theofascism, totalist systems, coercive religions, organizations or cults. There are various existing definitions of what I call theofascism or spiritual fascism. I will speak of a number of them here not just in relation to Guenon but in relation to religion and ideological systems as a whole.

a. Defining Fascism in Roger Griffin

Guenon's theofascism goes beyond Roger Griffin's definition of fascism, or rather it only fits part of Griffin's definition. Griffin, a British writer who has written extensively on fascism, its history and nature, states that "Fascism is a genus of political ideology whose mythic core in its various permutations is a palingenetic form of populist ultra-nationalism.²⁸⁸". Griffin is using the term palingenetic to mean that fascism seeks rebirth, revolution or even apocalyptic change. Guenon was preeminently, even obsessively a 'palingenetic' writer and the whole traditionalist movement is palingenetic. Moreover, Guenon does fit the entirety of this definition of fascism in the 1920's when he was flirting with French Catholicism and had associations with members of Action Francaise, the French fascist movement. But by the 1930 's Guenon has become a practicing Moslem, at least superficially. During this period, in fact, he has created a transnational form of fascism, traditio-fascism, meta-fascism, or theofascism, as I call it. Once Guenon is in Cairo he becomes a universalistic zealot and his fascism is not so much like the Nazis or Italian fascism as it is like the corporate global fascism of the Post World War II era. Indeed, one factor that characterizes most theofascism, though not all, is its rejection of nationalism in favor of a universalist or globalist tendency. But this is not always the case, as in the theofascism of the state of Israel or Iran, or the theofascism of George Bush Jr.

With the publication of Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power (1927), Guenon has defined himself as an authority who is supra-religious, standing over all the religions like a prophet of doom. This is when he becomes a spiritual fascist or theofascist, who is internationalist rather than nationalist. Or at least this is clearly his intention. What Guenon does in this book is to try to use the same old justification used for centuries to excuse and promote unjust power. Clifford D. Conner, in

²⁸⁸ See Griffin, Roger, the Nature of Fascism, Routledge, 1993 pg 26

his excellent People's History of Science, shows how unjust societies exploited sciences like astronomy and geography to support upper class interests.

“ the power invested in the ruler must be explained and justified..
and so ideology is enlisted to justify political power, the sacred king
and divine emperor trace their lineage to the celestial realm. ...
they monopolize astronomical knowledge as a primary component
of political power” ²⁸⁹

This applies to Guenon. This procedure of bogusly claiming divine origin on the basis of geographic or astronomical facts constitutes some of the earliest abuses of science by unjust powers. This occurs very early in Mesopotamia, Egypt, Mayan and Native American cultures(the Anasazi for instance), indeed the whole shamanistic imposture depends on just this fictitious pretence.²⁹⁰ This is clear even in modern cultures where the English royalty trace themselves back to Joseph of Arimathea and thus to Christ (as on the ceiling of Winchester Cathedral in England for instance). It is a bogus claim, but people have believed it. Since Joseph of Arimathea very likely did not exist, much less go to England to found a dynasty, as he was a fictional character,²⁹¹ as is Christ, the use of these

²⁸⁹ Conner, Clifford, D., A People's History of Science, Nation Books 2005, pg. 67

²⁹⁰ Shamans in Siberia and Native America pretended to travel to the universe and find the universal tree of some other symbol. They pretended to heal people and sometimes even succeeded, as is logical, given their enthusiasm. They used a form of positive thinking and it helped, occasionally. But it helped very little, in fact. Shamanism is a subjectivist pretence. When European diseases came Shamans stood helpless. I once watched Thomas Yellowtail do some “healings” in the ancient manner, and it was make believe. He merely put Otter skins on people, and it had no effect at all. People thought they were healed when they got better, when they would have gotten better anyway, It had no benefit at all and was sad to watch him pretending to do something he could not do. Indeed, watching his failure was part of my realization that the whole panoply of claims around Schuon were false.

²⁹¹ Blake also thought this fable might be the case as was immortalized by him in the lines.in “Milton” ‘and did those feet in ancient times walk upon England’s mountains green”

two myths by the English kings was just propaganda.²⁹² Beginning with Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power and continuing up until Reign of Quantity and the Signs of the Times, Guenon tries to do the same thing. He tries to turn all knowledge toward the justification of his particular spiritual system of power. Theofascism combines or wants to combine temporal might with spiritual Righteousness. This exactly that 'theofascism' is all about. He wants a system of knowledge to increase social disparity and to have the elite rule by hereditary dictatorship based on religion.

Between 1927 and 1930 a transition occurs in Guenon from nationalistic zealot to bitter internationalist and apocalyptic guru of this super-religion²⁹³ called 'traditionalism'. This transition is way beyond the imagination of Roger Griffin. Griffin's definition of Fascism is too prosaic and narrow. This is not to say that Griffin's definition is mistaken. It is accurate as far as it goes, but the theofascism of the Traditionalists goes beyond Griffin's imagination. Guenon's international

²⁹² Celestina Savonius-Wroth, a follower of Schuon, and, with most of the rest of her family, participant in his primordial gatherings, tries to maintain that Harry Hammond, a far right royalist Anglican and enemy of the English revolution, was one of the "apologists who accorded a new importance to contemporary "folk" religious practices as remnants or "remains" of Christianity in its ancient and pure form." Hammond says that Joseph of Arithmea and not Augustine and the Romans probably brought Christianity to England. This is fiction of course, cooked up by the aristocracy to justify their powers, as one can see plainly in stone on the ceiling of Winchester Cathedral. There one can see the mythic justification of the English Kings. Joseph Arithmea is as much a myth as Jesus and the fiction of "an ancient and pure" Christianity." There is no "pure" Christianity. That is itself a myth. Making a further myth of the divinity of English Kings is specious. What is true is that Hammond was a right wing political writer, like Schuon, who sought to restore an unjust aristocracy, and was willing to resurrect and use bogus myths to do it.

See the miscellaneous theological works of Henry Hammond. Pages 242 and 257.
https://books.google.com/books?id=7ygBAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA257&lpg=PA257&dq=Henry+Hammond+arimathea&source=bl&ots=mg8kNcgu1k&sig=a4tJUvVWOj97cAmlB_r5BJ5u9c4&hl=en&sa=X&ei=3nsHVeyFAYjToATeuLLQDg&ved=0CCEQ6AEwAQ#v=onepage&q=Henry%20Hammond%20arimathea&f=false

²⁹³ Charbonneau-Lassay, a Catholic correspondent of Guenon, used this term "super-religion" in a letter about Guenon, he complained that Guenon is not a Catholic and has adopted a sort of a sort of "super-religion", outside the boundaries of the Catholic Church and Islamic rites.

or universal fascism is a political form of spiritualism that can inspire or support multiple fascisms in many places. That is why Guenon's name crops up among French, Chilean, Romanian, Russian, French, English, Italian or American neo-fascists, conservative revolutionists, far right wingers or Traditionalists. Guenon is a proselytizing adjunct of far-right movements in many countries, and seeks to supply a ready-made spiritual ideology to diverse national movements. Schuon even tried to apply this template to tribal movements, with limited success.²⁹⁴

Guenon universalized fascism: Guenon subsumes religion as part of a political program masked as a metaphysics: a will to power masked as a search for a fictive divinity. Those who claim that Guenon is apolitical have not understood him, nor how megalomaniacal and personal Guenon's political program really is. Guenon's transcendental fascism is a utopian revolutionary and apocalyptic ideology which attempts to revive a spiritual, global apocalypse and rebirth. To put this somewhat differently, Guenon's fascism is a 'gnostic' fascism, a form of political religion, a revival of the gnostic Platonism with its roots in the apocalyptic tradition.²⁹⁵ He wants to deify or make spiritual a basic system of elitism, inequality and injustice: theofascism, precisely.

The roots of theofascism can be found in the religions as well as in reactions against the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. The traditionalists reference various antecedents of their politics. They like

²⁹⁴ Schuon exploited the Crow Indians first through Yellowtail and later through John Pretty on Top. This is a very poor and sad tribe who were easily exploited because of their poverty. The Schuon cult bought Yellow tail a house and were able to control him by controlling where and how he lived. They even installed a radio device in his house so they could communicate with him often

²⁹⁵ I am using the term gnosticism here literally, in its meaning as a 'knowledge' system. I do not mean 'gnosticism' in the sense that Augustine meant it, as a term of hatred for a heresy, though Guenon and Schuon did claim some allegiance to a gnosticism of this kind. I certainly do not mean gnosticism in Eric Voegelin's sense, who used the term quite bizarrely, in a similar way as Augustine, but applied to modern thinkers, implying heresy among them. Voegelin is a strange historian who writes as if still mired in medievalism and Christian superstition. Heresy is not a concept that has any meaning anymore. Schuon claimed infallibility and used the word against those who disagreed with him.

the Shinto worship of the emperor. They also admire Plato's desire to have Guardians rule a class-divided chauvinistic city=state and create a eugenic system of elitist overlord supported by slaves, Guenon, Schuon, Evola and Coomaraswamy approve of the Hindu caste system. They also like the Catholic love of hierarchy and a cruel state apparatus to work out the Vatican's will. They also enjoyed Muhammad's love of violence and jihad as well as his constant threat of hell and apocalypse as a way of creating a society that functions on fear--- all these share in the unjust ideology of theofascism as envisaged by the traditionalists.

To express this differently, Guenon despises the physical world and wants to destroy the world that does not fit his ideology of a return to former political religions and fantasies of the Middle Ages. He wants to bring back priestly power, destroy democracy and science, and return to arbitrary dictatorships by dogmatic institutions that serve an elite caste. Those who refuse this backward politics and still embrace democracy, science and Enlightenment values should burn in hell fire or be massacred in a final solution of some kind. He appeals to those who are disillusioned with 'modernism' and want power at any cost. He is particularly attractive to far right ideologues in many countries. Evola and Dugin tried to apply Guenon's ideas politically, whereas Schuon made a little cult and Coomaraswamy acted as a sort of effete theory-man, hoping many would follow and implement his ideas. Guenon believed that the whole world had literally entered into the unfolding of destruction. The events of his prophecy in Reign of Quantity would result in only the elect surviving a gruesome apocalypse.

It is useful to recall that the originating idea of the "apocalypse" appears to be due to the Roman effort to defeat "barbarians". The Roman and later the European need for a Hegemonic empire seems to have engendered large scale, even universal notions of war, fear and poverty. The cruel and violent punishment and dismemberment of those who are disliked by the Romans and Europeans are catalogued in painted

versions of the last Judgment in Van Eyck, Michelangelo and a thousand other artworks done between the 12th and the 20th century.²⁹⁶ Indeed, the apocalyptic idea, which is central in Guenon's work, is really at the basis of the horrendous cruelty of European and Arab conquest, both in the Mideast and the 'New World'. The brutal murder of Native Americans, as well as the atrocities of Auschwitz and Nagasaki have the apocalyptic idea as their distant organizing mythos. The traditionalists have the apocalyptic idea at the center of their ideology because it is such a potent image of power grabbing and theofascism. This would suggest that such apocalyptic fantasies and their influence in history ought to be questioned further. Apocalyptic fantasy often correlates with poverty, and fear of the future.

Defining Umberto's Eco's Ur-Fascism

Griffin's definition of fascism is too narrow since it only applies to nationalist politics. Among the Traditionalists Alexander Dugin, Evola, Andreas Serrano, Hossein Nasr earlier in his career, and a few others and perhaps the younger Guenon could be called nationalists. A better definition of fascism that includes the Guenonian effort to make a trans-national or universal fascism was created by Guido Di Giorgio who considered Guenon not a fascist but a spiritual fascist. The novelist and culture critic Umberto Eco. Umberto Eco came up with a way of looking at what he calls "Ur-fascism." Ur Fascism is deeper and examines the facts behind fascism more completely than Griffin could manage. In Umberto Eco's definition Guenon, Schuon, Evola and Dugin should be called an "Ur-fascist". I prefer the term theofascist to 'spiritual fascist',

²⁹⁶ Kenneth Clark alludes to the origin of the apocalyptic idea in his history of the Nude, and suggest Late Gothic paintings of Apocalypse recall Belsen, the German concentration camp. Pg. 518

or Urfascist. Since the German prefix “Ur” is obscure in English.²⁹⁷ But Ur-Fascism is fine in itself and is more or less synonymous with theofascist .

What the apologists for Traditionalism or “theofascism” fail to understand is that Traditionalism is more, not less totalistic than ordinary fascism. Unlike the Nazis, the Traditionalists do not want merely temporal power. They want to be able to dictate the entire structure of reality globally and not just locally or nationally. They want to dictate how reality is constituted spiritually, intellectually, socially and politically. It might help to explain this by turning to Umberto Eco’s attempts to define theofascism and then comparing Eco’s views with those of Robert Jay Lifton and others, who have done a lot of work trying to define unjust power and how it operates.

In Eco’s language the Traditionalists are “Ur-Fascists”. In an essay titled “Ur-Fascism” (or ‘Primordial Fascism’) in his book, “Five Moral Pieces” (Harcourt, 2002), Umberto Eco lists 14 characteristics of Ur-Fascism. Guenon, Schuon and Evola are guilty of most of them.

There are various aspects of Eco’s analysis that do not involve traditions.²⁹⁸ to save time I will not discuss those. But most of his main characterizes of Ur-Fascism do apply to traditionalism. These are the characteristic that do apply to Guenon Schuon and the others:

²⁹⁷ The prefix Ur was used by Goethe in the phrase Ur-plant, meaning primordial of original plant from which he thought other plants come. In this sense Ur means archetypal, and since I don’t believe in archetypes, much less archetypal plants, I choose not to use the word. Plants evolved from earth, water and sunlight, they did not come from imaginary Platonic, Islamic, Schuonian or Jungian “archetypes”. Some people translate the word Ur as “eternal” which is not too far off since Guenon seems to have tried to create an eternal fascism. In any case, theofascism seems fine, especially since one of Guenon’s followers already had coined the term “spiritual fascism”. The term Theofascism is more or less synonymous.

²⁹⁸ Eco defines Ur Fascism

by these 14 points. The 14 points of Eco’s analysis are in over simplified terms : The Cult of Tradition: Rejection of Modernism: The Cult of Action for Action's Sake: Disagreement is Treason: Fear of Difference: Appeal to a Frustrated Middle Class: Obsession With a Plot: Cult of Inferiority: Life is Permanent Warfare: Contempt for the Weak: Cult of Masculinity: Selective Populism: Newspeak. Compare these with Lifton’s characteristics of Totalism, there and many overlapping criteria.

The Cult of Tradition:
Rejection of Modernism:
Disagreement is Treason:
Fear of Difference:
Obsession With a Plot:
Cult of the Elite:
Life is Permanent verge on apocalypse:
Contempt for the Weak:
Cult of patriarchy :
Double-speak or Newspeak:

Eco states that any single characteristic is “enough that one of them be present to allow fascism to coagulate around it”. The first one, the “the cult of tradition” is essential to the Traditionalist project.. For the Traditionalists, as Eco suggests “the truth has already been announced once and for all”, there can be no advancement of learning: “all we can do is continue interpreting its obscure message”. Guenonians read and reread his silly books as if they were holy writ. Schuon’s acolytes do the same thing. Eco notes that “Nazi gnosis” “fed on Traditionalist, syncretic, and occult elements”, and he explicitly cites the example of the influence of Julius Evola and Rene Guenon on the new Italian right as examples of Ur-Fascism.

Eco is right to consider Guenon a theofascist. He also notes that a feature of fascism is its “rejection of the modern world”, its disapproval of Renaissance and Enlightenment thought. “Traditionalism implies the rejection of modernism ...The Enlightenment, the Age of Reason, is seen as the beginning of modern depravity. In this sense [Eternal fascism] can be defined as irrationalism.” The Traditionalists are romantic

irrationalists who deny science and want to return to revelations and sacred texts administered by priests or to their own internal intuitions, their subjective “intellect”. Eco specifies that for an Ur-Fascist “anyone who disagrees with them is guilty of treason. In modern culture the scientific community praises disagreement as a way to improve knowledge. For Ur-Fascism, disagreement is treason.” This is exactly right. The Traditionalists brand, slander and anathematize anyone who criticizes them as if they were heretics. I heard Schuon call people “heretics” on many occasions.

Eco also notes that at the “root of the Ur-Fascist psychology there is the obsession with a plot, possibly an international one. The followers must feel besieged.” This is certainly true of the Traditionalists. Guenon’s book Reign of Quantity is perhaps the most plot and conspiracy obsessed books ever published. Guenon sees the entire universe as a plot, and evil exudes from coins, metals, architecture, people, and books: he sees plots and demons seeping out of the Great Wall and everywhere else too. This is true to such a degree that Guenon has classic paranoid symptoms of Narcissism and paranoid schizophrenia.²⁹⁹ Guenon thought that even his close associates were in a plot against him, that the entire universe was in a plot against all of us.³⁰⁰ Schuon also anathematized everyone who did not think exactly as he did. Schuon’s cult was rife with imaginary enemies. Schuon thought that anyone who disagrees with them is “evil”. Guenon’s followers see plots everywhere too. Recent Traditionalist writers such as Charles Upton continue this tendency to see plots and

²⁹⁹ In Against the Modern World Sedgwick repeatedly refers to Guenon’s paranoia as “mild paranoia”. There is nothing mild about Reign of Quantity, which is a case of classic paranoid projection of a mental illness on the structure of the entire universe. His vision of revenge on the population of the earth for not believing and Guenon believes is very disturbing. He was a sick man

³⁰⁰ I will discuss this more completely in my review of Guenon’s book The Reign of Quantity.

conspiracies everywhere. ³⁰¹

Among the various other characteristics that Umberto Eco cites as typical of fascism, Eco singles out its hierarchic elitism: “[it] is a typical aspect of all reactionary ideologies, insofar as it is basically aristocratic, and aristocratic and militaristic elitism cruelly implies contempt for the weak.” The Traditionalists are full of disdain for everyone except their own members, and even they are regularly subject to constant rebuke and critique. Eco also notes that the elitism of the spiritual fascists results in their promoting a “cult of heroism”, where everyone is “impatient to die”. Eco’s criticism regarding the “cult of heroism” and the elitism of the Ur-Fascists is exactly right. Schuon had a cult of heroism too, and pretended that he himself as a sort of war hero against the modern world. The Traditionalists are obsessed with apocalypse and “joining the next world”. They have a Manichean notion of earthly existence as radically steeped in evil. The attempts of writers like Guenon and Schuon to lay claim to an imaginary “divine intellect” ---really a “pathological subjectivity”--- from which they want to derive all earthly authority involves them in truly dangerous delusions of grandeur, very much along the same lines as the worship of Hitler or Ill Duce or the self-worship of Napoleon. However, they go even further than these men. They divinize the anti-modernist, aristocratic and theocratic “Self” and claim supernatural authority for what is really just a right wing platform of repression and arrogant ignorance. They are radical conservatives, as were the Nazis, but they are not Nazis; despite the close sympathies and similarities: there are differences. However, the differences do not negate

³⁰¹ Some Traditionalists imagine that the recent revelations of homosexual catholic priests abusing young boys is due to “Satanists” infiltrating the church. This is a deliberate falsehood of course and another example of homophobia. Even the current Pope Benedict has been shown to be involved in a cover-up of these corrupt priests. The real reason for the pedophilia is that the church, despite its homophobia, has always encouraged homosexuality by its patriarchal misogyny and advocacy of unrealistic celibacy. But the real causes cannot be addressed, so various traditionalists, find a scapegoat to try to cover up for the Church itself, who is the real guilty party here.

the fact that the Traditionalists are super-fascists: rather they underscore that traditionalism is a species of fascism or a religious scaled, and nothing else.

Umberto Eco's definition of Ur-Fascism or my own notion of theofascism, derived from many sources, can be widely applied to Guenon and the other traditionalists.³⁰² My concern here is only to outline some aspects of the relation of the Traditionalists to Fascism, totalism and colonial Imperialism. I do this as an application of my larger concern, which is to outline the relationship of systems of knowledge to the form and practices of power, which I perused more completely in my book the Empire of the Intellect. Moreover, since the Traditionalists claim to represent the essence of all the major religions, I wish to assess religion as a form of power in opposition to science. I believe that some of the conclusions of the study of this particular movement and the various cults it has spawned can be applied historically to the major religions of the world. The use of doctrines and ideas to legitimize oppressive power structures and hierarchies which I have outlined in these chapters, can likewise be found operating in the major religions on a much larger scale. Thus a critique of Traditionalism ends by being a criticism of religion as a whole as well, and thus becomes a defense of science.

³⁰² Eco also criticizes Guenon in other ways. He claims (in Umberto Eco, *Les Limites de l'interprétation*, Grasset, Paris, 1992,) That Guenon 's works are full of argumentation based on loose analogies, arbitrary comparaisons and symbols, etymologies and phonetic proximities that do not establish facts but rather build a case based on fictions and paranoid suppositions. There is truth to this as I show in my essay on Guenon's Book Reign of Quantity in this book . The traditionalists are basically romantic poets of the subjective, and most of their works try to create an appearance of rationality for things that are inventions, metaphors, pretense and fictions. They are shamans of the pretend. And as Bertrand Russell pointed out, fascism is largely the production of far right romantics.

Religion as Social Control:

Theofascism, Totalism and R.J. Lifton

Roger Griffin and Umberto Eco's views are complemented and augmented by other writers like R.J. Lifton. I will discuss these and other writers on cults and totalism in this chapter, drawing in my idea of theofascism into the mix. One of my concerns in this book is to outline some of the weaknesses of the approach of evolutionary psychology to religion in the hopes of improving it. Evolutionary analysis is the way to go.. I am very much in favor of an evolutionary view of religions but as yet it seems weak. Since religion appears to be a cultural construct akin to politics, it is hard only incidentally suggested by our genetic endowment and easily removed. Lifton's analysis is better in many ways than Boyer or Dennett. Writers like Pascal Boyer, simply do not grasp very deeply the hugely destructive character of so much of religious history or the close kinship of religion to politics. Like politics, religion does not have a directly genetic origin in the human brain. People organize their political and religious behavior based on very different ideas and notions of what is just or fair, true or false. Religion and politics are very similar by-products of human cognitive capacity. Evolution is not yet a very good interpreter of religious ideology and behavior, just as it cannot yet explain political systems very well. To understand how religion actually operates in the real world, R. J. Lifton has advanced theories that augments the otherwise very weak theories of Boyer and others. If we are going to have a scientific study of religion it has to go a lot deeper. Invoking brains science, is essential, but by itself, it is simply not enough yet.

Various people have written me and make the mistake of imagining that this book is about fascism of the German or Italian varieties. They imagine that I am saying that traditionalism is fascism of the Nazi kind. No, this is a misunderstanding. I am not writing about Nazi Germans,

Fascist Italians or the Fascist Japanese of World War 2. Theofascism is not the Fascism of the Nazis and Italians and this should be plain in the course of this book. However, yes, there were real connections between the two very different forms of reactionary systems, however tenuous. Fascism, Traditionalism and religion in general are all about social control from the top down. I am exploring the close relation of religion and politics in order to write a critique of many kinds of authoritarian power systems.

At least part of these 3 books is also about a minor and rather obscure 20th century cult of the past, a group of nostalgic religiophiles, wanna-be spiritual masters and delusional self-made “prophets” who tried to canonize themselves as the final word on the ‘great’ religions and civilizations of the past. I am interested in the critique as a way of questioning the role of ideology in evolution. There are those who try to write that evolution is part of culture and thus religion or ideologies must be defined as part of our development. Religion is then defined as part of the human success story. This sort of self-congratulatory social Darwinism is really inappropriate. Boyer says that religion is a “parasite” on the mind, which is basically a by-product theory, like Richard Dawkins. Dawkins is much more forceful than Boyer and says outright that religion is not a good thing and that it is a wayward “by-product” of our brains. Lifton thinks religion is an accidental “by product” of power systems and social inequities and does not look into genetic or brain science very much. I think the truth in both these hypotheses, and they are not opposite but complementary. Though I think the by-product theory is still very fuzzy and unclear.³⁰³

Human brains are made in ways that make them susceptible to

³⁰³ Although Darwin implied something like the by-product theory, he does not go that far, and implies much more for adaptation. He implies reason, imagination, and some aspects of language are adaptations, for instance. Chomsky follows Stephen Jay Gould who tried to subvert Darwin with his spandrel theory, which goes far beyond Darwin. I doubt Gould is right. I will discuss Gould and others in a latter chapter. See also exaptation.

ideological constructions, and religious systems grow up in relation to system of abusive power. I doubt that the notion of mental viruses has any use except as an analogy. It is not the case that evolution selected for religion, it is rather that evolution selected for language and culture. While language distorts the mind in one way, culture has often deviated into ideological extremes—delusions---- in order that a given caste or class would perpetuate itself, often destructively, against the benefit of the culture of a people as a whole.

In order to understand religions and their relation to culture at large, It might be useful to look at the arguments about the use of the word “cult” here. Religious studies is clearly an academic discipline whose primary purpose to justify fictional notions of power employed in the various religions. It offers apologetics. There are few cases of the critique of religious powers in the academic world, The word cult comes is from the French *culte* or Latin *cultus*, ‘worship’, from *cult-*, ‘inhabited, cultivated, worshipped,’ and denotes ritual practice. Cults are thus defined by the actual facts of how religions operate. Cults are belief systems that infect groups through ideological systems of control. All religions are thus delusional cults, whether they are publically acknowledged as a good or not.. A destructive cult is one that does harm, like Scientology or the Catholic Church, and many others, too numerous to mention. Religions also act as destructive cults, more so at one time and less so at another. The definition of cult applied only to outlying groups from the status quo of Christian or Buddhist normality is wrong. Buddhist and Christianity are cults too, just much larger ones and ones more widely accepted as legitimate.

The word cult is perfectly valid and not entirely pejorative in common use. Cult and culture are both words that describe common systems of practice and belief. It is pejorative in some usage and that is fine as these are often harmful groups and coercive institutions. There was an unwarranted apologetic movement in favor of cults and religions

created by religious studies scholars of a right wing bent in the 1980's and 90's, led partly by Cesnur but spreading to other academics fairly quickly. It was partly an effort to hold on to their jobs and partly an effort of sanitize a very unseemly growth of dangerous far right cults worldwide. The cult apologist movement was born to try to stem criticism of authoritarian theofascism in movements of many kinds. As it became obvious that there is little difference between destructive cults and the world's religions, an attempt was made to blur any critique of religion at all. This is still very much the case, as, 1st Amendment ideas help insulate criticism from any discussion at all.

Indeed, as Timothy Fitzgerald claims the term religion, as used, is indistinguishable from the word 'culture'. Religions are ideologies and psycho-political systems. When an ideological culture gets turned into 'them versus us' groups they are cults, and all the religions are this exactly. People who seek to excuse cults and thus support exclusive and coercive groups they are called "cult apologists" and there are many priests and religious studies professors who are this precisely. I look at a number of such professors in this book, Mark Sedgwick and Arthur Versluis, among others. I therefore retain the use of the word cult and eschew the 'newspeak' term, "New Religious Movement".

This is worth looking into deeper. As you will see if you look into the history of the Scientology cult. It is one of the worst cults in the last 50 years. It has made substantial efforts to influence opinion and case law in favor of cults. It has also influenced many rather dim witted religious studies professors who imagine that delusional and coercive cults are actually "New Religious movements" (NRM). The Scientology cult has used its power and money to lie about religion and push an agenda of religious extremism on the American public. It has also sought to intimidate and lie about all its critics, not unlike the Schuon cult.³⁰⁴

³⁰⁴ Cult Awareness Network (CAN) listed the Schuon cult as a dangerous cult. But this

While it is true to say that cults are part of history, to see them as part of evolution and thus religion as a necessary part of human development and society seems far-fetched or even delusional. Religion is not so much the fruit of evolution as the aberration that seeks to undermine the facts of nature by promoting acceptance of delusional ideologies. I am using the Traditionalists as a foil against which to assess various cultic systems of unjust power. They thought they were “Lords of the World” in Rene Guenon’s phrase, and had the “divine right of kings” in Schuon’s phrase. Nonsense of course, but interesting for what it says about human beings and how, historically, regimes and individuals have inflated themselves. Group dynamics shows us how those who follow authoritarians will accept their beautiful lies as truth. As much as there have been attempts to abolish terms like mind control or brain washing, it is clear that these are real things and reality always has a way of reasserting itself against apologists and propagandists. Guenon, Schuon and Evola were throw backs to the Middle Ages. Like their mentors the Pre-Raphaelites, their idealistic, even dreamy and unresearched love of that period made them unable to see just how dark the Dark Ages really were.

One important detail I should mention is this. “Spiritual fascism” is not my term, but a term used by one of Guenon’s close followers, Guido De Giorgio, to describe Guenon’s ideology. I define this perhaps too precisely in the course of this book. Spiritual fascism is an apt and pregnant phrase. It was a phrase invented by a Guenonian and I here apply it here to a much wider phenomena, far beyond the idea of historical fascism. But the preferred term here is Theofascism, because it

praiseworthy organization was destroyed. In 1996 Scientology used over paid lawyers to intimidate and then bankrupted and destroyed CAN. It then bought out the real “Cult Awareness Network” in 1996” Margaret Thaler Singer expressed the opinion that ‘any experts the public would be referred to by the “New CAN” would be cult apologists.’ This is true. Cult apologists, who perhaps should be called “delusion promoters” now constitute a serious portion of what is called religious studies. For more on Scientology see this old story from 60 minutes <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7vUPaifSnbG>

emphasizes the use of a god concept as a way to leverage power over the innocent by stealing their minds with delusory images of the divine.

I suppose I could have used the term “totalism” or “totalitarianism”, which Guenon, Schuon and Evola all were to some degree. There are various definitions of totalism. And I said earlier. Robert Lifton’s understanding about social control and totalism is deep and most thoroughly researched. He has written amazing books on Chinese Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism, Vietnam, Nazi Doctors and Hiroshima in America. Lifton’s use of the term “Totalism” differs from theories of “totalitarianism” in that the word ‘totalism’ can be applied to the ideology of groups that do not wield governmental power. But really there is no real difference between the two concepts beyond scale. So I will use the word totalism rather than totalitarianism.

Fascism is one sort of totalism, but there are others, even on the far left. The distinction between totalism and totalitarianism is related to another vague definitional squabble between state terrorism and criminal terrorism committed by smaller groups. Large scale institutions like to pretend they are a totally different objects than other small groups, cults, or corporations. But this is not the case. Osama Bin Laden’s al-Qaeda is not different in cultic structure from ‘Aum Shinrikyo’, the Japanese cult that killed 11 people with sarin gas in 1999 and nor is Bin Laden much different than George Bush, who also was a theofascist, just as was Bin Laden. Bush killed a lot more people than Bin Laden. Nor is the Jonestown cult that killed 900 people in 1978 all that different in basis structure than the structure and belief system of Hitler’s Fascism or Stalin’s gulag system. All these can be usefully compared to Innocent the III’s Catholic Church or Nixon’s war against the Vietnamese. These are all destructive systems of totalism that depend on creating a “Them verses Us” atmosphere and scapegoating individuals outside the group. They employ a system of mind control, indoctrination or misinformation, as well as apocalyptic millenarianism used to justify exclusion and

destruction of others. Even destructive corporations have elements of totalism as part of the makeup of exploitation and control. Yes, there are differences, but the basic outline that justifies killing in all these instances is very similar.

The phrase “ideological totalism” was used by “Robert J. Lifton in the 1950’s to describe these systems of ideological abuse and mind control and this echoes my own “ideofascism”, mentioned in the previous chapter. The purpose of mind control of course, is social control, getting people to behave in specific ways that serves of organizational objective. Lifton is one of the best writers there is on this subject. His early book Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism is ground breaking. Later books elaborated on his early studies. Lifton’s first study of these ideas applied to Communist or Maoist China before and during the ‘Cultural Revolution’, where systematic indoctrination was routine and punishments for failing to conform were horrendous. Systems of power—as well as the intellectual apparatus that justifies systems of power----act in similar ways. Lifton himself applied conclusions drawn from Chinese social control to other societies, including our own. The totalism of Guenon has many similarities to the totalism of, say, Mao or Stalin. Though this is an way of comparing totalist systems looks at many abusive systems at the same time.

Here I’m concerned with one form of ideological totalism and that is traditionalism and its relation to what I am calling ‘theofascism’. Totalism and theofascism more or less overlap, while yet differing sharply in some areas. Indeed, what characterizes traditionalist followers is their arrogance and certitude that their spiritual delusions are the truth and the only one that exists. They are so fallen under the Guenonian spell that they tend to falsely call anyone who criticizes the cult master or his stiff and ossified doctrines, “evil”, “satanic” or “out for revenge”. But to be objective about traditionalism is to recognize its far-right, closed and the cultishly political character of what it calls “metaphysics”.. Karl Popper

defines an “open society” as one that allows critique and falsification to verify truth. Science is a necessity in an open society precisely because it involves open inquiry. Guenon’s and Schuon’s worlds are retrogressive “closed societies”, in Popper’s phrase, which do not allow criticism or even recognize it exists. They hide in subjective dogma and claim to know things they really know nothing about. They live in an insulated nether world that is monitored by a sort of “ministry of truth”,³⁰⁵ which are actually upper level cult members whose job it is to lie to the average cult members and tell them critics of the group are evil and the great leader is indeed great. They try to blacklist and demonize all honest and innocent whistleblowers To Guenon, critics are the enemy: they were devils and heretics, demons and counter-initiates involved in a diabolic plot against him. The truth is otherwise.

In the early 1990’s, when Rama Coomaraswamy and I had many long conversations about how to bring Schuon to justice and into question we also talked about destructive religious cults in general. We both used the word “totalism” to describe the Schuon cult or his intellectual system. Like Orwell’ 1984, the Schuon’s cult is a closed system with Schuon as its ultimate hero. Orwell’s book reminds me of the tactics of the Schuon cult. It was written around the same time as

³⁰⁵ This phrase is used by George Orwell in his excellent 1984, which in fictional terms outlines very well the nature of cult mechanics, unjust power structures and ‘principled autocracy’ as Martin Lings calls his favorite system of torture and mind control. Orwell and Lifton have a similar analysis of power systems. Winston Smith works the “ministry of truth” and figures out that he is a professional liar and propagandist for the unjust state. He starts to do things in secret—namely love someone--- that are against the arbitrary rules of the state and is punished for it by the men in charge of thought control. Big Brother is watching you is a constant refrain of the book, like the god of the Inquisition or the cult monitors in Schuon’s cult, they watch over the followers to insure conformity of thought. Anyone who is critical of the state or its officers must be punished or silenced. Winston falls in love with someone and both of them are tortured until their love is squashed and they betray eachother.

The book reminds me of what the Schuon cult did to Maude Murray: thought control, torture, punishment for love and finally a kind of ugly and malicious banishment.

Guenon's Reign of Quantity and it is its opposite in every way. Where Guenon supports Totalism and arbitrary power, Orwell opposes it, where Guenon hates the individual, Orwell celebrates the individual, where Guenon endorses the elite, secrecy and lying, Orwell wants the truth, democracy and transparency. Totalism is a good term and describes many repressive and unjust systems, religious and non-religious. However, this term misses the peculiarly religious, Universalist and extremist flavor of the Guenon and his followers, while it does describe much of their behavior. Therefore, I am using the terms Theofascism, Spiritual fascism and Totalism in reference to the traditionalists. These are all closely related terms, but they mean slightly different things.

So then, listening to the evidence and being aware of some of Lifton, Griffin and Eco's ideas, Guenon and Schuon are theofascists or religious totalists and these terms are more or less synonymous. They are not fascists as defined by Griffin. I do not say they are fascists either, but only that they share some aspects of it. Guenon and Schuon claimed to have enunciated a doctrine that encompasses the entire structure of the world, which resembles the backward looking aspect of fascism, if not its futuristic cult of modernity. But there is a dystopian cult of the future in the traditionalists in that they are utter pessimists, and the world is going to hell now and will soon be burning in apocalyptic fires. The future for them is the grim reaper and a spiritual life in a upper class suburbia in the next world. Theofascist traditionalists are not nationalists in general, though there is an opening to nationalism in it, as it seeks to universalize at the same time as it tries to honor local customs, interpreting them "esoterically"..

The Traditionalists picture themselves as a 'remnant' of holy men banding together at the end of the world, as Guenon, Schuon and Evola imagined. The truth is otherwise. Rather traditionalism was a

psychopathic reaction to science and modernism. It was an effort to gather the dying religions together to try to forestall the end of religion as a serious and credible force in history. This is obvious in Guenon's insane book, The Reign of Quantity, where evil is far more powerful than good ³⁰⁶ and the entire world is under a deathwatch of threatening evils pouring through the "Great Wall" around the world. Guenon uses the insane imagery of paranoid schizophrenia. Traditionalism ends in a rank effort to resurrect unjust totalitarian political theocracy. Traditionalism ramrods religion back into politics and reveals that religion is really politics by another name

So then at the risk of repeating things the reader already knows, Guenon, Schuon and Evola are three men who embody a certain extreme conservative ideology in the 20th century. Mark Sedgwick, in a book of this title, calls this ideology and the men who promoted it "against the modern world" and yes all these men are extreme outsiders. It took me some years to come to any clear conclusions about these men. There was no book about them then and everything I learned I had to gather by my own efforts and through meeting people who knew and research, as well as through my own experiences, which were unique, as I had an inside track that I had not even looked to acquire. But after I left the Schuon group in 1991 and began studying cults, dangerous organizations and destructive governments, I finally determined that what I had encountered was truly a destructive cult. While still in the cult I could tell

³⁰⁶ Guenon's very early poems show him to be primarily obsessed with Satan, not with god, and he tries to incorporate Satan into god, somehow, reminding one of Carl Jung's or Jeff Kripal's similar gnostic endeavors to rehabilitate evil as good. This is not a poem that is about reality, it is a poem about Guenon's psychology, which appears to have been a mind that was always under threat from his earliest years. His religious ideas are a perpetual effort to forestall the cracking up of his personality, and the Reign of Quantity is really about that, not our "modern world". Guenon's hatred of anything personal is a defense against his own seething fears and terrors, his own humanity. These fears overwhelm him increasingly as he tries to conform himself to esoteric ideology and orthodox mythologies. This is true of Schuon too, who was a very small man, but who tried to exalt himself using Guenonian formula and religious mythology.

that Schuon was insane, I could see it in his face, but I had no name to call what I saw. I finally figured out that Schuon was a real sociopathic personality. I often had that impression while looking at him. There were occasions where he resembled photos I have seen of glaring-eyed Charlie Manson, the cult leader of Helter Skelter.

Guenon shared many of the qualities Schuon possessed, or rather, Guenon, in some ways, both complemented encouraged and helped form the development of Schuon's psychopathology. I learned a lot from Robert J. Lifton, Margret Singer³⁰⁷, Madeleine Tobias, Janja Lalich, Stephen Hassan and others that the psychological profile of the psychopath and the cult leader have many overlaps. It might be worthwhile to go over these tendencies and apply them to the traditionalists in a little more detail. The characteristics of a sociopath or psychopath, according to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders text DSM IV,³⁰⁸ Madeleine Tobias, following R. J. Lifton and other thinkers who have studied destructive organizations, defines a cult leader and his cult as existing to promote or "meet the unmet, emotional, financial, sexual and/or power needs of its leader". This is certainly true of Schuon where his four wives served him night and day and his other disciples were encouraged by the wives to worship him as an "avatara". Ms. Tobias notes that "the dynamic around which cults are formed is similar to that of other power relationships and is essentially authoritarian".

Madeleine Tobias defines 15 characteristics of cult or psychopathic leaders. These include: 'charisma', 'manipulative conning', 'grandiose sense of self'; 'pathological lying'; 'lack of shame and remorse'; 'callousness', 'lack of empathy', and various other criminal and sociopathic qualities. Schuon fit nearly all of these characteristics, as do

³⁰⁷ For more on cults and Margret Singer see:
<http://www.rickross.com/groups/singer.html>

³⁰⁸ Hervey Cleckley was partly responsible for the DSM- IV chapter on psychopaths.

many of the Nazi leaders, as well as other leaders of cults and dangerous states and organizations, from Cromwell to Hitler, Stalin to David Koresh, Robespierre to Constantine, J.P. Morgan to Torquemada, or from Hong Xioquin ³⁰⁹ to the leaders who promoted and executed the Vietnam war. ³¹⁰ All these men served a “Higher Truth” called god, the free market or the party. Thus faithful to a higher truth they abused, exploited or killed those who did not serve their truth. Totalism seeks to destroy anyone who is in the way. Many of these qualities resonate with Umberto’s Eco’s analysis of Ur-fascism as well as Robert Lifton’s analysis of mind control organizations, cult and states. Eco, Lifton and Tobais show us the profile of a cult leader and the psychology of a fascist movements and these character traits fit Napoleon, Stalin, Schuon, Guenon, Evola, Koresh, Manson and other cult leaders and autocrats quite well. These authors list fifteen characteristics of the psychopath or cult leader. I will only list only a few of these, to be brief, with no intention of being exhaustive here.

Profile of a psychopath or cult leader

1. **Charm or glibness**—able to con people, persuade, confuse or convince. Guenon’s kill in service to ultra-rightist ideology created many little groups and cults, followers and off shoots, Guenon’s writings seem pretty awful to me, but many find them compelling. He is able to sell the most ridiculous idea as if it were the real truth. Schuon is not so good at this and Schuon’s writings ere heavily edited by the Guenonians in his early years. Schuon learned to be charming with some difficulty. On the other hand, Evola was able to charm his

³⁰⁹ Hong Xoaquin killed millions of people in China. Like Schuon he claimed to be a son of the Virgin Mary. That is interesting. There are not many people who make such obviously psychological claims.

³¹⁰ Tobias, Captive Hearts, Captive Minds, pg.77 see also Stephen Hassan's Combating Cult

followers into violent acts. Roger Griffin writes of Evola's abilities to convince others, his lecturing to SS groups in the Third Reich and even after the defeat of Fascism. Griffin writes

“For the next two decades he was to maintain his self-appointed role as a beacon of Traditional values illuminating the dark plain of modernity, little known except to small groups of neo-fascist youths such as the Fases of Revolutionary Action and the Black Legions whose acknowledgment of Evola as their ‘master’ and ‘inspiration’ caused him to appear before a Rome court in 1951, accused of attempting with his ‘nebulous theories’ to ‘reconstitute the disbanded Fascist party’ “

2. **Manipulative---** cult leaders do not respect rights of others, has only accomplices or victims. Schuon did not like children and encouraged his followers to not have them. He was bad to many disciples and left many bitter people behind him, as Glasse records. But he convinced others to support him financially, in great style. Female followers, duped by his aura of power, offered their bodies to him, despite his ugliness, or maybe because of his presumption of guru status. He was a little Napoleon, with a huge ego hidden behind the pose of ‘Shaykh” a Native American headdress or a purple velvet cloak. Guenon was also a manipulator, liar and con man, as I have shown though out this book.

3. **Grandiose sense of self:** Schuon thought he was “the last manifestation of the Logos”, Guenon thought he was as divine mouthpiece a manifesto of ‘pure intellect’. Later in this essay I will show how Schuon and Guenon thought they were both chosen by Al Khadir, a mythical figure in the Koran. Evola Schuon and Guenon style themselves sages of the “Sacred Right”, the unassailable ”tradition”. Roger Griffin notes that “the characteristic trait of all Evola’s writings” is to grant himself “ license to roam through the store-houses of the world’s anthropology, mythology and esoteric doctrines unencumbered by

conventional standards of evidence or ‘objectivity’. Without any outside corroboration Evola assumes “ a tone of unassailable authority in the revelation of eternal truths” . This is true of Schuon and Guenon too, as well as many other traditionalists writers. ³¹¹ What is a myth if not “an attempt to rationalize the irrational” Karl Popper writes

4. **Prone to lying**, deceit, cheating. Guenon used pseudonyms, was prone to excessive secrets, often used secrets to try to mystify his spiritual election. Schuon “lied easily and had other lie for him” Schuon’s third wife Maude Murray stated. Indeed, the Schuon cult is based on lies from its inception as are all the religions. The myth of Christ’s resurrection, Schuon’s vision of the virgin Mary, the nonsense about Krishna in Hinduism, These are all “Holy lies” as if putting the word holy before them made them any less lies. Watching Schuon lie to get out of consequences of the legal system was interesting as it showed me that for self-survival all his “principles” went out the window and he was just another opportunistic hypocrite. Getting young girls to lie for him was really something. I saw who he really was.

5,6. **Lack of remorse**. Shallow emotions. Neither Schuon or Guenon seemed to feel deeply about anything except their own intellectual supremacy. Schuon used people openly and discarded them without remorse. This is true in other cult leaders too, such as Adi Da, who abused many of his followers, or Bagwan Rajneesh and Gurdjeiff, who did the same thing.

7. **Incapacity for love**. Schuon wanted adulation but did not love others in turn. He was incapable of being a father or a good husband. He merely gathered or collected worshippers of himself and even his “wives”, who

³¹¹ See
<http://www.rosenoire.org/articles/revolts.php>

were not really wives, meant little to him except if they increased worship of him. As Cyril Glasse wrote that “in the late 1970’s and beyond S. Hamidah, S. Aminah. And S. Latifah applied their flatteries to him each trying to outdo the other” Schuon claimed that “ I am not less than Plato” and it was suggested that “ He is greater than Jesus””. To this hyperbole Glasse humorously replies that “it is not known if anyone saluted but it was run up the flagpole”. In other words the wives tried to claim Schuon was as great or greater than Jesus, to try out the idea.

Guenon seems to have required great admiration too, though not as excessively as Schuon.

9. Callousness lack of empathy. Guenon is vicious in his books, laying waste to the “profane”, hating democracy, wanting everyone to be reduced to an excessive religiosity that punishes those that do not conform. Schuon even disliked children got mad once when child saved at him when he was in his car. It was “undignified” for the child to do this to him. I never saw him apologize for anything, or admit wrong doing, even when his crimes were put in front of his face, All faults lie with others and never with him.

13. Sexual behavior. Schuon was a polygamist and held bizarre gatherings in which the women were expected to press their genitals against him for a “healing”. No explanation was ever given why their wombs were ‘sick” and required healing. The rationale was invented after the fact to justify a practice of passion of his female followers. It was a sexist maneuver, based on false premises of women being “wounded”..

So the characteristic of the psychopath or sociopath and the cult leader overlap and Guenon, Schuon and Evola share some of the characteristics of the sociopath in varying degrees. All three men were very far right eccentrics with deep seated and irrational hatred of the modern world

and a wish to return the world to earlier more repressive and hierarchical models based on caste or totalitarian religious ideas. They all claimed bogus initiations, or to have been born with extraordinary inner knowledge (Jnamic gnosis they liked to call it) but in fact they were autodidactic ‘anti-positivist’³¹² romantics with delusions of grandeur.

Madeline Tobias writes of the cult leader that:

“The cult leader enjoys tremendous feelings of entitlement. He believes that everything is owed to him as a right, Preoccupied with his own fantasies, he must always be the center of attention. He presents himself as the “Ultimate One”: enlightened, a vehicle of god, a genius, the leader of humankind, and sometimes even the most humble of the humble. He has an insatiable need of adulation and attendance. His grandiosity may also be a defense against inner emptiness, depression, and a sense of insignificance. Paranoia often accompanies the grandiosity, reinforcing the isolation of the group and the need for protection against a perceived hostile environment. In this way, he creates an us-versus-them mentality

This is all true of Schuon:

It is useful to compare the different typologies of the psychopath and the organizational structure of cults as laid out by Lifton and others. Martin Marty and Scott Appleby , in their series of books, Fundamentalisms

³¹² Positivism is ascribed to August Comte, whose “religion of humanity” is curious. The need of religion in Comte was pretty strong apparently because of his mental illness. I have been accused of being a positivist by French correspondent. it has never occurred the me to call myself this sort of label. I have never read any of the Vienna circle. I like some of Popper’s and Russell’s ideas but don’t think either was a positivist. Comte is a positivist and seems quite reasonable in general, but I never read anything he wrote until today. I like John Stuart Mill, vaguely, but I think I prefer the Russell and even a maverick like Feyerabend, , though they are not perfect either, no one is. Feyerabend was mistaken in many ways. So I am not a positivist, though I am very much in favor of science, empiricism and reason and think the hatred of these by poets, artists and the religious is ignorant, and irresponsible. We are all doing our best to understand reality and fighting against the irrationalism of those who hate science and inquiry and would have us live under authoritarian dogma.

Observed, developed similar categories and points that characterize fundamentalist ideology are

1. religious idealism as basis for personal and communal identity;
2. Fundamentalists understand truth to be revealed and unified;
3. It is intentionally scandalous, (similar to Lawrence's point about language — outsiders cannot understand it);
4. Fundamentalists envision themselves as part of a cosmic struggle;
5. They seize on historical moments and reinterpret them in light of this cosmic struggle;
6. They demonize their opposition and are reactionary;
7. Fundamentalists are selective in what parts of their tradition and heritage they stress;
8. They are led by males;
9. They envy modernist cultural hegemony and try to overturn the distribution of power.

This is pretty much all true of the Schuon cult, and most of it is true of Guenon's ideology. The following characteristics are also true of the Schuon cult organization:

The organizational characteristics include:

2. an elect or chosen membership;
 2. Sharp group boundaries;
 3. Charismatic authoritarian leaders;
 4. Mandated behavioral requirements.³¹³

³¹³ See Fundamentalism Observed by Martin Marty and R. Scott Appleby. There are four large volumes in this series so far. Fundamentalisms and the State. Fundamentalisms Comprehended. And Fundamentalism and Society. The books compare Protestant Christian, Catholic Christian, Jewish, Sunni Muslim, Shia Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Confucian and Shinto forms of Fundamentalism. These are interesting books and show further the close relation of religion to politics.

Getting out of such an organization is not easy. Many people have recorded the difficult of getting out of cults and religions. But I succeeded and went one to try to understand cults as a phenomena. When I left the Schuon cult in 1991 I came back to Cleveland and fought a pretty severe depression for a year. I got help from various people who understood a lot about cults and the suffering one undergoes when one realizes the spiritual master was a fraud. This is a very common occurrence and I am by no means the only one to have gone through it. The beautiful lie of it all leading to betrayals, fear, ostracism and being hated and lied about for telling the truth. At the time there was a horrible case in Cleveland by a man named Jeffery Lundgren, who had a quasi-Mormon cult. He thought himself a “prophet” too, as did Schuon, so I paid close attention to the case and read about it. Schuon’s sexual child abuse of girls of young girls in Primordial Gatherings really bothered me a lot. I realized at a certain point that he was not alone in this. Many children have been killed by Christian and other societies due to medical neglect. A study done of children killed by “faith healing” between 1975 and 1995 showed that 172 kids were killed because of their parents neglect, due to their involvement in Christian sects.³¹⁴ Moslem faith healing is similar,

³¹⁴ The number of kids killed by “faith Healing is no doubt much higher. This study was done by Seth Asser and Rita Swan. This study is called “Child Fatalities from Religion Motivated Medical Neglect”. “Criteria for inclusion were evidence that parents withheld medical care because of reliance on religious rituals and documentation sufficient to determine the cause of death.”...

“These fatalities were not from esoteric entities but ordinary ailments seen and treated routinely in community medical centers. Deaths from dehydration, appendicitis, labor complications, antibiotic, sensitive bacterial infections, vaccine-preventable disorders, or hemorrhagic disease of the newborn have a very low frequency in the United States.”

The actual number is certainly much higher . The authors note that

We suspect that many more fatalities have occurred during the study period than the cases reported here. Deaths of children in faith-healing sects are often recorded as attributable to natural causes and the contribution of neglect minimized or not investigated. During the course of requesting documents for this study, we were told of deaths of children because of religion-motivated medical neglect that were not previously known to us from public records, newspapers, or other sources.

See:

though in that case it often involves money making scams. Children in Islam are sometimes deformed or made to be deformed and then exploited.

Islam has permitted the child marriage of older men to girls as young as 9 years of age in Iran. The Seyaj Organization for the Protection of Children describes cases of child brides in Yemen. Hinduism allowed prostitution of young girls in temples. Tibetan Buddhism allowed abuse of young girls and boys by monks and Llamas at young ages. Mormon founder Joseph Smith was also guilty of child abuse. He married girls as young as 13 and 14, and other Latter Day Saints married girls as young as 10. Smith was a philandering and adulterous man who liked to threaten women who refused to sleep with him. The Mormon Church eliminated underaged marriages in the 19th century, the original leaders being some of the worst offenders, but several fundamentalist branches of Mormonism continue the practice.³¹⁵ Elijah Muhammad of the Nation of Islam was prone to the same corruption, allegedly having 21 children by eight women . Schuon was not alone in his corruptions.

Calling these dangerous cults “New Age religions” is absurd. I also followed the horrible case of David Koresh, the cult leader of the Branch Davidian cult. He was also an abusive personality, not unlike Lundgren and Schuon, though Schuon did not murder anyone, directly, anyway. I learned about Lifton’s theories from Tobias and Stephen Hassan. Hassan

<http://www.childrenshealthcare.org/PDF%20Files/Pediatricsarticle.pdf>

³¹⁵ Joseph Smith seduced a “married teenager, Zina D. Huntington, who he asked on 25 October 1841 to become another of his multiple wives. Smith informed her (using a line he also employed with Emma and others) that he was ordered to do so by a sword-wielding angel who was threatening to kill him if he disobeyed.” This is blackmail of course of a particularly vile kind. There are many stories like this. It is a wonder anyone stayed Mormon. Smith continues to dupe followers to this day

<http://exmormon.org/d6/drupal/Joseph-Smith-and-Fanny-Alger>

had been a member of the Reverend Sun Myung Moon cult, a Korean millionaire who exploited many people.³¹⁶ These people really opened my eyes about the prevalence of human right abuses brought about and enabled by cults, fundamentalisms and “major” religions.

It is useful to compare Robert Lifton’s schema for totalism to that of the psychological profile the psychopath of Madeleine Tobias, the scheme of Umberto Eco and the ideological characteristics of Fundamentalism above. Lifton expands the scheme of the cult leader beyond the individual and his analysis lines up closely with the characteristics of Fundamentalisms of all kinds. Below I apply some of Lifton’s terms to Guenon’s milieu to indicate how well Guenon and Schuon fit Lifton’s totalism model

3. Milieu Control. This involves the control of information and communication both within the environment and, ultimately, within the individual, resulting in a significant degree of isolation from society at large. Orwell called this tendency “Newspeak”. Guenonians separate themselves from the modern world as much as they can,

³¹⁶ In the 1990’s he took out a full page add that said “he went to heaven and got endorsements from Jesus, Stalin, Martin Luther”. Even this cult leader recognizes Stalin as a religious figure. Moon brainwashed young people with lack of sleep sugar, sex and easy marriage. Thousands of people were more or less abducted into the group and taken from families and loved ones. The organization had many corporate features and Moon himself was primarily interested in money and power, rather like the Scientologists. His former wife Nansook Hong wrote a brave exposee about him and “characterizing her husband as a womanizing cocaine user” who abused her. Many victims of this cult have written very damning things about the cult. “He also had commercial interests in Japan, where right-wing nationalist donors were said to be one source of financing. He was found guilty of “tax fraud and conspiracy to obstruct justice and sentenced to 18 months in prison, states the New York Times article on the day of his death. The New York times article treats the cult as if were merely another corporation, and a “new religious movement” which is a euphemism for a dangerous cult. Like other charlatans and cult leaders, such as Schuon and Jeffs, Moon called himself humanities great prophet and considered himself persecuted. He often invoked religious freedom as the justification for why he should be able to continue to exploit and harm people. . Like Schuon, Moon combined aspects of the different religions in his cult.

despise those who are part of the ‘profane world’ and encourage an alienated adherence to extreme orthodoxy. In Schuon’s cult this separation was extreme.

4. **Mystical Manipulation.** There is manipulation of experiences that appear spontaneous but in fact were planned and orchestrated by the group or its leaders in order to demonstrate divine authority or spiritual advancement or some special gift or talent that will then allow the leader to reinterpret events, scripture, and experiences as he or she wishes. IN the Schuon cult this was a constant and shifting thing. There were endless meetings, dinners rituals prayers and gatherings in which members were exploited and made to think as a uniform unit.
5. **Demand for Purity.** The world is viewed as black and white and the members are constantly exhorted to conform to the ideology of the group and strive for perfection. The induction of guilt and/or shame is a powerful control device used here. This is Guenon’s books in a nutshell, everything in Manichean terms—
6. **Confession.** Sins, as defined by the group, are to be confessed either to a personal monitor or publicly to the group. There is no confidentiality; members’ “sins,” “attitudes,” and “faults” are discussed and exploited by the leaders. Guenon’s system if basically inquisitorial mocking, disdainful, proud, and demands self-policing of an extreme kind
7. **Sacred Science.** The group’s doctrine or ideology is considered to be the ultimate Truth, beyond all questioning or dispute. Truth is not to be found outside the group. The leader, as the spokesperson for God or for all humanity, is likewise above criticism. Only Guenon or Schuon knows what reality is: both claim to be infallible.
8. **Loading the Language.** The group interprets or uses words and phrases in new ways so that often the outside world does not understand. This jargon consists of thought-terminating clichés,

which serve to alter members' thought processes to conform to the group's way of thinking. This is what Guenon's books intend to do, create thought terminating cliché's--- the modern world is evil, only orthodoxy is good, esoterism is truth esoterism is a means, the modern world is "counterfeit", the ordinary factual world is nothing, only platonic idealizations are real, etc. etc. etc.

9. **Doctrine over person.** Member's personal experiences are subordinated to the sacred science and any contrary experiences must be denied or reinterpreted to fit the ideology of the group. This was a constant process in the Schuon cult as family experiences and needs were sublimated into Schuon's purposes.
10. **Dispensing of existence.** The group has the prerogative to decide who has the right to exist and who does not. This is usually not literal but means that those in the outside world are not saved, unenlightened, unconscious and they must be converted to the group's ideology. If they do not join the group or are critical of the group, then they must be rejected by the members. Thus, the outside world loses all credibility. In conjunction, should any member leave the group, he or she must be rejected also. (Lifton, 1989) In Guenon's groups only Guenonians know anything--- everyone else must be mocked or ridiculed.. looked down on, kept from the silly secrets Guenonians hide. In Schuon's cult or in the Evola groups this was also the case. Only the cult leaders lies, dressed up as truth, matter.

Robert J. Lifton wrote one of the first studies on what he called "ideological totalism" as a result of his involvement with victims of Chinese mind control and torture techniques in China under Mao. But as Lifton himself points out, ideological totalism is not restricted to political and religious entities, but can be found in corporations, cults and in science or the institutions that science serves. Lifton writes:

Behind ideological totalism lies the ever-present quest for the omnipotent guide- for the supernatural force, political party, philosophical ideas, great leader or precise science that will bring ultimate solidarity to all men... [and] the potential for totalism is a continuum from which no one entirely escapes ³¹⁷

Guenon and Schuon in slightly different ways would claim to be or to have access to the 'omnipotent guide', be that guide an imaginary figure like Al Khadir, or an equally imaginary god that they assumed favored them above all other men. Both men were led by an imaginary faculty of the mind they called the "Intellect", which was not reason or intelligence in the ordinary sense, but an imaginary supra-sensible organ the "spirit", never defined or capable of being defined since it does not exist. In short, they made stuff up in their emotional imaginations. Theofascism is thus a system of sociopathic totalistic thinking and practice.

Let me define the relation of knowledge and power to atrocity more carefully. The desire to overcome or transcend the world through knowledge, is to participate in what R.J. Lifton calls the "immortalizing" principle. The speculative philosophical, spiritual system comes to seem to the Hegel's, Marx's or Guenon's of the world as an act of Salvation. This is fine in some cases. There is nothing intrinsically wrong with the paintings of Rembrandt or the writings of Thoreau, both of whom created something that made them relatively "immortal". They imagined things that were seemingly "transcendental". The neurological capacity for language in the brain allows this excessive imagining to extrapolate and imagine all sorts of things. There is no doubt an adaptive function to this. But one result of this excessive creative use of abstract images and

³¹⁷ Lifton, R.J. Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism New York: W.W. Norton 1969 pg.436

words is an addiction to transcendental delusions. But once the desire to be immortal begins to put ideology before people: fascism or ideological injustice raises its head. When the abstract idea of 'God', the 'Party', the 'Flag' or the 'Great Leader' is more important than actual people or animals, nature or the land, people start to be killed, injustices are excused, nature is abused. Theofascism is a form of totalism where ideology is put before human rights, as I have shown. One can trace the operations of ideological totalism in many historical epochs. For instance, Robert Oppenheimer, hated Hitler so much he became like Hitler. He really believed that the Bomb might save the world, just as the 3rd Reich was supposed to save the world. Both Hitler and Oppenheimer indulged in totalistic thinking to excuse horrible atrocities. Both of them also employed theofascist ideologies to justify their actions. The totalistic thinker wants to create an absolute truth to give to mankind---- a saving strategy that will insure his fame and immortality in the memories of other men and women. Hegel thought that his intellectual system was of such immortal profundity that he believed he had become the "Logos", the principle of universal truth. Schuon thought this too. Marx thought this to, working from Hegel, but changing his apocalyptic beliefs in a different direction. All these men create an abstract idea and then treat it as if it were concrete. They identify personally with an impersonal deity of principle. This is Whitehead's "fallacy of misplaced concreteness" again. The Inquisition killed in the name of an impersonal god it falsely claimed to represent. Marxism led to the Stalinist millennium of the Gulag Archipelago, with its labor and death camps. The German romantic idealism of Herder, Schlegel and Schelling would lead to Lanz von Liebenfels and Hitler and their chiliastic movement to save the world by destroying it. They all involved Inquisitions, torture, abuse of human rights. The needless dropping of the atom and hydrogen bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki are another example of totalistic killing. There is also the famous story of the American army officer who destroyed a

village in Vietnam to “save it for freedom”. Guenon and Schuon are involved in the same tendency to create a salvational system of knowledge/power, a theofascism, which threatens the very world it would save.

Actually what we need to be saved from is the Savors: those who claim to a system of total knowledge and power; those who fantasize the world’s destruction because it does not fit their formulas; those who commit the fallacy of misplaced concreteness; the apocalyptic gnostics and romantics who love intellectual or rather “imaginal”³¹⁸ truth more than concrete realities, and would sacrifice the entire world for a religious or scientific formula by which they hope to obtain immortality. We need to be saved from the Schuons, Dugins, Hitlers, Stalins, Guenons and Evolas of the world. They are dangerous and hungry for the sort of power than depends on harming others.

To summarize: R. J. Lifton created the idea of totalism to explain dangerous systems of thought and practice. Theofascism, which Guenon adapted from traditional religious myths and ideologies, is one form of totalism. Theofascism needs to be distinguished from the ordinary fascism of Mussolini or Hitler, though there are areas in common. Someone suggested the term “clerical fascism” to characterize the Iranian regime after the Iranian revolution in 1979, as well as Fascist Italy, Croatia, Romania and Franco’s alliances in Spain. But this does not apply very well to traditionalism though there are obvious affinities.

³¹⁸ This term was coined by Henry Corbin (1903-78) who more or less took it from Sufism. The imaginal realm is the imaginary realm of religions, the other realm beyond our world that religion makes up and creates is rituals around. Corbin defines it as “the appearance of an Image having the quality of a symbol is a primary phenomenon (*Urphanomen*), unconditional and irreducible, the appearance of something that cannot manifest itself otherwise to the world where we are.” In other words the imaginal is the fiction of heaven or of “...*alam al-mithal*, the world of the Image, *mundus imaginalis*: a world as ontologically real as the world of the senses and the world of the intellect, a world that requires a faculty of perception belonging to it, a faculty that is a cognitive function, a *noetic* value, as fully real as the faculties of sensory perception, or intellectual intuition.” This is to say that the imaginal does not exist, it is a construction made up by mystics and religions as a world alternative to our world. Corbin appears to share the same “pathological subjectivity” that was the problem with Schuon and Ibn Arabi.

This has some overlap with traditionalism in that they do support theocracies and are prone to nostalgia for the lost aristocracy. There is also the term “religious neo-fascism”, and that has its merits too. It includes Hindu neo-fascism State Shintoism in Japan, Christian fundamentalism in America, and could be applied to European Integralists, which basically is Catholic fascism--- as well as to Guenonist far right Frenchmen who love Benoist and other European reactionaries. But I have chosen to stay with the term theofascism as it applies to all these movements in varying degrees and still satisfies most of the criteria outlined by Orwell, Griffin, Eco, Lifton , and Tobias, among others.

In conclusion, it is clear that religion is attached to humanity in a dysfunctional or delusional way. But it is hard to imagine how religion can be considered part of the evolutionary development of people. It appear to be anti-evolutionary in a fundamental way. Religion is an unfortunate by product of evolution, not a product of it. Lifton was onto something along these lines and looked at religion as part of human sociology or psychology. Questioning religion is not about trying to find how religion is justified by evolution but rather how systems of power are constructed out of ideological falsehoods and perpetuated to serve social classes and castes. The question about how evolution fits into religion has to become more nuanced. Religions did not help humanity become successful, rather it helped given segments of various populations gain unjust powers and exercise discrimination against outsider groups. It gives an ‘elite’ social network a certain sort of control via prayer, magic rituals and superstitious ceremonies, but does so in a way that leads to serious problems hardships and wars. Religion is an enabler and adjunct to political systems and is used to further the interest of those who are already corrupt and in power. To conclude that this is useful to human evolution is far-fetched, to say the least.

d. Julius Evola's Theofascist Politics

To understand Evola's politics it is necessary to first define theofascism. The term 'spiritual fascism' was not invented by me, or by Umberto Eco, rather it is a phrase that is used by one of Guenon's main Italian followers, Guido De Giorgio (1890-1957). Piero Di Vona writes that

"Under the pen of De Giorgio expressions are often encountered concerning the fasces, fascism, and falsification. He also talks about the catholicity of fascism, spiritual fascism, and fascist catholicity[...]. Expressions, and similar ones [...] relate to the sacral and symbolic meaning of the fasces [the axe in a bundle of sticks]. For De Giorgio, fascism was necessarily sacred...." ³¹⁹

The "fasces" consisted of a bundle of sticks that were tied around an axe, was an ancient Roman symbol of the authority of the magistrate, and thus the fasces is in general a symbol of authority, autocracy or tyranny. De Giorgio lived in Italy during Mussolini's reign and sought to idealize or "spiritualize" the Roman Tradition to the point of divine worship. He worshiped the transcendence of authority. Fascism is thus in part the

³¹⁹ Piero Di Vona, Guenon, Evola and Di Giorgio p. 234) this is a rough translation

worship of power and theofascism, or spiritual fascism as De Giorgio calls it, is the worship of theocratic power. Of course, the dictatorship of Mussolini was a Catholic dictatorship. The pontificate of the Catholic Church assented to the power of Benito Mussolini, and signed (Feb. 11, 1929) with him the Lateran Treaty that allowed the existence of the independent Vatican City state, over which the pope ruled. The Pope signed a concordat that declared Roman Catholicism to be Italy's exclusive religion. Under Mussolini, Fascism and Catholicism were nearly synonymous. . This was seen as a good thing by such fascists as De Giorgio and Ezra Pound, who had fallen for his own Confucian brand of "theofascism" .³²⁰ De Giorgio's Catholic "sacred fascism." Or "Spiritual Fascism" was a natural outgrowth of Guenon's ideas and is a forerunner in of later Traditionalist Catholic far-right wingers, such as Rama Coomaraswamy; Jean Borella and some of their followers.

De Giorgio was not only a follower of Guenon's but was also a great admirer of Mussolini. De Giorgio insisted that what Guenon created was spiritual form of fascism. This is also what Evola thought Guenon

³²⁰ Pound's fascism is strange and idiosyncratic. He resembles Guenon and Schuon in that he idealized a traditional culture, the China of Kung fu Tzu—or Confucius and wrote various Canto's about this. His economic theories involve an effort to recall the medieval idea of usury. Some of these ideas are interesting, particularly as he is critical of American corporatism. But he slips into medievalism, and his writing sometimes takes on a Dantean flavor, and in this respect he resembles Guenon's and Coomaraswamy's idealization of the middle ages. Guenon's idealization of Dante's politics has many fascist overtones, as indeed, Mussolini idealized both Dante and Caesar. Pound became a political prisoner, accused of treason, held by the U.S in a mental hospital, St Elizabeth's, in Washington D.C. for 13 years. He left the U.S. after his release and declared "all America is an asylum". He moved back to his beloved Italy and his little town of Rappalo. Scholars debate if he is a fascist poet or not. I would say yes he is, he is an American expatriate who tried to use cultures not his own to promote a right wing conservative and patriarchal message. But unlike Guenon or Schuon, who were incapable of remorse, there is something sad and misguided about Pound that I feel for: he at least began to know he was mistaken as he approached very old age. Though it is unclear how much he recanted his earlier fascism. It is interesting to compare him with Schuon who recanted nothing and continued to try to exalt and nurture the myth of his own high status and election until he died in 1998. I watched Schuon tell many public lies in his last years and saw what kind of man he really was.

had done, and both Evola and De Giorgio were right. Fascism was a reactionary movement that sought to reverse modernism and return to an elite past when the few ruled without question and the many served the few. The many lowly people were barbarians who could ‘barbaric slough’ of poverty and hardship. “The poor you always have with you” said Christ in one of his nasty and elitist moments.

The traditionalists are all bizarre, but one of the more bizarre of them is Evola. Julius Evola (1898-1974) was a man with a “will” in the fascist or Italian futurist sense of a will to power. He had an inflated personal style, with his monocle and impeccable suits that might recall the old regime of the Kaiser or more humorously, the funny Colonel Klink of Hogan’s Heroes, a an American comedy form the 1970’s. Klink also nursed his monocle on his eye as proof of his superiority.



Colonel Klink. Hogan’s Heroes TV show 1970’s.



Evola

Passport

photograph, circa 1940.

Colonel Klink is perhaps an amateur version of the marvelous character of dictator Adenoid Hynkel in Charlie Chaplin’s exceptional movie The

Great Dictator, which shows the true nature of fascism both in its spiritual and secular varieties.



Like Evola and Hitler, Guenon and Schuon, Adenoid Hynckle wants to take over the world. Here the “Lord of the World” played by the great Charlie Chaplin.

Seriously, Evola was another follower of Guenon’s who admired Mussolini. Evola is was shown in the rather self-conscious photo below, suggesting some hidden ‘triumph of will’. It looks like a posed photo of the great hero about the climb the ramparts and save the day for history and god and the pretty girl back home. It is ridiculous, in short.



Julius Evola during World War I

While Guenon had private doubts about Evola as he did about everyone, he publicly approved of Evola wholeheartedly and wrote glowingly of his book Revolt against the Modern World: Guenon writes that his differences from Evola

“ should not prevent us from recognizing, as is right, the merit and interest of the work as a whole, and to bring it in a particular way to the attention of all those who are concerned with the “crisis of the modern world”, and who think like us [my emphasis] that the only efficacious means of rectifying it would consist in a return to the traditional spirit outside of which nothing truly constructive could be validly undertaken. “ ³²¹

³²¹ Coomaraswamy was glowing about the book too, despite his minor objections. He wrote:).

“Nonetheless, this book constitutes a remarkable presentation and exposition of traditional doctrine and could well serve as an introductory text for the student of anthropology and as a guide for the Indologist [especially for anyone interested in Hindu mythology and has not understood that, in the words of Evola, “the passage from mythology to religion constitutes a humanistic decadence.” The chapter, “man and woman” was chosen for the translation because of its clear, intransigent, and — we can add — tight peroration of the principles, that are reflected in the institutions and the ideals, such as that of sati, that is often no more comprehensible and that certainly are no longer held dear, even as memories by our politicians and reformers who, “whether by

Evola and Guenon were close and even reviewed one another's books. Guenon published articles in the Fascist newspaper *Regime Fascista*. Evola was an early convert to Guenonian thought. He was also a leading Italian exponent of the Conservative Revolution in Germany, which included Ernst Jünger, Carl Schmitt, Oswald Spengler, Gottfried Benn, and others. Privately, Guenon, a Frenchman, in a rather nationalistic way, accuses Evola of too influenced by German thinkers. He also complains that Evola "even went so far as to describe me as a "rationalist", which is really ridiculous (all the more so since it concerns a book where I expressly asserted the falsity of rationalism!)" ³²² when indeed, Guenon's books are first and foremost characterized by an exaggerated rationalistic pose, to make them look reasonable when they are anything but reasonable, as his idea of the Intellect is merely a subjective fantasy. His reason to Evola is a paranoid reaction to Evola. Guenon also had doubts about the orthodoxy of Evola's views on Tantra, but then Guenon did not know much about it either. But these are minor complaints from a man who complains about everyone. But in the main Evola and Guenon got along and supported each other's work.

But here I wish to show how Evola and Schuon express theofascism after the pattern of Guenon.³²³ But this will take some time.

force or consensus, were induced to accept Western models." (The Visva-Bharati Quarterly, Feb-Apr 1940)

³²² letter or Guenon to Di Giorgio, Nov. 20 1925
<http://www.gornahoor.net/?p=4398>

³²³ True to their exclusivist and cultish nature Schuonians have tried to get Evola thrown out of the Guenon school of extremist Traditionalists. The traditionalist groups all hate each other more or less and can agree on little. Of course Schuon writes against Guenon, and Guenon wrote against Schuon and of all of them the most unlike the others is Ananda Coomaraswamy, who actually had a 'real job' and loved gardening, Nietzsche and geology. AKC is the more interesting of the 3 early traditionalists, the reputations of the other two are already fading. Fabbri's arguments are very weak and appear to have been motivated by the hatred of Mark Sedgwick, and his book Against the Modern World which rightly includes Evola, Dugin and others traditionalists, despite their mutual dislike of each other. Evidently a member of the

Many people do not understand how theofascism and fascism are both related and different. I will try to explain this.

Guenon's followers explored the meanings and extent of what Guenon had created. There were some very close ties between Guenon and Julius Evola. Many of Guenon's and Schuon's followers would like to deny that Evola ever existed, ashamed of his fascism. Usually the traditionalists claim that Evola is different than Schuon and Guenon because he was more interested in the "psychic" rather than the "spiritual" realm. But the distinction between the spiritual and psychic is a distinction without a difference. Neither the spiritual or psychic actually exist except in the human imagination the difference between spiritual and psychic is merely a political difference.³²⁴ The psychic is premed to be lower class, more about feeling and less abstract and thus the spiritual is "Brahmanical", less emotive, and more intellectual and elitist. Reality is rather different and feeling is not less than thought or vice versa. A storm in a Teacup, or like cocks in barnyard, these men fight over nothing. The Schuonians hate New Agers because they are "psychic" by which they really mean, they hate the tendency of New Agers to "pick and choose" for themselves and thus have feelings and their own opinions and thus deny hierarchy. "The Spiritual", for the

Schuon cult, Renaud Fabbri penned this obtuse opinion which can be found here on one of the many Schuonian propaganda websites

<http://www.religioperennis.org/documents/Fabbri/Perennialism.pdf>

³²⁴ You can see this their writings. In his review of Guenon's most important book, *Spiritual Authority and temporal Power* Evola criticizes Guenon on the grounds that he is too weak, with his stress on Intellectual Guardians and the "sacerdotal". Evola writes:

"All this is a true fact. But Guenon's interpretation of the cause of such a downfall [of spiritual power] does not at all win our favour. The cause cannot reside in the upper hand that, at a certain point, temporal power took spiritual authority. How can such a thing be possible in the first place? Should the hierarchy of which Guénon speaks thus be conceived as something so abstract, to the point of admitting that the superior does not **also** have the task of being the strongest? And if this were not the case, how could the inferior have imposed itself on the superior and thus paralysed the irresistible power. Guenon's criticisms of Evola is that he is beyond him and superior to Evola. So it is really just a cock fight and the two men are both laboring under huge illusions but do not see it at all. see: http://thompkins_cariou.tripod.com/id95.html."

traditionalists, means that God is far above everyone, and if you analyze this further, 'picking and choosing' is evil because it is a denial of patriarchy, mind control or of the state. They think the king or priests should be paramount – and that means individual initiative is bad. The traditionalists in fact are new agers, but are merely right wing examples of the same escapist tendencies.³²⁵

Rama Coomaraswamy used to prattle on about the evil of picking and choosing, since the Church is supposed to direct your thoughts for you. Actually religions\ is a construction and a syncretic religion is no less a construction so it scarcely matters if you make a religion up as Schuon did or follow one that already exists.

Alain de Button, in his Religion for Atheists, even recommends stealing from religions in order to help augment and improve an atheistic culture, art, architecture and community. Is his book merely a Trojan Horse of Religion inside the city of reason? It is not very clear what his religious atheism would actually mean. Bach's music is wonderful. Does it mean the same thing once its Christian context is jettisoned? It does not mean exactly the same thing, but it is still wonderful. Yehudhi Menuhin playing the St Matthew Passion, (Embarme dich) is amazing and heart breaking. The crying human voice is even deeper and more profound when you realize there is no god there to listen to it.

Have mercy, my God,
for the sake of my tears!
See here, before you

³²⁵ Most of the people that I knew who left the cult ended by adopting some version of New Age religion, be it California Yoga, The Dali Lama, American Sufism. Eckhart Tolle, orthodox Judaism or some Rumiesque or Buddhist narcissism that leads them into a escapist cul de sac where they cease asking vital questions about reality. Even some of the women who were involved in Primordial gatherings and lied about them to defend the cult leader, eventually left the cult and rather than tell the truth about what they experienced have fallen into other systems of mind numbing religion, be it Islam or Yoga. Such cowardice appears to be one of the weaknesses of human nature.

heart and eyes weep bitterly.
Have mercy, my God.

This is what the Bach Cantata is actually saying, and it is even more moving when you realize there is no god there to answer this desperate cry. It is all importuning the invisible god that is not there. I doubt that Bach himself realized this, but that is change that happens in 268 years since he died. The facing of death and the need to be forgiven are universal.

The Christian context was a system of make believe that is not sustainable even in Bach's music. We listen to it because of its beauty not because the resurrection actually happened. It consoles us for death, without making us believe the old fables of Jesus as a resurrected savior. Certainly Button is right that there is nothing wrong with 'picking and choosing', Religions are not sacrosanct. But it all depends on what is picked and what is chosen and why. De Button vastly underestimates the ability of science to create en sustain a new view of art and poetry. . Science is still relatively young and untested in this regard. Culture is not merely imitative but creative. The architecture of science and atheism has not yet been created. It certainly is not the skyscraper which is a temple for greedy and empty hearted capitalists. Buckminster Fuller started trying to design architecture for science. The future is still open to what science would create that is sustainable and intelligent. Solar houses are getting there, as are some ecological designs, far ahead of Frank Lloyd Wright.. Science has had as yet little influence on poetry and most poetry of our age is very poor and often backwards and too spiritual. Imitating Dante, Rumi or Kalidasa is not going to work. Artists should take anything from anywhere and pick and choose, but there is no point in trying to make a religion of atheism. Religion has failed

utterly. But building Atheist temples modeled on Christian cathedrals is not a good idea. Atheism is not a positive form of belief in any case. Science is, but atheism is merely a position relative to religion, and as such rather an absurd position in some ways. Art needs to accept the absence of any gods without tragedy. Then science can be used to try to fathom the world as it is. This has barely been done as yet. Making art about the actual has many precedents, some of which I explored in an art show on realism.³²⁶

De Button has not gone deep enough into the springs of why cultures develop and grow. Science will make its art and culture out of an organic process, not a pastiche of post-modernist fantasies and conglomerate borrowings.. Science is only about 400 years old as a cultural force and only in the 20th century did it become widespread. The future is bright with science and this future is not about imitating religion, or following the destructive tendencies in capitalism. Button has a valid point that science does not do well helping the vulnerable and suffering. Science one day will increase its ability to sustain and console and create communities, as well as foster an ecology and harmony with the rest of nature. But this can only occur when corporate control and hierarchies are denied power.

The spiritual is increasingly a dead concept, the question is, what did humans project on it? The spiritual means conformity to totalistic, autocratic institutions, top-down authoritarian Churches, dogma, castes and social hierarchy. In fact, Evola wanted all this too, so the argument that he didn't is just wrong. De-symbolizing the universe is necessary, and doing that without making this a tragedy is also necessary.

³²⁶ Staying Amazed:
<https://wordpress.com/post/markkoslowspaintingsthoughtandnature.wordpress.com/5566>

The other reason some Guenonians hated Evola is because they say he is a Kashatriya rather than a Brahman caste. Actually both of these are very high caste, and the difference is slight in practice, as is shown by the fact that Arjuna in the Gita is also Kashatriya caste. But the notion of caste is bogus to begin with. So the argument is moot. There is no intrinsic differences between classes of people in India or anywhere else. While it is true that caste is akin to racism, it is not a race issue that is at stake in the outlawing of caste, but rather a system of discrimination akin to racism, that segregates and oppresses people along economic or class lines. Sexism is yet another form of inequality and discrimination. Caste segregation is a form of apartheid, not unlike the Jewish hatred of Palestinian or the White south African hatred of Blacks³²⁷ or the American hatred of Mexicans. In all these cases there are aspect of race and class that are involved, in varying degrees, but the essential components are all economic. The caste system and its attendant practices have been outlawed as punishable offenses in India, but as in America where racism persists, caste discrimination persists against the laws.. Upper castes complain about lower castes being given unfair advantage, which is hardly the case, just as in America whites complain about “black” “welfare mothers” and other caricatures of lower class individuals.³²⁸ Caste is a political distinction that masquerades as

³²⁷ There are no “black people” that concept is itself an effect of racism. There are many shades of brown and cream, sometimes tending to ochre, pink, grey or burnt umber, but never actually black. I’ve done paintings of various “races” and the palette is similar in all cases. It scarcely matters anyway, human are amazingly uniform, despite slight color differences.

³²⁸ The history of lynching in America is interesting, as Ida B. Wells showed. It is not unlike the bad treatment fo animals in the U.S..Slavery left a very long shadow and is still practiced in many areas, as the increasing indentured servitude of students to banks shows. Wells showed how people of color had no real justice and Euro Americans used lynching as a means to control or punish those who competed with Euro Americans, sometimes under the guise of rape charges. This is ongoing, for instance in Ferguson, Missouri, in 2014, an African American teenager was murdered by a police officer names Wilson and Wilson got off free, proving there is one law for people with darker brown skin than for others. Poor people make up most of the prison population which is disproportionately people of color. CEO’s rarely go to jail but many of them belong there. The answer to both the prison system in America and the CEO problem is the same, get rid of autocratic tyrannies of all kinds, the CEO and the Prisons being prime examples of this.

something “spiritual”. The notion that caste is somehow justified by gods or sacred texts merely shows that these texts and gods are fictions that hide political and economic injustices. There is nothing objective in caste or in so called “sacred texts”. It is merely one way of typecasting people though erroneous caricature and generalized stereotypes.

So the notion that Evola and Guenon are somehow different is illusory, They are both Europeans who are employing distorted Christian, Sufi or Hindu ideas to push forward a state form of Theocratic government. Evola is a traditionalist, as much as Schuon’s followers may hate the fact. Both Evola and Schuon categorize people in line with caste stereotypes and bogus typologies. The hatred of low castes or of the “profane” as Schuon called most of the outside the cult, is indicative of repulsive prejudices both in Evola followers and Schuon’s. Essentializing others, stereotypes, caricatures, elitist superstitions, hierarchy: these are the stock and trade of traditionalist discourse. The totalizing impulse in essentialism reduces others to false stereotypes.

That said, I repeat what I said earlier: Guenon’s version of spiritual theofascism is not at all the same thing as ordinary fascism, though the two political agendas have many similarities. I will show here how Evola participated in and ultimately rejected some aspects of ordinary fascism, just as Guenon had earlier. Indeed, Evola was merely following the pattern already set out by Guenon when he created his own theofascist system. This will show just how alike, indeed, identical, Guenon, Evola and Schuon really are.

It is true that Evola was a Nazi sympathizer and participated in ordinary fascism more directly than any other of the Traditionalists. But Evola is really a force after the war, not before or during it. As Roger Griffin implied in a letter to me, Evola had no influence at all on mainstream Nazism in the 1930’s and 40’s, even if a few of them were impressed with him. He wanted to influence to Nazi’s to become

Guenonian but failed. It seems likely that Evola has more influence in the world now than at any time in history. Evola is really a contradictory character in some ways. Evola was an internationalist on the one hand, at the same time as he was a nationalist in books such as in his book the Synthesis of Racial Doctrine. Evola echoes Guenon's racism in this and other books. Guenon wrote,

it is all too clear that to the extent that a man "Westernizes" himself, whatever may be his race or country, to that extent he ceases to be an Easterner spiritually and intellectually, that is to say from the one point of view that really holds any interest. This is not a simple question of geography, unless that word be understood in a sense other than its modern one, for there is also a symbolic geography..."

This is racism on a global scale and originates in a metaphysical ideology. Guenon rejected all of Europe to cling to medieval Islam and Holy War. This is a move into theofascism. Evola was disillusioned by Nazism and moved into Guenon's position to the far right of the Nazis. Evola was a poor Nazi in any case, but he was, first and foremost, a Guenonian---namely a theofascist, and the Nazis noticed this about him and rejected him for it. When he left ordinary fascism, after World War II, he remained a devotee of Guenon's transcendental fascism. His writings differ very little from Guenonian orthodoxy. There are some differences, of course, but not more differences than exist between Schuon and Guenon or Guenon and Coomaraswamy or Guenon and Eliade, for that matter. Evola was a collaborator with Guenon, as well as a regular correspondent with him. In his role as supporter of ordinary fascism, Evola wrote the preface for the Italian edition of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, a fraudulent anti-Semitic tract used by many who hated Jews to demonize them. Evola supported Mussolini's racial legislation of

1938, and he explicitly praised Codreanu's politics against the Jews as well as the bloodthirsty activities of the Rumanian Iron Guard, which Eliade had also supported. Evola's dubious claim to fame within the history of Mussolini's regime is to have written a Synthesis of Racial Doctrine (1941), as I mentioned, and which Mussolini endorsed and thought of a standard text for discrimination against Jews and other races.

After being rejected by the Italian Fascists, Evola sought the approval of the Nazis but the Nazis too rejected him, though he continued to seek and obtain some approval of the Nazis. He was allowed to lecture inside Nazi Germany, for instance. He thought he could convert the Nazis to the elitism and theofascism of Guenon. Himmler had Evola's books and lectures reviewed and it was determined by Himmler's staff that Evola worked from a "basic Aryan concept but was quite ignorant of prehistoric German institutions and their meaning".³²⁹ Nevertheless, Evola was an avid seeker of power and wanted desperately to convince

³²⁹ Roger Griffin writes of this book in a succinct and exact way that is worth quoting at length as it shows how thoroughly Guenonian Evola was. Griffin writes that that for a time Evola's Synthesis of Racial Doctrine satisfied Mussolini's "need for a version of racism which was distinct from Nazi genetic theories. It also argued that Italians were even more perfect Aryan specimens than the Germans because of their judicious blend of physical with intellectual and spiritual qualities. However, the theory which informs Evola's book is anything but orthodox even within Fascism, for it draws on his alternative philosophy of history which was given its most exhaustive exposition in the 1934 work *Revolt against the Modern World*. A tour de force of radical right eclecticism on a par with *The Decline of the West* (of which it is the Italian counterpart), the book blends Spenglerian, Guenonian and Hindu themes into a vision of contemporary history as the nadir of a protracted process of decline from the hierarchical, metaphysically based imperial order of 'the Tradition', a decline embodied in the rise of the undifferentiated masses, or the 'fifth estate' in modern times. The last pale reflection of this golden age had been the Holy Roman Empire under the Ghibellines when the Continent was still ruled by an aristocratic caste of 'warrior-priests'. After this 'European spring cut off in its first bloom, the process of decadence took over once more' (Evola, 1934, p. 367) leading to the Kali-yuga, the 'black age' of modern civilization. However, the emergence of fascism in Italy and Germany heralds the long-awaited sea-change in history: the rebirth of the true organic, hierarchical state being pioneered by the Third Reich and the Third Rome is ushering in the dawn of a new golden age." Europe for the Europeans. *Fascist Myths of The European New Order 1922-1992* Roger Griffin Professor in History, Oxford Brookes University Department of History, Oxford <http://www.brookes.ac.uk/schools/humanities/staff/europ.tx>

the German's of Guenon's ideas. ³³⁰ Evola "met with Hitler in September, 1943, to discuss the formation of the Fascist Republic of Salo, after the fall of Italy to the allies". ³³¹ Though this might have been the high point of Evola's life, it appears that it had no real fruit and was rather a failure.

The distinction between ordinary fascism and theofascism is a distinction between a populist fascism and an esoteric, elitist and ideological fascism that would be able to cross national and orthodoxy boundaries. Theofascism is an esoteric template, a metaphysical ideology that masks a politics, a dream of revenge created by some very intelligent retro-renegades and bad boys of the far right. It goes beyond orthodoxy while still using it to impose conformity. It lives as a "super-religion" on the bodies of dying religions, trying to make a new religion from the ashes. Theofascists are wannabe returnees to the glory days of Pope Innocent the III, the man who invented the Inquisition. Theofascists are wannabe Brahmins or devotees of Shankara and Vedanta who want to go back to the Inquisition and the caste system as a way of stopping democracy and public education. At the same time they invent new forms and try to create new ways of exploiting others.

The ordinary fascists did not go quite so far in the creation of fantasies of ultimate truth and power. In Guenon's fantasy, shared by Schuon and Evola, the ultimate, super Guenonian "elite", ---modeled on Plato's guardians, Crusading Popes and the caste elitists of India--- would infiltrate and take back some of the world's power before the world would be destroyed in a final apocalypse. Yet Plato's Republic resembles nothing so much as Hitler's Third Reich. ³³² It is both meaningful and accurate to compare the Hindu, Guenonian and Platonic systems are to Hitler's regime. In Plato's Republic he recommends, like the Hindus,

³³⁰ Ibid. pg 190

³³¹ Fideler, David. Gnosis Magazine #7, Spring 1988 see also Thomas Sheehan, "Myth and Violence: the Fascism of Julius Evola and Alain de Benoist" Social research vol.48, pp.45-73

³³² for more about Plato, eugenics IQ and the third Reich, search this book under Plato, eugenics etc., It is discussed in numerous places

selective breeding, eugenics, social control and a doctrine of mind control that would oversee the intimate behavior and thoughts of all citizens in his 'utopia'. Like Hitler and the Hindus, Plato devalues or demeans both men, nature and the world to make them conform to a vision of intellectual supremacy imposed through caste. Metaphysical systems are politics in disguise, projections on the universe of claims to unjust power. The Guenonian effort to render all existence 'metaphysical' demeans existence, demeans life and makes all of nature merely a cipher and symbol to be exploited for possession. Nature is not symbolic and to force it to be so demeans and helps destroy it. The "metaphysical transparency of nature" in Schuon's phrase, demeans nature into being merely a symbolic advertisement for a system of theofascist and totalist thought. The Schuonian concept of "Virgin Nature" is merely a misogynist dream of abducted beauty, stolen as a maneuver of conquest and violation.

The religious concept of the "pure" or "purity" is associated in Hindu, Platonic, Guenonian and Nazi systems with "the very 'highest' conceptions of knowledge. All that is considered "impure" becomes anathematized, outcaste, subservient, and degraded in the eyes of those who claim to be righteous in these systems of thought. Purity is a care category as well as a claim to hierarchical or esoteric knowledge. I agree with Neruda who wrote "Some Thoughts on Impure Poetry," where he advocates

"A poetry as impure as the clothing we wear or our bodies, soup stained or soiled by our shameful behavior, a poetry with wrinkles, observations, dreams, waking, prophecies, declarations of loathing and love, idylls and beasts, the shocks of encounter, political loyalties, denial and doubts, affirmations and taxes....the deep penetration of things in the transports of love, a consummate poetry soiled by the pigeons claw, ice marked and tooth marked

and bitten delicately with our sweat drops and usage, perhaps. Till the instrument so restlessly played yields the comfort of its surfaces and the wood shows the knottiest suavities shaped by the pride of the tool”.³³³

Yes, a poetry like that. Not perfect nightingales and the sheer diaphanous nudity of dead women in nether worlds. But the actual grit and dust and dying flowers of this world which is the only real world there is.

The concept of “Purity” is the nightmare that the rich visit on the poor, the diamond of monarchy that demands cracking or dismantling. Stephan Mallarme wanted to “purify the language of the tribe” and made little jewel box poems which reflect the world denying confections of the rich. Leni Riefenstahl’s *Triumph of the Will* recalls the terrorism of perfect beauty that one sees in some Chinese or Platonist Greek or Renaissance art. The idealized Pre Raphaelite perfection has a hatred of reality and women in it. The *Paradise of the Revelations of St John* is diamond and rubies arranged in sterile symmetries, like an international architecture seen in technicolor psychosis..

Ezra Pound wanted to purify the language too. He liked the Confucian notion of the “rectification of names”, which basically means keeping everything properly neat and tidy for the upper classes to go on making bigger profits, while the poor are degraded in squalor. Pound sought to create a kind of purity of aesthetic fascism, like Ayn Rand or Leni Riefenstahl: he admired Mussolini and thought he was the new Confucius (Kung fu Tzu).³³⁴

³³³ From *Five decades Poems*, Trans. Ben Belitt.

Here is also an interesting essay by a poet, Lee Upton, on the misery of the idea of purity...
http://poems.com/special_features/prose/essay_upton.php

³³⁴ Did Confucius exist? That is a problem that is also raised with Jesus, Muhammad, Buddha and others. There are 400 years or so between Confucius and the Sima Qian, the biographer of

Theofascism is just this need to keep everything pure for the rich and to symbolize the status quo of the gods they worship. The Virgin Mary was an image created to exploit the love of children that women have. Mary appears very little in the Gospels and where she does appear it is as a symbol in the Annunciation, where she is the passive agent of his deification. Jesus reviles his mother at one point, so her importance is merely as a backdrop for his divinity. Only later is Mary deified herself, as the Theotokos of Byzantine art. Later Mary is exploited as an ordinary mother, giving succor to the poor and the sick. She is so little in the Gospels it is possible to project nearly anything you like on the fictive symbol.

The image of the Virgin Mary is really the creation, over many centuries, of a separate religion inside Christianity. Most women and many men love to see images of babies and women holding or nursing babies. This is totally understandable, given that babies are new life and the summation of the love between a man and a woman. I love such images myself, which is why I fell into this myth deeply and loved it once upon a time. I learned eventually to love real mothers and not myths about them.

To me this is a secular image, every much about the love of actual children, not the love of an abstract goddess. .. The Virgin is clearly a mythical invention. The Church exploited this natural love of women and mothers for a millennia or more. The Church wanted to confuse the love on one's mother or wife with itself, such that people would turn to the Church for help, even if the Church really just wanted money or power. Botticelli and Leonardo in Italy and Gerard David and others in the

Confucius. So there are great problems in accepting his existence. He may or may not be a mythical figure. More than likely he is mythical as is the notion of the Mandate of heaven. It appears that the 1000 years between Plato and Muhammad was the time of huge fictions created to sustain large top-down civilizations from China to Europe, India to Rome and beyond. This is certainly not what I was taught, but it appears to be the case. World religions were created to orchestrate behavior in complex agricultural dynastic societies.

north, coming out of Byzantine models, created this very sympathetic image of motherhood.



It appealed and still appeals, to both women and men. I bracket off the fact that it is a Church propaganda image and look instead at the fact that it is really love of women that is at the root of it. My favorite images of Mary were actually ones that come from after 1400 or so, when she is softened into a very human and motherly image. The same can be done with especially lovely images of the Buddha, such as the Meditating Bodhisattva (Bosatsu) or the Horuyi-ji Kwannon at Horuyi ji temple in Nara, Japan. These are images of great loveliness and devotion, and can be completely understood in non religious terms as images of human and natural peace.



The Church exploited this ordinary mother and child love, as well as men's love in seeing this, in Mariolatry. The Virgin Mary is nearly always dressed like an upper crust, royal-blue woman in Byzantine, Renaissance and Classical Painting.



Ingres

The Vow of Louis XIII (1601-1643), King of France

By: [Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres](#)

This rather kitsch painting by Ingres,-- one of his worst—is meant to justify the Bourbon restoration, following the French Revolution, which it seeks to subvert, and the fall of Napoleon. This is a late and decadent image of the Virgin and Theotokos as justifier of imperial and absolutist kings. It is a ridiculous and artificial painting, a sort of pseudo Raphael, that no longer can carry the meaning it seeks to evoke. It was done at a time when Kings were no longer believable and cannot be taken seriously. A reactionary goddess that justifies the bogus idea of the divine right of kings is, in contemporary American terms a Republican and

anti democratic icon. It is a reactionary and rather idolatrous painting seeking to justify the divine right of kings. Many Renaissance Virgins are not much different and also look rather hyperbolic and silly now.

The primary function of paintings of the Virgin Mary images is to steal womanhood for the Church and the King and make motherhood, babies and women an advertisement for a patriarchy. Mary hardly appears at all in the Gospels and her history is largely the story of politics since the Roman era. Her role in the Gospel fiction is merely as passive witness. She is not given significant status until the Council of Ephesus (431 AD) accorded Mary the title Theotokos. It was an obvious political move, evoking the Roman goddess Artemis, or the Greek Goddess Hera. . Here is one speech in the gospels meant to “magnify” or exalt the fictional King and his Mother, where she is made to say:

For he that is mighty hath done to me great things;
and holy is his name.
And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to
generation.
He hath shewed strength with his arm;
he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.
He hath put down the mighty from their seats 1.46,55

This is the Virgin of the Inquisition, the Virgin of hate and war, the one who kills for god, like a jihadist. She is much more Mozart’s Queen of the Night here than the diminutive and kindly lover of babies and the sick that one sees later, in the Northern Renaissance (see the Gerard David above). This is part of the “Magnificat”, and from which my concern with magnification as a fiction partly derives. And it is the political speech of someone who glories in power and violence, not at all the gentle Mary that was created after 1300 as shown in Leonardo or Raphael. The history of the image of Mary is the history of what the Church imagined would get

them more power. The Theotokos is a Greek Isis, who is the Matron of kings. Totally fiction, she is used in many different ways. On the one hand she is imperious and forbidding, Queen of Heaven, and so helps justify autocratic cruelties. The Russian Icon, now in Moscow, called the Virgin of Vladimir was carried into battle as a kind of flag or standard of conquest, and thus functioned much as the image of Athena functioned for the Greeks; to incite male courage for bloodshed. The placement of females on the prows of European ships, or the tradition of giving these ships female names had a similar function. The ships of conquest and trade were sexualized by these symbols. European virility used female images like Mary or a Queen to excite itself and muster courage for atrocities.

The Virgin of Guadeloupe, supposedly the result of a miracle, is certainly another fraud. Its purpose was to picture the Virgin Mary as an indigenous Mexican, so as to seduce the indigenous people, who were Aztec or Mayan, into the orbit of the Christian caste system of the conquistadors.³³⁵ Religions are not fixed things, but changeable systems of social control and these myths are adapted to new needs. The main use of the Mary Image was to try to corral women into subservience to the Church and this is really a medieval religion and not a gospel one. Mary is in many ways a mythic creation of a goddess quite separate from the Jesus myth and yet complementary to it. She embodies a misogyny that is a logical part of Christian metaphysical hatred of the actual world we

³³⁵ The use of the word Krishna in Hindu religion is interesting for similar reasons. The word Krishna means dark, and the Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita is always represented as black or blue in Hindu art. The implication is that Krishna, by being made to speak in the language and concepts of the Aryan elite, represents the complete assimilation of the Dravidian underclass to the Aryan system of knowledge and social control. The word Aryan is apparently a linguistic designation not a racist one. The Germans used the Aryan ideal as a racist designation and that was false. The political theory of how the Krishna image came into being is merely a cultural speculation not an excuse for racism. If the Aryan Invasion theory is not true, it may still be true that the image of Krishna as black has an assimilationist meaning. The Virgin Mary was a propaganda image, probably the most successful in history, and it still is.

live in..



Botticelli

As I have already indicated, the early Mary as Theotokos is cruel and imperious and exists to magnify god and Christ. The later Mary is different. By the time of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux (d. 1153.) she is merciful and gentle and so seems to want to help poor women and men in distress. This is how she is pictured in Fra Angelico, for instance, or in Northern Renaissance art after Van Eyck, who was still painting the

Queen of Heaven Leonardo even refused to put a Halo on the woman and painted her amidst a landscape that is a Darwinian treasure trove of flowers and rocks.



The history of Mariolatry is a classic example of mythic and political opportunism. The image of Mary exploited the gentle facts of motherhood and sold it as an image owned by the Church. Later, in our time, the image is sued as a psychological exploit. The early Mary is an aristocratic Queen who supports her regimes but occasionally helps the power in a

sort of noblesse oblige. But by 1400, C.E., roughly, the image of Mary is softened into a more populist image of comfort and succoring. Even later the myth of Mary evolves into the sweet image of the nursing mother, as one sees in Bernard or Botticelli and Da Vinci. The image of Mary exploits the image of women that most of us love in our own mothers and wives. Women are more likely to be merciful and indulgent, kind and considerate. This is a brilliant creation, and a very moving one. Indeed, I could not resist the poetry of it myself for a few years, at least until I realized that it is fiction and cannot be taken seriously on its own terms. Now I dislike the constant association of any image of women with babies, breast feeding or otherwise, with the Virgin Mary image. I have painted several of these and they have nothing whatever to do with religious propaganda of any kind. The image of Mary steals the beauty of women in motherhood for an institution which is none of the things that this image exploits.

Schuon's Virgins are an updated form of the Mother of the divine right of Kings now become a psychotic exploit.³³⁶ She extends the compassionate willingness to help and talk, at great length, as at Medjugorje, that she showed to ordinary people, like the illiterate Bernadette at Lourdes, into having sex with Schuon, in his heart, or so he claimed. This is really a logical extension of, ironically, the Protestant Virgin of the North and the ordinary woman who negates the Theotokos, which Schuon really did not like. The Symbolist Virgin in Schuon is a sort of divine porn queen, as it

³³⁶ Visions of the Virgin are legion, but the Church only accepts those that are in line with their teachings. This turns out to be very few of course. Schuon's visions of the Virgin were many and happened at times of stress in his life, and are above all convenient to his search for power over others. All such visions are fake, but if they correspond to a social need they are usually considered real by someone. In Schuon's case it is likely his visions were merely imagination of convenience. He had one, one day, on a toilet and I was made aware of it that day, and it was clearly an effort on his part to condemn an individual, Maude Murray. I knew Maude was not wrong in this and so knew his "visions" were bogus inventions. He used the Virgin as a sort of goddess of his personal vendettas.

were. He was adapting the image of the Archetypal female to his own narcissistic and symbolist drama of being a prophet and a king himself. He tried to get such idolatry turned toward himself and his penis. He succeeded with a small group of followers who could be duped into doing this for him. The symbolist ideology of divine figures becomes merely a bankrupt fantasy of sexual fulfillment and childless lust for power in Schuon. Just as the Gospels were fictions which suggested all sorts of meaning to men who wanted power, the image of the Virgin Mary is a later adaptation of a useful fiction, made to serve whatever subjective fantasy they believe might create, including sexual fantasy.

To return this discussion to the idea of purity, a few things can be said. In fact, the “Pure” “Virgin” is a slap in the face at every woman who wishes to have children or have sex. The notion that a sexless woman is divine is absurd. Indeed, images like that of the Virgin Mary are images of male domination of women, where real women are seen as “polluted” by elitist and sexist men who are grossed out by fertility, menstrual blood and the uterus. The 1854 creation of the Immaculate Conception of Mary is also fiction and that tries to claim that she was free of original sin even in the womb of her mother. There is no such thing as original sin and to claim there is, is to curse every child born outside the Church. Schuon’s contrary vision of the Virgin as divine prostitute is also an abuse of women, as it too is childless, and has as its offspring a decadent con-man, who would take over the world with his ideology if he could. It is elitist denial of life that Neruda was opposed to and I agree with Neruda.

. The Enlightenment was a necessary war against ‘Platonic Purity’ and the monarchy of unjust classicism. Platonism, the philosophy of the effete, is a species of theofascism, as is the Hindu caste system. Theofascism and divine right politics are a patriarchal prescription for violence against the poor, the outsiders, nature and women. Religion and

caste systems use religious symbols to convince populations to submit to patriarchal power to make life easier for the elites. The French Revolution was partly an effort to overthrow the Kings and their symbols, which is why you see images of women that are not Virgins as in “Liberty leading the People” by Delacroix, or the Statue of Liberty in New York harbor.

Guenon was following Plato and Hinduism, and theocratic elitists like De Maistre, in pursuit of a fantasy of ultimate power through ultimate knowledge. Evola is merely following Guenon’s lead. Divine right mysticism is a dead end that these men tried to resurrect to keep the far right political flame alive. In his writings, Evola distinguishes between ‘spiritualist’ racism and the biological racism of the Fascists.³³⁷ The effort to create a race or rather a caste of elitists is the main thing that the

³³⁷ What follows are some absurd and neo fascist comments from Martin Schwartz, himself a neo-fascist, found on his Kshatriya web page
<http://www.juliusevola.it/documenti/template.asp?cod=368>

“In National Socialism, Evola certainly welcomed the racial ideas in one respect, but openly criticized its formulation in the terms of biological materialism. For Evola, the racial soul was of greater significance than the material basis of heredity. This view was clearly connected with his refusal of the so-called "theory of evolution," that materialistic invention of Darwin's, which, together with Marx and Freud, Evola considered as the lowest drivel of the materialistic period. ...Evola was in quest of a national movement that would help the spiritual principle to break through. He and a few friends had tried to influence Fascism accordingly. He thought that he had discovered in National Socialism, with the SS, the attempt to found a new ascetic Order..... Here Evola saw a chance of introducing his doctrine of Tradition, but this met with mistrust and incomprehension. As the records of the NS authorities show it was this concept of soul-race that upset them. They could issue certificates of Aryanism, but in no way could they meet Evola's hopes for the Aryan warrior in the spiritual sense.” .

[my note: all of the Traditionalist despise the theory of evolution, since it divests priests of power and divests nature of god, and Evola was no exception. Evola’s fascism, like Guenon’s and Schuon’s consists in trying to impose on the social order their dream of totalistic spiritual authority. It was this that the Nazis rejected when they rejected Evola. There are rightly few that can expect such fanatical ideology, the Taliban perhaps few Saudi, British or Jordanian princes , or certain far right Israelis.]

Traditionalists want. Schuon takes up this same theme in his Castes and Races, a racist book that uses racist and essentializing terms like “the yellow man” or “the red man” to describe Native Americans or Chinese. He likes to characterize people by racist stereotypes, He says for instance that Black people are prone to the “frenetic art of drumming and dancing” and that there is something about them that is of the element “earth” and has a “heavy indifference”. He says the “the Black man has a non-mental mentality”.³³⁸ All of this racist nonsense evokes the demeaning language of the slave driver and the “Master”. It has more to do with racist stereotypes than with reality. For Schuon, racist stereotypes are “archetypes”. He employs 19th century racist anthropology and phrenology to categorizes people in ways that are demeaning, even if they were “poetic” to Schuon himself.

Schuon distinguishes between the spiritual castes and the biological castes, following Guenon. There are no such castes, of course, the whole idea of either biological or spiritual castes is a fictional invention meant to serve a self-appointed elite. Castes are constructions of unjust political powers, made habitual by habit and custom(which become hardened into “traditions”). However, these specious categories are important to the Traditionalist perspective. Schuon creates distinctions without a real difference, violating Occam’s razor. By making the caste idea emphasize ‘intellectual’ rather than merely biological power and survival it transfers the tyranny of the blood, as it were, to a tyranny of the mind exercised over time. Guenon and his followers were creating a system of mind control, mental conformity, and intellectual tyranny. ³³⁹ As H. T. Hansen has admitted, Evola ” naturally had his

³³⁸ Schuon, Frithjof Castes and Races, Bedfont, Middlesex ,Perennial Books pg. 1980.38-42

³³⁹ Nothing so much characterizes a true Traditionalist as narrow minded bigotry, fanaticism and the inability to see anything in any way unless it is approved by Guenon, Schuon or various other self-important, falsely humble, ideologues such as Martin Lings of Hossein Nasr. Read their books, they all depend almost exclusively, on appeal to authority. But when you look closely at

hopes for Fascism. He simply wanted to “correct” it and steer it into aristocratic channels, as we will see him doing during the entire Fascist era.”

Likewise, Guenon and Schuon wanted to steer racism into a form of thought control and tyranny of ideas. How to turn so called “secular” fascism and other right wing forces into spiritual autocracy was the big question. This is still the objective of the latter day traditionalists. Evola wrote that... “We are in open opposition to a certain mythos: the one that wants to turn spirituality and culture into a realm that is dependent on politics. We, on the other hand, claim that it is politics that must be dependent on spirituality and culture.” In other words he wanted to exercise mind control over entire societies. Like Guenon and Shankara. Lao Tzu, Rumi and Jesus, Schuon and the Moonies, Evola wanted to control society by imposing transcendental and imperial delusions on the entire population. The function of saints is to be an example of inner quietude and disinterest, really a kind of self-mesmerism, while the powers that be are unquestioned and go on unhindered. You can see this is Christianity and Tibetan Buddhism, where saints are lined up or down walls of temples or churches, in mass gatherings or standing along transepts, naves or up in apses, looking down and admonishing the crowds of people to behave and conform. Saints are advertisements.

The Traditionalists are not intellectuals but rather anti-intellectuals. Their notion of the “divine Intellect” is itself irrational and anti-intellectual. They do not contribute anything to knowledge. They contribute a great deal to ignorance and superstition, reaction and backwardness. Theofascism is not like Hitlerism. Unlike ordinary fascism, genetics is not the sine qua non for the Traditionalists; intellectual conformity and backwardness is. After World War II traditionalism turns ; into a subtle mechanism of doublespeak and

the justifications of this ‘authority’ the whole thing crumbles into esoteric blue fairy dust.

ideological conformity, anti-intellectual dogma and mind control. ³⁴⁰

Schuon derives from the idea of “God” a whole complex of caste theories whereby people are judged not only by the usual four Hindu castes but also by the psycho-social designations of “pneumatic, bhaktic and hylic” which mean intellectual types, devotional types and physical types, respectively. ³⁴¹By elaborating these complex typologies, Schuon seeks to create an intellectual system of categories that determine ultimate levels of significance with himself and his ideology as supreme. The ideology of the “self” or the “intellect³⁴²” which creates a Guenonian “super-religion” is the lynchpin of theofascism, both in Guenon and

³⁴⁰ Blavatsky’s race theories were partially influenced by the Social Darwinism of the late 19th century, as were the Nazi theories of race. The elitist racism of Guenon and Schuon was almost certainly influenced by Blavatsky’s ideas as well except that her ideas have been sublimated. The Traditionalists despised Darwin with a rare passion for denial of factual reality. This is partly why they hated Blavatsky so much, who they resemble in so many other ways. Wolfgang Smith’s embarrassing books try and fail to disprove Darwinian evolutionism. Traditionalism shows its ignorance no place as much as in their rejection of evolution. The facts of evolution are so pervasive and extensive as to be undeniable. See essay below on “*On Those Who Hate Science and Reason: Anti-Science and Irrationalism in Rene Guenon, Wolfgang Smith and Other ‘Traditionalists’*”

³⁴¹ It should be noted that Schuon was influenced by the racist anthropology of Carleton Coon. In his 1962 book “The Origin of Races” Coon got specific about which regions and thus which races progressed toward modern human intelligence. “If Africa was the cradle of mankind, it was only an indifferent kindergarten,” he wrote. “Europe and Asia were our principal schools.” Coon believed Africans and Semitic peoples, among others possessed more ‘primitive’ cultural, physical and intellectual traits, a view that is reflected subtly in some of Schuon’s writings. Coon also had some anti-Semitic views apparently. I learned Coon’s influence on Schuon from John Murray, a disciple of Schuon who formerly was allied with Coomaraswamy and Guenon. He joined the Schuon cult in the late 1940’s with Joseph Epes Brown, who he spent time with in prison during WWII as a conscientious objector. I got to know John Murray rather well, and he explained to me on a number of occasions Schuon’s fascination with the racist theories of Coon.

³⁴² Meister Eckhart’s comment that the Intellect is in its essence is the uncreated substance of God is nonsense. The mind is a product of evolution and religions abstract language and misuse it, via a process not unlike Whitehead’s notion of the fallacy of misplaced concreteness. Claiming the intellect is “uncreated” is the result of an illusion of the mind thinking its own products are eternal and then magnifying this idea into a “transcendent” fiction. For an example of Scholastic angel counting that demonstrates this sort of tortured metaphysical fiction. see Reza Shah Kazemi’s book [Paths to Transcendence: According to Shankara, Ibn Arabi & Meister Eckhart](#) (Spiritual Masters. East and West) Kazemi is a ‘researcher’ for the Ismaili Institute --- a Moslem think tank in London.

Evola as in Schuon. Ultimately the ‘primacy of the intellect’, in Schuon’s phrase, becomes the ultimate power, higher than humanity, life, blood, race, or caste yet still possessing ultimate power over life and death. Of course, the primacy of the Intellect is nothing more than the self-regarding subjectivism and irrational ideology of traditionalism itself—a “pathological subjectivity”, to use an excellent phrase I found in Maude Murray’s documents.³⁴³ The arbitrary “heart intellect”--- a euphemism for arbitrary self-delusional intuition---- claims power on the basis of the idea of “transcendence” which is nothing more than a self-magnifying mirror. One can see this cruelty inherent in the impersonal claim to embody the ‘divine’ in this quote from one of Schuon’s books

We only have one concern- to express the impersonal and uncolored Truth- so that it will be useless to look for anything ‘profoundly human’ in this book, any more than in those of Rene Guenon, for the simple reason that nothing human is profound; nor will there be found any ‘living wisdom’, for wisdom is independent of such contingencies as life and death. ³⁴⁴

This cold, Arctic, arrogant and anti-human view of human life is the epitome of the danger inherent in the relationship of total knowledge to total power; human beings become extraneous to the abstract idea and the impersonal, disinterested ‘truth’ of those who falsely claim objectivity. There is no ‘truth’ in Guenon or Schuon, there is only the outrageously and false claim to it. Perhaps this Arctic, spiritually fascist, view of knowledge and power is what led Guenon and Schuon to seek to imitate the part mythical, part real Aryans. Like the Nazis, they believed in a mythical “hyperborean tradition” located somewhere in the frozen north, from which the major religions all descend, but which has since been

³⁴³ Schuon uses this phrase to condemn Murray but really it is true of him.

³⁴⁴ Schuon Transcendent Unity of religion pg. 15

fragmented by a Satanic design. Guenon and Schuon, Evola and Coomaraswamy believed they had rediscovered the “primordial tradition”--- something that arose prior to the fictional lands of Atlantis-- - the very idea of which is a 19th century fiction---and thought themselves to be leading an intellectual elite, which grows up out of the corrupted “mixed caste” impurity of the modern age. They thought they would supply humanity with a witness to the total Truth, before the world goes up in deserved flames. ³⁴⁵

The idea of the Self (Atma)----which Guenon, Schuon and Evola claimed in some sense to embody or reflect--- is merely a magnified abstraction, a concept, a self-mirroring conceit. The god idea is precisely this magnification of human self-awareness. This is another important difference between the Traditionalists and the German or Italian fascists. The Traditionalists claim to have the ultimate answer to the universe and to embody the ultimate truth. The German or Italian fascists do not go nearly so far in claiming total knowledge. Of course, thankfully, the Traditionalists have only had power within a small orbit of various cults and political groups. Evola’s groups in Italy did manage to kill some people, Schuon’s cult hurt a lot of people, but has not yet killed anyone, though there was one suicide that might be connected to the activity of the cult.

Evola allied himself for a time with ordinary fascism, just as Guenon had sympathized with Daudet and Action Francaise. Evola saw enough of a similarity between the Traditionalist position and Nazism that he sought to serve the Nazis despite the ideological differences. The two most important followers of Guenon, Julius Evola and Frithjof Schuon, exalted Guenon with a bizarre sort of Hero worship. At one point Guenon called

³⁴⁵ See Schuon's Transcendent Unity 1st ed. (later editions were altered) for a description of the downfall of the caste system in the modern age (pg.108-109). The implication being that Schuon as head of the "intellectual elite" will lead a few souls beyond the apocalypse.

Schuon “my eminent collaborator” and although Guenon and Schuon split in the early 1950’s. Guenon accused Schuon and his followers of ‘ignorance’ and plotting against him. Despite this Schuon continued to see Guenon as a precursor to himself, but at the same time, he saw himself as “a man not like other men”, born under the “divine axis” as he says in his Memoirs. How could there have been an influence when Schuon claims to be born divine and to have always been so from youth? In other words, Schuon thought he was prophet or avatar of sorts from before he encountered Guenon. This delusion makes Schuon a sociopath with a narcissistic personality disorder. Guenon suffered from something different, some form of paranoia. In any case, a common paranoid intellectuality and shared hatred of the modern world infuses both Guenon and Schuon.

Evola was also infected with this need of hero worship and elect status. He wanted to assimilate his hero-worship of his spiritual master to his hero-worship of his political idol, Mussolini. Evola, recalling De Giorgio’s admiration for the Spiritual Fascism of Rene Guenon, writes of the close relation of the philosophy of Guenon to that of Mussolini:

[One] finds in Guenon’s works, which are far removed from particularism and personalism...wide horizons, powerful, pure and unconditional ideas, and new ways to recover that greatness which does not belong to the past but to what is superior to time and of a perennial actuality. I feel this to be the case, since Guenon’s “radical traditionalism” is the same as Mussolini’s ideal of the attainment of a “permanent and universal reality”, which is the necessary requirement for anyone who wishes to act spiritually in the world with a “dominating human will”.³⁴⁶

³⁴⁶ Evola, Julius. Rene Guenon: A Teacher for Modern Times Trans., by Guido Stucco Edmonds. WA. Sure Fire Press; Holmes Pub. Group 1994 pg.22

In other words, Evola didn't read Guenon books very well. I find them intensely personal, though he tried to hide that from others. In any case, Evola seems to have been looking to Mussolini and Hitler as potential fulfillments of the Traditionalist and Guenonian dream of the Avataric Lord of the World. He envisions a road to past greatness through the ideas of Guenon. The same sort of ridiculous adulation would later be exemplified in the Schuon cult for their 'master'.³⁴⁷

In 1980 disciples of the French neo-fascist group GRECE, headed Alain de Benoist, as well as an Italian group, inspired by Evola, headed by Franco Freda³⁴⁸ and Pino Rauti placed bombs in a

"Bologna Railway station in August (killing 80, at the Munich Oktoberfest in September (13 dead) and at a Paris synagogue in October (4 dead), Fascist ideology the question of their possible connection presses to the fore. To be sure no one would want to lay responsibility at the doorstep of Alain de Benoist, any more than on the Italian parliamentarian and neo-fascist Pino Rauti."

Yet Thomas Sheehan thinks that there is some responsibility here, not directly, but that the ideology of these terrorist acts derives from Evolian (and thus Guenonian) sources. Sheehan says that this ideology of the far

³⁴⁷ Examples of this absurd adulation can be found in Martin Lings' Eleventh Hour and Charles Upton's, The System of the Anti-Christ, as well as Nasr's The Writings of Frithjof Schuon and in fact most of the books put out by World Wisdom Books, which is the Schuon cult publishing house. They support it and pay for all its titles. I worked for this company for a time and did a lot of their mailings, so I can attest it is a cult publishing company. World Wisdom is usually run at a loss and largely supported by Stanley Jones and Michael Fitzgerald. Jones inherited a lot of money, as did the Perry's, both of whom supported Schuon, and the cult, in high style. The wives and inner circle of Schuon's cult told him that his books sold large number of copies but actually they sold very few and in very irregular intervals. I took them to be mailed so I have a concrete idea of how many sold.

³⁴⁸ In 1963 Freda he founded the Group of Ar, based on the philosophy of Julius Evola, and managed a far-right library. Later, when the Group of Ar was disbanded, he founded the *Edizioni di Ar* ("Ar Publishing"), a publishing house that brought out books by Traditionalist figures like Evola and René Guenon.

right “could perhaps underlie these dreadful acts.”³⁴⁹ Sheehan adds that “Whatever “philosophy undergirds the writing of Italian neofascist Pino Rauti is made up of rehashes and outright plagiarism of Evola’s work.” Sheehan notes also that the far right leader Prince Junio Borghese liked Evola also and saw him “as not afraid to be considered a reactionary, i.e a man of the Right, when he warns that revolution makes sense only when it is a reconstruction, that is, a violent removal of an unjust state of affairs.” This love of violence is very much part of the conservative reactionary model of revolution.

Mark Sedgwick’s view of the influence on Evola on right-wing violence in Europe in the latter part of the 20th century is a little more quavering or ambiguous. Unlike Sheehan, Sedgwick has an unclear understanding of just what fascism is and how it connects to religion. Sedgwick does reluctantly admits that “Evola then seems to have approved what was done in his name—on condition that it was done with the proper spiritual preparation.”—which is to say that Evola appears to have approved the bombings—as long as it was done ‘spiritually’. This is a fairly typical procedure for religious justification for violating human rights and using violence, found in Zen Samurai, The Koranic Khidir and Krishna’s justification of violence to Arjuna, and elsewhere.

But Sedgwick doesn’t understand that the traditionalists are not fascists but theofascists. Nor does he understand how theofascism connects them to a politics that pretends to be apolitical. Guenon is one of many right wing theorists with spiritual pretensions in the 19th and 20th centuries: Nietzsche, Evola, Guenon, Di Giorgio, De Benoist, Spengler, Codreneau, De Maistre as well as many others and these all, to

³⁴⁹ Sheehan Thomas, Thomas Sheehan, “Myth and Violence: The Fascism of Julius Evola and Alain de Benoist,” *Social Research* 48: 1981, pp. 45-73; see also Franco Ferraresi, “Julius Evola: tradition, reaction and the Radical Right,” H.T. Hansen has written a lot about Evola, notably his , hundred-page introduction to Evola's political thought in Joscelyn Godwin’s translation of Evola’s Men among the Ruins. Martin Swartz-- a neo Nazi- likes the Hansen essay very much. Hansen seems to have a right wing agenda as do most if not all who recommend reading Evola.

varying degrees, are against science, reason and equality. They all want to return to an unjust system of spiritual castes or medieval hierarchy. Some of these affect an apolitical stand in order to deflect criticism in a time where they are vastly outnumbered. However, read any of their writings--- saturated with a virulent right wing politics that despises the world, they want to return to archaic forms of tyranny. Evola condemns Fascism as seen from the point of view of Right-wingers, in his “Notes on the Third Reich,”. He criticizes fascism for not being fascist enough. This is also the view of Schuon and Guenon and other conservative revolution ideologues. Traditionalism is ‘higher fascism’. For both Evola and Guenon. In other words, religion is magnified politics, meant to claim even great power than mere kings and dictators. It can only do so as long as people are uneducated and conditioned to make-believe, myths and irrational superstitions .

e. How Fascism Becomes Traditionalism and Corporate Culture develops after World War II

It should be stressed again that Evola’s experiences with the supra-rational are the foundation of his political doctrine.³⁵⁰

H.T Hansen

³⁵⁰

https://archive.org/stream/JuliusEvolasPoliticalEndeavors/JuliusEvolasPoliticalEndeavors_djvu.txt

As I show later in the Review of Guenon's Reign of Quantity and elsewhere in this book, Guenon's idea of the "supra-rational intellect" is delusional and false. From this it follows that his politics are hidden in his metaphysical doctrines too, if you logically follow out the comment of H.T Hansen above. Let me here return to the discussion about Evola and compare him further to Guenon and Schuon, to show that theofascism does indeed come from Guenon and that Evola, Schuon and other followers are merely followers of the pattern that originally was set down by Guenon.

As I will show in the upcoming chapter on Schuon's theofascism, Schuon rejects Nazism for the same reason that the Nazis rejected Evola. Evola had wanted very badly to serve the Fascist regimes in both Italy and Germany. In a dossier kept on Evola by Himmler's personal staff, Evola is criticized for being a "reactionary Roman". That is, The Nazi's say, Evola's theories would most likely lead to an "insurrection of the old aristocracy against the modern world...His overall character is marked by the feudal aristocracy of old...His learnedness tends to the dilettante and pseudo-scientific" ³⁵¹ In other words, Evola was too reactionary and medieval even for the Nazis. Schuon rejects Nazism because it is not theocratic and aristocratic enough- it is too modern. The Nazis reject Evola, whose philosophy is roughly equivalent to Schuon, because he is not modern enough and too enamored of the old order of the aristocracy. Evola rejects the Nazis because they bungled the Guenonian revolution that he hoped for. In other words, Schuon and Evola are more to the right than the Nazis and want to return to backward, pre-scientific, theocratic and imperial forms of knowledge and power. It is this fact that makes it easy to equate Traditionalism with Nazism, while preventing one

³⁵¹ Evola, Julius. Revolt against the Modern World Rochester, Vermont. Inner Traditions. 1995 pg.xviii quoted in introduction by H.T. Hansen

from seeing an identity between them. One can conclude from this that the Nazis saw enough of themselves in Evola to consider him for service to the Reich, but they rejected him ultimately as being more reactionary than themselves, and rightly so. It is hard to imagine anything more reactionary than Nazism. However, the Nazis reject Guenonism as being more theofascist than Nazism. This is the logical conclusion to Guenon's Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power, as Evola correctly deduces. There are differences between Evola, Coomaraswamy and Guenon on the exact relation of the royalty to the priesthood, but these differences are more or less irrelevant.³⁵².

Evola eventually realizes, as Guenon realized after his rejection of Action Française, that ordinary fascism was not totalistic enough. Evola's later rejection of Nazism mirrors exactly Guenon and Schuon's rejection of it. Evola's right-Wing critique of Fascism is a ringing endorsement of theofascism. Evola writes of Hitler that

“In respect to National Socialist theosophy, i.e., to its supposed mystical and metaphysical dimension, one must realize the unique juxtaposition in this movement and in the Third Reich of mythical, Enlightenment, and even scientific aspects. In Hitler, one can find many symptoms of a typically “modern” world-view that was fundamentally profane, naturalistic, and materialistic; while on the

³⁵² Coomaraswamy probably understood the relationship better than either of the other two men. The reciprocal nature of power in the medieval period was shared by royalty and church. potency of religious faith and the influence exercised by the Church was closely embraced by territorial rulers. The coronation ceremony by which a new king's powers were confirmed by the gods was typical in India too, and the arrangements of these powers depended heavily on who was in power at what time. There was a revolving door between them and often sons of a noble became pope or vice versa. There is little reason to say that one or the other is preferred as the arrangement itself was corrupt and delusional on both sides. Evola and Guenon were merely trying to resurrect a dead system in the 20th century that was corrupt in its core. Those who argue over which side was to be preferred are merely indulging in propaganda and delusion..

other hand he believed in Providence, whose tool he believed himself to be, especially in regard to the destiny of the German nation...He railed against the “Dark men of our time,” while attributing to Aryan man the merit of having created modern science. National Socialism’s concern with runes, the ancient Nordic-Germanic letter-signs, must be regarded as purely symbolic, rather like the Fascist use of certain Roman symbols, and without any esoteric significance. The program of National Socialism to create a higher man has something of “biological mysticism” about it, but this again was a scientific project. At best, it might have been a question of the “superman” in Nietzsche’s sense, but never of a higher man in the initiatic sense.³⁵³

One can see here Evola’s hatred of science, shared by all traditionalist anti-intellectuals. Evola likes aspects of the Nazi interest in mystical politics, as did Guenon, but his complaint is that they are not “initiatic”, and do not have a firm grounding in “rites and sacraments”, just as Guenon would accuse the fascism of being “counter initiation”. Evola wants the return of the “divine right of Kings”, the discredited ideology of the “great chain of being” and the caste system, as do Guenon and Schuon. Roman fasces, which consisted of a bundle of sticks that were tied around an axe, was an ancient Roman symbol of the authority of the magistrate. They were carried by his [lictors](#)—attendants--- and could be used for corporal and capital punishment at his command. Fascism is thus a worship of authority and a politics of cruelty. The one all-consuming obsession of the traditionalists is hierarchy, giving the elect a special status. Guenon, Schuon and Evola are religious worshipers of hierarchy and authority, spiritual autocrats. When Evola reproaches Hitler for not being concerned with the “higher man” in the initiatic

³⁵³ from *Il Conciliatore*, no. 10, 1971; translated from the German edition in *Deutsche Stimme*, no. 8, 1998

sense“, he is saying that Hitler is not sufficiently concerned with hierarchy. Just like Schuon and Guenon Evola criticized the Nazis for not being concerned enough with hierarchy and too concerned with science and democracy. In other words, Evola reproaches Hitler for not being Guenonian or Schuonian. Evola is mad that the fascists are not theofascists.

In his old age, Evola sees Fascism as a counterfeit, as did Guenon, whereas his own formula of Traditional truth is the real article, the authentic fascism and therefore the measure of all power and knowledge. Evola, like Schuon and Guenon, was sure he is in touch with the “real” tradition, and that this “tradition” gives him and those who think like him the right to the world power the Nazis wanted but never attained. Traditio-Fascism or theofascism grows out of ordinary fascism.

This is clear in some later writings of Evola, written after World War II, where he concedes that Fascism was partially in error, but that now that this is recognized it must be understood that after World War II fascism becomes Traditionalism. Evola writes that those that

“have lived through Fascism and have thus had a direct experience of the system and its men, know and acknowledge that not everything about it was in order. As long as Fascism existed and could be considered a movement of reconstruction in the making, one of yet unrealized and uncrystalized possibilities, it was still permissible not to criticize it beyond a certain limit. And those who, like ourselves, while defending a set of ideas which only partially coincided with Fascism (and with German National Socialism), did not condemn these movements, even though fully aware of their questionable or aberrant aspects, did so precisely because we counted on future possible developments”.

In other words, Evola is stating that ordinary fascism had the possibility of becoming like Guenon's theofascism but it failed to do so. Guenon was likewise quiet about it, except for mentioning his disappointment in it in some private letters, like the letter to Coomaraswamy, quoted elsewhere. So Evola says

Today, when that Fascism lies behind us as a historical reality, our attitude cannot be the same. Instead of idealizing it in a way consistent with the 'myth' of Fascism, what is necessary now is to separate the positive from the negative, not just for theoretical reasons, but for practical guidance with an eventual political struggle in mind. Thus we should not accept the adjective 'fascist' or 'neo-fascist' tout court; we should call ourselves fascist (if we feel we must) in respect of what was positive about Fascism, not fascist in respect of what Fascism was not.[...]

In other words, it is a question of making linkages as far as it is possible between the great European political Tradition and discarding what at bottom can be seen as compromises, divergent or even deviant possibilities, or phenomena which were products of the very evils which people set out to take a stand against and fight. ³⁵⁴

In other words, according to Evola, after World War II and the defeat of political Fascism a new kind of "fascism" is necessary, which Evola identifies with "the ideas and principles based in that Earlier Tradition". In short, fascism after the War becomes theofascism or traditionalism. Fascism migrates into many areas of life after World War II. It became a part of Stalin's Gulag³⁵⁵ and the American blacklisting of the

³⁵⁴ Evola Julius: *Il fascismo* (Giovanni Volpe: Rome, 1979; 1st edn. 1964), 13-17.]

³⁵⁵ Stalin's fascism is interesting as it grows so much from his personality. He becomes even more authoritarian as his regime moves on. This is partly due to his encounter with Germany, as

McCarthyism. Fascism becomes part of the client-state relationship between the U.S. and governments it favors such as Pinochet's Chile, Peron's Argentina or the monarchist fascism of the Shah of Iran, and in many others states.³⁵⁶ But defeated fascism also morphs into traditionalism and the corporation and the idea of the "corporate person" which is a metaphysical construction.

Or in other words, Evola is saying that after its defeat in 1945, fascism must be 'spiritualized' along Guenonian lines--- which is to say basically that fascism must become theofascism. Theo fascism is universalistic or "globalized" as Guenon indicated once.

Guenon wants to be the universal man. Fascism must become Traditionalism or the New Right, as a capitalism/religion amalgam, fundamentalism combined with political reaction, much as it has become in the U.S. and Europe. In other words, to repeat myself, Evola was not the originator of Traditionalism's relation to fascism; he was merely following the pattern already set forth by Guenon (and before him Encausse, De Maistre and others). Guenon creates theofascism by moving to the right of Maurras and Daudet, as I will show later. Evola rejected ordinary fascism just as had Guenon and Schuon. Guenon's biography and written works outline a conservative apocalyptic politics that allies Traditionalism to fascism indirectly, as a sort of moralistic and far right correctant. Theofascism has a mirroring or complementary relationship to fascism, it is, as it were, the elite and religious wing of fascism.

he becomes more and more like Hitler the more he fights him. You can see this transference of autocratic insanity in Robert Oppenheimer too, as he works on the atom bomb and becomes obsessed with Hitler and defeating him with the big bomb.

³⁵⁶ Salvador Allende was murdered by the CIA, essentially, and the neo fascist Pinochet was installed. This was evidently masterminded by Henry Kissinger, who really is a war criminal and should have been in jail for this.

Clearly, traditionalism resembles fascism in various ways. In addition, clearly, it rejects many aspects of the fascism of Hitler and Mussolini. Thus those who say that Perennialism is fascist are both right and wrong. The words of Guenon and Evola would imply, however, that they were concerned with the fascist movements to varying degrees and put some hope in it, even if they ultimately rejected it in favor of a system of thought even more fascistic, or more totalitarian than the Nazis, Italian or Japanese fascists. Indeed, traditionalism is in many ways the extreme religious side of fascism. They approved of its wish to go “back to the old way”, to Tradition, its invocation of transcendental and inflated myths. However, they disliked the modernist tendencies in it. Whether one calls it Traditionalism “Higher Fascism” or Metaphysical Fascism, Meta-fascism, traditio-fascism or Transcendental Fascism it is all the same.

However, perhaps Guido De Giorgio’s name for it is the most accurate, since he was a participant in developing the basic ideology of Traditionalism. Guido de Giorgio, as I said earlier, was an ally of Guenon and friend of Evola. He developed an idealistic vision of the Roman ideology of the Fasces, or Fascism, which he called “spiritual fascism”.³⁵⁷ This bore an idealized relation to Mussolini’s effort to resurrect Roman imperialism. Be this as it may, Giorgio’s notion of “spiritual fascism” seen in conjunction with Umberto Eco’s definitions of fascism as well as with R.J. Lifton’s notion of ‘ideological totalism’ is quite accurate and complete as a description of the Traditionalist political/metaphysical project. The Traditionalists reject the Fascism of Mussolini and Hitler, but yet seek to return to the ‘Top-Down’ hierarchical Empires of the past, as Hitler and Mussolini did, but in a much more totalistic and conservative manner, without the modernist additions that Mussolini added to the Traditionalist project. Theofascism is fascism without science and

³⁵⁷ Guido de Giorgio (1890-1957) collaborated with Evola in the journals *Ur* and *La Torre*. See Piero Di Vona, Guenon, Evola and De Giorgio

without any Enlightenment values: science, freedom of inquiry, rights and reason. They want to return to the ages of authoritarian Caesar, the Pharaoh, Rome and the Church, Muhammad and the Chinese Emperors, all of them mixed up in a kitsch salad of grotesque reactionary politics and bad history. The Traditionalists are not like the Italian and German fascists, they are kitsch fascists, who yearn for a new age of theocratic dictatorship and anti-technology where priests modeled after Plato's guardians can commit injustices against the poor and children for their own good. This word "Theofascism" expresses very well this wedding cake amalgam of far right nostalgia, hatred of equality, anti-science and anti-human rights misogyny and patriarchal dogmatism. Theofascism is this toxic soup of discredited and rejected cultural detritus. After World War II this repulsive brew replaces the failed Nazis and fascists as a new Traditionalist movement develops pretending to be apolitical.

So, Roger Griffin, Umberto Eco and R. J. Lifton have given me a reasonable definition of fascism which I have expanded on. I have created a hypothesis about theofascism and applied it across a large array of historical facts and details. I have elaborating the historical and psychological sides of theofascism and not merely the political elements. My hypothesis appears to be accurate and to explain a great deal of behavior and history which would otherwise be obscure. I have applied that definition to the consideration of Guenon as well as his followers Schuon and Evola and to a lesser extent, Dugin and the Coomaraswamys, among others. All of these men followed the Guenonian pattern of supporting far-right politics of various kinds but then sought an "Ur- Politics" or a spiritual version of fascism that would be more universal. Guenon was the creator and inspirational for whatever his followers did. To him must go the credit of creating a toxic system of theofascist thought. Schuon was his rather demented follower, as was Evola, Dugin, Huston Smith, Rama Coomaraswamy and many others.

But I have also applied it to religion in general, and religion in general appears to share in the same delusional toxicity . I have gone beyond these rather local comparisons and facts to apply some of these ideas to religion as a global phenomenon. So I have tested some of these ideas against the reality of the history of religions and cultures. It follows therefore that religious experiences with the “supra-rational” are delusional by products, not of evolution, but of cultural and social forces. These fantasies which serve social classes, unfortunately, become the foundation of political doctrines erected upon these deluded principles. Such political systems are toxic and bound to fail, creating injustices in their wake.

So to conclude: ----after World War II the fascist project had failed, but theofascism lived on. The development of the corporation is not the same as but parallel to the development of traditionalist thought. Both were efforts to resurrect the dying aristocracy of Europe. Like Traditionalism the corporations had been developed as a mythical structure and went through a similar process to globalize itself. It also sought to create corporations as quasi immortal “persons”, loosely based on the model of religions, whereby a dead entity that is merely abstract is given personhood, just as the Trinity or Eucharist. Gods and corporations are abstract entities meant to magnify and multiply power of the classes and individuals they serve. These ideological structures, traditionalism and corporations are natural allies. Neither are fascism, but both have affinities with it. IBM works for the Nazi’s and helps them create Auschwitz, while not being Nazi themselves, Evola associates with Nazis and Schuon approves of Japanese theofascism without allying himself with the fascists. These are parallel and not identical developments.

This is why, when Schuon came to America, it was right wing corporate Republicans who brought him here and supported him. Many of the people attracted to Schuon were right wing corporate people, or wannabe aristocrats. He was natural ally of corporate reactionary

politics. The racist advisor of Donald Trump. Steve Bannon, is a follower of Evola and Guenon, for instance. Trump hates democracy, as do Bannon and Evola, and uses racism as a way to get votes, scapegoat the left and incite violence and thus control of the population.³⁵⁸

The corporations were created as an effort to create a neo-aristocracy that would continue what was undermined by the French and American revolutions. Traditionalism was also an attempt to uphold aristocratic values and an elite culture. Corporations were created during the period of 'discovery' during the 16th and 17th centuries and were central in the slave trade, Beaver skin dealing, the spice trade and conquest of native tribal cultures. The corporation would maintain the exploitation of labor, exploitation of the far east, mining and animal factories as some of their main sources of immoral profiteering to this

³⁵⁸ For more on the relation of Bannon-Trump and Traditionalists like Evola and Guenon see Joshua Green the "Devil's Bargain: Steve Bannon, Donald Trump & the Storming of the Presidency". IN 2014 Bannon said that ““Julius Evola and different writers of the early 20th century who are really the supporters of what’s called the Traditionalist movement, which really eventually metastasized into Italian Fascism.”

In his Vatican talk, Mr. Bannon suggested that although Mr. Putin represented a “kleptocracy,” the Russian president understood the existential danger posed by “a potential new caliphate” and the importance of using nationalism to stand up for traditional institutions.

“We, the Judeo-Christian West,” Mr. Bannon added, “really have to look at what he’s talking about as far as Traditionalism goes — particularly the sense of where it supports the underpinnings of nationalism.” He thus endorsed the ideology of spiritual fascism.

“His awareness of and reference to Evola in itself only reflects that reading. But some on the alt-right consider Mr. Bannon a door through which Evola’s ideas of a hierarchical society run by a spiritually superior caste can enter in a period of crisis”

Quoted From NYT

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/10/world/europe/bannon-vatican-julius-evola-fascism.html>

day. The later added to this gruesome list things like exploiting the sick, exploiting the oceans and forests and exploiting oil and coal and more recently, exploiting children and schools and the mind itself via electronic devices. But these things really don't become what they are now are until after the 1800's with the rise of industrial production and exploiting of worldwide resources, which eventually cause mass extinctions and global warming. The idea of the corporation as a person does not become enshrined into later in the 1800's and doesn't really flower till the last 80 years or so. Corporation are then given quasi divine status as immortal persons.³⁵⁹ Traditionalist and Republican ideology runs parallel to all this and does not begin to dovetail with it until the last 20 years. Just as Schuon would prove useful to King Charles in England, Schuon and Guenon are useful to the creation of an anti-democratic cult and movements in many countries. Schuon did not like corporations much, but he loved their money and took advantage of all his followers who were rolling in it. He knew his bread was buttered by corporate dollars. The same can be said for many other cults. Cults are closely akin to corporations in American and CEO's are much like the arbitrary dictators one sees in religious cults. Destroying democracy is a major goal of corporate and traditionalist ideology, with a return to top down and imperious autocracies lording it over a globalized world. American protects both criminal CEO's and cult leaders by deforming the

³⁵⁹ Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black said, 'I do not believe the word 'person' in the Fourteenth Amendment includes corporations. ' Neither the history nor the language of the Fourteenth Amendment justifies the belief that corporations are included within its protection.' The Fourteenth Amendment is about human rights not corporate rights. It was grossly misused by corporate lawyers. Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas made the same point, writing that, 'There was no history, logic or reason given to support that view [that corporations are legally 'persons']. Chief Justice John Marshall did not equivocate in *Dartmouth College v. Woodward* in 1819: "A corporation is an artificial being, invisible, intangible, and existing only in contemplation of law. Being the mere creature of law, it possesses only those properties which the charter of its creation confers upon it." Those justices who maintain the atrocity of the Corporate Person fiction are guilty of helping cause endless abuses of our world. See *Santa Clara County v. Southern Pacific Railroad Company* 1886. As well as *Citizens United*

1st and 14th amendment to serve cults and CEO. Recently the Hobby Lobby Corporation won an argument at the Supreme Court that claims that corporations are entitled to the same religious freedom protections as people.³⁶⁰ This again makes corporate culture a sort of super and global religion, a sort of Transcendent unity of corporate culture, in short, a new aristocracy.. In so doing the progress toward undermining democratic values and resurrecting a corrupt autocratic system is encouraged. Evola would be pleased, I think. Evola said he did not want “spirituality and culture.... dependent on politics.” Rather he wanted “politics that must be dependent on spirituality and culture.” This is to return to aristocratic absolutism and is totally backwards and destructive. Evola, like Donald Trump, is ridiculous of course. The tendency to create a corporate/religious form of theofascism is quite real and comes with modern corporate globalism, even though it is partly a reaction against this same globalism.. Perennialism is trivial compared to corporate culture, but they dovetail at important points and so it is instructive to compare them. This corrupt tendency should not be ignored, but brought into question and if possible held to account or stopped.

f. Nietzsche, Traditionalism and Hierarchies of Hate.

³⁶⁰ The advertising jingle that should go with Walmart, Hobby Lobby and other corrupt corporations is “ Jesus loves me this I know, because my bankbooks tells me so”. American Christianity is largely based on this hypocrisy. Christians should be helping the poor and taking from the rich, who are supposed to be allowed into the kingdom of heaven. It were easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than a Walmart or Hobby Lobby president to even be glanced at by Jesus. There is no Jesus, but their own texts condemn them anyway.

Nietzsche said that “God is dead”, and this sounds true when you first hear it. But God never actually lived, and never existed, so news of his death is greatly exaggerated. One cannot kill a fiction, which is not a living thing. It merely fades away, as the Greek gods did. No one misses them. What Nietzsche should have said is the illusion is over, the delusions are done. But he clung to his own delusions mightily, as Zarathustra shows. But Nietzsche’s idea is right, the god idea is finished. It is not at all a bad thing, that the god delusion has died. The world is not an inferior vale of tears anymore, or a way station between here and the “next world”, a place of “original sin” or the field of “samsara” in which all is a dreamy illusion or Maya and the ten thousand things. The world is the only factual place there is and it is our responsibility to take care of it. Religion is dying because we need to care for the world and the religious despise the world. This despising of the world is a serious part of what ails our world and must be overcome. Religions are counter-evolutionary in more than one way.

Nietzsche was an elitist who wanted to create of “master class” and believed in a ‘slave morality’ for those who were below the masters. He believed in a European version of the caste system and was prone to a biological determinism that overlaps with the Nazi idea of biological determinism. The problem with him is this class obsession and combined with his transcendentalism leads him to endorse cruelty, and this combination does indeed tie him as a sort of prototype for Nazi thinking. A great deal of ink has been used to say he is not a Nazi, and that is true, but he is a proto-Nazi, not unlike the traditionalists, who are post-Nazi far right thinkers.

Nietzsche is in many respects another anti-Darwinist, who sees the ‘will to power’ as the goal, rather than survival, which in Darwin’s view would include altruism. Nietzsche is what would later be called a “social Darwinist” which has little or nothing to do with Darwin himself or the theory of evolution. Nietzsche likes cruelty, whereas Darwin abhors it,

rightly, though he recognizes it exists and is part of nature. But he wishes to mitigate it as much as possible. Nietzsche wants no helping of others, but only glory for oneself, and this is very likely to lead not to survival, but to bloodshed and war.³⁶¹ The Nazis were able to use him precisely because of these tendencies, quite apart from Nietzsche's sister, who distorted his work.

The relation of the traditionalists to Nietzsche is complex and ambiguous. But since Evola, while still in his earlier Nietzschean phase, called out for the creation of "a new human type...a being more the subject than the object, one who accepts those aspects of destruction which lead to a surmounting of individualism in favor of a new active impersonalism, towards a "heroic realism".³⁶² Zarathustra has much in common with the heroic idealizations of the traditionalists, from Guenon to Eliade.

It should be noted that Evola was not the only traditionalist to be influenced by Nietzsche. Ananda Coomaraswamy(AKC) devotes a whole chapter to him in his book Dance of Shiva, Pg. 141)_where Coomaraswamy writes of the "beautiful doctrine of the Superman, so like the Chinese concept of the Indian Maha-Parusha Bodhisattva and Jivan Mukta". In other words AKC has a very idealized view of Nietzsche and says naively and mistakenly, that the "will to power has nothing to do with tyranny". But AKC is dreaming.

Indeed, in 1916 AKC quoted approvingly this statement of John Ruskin

³⁶¹ Nietzsche writes critically of Darwin that

"Man as a species does not represent any progress compared with any other animal. The whole animal kingdom does not evolve from the lower to the higher – brutal at the same time, in utter disorder, over and against each other. The richest and most complex forms – or the expression "higher type" means no more than this – perish more easily: only the lowest preserve an apparent indestructibility.(Nietzsche 1968, 363)

He really does not understand Darwin and how art is not negated by Darwin at all. What is negated by Darwin is a devotion to the irrational and brutal, such as Nietzsche admires. Darwin hopes for a species survival and social relations that help keep each other well.,

³⁶² Evola, Julius Il cammino del cinabro, Arche, Milan 1983 pp. 99 191-192).

My continual aim has been to show the eternal superiority of some men to others, sometimes even of one man to all others: and to show also the advisability of appointing such persons or person to guide, to lead, or on occasion to even compel and subdue their inferiors according to their own better knowledge and wiser will(Ruskin quoted in Coomaraswamy, 1916b: 453).³⁶³

This is Ruskin trying to mirror the views of the English aristocracy. Ruskin is a very mixed person. On the one hand he is an arch reactionary, hating modern life, democracy,³⁶⁴ the ordinary, and on the other he was an interesting scientific artist, doing portraits of geological formations and Alpine valleys.³⁶⁵ But AKC did not grasp these subtleties. He admired the reactionary in Ruskin, the world denying escapist who would go back to Byzantium or the “Stones of Venice”. The will to power that AKC admired in Ruskin is virtually identical to what he admired in Nietzsche. Nietzsche desired eugenic policies and as William Shirer recounts in his The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich, Hitler took frequent sojourns to the Nietzsche museum in Weimar... Indeed, Shirer writes:

³⁶³ This is quoted in Ed Crooks here:

http://york.academia.edu/EdCrooks/Papers/1235766/John_Cages_Entanglement_with_the_Ideas_of_Coomaraswamy

³⁶⁴ Ruskin’s relations with Turner are curious. He was Turner’s champion for a time, and loved even works like Turner’s anti-slavery painting, which he owned for over 20 years. But Turner was not a reactionary, being more of a libertine like Lord Egremont, or Lady Elizabeth Eastlake, who hated Ruskin. Turner appears to have loved her. In any case, Ruskin invented the story that Turner said on his deathbed that “the sun is god”. He said no such thing. He merely said to Mrs. Booth that he would like to see the sun again.

³⁶⁵ Ruskin, Schuon and AKC have curious things in common. They all had a tendency to attraction or young women or pedophilia, they all reject the modern world and hate science and industry. Ruskin and Schuon both had tendencies to see themselves as children. In Ruskin’s case these tendencies came out later in life in extreme psychiatric form, encephalopathy or CADASIL. They are all politically reactionary. I do not know what conclusion to draw from these similarities,. They were all men who were deeply influenced by romanticism and the symbolist movement, and had reactionary an nostalgic and narcissistic tendencies, as well as a certain fascination with sexualized youth.

“There was some ground for this appropriation of Nietzsche as one of the originators of the Nazi *Weltanschauung*. Had not the philosopher thundered against democracy and parliaments, preached the will to power, praised war and proclaimed the coming of the master race and the superman—and in the most telling aphorisms? (100)”

There are a lot of apologists for Nietzsche, Walter Kaufman and many others, who try to white wash his proto-Nazi attitudes, but actually Nietzsche is quite as bad as the Nazi in many instances. For instance he says that

The party of life which takes in hand the greatest of all tasks, the higher breeding of humanity, together with the remorseless destruction of all degenerate and parasitic elements, will again make possible on earth that superfluity of life out of which the Dionysian condition must again proceed” ³⁶⁶

This is the transcendental obsession that would lead to Auschwitz and other atrocities. The desire to be or make up a god which so obsessed Nietzsche, is what ties Nietzsche to AKC, Schuon, Jung, Campbell, Rilke and Hiedegger and other romantics. The desire to make or be a god also creates power drives, delusions of superiority and this leads to the desire for destruction. In the above quote Nietzsche involves the very ideology that would soon create Auschwitz and Dachau. So what is Coomaraswamy thinking when he says at the end of this essay that

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³⁶⁶ Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, Penguin Books 1979, pg.81

“those who have comprehended the decline and fall of Western civilization will recognize in Nietzsche the reawakening of the conscience of Europe”

This “reawakening” of conservative and aristocratic delusions was murderous in the extreme. AKC is invoking the theofascist paradigm. He did not know that is what he was doing and his followers do not know it either and would deny it. But what AKC wanted was that the “conscience of Europe” would “reawakened” to the misconstrued religious fictions of bygone centuries.. Well, anyone who has read AKC knows that what he means is that the medieval religions of Europe and India should be resurrected, the elitist social forms of the Kings and lords should return. He hoped that the Enlightenment be brought into disrepute. The poor should be put down, the rich reasserted as the Masters of Europe and the “parasites” gotten rid of..

All the traditionalists end up being devotees of dream worlds, living in a cocoon of imaginal delusions and supporting holocaustal solutions. Too bad AKC read Guenon and took him seriously. AKC was a mildly interesting man before that happened. He could have been a scientist. He could have been many things, but as Gandhi once implied, AKC ‘was more talk than action’. His son Rama writes to me as says I believe he was with Gandhi on the famous salt marches” AKC went astray because of Guenon. His ideal of ‘contemplation’ ends in allying him with the most reactionary forces. In the 1920-30’s AKC is revisiting the same Blavaskean and Guenonian theofascism that inspired Guenon and Evola and which is dimly involved in Hitler’s own claim to be a superman as well as Schuon’s claim to be an avatar.³⁶⁷

³⁶⁷ Patrick Ringgenberg notes in his Theories of Art in Traditional Thought, not yet published (pg. 370) that Coomaraswamy’s universalism is hollow and narcissistic. Like Guenon and Schuon AKC worked on the basis of a subjective elitism that is ultimately self-aggrandizing and self-magnifying. He pretends to a selfless universalism that is false and soon reveals itself and a romantic narcissism that vaults its fairy tale metaphysics up into a universal self-mirroring.

Schuon writes of Nietzsche with some affection in his book Having a Center. He is, as usual, remarking on his own characteristic obsession with his own delusions of elite status. Maude Murray says that Schuon “admired people like Napoleon and Nietzsche.” (2018) Nietzsche loved the elite too, as did Thomas Carlyle and other apologists of reactionary and English aristocracy. He was an extreme individualist reactionary and this is what ironically characterizes many traditionalists. Schuon recognizes that Nietzsche was demented³⁶⁸, as everyone must who has read Nietzsche’s book Ecce Homo. But Schuon bends over quite far to prove that Nietzsche book Zarathustra was written as a “violent reaction of an apriori profound soul against a mediocre and paralyzing cultural environment... Nietzsche’s misfortune like that of other men of genius, such as Napoleon, was to be born after the Renaissance and not before it.” Schuon says virtually identical things about himself. Like Hitler Nietzsche and Schuon think they are a “god on a treadmill”, as Schuon would describe himself. In short Schuon sees Nietzsche as a man like himself, since Schuon describes himself in virtually identical terms in his Memoirs. Of course he says also that Nietzsche lacks “discernment”, which Schuon claimed, falsely, to possess in a superabundant degree. Schuon would not want to be lesser than anyone, of course, since he was such a ‘humble’ man, as he says in his late poems.³⁶⁹ But by then he was trying to counter the legitimate criticisms of his delusion of

Traditionalist theory of art and ideology, Ringgenberg says, is “founded on the axiom of a universalist metaphysics, by definition unchangeable and beyond time, this intellectual perspective did not permit fundamental questioning, and contented itself with repeating, in different terms, ... the opinions and options articulated by its founders.” Yes, this is good. Though Schuon’s art is actually an excessively individualistic art, hiding behind ego effacement.
³⁶⁸ There are arguments about what exactly Nietzsche suffered from, some say syphilis and other say an extreme form of manic depression. Incidentally, may have been homosexual, though that too is uncertain.

³⁶⁹ Spiritual humility is an hypocrisy. Claiming to be humble to god while you proselytize and brow beat others with the black book is always an interesting behavior to watch. Missionaries go to countries they know nothing about to force others to believe their nonsense and they do it “humbly”, like Dicken’s Uriah Heap, who is always humble, while he harms everyone around him. .

grandeur.

In any case, theofascism is a common factor to Guenon, Schuon and Nietzsche--- none of them are exactly fascists, but they all go well beyond the fascists in their ambitions. They want to move the world backwards into the Dark Ages and claim that doing so will bring us to the light. As M. Ali Lakhani writes in an essay echoing Coomaraswamy great praise for Nietzsche's theofascism, the

“Self that must be understood as the *Urbemensch* (the Nietzschean “Superman”), as Ananda K. Coomaraswamy noted in his essay on Nietzsche, not the psychic or sensational self of common parlance or of the ill-termed “Nazi gnosis”. The Nietzschean “Will to Power” or its Blakean equivalent of “Energy” (symbolized by the “Tyger” whose “immortal symmetry” cannot be framed) are thus to be understood strictly as faculties of the authentic Self or the “Inner Man”, and not as the personal cravings or lower impulses of the “Outer Man”.³⁷⁰

Lakhani is parsing distinctions without a difference here, as is common among the traditionalists. There is no “Self”. That is a Hindu construction that is fiction, like the idea of god or gods. The notion of “higher” and lower self is a fiction constructed by ideology, as elementary brain science has shown. He unsuccessfully tries to defend traditionalism against Umberto Eco's correct charge that Guenon is basically an “Ur-fascist” writer. Guenon is an Ur-fascist and one can only prove he is not by either lying and pretending he isn't. Lakhani, who sympathizes with Ur-Fascism, states some basic premises of theofascism pretty well. He echoes Guenon more or less directly when he states “There is no outer order (or Beauty) without inner order (or Virtue), no

³⁷⁰ http://www.sacredweb.com/articles/sw11_editorial.html

legitimacy of hierarchy unless premised upon the spiritually-ordered structure of reality, which proceeds from the subtle to the gross, from spiritual substance to material form, in a “great chain of being” (the GCB). In other words Lakhani invokes arcane, archaic and defeated justifications of aristocratic hierarchy. As Darwin showed, the world is not at all like this. This is merely the delusional fantasy of an absolutist. Like all the traditionalists he is obsessed with hierarchy and thus with power, wishing to bring back the defeated power of centuries ago. He claims, humorously, that traditionalists are superior beings by universal fiat--- as did Guenon and Schuon. The reason for the GCB was so that Guenon and Schuon could be greatest and highest among humans, obviously. They are almost glowing angels themselves!

But jokes aside, Lakhani states that “there is no legitimacy of hierarchy unless premised upon the spiritually-ordered structure of reality” – well there is no demonstration of proof anywhere of any “spiritually-ordered structure of reality”, so the idea that hierarchy is legitimate is false. Hierarchy is not a legitimate concept. It is an invention that supports social inequality, greed or class obsessions. If ones studies the notion of “proof” in spiritual dogmas and assertions, it is clear it is based on erroneous analogies and blind assertions that are not proven at all. The saying in the Gospel myth of Jesus that “Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.” is the final fiat of religion, as this proves nothing at all, and offers rewards for unthinking allegiance and ignorance.

The Great Chain of Being---“GCB”-- is a discredited Platonic and Christian concept that expresses theofascism in a nutshell. It situates the male patriarchal god at the top, descending down a plethora of imaginary seraphim and angels, to man and beneath him, woman. Then snails, and the world condemned by the bogus concept of “original sin” etc. Darwin dispatched the silly idea of the “GCB” over 150 years ago with this Theory of Evolution. The ideology of the “ GCB” depended on

the discredited Platonic notions of essences, castes and archetypes, which were proven not to exist when the growing dinosaur record demonstrated that species go extinct and are not eternal. Species also change radically over time and space through the process of adaptation and evolution. Lakhani argument is empty and circular. He does not understand that most of the writers for his journal, Sacred Web, are far right fanatics and Ur Fascists of the same esoteric fundamentalism of which Eco speaks so brilliantly. They cannot see their own theofascism because they live enclosed in the delusion “GCB”, “Transcendent Unity”, and other esoteric fictions. The “GCB” is utterly discredited. It has been shown conclusively that all living things are not meaningfully classified in a single linear hierarchy.

But one doesn't expect these writers to have any self-reflective critical ability. They do not believe in reason and wish only to parrot the unquestioned dogmas of their Magisterial “great masters”, without thinking too deeply about what these pseudo-masters actually said and did. So when Guenon and Schuon to claim affiliation with Khadir, they are claiming to be beyond good and evil in the Nietzschean sense of a cloaked transcendental narcissism. Schuon's claim to be beyond the law and to follow an “intrinsic morality” is exactly analogous to Nietzsche's theofascism. Evola's claim that Guenon and Mussolini are alike is quite accurate, for the same reason. These are psychopathic men who claim divine rights, and the right to be the “divine executioner” in De Maistre's phrase. They are all puffed up, romantic and ridiculous claims, of course, but they have a sense. What crazy cult leaders and Guenon and Schuon do is indulge what has been called “crazy wisdom” or holy madness ³⁷¹ and this is basically an excuse for some teachers to engage

³⁷¹ For more on this see Georg Feurstein's Holy Madness

Spirituality, Crazy-Wise Teachers, and Enlightenment. It is a questionable book but has interesting information in it.

irresponsibly in self-indulgent behavior, doing harm to others without a hint of remorse.

What these claims really amount to is claims to power, or claims over life and death. That is what their “god” really is. That is what their claim to access to esoteric knowledge through the supersensible “intellect” really is all about. Guenon says that “intellectual intuition” is the “essential” principle ³⁷²to which everything else must be referred”, and that all knowledge and social relations must be made subject to this claim to metaphysical knowledge through the Intellect so that “proper hierarchy must be everywhere and always preserved”.³⁷³ This is pure bunk of course, since the intuitive intellect is guarantee of nothing but irrational dictates and subjective presumptions. The “Intuitive Intellect” in Guenon, Schuon, Evola and Nietzsche is an imposture, a “pathologically subjective” Guenon is merely grasping at totalitarian power through knowledge. What you get in Guenon and Schuon is irrational dictates and presumptions, and it was this irrationality and grasping at transcendent fictions, which they recognize in Nietzsche, since his book *Zarathustra* is exactly that. The drive for transcendent power leads them all to amorality. This leads them to see others as merely in the way. This hatred of individuals in favor of “principles” and the willingness to destroy those who stand in the way is common to all the Traditionalists. It is this that makes their beliefs poisonous. Evola hopes to achieve this trans-individual greatness, like Mussolini, who tried to imitate the Roman Caesars. Schuon thinks he is Caesar or

³⁷² Chomsky writes that “As for “First Principles,” basing them on divinities is, I think, a very bad idea. That leaves anyone free to pick the “first principles” they choose on other grounds, and to disguise the choices as “what God commands. If it’s the warrior God of the Bible, the First Principles are horrendous.” Or it could be another god, such as the Zen idea of nothingness which as used by Zen priests to justify the massacres of World War 2—and so on. Guenon’s principles are nothing at all, just merely vague mythical generalities that he never makes clear. He creates grand ideas and then has no clue what they actually mean, they are merely glorified abstractions and mythic fabrications.

³⁷³ Guenon, Rene. *The Crisis of the Modern World*. London: Luzac 1975 pg. 37

Napoleon, as well as Plato, Shankara and perhaps Christ too.

Guenon and Evola came to realize that Theofascism and fascism were not quite the same thing at different times. Later in his career, after he has already invented theofascism, -- or 'spiritual fascism' as DiGiorgo called it--- Guenon thought that Nazism lacked the same principles which Evola praises it for. On March 28, 1937, Guenon writes to Ananda Coomaraswamy that "I agree with you [Coomaraswamy] on the subject of Fascism and similar regimes today, which seem to be in opposition to "democracy" but are, ultimately, just as devoid of real principles".

Guenon was pleased that fascism was opposed to democracy, which he hated, ³⁷⁴ but he is disappointed that it lacks true 'esoteric' and 'aristocratic principles'. Fascism with aristocratic principles would be fine by him, in short. For Guenon, a 'principled' theofascism is what is desirable. When Guenon says "principles", he does not mean anything rational or thought through: he means arbitrary superstitions like Seraphim, "Beyond Being", the absolute and Atlantis. He means irrational beliefs derived from Plato and caste-ridden Vedanta, Innocent the III and Dante's sadistic Paradiso. Guenon takes a firm stand on make-believe, just as Dante does, creating a heaven that is as bloated and inflated as his hell is cruel and sadistic.

³⁷⁴ A. Coomaraswamy loves aristocracy and hated democracy too as can be seen in this essay, where he justifies the horror of the Hindu caste system. "The Bugbear of Democracy, Freedom and Equality," *The Bugbear of Literacy*, (Bedfont: Perennial Books, 1979), AKC hates America and its workers and says of them that "these great proletarian aggregates, whose members, exploited by one another, pullulate in "capitals" that have no longer any organic connection with the bodies on which they grew, but depend on world markets that must be opened by "wars of pacification" and continually stimulated by the "creation of new wants" by suggestive advertisement. " Though elements of this are true is hardly a fair assessment of people in Boston or Cleveland. Then he notes that the American way of life " is destructive of the more highly differentiated traditional societies in which the individual has a status determined by his function and in no sense merely by wealth or poverty" and he is speaking of the caste system. It is good that the caste system is being destroyed. What will replace it needs work, that is for sure, but AKC is totally wrong that the caste system was a good thing. He is also wrong about Plato and the idealization of craft. I admire craft a great deal and am a craftsman myself, much more than AKC was, but I would rather have a sewing machine that is well made by machines than a bad machine made by hand.

The difference between Guenon and Evola is a slight difference. Both men were devoted to “principles” at the expense of other humans if necessary. They “drew their line in the catacombs”, as Evola says somewhere. They sided with the non-existent dead against the living, and philosophized out of the Tombs. They take their stand on the ramparts of decayed metaphysical systems of make believe eternal values. They are both ideological totalists, that is, they would be willing to sacrifice anybody or anything to achieve the glory of their narrow beliefs. But they differ slightly on their interpretations of fascism. They both prefer it to democracy, but Guenon seems to have held out for an even more total philosophy of political control than Evola was able to imagine in the 1930’s.. Evola is actually more liberal and open minded than Guenon. Evola was a transcendent fascist who was willing to work for the Nazis and did work with Mussolini, but for Guenon the fascists were not fascist enough, he wanted a Super-Duper Universal Spiritual Fascism. These men are only slightly different.

The answer to the question: are the Traditionalists Fascists?- is thus a complex matter because the Traditionalists are clearly related to the fascists in some respects, but not in others, as were Pound, Junger and others. The Traditionalists are ‘spiritual fascists’ or theofascists and not National Socialists is one way to put it. The Traditionalists are more concerned with creating doctrinal and symbolic forms of power which they hope will be actualized in the political domain, whereas the Nazis and Italian Fascists, using some of the ideas that also appealed to the Traditionalists, seized the social power that the Traditionalists only dreamed of. Therefore, despite the persistent tendency for the Traditionalists to link themselves up with or be associated by others with Fascism they are not Fascists in the ordinary sense, meaning they are not Italian or Germanic Fascists. Guenon claims that fascism is “just as devoid of principles” as democracy, and he thinks democracy is part of a diabolical plot. He wants a type of fascism based on a supra-religious,

“transcendent unity” of all the religions., a universal fascism, a spiritual or sacred fascism as it were. Schuon wants this too.

Evola, later in his life, rejected the ordinary Fascist point of view and even condemned it along the same lines as Guenon and Schuon. He writes:

“If one considers the results, the catastrophic consequences to which National Socialism led, even indirectly, those goals must have been obscure and destructive. One would have to identify the “occult side” of this movement with what Guenon called the “Counter-Initiation.” ³⁷⁵

This is literally correct and what Guenon did write of it in some letters. But of course, one must ask, so what? What is Guenon’s idea of the “counter initiation” but a perversion of the fact that religions are failing and that is a good not a bad thing. In the Guenonian lexicon the “Counter-Initiation” is a satanically inspired conspiracy against the spiritual forces of “good”, in short it is a political insurrection against orthodox political monarchism. That is a good thing. But for Guenon, virtually the entire modern world is loosely connected in this vast conspiracy to subvert the occult spirituality of traditional ideologies. But since Satan is as much a delusion as God, so what? Guenon’s analysis is specious. To take these mytho-political statements seriously is ridiculous.

So, clearly, despite affinities, the Traditionalists did not become Nazis or Italian Fascists in the ordinary sense, even if some of them were allied with it at various points. They are even further to the right than the Nazi’s. “Theofascism” is a fascism that goes far beyond the very limited and “profane” fascism of Hitler. Those who try to say that traditionalism

³⁷⁵ From *Il Conciliatore*, no. 10, 1971; translated from the German edition in *Deutsche Stimme*, no. 8, 1998

is not fascism are correct but mistaken. Traditionalism is more than fascism, it is meta-fascism, it is the fascist heart of fascism, as it were, a theofascism, what H.T. Hansen calls “super-Fascist” ---the insane and primordial ‘soul’ of fascism. Again, “Fascism” becomes traditionalism after world War II. In short the war mongering and human rights hating, Chimpanzee side of Guenon was patrolling the borders of what he thought was knowledge, and he was more than happy to have violence done to serve his need of totalistic power. Darwin explains Guenon quite well. Guenon is merely a political animal, on the one hand, though I hesitate to compare him to animals at all.

Guenon left his fascist friends at Action Francaise and became even more universal in his drive for repressive government and denial of basic Enlightenment values like human rights and democracy. It might be useful here for comparative purposes to discuss Martin Lings’ and Schuon’s reactionary political-mysticism in a little more detail. It will add to the considerable trove of evidence that shows that Evola, Guenon and Schuon and other traditionalists are all theofascists and there is little difference between them in “principle”. So the next two chapters will discuss the politics of Lings and Schuon.

On the Theofascism of Martin Lings and his Endorsement of Franco

Let’s look at another example of the meshing of political and religious mentalities in view of justifying cruelty in the metaphysics of power. Martin Lings (1909-2005) is often presented as a gentle, poetical

man, saintly and scholarly. It is true he was poetic in some ways, a romantic lost in dreams of spirituality.³⁷⁶ But he was no saint, or even a very strong or good person. Before I really understood it, I liked the poetical quality in him in the various long meetings I spent with him over a number of years. But then I saw the other side of him, a side most people don't see. It must not be forgotten that behind the mild exterior was the same ridiculous ideology that Schuon and Guenon followed. Indeed, Lings spent many years with Guenon before spending even more years slavishly attached to Schuon. He was self-indulgent and narcissistic. He was strangely catty too, and turned on people who refused to worship Schuon. Indeed, he was not a "primordialist" but he was quite willing to cover up for Schuon's wrongs and he was a faithful administrator the Schuon cult in England. He was a weak man whose whole being revolved around a need of powerful father figures---theofascist father figures, in fact.

Lings is the most "quintessential" traditionalist. He spent more time with both Guenon and Schuon than anyone, absorbing their theofascism and love of the irrational. While I think there was a gentleness in his nature before he ever got into religion, his encounter with them made him accept some pretty awful things. He was himself a rather ruthless person, despite the pose of gentleness. Indeed. Lings was

³⁷⁶ Lings was important to the formation of the Matheson Trust, a "charity" that was set up in England to propagandize the Theofascist ideas of Lings, Schuon and others. Notable in its publications is the theofascist text of Jean Hani, a far right French Platonist and theofascist.. His book Sacred Royalty: From The Pharaoh to The Most Christian King is a 1984 book. Jean Hani revisits the heroes of theofascism and has been translated by Schuon former autocrat and immoralist Gustavo Polit who has evidently returned to the cult after years of embarrassed exile. Hani is a Platonist a sort of worshiper of Guenon. Hani hates the wise and forward looking naturalistic philosophers of the Enlightenment, which he sees, wrongly, as evil. Hani wants political power to return to sacred theofascists and arbitrary dictators such as Egyptian Pharaohs, the Emperors of China or Japan, the "Kingship" of Christ, Holy Roman Emperor, King of France and so on. He wants public recognition that bogus the power of kings comes from bogus gods. Hani wants to return good old days of Innocent the III the Inquisition and dictators and violators of human rights. As a Christian theofascist it is understandable that Lings's Matheson Trust would publish this book since Lings supported the Christian fascist Franco

a fascist and says so publicly. Just as Schuon supported Japanese imperial fascism (I will discuss this later), Lings supported the Spanish Fascist Franco, whose right-wing dictatorship, exterminated people who dissented against or disagreed with his autocratic reign. I will speak about more of that in a minute.

However, before I look at Martin Lings I should say a few things about Lings and Guenon. Guenon is a fiction writer who is not worth reading by anyone who cares about the reality of our world. He is a writer who has a certain charisma, but he is insane and full of magical delusions. I have discussed Guenon with followers of his who knew him, such as Whitall Perry and Martin Lings, as well as Schuon. I have found that many people think these men praiseworthy. But they did not know them or observe them closely. With the exception of Guenon I observed these men closely and in person. They were rather less than saintly and perhaps rather perfidious. Lings, Perry, Schuon and others all spoke disparagingly of Guenon to me, behind the back of the praise they wrote about him in public. All these people were very critical of Guenon and accused him of obsessiveness and paranoia. They had to praise Guenon in public because to criticize him is to cast doubt on themselves, since they believe the same questionable rubbish. In private none of them liked each other much and they bickered and back bit each other. A hint of Ling's dislike of Guenon, as well as his awareness that the man was mentally ill, comes out, despite himself perhaps, in his essay about him. In it he says that

“Guénon was extremely secretive and would not give his actual address to anybody; he wanted to disappear. He had enemies in France and he suspected that they wished to attack him by magic. I do not know this for certain but I know that Guénon was very much afraid of being attacked by certain people and he wished to

remain unknown, to sink himself into the Egyptian world where he was.”³⁷⁷

I spent a good deal of time talking to Lings about many things. Like Joseph Epes Brown, Ling’s seemingly gentle disposition when you first meet him was deceptive. Brown and Lings were my favorite traditionalists back in the late 1980’s and early 1990’s. That was before I got to know how perfidious this entire cult was, and how these men would defend their delusions to the teeth. Once I learned more about them and saw they were unreflective followers primarily interested in their ‘legacy’, I saw their apparent manner was superficial.

Lings was certainly not a “saint” as some humorously claim,³⁷⁸ but of course, I do not subscribe to anyone’s notion of hagiography anymore. There are no saints. Hagiography is merely spiritual advertising, ----- that is what all those pictures of saints in Russian orthodox churches or Buddha’s in Tibetan temples are all about. St. Francis and Seraphim of Sarov are example of self-mesmerism, beatific quietude that teaches passivity and a certain willingness to accept hierarchy with grace and thoughtlessness. Priests wrote the mantra “Om Mani Padme Hung” on rocks all over Tibet and Nepal and this is all the an advertising formula for a priesthood. There may have been sweet people like Seraphim of Sarov, but such people can appear anywhere minus the myths that are told about Russian saints. There have been sweet cobblers, machinists, river pilots, prostitutes and janitors. Indeed, it is more likely to find people of kindness in the lower classes than the higher ones.

³⁷⁷ <http://evans-experientialism.freewebspace.com/lings02.htm>

³⁷⁸ I have met quite a few young Muslims who are all too willing to fall into any pattern of cultic praise for people they do not know, such a Lings. Lings was not a” saint” , though he was good a certain pretenses and acting certain parts for others. Islam and its cult of Muhammad prepares them for this willingness to fall into adulation. He wrote a book called Sufi Saint of the 20th Century, which is an attempt to beatify an Sufi teacher who Schuon also exploited as advertisement for himself.

So in any case, it became clear to me over time that Lings lived a very sheltered life from himself. He had been “fired” as Guenon’s secretary, by Guenon himself, a little known fact. Guenon suspected him of theft and spying, perhaps not without reason. Guenon had disliked Schuon’s rather bizarre view of the Virgin Mary; -- Schuon’s Virgin is really a romantic fiction: it is more a symbolist painting of an undressed temple prostitute than ‘virgin’. In any case, Lings left Guenon and clung to Schuon. So, he was already living an awkward life trying to silence his own intuitions and understandings about things in order to get along with Guenon and Schuon who were really two Prima Donnas—or men with huge egos. Lings adapted. Like Schuon he thought he was a holy Sufi and claimed the “Sufi is uncreated” and thus more or less a god. Claiming to be uncreated was a way to exalt himself and indulge the characteristic perennialist pride that infects all the disciples of Guenon.

Lings lived his life in poetic fragments suspending himself in between Guenon and Schuon. That was his world and he was fastened to the dogmas and could not be budged. He could not want to face reality of the falseness of Schuon and the fraudulent character behind the poetry he saw in perennialism. I spoke with him at length about his color theories, for instance, which appear in his book Symbol and Archetype.³⁷⁹ His ideas were derived from Schuon and Rumi and I could see how his mind worked. Schuon’s ideas are derived from religious prejudice and essentialist projections. He really wasn’t that bright and was prone to dogmatic assertions derived from Guenon or Schuon. He didn’t understand color and simply took traditional symbolic ideas about color from Schuon and Medieval periods and generalized about that and in a way that had a certain charm, but which was without any empirical

³⁷⁹ This is a very Platonist book and reveals Lings to be an extremely retrogressive thinker who really belongs in the middle ages. I studied this book in respect of its theory of color which is incredibly backward and wrong-headed, pre-Newtonian and based on many misunderstandings and superstitions.

merit. He abused color phenomena as a schema to express dogmatic ideology.

Schuon didn't understand much about color either. They both merely processed bookish, symbolist and abstract ideas and had no concrete understating of color and its actuality. Indeed, they scoffed at color in its concrete actuality and were only interested in its symbolism, which has no reality to it. Archetypes are merely wooden essentializations. The associated color symbolically with virtues and qualities, when it has nothing to do with that. Like Rumi, Schuon and Lings associated color with women and women are all "color and scent". Or they agreed with the Tao Te Ching that states that "the five colors makes men's eyes blind". They made ignorant pronouncements to me about color as being Maya. Color is not illusion. Maya is a delusion and akin to animals. For anyone who has any real knowledge of animals it is not a disparagement to say people are animals. But sexism and speciesism often go together is patriarchal and speciesist males. Lings' effort to force colors into a Schuonian artificial symbolism is part of the tacit misogyny and speciesism. Color is not at all symbolic. Black and white red and green mean totally different things in different cultures. Color is about life and not about religion. Understanding it begins with Newton, not with religion, which has little of value to say about it if anything at all that is useful. To begin understand beyond Newton is to begin to learn about the amazing factuality of or earth and its many moods. I learned next to nothing about color from Lings or Schuon and talked to them both about it in depth. I have learned a great deal about color form nature, and the sun. Color is not the opposite of light as traditional systems claim, but an expression of light. One can only begin to appreciate color and he beauty of it, when one sees that it is a physical fact and not in any way symbolic.

Furthermore, I came to grasp that Lings was largely ignored and used by Schuon's entourage in a cynical way. They thought he was a

nuisance, though a necessary one, and regularly lied to him. They really despised him though affected to like him. There was a flurry of nasty backbiting in Schuon's intimate entourage whenever he came to town. The same is true of Nasr, who Schuon also despised. Lings would come visit Bloomington every year and stay at an extra house the Perry's owned, across the street from Schuon's house. At that point in time, Schuon was spending most to his time and a lot of the cult's money (\$500,000) having his followers build a house his "forth wife", Sharlyn Romaine, which was three or four houses down Schuon's side of the street. In between Schuon's house and Romaine's house (where the primordial gatherings were held), there would be large Muslim gatherings at Stanley Jones' house. Jones had a large room built on his house and this was called the "Zawiah" or prayer house. The Sufi gatherings were held here that were nominally about Sufism, though the women all wore Hindu Saris. Schuon had partly abandoned Islam by now (1991). When Lings was in town, these gatherings were meant to impress Lings and I went to many Majlis as these were called, where Lings was present. He was feted and was duly impressed. These Majlis continued the whole time I was in Bloomington, but Schuon showed up more and more rarely. The cultic center of Schuon's interest had shifted to nudity and primordial gatherings. But when Lings was there Schuon's disciples made deliberate efforts to act as if this 'dimension' did not exist.

The 'wives' of Schuon were all a flutter about how to conceal the reality of secret "primordial" gatherings from Lings while he was in town. I was told explicitly that we must all lie to Lings and cover-up the existence of Schuon's Primordial Gatherings, the "Indian dimension" and Schuon's cult of nudity because Lings was 'opaque', as the wives would say. He could not understand why Schuon was worshipped by nude or semi-nude women in secret gatherings, they claimed. People were told to take down their nude icons of Schuon hanging in their living rooms. Lings would not understand the exposed penis. The more sexual nude

Virgin Marys were also taken down when Lings came for dinner. I had done a painting of an Icon of the Virgin Mary copied from the famous Virgin of Vladimir in Russia and Schuon liked it and sent it all over. Many of the cult houses had a copy of that to put on their wall when Lings or Nasr would show up for dinner at their houses.



On Schuon's insistence, my Icon was thus used as a sort of lie, whereby Schuon's follows could put it up in their houses when people who were not in the cult came over, to make these people think they were good Christians or anthropologists or something. . My art was being used to lie to others. This was a hint of the abusive mistreatment that was to come to Maude and I a year later.

I did not do this work to have it used in this way. It was clear I was supposed to be grateful for this abuse however. I was studying religious art of many kinds and copying was a way of understanding it. I gave it to Schuon with the intent of sharing this understanding and showing what I could do in view of studying painting with him. He invited me to study with him but gave the painting back as I had done an exact copy of the Vladimir Icon and Schuon did not like that I “imitated the accidents”, namely the worn off gold leaf and cracks on the surface of the icon. So we wanted me to change it. This is the altered image.

It became clear to me though my study of art with Schuon that his approach to beauty was really an exploit.³⁸⁰ He was trying to set up a rule of power over his followers and the Icons functioned to call them to order and obedience as focal points in their house. His need for them to worship his body was really part of a need to control them. The Icons were an extension of the worship of his body that he demanded at Primordial gatherings. I realized that this power play is what Icons have always done, be they from Tibet or Byzantium.³⁸¹

³⁸⁰ Schuon says that his Virgin Mary paintings are not just the virgin but “femininity as such” – he did not like the image of the mother, as he explained to me. He saw the Virgin as his lover. And the Christ child in these works is Schuon himself, in his capacity as the pinnacle of the “devotion of all the world’s Prophets” as he says in a poem. In another works Schuon Icons are porno-spiritual images of his own divinity. In later years he tried to hide this behind protests that the Icons not be worshiped when he himself set up the certainty that they would be worshiped. The Icons of Schuon are advertisements of his transcendent delusions, records of delusions of grandeur. The cults later efforts to cover up for the Icons and deny they are object of worship is part of the their incessant campaign of lies and public relations, which I have documented elsewhere.

³⁸¹ Even the effort to outlaw Icons as in Byzantine culture is mostly about control of minds. In 754 the “Iconoclastic council” stated that “we declare in the name of the Holy Trinity, that there shall be rejected and removed and cursed, every likeness which is made out of any material and color whatever by the evil art of painters.... Whoever dare to makes such a thing.. shall be anathematized...” This idiotic pronouncement, condemning all art is an attempt to control minds and thoughts, and impoverish the imagination with only those images which serve the priests and churches. This tyranny over images is also a virtual dogma in Islam. It doesn’t matter if images are controlled by exclusion as in Islam or by saturation as in Christian crucifixions or endlessly multiplied Hindu gods. Domination is of one kind of imagery or the absence of imagery, in either case--- it is control that is the purpose of art, reflecting the power to the upper classes. Corporate art, or abstract art, which likewise excludes so much, is yet another form of fanatical control. I

I did not lie about his painting, but Schuon wanted everyone else to do so. But there were lies Schuon's "wives" told me to tell and I disliked doing that intensely. Indeed, I refused to do so.³⁸² I once even invoked Thomas More's silence rather than lie.³⁸³

I disliked Ling's obliviousness to all this too. I think he pretended not to know others in the cult lied to him. He could not be as stupid as he sometimes seemed. Perhaps he was on good behavior, and knew he was being lied too, but also wanted to be in Schuon good graces and so put up with it. He was still in hot water with Schuon.

A few years earlier Lings had given ear to a group of folks led by Cyril Glasse, who had turned against Schuon for various valid reasons. The Schuon group punished Lings for sympathizing with them. A few nasty letters from Schuon were sent to Lings in January 1989, which told him that Glasse's group were in a satanic "conspiracy" against Schuon. This was Maude's idea, which was odd since she had been having an affair with one of Glasse's group for a few years. While being "married" to Schuon she was having an affair with one of his followers.

The inner circle of the cult was very corrupt and Lings must not

saw how this worked concretely in Schuon's world. It permanently discredited his art for me. I had an Icon of his which was given to me by Maude Murray, which I gave back to her for nothing, when Maude said it was worth 10,000 dollars,--- that is how much I was sure of its emptiness.

³⁸² I was told to lie about various things. For instance I was told to lie to Whitall Perry by Catherine Schuon, because Perry had asked me to read one of his manuscripts. Schuon hated Perry's writing and Catherine Schuon had had a 10 year affair with Perry while Schuon was sleeping with Perry's wife, so there was bad blood between all these people. I read the manuscript and could not really lie about it to Perry. I said what I was told to keep silence about it like Thomas More. This was not a lie and did not fool Perry, who immediately saw I had been meddled with by the Schuons. I was not able to lie. But the inner circle of the cult was so corrupt that it was really impossible to negotiate among all these people without getting into trouble. The whole place was a cesspool of lies, affairs, divorces, cruelty and pretenses. Two of Schuon's "wives" were found guilty and arrested for perjury in 1991, Romaine and Murray.

³⁸³ There is a tendency to picture Thomas More as a saint. I don't think he was. Evidently, he had a number people burned at the stake when he was a Chancellor and was a fanatic against the Protestants. This is not to justify his beheading, but merely to say he was a brutal man caught in a brutal time.

know about it, was Schuon's reasoning. Lings must not support them. So they risked Lings having to leave the cult. The people that questioned Schuon were branded as satanic and diabolic. Catherine Schuon even said that they should be killed. I have Schuon's letter to Lings at this time and Schuon writes to Lings that if Lings continued to support these people he could found his own Tariqa or brotherhood. In other words Schuon was trying to blackmail Lings and Nasr into agreeing to shun a group of people who were opposed to rather crazy developments in the Schuon cult. It was a successful bit of blackmail and Lings caved in and shunned those who were questioning Schuon. It was around this time that the nudist primordial gatherings had started. Lings joined the cruel shunning and kowtowed to Schuon, showing he was loyal to unjust authority and not to the truth. He should have left Schuon, as that would have shown character, but Lings was a very weak man and needed Schuon as a sort of surrogate dictator. He endorsed Franco and he loved Schuon: Lings loved theofascist dictators.

What Lings did not know was that Cyril Glasse's revolt against Schuon's primordialism in 1987-89 was well informed. One of the members of the group who openly questioned Schuon also had had an affair Maude Murray, as I said. This led to these men knowing a great deal about the inner working of Schuon's mind and personal proclivities as well as the rather sordid inner circle of the cult and how it really operated. The fact that Maude was sleeping with one of them was really an indication that the cult needed a shakeup. Schuon was unable to care for his "wives" and neglected them, indeed, they were not wives at all. These "mafia" as the rebels were wrongly called, were objecting to the corruption inside the inner circle. As I said they were branded falsely as "evil". Glasse and others close to him went to Lings and Nasr for help. Maude Murray, then Schuon third wife, helped Schuon draft a reply to Lings and Nasr saying that they must either regard Glasse and his friends as evil—or "satanic"—or leave the cult. Schuon despised Glasse

because Glasse did not much like Schuon's cult of his own divinity. He had learned from Maude and direct observation that Schuon was mostly hot air and self-aggrandizement. Nor did Glasse like Gustavo Polit a pedophile who Schuon handpicked as his right hand man. Lings, again playing the coward, complied with the blackmail and shunned Glasse and his friends. Nasr did too. Both of them showed themselves to be cowards who would go along with Schuon's corruptions and covered up and lie for him.

Cyril Glasse and his friends, (Paul Yachnes, David Lake, Victor and Mary Ann Danner and many others) were all fine men and women. Yes, like me that had been led astray by vain spiritual hopes and superstitions. But they were all used to help solidify Schuon's power over the cult relative to Lings and Nasr and their respective followers. This was a political ploy. Indeed, in Schuon letter to Lings of Jan. 1989 Schuon complains that it is hard 'to be a 'Monarch'. The Poor Prophet, modeling himself on the cruelties of Muhammad, must blackmail his followers into obedience. Indeed, the letters to Lings and Nasr were sent all over the world not just to Lings and Nasr, precisely because Schuon needed to intimidate the whole cult. His persistent delusions of grandeur never quit. He liked having power and acted as thug and threw well-meaning people out of his cult. They could not be allowed to question things he was doing that were clearly unbalanced. There was plenty of reason to question the authority of such a crazy leader and try get real answers to questions about Schuon's very bizarre behaviors. If Schuon had been a decent man he would have dealt with the fair questions raised with reason and openness. The insurrection against him in 1987 was a just one. Schuon was doing crazy things that needed explanation and rather than explain it he tried to brow beat and threaten the whole group into submission by means of lying and blackmail. It reverberated for years to come. Indeed, it was a precursor to Schuon's public

exposure as a fraud that occurred in 1991, in which many people were involved, including those who left Schuon in 1987.

Much of the force behind the 1987 reaction against Schuon was really about the inner decadence that pervaded the whole group, radiating from Schuon himself. There were superficial changes, the trend to replace Islamic forms with Native American things. The songs sung in Majlis or Islamic gatherings were becoming more native American. Gustavo Polit invented a chant that sounds half native American half Muslim. None of this bothered me but it bothered others. Also, Schuon had been taking other men's wives since at least 1965, probably before. Several of Schuon's "wives" were unfaithful to him because he was an impossible husband, could not be trusted and was more than willing to lie and cover up his affairs. They did the same thing he had done. They took other men just as he took other women. So the inner corruption of the group came forth from Schuon's own confusion and psychology.

There was a man who was in the group that Glasse led in 1987, Glasse had a long affair with Maude Murray for two years while she was married to Schuon. Maude and I discussed this affair at great length. A relationship with Schuon was really one of service rather than love. Maude never really loved Schuon, she "loved" him as a sort of obligatory devotion or service. She called herself a "devadassi, or temple prostitute, speaking of her relation to Schuon. She lived with John Murray but their physical relations had ended years before, and she considered herself divorced from him. So when she had an affair with Cyril Glasse, it was her only real relationship. Schuon's relations with others were dysfunctional, and there were problems in every direction all around him. One of the wives, the first one, Catherine, had had a ten year affair with Whitall Perry. Schuon was incapable of ever discussing his own

fallible nature, since he was sure he was infallible.³⁸⁴ This made him impossible and unable to feel remorse about his actions. Since he could never admit wrong about anything, everything he did was perfect, even if it wasn't. His relationships were clearly a mess, but he alone did not see what a mess it was.

So, Schuon's actual wife was sleeping with his second wife's husband, while he was sleeping with the second wife. The third "wife" was sleeping with Glasse, at the same time and sometimes on the same day she was sleeping with Schuon, according to Maude. What a mess this was. Glasse was learning a lot about primordial gatherings, nudism and Schuon's Avataric delusions of grandeur. Glasse told me he feels guilty for "committing adultery" with Maude. He was wrong to think this. Actually there was no adultery. Maude was not really married to Schuon at all and she was effectively separated from Murray. Glasse did nothing wrong.³⁸⁵

She was a lonely woman caught in a terrible cult and trying to find a way to get out. There is nothing to feel guilty about. Schuon was not married to these women and the husbands of these women had already relinquished their wives to sleep with another, on Schuon's insistence. As I said, Catherine, was sleeping with one the cuckolded husbands, Whitall Perry, whose wife had been stolen by Schuon in 1965 as his "second wife", Schuon more or less stole his 4th wife from a follower too; and the 2nd wife had tried to give her daughter to Schuon as a sexual present. The 3rd wife had had two affairs cuckolding Schuon.. In short,

³⁸⁴ He did say once that he can be "wrong about a menu in a Chinese restaurant" but "I cannot be wrong about principles" This is nonsense, since the "principles" he likes to quote are all fiction anyway.

³⁸⁵ I never felt any jealousy about Maude's romance with Cyril Glasse. I understood why she did it, and how Schuon as not a lover so much as a burden to Maude. Maybe it means I did not love Maude very much, Perhaps, but more likely, all these things were strangely unreal to me, as Schuon lived in a dream world of delusions and all those close to him did too. I was in it very briefly and was lucky to get out so quickly. It was all a bad dream really and those who blame me for anything in this world of bizarre mirrors does not understand what it all was.

the immediate 'esoteric' inner circle of the cult was a cesspool of intrigue and wife swapping.³⁸⁶ No one really cared about anyone and the whole arrangement was there to support the delusions of Schuon, a sociopath, if ever there was one. The "primordial gatherings" were a natural outgrowth of the inner corruption of the cult. Schuon wanted to claim all the women, but to keep them married to other men, so he would not have to be responsible. All this was kept from Lings who knew hints of it, but averted his ears and eyes and would not listen to the truth, even when he was told directly about it, as I told him about it. Lings was sure that the inner circle propaganda that Schuon was an great prophet and avatara must be true. He even fooled himself and his followers that Schuon was a celibate.

This active refusal to listen became a major part of Ling's career. Hear no evil see no evil. He was a man of no moral backbone at all. So when I tried to tell Lings about the corrupt inner decadence that emanated from Schuon himself into the inner circles of the cult, he could not believe it, and denied it vociferously like a man about to drown in his own self-deceptions. It was an amazing thing to watch just how hoodwinked and brainwashed Lings was by Schuon. I told him many first hand eye witnessed facts and he denied them one after the other like a brainwashed Stalinist. He was so adamant in his will to delude himself. I lost total respect for him and learned what an utter coward he was. Yes, this was the man that loved the dictator Franco of Spain, and held Franco up as what a political leader should be. Lings loved the theofascist who would like to keep power. Franco was like Schuon in many ways. Experiences with minds under deep delusion became very common in my life during those years. I lost many dear friends to their refusal to look at reality.

³⁸⁶ The only wife of Schuon's that was faithful, sort of, was Barbara Perry, but then she tried to give Schuon her own daughter as a sexual present, so this was hardly a real faithfulness unsullied by corruption. Giving your daughter to your lover is a very corrupt act.

Martin Lings' servile adulation of Schuon is evident in Lings' book The Eleventh Hour. There he ends to books by saying that Schuon books demonstrate "all the positive qualities that belong to the end of the age" and that also that Schuon is the "light that is primordial as well as terminal" ³⁸⁷. In other words, Schuon---- who was really a rather nasty, selfish and deluded old man, who hated science and wants to use women as a throne to admire himself upon,---- is a summation of the 'primordial light' as well as the "terminal" light that will come when the clock strikes twelve and apocalypse is unleashed. Lings is claiming Schuon is almost the second coming of Christ, the first and last man, the summit of the human species, as Schuon called himself. This is all utterly ridiculous. I mention it merely to show the lengths to which Lings was willing to delude himself. Indeed, this is what religion is, these willed delusions, these arrogant and unwarranted assumptions in denial of all evidence. This is blind belief as irrational politics.

Lings was living in a poetic dream about Islam and Schuon rather despised that as "sentimental voluntarism", but Lings could not know that Schuon held nudist gatherings. ³⁸⁸ When I told Lings on the phone in 1991 about how he had been duped by Schuon all these years and explained the Primordial Gatherings to him in detail he showed me his

³⁸⁷ Lings Martin. The Eleventh Hour. UK Quintessentia, 1987 pg. 93. Lings calls Schuon the "restorer" in this book, compares him to Elias and Leo Schaya's rather silly idea that Schuon has a prophetic function, that he is the last prophet before the coming of Christ at the end of the world. Lings goes even further and verges on trying to say that Schuon is the final prophet before the second coming, he even implies he might be the second coming. This is ridiculous myth making occurs at a very advanced stage of self-delusion. It is worth studying as sort of template of how many religions get started by someone lying to themselves about the cult leader, just as Lings lies to himself here. How many lies were told after the man they called Jesus died? Buddha, Muhammad. In the case of the latter there is a lot of evidence that a great deal of the history about Muhammad is pure fabrication. It is virtual certain this sit re of other religious figures too.

³⁸⁸ Lings Life of Muhammad is a good example of sentimentality. The book is based on a lot of bogus sources, such as the Hadith, which are known to be forgeries written up to a few hundred years after the person they call Muhammad might have lived. Lings writes as if all the myths about Muhammad were true, when most likely few if any of them are.

true colors. Facts and evidence did not matter to him. I told him verbatim things I had seen with my own eyes. He denied what I said—he even said I was lying, and said it could not be true, and I made it up. I wish I had made it up. He cowered into a hole. He was locked into the jail of his dogmas and delusions. I could see it around him like the Tower of London enclosing his brain. He insisted I had not seen with my own eyes what in fact I had seen with my eyes. Probably cult members had coached him to think me insane. They were going around saying I was insane and evil, homosexual and psychotic, as part of their damage control campaign. I spoke calmly and reasonably to him about the truth, but he preferred to hang up on me rather than deal with the truth of it. His blinkered vision triumphed, he protected his ignorance and he kept delusions sacrosanct behind a wall of lies. I got off the phone utterly disgusted with him and totally convinced that the truth does not matter to him at all. I no longer respected him either. I couldn't.

Schuon's blackmailing magic had worked on Lings as on Nasr, Maude and so many others. Lings said he "had high hopes" for me and said he was "very disappointed" to see me turn against Schuon--- as if it were my fault that the cult had lied to him for all those years. ---As if it were my fault Schuon held nudist gathering of thought he was a divine being. He could not face that Schuon had orchestrated lying to him for many years. He had lived in a fictional land of poetry and lying to himself for so long he could not get out of it. He stayed in his delusions until his death. So much of religion is about living in lands that deny reality and float one in a never-land of fictions and delusions.

Ling's public declarations about Guenon are likewise partly myth and fiction. In private he told me he thought Guenon was a highly disturbed and paranoid person. In any case, the combined influence of years spent with Guenon and with Schuon took a terrible toll on Lings' mind. In Ling's book, The Eleventh Hour: the Spiritual Crisis of the Modern World in the Light of Tradition and Prophecy, he speaks of

favorite apocalyptic ideas of the traditionalists, implying Schuon is some sort of final avatar, as I said. But further than this, while building up to the apotheosis of Schuon, he voices traditionalist ideas of governance and politics. This is where he expresses his highest approval of the Spanish fascist Francisco Franco, echoing Schuon's ideas and political interests. Franco was the longest lasting exponent of European fascism. He shows his contempt for democracy and his love of Islamic theocracy in way typical of Schuon and Guenon. After explaining that principled autocracy is the preferred form of government based on Guenon and Schuon's ideas. Among modern leaders, the creator of the Spanish Holocaust, is the one to pick. Lings writes that:

“Franco re-established a principled autocracy. That is, a Christian kingdom with himself as regent, thus saving his country from a communist dictatorship”³⁸⁹

Lings and the traditionalists admired this monster of fascism. Hundreds of thousands of people suffered under his dictatorial rule. He thought he was chosen by God to rule Spain. Franco was a right wing authoritarian Catholic with ties to Hitler and Mussolini during the Spanish Civil War and who continued to rule Spain for many years after the war. He was a brutal killer, not just of men, but of whales and birds. He admired the Nazis and tried to imitate them. As Paul Preston show in his biography of Franco, Franco had royal pretensions, hated liberal democracy, was a backward leaning fanatic of tradition and was obsessed with Freemasonry. He relied heavily on executions of his enemies, repression, and control of the press. He was a tyrant, in short. Indeed Franco is the longest surviving fascist of the World Wars. By admiring him, Lings is admiring ‘quintessential’ fascism. Eugenio Pacelli, “Hitler’s Pope” and the

³⁸⁹ The Eleventh Hour: the Spiritual Crisis of the Modern World in The Light of Tradition and Prophecy, "Cambridge UK. Quintaessentia 1987. Pg. 42d

favorite Pope of Schuon and Rama Coomaraswamy, had also supported Franco's fascism in the 1940's. Pablo Neruda, Federico Garcia Lorca, Noam Chomsky, Ernest Hemingway, César Vallejo, George Orwell, Arthur Koestler and just about anyone sane or reasonable has opposed Franco. The destruction of the left during the Spanish Civil War was a horrendous act that destroyed hope of freedom for many. It is believed that at least 200,000—250,000 people were executed or killed by Franco. Hundreds of thousands more were forced to flee fascist Spain because of this monster Martin Lings loved and admired. If anyone doubts the fascist nature of traditionalist this is absolute proof that they are wrong. Lings, the most mild and gentle of the traditionalists, was a flaming fascist.

Lings liked Franco because Franco was a far right catholic. Lings does not care how many Franco killed. Schuon thought this way too. Lings likes Franco because he created a quasi-Platonic state and because "Plato's state is in fact a theocracy" as Lings says in another book.³⁹⁰ Lings wants to combine the virtues of Franco's fascism with Plato, which is what Evola and Guenon all wanted in slightly differing modes and emphasis. A Catholic state that banned his books and murdered Garcia Lorca, the great Spanish poet, eliminates free speech and supports a fascism state and church---that is what Lings admires. It is impossible to respect a man who has such ideas. This is what I, and anyone who can still reason, should call Theofascism.

Lings considers the murderer, Franco, the exemplar of 'principled autocracy'. He defines this concept by various examples besides Franco. First, of course, he praises Plato as the inventor of 'principled autocracy'. Then he praises Henry the 8th before the end of his reign because he was "defender of the faith". Of course Henry becomes a Protestant and creates the Church of England, which probably did not entirely please

³⁹⁰ Lings, Martin. Ancient Beliefs Modern Superstitions. London. Allen and Unwin. 1965 pg 52.

Lings.³⁹¹ Then he describes “Napoleon’s relatively principled autocracy”³⁹². Lastly Lings suggest that “in every free country there is a sector... – which has already been won over to the other side” But in many of these countries there is “a marked stiffening in favor of conservation,[which] confers on it something of the function of the defender of principles and upholder of tradition.”³⁹³ By this Lings means far-right wing autocrats such as Thatcher, Nixon and Bush, who were all supported by the Schuon and his cult.

In short, Lings ideal of “principles” is really an ideal of delusions and need of hierarchy based on admiration of brutal dictators. He sets up a pantheon of real scoundrels like the fascist Franco, the dictator Napoleon, or Nixon to be models for his ideal ruler or our world. Schuon belongs in this group too, since he was even more puffed up in Lings’ eyes than the portrait of Napoleon below. It amazes me that small, gentle, quiet spoken Dr. Lings could be in love with this collection of murderers, and not just incidental murderers, but mass murderers. It turns out gentle, quiet spoken Dr. Lings was really a raving fascist inside and longed to see people killed for his narrow and repressive god. Like

³⁹¹ Lings had a romantic and rather absurdly idealized notion of the Elizabethan age. Lings book on Shakespeare is one that makes Shakespeare so unpalatable that I would not wish to see another play by him if I thought Lings were correct. Lings styles Shakespeare as a fawning theofascist and exponent of the “great chain of being” and monarchist noblesse oblige. While this is partly true, the conservative part of Shakespeare is the part we ignore when we read him as hopelessly out of date. Schuon did an illustration of Shakespeare for this book. The idea was to try to get Shakespeare as a precursor to Schuon’s ideas. Fortunately the variety and diversity of Shakespeare’s work is such that Lings’ view of him is very unusual and eccentric. It is a point of view that no doubt pleases and theofascist like Prince Charles. While it is true that Shakespeare was a suck up to royalty, he was so because he had to be. I doubt it was his real nature to be that way. There is no doubt a fawning and theocratic aspect to his world view that ought to be criticized more than it has been. But if that is all there was to Shakespeare he would not be worth reading. Shakespeare has more in him than Lings is able to see. He was also a great writer and a populist, humanist and a street poet, a man of the people and a critic of power.

³⁹² The Eleventh Hour: the Spiritual Crisis of the Modern World in The Light of Tradition and Prophecy, "Cambridge UK. Quintessentia pg. 49

³⁹³ Ibid pg.52

Schuon he thought “profane people” should all die.³⁹⁴ Profane people is just about everyone outside the Schuon cult. The gentle, soft spoken man I sat next to in a chair as he sat on a little beige couch in a suburban sitting room in Bloomington Indiana, was really a seething fascist and not worthy of respect. I did not know this then, as his pretence to gentleness was so convincing.

David Hall was the first to notice that Lings was an advocate for fascism and indeed one of the first to notice that the whole traditionalist movement has strong fascist tendencies. David Hall (1942-2007) writes specifically of this passage in Lings that Lings is saying that

“it is perfectly acceptable to imprison, torture and kill people, as long as it is done by a ‘principled autocracy’, in the name of religion, or at least a religion approved as orthodox by traditionalists.” ³⁹⁵

Hall is saying that Ling’s notion of “principled autocracy” is as bad as the dictatorships of Stalin and Hitler, and that is scarcely matters if

³⁹⁴ Lings once bragged to me about someone who disliked Guenon being struck by lightning, obviously an accidental tragedy which Lings gloated on as if his imaginary god took revenge for him personally

³⁹⁵ Hall, David aka Ibn al Rawandi. “Esoteric Evangelicals: Islam and the Traditionalists” published in New Humanist Magazine, 1993? Pg 12, David Hall became a friend of mine via mail. (a memorial site says of David that in the 1980’s

“David then started to explore the world of the Sufis and as usual threw himself whole heartedly into that pursuit, finally debunking elements of that tradition in a book called *Islamic Mysticism* (ISBN 1-57392-767-8) under the pseudonym Ibn al-Rawandi. After his Islamic period, David became a keen proponent of Humanist philosophy, and wrote many articles for the *New Humanist* and other publications. During all this time, we were in touch with David.

In all his different guises, David Hall remained true to himself and a remorseless searcher for the truth. I hope I have done him some service in this book .

you do it for god, Marx or for Hitler: killing and torture are wrong. I agree with Hall, Ling's views are monstrous. Christopher Hitchens may have spoken too quickly when he said that "God is the origin of all dictatorships", but certainly God is a factor in probably most dictators, most dictators and serial murderers, and there is not much difference, end up thinking they are gods.³⁹⁶

This begs the question: what is the relation of gods to the minds of murderers, dictators and serial killers? The transcendental will to power creates a sort of doubling in the mind, as Robert Lifton would say, and that alienates them from reality, enabling them harm others or to kill with no remorse. Religion and politics are both good at crating this effect of doubling or alienation from immoral actions and violations. Transcendental magnifications are important in creating atrocities, as they remove conscience and enable individuals of groups to act impersonally. This can be seen in large scale atrocities like the murder of Jews by Hitler on in small scale atrocities. The harm Schuon did to Maude had this fascist character of harm done with no conscience, with an abstract removal,- a "disinterest", like an executioner or the mafia. Indeed, this is exactly that I saw in Schuon, he had no feeling for others, only for himself. The whole cult was devoted to the megalomania and narcissistic solipsism. He saw himself, falsely, as a victim: but everyone else was either victimized by him or was an accomplice. This similarity to psychopaths is very common among cult leaders. , (Adi Da) There was a similar sort of organization in the Franklin Jones, (Adi Da) cult to that which formed around Schuon. To quote form a site that offers evidence on Adi Da:

Adi Da built an inner circle of corrupt loyalists who helped him control what was communicated about him to the general membership of

³⁹⁶ Hitchens wittily referred to heaven as a "celestial north Korea" with its thought control and its dictatorship of behavior..

Adidam and to the public. The inner circle was perhaps the most critical piece of infrastructure Adi Da developed to enable his decades-long pursuit of every kind of fulfillment for himself at the expense of others. Inner circle members were rewarded with high status in the Adidam organization and culture, and in many cases were allowed to live off the resources of the group and did not have to earn a living in the “outside world.” The inner circle’s mission, among other things, was to hide what they could of Adi Da’s indulgent personal life, abusive treatment of others, and psychological issues. What they couldn’t hide, they explained away as his method of spiritual teaching, tantric practice...(<http://www.adidaarchives.org/>)

A very similar pattern of a well-rewarded inner circle excusing the “Master” and hiding his crimes was at play in the Schuon cult as well. Schuon managed to convince many of the his followers that his elect status required an extremist censure and autocratic style.

Martin Ling supports Franco, and I think Schuon did too. Franco killed hundreds of thousands under his dictatorship. ³⁹⁷ He admired Nixon too. Nixon murdered a few million people in Vietnam. Schuon admired Napoleon for his delusions of grandeur. Napoleon was in many ways the French Hitler. He tried to conquer all Europe and nearly did so, but got bogged down in Russia just as Hitler did. Many unbalanced people have admired Napoleon who is in a way the patron saint of paranoids with delusions of grandeur. Schuon had a bit of a Napoleonic complex, perhaps because he was short, perhaps because he had an inferiority complex. This Ingres painting of Napoleon as dictator show some idea why



Napoleon: by Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres, 1806

It is certainly one of the most repulsive of French classicist paintings, well the equal of the portrait of Louis the 14th I also find repulsive. Ingres drawings are marvelous, but this is one of the worst of his paintings, though it is technically perfect. Another repulsive painting by Ingres, which also resonates with the cult of Napoleon is the Jupiter and Thetis . In any case, this portrait of Napoleon enables me to completely understand why Beethoven was so disgusted when Napoleon crowned himself Emperor that he tore up the dedication page to Napoleon on his Third Symphony (The Eroica) and contemptuously said that Napoleon was a typical tyrant, and never thought well of Napoleon again. He knew Napoleon had betrayed the French Revolution, as had Robespierre. Indeed, between the two of them the ideals of the revolution went into

some remission and there were later attempts at restoration of the kings, which all failed.³⁹⁸

Schuon liked Napoleon and his puffed up poses and Schuon tended to strike similar poses in photos of himself. He saw himself as a "monarch" as he said in a letter to Lings I mentioned above. "The world is round, I am the king, and I don't know why" Schuon liked to say. He thought he was a prophet and a monarch, but of course was neither. He also saw himself as the "super-pope" says David Hall, Schuon thought he was the "self-appointed arbiter of what is absolutely and relatively true in all traditions, a kind of super-pope, who alone is able to interpret both the esoteric and exoteric meaning of all "true" and orthodox' religions'."³⁹⁹ This is exactly right. Hall further quotes Zaehner against Schuon. Hall maintains that Guenon's and Schuon's idea of the supraformal "intellect" is "mainly a device for brow beating critics". Hall notes that the idea of the "intellect" is an idea that is used by Schuon and others "because without it there is nothing to save all the divergent species of religious experience from being totally subjective and illusory." Yes this is exactly

³⁹⁸ Robespierre had declared a new holiday, the "festival of the Supreme Being" and he led the festival as if he were Moses come down from the mountain, it is said. After killing so many during the Terror, he was apparently now trying to declare himself a sort of god or prophet. He was put to death by Guillotine and died by the cruel method he had sued to make others die. He wrote "Terror is nothing more than speedy, severe and inflexible justice; it is thus an emanation of virtue; it is less a principle in itself, than a consequence of the general principle of democracy, applied to the most pressing needs of the patrie" But this cruel doctrine was his own undoing.

³⁹⁹ Hall, David, "The Device of the Intellect in Traditionalist Apologetics", 1993 unpublished. collection of the author. This is an excellent essay, one of the best critical works written about Schuon. David died in 2007 and was a wonderful person, a humanist and a skeptic. I thank him here for his deep inquiring mind and his admission that knowledge is a serious ongoing inquiry, not a dogmatic way to spill blood. David's book Islamic Mysticism: A Secular Perspective, written under the pseudonym Ibn Al-Rawandi was unfairly attacked by the Schuon cult. The writer of the attack, Barry MacDonald (cult same sidi Thabit), a cult member in the Schuon group was actually was a sponsor of Schuon's nudist primordial gatherings and held such gatherings at his house, according to Maude Murray and others who told me about it when it happened. Barry's ex-wife, Sharlyn Romaine, (who Schuon more or less stole from Barry) and Barry's second wife Rebecca, both performed nude as "Devadasis", for Schuon's spiritual edification. So of course MacDonald has to deny Schuon's actual doings, since McDonald himself is implicated in them and participated in them. MacDonald write's rather pretentious and make believe poetry in imitation of Schuon's.

right too.

Schuon's spiritual conjectures are subjective and illusory. Schuon erected his system upon thin air, Halls says, because Schuon and Guenon by implication, "wants to preserve the religions in their classical exoteric forms, while at the same time advocating an esoterism that makes it quite plain how hollow and counter-productive these forms have become." Yes exactly again, and thus Schuon's esoterism, is little more than self-aggrandizement—his penis in the primordial gatherings being the ultimate truth of esoterism... and so esoterism is hollow too, empty, childless, impotent, as was Schuon in the end.

What Lings called "principled autocracy" is thus superstitious "esoterism": power erected on thin air and stealing justification from that which does not exist. From this delusional claim to power derives tyranny, theofascism, or monarchist, or reactionary conservatism. Lings served Guenon for some years and then served Schuon for many decades and this is where it led him, into an embrace metaphysical delusions and the fascist Franco. Schuon and Guenon really were teaching a kind of thought control and Lings internalized that. His embrace of Franco's fascism is a political expression of Guenonian and Schuonian metaphysic. Lings was a metaphysical fascist.

To further understand this progression of idea driven political delusions it is useful to compare Lings and Perry. Whitall Perry said to me that that Guenon was deeply paranoid, despite the fact that he had written of him in his Whitall Perry, "Coomaraswamy: The Man, Myth, and History", ⁴⁰⁰ that he was a precursor to Schuon. He implied in this essay that Guenon was like Elias, who was like John the Baptist compared to Schuon, who was like Christ. All false analogies. Perry says that Guenon

⁴⁰⁰ Whitall Perry, "Coomaraswamy: The Man, Myth, and History", in *Studies in Comparative Religion*, Vol. 11, No. 3, 1977

and Coomaraswamy “ did nonetheless vehicle elements of a prophetic message, being spokesmen for what Leo Schaya calls “the Eliatic current.” This is mythic and elitist nonsense and a good example of how the traditionalists make absurd assertions as if they were facts when really they are merely outlandish and mythic make-believe. Earl Doherty points out that John the Baptist was probably a fictional character who was injected into the Jesus myth as a justifying mechanism. So the whole myth of John and Jesus is itself a fabrication and Schaya myth merely complicates an already mythical fiction. Schuon was not even mildly a nice guy, much less holy man. He was a pretentious snob prone to despising others. Perry had ideas about him that were no doubt influenced by his wife, Barbara, (Schuon’s 2nd “wife”) who thought that Schuon was a prefiguration of the Second Coming of Christ and who wrote hundreds of pages of neo Hindu nonsense calling Schuon the consort of the Virgin Mary. They all spoke of Schuon in the most inflated terms, it was a requirement to be in the cult to do that, they primary requirement. Schuon lived on flattery and needed it constantly.

Schuon thought Guenon disturbed too. However, they were all trapped in Guenon’s worldview and so could not criticize him except in a small way. If the traditionalists did not pretend that Guenon was some sort of prefiguration of Schuon’s magnificence, where were they all? So they all dutifully praise Guenon publicly. That is the way this group worked. Things are very different inside the sect of Schuon or Guenon than outside. Outside they try to look like scholars, anthropologists and holy men , inside they are petty and paranoid, dislike children, wife swap and viciously compete for position and praise, at the same time as they are sure they are the most amazing men in the whole world. Sex and power ruled them, money flows toward the corruption. They not only believe their own myths but they extrapolate even more myths to magnify the absurdities that already engulf them. Those who question the charade are called evil and thrown out. Those who continue to be

seduced by the salesmanship, proselytizing and public relations tactics of Traditionalist authors, stay in the cult. Those who see through it, as I did, leave the cult. Few wish to tell their story when they leave. It is too shaming and embarrassing. Indeed, there is a cloak of permissibility that covers the embarrassing fact of religion in America. It is everywhere permitted because it is enshrined in the Constitution, but everywhere it is an embarrassment and does a lot of harm. But these stories have to be told. There must be efforts to tell the stories about what harm religion does and supply a rejoinder to the endless proselytizing and propaganda. The earth cannot afford the luxuriant delusions of men like Schuon.

Guenon and the Traditionalists are one of the last decadent gasps of old time orthodox and aristocratic religions finally dying off. The end of religion is occurring in our century. It is well and good that the influence of religion die off. No doubt, it will persist in pockets. The Catholic Church is slowly dying of its own corruption; its repulsive abuse of young boys and girls by priests and the Vatican's efforts to cover it up is documented in countries all over the world. Hinduism is being taken over by global corporations. Buddhism becomes a way to keep corporate workers calm and unquestioning. The Jewish state more and more brutal and unjust, and Islam is revolting against its own dictators or "principled autocrats" to use Lings' language. Religion has to adapt to science, human rights and democracy: religion is finally on its way out as a major power in the world. That is to the good.

No doubt, religion will continue to play a social role, propped up by reactionary politics, cult leaders, bad systems of education and a refusal to admit that morality does not need religion to preserve good order. But traditionalism, which tries to hold up archaic forms of religion, is a dying ideology, sad as this might be for those who cling to dying rituals and spiritual methods. For me, Guenon is of interest only as a negative example of the dogmatic elitism and mystagogy that Spiritual Fascism

ends up becoming. With a spiritual fascist named George Bush in the White House and another spiritual fascist who bombed the World trade centers in 2001 it is worth studying Spiritual Fascism more closely. Osama Bin Laden and Bush, Israel ⁴⁰¹ and Iran, these states tried to resurrect the period of the Crusades and failed. In the end, no one wants these backwards systems of belief anymore. Religion is dysfunctional and a hindrance to the betterment of our world. Lings was dead wrong. Ancient superstitions will not save us. What he ignorantly called modern beliefs, are, in fact, useful systems of science and understanding that it would be a mistake to ignore or disparage.

g. The Theofascist Politics of Frithjof Schuon

Politics and religion fit together hand in glove, or rather, closer that, like two sides of the same coin. It would be useful to explore the close relation of these politics and religion in the cult leader Frithjof

⁴⁰¹ Schuon despised the state of Israel, I think out of some displaced racism. He wanted Israel to be in Europe. In fact, Israel follows the ideas of Guenon pretty closely in some ways, as Israel is based on an apocalyptic millenarianism ideology and is a theofascist state not that different than Franco, who Lings admired or Iran. Israel punishes the Palestinians in Gaza and elsewhere with an Inquisitorial zeal that should have pleased Torquemada or any Guenonian. The treatment of the Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto was not dissimilar to how the Jews treat the Palestinians in Gaza. The bombing of the civilian population in Gaza in 2008 was especially murderous and unjust

Schuon, as I knew him and his cult rather well, much better than I know Evola and Lings. So, I will further develop ideas I began to explain in earlier chapters. My main purpose here is to show how a cult leader like Schuon might typify abuse of power in many organizations. I use him as an example of religious delusion and how it get seamless morphed into a system of social injustice.

We learned from Evola that after the defeat of fascism during World War II, fascism went underground. It went into religion and into corporations. In Evola's estimation, and because it had to hide, fascism become "apoliteia" or seemingly apolitical while yet becoming global and it did this by seeking a "transcendent unity of the religions". The "transcendent unity of the religions" is really just a cover phrase for a political movement whose force is to support the hierarchy and the upper classes so that injustice will prevail. It is a political phrase for a political movement.

I have to laugh when I come across statements by Schuon's followers that he was not political. The cult around Schuon was well practiced in lying about and covering up what he really was. Schuon's third "wife" Maude Murray left a detailed record of how Schuon coached his followers to lie. But, some of them were rather dim and simply did not understand what their 'great master' was really up to. Schuon was a very political animal and was always trying to engineer other people's perception of him. He required extreme adulation by his followers. Indeed, getting into the cult required that one know somethings about religion, but the main thing was the ability to adapt to an environment where praise and adulation of Schuon would occur. If one could not do this, one was accused of being "satanic", "underestimating the Shaykh", or some other nonsense. Actually, real questions about Schuon's sometimes unethical, selfish, criminal and mean behaviors were railroaded in just this way. This is typical cult behavior as R.J. Lifton shows. The political center of the cult becomes the leader's personality

and everything in it is directed toward him. In the Schuon cult, the main method of induction is the appeal to the follower's pride. According to Desmond Meraz the Schuon cult believes that Schuon's nudist followers keep the entire cosmos going:

“The experience of Primordiality afforded by the Shaykh [Schuon] to a small group of disciples in Bloomington causes powerful reverberations throughout the cosmos, serves as an antidote to modern perversions, purifies the world, and serves as a prefiguration of paradise. ⁴⁰²

This is funny. They are aged now and this must be a rather paunchy and saggy group of hippies, doctors, lawyers and computer geeks. In the past they gathered nude around Schuon, but nothing was said about taking their clothes off being essential to the support of the universe. Now they claim to be holding up the cosmos for us perverted and impure people. They are the pure, of course, in their own estimation, who had young girls and boys at their nudist gatherings and who lied endlessly to get out of court. These droopy geriatrics are hardly the “pure”. Us “profane” people do not understand the hidden power of taking off our clothes and saying a formula over and over. But jokes aside, this sort of multilayered lying is precisely the kind of Magical Thinking helpful in keeping the cult going. These claims have no truth in them, as these paunchy cultists hardly hold up the universe for us. The followers have a perpetual need to quote and praise Schuon which is the main purpose of the Schuon cult. It is all myth creation and the lure of fiction, the willingness to be deluded, and romancing the great leader.

The induction strategy of the Schuon cult depends on the nude master being seen as a god figure, which requires considerable lying on

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http://desmontes.blogspot.com/2015/07/the-confusing-case-of-frithjof-schuon_21.html

the part of the officers of the cult. They have to make heroic and palatable this rather small man, who was prone to anger, jealousy, and had great need of power and delusions of grandeur. They must sell him the last prophet at the end of time. ⁴⁰³

One of the things that really repulsed me about Schuon before I got to know him very well, was the following. When I had only been in Bloomington a few months, “Mrs. Schuon” and others began to ask me to be a chauffeur for visitors to the cult from other countries. I took them to Schuon’s house and many other places. I spent a lot of time with some of these people and got to know them. A few disciples of Schuon had come from South Africa and I drove them everywhere, had dinners with them and we talked a lot. They favored the elimination of the Apartheid system. One night I had dinner with them and Stanley Jones, one of Schuon’s rich neighbors and a functionary in the cult. He gave a sort of lecture to the South Africans that Schuon hated the anti-Apartheid movement in south Africa and supported the Apartheid system. The

⁴⁰³ There is an interesting website called [The Occidental Exile](#), which shows the author rightly, confused and disappointed by the immorality of the Schuon cult. The author, Desmond Meraz, starts to seriously question Schuon’s behavior and his books. He does not know how right he is to do that, but then he gets a letter from the cult telling him ‘Satan’ is haunting him if he does not accept Schuon. They are a Manichean sect obsessed with Satan. He writes that the cult says to him “who am I to question such exalted teachers, paragons of virtue and intelligence”. Actually, Schuon was not someone he should want to emulate. The cult nurtures the delusion that he was the most exalted of men, but that too is a lie.

. It is sad to watch the author of this website be so honest and yet continue to opt for these delusions, even though he is clearly a decent fellow who deserves a chance to look at reality as it really is . But it is unlikely he can see through his own delusions unless he realizes the Platonist and Muhammadean ideologies he has accepted should also be questioned. The acceptance of evidence is a great strength. It is like having babies. One realizes that imposing religious delusions on these fresh and innocent beings is a kind of fraud. Babies are above all biological and physical beings who learn to think. These are the real “primordial” beings that will sustain the world to come. Schuon did not like babies or children much and involved children in these gatherings. The cult is still lying about this 25 years later. There is nothing to be confused about, if you look at the facts. . .

Apartheid system was one of the last vestiges of the colonial system of slavery in Africa. I was horrified. These followers seemed on the surface to accept such views as natural, which was also disturbing, as it seemed to reflect the internalization of the 'Master' ideology.

Indeed, this was the one of the factors that eventually led to my leaving the cult and testifying against Schuon in the case the police brought against him. It was unconscionable that Schuon would support apartheid. Only a monster could do that. The followers from South Africa had darkish skin and it disgusted me that he would insist on reproving such men for having anti-apartheid sentiments. They were themselves potential victims of this system of organized hate ⁴⁰⁴ I had a close friend from South Africa and understood the subject very well. Schuon's views of it were utterly ignorant. He feared 'atheist communism' in South Africa. He spoke with contempt of the "democratizing tendencies" that could blossom there. He hated democracy. Part of me knew then that this was a bad man

Schuon's system of thought is highly derivative of Guenon's, indeed, there would be no Schuon without Guenon. Schuon became a disciple of Guenon in his teens. Schuon, the epigone, invented very little in terms of ideas. What he did do is apply some of Guenon's ideas and develop them in bizarre directions, using them to colonize native American religions, for instance, as well as adapting Guenon and Coomaraswamy to creating an aesthetic that ended in being a sort of universal narcissism and a cult of "sacred nudity". ⁴⁰⁵ As far as I know, Schuon did not have direct

⁴⁰⁴ One of these men was named Shaheed Carlse

⁴⁰⁵ Coomaraswamy's theory of art is destructive to art, partly because it really is a bitter longing for death and partly because it is a denial of nature. His theory also advocates a Platonic insistence that art serve traditional, impersonal and institutional powers and abjure individuality. He advocates for archaic Church and monarchist art. Very little art of any value has come out of the traditionalist movement, precisely because Icons are irrelevant in a society ruled by corporate icons and logos. Traditionalist art is merely a pretentious nostalgia for the art of repressive and inquisitorial empires. The old empires of Europe and India are hardly realistic

relations with the fascists as Guenon and Evola did. One of Schuon's best friends and disciples, Albert Cuttat, did have close connections with the Nazis and helped some of them escape to Argentina. Schuon did end up supporting Japanese Fascism.

Upon his return from a very brief visit to India, Schuon appears to have rather inadvertently fallen into a position where he had to fight against the Nazi's in World War II. But he was very young then. His thought at that time was almost entirely Guenonian. When Schuon starts defining himself later as a cult leader and writer, he sets up his cult along Guenonian lines. He moves to the extreme right as Guenon did, bypassing the Nazis following Guenon's model, moving farther to the right than even the Nazis. This gives his followers the erroneous notion that Guenon and Schuon have no relation are fascism or are apolitical, but that is incorrect. Schuon's ideas are derivative of Guenon. Guenon created spiritual theofascism, and theofascism is even more reactionary than secular Nazism, not less. Schuon applied Guenon's ideas while adding some of his own and created a cult where he claimed to be an infallible and unquestionable authority, a sort of self-appointed pope of all the religions. Cult leaders create their own societies and set themselves up as dictators.⁴⁰⁶ Schuon's claim to be infallible was

alternative to the destructive corporate empires of today, which really are successors to the abusive powers of Church and Throne. Religion can offer no real antidote to the excesses and harms of corporate culture. Religion augments corporatism. What little traditionalist art that came out of this movement it ends up being an art of delusions of grandeur. Frithjof Schuon's "Icons" for instance are little more than personal fantasies of Schuon's own delusions of grandeur, picturing himself as a prophet or his having sexual relations with the Virgin Mary. In the context of our world a traditionalist art can be little more than a vapid, derivative imitations of iconic models of the past or expression of a universalistic psychopathology, as it becomes in the work of Schuon

⁴⁰⁶ I much preferable to be a "fallibilist" as Karl Popper called himself. To be fallible is to admit the possibility of error and to be able to learn. To claim to be infallible is to claim rigid narrow mindedness and creative collapse. Such a man cannot grow or learn.

enunciated in one of the cults documents. Schuon, writing of himself says:

A Shaykh al-Barakah [i.e. Shaykh by grace ---Schuon himself] is infallible not only as regards intellectual and spiritual things, but also as regards all other things for which he claims infallibility. And this claim is itself necessarily infallible. Infallibility is the essence of authority. And the essence of good order is respect for authority. Next to the supreme authority every man ought to feel as a servant....Similarly, one must accept those who the Shaykh presents as persons worthy of respect....one does not have the right to oppose his judgment.⁴⁰⁷

This is a ridiculous tirade written by a man who wants to be a tyrant. Indeed the claim that even his claim to be infallible is infallible⁴⁰⁸ shows a man of rare insecurity, indeed, grandiose insecurity. The decadent Catholic Church instituted the doctrine of infallibility to clutch on to its failing power and Schuon echoes this in his effort the hold on to his power. It shows Schuon's madness with admirable clarity: The Inquisitors also insisted "no one had the right to oppose their judgment". "The Fuhrer is always right"--- was also a propaganda slogan used regularly by the Nazi's. Totalism proceeds by fiat and dogmatic imposition of views that cannot be questioned. Knowledge must be

⁴⁰⁷ Text 108. This text was written in 1986, but was back numbered to appear it was written much earlier, according to Cyril Glasse.. It is included in Cyril Glasse's account of the cult, which was privately distributed. Glasse is right that it was backdated, as it has all the marks of being written in 86, when Schuon was upset people were not obeying his "wives".

⁴⁰⁸ The doctrine of infallibility has been declared by the catholic Church under Pius the XII in 1870. In practice the doctrine of papal infallibility had been in place for centuries and some even trace it back to the early Roman Church. It is a doctrine meant to insure the power of the Church and its manifestly absurd character was hard to question given the punishing power of the Inquisition and other threats. It was a trumped up dogma created to declare the equally absurd "assumption of the virgin". the doctrine of infallibility was needed as a stop gap for the fact that the church had been failing for centuries, Schuon needed the idea because his cult was collapsing in the 1980's and declaring himself infallible was meant to forestall the inevitable collapse.

imposed, but when a system of knowledge/power comes under serious threat, its malice and murderous nature bares its teeth. I saw this in Schuon when the police were investigating him. The man who claimed to be the infallible embodiment of pure truth suddenly turned to a lying, deceitful and conniving fraud willing to drop the truth at a moment's notice and get a whole crowd of people to lie for him to keep himself from being found out for what he really was. He was a coward and a fraud, a con man and a pretender. I saw this more deeply than anyone, except perhaps Maude, whose life was utterly ruined by this bad man.

Toward the end of World War II Germany changed its propaganda drive to declare Germany must have "World Power or Ruin". This is substantially the message of Guenon's book Reign of Quantity as well. He wishes at the same time to destroy the world that does not agree with him. Schuon demands total obedience and "respect for his authority" and followers must also respect those who he respects (his "wives" primarily) and "one does not have the right to oppose his judgment", he says. This shows Schuon's theofascism as a cult leader. While it is true that Schuon did not support Nazism, the whole system of thought and the structure of Schuon's cult was based entirely on spiritual totalitarianism, or theofascism.⁴⁰⁹

However, Schuon does discuss the Nazis in published and unpublished documents. For Schuon, the Nazis are too nationalistic; he

⁴⁰⁹ Guenon also claimed to be infallible in a certain way. He wrote

"Those who are qualified to speak in the name of a traditional doctrine are not required to enter into discussion with the "profane" or to engage in polemics: it is for them simply to expound the doctrine such as it is, for the sake of those capable of understanding it, and at the same time to denounce error wherever it arises... their function is not to engage in strife and in doing so to compromise the doctrine, but to pronounce the judgment which they have the right to pronounce if they are in effective possession of the principles which should inspire them infallibly." RG: Crisis of the Modern World p65

These are ridiculous directions on how to behave as if you were the Wizard of Oz. Puff yourself up, sound like you mean it, quote a scripture or two and hope they believe you. It is a con-man's game. Schuon derived his authoritarian notion of his own infallibility from Guenon.

wants more power than merely the nation. Schuon claims to speak for the entire world, insofar as the world is “traditional”. “All that is traditional is ours”, he writes. Schuon’s book Transfiguration of Man contains an edited older essay called “Usurpations of Religious Feeling” in which he accuses nationalist patriotism, and thus Nazism, for not being religion, and complains that “people fail to see that religion alone, would be qualified, in principle, not to do impossible things, but to do what could and ought to be done”. ⁴¹⁰ Thus he wants more not less control than the Nazi’s had, exactly as Guenon had done: Evola also sought beyond the Nazi’s into a “higher power”. This is the basic premise of theofascism which all three men endorse whole heartedly.

Schuon is a theofascist, which is to say he was a theocratic Imperialist and complains in this essay that Nazism, because it is secular, has usurped the right to total power that belongs to religion alone. Schuon would like to return to the medieval tyranny of religion, and he mentions Caesar, Shintoist Japan, the “Middle Empire of China, the Holy Roman Empire and the Kingdom of France” as models of Traditionalist integrity. ⁴¹¹ Actually these were all horrible regimes full of injustices. Schuon despises the Renaissance and the French Revolution. Of course Schuon is assuming that his own totalistic universal religion is the most “qualified” to do “what could and ought to be done”, which would be to restore traditional tyrannies to their “divine right”. ⁴¹²

⁴¹⁰ Schuon, Frithjof. The Transfiguration of Man. Bloomington Indiana. World Wisdom books. 1995. pg. 35 The above essay is an edited version of an essay published in Studies in Comparative Religion, which was the primary journal of the Schuon cult. This longer version of the essay is much more telling of Schuon's deeper beliefs. The essay was edited, apparently, after Schuon had been accused of ties to Nazism.

⁴¹¹ There are interesting comparison to be made between Schuon and the Japanese fascist and homosexual writer Yukio Mishima, who also idealized the Japanese traditionalist state of world war 2. He upheld the ideal of the ‘divinity of the emperor’ even after Hirohito renounced it. Mishima was also a nostalgic romantic for “tradition” and he killed himself by traditional seppuku, a horrible way to die.

⁴¹² The psychology of the 'divine right' idea is interesting. Schuon's rationale is probably typical. The rather loony logic of power in Schuon’s case goes something like this: He quotes Plato that "there is no right superior to that of the truth": Schuon possesses the truth, therefore, all rights

Schuon had no understanding of the barbaric nature of Christian ascendancy during the Roman Empire. How they evidently burned the library of Alexandria or how they murdered Hypatia and many others. He did not grasp the horror of the system of indulgences and the system of inquisitorial mind control that made the Dark Ages so dark. The same is true of Schuon's and Guenon's ignorance of the rapaciousness of Islam and other religions. Both Guenon and Schuon were reactionary bigots stuck in a system of thought that froze their moral sense and made them advocate ignorant superstitions and terror.

As an example, it might be useful to look at Schuon's support and sympathy with Japanese imperial fascism as well as the Japanese adulation of the Emperor. In his In the Tracks of Buddhism. He writes that he decided to write about the importance of state Shintoism because of

“the alleged “abolition” of the divine status of the Japanese Emperor at the time of the American occupation: this blatant and gratuitous manifestation of the anti-traditional spirit and the characteristic folly it enshrined called as a matter of course for the study of traditional context where the imperial prerogative fits.⁴¹³

belong to him: he is beyond the law. He can do whatever he wants and it is divinely inspired: Truth, whatever it may be, becomes the reason for rights and the power it confers. Richelieu would agree. He said, "what is done for the state is done for God"...and "God absolves actions which, if privately committed, would be a crime". (McCay, History of World Societies, Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1992 pg.611) Schuon calls this doctrine "intrinsic morality". Since Schuon feels inwardly that he knows the truth, he must be infallible, and therefore he cannot do wrong, whatever he does. One finds similar formulas for tyranny in most powerful regimes, states, corporations, and cults. George W. Bush made a classic statement of spiritual fascism when he said when he decided to run for president in the 2000 election, as he confided to James Robinson, he believed that he in fact been called by God himself to he lead the United States: "I feel like God wants me to run for President. I can't explain it, but I sense my country is going to need me. God wants to me to do it." A similar mentality of self-justification can be found among sociopaths and serial killers

⁴¹³ Schuon, Frithjof, In the Tracks of Buddhism . London Allen and Unwin. Pg 85 .

Schuon takes the American rejection of the Japanese monarchy very seriously. He clearly has a personal and political vendetta to serve here. If you read his texts carefully he states that the Japanese emperor has special “privileges that are far from arbitrary.... Are attached to every line that is of avataric origin, therefore also to the line of Jimmu Tenino [the first emperor] who incontestably also had the quality of the prophet.” ⁴¹⁴ He claims that the avataric line of the emperors cannot be abolished—under the supposition that it is “divine”. It is really just a social construction, like all such systems of power and spiritual ‘authority’. But Schuon would never admit this, self-centered dogmatist that he was. Elsewhere Schuon writes “In Japan, Shinto, for example, was latterly made to serve political ends, but it was in no wise compromised in itself by this fact”. So Schuon basically concludes that the imperial dictatorship must be honored even if it has become fascist and even if it murdered millions. ⁴¹⁵ This is fairly typical of Schuonian immoralism, where he justifies horrible things in the name of some arbitrary and irrational ideology such as the imperial state. Schuon would later excuse his own immoral actions on similar grounds.⁴¹⁶

The same may be said of Shinto. Earlier I quoted Zen Master Sawaki Kodo who said that “if killing is done without thinking, in a state of no-mind or no-self, then the act is an expression of enlightenment.” No

⁴¹⁴ Ibid In the Tracks of Buddhism pg 107

⁴¹⁵ From Tradition and Modernity

http://www.sacredweb.com/articles/sw1_schuon.html

⁴¹⁶ Schuon appeals to the theofascist ideology of murder for the religious state. Schuon’s ideology is mirrored in the Zen support of Japanese murdering during World War 2. Brain Victoria writes of this in his Zen and War that “The reason that Zen is necessary for soldiers is that all Japanese, especially soldiers, must live in the spirit of the unity of the sovereign and subjects, eliminating their ego and getting rid of their self. It is exactly the awakening to the nothingness (*mu*) of Zen that is the fundamental spirit of the unity of sovereign and subjects. Through my practice of Zen I am able to get rid of myself. In facilitating the accomplishment of this, Zen becomes, as it is, the true spirit of the imperial military (Victoria 2003, p.124).” In other words, killing is Zen and one must be like Arjuna in the Gita and murder for god or “mu”.

thinking = No-mind = No-self = No karma. This ruthless impersonalism is theofascism in a nut shell. Self centered “spiritual” cruelty that has no regard for the victims of it at all This is basically Schuon’s attitude too. In any case, Schuon claimed himself as a sort of avatara so the abolishment of the Japanese Emperor is personal matter for him. He supported Japanese fascism because he was himself of like mind.

So what Schuon is really saying here is that the pretence of mythic elitism and power must be preserved because the maintenance of his own delusions depends on it. He clearly has a personal interest in the “prophetic” nature of emperors, since he will himself eventually claim just this divine status. So, as usual, Schuon dictates ideology based on a subjective pathology. The empirical evidence states clearly where he was wrong. In the rape of Nanking alone, in 1937, hundreds of thousands of civilians were murdered and 20,000–80,000 women were raped by soldiers of the Imperial Japanese Army. Evidently Schuon was not terribly bright, he sanctions mass slaughter to justify an absurd mythic Imperial dictatorship. He honors an imaginary platonic “archetype” of the ‘prophet’, while millions of people die in the war between fascist Japan and the West.

Schuon says that the modernism that changed Japan after the Meiji in 1864 should not have happened and implies the Emperor is somehow the victim. Actually the emperor entered willingly into a compact with fascism and signed a Tripartite Pact with Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy in 1940. I know Schuon wished to reverse the modernism that inspired Japan in the Meiji and return to the horrors of the Tokagawa period, when the ruthless class of Samurai ruled Japan with arbitrary cruelty. Schuon thought that the emperor was engendered by Amateratsu, a Japanese goddess, who is the “mirror of the Intellect” – and he saw himself as engendered in exactly these terms. I discussed this with

members of the Schuon cult, John Murray in particular, and know that this is what Schuon had in mind.⁴¹⁷ He wanted a return to monarchy in Japan, as elsewhere, and supported the central aspect of the modern fascist state—the emperor (the fascist state was called “kodo”). This again is a clear example of Schuon as a ‘spiritual fascist’ – and he again quoting the Duke D’ Orleans” “all that is traditional is ours”—a statement that meant for Schuon the rejection of everything that came from the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, which he despised for its democratic striving for equality.

The truth is that under the direction and approval of the emperor Japanese fascism that Japan massacred ten to twenty million innocent Chinese between 1931 and 1945. Japan massacred many others in other countries. It made sex slaves of thousands of helpless Asian women. The Japanese Emperor’s belief that the Emperor’s will is the will of the nation is a form as a form of megalomaniacal totalitarianism very much to Schuon’s liking and personal proclivities. Such a system of Japanese totalitarianism left no room in any subject for his own selfish activities. This is religious fascism in a nutshell, and this is what Schuon is approving of. In August 1945, State Shinto was abolished. It was good for Japan that this happened. Though the dropping of the atomic bombs was a horrendous and unnecessary act, since the Japanese were already expressing the need to surrender.

⁴¹⁷ John Murray was second in command to Schuon in the cult, a position called Naib. I got to know him very well. He was a curious and interesting fellow, understated and played cards close to his chest. He followed Schuon in loving the arbitrary dictatorship of the Ieyasu Tokugawa clan. Schuon liked the strict class or caste hierarchy established by Hideyoshi, Zen is forged in this atmosphere and retains much of the militaristic ritual and naturally adapted itself to corporate culture in Japan and in the west. Schuon liked to immerse himself in the biographies of “great men” hoping to imbibe their aura as it were. He imaged he was like Caesar, Napoleon and many others. His whole life was a “Play of Masks”, as in the title of one of his books. A poseur of perennial delusion, he pretended to be something he was not.

So no one can claim that Schuon did not support Japanese fascism. He did. While he does express doubts about the Mieji, his support for the emperor demonstrates a horrible lack of understanding of history of the time, as well as a lack of sympathy with its victims. As is his wont, he justifies terrible things simply to preserve an spiritual ideal or “principles” that are heartless and mythical, superstitious and based not on reality but on fictive religious ideas and myths. His inability to understand either Zen or Shinto and their role in the cruelties of Japanese history is noteworthy.

Zen as an aesthetic movement that made lovely gardens, flower arrangements and spontaneous paintings is interesting. But that is not really Zen as a spiritual discipline, which grew up as a system of power. Romantic poets like Gary Snyder sell all sorts of Zen nonsense in America but the truth it is was a warrior religion that extolled killing and beating disciples.⁴¹⁸ As Brian Victoria⁴¹⁹ wrote regarding Shinto and Zen

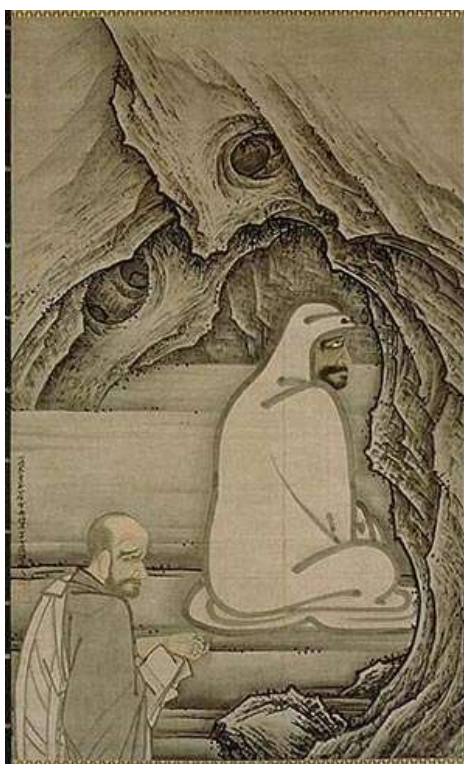
The Zen monastery provided both the physical and mental training that proved to be most attractive to Japan’s military and government officials of the past, but also to Japan’s corporate elite today. “Discipline, obedience, conformity, and physical and mental endurance” as well as the “traditional Buddhist teaching of the

⁴¹⁸ For more on this see <http://www.strippingthegurus.com/stgsamplechapters/zen.asp> This is an interesting book, and though I disagree with Falk on many things, at least he has done some research on cults and cult leaders, unlike most religious studies scholars.

⁴¹⁹ One review of Brian Victoria book *Zen at War* asks “Where is the Buddha Dharma when one hundred million are asked to sacrifice themselves on the bloody altar of nationalism? If enlightened masters can make such a call, then perhaps we need to re-evaluate what the term ‘enlightened’ means. “ Exactly. Buddhism itself is questionable. Elsewhere Victoria says that religion is not the problem, but rather that people misuse it and it is innocent. I do not think this is true. The Inquisition grows right out of Christian notions of exceptionalism. The caste system grows inextricably linked to Hindu ideology and can be found advocated in the Bhagavad Gita and elsewhere. Christ says he came to bring a sword.

non-substantiality of the self” are among the many features of Zen monastic life that has appealed to Japan’s various elites throughout history⁴²⁰

One can easily see why. These “virtues” are the virtues of men and women willing to do anything for the leader without question or dissent. Schuon loved this sort of mindless obedience. All tyrants do. Buddhism creates a virtual kind of caste system simpler than Hinduism . Those who are on the “Way” are soon to be beyond desire and those who are not Buddhist and animals and will “suffer” horribly. Zen is a samurai version of this cruelty and fits easily into a war machine mentality.



Huike Offering His Arm to Bodhidharma Sesshu(1496)

⁴²⁰ <http://www.globalbuddhism.org/5/metraux04.htm> Brain Victoria’s writing analyzing Zen and its relation to militarism should be much more read than they have been. He also discusses the complex relationship of D.T. Suzuki to Japanese fascism.

As you can see in this famous picture of Bodhidharma where he becomes enlightened as one of his followers cuts his own arm off, Zen was closely allied to a violence against reality as the cost of its transcendent illusions about life. Transcendental magnification and violence often go hand in hand, as I show through these books. In other words Schuon's endorsement of the militarism of Zen and Shinto is really an endorsement of an anti-human rights and theofascist agenda.⁴²¹ The same could be said for Tibetan Buddhism, which also has a dark and largely unexamined history of cruelty.⁴²²

Following Guenon exactly, Schuon's politics is not a nationalistic totalism like Nazism, but a transcendentalist totalism,⁴²³ which is just another way of saying it is a "theofascism". In the above essay, Schuon disapproves of Nazism because it is "profane", "civilizationist" and "humanistic" and therefore not totalistic enough, which essentially mirrors Guenon's and Evola's criticism as well. Schuon has written elsewhere that "a religion [or a civilization] is integrated and healthy to the extent that it is founded on the invisible and underlying religion, the *religio perennis*". The "*religio perennis*", of course, is Schuon himself, since he calls himself the "human instrument for the manifestation of the *religio perennis* at the end of time".⁴²⁴ In other words he is spelling out,

⁴²¹ Schuon also opposed the idea of the Jewish state in the holy land. This bespeaks a rather hidden anti-Semitism on his part, and I discuss this elsewhere in this book.

⁴²² Victor Trimondi and his wife have begun to examine this bleak and misogynistic history.

⁴²³ Interestingly, Hitler did say at one point that national socialism must one day become universalist.

⁴²⁴ In the Spring of 1991, the 4th wife, Sharlyn Romaine writes in her essay, the "Veneration of the Shaykh": "how can one doubt that one is faced with an 'Avataric' phenomenon; with a prophetic figure...with a spiritual manifestation of major import?" And she adds in a footnote that the "spirit of Envy", i.e. the devil, cannot abide this "truth". In other words, to doubt Schuon's perennial, Avataric, transcendent, prophetic, central, total and universal status is to be of the devil. Not only this, asserts Romaine, but Schuon has a "mandate", like a Chinese Priest-King, to summarize all the religions at the "end of time": Romaine continues:

his disciples have the right, *in fact the obligation*, to venerate him, to show their awareness of his grandeur and nature...[Schuon combines] the qualities of Shiva

rather obliquely, a grotesque drive for a totalistic world religion based on his principles. 'The world is healthy to the extent it is like me', is what Schuon is actually saying. He not only thinks he is the summation of all the prophets, as I have shown elsewhere, but he also thinks he is the combination of Alexander the Great, who had himself proclaimed a god. Caesar, Napoleon and other "great" characters in history, claimed something similar.. Schuon claims "divine right", on the model of so called theocratic civilizations. This is a natural outgrowth of many of Guenon's ideas. Neither man questioned if founding a society on such grandiose and inflated ideas would be a good thing. A sociopath who is this deluded about himself does not question himself.

In various photographs I have seen Schuon self-consciously poses as the 'great man'. In some of these he appears as a kind of Aryan Caesar, in others as a Chinese Emperor, Great Native American Chief, Islamic Caliph or Saint or Indian Raja, all basically move scripts in which a frustrated actor poses. In nude photos of Schuon, of which there are

[the Hindu God of destruction] and Krishna, the Bodhisattvic universality of sympathy [the Buddha], the affinity with the Primordial and the Red Indian; the providential connection with Seyyidatna Maryam [the Virgin Mary] and also in the Semitic world, the affinities with Abraham, David, Christ and Muhammed, are only too real. The different faces of the Logos reverberate again in the Shaykh and are manifested in different ways. Unquestionably, his disciples are aware of this...and that is why his disciples are drawn providentially to that master, love what the master loves and wish to follow him as closely as possible and participate in his reality.

In other words, Schuon is a living encyclopedia of divine manifestations and masks of the logos. He is the kitsch pastiche of all the religions, a sort of one man Barnum and Bailey circus of all spirituality. His disciples have the "obligation" to be obedient to him because he is the quintessence of all the religions. Schuon's handwriting appears a number of times on this document. In one place he writes that he is "the human instrument for the manifestation of the religio perennis at the end of time", or in other words, he is the apocalyptic summation of all the religions. In another place Romaine writes—no doubt copying Schuon's words--- that "the Shaykh is the link joining the Primordial with the last and for that reason embodies a vision that embraces the whole circle [of time and the religions]". She then writes that he is "the Center" which determines and unites all the religions like the center of a wheel unites the spokes. Schuon adds that he "manifests the Center as such". Which basically means that he is like god, the center of the universe and of time, or the "transcendental unity" of the religions at the end of time.

many, he is the embodiment of the pure “esoteric” truth. “Esoterism” is basically the 20th century new religion for intellectuals, who can make up their own religion at will. Schuon claims that Caesar, like the Chinese Emperors, or other manifestations of theocratic statehood reflect the “theocratic essence of the imperial idea” ⁴²⁵ This might be satirically humorous, like the puffed-up buffoons in Jean Genet’s great play The Balcony if it were not true that Schuon, like Goebbels, the Roman or Chinese Emperors or today’s politicians and advertisers know, as Goebbels said, that ‘people more easily accept a big lie than a little one’. There are people, committed to a cult routine of ignorance, prayer and self-delusion, which actually read Schuon’s writings and “themes of meditation” ⁴²⁶ and believe that Schuon is the puffed up “last prophet at the end of time”. I met many such people. Goebbels said that his project was to get all Germany “to think homogeneously”, and Schuon wants to do the same thing. His cult is designed as a system of thought control. Echoing the speech of Goebbels and German racist anthropology of the early 20th century, Schuon was still writing in 1990 that

“To be normal is to be homogeneous, and to be homogeneous is to have a center. A normal man is one whose tendencies are, if not

⁴²⁵ Schuon, Frithjof Light on the Ancient Worlds Bloomington, World Wisdom ? pg. 89 ?

⁴²⁶ Schuon's six “themes” are part of his method. The six themes are: purity, spiritual combat, contentment, fervor, discernment, identity—all more or less stolen from the Buddhist paramitas and then claimed as his own in a ‘vision’ of course. Schuon supposedly realized the six themes as six stars in a vision of the inner nature of the Prophet(i.e. himself). The six stars were a spiritual portrait of the Prophet and the Prophet was Schuon himself--- of course (who else?). As a result of this vision Schuon wrote the essay the” Mystery of the Prophetic”. The vision is probably a fabrication, as are most (all ?) of Schuon’s visions. The six themes were basically stolen from the six Buddhist Paramitas. My observation was that Schuon’s spiritual method had no good effect at all upon the behavior of those who practiced it. Indeed, if anything it made them more insular and cultish, prone to magical thinking and excessive opinion about their importance. I practiced the method for two years and it was easy to leave it behind, but not easy to get out of my system. Such methods are techniques of mind control. It took some years before the bulk of the habitual mental processes left me entirely. Even 20 years later parts of the endless prayers or sequences of prayers come back to me in moments of duress or stress. Systems of mind control are very effective in getting into the synapses and the deep memory cells.

altogether univocal, at least concordant; that is, sufficiently concordant to serve as a vehicle for that decisive center which we may call the sense of the Absolute or the love of God.

The tendency towards the Absolute, for which we are made, is difficult to realize in a *heteroclite* soul; a soul lacking a center, precisely, and by that fact contrary to its reason for being. Such a soul is a priori a “house divided against itself,” thus destined to fall, eschatologically speaking.” ⁴²⁷ (emphasis mine)

For Schuon “heteroclite”—a word that is hardly “precise”—its definition is “one who deviates from common forms or rules”—which describes Schuon himself pretty well. But Schuon used to term with a Schuonian sneer—a sort of Germanic and pseudo-aristocratic disdain and snideful scorning. He said words like “swine” or “modern” or “diabolic” or “computer” with this disparaging tone too. To be heteroclite was for Schuon like being a mongrel dog: people who do not believe in Schuon’s “absolute” are mongrel dogs who will go to hell. This is what he is saying. For Schuon “profane” people are “heteroclite”.⁴²⁸ For Schuon a ‘centered’ man is a man who is centered on an abstract ideology, preferably Schuon’s own, but it could be another fictional religious system of mind

⁴²⁷ In F. Schuon, *To Have A Center*, Bloomington. World Wisdom Books, 1990, p3

⁴²⁸ Schuon’s speech patterns and uses of words sometimes sounds like language I have read used by the KKK. In 1926 Hiram Evans, the Imperial Wizard of the KKK referred to people of different thinking that his as “intellectually mongrelized liberals”. Schuon had a very black and white mind, and his notion of “heteroclite souls” was said with a similar slur to the idea of ‘mongrelized half breeds’. With Schuon, you were either with him or against him. The KKK was like this too. It is not an accident that Schuon was attracted to Indiana, the state where the KKK had the greatest following and a state that produced many cults. It is the most right wing northern state. “for quote see Richard Hofstadter’s *Anti-intellectualism in America*, (pg 162) The chapter ‘Revolt against Modernity’, shows how hatred of Modernity is not just a far right catholic thing but also rife among conservative Protestants. Catherine Schuon found herself in deep sympathy with “right-wing-Bible-thumpers” as fundamentalists are sometimes pejoratively called.. I had more than one conversation with her where this was obvious to me. There is real sympathy between Schuon and the American far right, not just in terms of caste and race questions but also in their hatred of evolution and adoption of anti-rationalism as a philosophical justification for their romanticism.

control. The essential thing for Schuon was belief in an “orthodox” make-believe deity and respect for authority, --meaning obedience to a tyrant. The important thing in Schuon’s self-estimation was that he “never changed”, and was what he was even at an early age. He saw himself as a baby emperor, the Jesus child. This is of course the highest virtue of the European aristocracy, who prided themselves on always being the same and never deviating from the sense of privilege and elite status. For Schuon he is always the highest, and everyone else is beneath him. Those outside his notion of prophetic permanence are divided people who are destined for hell to the degree they are secular and humanists and value change.⁴²⁹

This doctrine developed around 1990 with Schuon but goes back to his youth and reflects the racist anthropology of the 1920’s and 30’s. It was around this time too that I heard Schuon say that all the profane people⁴³⁰ in the world ‘deserved to die’. Racism in Schuon had been changed into something less based on skin color than on ideological conformity.

For Schuon diversity among the religions is fine, as long as they keep well in the confines of his philosophy of orthodox ‘esoterism’. This really amounts to a negation of diversity of course. They must all think alike. Only “esoterists” understand the one true “Truth”, of which orthodox religions are but the partial and relative and minimized expression. This is all nonsense of course. But this nonsense had a point and that was to denigrate others. Religions must conform to

⁴²⁹ Actually I think it is a fine thing to be able to change direction in one’s life, based on new information and experience. Schuon claimed to ‘never change’ from his youngest years, which seems an admission of narrow minded fault as well as terribly impoverished. To ‘never change’ is in a sense to never have lived deeply. In the end I came to see Schuon as a small and impoverished fellow, who had few real capacities, and was stuck in so many character flaws he had no business claiming any of the things he claimed. He should not have been involved trying to help people, as he was incapable of that.

⁴³⁰ Schuon says in a text called “Rules” given to new initiates into his “tariqa” that “one must not have an occupation outside of one’s professional work that entails contact with profane people”

Guenon's and Schuon's criteria or they are "heresy", "profane" and "diabolic" and need to be denounced by those who claim to be arbiters and judges, namely, the Traditionalists themselves. A great deal of Traditionalist writings involves slashing and beating up on those they feel are remiss, mistaken, threatening or profane. Indeed, a good deal of traditionalist writing is devoted to trying to trash thinkers who are close to them but slightly different, Jung, Gurdjeiff, De Chardin, Blavatsky, New Age thinkers and many others. Many of the Traditionalists function as a sort of thought police, branding those who think outside the Schuonian or Guenonian box as satanic modernists, part of the 'subversive "counter-initiation" diabolic or profane. Schuon's and Guenon's followers live in a system of mind control, unable to think their own thoughts, unable to read books outside the canon of the informal and unwritten "index" created by Schuon and his followers.

Schuon, like Guenon and Evola, despises democracy. Guenon, always the paranoid, had seen democracy as a diabolical plot designed by an imaginary Luciferian intelligence to "level" and destroy the spiritual "elite" whose existence maintains the world. For Guenon and Schuon democracy is a slide toward the apocalyptic abyss. Schuon writes in his first book that the great truths of "purely intellectual Knowledge" that comprises the esoteric essence of the religions east and west

" have been formulated-for the first time, we believe, in the writings and books of Rene Guenon"⁴³¹ Schuon defines what Guenon knows as having been gathered by "intellectual evidence that implies absolute certainty; but it he present state of humanity such evidence is only accessible to a spiritual elite, which becomes ever more restricted in number."

⁴³¹ Schuon, Frithjof. The Transcendent Unity of Religions New York, Pantheon Books. 1953. pg. 12-13

How convenient! In other words, Schuon is selling fiction as reality. Schuon had no evidence of anything of the kind. This is pure fiction. There is no such things as “esoteric essences” which Schuon and his friends had elite access to. Guenon and Schuon have invented a way of seizing all the religions for themselves “for the first time”. They claim special status of the evidence of that which does not exist and for which no one has a shred of evidence I watched these men and women closely and there was no evidence of any special election at all, they merely thought the same thoughts and behaved in predictable ways.

Schuon claim to have the secret knowledge of the universe was a pretense. It is from this pretense that he derives they idea that he is “infallible” fountain of all authority and hierarchy. To Schuon, following Guenon, democracy is he says, a “rising tide of profaneness”; a tendency to “anarchy”; a downhill slide towards “dissolution”; a descent into the evils of “relativism”, and “relativism engenders the spirit of rebellion and is at the same time its fruit”.⁴³² Schuon misunderstands the notion of the relative and the theory of relativity, which he confuses with moral relativism. The relative is merely the things that have relations. The relative is our actual lives, our children, our thoughts, the trees in our yard, the forest and skies of our planet--- the relative is everything worth living for: there is no absolute. Schuon merely creates a transcendent fiction. He does so for political reasons. The relative does not provide a politics Schuon likes, whereas the absolute, gives him ultimate authority, since he has defined himself as the supreme prophet of “truth”. The traditionalists hated relativism because it allows “picking and choosing” and they wanted to be able to dictate the structure of reality in absolute terms, where no one can pick anything but must follow empty and arbitrary rules that serve only the elite.

⁴³² Schuon, Frithjof. Logic and Transcendence London: Perennial Books. 1975 pg. 16

For Schuon all this—the earth, our lives --- is nothing. He says “relativismdestroys the notion of truth”⁴³³. That is pretty silly. Truth is always a measurement and a reckoning, an assessments of facts on the ground, in reality. The relative is all there is, in fact, as all facts are relations. Schuon’s notion of truth is fiction, belief in fictional gods. Schuon says that “relativism of whatever kind kills intelligence”,⁴³⁴ and like “psychologism”, to which democracy and relativism are akin, in Schuon’s estimation, relativism rebels against admitting “that which exceeds us... and this is the very definition of Lucifer”.⁴³⁵ In other words, for Schuon, “intelligence” is power and hierarchy erected in service of delusions. He does not talk about “truth” and when he says “real” he means unreal.

Schuon’s hatred of relativism is a confused mess, in short. The relative world described by Einstein, which Schuon hated, is just our world. Hating the world as it is, is, well, just plain dumb. There is no absolute to which all things are relative. The relative is all that there is, everything exists in relation to other things and forces. We exist only because we live on a planet that is a certain distance from the sun. This is an unassailable fact. Schuon thinks that those who do not recognize the delusional “absolute” and fall abjectly before god or gods are “the very definition of Lucifer”. The great sin for Schuon is “refusing to admit that which exceed us”, which is to say, refusing to admit that the unreal is real. This is ridiculous, of course. Gods are fictions so how could they “exceed us”. They are necessarily less than us since we made them. The absurdity of this adulation of fictive authority and the ideological elitism this entails never occurred to Schuon. Schuon thinks all life, which is relational and thus relative—is the ‘definition of Lucifer’. There is nothing luciferian in the existence of birds flying in the air, which are products of

⁴³³ Schuon, Logic and Transcendence pg.17

⁴³⁴ Schuon, Frithjof. Castes and Races London; Perennial Books, 1959 pg. 83

⁴³⁵ IN other words, to deny the fact that the fiction of god exists is the supreme sin for Schuon.

adaptive strategies to our specific planet. Lucifer here is a mythical fiction, as is Schuon notion of the “Intellect”.

Schuon’s hatred of life is staggeringly ignorant.⁴³⁶ Both Schuon and Guenon misunderstood and misused the idea of relativism. They most often referred to amoral relativism, a really rare idea, that implies, no ethical reality at all: anything goes. There is hardly anyone except a selfish psychopath who believes in that. Moral relativism in extreme form means you have the right to do anything at all whenever you wish, including murder, rape or blow up millions of people. No one in their right mind believes he is infallible and beyond good and evil, except perhaps, Schuon and a few other people on the edge of sanity. Schuon was close to being a moral relativist in his personal life.

In any case, science is not a moral relativism but has a deep ethics, deeper than religion which is highly immoral. Schuon opposed the absolute and the relative, which is a false comparison as there is nothing “absolute” . Nature is defined as relational or relative. Schuon never understood that that science is not a form of “relativism” but rather as Thomas Kuhn said, scientific development is a “unidirectional and irreversible process,” which means that later scientific theories do make improvements on previous ones. Life is not chaos as Schuon implies. Anyone who has spent any time in nature can see a kind of ethical intelligence at work there. There is only the relative, absolutes are fictions, but this does not mean there is no development or progress. Of course Schuon hated progress, and wanted civilization to stay in a delusional state fixated on an imaginary absolute, praying perpetually useless prayers to a god who is not there.

Schuon’s inability to understand the relative world we live in is also a source of his hatred women. Schuon’s deep misogyny is obvious in many

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writings of his. For instance, Schuon says that “women appears as the exteriorizing and fettering element”... woman is “characterized by a tendency toward the world, the concrete, the existential.”, as if this were a fault,, when it is not, it is the best way to live life--- as if being up in clouds of metaphysical madness, like Schuon was —drifting among pompous abstract concepts about “beyond being” and the “relatively absolute” had any real value... (Essential Writings pg. 417) When Schuon wrote this nonsense about women he had three “wives” and the one he spent the most time with was Maude Murray, who I got to know extremely well. He had a demeaning attitude toward her even though he claimed a right to her based on phony visions from the Virgin Mary. It was very clear to me he did not know her and did not let her be herself around him. He forced her to stay with him even when she made it crystal clear she did not want to be with him. She fought for years to get away from him, at the cost very nearly of her life. She had two relationships with other men while with him. He was cruel and heartless. His notion of women is that they were possessed “symbols” and little else besides. Even in basic texts such as the simple text “Rules” given to new initiates into the cult, who are told that “women in a state of menstrual impurity do not say the canonical prayers, not even mentally: but they may say individual prayers, and they may invoke the Shahadah or the Divine Name..... In principle they do not go to Majlis, but one can make exceptions if facilities permit: but then they are not able to participate in dhikru-sadr” ---which are chanting Sufi dances done at majlis. This hatred of menstruating women is typical of many male centered religious superstitions. Maude told me that his wives “Do not have rights they only have duties”. In other words Schuon was a chauvinist of a rather vile kind. He takes the misogynist hatred implicit in the Koran and applies it to women he knew personally.

What Schuon never realized or thought through is that science is not “relativism”, in the perverse sense that he means in this word. Truth

is not perception. It is based on facts. There is an outside world beyond the human mind that constrains science to facts. The idea that facts and evidence matter is science--- but the idea that everything boils down to subjective interest and perspectives is merely post-modernist nonsense: and that is what Schuon misunderstands as science. Schuon was afraid that his dream world would be uncovered by science and shown up for the sham it is. That is why he was afraid of science and the relative. Guenon and Schuon shared a rare devotion to make-believe and the revival of make believe in the 20th century. Traditionalism is the effort to restore make-believe to the domination of the world. They created a rare form of silliness that serves the rank narcissism of certain affluent and reactionary people who long for the old days of caste and hierarchy. Schuon's notion of the "intellect" is relativistic in the sense that it really is pathologically subjective.

Schuon falsely equated the relative and the relational with evil or Maya, when actually it is "Atma" and the "absolute" that is the fiction. Those who conflate moral relativism with immoralism or the theory of relativity with immorality are making fundamental error in understanding modern science. Schuon knew little about science. His use of archaic religious terms stranded his mind in the medieval concepts and made him unable to realize how erroneous his understanding of concepts like relativity and the relative really was. Richard Rorty rightly denied that relativism applies to much of anybody, being nothing more than a Platonic scarecrow. Schuon thought materialism was some sort of satanic idea, when really it is just a view of the world as being made of things, which is merely a truism. The world is material. Schuon was afraid of this truism and so branded all 'reductionism' as evil when really it is just a natural fact that observations about reality end up encompassing more facts and creating there a deeper and deeper understanding of the real. Science is reductionist and that is a good thing. With holism one ends up with

glittering generalities that allow all sorts of superstitions to enter into “knowledge”.

The idea of the “absolute” in Schuon is really a construction that comes for 19th century romanticism: Hegel, Fichte, Schelling and others. The whole dichotomy in Schuon’s ideology between the Absolute and the Relative is bogus and based on misunderstandings. As Isaiah Berlin said to “confuse our own constructions with eternal laws or divine decrees is one of the most fatal delusions of men.” Schuon and Hegel did this all the time. But that does not make what he said real.

The confusions about relativism are legion. There is also cultural relativism. This is the idea that different cultures are fundamentally different and that scientific truth is merely one kind of truth and it is not to be especially privileged. Science seeks truth across many “frames of reference”. It is clearly nonsense to suppose that different cultures make one immune to disease common to all humans. Vaccines apply across cultural borders and telescopes work no matter what culture one is in. Science is true whether one believes it or not, which is not true of religion. A species description of a Magnolia Warbler does not represent anything but that Warbler. Point by point it tells what it looks like, how much it weighs, where it lives, what it eats, where it nests and so on. The subjective aspect of cultural norms certainly differ from place to place as one would expect. Muslims do not believe what fundamentalist Christians or Shintoists believe. But science is universal. The theory of evolution is not an “inter-subjective” construct but an objective fact and applies everywhere and not just in Europe and the United States. $E=mc^2$ is true on the moon, Jupiter or in another galaxy. Jesus is “Lord” only to Christians, and only in their imaginations, not in fact. Jesus is an inter-subjective delusion, and it is extremely unlikely that the guy ever existed as a real man, and if he did, he was certainly mangled into unrecognizable shape by the early mythologists of his religious construction..

The racism and caste obsession of the traditionalists depend on the notion that they are the pinnacle of truth and the apocalyptic remnant of the elite. To understand some of the background of Schuon's obsession with his own claim to greatness it is useful to look at his formative influences. There is Guenon as we have explained. However, Schuon mentions many others. He mentions the

“spiritualist renewal of a Maine de Biran-whose merits we cannot overlook- not to mention the prolongations of ancient theosophy in the case of Saint Martin and Bader, and partially in Schelling”.

These 19th century romantics are all seeking to create an elitist form of spiritualism. This need of Germanic transcendentalism and the myth of the holy spirit can already be seen in Albrecht Durer's paint of himself as Christ.



Schelling speaks of longing to be God, and he predicted a ‘prophet seer’ who will unite philosophy and mythology into an apocalyptic mode of action, which will restore the primordial beginning of things by unifying all knowledge. Schuon continues this very Germanic obsession, wanting to be everything, when really he is a small man with huge self-doubts and a ‘god on a treadmill’ as he called himself once. There is a clear need to over compensate here. Germanic transcendentalism seeks for the ultimate as in Wagner’s inflated music or Nietzsche’s Zarathustra. Novalis predicted a “prophet seer” too, and Novalis is one of the rare poets Schuon approved of, Schuon compares himself to the ‘holy spirit’ and claims to have transcended virtually all history to be one of the last prophets at the end of time. What is the reason for this absurd need of

self-elevation? What begins to dawn on me as I look at all these facts is that there is a psychological lack that is being filled by transcendental fictional deities or imagery ideology. This seems to arise in Germany as a result of some kind of national and historical feeling of weakness of lack to authority and inferiority relative to the roman empire and the Roman Church.

Like Schuon and Guenon, Schelling longs for total knowledge/power, or what Schuon calls “objectivity freed of all shackles”.⁴³⁷ That means objectivity that has been freed of evidence and objectivity. Schuon’s “objectivity”, like his concept of the “Intellect”, and they are synonymous, is merely a narcissistic mirror on the universe that is colored by Schuon’s subjective opinion of his own omniscience and omnipotence. “Objectivity” is the freedom to impose mind control; the freedom to take total power and claim total knowledge: the freedom to be a “messiah” as Hitler or Schuon thought they were; the freedom to be infallible, as the Popes had claimed, or as Schuon and Hitler both claimed. Amoral “disinterestedness” easily becomes immoral in Schuon and in political leaders like Hitler of the Popes because it hides tacit assumptions behind the pose of neutrality. The pose of neutrality becomes active complicity in a regime of knowledge/power. One can see this in corporate science where greed deforms the facts. Schuon’s ideology is even worse than corporate science. There is no “objectivity” in Schuon---- there is only the confusion of his subjectivity with reality. If Schuon thinks something, it is objective because he thinks it. His thoughts are god’s thoughts. An honest man has some humility, as he knows he is largely ignorant of nature and how the universe works. An honest man knows he is fallible. An honest man attempts to be honest and accurate and admit one’s bias up front. Schuon was never an honest man, he claimed to be infallible..

⁴³⁷ Schuon, Roots pg.96

Schuon also speaks of Maine De Biran as an influence. Maine de Biran, a French phenomenologist from the 19th century, saw in Hinduism a confirmation of the totalistic concept of the 'divine ego' --- an absolute---which he imagined would achieve a total revolution in consciousness. This symbiosis of German and French philosophy and Hindu and eastern thought parallels the enormous exploitive drive of the Europeans in India, Bengal, China and the Philippines. A similar idea occurs in Hegel and Fichte, with the notion of "absolute self-consciousness" or Fichte's "universal Ego", both of these being hierarchical notions of consciousness that are delusional. Indeed, Hegel's statement in his Wissenschaft der Logic exactly parallels the central concern of Guenon and Schuon's writing. Hegel says that this book presents the "Realm of Truth as it is without veil and for itself. It is possible to say that its contents is the presentation of God as He is in His Eternal Being, before the creation of nature and any finite being".⁴³⁸

This modest pronouncement is a good example of Germanic Transcendentalism and the myth of the holy spirit. In the beginning was Hegel, in other words, which is about as sensical as Schuon's claim to be "the glory of the Omega" or the "manifestation of the Logos at the end of time" or the holy spirit itself, as he claims in her memoirs. Both Hegel and Schuon are claiming to have become the Logos, or the principle of total knowledge and universal power. They are "total objectivity" and the total "subject". This is bogus of course, what they really are is total

⁴³⁸ quoted in Voegelin, Eric. Order and History Vol. 4 Baton rouge Louisiana State Univ. Press. 1974 pg.57 In this book Voegelin defines gnosticism as " the enterprise of returning the pneuma in man from its state of alienation in the cosmos to the divine pneuma of the beyond through action based on knowledge". Voegelin is a Platonist, and I would differ with his definition, Platonism too is 'gnosticism', in the merely etymological sense of it being a theory of knowledge. The basic thrust of most knowledge systems is to conform the human will to a Symbolic system, which assumes human alienation from a supposed 'higher truth'. Religions do this in obvious ways; science does it through mathematical abstractions. All this could be called 'gnostic', but the term is meaningless, because it does not describe the process whereby symbol-reality becomes a means of oppression or exploiting the concrete world of real things and people. Moreover the term gnosticism is too allied with Christian notions of orthodoxy and heresy.'

subjectivity, expressed in the most inflated hyperbole possible. They embody William James notion subjective spirituality very well.

Schuon and Hegel thought the when they think, they imagine, it is god who thinks through them. This is pure fiction and self-deception on their part. These German philosopher love to exalt themselves and transport or transcend themselves in inflated rhetoric. I have seen this in Wagner's Operas or Hitler's speeches. I can see this same inflated idealization in Fichte, Nietzsche, Schuon, Hegel and many others. I have no idea why this is so, but it appears to be a regular feature of Germanic thought in the last 200 years. I suspect, again, it has to do with an inferiority complex of some kind, as well as the macho bravura of a Protestant nation that was put down by southern Europe in many wars spread over centuries. The excess of the backwardness and defeat of Germany over many centuries led to a conservative revolt which helped produce the high flown excesses of Hitlerian rhetoric, Lutheran identity with the holy spirit, Hegelian transcendentalism or Schuon's need to be all the gods and embrace all goddesses as his own. The effort of Hegel and Marx to create a totalistic "consciousness" that would sweep the world off its feet is not different that the similar effort of Aquinas or Shankara to create and justify the absolute truth that would dominate the world. What these thinkers try to present is a total vision of supremacist consciousness based somehow in a lack of identity, and impoverishment, indeed a pathetic need to be more than human, a fiction, an imaginary thing that does not exist, a god.. Spiritual subjectivity wants to dominate the world in an effort to remake the world over in the image of its delusion.

This drive toward total knowledge/power is at the root of much of the romantic philosophy of the 19th century. Marx aspired to a similar form of ideological totalism, though in a different way. It is this same drive toward a totalistic system of knowledge and power that inspires Guenon and Schuon. Karl Popper was right to see a close relation

between Plato, Hegel, Marx and Hitler, all three of them straining after a system of romantic totalism, with the result that all their systems are prone to cruelty, hierarchy and injustice. Schuon, Guenon and Evola were attracted to the conservative wing of this tendency, which is why they continue to be compared to Fascism rather than Marxism, which they despised.⁴³⁹ Liberal and conservative, religious and secular forms of totalism are equally toxic,

Schuon also admires Joseph De Maistre⁴⁴⁰(1753-1821), “whose intelligence has great merits” Schuon claims.⁴⁴¹ This is extremely high praise from Schuon who rarely praises anyone except himself. De Maistre, like Prince Metternich (1773-1859) was opposed to modernism of all kinds.⁴⁴² He was castigated as a blind reactionary, which indeed, he was. Metternich, Bonald and De Maistre are often linked together as three of the most conservative opponents of the French Revolution. They wanted a return to the rule of aristocracy and the Church. De Maistre supported the Czarist state in Russia during a period of cruel and bloody oppression and Metternich, as a result of the Congress in Vienna, left hundreds of thousands dead in Spain as a result of his policies. Goya’s prints of the “Disasters of War” record in graphic form a protest against the bloodbath caused by the policies of the aristocratic and Catholic reactionaries like Metternich. Schuon and Guenon despise democracy and basic human rights and want to return society to the “Throne and God” of these Imperial religious Dictators, who longed for the world of

⁴³⁹ The question that arises here concerns the social function of systems of knowledge, and how these systems justify the claim to total power. An analysis and critique of this phenomena appears necessary. But this is beyond what I intend to do here. But I think it important to outline, however briefly, the fact that in Guenon and Schuon we are dealing with attempts to create an ideological and totalistic system that seeks to function as a dictating paradigm for interpreting past and future history.

⁴⁴⁰ I will discuss De Maistre more below Guenon in relation to Action Francaise

⁴⁴¹ Nasr, Seyyed Hossein. The Essential Writings of Frithjof Schuon Warwick, N.Y. Amity House. 1986 pg.259

⁴⁴² 15 May 1773 – 11 June 1859 Metternich was a German/Austrian extreme conservative who opposed the Enlightenment, free press and progress.

lost privileges that were gone, but who were willing to kill hundreds of thousands to get their power back. De Maistre wrote somewhere that the banner ideas of the French Revolution, namely, “Liberty, Equality and Fraternity”, must be replaced with the call for “Throne and God”, He also advocated the infallibility of the Pope and absolute power for the King; he writes:

I have never said that absolute power... does not involve great inconveniences. On the contrary, I expressly acknowledge them fact, and I have no thought of attenuating the inconveniences⁴⁴³

One finds a similar kind of self-righteous sadism in some of Schuon’s writings. Schuon justifies the concept of Holy war and speaks holy anger, which he defines as equivalent to the love of god, except it is “hate in god”.⁴⁴⁴ He claims that holy war is necessary because without the warrior caste “man declines and the whole of society degenerates” a hypothesis for which there is no evidence whatever. Presumably the suffering that is caused by the brutality of holy war is good for man because, Schuon explains, the “sinner needs suffering in order to expiate his faults” and therefore “the abolition of the sense of sin is not only impossible it is not even desirable”.⁴⁴⁵ This again has no evidence at all for it and quite a lot against it. Schuon upheld the Native American Warrior as the exemplar to his groupies. The men in the cult like to strut around in Native American costumes acting tough and pseudo-‘aristocratic’. Little was said in the cult about how brutal and unjust many male dominated Native tribes were in the Americas. Tribes tortured each other in the most gruesome manner possible and stole women, raped villages, burned and chopped up bodies in a merciless way

⁴⁴³ Copleston, Frederick. A History of Philosophy vol IX. New York: Newman Press 1975 pg.9

⁴⁴⁴ Schuon. Esoterism. pg.118

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid. pg.160

that is neither romantic or to be pictured in romantic paintings like Schuon symbolist cartoons of Indians..

Schuon thought that we should castigate children for sin. Castigating children for “sin” and punishing them simply does not work, in fact it has been shown to be counter-productive. Schuon did not like children much, except himself as a child⁴⁴⁶ Maude Murray says that

“Regarding children, Frithjof Schuon did not like them – and especially not babies. A crying baby was the worst; but he did have a sense of childlike innocence, which came out often. He was not easy on his mother either”(2018)

The whole notion of sin is ridiculous. Schuon thought “Holy war” is necessary in order to convince the sinners of their need to repent. Schuon does not mention that the spiritual elite profit through the enforced suffering of others. Nor does he mention that sacrifices for god, in most spiritual societies, end up being sacrifices for those who have power in the society.⁴⁴⁷ Right wingers like to promote “volunteerism”, but rarely volunteer themselves. The want to poor to pay the taxes while

⁴⁴⁶ Perhaps Schuon’s unhappy childhood and unfortunate attitude toward children was due to his own father. According to Hugo Bergmann, “Schuon's father was an Anthroposophist, that is a follower of the Anthroposophy of Rudolf Steiner, and as a young man Schuon participated in spiritist séances”. Sedgwick records that “Bergmann described the first encounter as “painful,” as Schuon seemed to him “stilted” and “affected, and” dressed “as a prophet.” Evidently Schuon posed as a great man quite early.

<http://traditionalistblog.blogspot.com/2010/08/hugo-bergmann-and-frithjof-schuon.html>

⁴⁴⁷ Schuon justifies the practice of bloody human sacrifice against the victims will on the grounds that "the sacrificer does not act as an individual but as the instrument of a collectivity, which, being the totality, clearly has certain rights over part of itself". The sacrifice must be "approved, therefore demanded, by God". In other words it's all right to kill for the idea, the state or the religion, provided these are all religious bodies. (The Eye of the Heart, unpublished English Translation by Gerald Palmer, p. 135) Schuon says in this essay that human sacrifice exists to pay the "tithe" or tenth of oneself that one owes to god. It is a short step from this doctrine to his latter statement that three quarters of the modern world need to be sacrificed, since the modern world has abandoned god.

the rich let their wealth “trickle down”—when of course it hardly every does. This is why it is always essential to support taxing the rich and regulating them as much as possible in the just interests of the power and middle class.

Power always lives on the “inconveniences” and deprivations of others; it is this precisely that defines power as power. The god idea is merely a rationalizations couched as a myth which helps justify power relations. Those who desire or have power rarely question their own right to decide how or why others should suffer. In any case, Guenon and Schuon assimilated the romantic and aristocratic elitism of writers like De Maistre, Biran and Metternich and others. In Guenon and Schuon the notions of objectivity, truth and god serve an ultra-rightist, neo-imperial, totalistic, anti-science and apocalyptic vision that seeks to restore ‘traditional’ forms of knowledge/power through a holy war against modern forms of knowledge/power in order to destroy the latter. This is what theofascism. One linchpin of this mode of resistance to the modern world is the idea of a universal Savior, who unites all the religions and ancient imperialisms in a unified assault against the moderns. The “restorer” or “prophet” of this perennial religion is supposed to appear “at the end of time”. Guenon expressed this hope rather fantastically in his The Lord of the World,---a ridiculous book which he ends by quoting De Maistre’s hope for an apocalyptic restoration of the “divine order”.⁴⁴⁸ Schuon went much further and decided he was himself the last avatara, or the final “manifestation of the Logos” in Schuon’s words.

⁴⁴⁸ Guenon, Rene. The Lord of the World Moorcote, U.K. Coombe Springs Press pg.67 Guenon thinks Shambhala is a center of high evolutionary energies located in central Asia. Guenon believes that Shambhala exists and “Agartha”, is there, which is a center of secret initiations. Guenon likens Shambhala-Agartha to a major earth chakra where immense power is concentrated. He accords it the status of the world’s secret government, the source of all wisdom. This nonsense was also pursued by the Nazi’s and by the Stalinists both of whom tried to enlist the Shambhala myth for their own uses. Viktor Trimondi writes that the Shambhala myth is a recent fiction and ties the Dalai Lama to fascism.

This tendency of Guenon and Schuon to assimilate 19th century idealistic, and imperialist Egotism to Vedanta and Sufism is probably not a false assimilation. By which I mean that there are deep similarities and affinities in these systems of elitist make-believe.. Theofascism is a modern phenomenon but is based on earlier doctrines and justifications of injustice promoted by previous systems of religious power. The One God requires a totalistic state; this is a truth that goes back to Akhenaton and his cult of the sun-god. The Tao needs an Emperor to impose it by force and bloodletting; Christ is both bloody Judge and cruel King or as Schuon somewhere says “the Sultan is the shadow of god on earth”. The traditional religious doctrines are theories of knowledge which dictate social practices, and this is what the German theorists were trying to create in the 19th century; a theory of knowledge that would dominate the world and dictate a cultural paradigm. The thousand year Reich of Hitler was also born out of the same matrix of ideas, though it took a different direction.⁴⁴⁹

Guenon and Schuon, perhaps because of Guenon’s early affiliation with the New Order of the Templars subscribed to a vision of the Age of the Holy Spirit, recalling Joachim of Fiore’s magnified prediction of an age of the Holy Spirit. Joachim was a monastic mystic of the 12th century who predicted this base on the spurious book of Revelations. Schuon would claim to embody the Holy Spirit, another spurious or inflated claim. Goodrick-Clark speaks of Lanz von Liebenfels’ belief that the Templars of the 12th century, known for their warrior conduct in the Crusades, and for their eventual removal as heretics, in fact were those who sought after the Holy Grail, which is a mythological symbol of the Holy Spirit. The Grail is nonsense of course, pure make-believe: a

⁴⁴⁹ It’s true that religions sometimes become detached from elite classes and powerful interests, and then come to symbolize protests and grievances, but in this case the language of despair is still the language of the oppressors, and usually does not alleviate the suffering but only serves as a conduit for assimilation. Christianity was used by former slaves in the U.S., in this way, for instance.

misunderstanding of the life that is in everyone, even animals. The Nazi attempt to picture themselves as the “Teutonic Knights”, shares the same inflated symbolism. It is perhaps not without significance that nearly a quarter of the SS were Catholics. The infamous SS was modeled on the myth of the Templar Knights as Holy Warriors, which had been developed by List, Lanz, Wagner and others. The symbolism involved here is part of the imperial myth of the Crusades and the war against Islam. (see chapter below entitled “Innocent the III and Fairy Tales

The intention of the use of symbolism of this kind is to confer legitimacy on a new practice and form of politics and power. The concept of the holy spirit is an intellectual or emotional fiction, depending on the religious mentality of whoever uses it. It is a mythological construction that channels emotions, thoughts and social behavior. I have watched so called “Holy Rollers” and “Jesus Freaks”, as well as Baptists and snake handlers go into mystical states. These people claim the influx of the holy spirit has flowered within them. What is plain is that these people are not possessed by anything except emotional excess or deceitfulness, transports of imaginary ‘enthusiasm’, as happened too to the shamans of old. I have seen Christians talking in tongues and it is clearly a kind of hypnotic trance or emotional state. When Schuon says in his Memoirs, “The day will come when the divine will call me the Holy Spirit”, he is appears to be saying that he wants to be the standard of all truth and social practice; the paradigm of society, legitimacy and all knowledge and power. But what he is really saying is that he has this transcendental and delusional emotional need inside him and he wants his delusion to be asserted in fact. It never would become fact, it was just a delusion on his part. There is no “holy spirit” there is merely the desire that there should be such a thing, because humans are prone to feeling and can be made to feel excessive waves of inner emotion, given the right combination of alienation, symbols, rhetoric, music, exhortation and preaching. This is partly why Hitler was able to exhort his followers into

frenzies of passionate patriotism ⁴⁵⁰ He evoked the 'holy spirit' in them in their suffering, as it were, getting them to feel release and passion and setting up demons for them to slay and take out their revenge upon.

It might be useful to digress a little here and trace the history of the Aryan ideology. The Aryan ideology of the 19th century was largely a cultural construction that justified nationalist and internationalist Imperial motives. It is derived from a distortion of the conquest of the Dravidian peoples of India by the invading Aryans or Indo-Europeans who moved south somewhere after 2000 B.C.E. The growth of the Aryan myth, beginning with Schlegel and Herder, who largely originated it, seems to have served the function of a Creation myth for the Germans of the 19th century, perhaps in compensation for an old inferiority complex against the Romans and Catholics, who for so long had seemed to have the 'superior' culture.

The Aryan myth defined the Germans as different than the Catholics of the south. What is important to realize in the cultural battles between Protestant North and Catholic South is that the symbolism of the justifying ideologies is a patina or a superficial cover for a struggle for power. A differing system of knowledge dictates a different form of power which gets embodied in a different symbolism and religious rites. The Aryan myth justified conquest and the resulting atrocities and thus forged both a mentality and a system of cruelties.

So there are family resemblances between the "Aryan" ideas of Lanz von Liebenfels and Schuon. Lanz believed the "Grail was a metaphor for the strict eugenic practices of the Templar knights designed to breed god-men"⁴⁵¹ Schuon says, in comparison, that "without the idea of the 'God-Man', esotericism would be deprived of an aspect of its very essence"⁴⁵²

⁴⁵⁰ Schuon, Memoirs unpublished

⁴⁵¹ Goodrick-Clark, pg.108

⁴⁵² Schuon, Transcendent Unity pg. 143

For both men the Grail or the idea of the “God man” is a mythological symbol of total truth and thus total power; and thus justifies caste discrimination and cruelty. The New Templars of Liebenfels’ spiritual order were also the new Aryans; the carriers of the holy spirit. Schuon claimed to embody the holy spirit himself. Liebenfels writes that “visionary sages will arise from the ancient holy soil of Germany and enchain the apes of Sodom, establish the Church of the Holy Spirit and transform the earth into the “Isles of the Blessed””. Likewise Schuon, who claims to be the last Avatara before the Second Coming, promises his disciples a special sector in Heaven, where they will be with him always. The evil moderns, the profane, the psychologists and secular humanists are Schuon’s : Jews” and they will all be destroyed in the final apocalypse.⁴⁵³ Lanz and Schuon are thus potential mass murders of a spiritual kind, though they never got to realize their holy and bloody dreams.

Like most Apocalyptic visions, Liebenfels’ vision is a sublimated will to power that compensates for the lack of real power. The apocalyptic idea is often a mythological construction which symbolizes the desire for a change in the social arrangements of power and knowledge. This fantasy is often the result of poverty, frustration and political hatreds. The vision of Liebenfels is very much like the Guenonian and Schuonian visions except that Guenon and Schuon replace Sodom with the Modern World as the place of evil people who deserve to be exterminated. Liebenfels hated Jews become Schuon’s ‘profane people’ This way of thinking was common in economically depressed Germany between the Wars.

The modern world is the “infection” of evil for Guenon and Schuon. Liebenfels did not hate the modern world so much; his hatred was more

⁴⁵³ Secular humanism is the only way to look at the world that makes any sense. What secular humanism is a huge thing that ranges from science to the poetry of Whitman to Da Vinci and biology. The other ways are all more or less delusional or wrapped up with fictions

racial and nationalistic. Schuon and Guenon are not fascists as was Lanz, but theofascists, so their mythology—and their delusions--- are more ‘universal’

Goodrick-Clark explains Lanz’s basic ideology as follows:

“the principle features of Lanz’ ideology prior to 1918 were thus the notion of occult gnosis {knowledge}, its historical lapse or suppression as an established religion due to a satanic design, and its imminent resurrection in order to secure the cosmos for a new Aryan elite”.⁴⁵⁴

This is also the basic thesis of the Guenon-Schuon-Evola philosophy. As the “Kali-Yuga”, the supposed present period of cosmic decadence, progresses, the Primordial, Platonic and Vedantic “truth” is known by fewer and fewer people, and those who know it are the “elite”. Supreme among this elite are Schuon and his disciples. Guenon and Schuon adapted the proto-Nazi idea of the “god man” which itself grew out of German and French Romantic philosophy and occultism and combined these with traditional religious esoteric systems.

It may be worth mentioning that Schuon’s first book contains references to the Templar myths which were removed from later editions. The shift occurred after Schuon’s split with Guenon in the late 1940’s. Schuon would retain the myth of the primordial Aryans, however, as well as the myth of the God-Man, who is the summit of the pyramid of castes and who embodies the Holy Spirit at the end of time. Indeed, the theory of an Aryan, aristocratic and esoteric brotherhood composed of spiritual Brahmins, which obsessed Liebenfels, and which he saw as

⁴⁵⁴ Goodrick Clark pg. 105

apocalyptic agents which would bring about the end of the world and restore “god men” to world power, is very much present in the writing of Guenon, Schuon, and Evola. They are all drinking at the same fictional, mythic trough, as it were. This is nonsense with a political purpose, delusions with an agenda.

So what we see in Schuon is a drive toward a virtual universal power, which is really imaginary but which he hoped would become actual. He really saw himself as a “king”. “The world is round, and I am the king and I don’t know why” he liked to say. This rather insane love of imaginary elite power is very much present in the writing of Guenon and Evola too. Schuon sees himself as the “Restorer”, and he has been called this by three of his main disciples, Leo Schaya, Whitall Perry, and Martin Lings. Lings calls Schuon this in his book The Eleventh Hour.⁴⁵⁵ Whitall Perry says in an essay that Guenon and Ananda Coomaraswamy were the prefigurations of Schuon like Elias and John the Baptist prefigured Christ.⁴⁵⁶ And Schaya claims that Schuon is Elias.⁴⁵⁷ In some unpublished documents distributed to his disciples (authored by Gustavo Polit, written under Schuon’s direction) Schuon makes clearer his understanding of Aryanism. He says:

⁴⁵⁵ Martin Lings was Guenon's secretary in Cairo in the 1930's and 1940's. Under Schuon after the 1950's Lings was a 'Naib', that is--- a high ranking member of the Schuon cult, author of many books, and oversaw perhaps 75 of Schuon's disciples in England.

⁴⁵⁶ Perry, Whitall. "Coomaraswamy, the Man, the Myth and History" in Studies in Comparative Religion. Perry compares Guenon and Coomaraswamy to the two witnesses mentioned in the Apocalypse of St. John. Perry lives across the street from Schuon in Bloomington, and his wife, Barbara, is "married" to Schuon, while still remaining “married” to Perry.

⁴⁵⁷ Schuon alludes to this, with approval in his Memoirs. Speaking of a symposium held in Houston, Texas in 1973, attended by many of Schuon's Chief disciples, such as Hossein Nasr, Joseph Epes Brown and others, Leo Schaya, in Schuon's words, "gave an address in which he pointed out that there was a connection between our [i.e. Schuon's] work and the reappearance of Elias at the end of time". Schaya's essay the "Eliatic Function" was the basis of this. Schuon's totalistic message is supposed to prefigure the end of the world. Schaya was one of Schuon's many victims: Maude Murray told me that Schaya's wife claimed that Schuon's cruelty killed him. Schuon was a “friend” of Schaya but apparently betrayed him.

“The human instrument [i.e. Schuon himself] for the manifestation of the Perennial religion at the end of time had to be a westerner; it could not be an oriental and for this there are several reasons. Spiritually considered the messenger who brought the tariqa {i.e. The spiritual elite-Schuon’s cult] to Europe... is more a proto-Aryan than a European; but as a European he is a south German deeply rooted in poetic and mystical Romanticism.”

This passage is rather obscure, until one reads Schuon’s book Castes and Races. There he refers to the preeminence of the white race, which realizes itself only through combining the “messianic and prophetic outlook of the Semites” with the “Aryan Avataric outlook” of the Hindus and Indo Europeans. This turns out to be a portrait of Schuon himself, who is supposed to combine the “first and the last”, where “extremes meet”; the last total man at the end of time.⁴⁵⁸ This book, more than any other in Schuon’s ‘oeuvre’, evokes the eugenic and race/caste obsessions of the Nazis. The Nazis used such racist designations to typecast Jews, homosexuals and the insane. The Nazis rounded up and sterilized 400,000 of those thought to be insane. They gassed anyone thought to be homosexual. The essentializing language the Nazi’s used about race groups is very similar to that used by Schuon.

Later in this book, Schuon states that westerners of a “modernist” outlook due to a “western education”, and who criticize the caste system are guilty of a “luciferian insubordination in the face of the sacred”.⁴⁵⁹ To be educated and not accept hierarchy and subordination is the great heresy for Schuon, as for Guenon. To question the caste system is “luciferian”?. What an amazingly ignorant thing to say!! Schuon is following some of the doctrines of the traditional Catholic Church and the Inquisition in these pronouncements. Since Schuon believed he was

⁴⁵⁸ Schuon pg.53.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid. pg.8

infallible and “not a man like other men” all others should submit to his idiotic opinions or be accounted as evil, cast into hell or destroyed by god. This is an obscene and unconscionable conclusion of a bad man. There is no possible justification for the evil of the caste system. Caste and Races is a racist book by a narrow and bigoted man.

Refusing subordination is to be praised as part of human and nature’s rights. It is seen wrongly as the great crime against the Traditionalists as it was to the Nazis and the Stalinists or any other ideological autocracy. The Traditionalists call this refusal of hierarchy “prometheanism” which they see as the evil fruit of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. Prometheus was a mythological story about the suppression of what we now call human rights. To his credit, Prometheus refused to submit to the delusions of grandeur of the gods, who were no more than projections of the drive to knowledge and power of the Greek elite. Prometheus is myth to be proud of, even if it is just a story. He is supposedly punished for this by a bird who continually eats out his liver. Obviously a myth made up by kings, and it is false. Prometheus is an enlightenment hero and deserves no punishment at all.

Schuon took over Guenon’s racism about the “West” Guenon wrote that “it is all too clear that to the extent that a man “Westernizes” himself, whatever may be his race or country, to that extent he ceases to be an Easterner spiritually and intellectually, that is to say from the one point of view that really holds any interest.” This race hatred against science and democracy is anti-Promethean. As an anti-Promethean, Schuon claims bogus authority. According to his wives, Schuon is supposed to transcend history, since he is a “kulturheros” who brings a new age and new civilization out of the ashes of the old. Schuon claims, as Guenon also implicitly claimed, to be the living anticipation of the golden age that will arise after the apocalypse. Guenon and Schuon both wrote and acted and seemed to believe that only someone diabolic or

insane could reject their right to total authority. This delusional sense of transcendental entitlement is characteristic of psychopathic cult leaders.

For Schuon no science is allowable on the “level” of ordinary reality. All must be subservient to an imaginary hierarchy, to the caste elitism of Guenon and Schuon. For Schuon, subordination is the essence of the social order, because the social order must be built on fictional “principles” which only the “men of intelligence” – that is---only the self-appointed “spiritual elite”, can supply. Schuon believed himself “objective” and “infallible”. In Schuon’s lexicon, “objective” does not mean concretely observed or scientific, as he despised science. For Schuon, objectivity is god, and the “intellect” is what reads what is “real or unreal”. For Schuon objectivity leads one to god and god is more or less made in Schuon’s image. Schuon thought he was himself objectivity and what he thought must be true because he thought it. He claimed to be infallible. What does not lead to Schuon and thus to god is profanity, evil or illusion. This delusional system of self-mirroring or solipsistic and circular justifications is Schuon metaphysical system in a nutshell.

In other words, in Schuon, “reality” is an ultimate subjectivism ‘Objectivity’ in Schuon’s ideology is a fiction, a sort of pseudo-science. Schuon is guilty of the fallacy of misplaced concreteness, as Whitehead called it. He makes concrete what in fact is merely abstractly speculative and fictional. When Schuon says that the social order must be built up on ‘objectivity’ he means dictated by religion, not scientific fact, which he despises. Schuon says many absurd things about evolution, which he never understood. He liked Louis Agassiz ideas because they Agassiz tried to deny evolution and ground nature in Platonic “ideas” or archetypes. Agassiz’s support of slavery grew from the same soil as Schuon’s love of caste and elite despising of others. The archetypes were essentializations, or generalized prejudices, which allowed Schuon to categorize people in absolute terms. Schuon Guenon are symbolists

above all, realities do not concern them as much as stereotypes or Archetypes. ⁴⁶⁰ Archetypes, Agassiz thought, even dictate for Agassiz that so called “black” and “white” people were separate species. Platonistic Arcetypes are racist constructions, essentialized fictions. Schuon separated people into caste hierarchies. Some sacred, some profane, So, just as Agassiz’s Platonism inevitably turned him into an apologist for racism and slavery, Schuon’s Platonism turned him into a caste elitist who despised others and holds himself up to megalomaniac heights. Schuon’s whole system of thought---and this is crucial and also true of Guenon--- is based on the ideology of the subjective “Intellect” and in their system the intellect is nothing other than their own private subjectivity elected into a fictional embodiment of all the religions reduced to a few simple caricatured ideas. In other words the whole basis of the Guenonian/Schuonian system is not just cracked in its foundations, it is based on the subjective delusions of Guenon, Schuon, Evola and the rest. It is an elaborate farce, a masquerade, an elitist pastiche of bits and pieces of broken religious symbolisms and ideas.

Schuon says that the rebellion against the authoritarian Kings and Priests after the Renaissance and Enlightenment was a “luciferian” revolt against the spiritual castes. ⁴⁶¹ Actually it was reasonable revolt against superstition, abuse of human rights, horribly unjust economic

⁴⁶⁰ In the philosophy of Aquinas and others, a more Aristotelian concept of universals would be combined, rather ambiguously, with the Platonic position. Aquinas unwittingly began the dissolution of Christian symbolism and the rise of science by questioning Plato’s “Ideas”. It was this ambiguity in Aquinas that led to the Realist/Nominalist controversy over the subject of universals and made the question of universals central to the controversy over the nature of the Eucharist. Science rises out of the failure of the Platonic theory of knowledge and the turn to seeking knowledge based on experience rather than dogma and symbolism. Science begins in the nominalism that trumped Aquinas.

⁴⁶¹ In this context the idea of Lucifer might be a good idea, or at least that is what William Blake thought in 1800. The idea of Lucifer is not an improvement of the god idea. Both are made to believe.

arrangements, slavery and arbitrary dictatorship. But, Schuon believes that the overthrowing of priests and kings led to the takeover of what the Hindus call the Vaisya and Shudra castes, that is, the merchants and workers.⁴⁶² These “low caste” people had no right to the power of the Brahmin and Kashatriya, or Priest and Warrior castes, Schuon complains. Hating both Marxists and Jeffersonian democrats he wants to bring back Medieval kings.

Never mind that most ‘priests’ were parasitical and most ‘warriors’ were thugs. Never mind that India is still rife with superstitions of myriad kinds many of which do great harm to women and hurt people who try to escape caste injustices.. To quote a recent New York Times article, India is “teeming with gurus, babas, astrologers, godmen and other mystical entrepreneurs.”⁴⁶³ India thrives on ignorance and those with a vested interest in exploiting it. Schuon fantasized that an evil conspiracy took away the unjust powers and bogus superstitions of the priests and Kings of yesteryear. Kings were cruel men with swords and priests were selling indulgences for profit, and the notion that such thugs or hucksters were better than some blacksmiths, glasses makers or bakers, is quite absurd. Castes are there to protect the vested interests of classes that specialize in certain rituals, and caste protects the powerful who wish to hold on to

⁴⁶² Schuon writes: "instead of throwing overboard the theocratic and monarchical principles, these should have been given their full sense, which was a religious one; this is just what the nobility had neglected to do since the Renaissance". (In the Tracks of Buddhism. London: Allen and Unwin. 1968. pg. 69) This implies a total theocracy.

⁴⁶³ For instance on Aug 19 2013, Narendra Dabholkar, a doctor who was fighting against superstition, was murdered in India, apparently by far right religious fanatics. He was good at debunking gurus and frauds. The New York Times reports that

“ If a holy man had electrified the public with his miracles, Dr. Dabholkar, a former physician, would duplicate the miracles and explain, step by step, how they were performed. If a sorcerer had amassed a fortune treating infertility, he would arrange a sting operation to unmask the man as a fraud. His goal was to drive a scientist’s skepticism into the heart of India, a country still teeming with gurus, babas, astrologers, godmen and other mystical entrepreneurs.” (NYT Aug. 24 2013)

It is a shame this man was murdered. He was trying to do good work, badly needed in India, which for so long has been controlled by irrational systems of make believe.

the inequality of their position. Religion does this too. It is designed to be a certain sort of people in power.

Schuon claims falsely that 'low' democratic people have victimized the holy priests and warriors and "celestial values" are replaced by "infra-human" values. He imagines 'low', evil people want to abolish caste. Schuon disliked hard workers and preferred lazy "blue blood" Aristocrats. He disliked women who raise children close to their pants or skirts, breast feeding them, but liked wedding cake like, overdressed wives of slave owning lords who sent their kids to boarding schools for nearly the whole year to get rid of them. Schuon thought that open-mindedness, fairness, abolition of slavery, better medical care, worker's rights, equality, women's rights, human rights, animal rights, nature's rights and democracy were all the devil's spawn. Schuon explains:

It is not the people who are the victims of theocracy, it is on the contrary theocracy that is the victim...The European monarchs of the nineteenth century made almost desperate efforts to dam the tide of mounting democracy...But these efforts were doomed to be vain in default of the one counterweight that could have reestablished stability, and that could only be religion, sole source of the legitimacy and power of princes. ⁴⁶⁴

Schuon writes this grotesque theofascist nonsense without even being aware of the suffering of millions of peasants and lower class people,

⁴⁶⁴ Schuon, Light on the Ancient Worlds pg.31 This effort to paint the theocratic aristocracies as victims is perhaps unique, but not exceptional. De Maistre also tried to paint aristocrats and religious authorities as victims. I note that many tyrants have seen themselves as victims. Stalin and Hitler seem to have had this tendency. Late in his life Stalin did a drawing of himself as a sheep surrounded by wolves. Nixon seems to have seen himself as a victim also. The most conspicuous example of this tendency is the use of the image of the victimized Christ by the Churches, even while the Church was victimizing others, holding Inquisitions, Crusades and becoming deeply involved in the slave trade in the 'new world'.

serfs, slaves, Native American workers who died so that “theocracy” could persist in exploiting them. If “stuffed shirts” had more religion to oppress the poor they could have kept their unjust estates and the Sherriff of Nottingham could take his bath in milk, without being irritated by that up start Robin Hood. The French Revolution happened because the priests and aristocracy were rotten to the core, greedy, punishing, moralistic and hypocritical: They killed an starved people, taxed them into starvation, beheaded them put them in prisons without charge or burned them at the stake.

Schuon says that “he who says democracy says demagoguery”. Wrong. This is true mostly when the far-right governs and these demagogues hate democracy. It is the party of big business that causes most of suffering, death, environmental loss and human rights violations in U.S. history. Big Business continues the heritage of the aristocratic Ancien Regime, without the pretence of good manners. The aristocrats soaked the poor and middle class with high taxes and exempted themselves from most tax, as the rich do today. The French Revolution was a time of great hope, largely ruined by Robespierre and Napoleon. It was a star of future hopes and we still live under its hopes and struggles. Many of the ideas of Liberals or democrats in the French Revolution have later influenced administrations in United States and indeed, world history. They have liberated people from oppression, such as Lincoln’s Emancipation of slaves or FDR’s Medicare or workers’ rights, Civil rights, as well women’s rights programs. The aristocracy over the world was mostly removed or dissolved. Eventually we will need nature’s rights and animal rights legislation, defined as the precondition of all other rights.

Schuon was ignorant of the importance of aspects of the English, French and American Revolutions, as well as of American history. He recommended that a “monarch or... a military dictator-could have seen

to interracial justice” in the U.S. ⁴⁶⁵ This laughable statement shows Schuon as an immigrant who has no understanding of American history at all. We fought a war to eliminate monarchs from our lands and another war to get rid of slave owners, and there still remains the task of getting rid of CEO’s and their role in corrupting congress and courts. The long fight against slavery was above all a fight against patrician aristocrats and Jim Crow plantation owners who had priests and military dictators on their side, enforcing slavery values even after slavery itself was abolished..

Schuon was the demagogue. Schuon complains that in the modern world, control is not in the hands of religious-military dictators. He falsely supposes dictators would see to “interracial justice” between whites, Native Americans and African Americans. Actually it was businessmen, religious leaders and military men who created race and class ideology and atrocity to begin with. The slave trade and the murder of some 30 million Native Americans, either outright, or by overwork and resulting diseases, were enacted by 16th and 17th century European aristocratic and theocratic merchant states and monarchs and are contemporary with the worst period of the Inquisition. Upper class and monied interests supported slavery up to and beyond its end. The Inquisition is really about stopping Science, and was the policing arm of the aristocracy the Church. The Inquisition was about policing the world to keep the Church and the Aristocracy in gold But Schuon does not usually trouble himself with history, science or facts, such as the fact that Columbus was just such a military dictator, who sailed for “gold and God” and who, according to Bartholomew Las Casas, killed 3 million Native Americans on Hispaniola and elsewhere. It was Napoleon, whom Schuon admires, who destroyed the first African American state in Haiti

⁴⁶⁵ Schuon, Frithjof. To Have a Center Bloomington. World Wisdom Books.1990 pg 169

in the early 1800's. ⁴⁶⁶ Napoleon also undermined all that was good about the French Revolution and set in motion the absurdity of the restoration of kings.

Schuon subsumes all history, all religions and all social order under the banner of his absolutist belief in monism or the "One" to which only his august intellect, as well as a few other "elite" intellects, have access. The subjective faculty Schuon calls the Intellect is merely a faculty of self-delusion. Schuon's followers listen to or read such rubbish and sigh with admiration at Schuon's genius. However, he is not a genius. He was a theofascist who was ignorant of history. As we see, Schuon's embrace of the Japanese version of fascism, his confusion about relativity, his abusive ideas of caste, and his embrace of the divine right of kings how him as an entirely political human of a rather harmful sort. I do not care much about Schuon, but he is a good example of how questionable politics has been for many centuries. Thus, he writes: "the theocratic essence of the imperial idea is clearly apparent; without theocracy there would be no civilization worthy of the name". ⁴⁶⁷ In fact, he is wrong, theocracy was a system of state terrorism and mind control which established a pattern of atrocity producing systems of government. It did not produce civilization. It produced destructive empires and millions of deaths. Its gradual disappearance over the last few centuries is a good thing and 'civilization' survives very well without theocracy. We must be careful to insure that arbitrary dictators , be they kings, corporate CEO's or cult leaders like Schuon, do not triumph over ordinary people or nature.

⁴⁶⁶ Schuon also supported the system of Apartheid in South Africa, on the grounds that it was preferable to communism. He also approved of Nixon, Reagan and the Vietnam War, which killed 3 or 4 million Vietnamese.

⁴⁶⁷ Schuon, Frithjof. Light on the Ancient Worlds Bloomington: World Wisdom Books. 1984 pg.8

The French Revolution is not over yet, at least until war and killing are gone, nature preserved and the earth and all its beings are cared for, honored for the lives they evolved into and no longer used to make men rich and the earth starved and choked with pollution and global warming.

Critics of Schuon: His Fictional Marriages, Lying and Polygamy

Note: What follows brings some of the history I discuss in this book into the personal realm, to show how the religious ideologies of various religions and a cult had an influence on me and how I got free of it, eventually. It tells of a failed love story and how this love story helped bring into question a cult leader and a con man.

It is well nearing 30 years since I was involved in the police investigation and court case as a witness against Frithjof Schuon. He was indicted for child molestation and “undue cult influence” and I knew he was guilty as I saw what he did,. So did the Grand Jury, which indicted him. I gathered plenty of evidence to prove it, before and after the indictment.⁴⁶⁸ The Grand Jury even tried to indict the prosecutor,

⁴⁶⁸ This undue cult influence is ongoing. In March 2115 Wikipedia itself protests the lack of criticism and removal of critical comments from the wikipedia article on Schuon and notes: ““This article is useless as it is. There is no trace of comparative or even historical criticism. As it stands, the article is a pamphlet.” Wikipedia notes that much of the material about Schuon

because they were sure his dropping of the case was crooked. They were right to do that. Schuon had created Primordial Gatherings as the crowning achievement of his career. I was told this in no uncertain terms, notwithstanding the cults later denials that these were rituals. These were rituals, not merely “Indian Days”, which were recreational activities designed to amuse Thomas Yellowtail as people in the cult have stated. In these Gatherings, Schuon had women dance around him nude or semi-nude and as he embraced each one in a sexual manner he claimed to “heal” women through sexual contact. Yeah, right.

I was not the only one who told about these events. Stephen Lambert described Schuon in these gatherings in which he “embraced each woman in turn, pressing them to himself in full body contact by first clasping them about the upper torso and then about the buttocks. “ as they circled around him. In the larger gatherings the men circled about the women. Maude Murray, and I described these also, as well as variations on it. Ron Bodmer and Aldo Vidali described similar things. These are five direct witnesses and this is certainly not “defamation” but evidence of clear fact. The cult invited children to these events, and then

“is mostly a copy and paste from the World Wisdom Books[Schuon cult publishing company] website biography, which makes this edit a breach of [WP:NPS](#). While WW's publications and diffusion activities may be commendable, their contents in relation to Mr. Schuon are certainly not written in a neutral “encyclopedia” tone and are by far too detailed for the concision required.

This article has a long history and this is not the first time such a pro domo addition occurs, but disciples, students and followers of FS might realize that it is detrimental to Schuon's appreciation to have an encyclopedia article taken over for promotional purposes.”

Criticism of Schuon can be found here:

<https://groups.google.com/forum/#!topic/soc.culture.iranian/EKtP6julW4E%5B151-175%5D>

And here:

<http://www.naturesrights.com/knowledgemythindex.asp>

see the first two essays

as well as the book by Mark Sedgwick and the Dance of Masks by Hugh Urban

did all they could to lie and cover up these facts, once they were exposed. They are still trying to cover it up, 25 years later.

I knew a great deal about Schuon, more than anyone really, outside of the tiny inner circle of the cult, who have not told the truth about him to this day. The cult had an enormous respect for his man, who was neither very nice or respectable. He had delusions of his kingship and expected others to pamper him like that. I saw through this charade fairly early and found myself in the inner circle looking closely at this man and I did not like what I saw. He was not a king, actually, but they all acted like he was Henry the 8th, or actually, more than that, as if he were the final prophet 'at the end of time', which is what he called himself. Being the only one too see that this fake emperor had no clothes was a difficult place to be,--- terrifying actually--- but it was the truth, he was a nudist and a user, as well as a cult leader and there was no way to pretend it was not so. I am hardly proud of my knowledge and think it more of a burden and embarrassment to have to talk about him at all. But the world has yet to catch up with what I know. I have long felt a responsibility to tell the truth about it.

Certainly the organization around Schuon was, and apparently still is, a cult. My purpose in helping the police investigate this cult was to expose it and stop the abuses. In this I was successful. Schuon was indicted, rightfully so. It is known by many that something is rotten in Bloomington. The cult was circumscribed and the abuses exposed even if the cult managed to subvert justice and lie to the public. Maude Murray admits that Schuon was guilty: she writes:

[Schuon] was technically guilty by law; but the charges were dropped.⁴⁶⁹

⁴⁶⁹ see <https://frithjofschuon.wordpress.com/2018/06/14/summary/>
She claims here that she is not going to lie anymore, but that is easily shown to be a lie itself. She lied to Vassar University claiming she was dead. Not a small lie either. She also claims that I had my dates wrong, actually I gave the police a series of dates, as I was unsure what date the Wroth

It is well known now that there was deep corruption around Schuon, even if the cult circled their wagons, lied publicly and covered up all that they could.⁴⁷⁰ People said that I lost that because Schuon was not convicted. This is not so, no more young girls were molested, and Schuon was exposed as a fraud. He is known now world wide as a fraud, despite Maude Marry's rather sad attempt to picture him as a genius, which he wasn't.

Because it is such a small, regretted, part of my life,-- insignificant really,--- I do not mean this present chapter to make more of the Schuon cult than was there. The fact is it was not that important in my life. But I write about Schuon here merely to tell the truth and continue to educate others about what I learned, using Schuon as a foil against which to raise issues about cults, power systems and religions. I was an innocent when I went to Bloomington at age 33. The two years I spent there were under a regime where I was required to act in a certain way and show "adab"(polite submission) to those who claimed to be my "superiors". I know now they were anything but my "superiors". But I did not know that then. I was merely a witness. Most of what happened to me there was not by my design. I watched it all happen with a strange distance, like it was happening to someone else. I went with the flow and learned what I could as I went along. I felt more and more like a reporter rather than a participant in these events. I admire the reporter's perspective, my uncle was a reporter and I like Joan Didion's writings. She is a very good reporter.

There was no point in my life where I was more abstracted from

girls were at primordial gatherings. That they attended, I had and have no doubt.

⁴⁷⁰ The cult was alleged at the time, by one of the prosecutors, David Hunter, to have somehow bought the influence from the governor of the state, then a man named Birch Bigh. How they did this is unknown to me, but the grand jury tried to stop this and get the prosecutor by the name of Robert Miller investigated and fired. So the corruption in the Schuon case went quite deep. The corruption clearly originated in the cult itself, radiating from the rot at the center of it.

myself, more another, more in need to repress who I was to get along in an alien society. I was considered 'gifted' and thought of well by the cult leaders and given things, money, and initiations. I was not looking for any of this, I was looking for what was true in religion, and finding out who Schuon was. It was all very surreal and involved deluding myself, at the same time as I was aware I was required to do that and did not want to. It was very clear that having a "good character" meant flattering Schuon, and having a "bad character" meant questioning or criticizing him. The cult was about adulation of the cult leader. It still is. But as I saw more and more corruption around me I began a gathering of information to bring out of the cult and subsequently I exposed the fraud. The blame the cult tried to fix to me after I left is a typical damage control technique used on all whistle blowers. Once a "good character" I was made into a "bad character", when I started criticizing the cults crimes. Obversely, Schuon saw himself as the greatest man who ever lived, but when he was criticized, and the criticism shown to be founded, he claimed himself as the victim, when in fact he was the victimizer. So their attacks on me were little more than fraudulent slanders done in an effort to try to improve the flagging image of Schuon as the greatest man of our age. Their whole strategy was to try to present me as a crazy, morally deficient, bad person. But I was not that, even if I was far from perfect.. The same people who said I was gifted, suddenly thought I was evil incarnate when their "spiritual master" was exposed to the light of day. Maude complains of this too, and in my hearing I heard all sorts of slanders on Maude's character by people in the cult who claimed to know her. She was none of the things she was called, "a loose woman" and "nymphomaniac" a mad woman and so on. Groups of people, cults especially, easily become cruel and slander those who question them. The worst slanderers in the cult were often the most guilty of the very thing they accused their victims of.

Schuon's work and the life of his cult has some value as part of a

discussion of religion from the point of view of how organizations exploit true believers. Schuon had no awareness of his own delusions, much less the delusions of the religions he writes about. He was without question the most deluded man I ever met. This is generally true of religious people, who know on some level that their chosen delusion is false, but it costs too much to admit it to themselves, so they go on believing the lies they need to keep going. I have met street people, people suffering hallucinations, depression, textbook cases of schizophrenia, a Vietnam soldier suffering PTSD, crouched down in the middle of the street in Brooklyn thinking bombs were falling all around him, enemies everywhere--- but Schuon was worse off than all these. Strangely, I was willing for a time to forgo my own sanity to follow his madness, like following the piper out of Hamelin with his crazy flute. But this lasted only so long as I did not really know him, but once I got to know him, I was no longer in the cult, even if part of me was still involved bodily. For the last 6 months or even a year that I was in it, I was not in it, I merely acted the part. It was not deception of others that was my intent, I wanted to get people out of it and find the truth. I became a kind of spy, without wanting to, or even enjoying the role.

He sometimes--- not always--- reluctantly saw the need to have religions adapt to the needs of our world. This is to his credit. What appealed to me about him was that he was open to all the religions and wrote about them rather accurately, most of the time. His book on Islam is quite good as a bland description and even many Moslems like it. His essays on Shinto are interesting as are his essays on Buddhism and Native American religion.⁴⁷¹ What I mean is that he reflects these systems of make believe fairly accurately. But his ability to be objective about these religions or to do the intricate work of real scholarship on them is not

⁴⁷¹ I do not mean to say that his assessment of Shinto and its relation to World War II Japanese fascism is appropriate or a good thing. It isn't. I mean to say that he reflected the madness of that pretty well.

there at all. He merely appropriates what he needs from them. He was a user and propagandist ,not an objective reporter. Like many psychopaths, he was intelligent and used that quality to advance his con-game. Maudemurray fell for this part of him, due to her lack of insight. The accuracy he did show was in service of huge delusions about everything. He was a deluded man who swam in the sea of delusions that we call the major religions. He passed these delusions onto others and is still doing do now though his books, even though he is dead.

There are more criticisms of Schuon than one finds of Guenon . The paranoia of Guenon, discussed elsewhere in these books, is also in evidence around Schuon, who seems to have patterned his whole mindset obsessively on Guenon's and then later denied doing it. Schuon is not an effective critic of Guenon, but rather a follower. Guenon's criticisms of Schuon are much more pointed. He accuses him of being unorthodox in the following letter:

Guenon writes:

“in Lausanne, the ritual observances have been reduced to the strict minimum, and that most even don't fast anymore during Ramadan; I did not think that it had reached this point, and I see now that I was only too right when I said that soon it would not be a tariqah at all anymore, but a vaguely “universalist” organization,

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But this is merely the mad diagnosis of another deluded man. Guenon is here looking down his nose at Schuon because Schuon and his group are not 'orthodox' enough, which is true they were not: orthodoxy being the ability to follow handed down dogmas and arbitrary rules without any insight or creativity. Guenon himself was hardly

⁴⁷² Cairo, October 9th, 1950. *Rivista di studi Tradizionali* n. 33 (1970) and 34 (1971). Translation by Denis Constaes

“orthodox” and orthodoxy itself is a guarantee of nothing but mindless following of rules. He was a chain smoker, former hashish addict and womanizer. Schuon was individualist and eccentric European in the extreme: a dandy, a wine drinker, occasional smoker, liked to eat dinner nude with his “wives”, who were not his actual wives, and none of this is what which you are supposed to do if you are a “good Moslem”. Religions are primarily about thought and behavior control. Schuon called the concern with rules and observances, “exoteric voluntarism” and “orthodoxy” and applied these norms only to hangers on in the cult, or outsiders. The inner people of the cult were immoral wife swappers, nudists and “esoterists”, very unorthodox and syncretic in combining many religions into one. Many people get upset that these men were hypocrites, but few question the value of orthodoxy itself. Orthodoxy is required of those who are beneath us—this was the mindset of the inner circle of the cult.

But though Schuon and Guenon were not very good Moslems, they were still Moslems and did the prayers and most of the observances. The fact that these men were not very good at what they did hardly means that Islam itself is beyond question. Indeed, the involvement of young girls in Schuon’s primordial gatherings has Muhammad abuse of Aisha, at age 9, as its ultimate model. Religious systems are systems of social control and the founders of such systems are often themselves fictions or make believe and the fictional character of Muhammad Jesus of others are often men of dubious character themselves. The willingness of Islam to encourage the abuse of children was exemplified in December of 2014 when Taliban Muslims murdered 100 children and 47 workers in a school. They were opposed to them learning anything other than the Koran and the Sharia. The fictional god comes first and all must be made subservient to that, in Schuon, as in other religious fanatics. Children for Schuon, as for the Taliban or Mormon cults, must be sacrificed for the “transcendent” delusion.

I am not making a 'value judgment' about Schuon's behavior, I merely describe what I learned. These are facts, not value judgments. Schuon's bizarre "marriages" involved his "wives" being married to other men, who they were still sleeping with. I doubt this has any precedent anywhere that I know of, except maybe other cults, infidelities or Islands in the Pacific where such anomalies may have occurred due to lack of men. I cannot find a similar example, which is not to say there is not one somewhere. In any case, women and children are often the victims of such male dominated religions.

Schuon's unorthodoxy in marriages is one thing. His claim to be the sexual consort of the Virgin Mary is another thing. To say it is unorthodox is to understate it, though surprisingly, I found a few other men who claimed this, Hong Xioquin claimed to be the Virgin Mary's son and Da Free John claimed sexual relations with her. The Virgin Mary is a myth, and anyone can claim anything about a myth, like Schuon. Schuon's claim to be a prophet and an avatara is also unorthodox, though not that unusual in certain institutions for psychological care. Orthodoxy is designed to get small minds to follow mythic make believe with regular adherence and repeat over and over again the same delusions.

Many people have tried to tell me Schuon was not a real spiritual master. This is quite true, but this forgets the fact that there are *no* real spiritual masters and never were, anywhere. There are only more or less sincere people who believe their own delusions and teach them to others. A "real" spiritual master is someone who takes his own delusions seriously and manages not to hurt too many people because of it. This is rare, admittedly, but no less delusional than people who are rotten and claim to be saints or others claim they are saints. Schuon tried to embody all the religions, which is no less valid than claiming to embody one of them, since they are all systems of make believe. It scarcely

matters if one embodies one or all. They are all fictions. Since Muhammad was probably not a real person and Jesus probably never existed it is rather hard to maintain any notion of “orthodoxy” since it is all fairy tales. This is why something like the Inquisition was such a destructive and poisonous thing. The forced obedience to delusions by torture, fear and cruelty. There are people who master the art of delusion making and promulgation of delusions and some are more ‘orthodox’ in going about this than others. Orthodoxy really just means being dogmatic about adhering to one delusion over another. Forcing such delusions on others, proslytizing, or setting up inquisitorial process is part of this.

Further, Schuon’s claim to be a Shadhiliya spiritual master (or Shaykh) descended from Sheikh Al-Alawi was also claimed on false pretenses. Schuon claimed Adda Bentounes of the Alawiya tariqah in North Africa made him a muqadam, when in fact he did not, and then Schuon claimed himself Shakyh one morning after a dream. His followers had dreams too and this was supposed to prove it. Maude Murray was part of the process of creating the Dream book. He was a fraud from the beginning, as she tried to make the fraud legitimate, she is still doing this. The Shadhiliya tariqa denied he had any legitimate standing to declare himself a Shaykh.⁴⁷³ But what does this matter anyway? All sorts of corrupt people are bishops or Popes, and many cult leaders have no legitimate basis to be anything. All the religions are based on fictions and the notion of Orthodoxy is merely the effort to legitimize what is fundamentally illegitimate. Indeed, professional priests, Mullahs, popes, Lamas and others who “profess” their faith are all phony, as they have positions based on falsity and fictions.⁴⁷⁴ There is a mistaken

⁴⁷³ Mark Sedgwick discusses this on page 88-89 of his text, with a prejudice toward Moslem orthodoxy.

⁴⁷⁴ The notion of “professional” itself is often more pretence than fact and based on bureaucracy and money rather than truth. One wants to have someone do work that is well done, surely, but this easily becomes confused with those who merely get a license. There are many “professional”

assumption that those who have power are more likely to be good, but this is often not the case at all. Correct behavior is not a guarantee of anything, other than correct behavior.

Orthodoxy is merely the pretence of the right behavior that confers power on a group. Schuon was passionate about having all the religious power he could get. The notion of legitimacy and orthodoxy in religion is suspect. “servants, obey your masters in all things” St. Paul said. (Col 3:22) Christianity is full of justification of the Masters and supported the idea of slavery. The Orthodox in nearly all cases supports the masters, just as most Christians supported slavery up until the civil war.

Unorthodoxy only matters to those who subjectively think that orthodoxy is a true standard. There is nothing at all objective in orthodoxy. It is a delusion. While it may be true that a patina of moral orthodoxy does protect against a few abuses, the idea of orthodoxy itself is highly questionable and brings with it its own set of terrible abuses. It has been orthodox to stone women or to marry nine year olds girls in Islam, but these are violations of human rights. Orthodoxy is a guarantor of nothing but conformist and conventional thinking and conventional thinking often cruelly violates human rights. Guenon was hardly “orthodox” himself and his unorthodoxy is not a guarantee of anything either. His use of Islam was parasitical to the “super-religion” of Traditionalism that he invented. The Traditionalists are not orthodox: they merely politically exploit orthodoxy as a means to greater power.

con men, liars and thieves and we call them professors or doctors, lawyers or businessmen. They all have licenses. Professional men are often those who are likely to steal your pension or commit environmental abuses. “Collison” experts who fix cars are often corrupt gougers who cannot do work as well or as fairly as independent mechanics, for instance. The notion of a profession has a heritage in caste and institutional history. The medical profession is a good example, where the “professionals” are largely a creation of moneyed interests, who keep secret the actual outcomes of their operations. The medical profession is a creation of the 1900’s male misogyny and the effort to profit from the sick. Comparing health care systems in America, Germany, France Britain and other countries quickly shows how “professionalism” in America is largely based on the immoral and profitable exploitation of the sick. They farm the ill for profits. This does not mean that there are no professionals who are competent, obviously there are. But the guild mentality of the manger class should be questioned as sometimes self-interested and unjust.

Orthodoxy, in any case is merely the persistence of habit, literally “right speech”—as if performing certain actions or prayers in a proscribed manner has any real meaning. Orthodoxy is merely dogma and mind control ossified in a system over a long period of time. It is a brain training along the lines proscribed by self-interested and unjust elites. Unorthodoxy, orthodoxy: both concepts are really absurd and harmful. The problem in both cases is religion itself, which has a dimension that is fundamentally unjust and fictional and leads to violations of human rights.

It is assumed that because some ritual religious practice, prayer or other magical or superstitious ceremony is passed from generation to generation that it “works” or is efficacious. In fact there is no evidence that this belief is anything other than magical thinking, usually promoted by a patriarchal priesthood concerned with passing down a pedigree and an institutional power structure and the economic benefits that go along with this. Rituals are outward, symbolic reenactments meant to silence dissent and rebellion. Prayer is meant to do the same thing from the inside. A large part of the purpose of prayer is just this institutional imposition into the subjectivity of the person who prays. Orthodoxy is doing things the way those in power have done it before. The pretence to be a Shaykh or Priest is really the ability to follow the rules of the institution. In. Schuon’s case, he set off on his own, and was doubly a fraud, first because being a ‘authentic” Shaykh is itself fraudulent, and second because he was unable to be follow the bogus rules that would have made him be orthodox. He did claim to be orthodox when he was more of a Moslem and then he claimed to be an unorthodox Native American. But neither effort was very well done. The problem for Schuon was that he tried to be orthodox to too many religions, and they contradict each other. These rule systems are largely arbitrary and do not overlap well. Combining systems of fiction merely makes for an even more delusional system. Schuon was thus a polyglot

phony, and master of delusions of many kinds. It is hard to see the merit in that. While he might have “fascinated” the ignorant with the variety of what he spoke of, everyone who knew subjects better than he knew he was a fraud.

What I learned from all of the Traditionalists, including Schuon, Guenon and Rama Coomaraswamy, is that the claim to be orthodox amounted to nothing. It was a political pose, a way of forcing others to behave in certain ways. This is true in all churches and religions. Doing it the “right” way insures only conformity and still amounts to practicing superstition and magical thinking. Orthodoxy is was merely a pose to gain power, a strategy --- a dogmatic claim to exclude or condemn others, in addition to a code of behavior, especially one more applied to others and less to oneself. Orthodoxy is merely superstition and make-believe organized over a number of generations, passed down mostly by males, but also by females, who want to exclude others from joining the club. Orthodoxy is a sort of bogus cultural natural selection, whereby those on the inside exercise prejudice against those who do not conform. Beating up on those who questioned Schuon or his ministers was a major part of the senior members of the Schuon cult.

The Schuon cult had its own bizarre orthodoxy that was different from Rama Coomaraswamy’s attachment to archaic and outmoded, far-right, Latin Masses or Moslem followers of Schuon who had their Sufi “Wird” or “Hadra”⁴⁷⁵ or bizarre systems of dream interpretation. Guenon said that

⁴⁷⁵ The Wird is a Sufi rosary more or less – a long prayer said in a certain way and Hadra is a ritual dance done at Majlis (gatherings)---, in the case of the Schuon cult they did the Shadiliya Hadra of North Africa which was done with a drum and the dancers chant the name Allah over and over. Schuon’s Hadra was rather cold and unemotional. He wanted his followers to experience a sort of intellectual union with an imaginary god both on an interior and exterior level, which really means to completely give yourself to the imaginary deity. .

“I am not surprised, for, from a technical viewpoint, the ignorance off all these people, to start with F.S. [Frithjof Schuon] himself, is truly frightening...”

Guenon felt that the Schuon group was a failure as an orthodox group, which is true. But Guenon’s orthodox perfectionism was even worse than Schuon’s lack of it. Guenon also thought that Schuon’s people were spying on him, and they probably were. But actually Guenon had no real inside knowledge either. He was also a fraud. He thought Martin Lings was reading his mail. He states his paranoia pretty clearly :

I think we must be very careful
[about]all that F.S. [Frithjof Schuon] and the Swiss might want to have appear in the “E.T.” [the journal Etudes Traditionnelles], for it may well be that they slip into some article something that would be directed against us...

Well, the truth is, as I saw myself, the Schuon cult *was* against Guenon, on the one hand--- they were all against each other---, but on the other Guenon was very paranoid and suspected Schuon’s group, rightly, of being a group designed for self-promotion. In short, this was a nest of vipers and all of them were back biting the others.

There are various critics of Schuon, besides myself, though most of them are unpublished.⁴⁷⁶ Schuon’s minions branded and publicly

⁴⁷⁶ Cyril Glasse, a member of the Schuon cult who led a reasonable effort to question Schuon in 1987, put together an impressive book of criticism of Schuon in the early 1990’s. It records the criticism of Victor Danner, David Lake, Paul Yachnes, Catherine Perry and many others. Rather than admit he might be wrong, Schuon claimed that all these critics were in conspiracy against him and that anyone who listened to them was listening to a diabolical plot against a great prophet. Those who criticized him were quite reasonable to question him,. But Schuon’s

tarred anyone who criticized their great “Master” with slanderous appellations like “satanic”, “evil” or “intrinsic swine”.⁴⁷⁷ Schuon himself, who had a mean and caustic mouth, used similar terms. Maude Murray writes to me that Michael Fitzgerald and Sharlyn Romaine lied to the newspapers and under oath and deliberately attacked my character in particular. Maude says in a letter to me that that “they purposely studied and exaggerated your bad character traits and had me do that too.”⁴⁷⁸ She never apologized for doing this, though she should have. They wanted to picture me as a demon seething in revenge. I was not seeking Maude Murray’s involvement with me. She got me involved with her. She would have gone for any opportune guy. Actually I was just a guy in the wrong place at the wrong time and came out with evidence that I did not even want to have.

Maude need not have gone along with them in lying about me and my imaginary bad character. It is a testament to this cult’s rabid tactics to turn a woman who loved a man against him in this way. I certainly have aspects of my character which could be better but none of the people in the cult had any useful insight into me. Schuon claimed that “that it was a dirty love story which I did not approve and they wanted to destroy

arrogance overcame him and but rather than listen to reason he declared himself infallible. He wrote that even his “claim to be infallibility was infallible”. All those who criticized him were forced out of the cult and demonized. This, again, is theofascism in a nutshell. Irrationality is set up as an unimpeachable “infallible” authority and evidence is suppressed and those who criticize the injustice are declared satanic or evil. It is standard policy of the Schuon cult to accuse their accusers to cover up their own faults—the typical strategy of hypocrites.

⁴⁷⁷ ” that is what Schuon called me in a public video. He said it with a Nazi sort of “Svine”, as Hitler called Jews—I have no idea what an “intrinsic swine” might be—I guess something like Wilbur the pig in E.B. White great children’s story Charlotte’s Web. Wilbur was a pig who is “Some pig”, “terrific” and “humble”. Maybe I am “some pig” too! I rather like pigs and their reputation for being dirty is not their natural state, but one imposed on them by their keepers. It is their keepers who abuse them when they seek to profit from them. Pigs are merely domesticated wild animals. If allowed to become wild or feral they revert to being Boars and grow tusks. Perhaps I became a wild boar, and went feral and scared Schuon! I scared him with his own behavior. It took some courage to do that, courage he did not have!

⁴⁷⁸ Murray letter to mk, May 1996.

me.” But this is utter nonsense and paranoia. There was no ‘dirty love story’, except in Schuon’s own dirty mind and need of multiple women and girls. He was indeed an impotent and dirty old man, and my relationship with Maude was many things, but was not ‘dirty’. He built up his entourage of sacred ‘devadassis” over many years, and each one wanted the power it gave them. The role of women in servicing his delusions was considerable.⁴⁷⁹ He distorted himself, I had nothing to do with it.

Maude was sick of it by the time I met her. She was tired of being his concubine, tired of the humiliation, tired of being used. But I was not seeking a relation with her. On the contrary, I got involved with Maude because she needed me. She was lonely and desperate. It was not at all about love at the beginning. It was a caring relationship in which I did my best to make her life better. I think I succeeded for a time, but it took her along time to get out of the cult, if she is out of it. I got involved with her only because she needed me, I was 33 and she was 50 and it was not a matter of sexual attraction at all, at least on my side, though sex became part of it. She was 17 years older than I. She insisted that we get involved against my resistance to this, and over several months. I felt sorry for her. When I first met her I was not at all attracted to her. I did not even like her very much. She told me that if I thought as Cyril Glasse thought, I could go “jump in a lake”. I had no idea how he thought then, and did not know what she was saying. I later learned she had an affair with this man, while she was professing total love of Schuon. So her attack on Glasse really was an hypocritical attack that hid her own

⁴⁷⁹ The role of women in the cult is a complex subject. It was amazing in many ways. Schuon was a man who needed many women to keep him feeling normal. He rarely did feel normal so their work was daily and needed to keep him going. They all wanted to role of serving his ego and keeping him propped up. They acted as his procuress too, recruiting other women to serve sexual or model like roles in his sexual theatre. Maude played that role herself for a time, until she got Sharlyn to be her stand in, and then Shalryn started recruiting other women, young girls, wives, daughters, whatever would make the “Shaykh” happy. Schuon’s need of endless female adulation was bottomless.

falsity and lying. This was the beginning of my learning that Schuon himself was utterly corrupt, and far from being a teacher of anyone. Like Maude, he was a fraud, and a liar who said all she cared about was the truth. I should have known that she would end up being duplicitous toward me too, as this was really who she was and who Schuon was too. These were bad people who claimed, as Maude is now claiming, (2018) to be geniuses.

Later, after I painted her house, which took months and was done on her insistence, I got to know Maude. It was pity that led me towards her, and wanting to know who Schuon was. She pursued me, I did not pursue her. These were my original motivations for eventually giving in to her. Pity continued to be the strongest reason for being with her, as Schuon had treated her so badly and she was in pain. The other motive was reporting what I learned. These ended up being very different things; the first involving a certain affection for Maude and her eccentric craziness I developed, and the second the recognition that she had been hugely influenced by Schuon and could not be trusted, would easily stab me in the back, and was a liar and play acting as a teacher who knew about god. Actually she knew little or nothing, just the nonsense she was told by Schuon and his minions. She continues this charade now, pretending to know about Schuon and god but lying all the time about it as a cover for her considerable delusions.

Originally, Maude acted towards me as my “spiritual superior”. I was obliged in the unspoken rules of the cult to regard her as my superior in the hierarchy of the cult. I had to give her audience. She told me from the beginning that I was to act as if she were Schuon himself giving me what he would have given me if he were not so old. She had the idea, which she got from Schuon, that charity should go only to those that deserve it and those that deserve it most, are those who follow Schuon and love him best. I did not see right away that this is a formula

for all kinds of corruption. She told me I was special compared to all the people in the world and deserved what was given to me. I knew this was false, intuitively, but it was flattering, though I knew that such flattery was not to be trusted. It took me quite a while to figure all this out. I was obliged to accept her at her word, however and did so, provisionally, just because I was curious where it was all going. She was very insistent and overbearing and I went along with her, even though I suspected she was mistaken, and told her so. I knew she was doing what Schuon did, as one would expect. This became clear with time, but it took time to understand it all. All of it was way outside my experience.

I objected to her effort to give me all that she did at first and resisted it. She wanted to get involved and become intimate. I was originally not attracted to her at all, other than to see her as a “wife” of Schuon, even though she hardly acted like one. How does one trust a woman who is so willing to be unfaithful to a man who at the same time is the man she says she loves totally. One cannot trust her, indeed, she is crazy.

But one tends to believe what one is told. I did not know she had done this before, with another man. I even wrote about thirty pages of doubts I had in my journal, about what she wanted to do with me, about her the immorality of what she wanted to do. I knew what she wanted was wrong, but at the same time she seemed sincere that she would give me all that Schuon could not at his age. She asked to borrow my writings and then destroyed these writings, telling me the next day she had lied to me. She destroyed all the things I wrote about her or photos and poems I took or wrote of her that were compromising to her. They were not compromising to her in fact, but she was afraid to them because they were truthful and honest. It was very clear she was a fake, and her ‘love’ of Schuon was a studied falsehood. I had serious doubts about her destroying my writing and was angered by it but did not act on it yet. I

let so many things pass because at least I was progressing in my knowledge of who this guy was. It took over a month or two for her to convince me to get involved with her. I painted much of the interior of her house during this time and then she started coming to my house.

There were several times that she destroyed my writing like this, 3 as I recall. This act eventually convinced me of her confused duplicity, but that was just one fact among many others. In the end she convinced me she was no longer married to Schuon and that she was a free woman, despite the contradictory warnings that she was a pawn under his control. This ended up being true. She offered to teach me all she knew about him, since she had been his intimate confidante for 15 years.⁴⁸⁰ I saw clearly enough that there was no way to get close to him otherwise, as a man. Women could only get close to him by offering their bodies, which they often did. I saw I could learn who this man really was from her, so I gave in, giving up my original resistance. The cult tried to say that I was an opportunist who seduced her, but this is a lie. In fact, as I see now but did not see then, I was put in a moral dilemma. I chose coming to know who she and Schuon really were over my awareness that all this was wrong.

She seduced me after a great deal of resistance on my part. Getting sexually involved with Maude might be immoral if she were actually married, on the one hand, and on the other, getting involved with her would give me knowledge of the truth about this man. As time went on, and she showed me she was not really married to anyone, it was clear that there was no immorality in doing what I did, *prima facie*. She was caught in an impossible situation with a tyrant who changed whenever it suited him. The cult later tried to claim I was immoral, but this was a

⁴⁸⁰ I had a dream about Schuon when I first moved to Bloomington in which I tried to fly from my apartment to his house in a desire to get closer to him and learn all he had to teach. My desire was very sincere, but I did not know then that no one knows about God because there is no god. He was a fraud. I don't believe in dreams much, but they often do reflect real things in one's life.

ruse behind which to hide their own and Schuon's guilt. This was obvious, but hard to explain to others. In the end it was the knowledge that mattered about the truth, and how that knowledge was gained involved huge suffering, both on my part and Maude's. It cost us both dearly, though probably her more than me. I was protected first by my innocence, and later by a growing indifference to Schuon and Maude and a willingness to be objective about it all. Her job, despite her evident craziness and confusion, was to be a sort of 'fixer' for Schuon, trying to made him look good, even if he was a fraud and no matter how much truth come about what a fraud he was. She is still being his "fixer" even today and even as she admits what a fraud he was.

She slowly initiated me into Schuon's 'tantric' ideas and practices as well as gave me access to observe his daily behavior first hand, without him knowing he was being watched. As my initial objections subsided, and even when she destroyed my writings about my doubts, I went along with this as long as I could, as there were other reasons for being with her. But soon I started insisting that Schuon be told. I got her to write him a letter asking for our marriage, which was published in the Account I wrote Rama Coomaraswamy put out in 1992. Her letter was weak and even fawning. She made the mistake of asking to be "given" to me, rather than insisting that she was already free of him and demanding that she be given respect. By acting so weakly she gave him great and unjust power over her. I could see that this was a game between them.

So what Maude did was set herself against Schuon in the most personal possible way. I was merely a bit part in this. I watched it play out as if it were a play. I eventually saw that I was merely a pawn in the battle between them. Maude's willingness to help the cult try to assassinate my character was very disturbing and finally I realized that she was utterly locked into the cult. When I left the cult I could see affection was destroyed in her for me. She saw me only through Schuon's malice and hate, and he hated me because she had preferred me over

him. He was jealous and vicious man, a man of no virtue at all. He was no spiritual master, or even a very nice guy. I saw how quickly her love of me vanished into his con-game and she was employed in creating falsehoods about me. I could see her brainwashing quite concretely, even though many say brainwashing is an impossibility, it is not. She is still brainwashed in 2019.

Being a pawn in the battle between them was not a part I wanted and I knew early on it was going to end badly. My feelings were irrelevant, and I was made into an objective mirror of the situation whether I wished it or not. I did not wish it, and once the ball was rolling it was a roller coaster ride till the end, with my virtue and innocence the only thing standing in their self-destructive course of their sexual politics. Once I honorably insisted he know that Maude and I considered ourselves “vertically” married, Schuon and Sharlyn Romaine set about trying to destroy Maude. Maude had always lied in her affair with Glasse, which I did not even know about at that point. But with me, I was not a liar and never have been. I was irrelevant to them, and though for a while they tried to respect my position, it was only to get me out of the way, giving me permission to be with Maude. This gave them time to wack away at Maude mercilessly, I mean Schuon and Sharlyn, the latter being just as much petty and without virtue as the former. They were outraged that someone else would claim the happiness and love they thought they had. They were jealous and envious, mean and vengeful. Schuon thought any real woman would want to be only with him since he was a “prophet”. His delusions were indelible, irremovable, even though they were false. Adamant in his self-delusion, he went on, day after day, trying to skewer Maude with insults, guilt trips, fake visions and religious prescriptions. He had no sense or conscience about how much he had abused and neglected her as a wife.

I was witness to all his bad behavior toward her, and lost any respect I may have had toward him. This was entirely his fault. It became so clear

that all this was about him, he was not a good man at all, and the whole cult was constructed to benefit him and Sharlyn.

Any woman who wanted to be free of him must be in “revolt” and thus “satanic”. This absurd dogma revealed him to be a misogynist and a tyrant. In fact, he had neglected her and did not have any real claim on her anymore. She had been free of him for a long time, using the means he himself had used, lying about her affairs. Schuon said Maude was “the first women in history to betray a prophet”. Actually there are no “prophets” in history and the category is specious. No one has any real data and any such beings, Moses, Buddha, Solomon, Jesus and Muhammad all beings who exist only in books and probably never breathed a real breath anywhere. This revealed to me that Schuon’s narcissism revolved around the pivot of his claim to be a prophet. This taught me who Schuon really was. He was a fraud, and a bad character. I saw with certainty he was a self-centered ego-maniac. Maude did teach me who he was, I could see what a bad man he was by his actions. She wanted to leave him and he threatened and beat her up psychologically to force her not to. She was his victim but yet was not much better than he was.

He had abused and neglected his “wife” and made her sit and watch him “make love”—in Maude’s words--- to Sharlyn in her presence, 3 days a week for a number of years. She liked to say how beautiful it was, but this was required, it was not beautiful and she hated going. Her saying how wonderful he was and how ‘magnanimous’, how special and beautiful, were more lies she repeated like a parrot. There was nothing magnanimous that I could see about his selfish need of adulation, his mistreatment of her, or his refusal to recognize that I was a person too, not merely a pawn in a game of his narcissistic ego. Schuon ruled them all with psychopathic charm and threats. He made them all treat him like a child, even to the point of having them call him a child’s name. The

wives all referred to him as “Shaykhali” which means little Shaykh or more accurately, ‘cute little shayki-poo’!. yet he threatened any of them that slightly deviated from his impossible expectations. Maude was not allowed to say she disliked watching his fourth wife perform sex acts not involving intercourse in front of her. ... At the beginning it fulfilled some lesbian need she and Sharlyn had, mostly Sharlyn perhaps. In the beginning of Schuon’s relation with Sharlyn the three of them had sexual dalliances on his bed. But this got old fast. Maude knew she was replaced after 15 years. He only had eyes for the younger woman. Then she was glad that Sharlyn had replaced her. She was bored with his self-serving Tantra and his cult of nudity.

She was used up and now found wanting and forced to witness what replaced her. Only a completely inhuman, selfish man would do that to someone he claimed to love and not realize he was hurting her. She was right to want to get away from him. I tried to help her as best I could. There was no adultery in this, it was about getting free from a tyrant and a misogynist who denied a women free choice to divorce her neglectful husband. It was a human rights issue. In the end Maude did leave Schuon, broken and crazy. And Schuon was discredited. But it took a long time for this to happen and I was long gone by then. I was indeed irrelevant to the whole thing, just an unwilling witness to their perfidious goings on. I was not a bad person, just an occasion for them to wreck themselves on.

Maude and I loved each other after a fashion and it was a harmless love. What was said of it latter by Schuon and his gossips merely reflects of their ugly need of malice and make believe. They made up slanders to try to protect a bad man. I saw well how the cult worked and how they engineered and schemed to get Schuon vindicated. Even earlier than that, the whole event unfolded as a theatrical production. Indeed, I often felt a certain distance from the whole thing, as if I were undergoing a play in which I was not really a participant. When she bought me a

house and put a bag full of gold bars on the realtors table, it was bizarre, like a play that I was not in. I smiled at it, at the unreality of money to them, at the wealth they had not earned. It was all so crazy. She kept the gold bars in a great chest in her bedroom, next to her bed, on which the lamp sat. I was in a certain awe of her crazy mind, and the unreality of her life. Everything that happened had a logic but it was the logic of Schuon's and Maude's insanity in which I was merely a witness.

Maybe it is not accurate to say I loved Maude so much as I felt sorry for her. I knew it would not last. But I was curious how it would all come out. I knew it was a dangerous game from the start and saw my objections were meaningless to her. I knew increasingly that Schuon's double dealing forked tongue would betray everyone. But I wished to know the truth, and she was teaching me what Schuon was really like, in a daily way, where I knew what Schuon was saying and doing on a daily level. I was increasingly horrified by his selfish and sociopathic excesses. The fish bowl unreality of their lives was all around me like an invisible cloak and I watched them act like puppets in a theatre, playing out their pretentious parts with predictable concern for making Schuon look good no matter what. It was increasingly obvious that his selfish world view was the source of all their troubles and no one would ever say that he was the real problem. The problem was never me, not Maude, not anyone. It was him and his delusions of grandeur that were the problem. He stole other men's wives, he involved children in sexualized rituals. Maude likes to say, to cover up the truth, that they were not sexual. But how can pressing his impotent penis against the private parts of older women or younger girls not be sexual?

Most of my time with Maude was spent comforting her for the terrible ordeals Schuon put her through. Schuon made me a better person not by his teachings, but by making me help a person he so cruelly blamed, tortured and demeaned, proving his lack of virtue. He

was hardly an example of anything good and I did not want to ever imitate him. I saw he was no “master” of anything, least of all himself. Schuon did not care about her anymore and she knew it. He knew it too, but the idea of a woman having her own mind was not in his sexist notion of what women can be. “Feminism ist Zatanic” he had told me around this time. Her refusal to be his “doormat” as she put it, was exactly what she hated in him, and he must have known it.

He was a jealous and power hungry guy who wanted all the women in the cult for himself. Maude says that , “ my real crime in their eyes was my not wanting to be his wife anymore” (2018). He could not stand being unwanted. I was just an occasional cause of this, it could have been anyone. What he could not abide is that she did not want him and had had it with him. His truly “dirty” primordial gatherings were such that the cult is still lying about them and hiding their existence years later. Maude, to this day, calls them “Indian days”, but these were trivial affairs, the actual thing involving nudity was called Primordial Gatherings. Schuon was a dirty old man. He invented the idea of a sordid love story between myself and Maude in his mind. There was no “dirty love story”, there were just two lonely people trying to figure out what was really true and finding comfort in each other in the midst of his onslaughts. It was a sad and fraught relationship for me and even worse for her. She was pulled back into his corruption, and now at 78 or so, she is still trying to be his disciple, and still part of the corruption that was his “genius”. He was a “genius” at corruption, where is that at? He was not genius at all..

I knew it would lead to my leaving the cult and I accepted this as the price of knowing the truth. It was well worth it to know the truth, no matter how disappointing it was. Not even the public ridicule or the cults deliberate slanders made me regret what I did. The fact was that Schuon could not grasp that Maude would prefer me to him, when he as the “final prophet at the end of time” and I was just an ordinary guy. She

would say, like a Mantra, that she was once his “only beloved and would always be that”, but if “he really loved her he would let her go”. She was dreaming, indeed, the fact that she thought this nonsense shows her naïve trust in a trust bandit. But I knew this was not real, and deep down, so did she. He didn’t love her, or anyone, he was just using people. It incensed him to such a degree that she had the ability to love others besides him that he thought she was in a ‘satanic attack’ against him. Her rebellion against him required his devoting some years punishing her for it, mercilessly. This is not a good man at all.

I was never jealous of Schuon, as has been falsely claimed. indeed, I treated him very indulgently. I informed him about what we were doing, as was proper and was honest and conscientious. I insisted Maude write Schuon a letter asking to allow us to be together. She was afraid to do it and rolled back and forth, naked and crying, on my kitchen floor, trying to pray to a nude icon of him. She actually believed he would hear her prayers though the nude icon of him she held against her bare breasts. He heard nothing and it is her bizzarree spirituality, that she learned from him, that makes her think this crazy procedure might work. This is magical thinking of an advanced kind, the same magical thinking that makes her play the Koran, opening it to a random passage with her eyes closed, and putting her finger on a random sentence in the book. This is a bogus procedure, which she follows religiously. Around this time she also taught me how useless prayer is. She prayed endlessly and often all day long, aksing god and shuoon to let her be with me, help her and let Schuon see the truth. She prayed endless Ya Latifs. Over and over again. Nothing good ever came of it.

She asked him in the letter that we be allowed to marry. I knew her letter was too weak and fawning. I was not told “no”, as is claimed but rather was eventually told I “should wish to die for him”, and when this was clearly a stupid thing to say, he adjusted that and gave “permission”

to continue with Maude, in writing. Later, I merely told the truth about his phony marriages and his illegal and bizarre nudist practices. It was he who chose to keep them secret and lie about them. He has always blamed others for his faults and projected on them what is wrong with himself in true paranoid style. He says “I did not know so much wickedness could exist on earth.” But actually it is merely his own wickedness he is projecting on me. As Richard Hofstadter said in the *Paranoid Style in American Politics*,

one of the most valuable things about history is that it teaches us how things do not happen. It is precisely this kind of awareness that the paranoid fails to develop. He has a special resistance of his own, of course, to developing such awareness, but circumstances often deprive him of exposure to events that might enlighten him—and in any case he resists enlightenment. We are all sufferers from history, but the paranoid is a double sufferer, since he is afflicted not only by the real world, with the rest of us, but by his fantasies as well.⁴⁸¹

Schuon only saw his own need of power and the fantasies that derived from it and was blind to all needs except his own. Anyone who did not agree with his fantasies must be betraying him or in conspiracy against him. Like Guenon he truly suffered grandiose and paranoid delusions, some of which were brought into question by what Maude and I did. He had not thought through his phony idea of “Vertical and Horizontal Marriages”. Maude and I were merely trying to assert our “vertical Marriage” a concept he cooked up to justify his own affairs with multiple women. What we proved is that his idea of this was for himself alone and was a construction that had no reality in it. It was a stupid idea that was

⁴⁸¹ <http://harpers.org/archive/1964/11/the-paranoid-style-in-american-politics/7/>

merely about his having total control over the romantic relationship in which he ensnared his women. He probably got the idea, either directly or convergently, from the “vertical and horizontal integration” ideology of corporate control created by the Carnegies and Fords and other corporate Robber Barons. The purpose of vertically and horizontally integration is first to buy out or own a controlling interest in all the ‘vertical’ suppliers for a given product, say all the parts manufactures for cars and then to buy out all the competition, thus creating an illegal monopoly. It is a power play, a way to gain total control

Schuon notion of vertical/horizontal marriage was meant to give him total monopoly on his multiple relations with women, turning the other men involved into pawns in service of his supremacy. It was merely a self-serving ploy. Maude and I were right to fight against this imperious dictatorship. The whole arrangement of the cult was made in service of his private delusions.

His “wife”, Maude Murray, was not his “wife” to begin with. She believed she was no longer married to him because he was a bad husband, and was in love with another woman. Indeed, he was not a husband at all and he really wasn’t married to any of them, even the one to whom he was legally married, who he neglected. Even this so called ‘real marriage’ as fake. What I realized at last was that I was dealing with a sexist bigot. It was hard to admit this to myself, but the evidence was overwhelming. Moreover, the facts kept pouring in that many of his ideas were really cloaks for reactionary bigotry of many kinds. His willingness to violate simple human rights and freedom left me speechless. I was not entirely just a witness after all, but trying to comfort Maude made me realize what both she and I were up against. I knew I saw it more than she did. It was not my fault Schuon was a cheating husband. The whole defense of the Schuon cult was based on fabricating things about me and lying about things that really happened. They are still doing this, in books and online.

In fact, as has been proven, Schuon was guilty. There were underaged girls and a boys at these gatherings. There is quite enough evidence to prove this. In later writing Maude treis to say how beautiful this was, but that is merely propaganda. She tries to say the women were all had their private parts covered, but that is not true, only some did. My effort was not to put him in jail but to expose him as a fraud, and I think I did that in spades. He lied and cheated to stop his trial. This fact was independent of what happened between Maude and me. But there is so much more that he was guilty of. Many people think I wanted revenge on him so made up the molestation to get back at him for his treatment of me and Maude. But this is not true: there were multiple reasons to turn Schuon into the authorities, the molestation invlvoed grabbing their bottocks and pressing his penis againt the vaginas or yourg girls. But he was doing bad things in just about every direction. He was a philandering husband and a liar, an abuser and a tyrant.

Maude Murray admits they tried to lie about Schuon and to attack me, making me sound much worse than I am. She rightly says this was a dieliberate “strategy”. They tried to make it all about my supposedly bad character, when really I am not a bad character; I am merely a witness in this case. My own life is quite apart from this story. I am not a perfect person and certainly have my weaknesses and faults, I have never claimed to be perfect as Schuon did repeatedly. But, who I may or may not be is irrelevant, their characterizations of me were such that I did not recognize myself in anything they wrote about me. I still don’t. They did this same thing to Glasse, Maude, Victor Danner and many others too. This is a cult and cults defend their cult leader and cover up his faults by blaming others for their harms and crimes. They do as Hamlet said, they lie, and in lying about others and their own actions they claim that

not your trespass but my madness speaks.
It will but skin and film the ulcerous place,
Whilst rank corruption, mining all within,
Infects unseen. Confess yourself to heaven,
Repent what's past, avoid what is to come,
And do not spread the compost on the weeds
To make them ranker.
(Hamlet act 3, scene 4)

It was not me that was mad, it was their lies that they skinned and filmed over by lying, and that spread compost of the weeds, of the harm they did, and made it ranker. I quoted this to Catherine Schuon in a letter about them. I do not think I was wrong to do so, indeed, this fact so well described by Shakespeare was a perfect portrait of this cult.

Of course, I do not wish to be misunderstood. I do not at all mean that I was totally reasonable and without feeling about all this. I was not. I was horrified by what was happening and suffered deeply from it for years. It was as personal as you can get. But only part of me was blinded by it all, I could still see clearly while still in the cult and living under the influence of their insane machinations. I knew that I had to be strong and resist my feelings to a large degree. But I also knew I had to be careful, even cunning or cagey and watch out if I was to survive it.

I reached out to others who had left the cult. There was a whole lot of people who hated Schuon, knew each other and were very welcoming to me. They all knew Schuon was over the brink of sanity. I remember calling Glasse in New York City in 1991 and was a little apprehensive because everyone in the cult had said he was pure evil, totally satanic and beyond the pale. But they lied about him terribly. Maud elide to me about him too. He was actually very polite and nice, generous and more than willing to answer questions I had. What a relief to learn others had

survived this horrible cult. He worked as a tourist guide on a bus in New York City. I learned that Schuon worked overtime getting his people, Maude especially, to lie about Glasse. They did this about me too and many others who questioned the lie of Schuon's claim to be a prophet.

Glasse Begins his 570 page Dossier with the following:

“In 1980, Schuon moved to Bloomington with his credibility weakened in Europe, and decadence accelerated towards a full-blown cult whose new center was Bloomington. This decadence came to a head in 1985-1987 and is described in the documents gathered here. There was a shake-up world-wide. Most members considered leaving; very few actually did. Those who remained would not have believed that they would be taking part in orgies in 1991.”

Glasse was brave to put together this damning document. It tells many stories about individual people and their plight and suffering in the Schuon cult. Maude's response to these people and their legitimate complaints is horrendous and lacking in all compassion and honesty. The sad story of Paul Yachness's wife, for instance, and how the cult more or less drove her mad and condemned her in incredibly unkind and judgmental ways accusing her of all sort of things she did not do. Saydah Warda was her cult-name and she did something minor and apologized to one of Schuon representatives, Jesus Garcia Varela. Varela was not convinced her apology for something she didn't even do was 'sincere' ----so they forced her to apologize again and then again and again, and it was never good enough. She was falsely accused of pride. This was a cruel setup. When this did not make her sufficiently abject, they finally claimed she had a mental illness and in a Kafkaesque charade; they drove her out of the cult for being insubordinate and

insufficiently submissive to Schuon's perverse and sadistic "authority".⁴⁸² Schuon of course supported and encouraged this sadistic treatment. She later recovered her health and realized that the problem with Schuon's group is Schuon himself and the inner circles inordinate delusions of self-importance. She was right, of course.

This obsession with Schuon's authority would be the source of most of the cult's problems. They consistently denigrated and attributed low motivations to nearly anyone that in anyway seemed to question Schuon or his representatives. There could only be adulation for Schuon, the slightest hint of criticism must be eliminated.^{483 484}

⁴⁸² Jesus Garcia Varela, one of Schuon's officers would later be investigated by the Louisville police for trying to develop the nude photos of his young daughters at a public photo development place. I was informed of this by the Indiana Police and shown the report on the Varelas. The photos were in the possession of the police. These were some of the girls who were involved in the gatherings and later made to lie about it.

⁴⁸³ One can see this most clearly in the many documents and films Maude Murray produced in 1994-96. She clearly blames Schuon, Sharlyn Romaine and Michael Fitzgerald for her miseries, quite rightly, but every time she does so she back-tracks and excuses Schuon especially and to a lesser extent the others. But you can see she has been totally trained to never think an ill thought of Schuon even as she watches him do the most insensitive and horrible things to her. She is in denial about what a monster he really was. Her inability to put blame where it belongs, on Schuon's megalomania leads her into a temporary madness. This obsession with Schuon's 'authority' would be the source of most of her misery. She tries to ape Schuon claim to have been open to the arbitrary "Intellect" the supposedly 'infallible' source of metaphysical truth. It is quite true Maude was open to it, just as much as Schuon. There is in fact no such thing, what they call the "intellect" is really just an overly trained irrational intuitive state that arises in people who concentrate fiercely on imaginary gods or psychological fictions. Maude's "opening to the intellect" demanded of her that Schuon spiritual cult be brought to justice. She says that the cult must even be destroyed if necessary, if it could not be reformed. She was right to think this way. But she didn't really mean it, just as she means little of what she says. It was a horrible cult that needed to be brought to justice. What she was really getting in touch with is that Schuon had done her huge harm and his whole claim to sanctity was fraudulent and this had to be faced. She could not face it so she makes 'god' say it in her 'intellect'. In other words the "intellect" is just a vehicle of sublimations and desires, as it was in Schuon, Muhammad, Ibn Arabi and others.

⁴⁸⁴ This is often the case in destructive organizations. Just this month, October, 2015, in New Hartford, New York, a man who claimed to be the leader of Word of Life Church, a fundamentalist cult," beat one of their teenage sons to death and seriously injured another, with help from parishioners", according to a Washington Post news article. 10/15/2015. The head of this Christian cult was unhappy with the behavior of his two sons and had followers beat them both up, killing one. Schuon did not beat anyone exactly, but they were good at making people suffer who did not do as Schuon wanted, and for the same reasons. Religion in both cases was a justifying mechanism for abuse.

Glasse's book is about the gossip mongering in the cult, the disdain, blackmail and cruelty which Schuon and his wives and inner circle often involved himself. It is about the muck and garbage of the cult, the reality of it. It is about the cattiness and backbiting of Catherine Schuon and many others.

It might be useful to digress here and talk about Catherine Schuon a bit as she figures very large in most of the cults' problems. Catherine Schuon (b. 1927) was technically married to Schuon or as Schuon would say, "horizontally" married, rather than "vertically" married. It will take a minute to explain this. This does not mean she spent a lot of time horizontal, but rather that Schuon used the word "horizontal" in a denigrating way. His "vertical marriages" were his 'real' marriages, ---he claimed--- and these lasted only according to his whim, and his whim usually carried with it justifying "visions" which really were just active imaging of his subjective desires. If Schuon wanted a woman the Virgin Mary was trotted out conveniently and gave him a "vision" to justify it, as in the case of Barbara Perry and Maude Murray. So though Schuon was married to Catharine legally, legal status meant nothing to him. He said that he would rather "have a cup of coffee" than have sex with his legal wife, according to Maude Murray.⁴⁸⁵ So his legal wife was not really his wife and his illegal wives were not really his wives either. All his relationships were dysfunctional. He had servants not wives. Maude Murray repeatedly said that with Schuon she "only had obligations no rights". She did not like being a "doormat" for him as she put it. Such relationship is not a relationship at all, but a dictatorship. Schuon was a misogynist who really was incapable of a normal relationships with a woman. They had to be sacred whores or "Shaktis"

⁴⁸⁵ She refers to this in her documents of 1995-96 Cult names of Schuon's wives were:
Catherine= Latifah,
Sharlyn Romaine =Badriyah
Barbara Perry =Hamidah
and Maude Murray = Aminah.

as he called them. His last wife was called a “mahashakti” to magnify her even further. Being just a goddess is not good enough, she had to be a Great Goddess. Schuon did not have relations with actual women--- he imposed on them a preconceived and phony notion of divine femininity: thus, he essentialized women. By doing this, he sought to deprive them of basic rights. At the same time, he gave his wives a great deal of power and they used it, with his permission and encouragement, to harm others in many cases. The wives, who were called the “Shaktis” by some, functioned as a wall around Schuon as well as a built in group of gossips and advertisers who promoted Schuon, helped write his books and did his dirty work for him.

Schuon ceased treating Catherine as a wife in the 1960’s or even earlier. Schuon’s house had an office on the lower floor and behind the office was another room with an attached porch and this was Catherine’s domain, where she worked and slept. (you can see this even in the aerial photos of the Schuon house on Google maps, look up 3700 Inverness Farms Road, Bloomington, Indiana) Schuon had a bedroom upstairs, and he regularly visited Sharlyn’s house, indeed, he spent more time there than anywhere else. Schuon first married Catherine in 1949 and in 1965 ‘married’ Barbara Perry (Hamidah), in a ‘vertical’ marriage. Maude says, in 2018, that Hamidah, or Barbara Perry “ for the first eight years, S. Hamidah herself didn’t know she was a wife.”. That this was a ‘vertical’ marriage is important: Mrs. Perry was still married (in a ‘horizontal’ marriage” to her husband, Whitall Perry, at the time. The idea of a “vertical marriage” was a later invention and did not exist earlier on. In 1974, evidently tired of Perry, Schuon “married” Maude Murray, who was his ‘primary wife, as it were, for 15 years.⁴⁸⁶ Maude complains in

⁴⁸⁶ Barbara Perry was so jealous of Maude when she came along that she tried to give her own daughter to Schuon as a sexual present.. Barbara real husband, Whitall was sleeping with Schuon’s wife Catherine. The attempt was made by both Maude and Barbara to enlist Barbara Perry’s daughter in the sexual ménage a trios then going on. The daughter, Catherine, wisely refused. (Her cult same was Mariah) Later Schuon tried to seduce Catherine in a hotel in

2018 that” Our legal husbands didn’t know at first, so, briefly, we both suffered from having two husbands sleeping with us” Keep in mind---yes this is very confusing----- that Maude “vertically” married Schuon while remaining ‘horizontally’ or legally married to John Murray, until Maude divorced John in 1991.⁴⁸⁷ These make-believe categories were taken seriously inside the cult, but obviously mean nothing in fact. She had been spiritually “divorced” from John for years and claimed she threw his ring in Lake Geneva, Switzerland. She later denied this in some legal documents, evidently aware that throwing a ring out does not mean she was divorced, any more than Schuon’s spurious ‘visions’ means she was married. To further complicate all this, Schuon was lying to outsiders and saying that his original marriage was “platonic” and his subsequent marriages to other women were celibate or platonic too. So the whole marriage thing with Schuon was based on lies and fake visions of various kinds. It is impossible to see “genius” in this sort of philandering and narcissism. It has all the confusions and misdirections of ad hoc lying.

Maude was Schuon’s main ‘vertical’ wife until 1989. It was never celibate or Platonic. In 1989, Sharlyn Romaine was encouraged by

Morocco. She refused Schuon’s advances. Word was let out about this and there are various denials of this by cult members and this is reflected in the Glasse documents. The daughter has since admitted that Schuon did indeed try to seduce her. She was evidently in love with Schuon to some degree, as is to be expected when Schuon was held up as a sort of god in the cult. All of these relations verge on incest and indicate the corruption that spread through the whole inner circle around Schuon emanating from Schuon himself. More recently, Catherine ended up being attracted into the cult like orbits or Eckhart Tolle, the Dalai Lama and other new age religions. She was raised in the cult and was never quite able to leave it totally. Life outside a cultish environment is hard for many ex-members.

⁴⁸⁷ Maude says in her documents that during her times of great suffering due to being shunned and sued by the Schuon group John Murray offered to court and marry her again in 1995 or so, but that the cult prevented him from doing that. That was kind of him, one of the few kind acts anyone in the cult showed towards her. Too bad he was too weak to actually do it and caved into a cult mentality. Someone in the cult sent her an anonymous envelope with 6 one hundred dollars bills in it when she was about to starve. It was probably Stanley Jones, a decent guy at heart, if only in secret. Notice that the cult had fulminated such hatred of her, that it had to be done anonymously.

Maude to become the fourth wife.⁴⁸⁸ Indeed, I learned at last that Maude chose Sharlyn to get out of Schuon's life. She really did not want to be with him anymore and regularly said so to me. Maude could no longer stand being Schuon's "vertical wife" and wanted out, in her own words. She "wanted to get out of the center of things".. The fourth wife became exclusive and Schuon ceased to show interest in Maude. Maude wanted desperately to get away from the grizzly old buzzard. She had to go see Schuon and Sharlyn a few times a week, and Maude writes that Schuon would "make love to her in my presence"⁴⁸⁹ as I said. But Maude was no longer a participant in the 'manage a trois' as she had been in earlier years, when there was lesbian activity too. , She was of two minds about this newer arrangement. She liked being further from Schuon, who she found to be too harsh and extreme. But she did not want to be treated badly or excluded. She and Sharlyn had had something of a lesbian relationship going and Sharlyn was a jealous woman. She demanded Maude be absolutely faithful to Schuon. Schuon demanded it too, and it came as an unwelcome surprise that Maude no longer wanted Schuon as she once did and had gone with another man.

Maude had arranged for the affair between Schuon and Sharlyn and came to think that they would be happy to have her be with another. She knew he did not care about her anymore, as she was menopausal, though why that should matter since he never wanted children anyway, is beyond me. There were fierce rules for others, even if Schuon accorded himself nearly absolute freedom to do whatever he pleased. The injustice of his choices never dawned on his selfish mind. Maude could not see why she should not be able to do the same things he did. She was right, of course. Schuon's imaginary superior status made him imagine he was

⁴⁸⁸ In various writings Maude refers to Schuon taking Sharlyn Romaine from her previous husband Barry Macdonald as being cruel, --- Schuon wanted her and demanded to have her and Maude arranged for Barry to marry Rebecca Polit (Gustavo's ex—remember Gustavo had been unfaithful to his wife with a 16 year old) as a sort of "compensation"

⁴⁸⁹ Maude Murray documents.

exempt from the rules he made others follow closely. This double standard behavior is often true of cult leaders and the same thing can be found in Franklin Johns/ Da Free John and many other cult leaders and psychopaths.

It would be well to ask what that “vertical” marriages means—for Schuon it was a convenient, made up concept that meant the Virgin Mary and God’s blessing on his sexual desires. He thought that his “unions” were of deeper and more profound significance than marriage of the usual contractual sort. Maude regularly said that vertical marriage was any union “that leads to god”, though she would not have recognized gay marriage, as Schuon hated gays. “Civil union” was a meaningless concept to the Schuon cult, as they despised western law and only recognized religious legal ideas approved by Schuon, and that was whatever served him, essentially. So Maude’s real civil marriage to John Murray was moot, to her, if not in fact. Schuon thought he was a prophet and therefore all his unions were chosen by god and the Virgin Mary. This is ridiculous, of course, but this is the sort of delusion that was daily fare for Schuon. However, these terms – “horizontal and vertical” are meaningless terms of convenience invented by Schuon to justify his polygamy.⁴⁹⁰ Maude says that around Schuon

“Definitions and laws changed upon demand. When I asked for a spiritual divorce, for reasons I couldn’t tell him (lying, and

⁴⁹⁰ In her documents Maude condemns Schuon many times for lying about his marriages in an Oct. 13th letter to “Sister Veronica”. Maude says “his legal wife wrote a letter to Sister Veronica which was full of lies”. In this letter Mrs. Schuon is made to say (Maude says the letter was actually written by Romaine and Schuon) that the marriages were “spiritual”(by implication not physical) because Schuon is a man “without passion”. None of the marriages were without passion. Romaine and Schuon put lies in Mrs. Schuon’s mouth. They also say that Sharlyn was an adopted child of Schuon. Romaine was 38 or something at the time! You can’t adopt 38 year old woman. The inner circle tended to think with one mind and lied easily about many things. For years Schuon lied to many people about his life being without “passion”, when the opposite was true. Schuon’s speech is really about pretence and perception, he rarely tells how things actually are.

someone was trying to destroy me in hearts), he said he couldn't divorce me: As a bodhisattva, he "couldn't cause division". Then when I said I'd love him forever; however, I was leaving the center, he immediately, and contrary to all he'd taught me about being noble, said he'd never been married to me!

I was married "vertically" to Maude for six months or so, and then given "permission" ⁴⁹¹by Schuon to be with his "wife" provided I swore on the Koran to never tell anyone. Evidently god told Schuon this was OK. I was supposed to keep quiet about this, as I suspected and later confirmed, so that they could later lie and say he was opposed to the relationship the whole time. Actually he was not opposed to it, he was opposed to anyone finding out his "wife" did not want him anymore and in fact, was not his "wife" at all. It was really all about his ego. It remained an ambiguously "vertical" relationship with her that was and was not a marriage. Later Schuon absurdly claimed the right to dissolve that same permission, once granted forever, in a heartbeat. He had promised that this permission was "lifelong". But by then I had broken the agreement and already told the facts to people outside the inner "family" of the Schuons. I broke his arbitrary "ruling". Yes, he had presented all this to me as his "ruling" and I was told this was equal to "coming from god". He was an arbitrary dictator and ambiguous communicator, even though I had been told in writing that he is not an "ambiguous communicator". But both the "vertical marriage" itself and Schuon's dissolution of it were meaningless in fact. His "marriages" are

⁴⁹¹ "permission has been exceptionally granted to you" the document says giving me this permission to be with Maude. I had asked if Schuon was going to take this back and he replied in writing that he is "not an ambiguous communicator". So the arrangement was legitimated by Schuon himself, as if that really mattered. There was no "dirty love story" there was only Schuon's inept abilities as an "authority, his jealousy and his inordinate self-regard.. He could not deal with his own bogus marriages much less advise the relationships of others.

not real marriages, his cult is not a real cult, everything is not what it seems and the head of the tariqa is a fool. Again, this is a very bad man.

In one sense, and however illusory, I was married to Maude all that time and I really enjoyed that. My relation with Maude was stronger than he was, and that was interesting to me. I could see we had something that was not his, and this made him very angry. He had no real power over us, except if we gave it to him, and at fist Maude was strong but latter she was willing to believe in his lying fictions and I was not. I no longer believed in all this rubbish, when she gave in to his fictions about marriage and even went through a bogus divorce from him, when really she was never married to him, as he rightly said in a rare moment of insight. The divorce consisted only of Schuon announcing they were divorced. There was no divorce--- it was all fakery..

Marriage is mostly about companionship, friendship, children and family. It protects the women from other men and the man from other women. Above all it is a good place for children to be loved and protected. Schuon was utterly incapable of most of these meanings implicit in the marriage idea. It is important to stress that Schuon's "marriages" were utterly delusional, there is no such thing as "vertical marriages", it was a phony idea Schuon trumped up to justify his own numerous sexual infidelities. Marriage does have elements in it that derive from natural selection, since, more often than not, it helps the couple raise their children. Schuon wanted nothing to do with children. Also marriage is a civil union, even among gay couples, and the reason behind that is that the couple does better financially if two are recognized as mutually supporting each other. Schuon betrayed this trust and let her fly in the wind when he "divorced" her. I gave her more than half the money I had, in contrast, because I felt sorry for her.

The whole argument between Maude and Schuon was about his supposed superiority and exceptional status. Why should vertical

marriage be only restricted to him? There was no decent or moral reason why. Maude was trying to do exactly what he did, and she had the right to do that, in the context of the cult. So did I. She was claiming the same rights as he had. Why not?, his rights were utterly arbitrary anyway. Later, in letters from 1995 or 96, she would claim to be a “prophet” herself. God had called her to clean up the lying and corruption of the Schuon cult, she says. Why not, if vertical marriages could be had by anyone, why not prophet status too? She was not wrong to do that either, though obviously, it was a delusional belief she was laboring under. They both were.

Prophets are fictions, and so is vertical marriage. Maude was wrong about marriage because Schuon was and he was by far the worse of the two. Her outrage at the injustices, lying and corruption of the Schuon cult was very real, if limited by her own shortcomings. She was using his means and methods, whereas I had jumped ship and did not believe in all that nonsense anymore. His outrage at her effrontery to claim what he claimed was not totally misplaced. I am not excusing Maude here, I am just showing that Schuon was the one in the wrong. I was only a pawn in all this, and a very unwilling one too. I put road blocks up all along the way, and strained all his “rulings” to the breaking point. Part of me knew it was all absurd.

His marriages were a sort of Schuonian voodoo, which is to say he made up these concepts to justify his own perversities and desire for polygamous relations. His marriages were fictions. He wasn’t married to any of these women and the one woman he was married to, Catherine, he no longer treated as a wife, indeed, he had ‘given’ her to Whitall Perry years before. He thought he was Krishna and Solomon, both fictions. My marriage to Maude was a fiction as was the dissolution of it by Schuon later. None of it meant anything real and everything revolved around the madman at the center, who pulled the strings for his own crazy benefits and whims. I had put myself in the middle of a storm in a teacup, though

at the time, it was a real tornado of pain and suffering.

I never thought I wished to marry Maude in a real court with a judge. It is 25 years ago and I do not remember thinking about this, though I may have. I suppose this is a measure of how much I knew the whole thing was fake. If it had come to getting a real marriage with Maude, I am not at all sure I would have done it, if for no other reason than she could never have children, she foolishly had her tubes tied for Schuon, and I have always wanted children. Schuon did not like children and rather than bother him with knowledge of having her tubes tied, she went ahead and did it, knowing he would be fine with that but would prefer not to know. This is bizarre, of course, but such was life with a psychopath: she made life changing decisions for his sake, and denied herself and her own needs, without telling him. I think she later regretted this stupidity, but I do not know for sure. I hope she did at any rate.

I entered into the whole arrangement wishing more to see what would happen and wanting to know who Schuon really was than anything else. This rather journalistic interest, or need of objective knowledge, probably saved me. The way the whole thing unfolded was really a test of Schuon himself, and I could see very clearly what kind of man he was, and what his relations with women were. I was no longer just hearing from others who he was, I was seeing with my own eyes what his actions and words were and what a phony he was. This is not at all to say I was doing this only to find out about Schuon. I had strong feelings for Maude, not at the beginning, but as I came to see that she was being harmed by Schuon and needed my help. I could see that he did not care about her at all, he wanted to harm her because she did not live up to his notion of himself as the supreme man on earth, every woman should want him.

But I was enjoying the idea of being married, even as I was unsure that it was a real thing. I doubted it and found myself having to fight for it, so to

that degree I was sort of provisionally pre-married to her, in fact. But really, once I finally saw who Maude was, I did not want to be involved with her at all. She was using me, lied to me, and readily lied about me to others, stole things from me, destroyed my poems and writings, set me up and took the cults side in lying about who I am, helping in the “slam campaign” against me. This was the attempt to destroy my credibility by exaggerating my faults and lying about me to make me look as bad as possible. This is merely factual, not a “low” underestimation of her. Indeed, she says she stopped lying after the Schuon trial, but it is easy to prove this is not true. She is still acting on her part as a prop for the Schuon organization. She is still lying about him and me.

No one in ordinary society could have done what Schuon did. There are real laws with teeth against polygamy and child endangerment. These are good laws. I agree that multiple wives is an offence against women’s rights and making children do adult things of a sexual kind is wrong too. Schuon would be guilty of both if the real facts of what he was doing were known. My effort was to get these matters known. I figured they would all lie, and they did, but the truth was out, never to be put back in the secrecy box, though Nasr and Lings and many others, including Maude, lied about it all for years.

The whole confusion about marriage had been created by Schuon, Maude and I were showing just how false the concept of vertical marriages really was. My ‘marriage’ to Maude seemed real to me for a time—6 months or so—but it had no reality to it, any more than Schuon’s ‘vertical’ marriages were real. I was not wrong to be angry at this betrayal. Maude was very stupid to do this, of course, by which I means she should not have done any of it. The thirty pages of my writing she originally destroyed said this in so many words. Yes, I was innocently ‘married’ at least. Yes, for a short time, the seeming realness of it was wonderful. I had never been married before and was glad to be married,

even if only experimentally, as it were. I believed for six months or so that it was real, though part of me knew this was all a fiction and cockeyed, because Maude was clearly crazy, not because Schuon said so, at that point I knew what he said was self-serving poppycock. But within the miasma of the Schuonian madness, Maude and I had created a little haven of peace for a while, and for while she did not seem crazy, and I enjoyed it. I do not feel any guilt about that.

As it all went sour, quickly in retrospect, I watched it all unfold with a strange disinterest, knowing inside one day I would have to tell this weird story. She destroyed many of the notes I made to explain all this. I could not write anything down that was serious because Maude would read it and destroy it. She destroyed many things I wrote. Maude claimed to have come to me from Schuon himself. She said she was herself his gift to me. She said she was going to give me "all his secrets" and convinced me for six months or more that we were married in a "sacred vertical marriage", just as Schuon had convinced her and other women of the same thing. I was given all his secrets, but that was no blessing, but rather a curse of sorts. She still thinks that she gave me something "holy", but actually she merely showed me what a hypocrite both she and Schuon were, and how the whole system of 'metaphysics' he invented was not 'genius', but self serving lies, fictions, and falsehoods. I was merely shown in concrete terms how corrupt both Schuon and Maude were. Those who listen now to her spiritual nonsense now are sorely abused by her. Her spiritual consciousness is a bubble rising up out of a froth of delusions. This is obvious when you read what she says and the responses she gets from others.

I knew more about the inner circle of the cult than anyone. They were excellent liars, and very good at making a false image of Schuon to force feed followers. But I no longer wanted to know what I knew. It was a marvelous ploy to offer me what I wanted anyway, and I was lonely and

wanted to believe it. But once I knew, I was horrified, and did not want to burden of telling others exactly what I knew. It was and is a sordid story. She continues pushing this nonsense on people, discrediting herself, sadly. She has made herself a good example of all that is fake in Schuon and Islam.

But I doubted all that she told me and insisted that she tell him we were involved. She said “he was too old to know and would only have understood when he was younger”. I did not like this secrecy, even if Schuon practiced this sort of thing all the time. It was wrong. I knew somehow that the whole cult was erected on the lie of his Intellect, and the falsity of the hierarchy. Telling the truth would explode all that. I insisted many times over a few months and she finally told him, requesting, much too passively, “to be ‘allowed’ to marry me, meaning a “vertical” marriage. Her fear of him made her put things this way when she should have simply announced our relationship to him and made him accept it. It was not up to him in any case.

Her approach to him shows both how weak she was and how false was the hierarchy of the cult, which largely rested on people fearing him. He was a bully and a tyrant. He was meddling in something that was not his business. He had clearly let her go anyway. He had no interest in her at all. Rather than recognize that he had neglected Maude, taken other women and had betrayed her, he refused her request and said he had to control our relationship himself. I knew what he was doing was wrong and could see it was all about his ego and power. If he was at all a decent man he would have seen he neglected her, and had no claim to her. He was with another woman now, and should let Maude go with his good wishes. But he was not decent, and she had to be punished for not loving him and not wanting to die for him. He wanted her “on all fours” if possible, and said that to her. The hatred of animals and women he had was disgusting in itself, quite apart from his need to abuse Maude, which

was bad enough.

As I said above, I was given an equally unrealistic “permission” by Schuon, after his initial insistence that we split up, which he retracted in 24 hours.⁴⁹² He was horrified that his possession had been taken from him. Reason prevailed after his initial tantrum. He told us we should want to die for him. But no one wanted to die for him. But then I was given “permission” in writing. “permission has been exceptionally permitted to you” he wrote to me though Sharlyn. I was to be with Maude as a sort of virtual marriage that lasted another six months, though I was told it would “last forever”. In Schuon’s world, nothing really means what it seems to mean,--his arbitrary subjectivity rules--- everything is afloat in a changeable chimera or froth of his mental delusions and falsehoods. The notion that this was some “dirty love affair” as Schuon later called it is totally the invention of his smutty and jealous mind. He said that for public consumption later, in the press, to make himself sound virtuous. He was horribly jealous of me, worried others would find out that she did not love him, but I wasn’t at all jealous of him. There was no reason to be. His lack of virtue was loud and clear to me, as it still is. I saw him for what he really was, a petty and weak man who needed to lord it over others to make himself seem strong, when actually, he was a fake.

Schuon was prone to denigrate and slander others. When Maude left, 3 or 4 years after I left, he had others attack her character ruthlessly in the most vicious way imaginable, as is recorded in detail in her letters. It was put out that Maude was a loose woman and an “adulteress”, when she was nothing of the kind. She was not married to Schuon; in fact, he was the one sleeping with other women. The problems with Maude’s relationships with other men all stemmed from Schuon’s perverse and phony marriages. He was the adulterer, and on numerous occasions and with multiple women. The only “dirty love

⁴⁹² I was offered my pick of the women then available for marriage in the cult, This seemed absurd, as if it were up to Schuon or anyone but the women who would marry whom.

stories” in the Schuon cult were his sordid relations with multiple women and children, his smutty wet dream with the Virgin Mary and his Primordial Gatherings where his followers got to watch him stare at vaginas and press his penis against multiple women. There was nothing good in this. It was merely a man who wanted power and sexual contact.

Schuon was always underestimating me and ascribing to me motives and actions I didn’t have. He says for instance that I wanted to “destroy” him. Not true. He destroyed himself, I had nothing to do with it. It was he, together with Maude, Barbara and Sharlyn, who designed Primordial Gatherings and invited young girls and a boy: and it was he who insisted on being falsely married to multiple married women; it was he who allowed a pedophile to sit at his right hand and run the affairs of the cult. It was he who had wanted to sleep with the daughter of one of his “wives”; Barbara Perry. I was merely there as a witness and said what I knew. I was not a cheat and not a liar and I took nothing from anyone. I was honest and told the truth

Anyway, for some months, I wrongly thought all this nonsense about marriages was real. Maude thought it was real too, but as Maude found out to her dismay and eventual mental illness, Schuon’s notions of marriage were utterly crazy and unworkable. Everything was unreal around Schuon. She wrongly accepted his false assessment of her actions and made up all sorts of nonsense about me to justify his bad behavior. The only thing that was real was Maude’s and my relationship, which he wanted to destroy for all the wrong reasons. Truly paranoid, he accused others of that which he was guilty. All of the marriages in Schuon’s inner circle were phony and corrupt.

To him women were only symbols. He did not like real women. So his wives lied to him all the time and pretended they were little icons of beauty and peace, and if they did not he would have a tantrum or an asthma attack. When I made Maude assert herself and her own needs he utterly freaked out. He was jealous of me. I was never jealous of him at

all, as I said. I saw what a phony he was and how badly he treated people. Indeed, in his last letter to Maude he accuses her of not being the “person he knew”. That is exactly right for a change, he did not know her, and never tried to know her. He was a tyrant and everyone was so afraid of him they all lied to him and presented to him a false persona designed to flatter him.. He only knew the Maude that he created out of his sick brain. She was a ‘jewel in his throne’ only, or in her words a “door mat”. In Maude, he only knew a woman who lied to him for years because he made people lie to him, just as he lied to everyone in turn. His whole spiritual organization was based on pretence and lies. People were either his accomplice or his victim. Maude was both and is still both. Maude and Schuon are no longer part of my life, and I am merely speaking of them here as examples of the deforming power of religion on the human mind and the social falsities it creates.

I finally figured out that Schuon was a deeply corrupt man, indeed the whole inner circle around Schuon was a cesspool of corruption and lies. They all justified it by the myths they accepted, the Myth of the Virgin, the Myth of Schuon’s sanctity and prophethood, the myths of Sufism, and Native American religion. I remember well the last time I saw him at the primordial gathering on May 17, 1991. Everyone was watching Sharlyn do her sexual dance before him nude and I was not watching her, I was watching him. I could see he was utterly demented, wild with a distorted subjectivity, crazy with power. His eyes looked like Charles Manson’s eyes, almost psychotic, crazy with an intense need of power and drunk with all the adulation and nudity. I saw him 45 minutes later leave Sharlyn’s house with her and I could see what a pathetic little man he was. A fraud, a fake, a cult leader. This was a madman I had to get away from. I knew I would be leaving soon, and the only question that remained was what do about Maude. I started sending my mother documents and photos. I knew I was in danger. What I knew, put me in danger. All that I knew about this guy was a huge burden that I did not

want. But I had no choice, it was time to tell the truth to myself and then to others. My only regret is that I did not get all the photos and information I could have gotten out of the cult, if I had been a little braver.

The narrative the cult tells about me is utterly fallacious. They say I was jealous and Schuon ended the relationship with Maude. Not true. I was never jealous. My relationship with Maude was designed by her, not by me, and I felt all along it was not going to last. As I learned about Schuon's corruption day after day, I was much too repulsed to ever feel jealous of him. I chose to leave Maude and the cult in late May and early June 1991 and traveled first to New York and then to Ohio to consult with people I trusted. I discussed with friends outside the cult how go back and pretended to still be loyal follower, go undercover, and make the effort to try to get Maude out. My mother helped a lot, a friend named Roy Gonsenhauser helped, Mary Ann Danner, Rama, Wolfgang and Terry Moore helped. This was not easy and very scary. I will tell that story shortly, but it was I who left Maude and failed to get her out. I was already out of the cult when Schuon revoked his "permission". I made him revoke it, the whole ploy of pretending I was not really involved with Maude was a lie I would not go along with anymore. Maude wanted to stay in the cult, and the truth mattered more to me than to her. Even at 78 she is still wrapped up in all the nonsense he taught her. I left her and the cult because it was the right thing to do. It was hard to leave her, not to leave him. That was easy. He had long since lost all my respect. The notion of his being a "master" over anyone was absurd: the cultic hierarchy was absurd, the religion as absurd.

Prior to being told I must separate from Maude, which I myself provoked, I returned to Bloomington after talking to many people with the purpose of trying to get Maude out of the cult. I stayed a week or more in Bloomington, trying to subtly and gently coax her out. I had to pretend to be someone I no longer was. I no longer believed all the

prayers and rosaries, but said them anyway. I did not like the Koran but recited it. I did not like any of the trappings and methods and had to act as if I did. I felt like a secret agent or a spy in a dangerous country. It was not fun, and not me at all. I have never been a liar, but I could see this pretending was necessary to get her out. This cult had a dangerous tendencies and I knew it. It was clear this was a criminal organization and I had to treat them as such. Maude makes this clear in the following. She writes in 2018:

*What took place [in the grand jury hearing agaisnt Schuon] was illegal by the criteria of our profane society; but the only truly important thing, was that it sure was forbidden by God. (Twas intrinsically immoral too)! We then got put into a horribly profane trap, allowed by God (Who seemed absent) forcing us to lie under oath, before a profane jury, or see our Shaykh go to jail. We were also forced (by “those above us”) into a “slam campaign” against the accuser – a typical, and profane ruse detested by the Prophet ﷺ . I was told to write the worst things I could think of about the accuser; and they had secret meetings to plan strategy. Yes: I noticed the profanity of it all right; but I was obfuscated for decades afterwards. It’s also taken ages to find the words to express things.

She is admitting to slandering me here. What kind of woman does that? I began to see who she was in fact. I lost all respect for her. However, I saw after a week that this effort of trying to get her out of the cult was utterly impossible, she was so completely brainwashed. She still is brainwashed. I decided at last that it was hopeless and I should break off all relations. I knew that to do this I had to announce that Maude and I had a ‘vertical marriage’. I called up someone in the cult deliberately to say that I was involved with Maude. I knew that this would bring the

“authorities” down on my head. I had been told by Schuon as a condition of my relationship to Maude that I must swear on the Koran and never tell anyone about our “permission” and secret relations. Schuon’s main fear was anyone finding out I had permission for a romantic relationships with Schuon’s “wife”, who was anything but. For them perception was everything, lies built up on top of lies, and they carefully designed all the lies they lived by. Projecting the notion of Schuon as a saint, when he was not, was all that they cared about. I didn’t not wish to swear on anything, as my relation with Maude was really none of their business. I thought it absurd and was glad to finally undermine that absurd prescription. I deliberately broke that promise as it seemed an utterly corrupt thing of him to make me promise that.

The ‘authorities’ came down on me as predicted. I knew the ‘authorities’, were a big joke anyway. I did not recognize their authority as they were a couple of clowns, and I laughed at them when two of these men, Stanley Jones and Mike Fitzgerald⁴⁹³, came to my house and I demanded I never see Maude again, as if it were their business, as if they knew anything about it. I had already broken off with Maude. They did not know I had already given her up in my mind. I had already accepted with great sadness that I would not see her again; she was too far under the possession of Schuon’s system of mind control. I made them leave

⁴⁹³ Stanley Jones, Michael Fitzgerald and Jeffery Willsey among others, created a company called Sunrise Greeting Cards in the 1970’s. They had “met in a course called "The Religious Traditions of the North American Indian" taught by Joseph Epes Brown. Schuon was evidently attracted by the money of these men and came to Bloomington to head the cult enclave there. Fitzgerald actually accompanied Schuon to America and a symbiotic relation developed between cult and the business. There is a photo of Fitzgerald accompanying the Schuon entourage to America in 1980. In the photo appears the word “sucididad”. Schuon felt very insecure in Europe and hoped to find security in the U.S. . But for a man with a basically criminal mind like Schuon no place was secure.

Source: <http://www.allbusiness.com/north-america/united-states-indiana/273841-1.html#ixzz1hiiFMuO4>

my house in disgust. I ordered them out and was glad to see the backs of them. They were fools who neither understood Schuon nor the kind of group they were involved in. They were not worth talking to. That was the end. Once I got my head strait, I knew I would be going to the police and telling them what happened. It was the right thing to do. I had talked this though with my mother and others and knew what I was doing. She supported me all the way and helped me do what was needed.

Maude later tried to come to where I was living, but I knew she would not stay and we argued about the corruption in the cult. She tried to entice me back into the cult, and promised me all sorts of things: money, someone else to marry. She left when I told her how foolish the whole thing was, how her offers made no sense, and what a fraud Schuon was. I was not after money, houses, or even Maude herself. I had had it with Schuon's corruption, Maude's lying, the gossips and lying of the whole cult. Maude created the situation, but I could see myself what a fraud Schuon was. She was unable, is still unable to accept responsibility for the horrible cult leader she helped make him into, or her own corruption in wanting to be part of it. To this day in 2018, she is still trying to excuse Schuon's and Nasr's falsehoods. I was at last free of them and glad of this. Turning Schuon into the police was the next logical step and not an act of revenge. It was an act of clarity, this man had to be exposed, whatever the cost to me. I could see clearly what and who he was. The cult tried to say I did it because a relationship was denied to me. Not so, I was already out of it on my own. I did not change my personality as is claimed, rather I merely saw that I was being played, used and lied to by the cult leader and his officers, including Maude. They act like I am the bad guy, but that is not so, they are. If there was any revenge in this story it is Schuon and Romaine revenging Maude.

Schuon had Maude wrapped up in so many delusions she was not sure if down were up or up down. I rather foolishly thought my love

would get her out of the cult. My romantic streak took over and I followed it, and this was good because it did have the result of getting her out of the cult eventually, at least nominally. Yes, she wants back in, badly. She is utterly confused and even a bit mad. But I was young and naïve and I did not see that Maude was as corrupt as Schuon in many ways. The whole situation with her was really just part of the skewed sexual chemistry between Maude and Schuon. I had been gathering evidence about the cult for a year or more. I knew there was something terribly wrong, but wanted to know what and how far it went. The packages I sent to my mother's house had evidence I gathered months before I actually left the cult. I knew I would be leaving. I had never been in a situation like this and was very scared. Everything I did had to be done carefully and with fore thought. I made mistakes, of course. There was evidence that I could have gotten but didn't. I had photos of Schuon with other nude women, Mrs. Garcia Varela in particular, proof that this was not just a matter of a few mistakes he made but a systematic tendency in the cult of Schuon philandering tendencies, taking other men's wives, making their children into little sex objects. I should have tried to take photographs of primordial gatherings but was too afraid to do it. Only one man took photos of these gatherings and he was as corrupt as the central core of the cult. But a certain love of Maude kept me going.

I even painted an Icon of her, during that last few months, which is absent of all symbolism involving Schuon—he typically painted himself as the Christ child and I refused to do that again. I did this last painting as a sort of final tribute to her, enshrining my own delusions. It now seems an absurdly idealized painting and I am not proud of it. Though it has documentary value. It shows how my romantic streak had transferred whatever love I had for the fiction of the idea of a spiritual master into the love of a woman. But actually it was a dead end love and I refused to see that for a time. Indeed, when I did realize how foolish I had been to trust in this love, I destroyed the painting. The original

painting no longer exists and I only have a few photos of it. But it has historical meaning. The painting is a memorial to a delusion and a foolish false marriage that I thought was real. The feelings I had were certainly real. I know she loved me and risked almost everything for me. But in the end she gave into the cult,, stole things from me, and help them invent falsehoods and lie about me. The powerful pull of money was obvious and I saw slowly how corrupt it had all been.

The painting is an idealistic image---a beautiful lie. Or to put this the other way, I wanted to think it was an image of real love that was undermined by an old man's jealous megalomania. But that is not really true either. It was a mistake, everything had been a mistake. I had been duped by all of it. I saw my own mistake clearly and was deeply shamed by it. It was clear that all this followed on my own acceptance of myth and religion and religion was itself a lie. It hardly matters to me anymore, Maude is long gone and the world has gone on its way. I have long been free of it, except for the old responsibility to tell about it, which I do again here.

I was still in the cult when I did the painting of Maude: Schuon saw the painting and commented that it looked like Maude's body, which of course is correct. It does somewhat and I meant it to. He liked it and did not see how it is really a violation of his aesthetic and my declaration of independence of him. He really was not very discriminating, as was claimed of him endlessly. Indeed, it is my farewell to symbolist painting in general and the beginning of a return and new embrace of realism. It has a certain cartoon like quality as does all of Schuon's art. It is the end of my interest in the ideas I first encountered in Ananda Coomaraswamy.

My original impulse was to destroy all these works, as I find these works embarrassing, even repulsive. I did destroy a few. But I kept some of them , because I knew they were important to explaining the pathology of the Schuon cult. I was aware when I was doing them that I was an

outsider to the group and that my observations were somehow important. I was more journalist than seeker and more witness than participant. I let things happen to me just to see where they went and allowed myself to be in places I might not have chosen, except that I wished to see what I could learn. Indeed, to this day I am still the only person to tell the truth about the inside of this cult. A few have let things out, but few knew what was going on at the center of it all, or how corrupt it all really was. Indeed, there is no first hand account of life in this cult, except mine. Maude's account is largely self justifying and cultish nonsense, make believe and pro-Schuon propaganda.

After I left the cult, Maude returned to her former cult self and was easily adopted into an active campaign to denigrate and discredit me by deliberate exaggerations and slanders. That was a coup for the cult, to have even Maude condemn me publicly, as if it had ever been about me. She admits to being sucked into slandering me in letters. She does not apologize for this, rather she seems proud of her perfidy. She continues to falsely attack me. Everyone told her she made a mistake, when really she didn't. She had let the truth out about his corruption, lies, bogus marriages and so much else. But the social force against her was overwhelming. She is a weak person. She admits to be used by the cult to denigrate me in her documents. It had been her business for years to denigrate anyone who questioned Schuon too closely, so it was easy to slip into this, even if she had once loved me. I expected it, and took her betrayals as inevitable and painful. However, I had told the truth and never claimed to be perfect. They tried to paint me as a psychopath and homosexual, embezzler ⁴⁹⁴and whatever else they thought might stick.

⁴⁹⁴ The biographer and cult propagandist for Schuon, Jean Baptiste Aymard, writes slanderous lies about me and says ¹¹⁵“In addition, the plaintiff was prosecuted for misuse of property and

They could only discredit me by lying, which they did in excess. I realized at last how shallow her interest in me really was. I really was just a pawn in her long argument with Schuon, as I said. She did not know me any more than Schuon knew her. Indeed, the whole cult was a machine for his exaltation, which meant that anyone who questioned him must be skewered. She is still pandering to this delusion.

It took me a long time to get over this betrayal, but I did. I saw well enough how shallow she was. The journalistic distance that I always felt helped a great deal. I tried to get her out of the cult but could not. I had left her after all and the cult. I was clear headed when I left and there was no doubt it was the right thing. There was a growing joy in leaving actually, though it took months to feel it. I was at last free of religion, and I knew why, I was not sure I could explain it, but I knew it was worth trying. I never turned back and have never regretted doing what I did. I knew what my mistake was and I knew what I had done right. My first and last response to Maude had been to start writing down everything I learned, and I kept doing this all along, even after she destroyed notes and poems I had written. I knew I was in a strange and unique situation and that it should be recorded. Explained and compared to other religions.

It is painfully obvious in Maude's documents, as it was in her daily life with me, that she just could not see out of the web of delusions

embezzlement." I was not prosecuted for anything. Maude Murray admitted in writing that the civil case she brought was more or less forced on her by Fitzgerald to try to discredit me for telling the truth about Schuon's primordial gatherings. It was a frivolous harassment case that was dropped.. In the civil case I quickly proved with evidence the house was a gift,, and proceeded to give Maude Murray more than 38,000 dollars because I felt sorry for her. I need not have given her anything. Proving first that the house was mine made them drop the case against me. There was no case. Then to turn around and give her more than half the money showed that I cared for her. So the cult once again lies and fabricates things that are not true. I sold the house, legally, gave Maude more than half the money, paid most of other rest to lawyers, kept a little so I could go back to school, and was done with it. The truth is that Schuon was guilty of child molestation and lied about it. Trying to make it about a house, was just one more of their lies and distractions.

Schuon had placed over her. She thought she needed these delusions to go on. This is how religions operate, stealing trust, they cling to people like spider webs in their hearts. She could not see what a flawed, corrupt and imperfect man he was, a trust thief. He swam in delusions like a fish who needed a whole school of deluded fish to follow him, held to his lies by strings of self-deceit. Like other members in the Schuon cult she had regressed into blind adoration, spiritual narcissism, sibling rivalries, mirroring and parroting of the so-called master. She thought he was infallible and could never do wrong. She knew otherwise in her heart, and acted against him almost against her will. She even started thinking hse was a “prophet” just like Schuon. I could see her madness, she could nto see it. She was inside the cult, I was outside, and I could see her mind stuck in the illusions and mind control of this cult. It became impossible to talk to her. Of course I still loved her, but her duplicity, insults and viciousness toward me made it easier to give her up as lost. This is still the case.

In the last days I was in the cult, Maude created a ruse of having a woman who had MS call me to help her and while I was helping this woman, Maude entered my house and took my love poems, notes of conversations and some photos and destroyed them. I realized then how deeply immersed in the cult she was. She destroyed some fine rhymed love poems I wrote her, lovely things I had written to comfort her in her misery. From that point on I pretty much knew it was over. I was aware now that this was a dangerous cult and understood how sick the whole organization was. I had written those poems out of love and to comfort and amuse her. She destroyed the true thing, the one sharing and comforting thing, that had closely tied us together. I never could trust her after that, and still do not.

It took maybe a year to get over mourning her. It is said in various books that Schuon broke up or ended my relation with Maude, but that

is utterly false. I broke it off at the same time as I abandoned him and his cult, all at once, weeks before they told me I could not see Maude any more. Indeed, they told me I could not see Maude after I had already left her and the cult. What fools they were. They were merely posturing, making up a false story for damage control. They created this phony explanation as part of their campaign to vilify me. But the truth was otherwise. I provoked their reaction on purpose to put a final end to the charade.

As I explained, I had begun to network with others to bring the Schuon cult into question weeks before I left the cult. I called Terry Moore, who was a duplicitous insider. I called Rama Coomaraswamy, Cyril Glasse and Wolfgang Smith. I had consulted with my mother about it and a friend in Cleveland and another in California, seeking advice about how to go about getting Maude out of the cult and if I should go to the police about young girls being involved in the gatherings. I did not tell Maude where I was or that I had left the cult. They all helped me get out of the cult and encouraged me to go to the police. The case against Schuon was laid out with the police. This was all done partly before I was told to leave Maude, and partly after I left. Indeed, I chose the moment, and the moment I chose was one where I had already left Maude and was about to leave Bloomington for good. I drove back to Bloomington knowing it was dangerous for me there, knowing this was a dangerous cult and knowing I might not succeed. I wanted to get Maude out and hoped I could.

The effort to get Maude out was very serious and planned by me and others. I want to labor this subject yet further, since I have not quite explained it. I returned to try to get Maude out and failed, as I said. In four or five days it was clear she was mentally ill and could not see the truth of the disaster that would await her if she stayed. I knew it would probably fail but had to try. It was a brave and daring action on my part

to attempt to infiltrate the cult and deceive Maude and others as to my real intent. I could not tell Maude I had left the cult if I was going to get her out of it. I had learned to play as they played and used their own methods against them. It was not lying to return and try to get her out of the cult, without telling her why, but I knew I had to proceed with great caution and it was dangerous to do what I was doing for her good. That took all the strength I had at the time.

I have never had to do anything of the kind again, thank goodness. But I when I saw I would never be able to get her out, that was when I made some phone calls and told cult members I was involved with Maude. I knew would bring the house on my head. I let the house fall around me, figuratively speaking. I was in control, not them. I was myself again and free. I was free of religion and all its deceits and terrors, fictions and ecstasies, controls and shames. I was free of the stealth operation I attempted. I saw a member of the cult run by my house pretending he was jogging by on a street none of them ever visited. I packed up my things and drove to my mother's house, who helped me more than anyone to get out of the cult. Mom understood how dangerous these people were and how corrupt. When I did not arrive quite on time she called the cult and threatened them. I was proud and moved my little elderly mother could so frighten them. She had a big brave-heart and was strong. As a result of that they closed down their illegal store where they sold copies of Schuon's uncopyrighted paintings. They sold these photos to people from all over the world, probably invalidating any claim to copyright they might now claim.

In any case, I saw clearly how corrupt Schuon and his inner circle was and how deeply Maude was wrapped up in it. I saw how much he had neglected and now abused her. I desperately tried to get her out. I failed. For the next five years Schuon and Romaine mercilessly tortured Maude and then threw her out of the cult in a heartless and despicable way. I knew this would happen. I will write more on this in a minute.

To bring this back to Catherine Schuon, who was supposedly Schuon ‘real wife’—or at least publically she is treated that way. The truth is otherwise. In fact for a time she was ‘vertically’ married—or at least vertically ‘involved’ with Whitall Perry, or rather as Maude writes: Schuon “opened the Quran⁴⁹⁵ about letting Sidi Abdul Quayumm(Whitall Perry) see Saydah Latifah once a week and he found “that is a mercy for you”--- she writes. This practice of “opening the Koran” is utter superstitious nonsense. The mercy was that Schuon could stop feeling guilty for stealing Perry’s wife Barbara from Whitall by swapping his wife Catherine for Barbara. In any case, according to Maude, Schuon “let them see one another for 10 years and be naked together and not kiss on the mouth or have sexual union”, which means they could satisfy each other but not by intercourse. She told me this in 1991 and I’m glad she put it in writing. Schuon’s silly idea was that if sexual gratification was accomplished orally it was not really sex. This is absurd, but there you are, that is who Schuon was, counting naked angels on the heads of pins, or dictating to angels what kind of sex they can have. In any case, the important thing here is to notice that Schuon was interested in controlling the sex life of Catherine and Whitall Perry—and many others. He did this and with a Roger Gaetani’s underaged daughter Jasmine, and Gustavo Polit, encouraging statutory rape thereby. Aldo Vidali gave testimony about this.⁴⁹⁶

⁴⁹⁵ Schuon and Maude used this irrational practice a lot—they would pray and then open the Koran with a given question in mind and wherever their finger fell that was supposed to be god talking to them. Utter nonsense. This magical chance operation has no real basis in fact and easily provides crazy answers to real questions.

⁴⁹⁶ Rodney Blackhirst wrote a humorous poem about Schuon that goes:

FRITHJOF SCHUON

Frithjof Schuon is now long gone
From Bloomington Indiana

I was told in writing that I had an extraordinary “permission”, exceptionally allowed” to me, to be with Maude and we had to live together on the same terms as Catherine Schuon and Barbara Perry. Kissing was allowed. I finally realized that such terms were just a power play by Schuon. But for while I accepted it, not yet completely aware that Schuon was power-mad and somehow got off on controlling other people’s sex lives. It took me time to figure it all out. Schuon was utterly insane—he sought to control the sex lives of the inner circle in cult, everyone’s except his own. He created all the wife swapping, Primordial Gatherings, children being involved in secret rituals and all of that. Once I realized this I left the cult and never turned back. Indeed the bad treatment of children by the cult was a sign of the global decadence of both the master and his group.⁴⁹⁷ I turned Schuon into the police. It was

Where his vertical wives lived vertical lives
In the Schuonian manner.

His tariqah was just bizarre
Although you’d never know it from his books
Which elevate and emanate
His stern Teutonic looks.

The barakah went a bit too far
Out there on Lakota land;
His Virgin Mary verged on scary
In delusions that were grand.

The primordial seemed so cordial.
It unites what’s shared between us.
But when the veil was rent,
we saw what he meant:
To have a center is to have a penis.

⁴⁹⁷ In the inner circle of the cult, the treatment of children was horrendous. Child abuse of various kinds was sanctioned. One child died due to neglect and fighting caused by cult meddling and manipulation of a boy who shot himself in Morocco. One of Schuon’s wives, Barbara Perry tried to give her daughter Catherine as a sexual favor to Schuon. Whitall Perry was evidently abusive towards his children in alcoholic binges. The 3rd wife had her tubes tied because Schuon disliked children. The fourth wife was too involved with herself and Schuon to have children. Schuon painted various nude pictures of young children and involved them in his secret sexual gatherings. He could not abide the idea of having children because he was the only child allowed in his family of pseudo- wives who really were not wives but adorers.

the right thing to do and I have never regretted it. Those who say I made it all up or did it out of revenge are just wrong. That is not the way it was at all.

OK ⁴⁹⁸ then, back to critics of Schuon and the tendency to lie that was essential to Schuon's 'esoteric secrecy'.. So some of this extreme decadence and foul play of the Schuon cult is reflected in Glasse's documents. Glasse supplied me primary documents, letters, texts accounts that show concretely what Paul Yachnes calls the "the inner groups systematic contempt of all others". It is about how Schuon, his wives and Gustavo Polit acted destructively towards individuals such as Victor Danner and his wife Jacqueline or Saydah Warda, Cyril Glasse or anyone else who had totally legitimate questions or criticism of how Schuon and his minions behaved. Let's take just one of these stories briefly look over a little of Glasse's documents teach us about Schuon and his cult.

The Danner story is about Schuon coming to America in 1980. He wanted Danner out of the way and sent Mrs. Catherine Schuon from Switzerland to the Bloomington, Indiana, which was then an outlying branch of Schuon cult. Catherine was rude, overbearing and autocratic with the Danners. She told lies. She felt her authority threatened and tried to cover up for her lies. Her lies are recorded meticulously enough in the Glasse documents. Schuon was back in Lausanne, Switzerland, and heard about this and therefore felt *his* authority threatened. So the Schuons and the inner circle of the cult set about setting Danner up for a huge humiliation, engineered as a sort of mafia style hit or false accusation and denunciations, that shook him to his roots and forced him and his wife out of the cult. A certain Sidi Istevan would later say

⁴⁹⁸ Schuon hated to use of OK and similar colloquial expressions in English as common and "un-aristocratic". I use them with a certain relish now as they really are my culture, not his. His wooden use of phony 19th century pretentious speech does not interest me.

that the Schuon cult is “like the KGB, the former Soviet secret service. Schuon got all his followers in American to denounce Danner in writing. The fault here was the Schuon’s. Danner was accused of not sufficiently appreciating the “celestial representative” of Schuon, namely Schuon’s rather self-important ‘wife’, Catherine, about whom there was more of the gossip than the goddess.. The notion that either she or Schuon was ‘celestial’, whatever that may mean, is pretty silly. Jacqueline Danner rightly deduced that Schuon’s treatment of her husband proved that Schuon was a vicious and power hungry man. Jacqueline Danner writes in the Glasse file that

“A question arose in my mind: How can [Schuon] who has condoned the lies of Catherine Schuon (however trivial they now seem) and dammed us with such violent anger for finding in her certain imperfections, to the point of saying we plotted against her, while he lets others accuse my husband and accuses him himself, --- [how can] a man who forces his disciples to accept lies and deny the evidence of their heart (although not without their consent for one’s free will never disappears even under torture) [how] can such a man be a true spiritual master.”

Obviously Schuon was not a spiritual master-not that anyone is, it is all smoke in mirrors, in every religion. ⁴⁹⁹Catherine Schuon called all the evidence against her lies, when there was overwhelming evidence. This is typical of this cult, that truth in marginalized and egotism is paramount. Rather than recognize that his wife made serious mistakes, Schuon scapegoated the Danners. He shows himself as a vicious opportunist. Jacqueline Danner rightly states in an amazingly courageous letter of

⁴⁹⁹ Mrs. Danner told me she thought Ananda Moyi Ma was a real spiritual master. But I think she was dreaming or just met someone very charismatic. The idea of there being a real spiritual master is itself suspect, as the whole realm of the “spiritual” is suspect.

Oct. 18th 1978 that Schuon claimed to be “infallible” and since he is infallible, he claims his wife must be infallible too. The whole thing started in fact because Mrs. Schuon lied about herself and her treatment of others. In point of fact none of them were infallible and Jacqueline Danner was right to condemn Catherine Schuon for “denying the evidence and telling lies” and she was right to leave the Schuon cult over this horrible affair. It also destroyed her marriage, one of many marriages destroyed by Schuon. I talked to Jacqueline in 1991 and she was still upset about it all, but felt she had done the right thing to leave the monstrous Schuon and his corrupt cult. Jacqueline told me that Schuon had made sexual advances toward her. It is no wonder she did not respect him. Victor Danner made the mistake of kowtowing to Schuon’s irrational demands for apology. Apologies were never good enough for Schuon. As Glasse rightly said in his commentary of the Danner Affair, in the Schuon cult, “recognizing one’s faults... is a formula for anathema”. The Schuon cult basically stoned the Danners, as he did Glasse and Maude and many others back in time.

I got to know Catherine Schuon pretty well and she could be quite kind and a good painter on occasion, even if he work tends to look like Christmas cards. But she was manipulative, gossipy and meddlesome, not all that smart, and rather backwards and provincial in many of her views. I watched her encourage people to lie a number of times. Both she and Schuon lied easily and well and they insisted that others lie on their behalf. Maude Murray, Schuon’s third “wife” admitted in the 1990’s that he entire cult lied to get Schuon off the charges

“We lied in the hearing about polygamy and broke many legal rules to protect Mr. Schuon. Our lawyers cost us hundreds of thousands of dollars and we lied to them to...I had been told to lie as we all had.”..... “there were lies under oath and on T.V....I lied too. The Jury knew we were lying -- they even knew we would lie before we

got into the court room”.

I told the Grand Jury they would all lie in concert. They did. Maude writes further and repeats that “the Shaykh lies and has others lie quite easily”. So on Schuon’s behalf, Michael Fitzgerald and Sharlyn Romaine orchestrated the conspiracy to subvert justice and sought to discredit witnesses against Schuon by exaggeration and lying. Maude gained this inside information when she was still inside the cult. Maude Murray writes that the cult members all met outside their houses at night in 1991, because they had the utterly paranoid idea that the police bugged all their houses. Only a guilty group of people would do that. An innocent group of people would not do that. They were an extremely secretive group with a cult leader, with delusions of grandeur, who was used to lying easily. Maude writes that Schuon thought he was “beyond the law and I could agree that it does not matter if he lies, but his disciples have come to lie like streams flow downhill”. Thus, lying was a regular practice by Schuon and his minions and Schuon sanctioned this practice. Those who think this dirty, lying old man was a saint are sorely deluded. Maude writes in letters and says

“Over twenty people were forced under cult influence, to lie to Grand jury under oath, to protect Schuon. [Murray indicates that Michael Fitzgerald and Sharlyn Romaine] orchestrated this conspiracy to obstruct and subvert justice. [Murray claims that] Schuon lied on TV and elsewhere. "...."the Shaykh lies and has others lie quite easily". [Murray admits that] "Michael Fitzgerald... lied in court under oath, lied to his lawyers and led a spiritual community in a very expensive lawsuit that was won, but with a substrata of lies". [Murray reveals that] Michael Fitzgerald "took charge" of the cult in 1991, and on Schuon's behalf, orchestrated a

conspiracy to subvert justice.[In a film she made for Schuon called "Colors of Light", she reports that]

Michael Fitzgerald, "took charge" and "led the entire group to lie in court under oath...and to our lawyers" to protect Schuon against the charge of child molestation. [She also claims that Schuon's 4th wife, Sharlyn Romaine, assisted Fitzgerald] in the obstruction of justice. She writes that Romaine "engineered this thing... which was for lying to the court". [Murray says of Romaine, who is Schuon's 4th wife that] "I actually think she would murder someone if he [Schuon] gave the slightest reason for it".

In a cult mind control systems lying to the cult is not unusual. In the Bhagwan Rajneesh cult, one of the inner circle women did orchestrate a murder. I told the grand Jury they would all lie under oath. I knew these people well and knew how they would orchestrate getting Schuon off the hook. They did lie under oath and Maude and Sharlyn were accused of perjury based on a tape I gave the court in which Sharlyn discussed the "vertical" marriages they had with Schuon. This was a convenient notion that Schuon had invented in which marriage could be entered into, like Indians, he said, as long as such a marriage led to God. But when push came to shove, Schuon dropped all this fol de rol about freely entered into marriages (with Native Americans this also meant that either party could freely dissolve the union) and started talking like those who deny gay people the right to get married. It turned out that only Schuon could have "vertical" marriages. Being married to a prophet meant that only he could decide when the marriage was over, not the woman. Again it was convenience for himself that mattered. with Maude.

In 1991 the case against Schuon was mysteriously dropped because justice had been obstructed, against the will of the Grand Jury, who

correctly tried to oppose the dropping of the charges and wanted to indict the prosecutor, Robert Miller. It is now clear and can be proven, I believe, that Schuon, Fitzgerald and Romaine and perhaps others led the cult in a conspiracy to obstruct justice. Murray claims that evidence was "fabricated" by Fitzgerald . A few of the underaged girls, the daughters of William Wroth and Jesus Garcia Varela were trotted out before cameras to lie about not being at the Primordial Gatherings, when they certainly were. For Schuon everything depended on young girls being made to lie for him.

This tendency of people in the cult to lie was not new. The Schuon cult was organized around a group of families, the Fitzgerald's. Polacks, MacDonald's, Arbogast's, Varela's, Fluri's. Gaetani's, Jones', Casey's Murray's, Polit's, Perry's, Reynold's and many others. They were kept together by constant prayer meetings at each other's houses. They regularly ate lunch out, often at each other's houses. As a close knit group that denied any value to outsiders, they were constantly reinforcing each other's loyalty. It is no surprise that of the 70 people that were present at Primordial gathers they would all lie about it, except a few, me, Lambert, Catherine Perry and a few others. To tell the truth would have implicated them since most of them allowed their own children or witnessed their friends children at these gatherings. Jacqueline Danner observed Catherine Schuon lying years before, as he says in letters in the Glasse file. So it was quite silly for Schuon to claim Catherine Schuon was a 'celestial representative' who would never lie when Danner merely said she is an ordinary woman who made a mistake. Danner was being kind and for that he was blacklisted and run out of the cult, simply because he described exactly what Catherine Schuon was like. The problem with delusions of grandeur is that no one can ever praise you enough, and Schuon had that problem in excess. In the end Schuon was surrounded by not very bright flatterers, unable to think for themselves.

I don't agree with everything Glasse says about Schuon in the Glasse File, but I know the circumstances of why he did what he did. Glasse is a Moslem and Islam is a tribal religion with war, honor, moral blackmail and killing to create an empire at its core. But, Glasse was not wrong to question Schuon and his relation to Sidi Junayd ⁵⁰⁰. Gustavo Polit's cult name was Sidi Junayd. Glasse's documents provide a lot of detail about how Schuon set him up as a sort of personal front man to do dirty work for Schuon. Aldo Vidali records in a long letter (July 4, 1992) written to Schuon that

“ Your favored disciple, S. Junayd, told me that you gave him permission to do anything he desired sexually to (a deleted name of a young female cult member), then a girl of sixteen years, except entering her - which restriction he disobeyed repeatedly. That was not the advice of a wise man, but of an amoral if not immoral man, a man who has no understanding of the souls of the young nor of their right to be protected from sexual intrusion until they have reached maturity. Your advice most likely caused the mental crisis the [girl's mother] mother and makes you an irresponsible man. It confirms the molestations you committed against minors, acts you instructed others to deny before the grand jury. We have spoken to witnesses who confirm all you were accused of and more.”

This is exactly what was arranged with Polit, just as Aldo tells it. Polit's interest in young girls and women appeared and was not stopped by Schuon, Schuon allowed it, evidently because Schuon had a similar interest. Schuon's favorite artist was Hodler, who had a similar interest.

⁵⁰⁰

Schuon's own Native American and Virgin paintings contain young girls nude. Maude Murray succeeded in talking Schuon into getting rid of Polit 3 or 4 years after Glasse was thrown out of the cult partly on the grounds of his being a pedophile, so when she says in 2018, of the young girls used by Schuon in Primordial Gatherings:.

We didn't even notice they were young; it seemed like an innocent mistake to us, and they did not seem like "children" – but it was only innocent as seen from within a whole mindset that allowed an esoterically beautiful-seeming dance, which should never have taken place, with women of any age, according to the Quran, the Sunnah, and all the great Sufi masters

This claim to innocent naivete is absurd propaganda. Actually, Maude was aware of the tendency to pedophilia in the Schuon cult. We talked about it, and she was herself the one who made sure that Gusavo Polit was shipped out of town for this very reason. A lot of the behind the scenes manipulations such as this were organized by Maude, with Schuon's approval. Schuon was a very devious man who employed inner circle members to do things he did not want to do himself. Polit was shipped off to California rather than turn him into the police. The Schuon's paid for his way to go back to school. Catherine Schuon complained to me about giving him huge amounts of money. That is where Aldo got to know Polit and gathered evidence about him. It seems that Schuon chose Junayd because he wanted someone cruel and hard. Schuon told people, evidently quoting Machiavelli or Caesar Borgia that he wanted to be "more feared than loved". Schuon's delusions of grandeur led him to read books about tyrants like Napoleon and Ieyasu Tokagawa, both of whom he tried to imitate. Glasse was not wrong to question the initial stages of the Primordial Gatherings or Schuon's

misuse of Native American religion. Schuon's understanding of Native Americans involved an imperialist nostalgia. Schuon was an absolutist and imperialist, but tried to foster a nostalgia for them by intellectually colonizing them in his own way, as an example of his domination of religions. But Glasse was a Moslem and was trying to question Schuon as a universalist and syncretistic charlatan. There was much more to Schuon's delusions than merely his syncretistic tendency. His view of religion was mostly about having transcendental power. Moreover there was someone in Schuon's inner group, Maude Murray, who was out to get Glasse, after he years long affair with him, succeeded in convincing Schuon that Glasse was mentally ill and paranoid, when really it was Schuon that reacted in a paranoid manner.⁵⁰¹ Glasse was thrown out of the Schuon cult and branded as evil when he was not evil at all. But the paranoid and power hungry dynamics of this destructive cult spit out Glasse and his friends very quickly. The one imperative in the cult was praise Schuon or jump in a lake.

In any case, Glasse gathered an impressive series of documents about Schuon. They record Schuon's obsession with authority over reason; and Schuon and his wives tendency to create a Kafkaesque world of duplicity, irrationality and false accusations all in service of hyping up Schuon unrealistically grandiose ego. Glasse shows how superstitious and ignorant many of the members of the cult were. He records silly visions that the group believed and falsehoods they worshiped. Schuon's need of power leads directly to abuse of others. This is not to say that the Glasse documents do not have problems. There are not well organized and they are insufficient explanations as to what is being said

⁵⁰¹ Maude's affair with Glasse, which lasted 10 years, and which was kept secret, was certainly part of this effort to malign him, inspired by a sort of hypocrisy on Maude's part. Notice however how the sexual politics between Maude and Schuon already did great damage to Glasse, as it would later to me. Maude and Schuon were poison together and brought out the worst in one another, but rather than visit that on each other they spread it through the whole organization. This again shows what a bad leader Schuon was, as well as how dishonest Maude was.

by whom. They are in several languages.

The Glasse documents support a rather orthodox view of Islam which I do not agree with. I am no supporter of Islam. They tend to support the idea that all the religion are valid, when clearly there is little real difference between a cult and a major religion other than scale. They also tend to encourage the idea that Schuon was a real spiritual master. He was really an authoritarian sociopath. There are no real spiritual masters. There are only more or less convincing fakes. Glasses' documents should be public eventually so scholars cans start to dissect the Schuon cult accurately. There are useful in showing that many people, not only me, thought Schuon a fraud. But for now they are still private. There are amazing primary documents from a religious cult.

Glasse observes that Schuon and his wives regularly talked about European disciples of Schuon as being second class, or even "worthless". Hossein Nasr was likewise included in this group. I heard such talk myself. Nasr was looked down on by Schuon, and Nasr came regularly to Bloomington eager to lap up any of the crumbs that fell from Schuon's able. Glasse observes that European disciples of Schuon failed in "not recognizing [Schuon's} greatness, infallibility, [or the] incomparable sanctity of a spiritual master who has a strange penchant for going into rages in restaurants over the question of seating or the garlic in the bread". (Schuon forbid garlic eating in his cult) Glasse points out that even at dinners it was obvious that Schuon was a narcissist who demanded constant adulation. Glasse says the "wives" were central in getting this for him. Indeed, to not supply Schuon with this adulation would get one on the "list of enemies, the classification into which one can fall simply if ones lives far away and has not appeared for guru

worship in a long time”⁵⁰² What Glasse says here is completely accurate to what many others experienced in Schuon’s cult.

To give an idea how afraid people are of the Schuon cult, Mark Sedgwick lists 8 anonymous informants⁵⁰³ who gave interviews against Schuon in his Book Against the Modern World. They were all scared of retaliation by Michael Oren Fitzgerald and the legal mafia the Schuon cult has sent out trying to do damage control after Schuon got arrested. Schuon was caught masterminding lying to Grand Juries and showing himself off nude to nudist followers. Young girls were involved in these gatherings as has since been proven. The Schuon cult has hurt a lot of

⁵⁰² Glasse commentary to a letter from Schuon , written by Glasse in June 1987. Dossier Glasse

⁵⁰³ In Mark Sedgwick’s book Against the Modern World. Sedgwick’s records critical views of ex- followers of Schuon. Some of these views are wide of the truth. Sedgwick records that Victor Danner thought that “Schuon was an authentic Shaykh” but that he was “surrounded by mediocre and even wicked people”, (pg. 177). I met Danner’s surviving wives and Danner was misled by the whole deceitful entourage of Schuon. The notion of Schuon being an “authentic Shaykh” is false, not just in Schuon’s case, but in anyone’s case. The whole notion a spiritually chosen people is fiction. But putting that aside---it must be said that among Shaykhs, Schuon’s claim to be one is especially absurd. Many people expressed the view that Schuon was holy and his followers corrupt. But this is just cult brainwashing and wildly false There was nothing “holy” about Schuon in person, on the contrary. Actually the followers and the leader were corrupt. The cult was arranged so the wives of Schuon hid Schuon’s real character. You can see Maude doing this in her documents. Followers and outsiders only saw the fake Schuon who was trotted out for gatherings and private meetings, initiations and Majlis. In private Schuon was a very corrupt man who had many difficult and perverse things in this make-up. He was prone to excessive anger, paranoia and megalomania, and had real delusions of grandeur which turned into rage when brought into question. He was a polygamist, despised others, had excessive pride and was profoundly paranoid and superstitious. He was a dandy who liked to dress up in bright blue velvet cloaks and pretend to be a king or royalty. In association with the grandiosity, he also was prone to a certain infantilism that I think was part of his narcissistic personality disorder: He encouraged a certain worship of himself as a child and painted himself, bizarrely, as the Christ-child embraced between the spread legs of a nude Virgin Mary. I spent a lot of time—nearly two years--- in a position where I could watch Schuon’s behavior on a daily basis, something only a few of his “wives” could do. The notion that he was saintly or not involved in the nasty things that went on in his cult is just mistaken. He was involved in most of the things that went on. He designed the Primordial Gathering and the paintings: he created a cultic system and ran it as a sort of tyranny. The gullible who loved him were encouraged in their absurd adulations by a cult mechanism that was designed to make him appear virtuous and faultless. The cult mechanism is still intact in Bloomington, trying to sanitize the dirty old man. You can readily see it on the “World Wisdom” website and other cult venues

people and many people know this. Mafias hurt people because they want to spread terror to others who might step forward. That is why there are so many silent followers and former followers of Schuon. Of the many that could talk about what they know about Schuon's cult very few will.

There is also an assumption perhaps tacit, that America supports cults because of the first amendment in the U.S. Constitution. The first amendment prohibits the making of any law "respecting an establishment of religion", impeding the "free exercise" of religion, as well as infringing on freedom of speech. The Schuon cult tries to silence critics and has managed in some cases to curtail freedom of speech. Due to misreading of the amendment, Religious freedom became a high value priority in some areas. Destructive cults and religious institutions are given too much leeway to abuse and exploit. The Schuon cult demonstrates this in their efforts to use courts to silence critics. During the indictment of Schuon for child molestation the Schuon cult lawyers tried to pretend the cult was being persecuted for their religious beliefs. Hardly. They were trying to hide Schuon's crime behind the first amendment.⁵⁰⁴

When I gave evidence to the police about Schuon in 1991 other people came forward too. Many testified against him. Mary Ann Danner, the wife of the late Victor Danner who was so damaged by Schuon, wrote about Schuon at the time and said:

⁵⁰⁴ The hatred of the world that involves many cults has a positive factor in that they at least are seeking alternatives to the inhuman power of capitalism, which is so cruel and unforgiving to nearly everyone. But the result is almost always worse than the capitalism cults seek to supplant. For instance "Heaven's Gate was an American UFO religion based in San Diego, California, founded and led by Marshall Applewhite (1931–1997) and Bonnie Nettles (1928–1985). On March 26, 1997, police discovered the bodies of 39 members of the group who had committed suicide, in order to reach an alien space craft which they believed was following the Comet Hale-Bopp, which was at its brightest." Says an entry on Wikipedia. I followed the development of this cult and saw many analogies with the Schuon cult and Guenonians.

“He has willfully and wantonly destroyed marriages, smeared reputations, drove some followers to nervous breakdowns, harassed members, and engaged in adultery and child molestation. Because of his self-inflated role and position, he is not only immoral but also amoral. Consequently to have no awareness of proper conduct and hence no remorse for his actions or the pain he has inflicted on others. By a kind of casuistry he manages to twist circumstances and situations ... uses pseudo-metaphysical arguments to have the final say. Moreover, he threatens those who may disagree with him should they upset him . . . , Schuon appears to be a kind of schizophrenic who after many years of being surrounded by brainwashed sycophants has lost touch with reality—and by extension so have some members of his group, particularly those closest to him “By their fruits you shall know them,” and Schuon’s mark on them is unmistakable. As for those who choose to leave, they are explained away as not intellectual enough to understand his teachings, doctrine and method have “lost their intelligence” as it were, or they have betrayed their master. The fault always lies with the follower and never with Schuon. Even the most flagrant violations of behavior are either blamed on his closest companions or denied. Lying is characteristic of the of the group and eventually leads to mistrust among them.”

In 1991, after news of Schuon’s molestations of young girls came out, Schuon even got the girls that were involved in the molestations to lie to TV cameras about what happened. They claimed to be out of state, which was not true. They were set up by the cult and their parents to lie so as to get Schuon help off the hook. Schuon had done the same thing years earlier when he tried to seduce young Catherine Perry and then the

cult made her lie about it.⁵⁰⁵ It is darkly humorous that Schuon, who wrote so much about the virtues, would enlist young girls to lie for him to protect him from prosecution for sexual indiscretions. But this hypocrisy is typical of a psychopath. Schuon even tried to blame the press for his crimes. Other critics of Schuon have been demonized by Schuon and his minions in awful ways. Some of the people so demonized were myself⁵⁰⁶ and Aldo Vidali, Maude and others. When a group demonized you in this way you learn the sting of what cults really are and why they are dangerous. Religion is political and it lies to further itself. Aldo wrote a book about Schuon called the Feathered Snake, a rather bitter and occasionally humorous satire, which the Schuonian so hated that they spent over 250,000 dollars trying to suppress it, using lawyers. They even came to Cleveland to harass me, rather uselessly, since Aldo had done nothing wrong. But it was all about trying to sue the courts to intimidate people, like the mafia. There were successful. Aldo had to move to Hawaii to get away from their legal harassments.⁵⁰⁷

Schuon, through lawyers, proved his willingness to abuse his “wife”, and forced Maude to sign a confidentiality agreement more or less abolishing her freedom of speech. In the process she lost nearly everything and was forced into poverty. He and his cult were brutal and cruel to her. She tried honestly and openly to get away from his bogus “marriage” to her. In response he punished her with law suits and poverty. Only a very bad man would do this. Rama Coomaraswamy was also sued for his effort to tell the truth about Schuon. Mark Sedgwick

⁵⁰⁵ Aspects of these lies are recorded in the Glasse documents.

⁵⁰⁶ I was called a homosexual and was accused of crimes I did not commit. They twisted and altered the truth to make me sound as horrible as possible and did all they could to slander and lie about me. Schuon was guilty and they knew it, so they tried to make me the scapegoat of his crimes. It hurts badly when this happens and it let me know how bad people can be, and how cruel. One begins to see who people are the cruelest of earth ‘species.

⁵⁰⁷ The cult lawyers and Michael Pollock came to Cleveland in 1992g from California and spent a lot of money trying to enlist me in their harassment case against Aldo Vidali and I had to sit all day answering inane questions about him. It was harassment against me and Aldo, as well as Aldo’s family because he criticized them.

too was attacked by the cult for trying to tell the truth about them. The cult was furious that Sedgwick allowed some of those who have no voice to speak out against Schuon, even though they refused to let him use their names. I'm sure they are grateful for this. The cult does not want the truth about them out in public, that is plain. They have systematically tried to destroy any free press or critical review of Schuon. Ziauddin Sardar wrote an essay in the magazine Impact International – called “Man for all Seasons”.⁵⁰⁸ Peter Wilson writes

⁵⁰⁸ See

<https://groups.google.com/forum/#!topic/soc.culture.iranian/EKtP6julW4E%5B151-175%5D>

This essay is quite good, An excerpt of it follows:

” Nasr writes that

There is “much more to the "genius", {of Schuon} who unlike any other "single human being", surpasses all in "both metaphysics and plastic arts". The absurdity of Nasr's views became quite evident in the Winter of 1991. The Herald Times of Bloomington, Indiana, reporting on the front page of its 15th October 1991 edition, declared: [Leader of sect indicted: Sexual abuse alleged in rites]

The 84 year old leader of a religious sect living in Inverness Woods southeast of Bloomington has been indicted on felony charges of child molesting and sexual battery in connection with alleged sexual abuse of three teenage girls during the sects rites... Fritjof Schuon of 3700 Inverness Farms Road was the chief target of three indictments issued by a Monroe County grand jury...

Two days later, State Police Detective, Sgt. Jim Richardson, told the Herald Times that during his investigations he had interviewed 30 people in connection with the case and concluded that Schuon is a powerful, aloof man who was "obsessed with nudity", and who "led his followers who wore American Indian garb, in rituals during which he pressed himself against bare breasted women while placing his hands on their hips". Search of Schuon's house had "turned up photographs of nude and semi-nude members of the group participating in ritual dance". The same day, Schuon refuted the notion that he was the head of a cult but admitted that he was the Shaikh of a Sufi order called Tariqa Mariamiah, "a spiritual society for prayer which exists for those Sufi followers of my principles" (17th October 1991). Defending Schuon, Nasr told the Herald Times of 20th October that "he belongs to a different world. He is very much a premodern man". On 21st November, the paper reported that Prosecutor Bob Miller dropped the Schuon indictment claiming lack of evidence. “In a furor of accusations and counter accusations his deputy, David Hunter, submitted his resignation.

Whatever the merits or demerits of the indictment, the investigation revealed certain important features about Schuon. He has established an hitherto unknown tariqa revolving around Virgin

Mary. Nudity plays an important part in the rituals (zikr?) of this tariqa. And despite the language and terminology, Schuon's innovation had little to do with Islam or Sufism.

The case against Schuon was brought by Mark Koslow, a former disciple and member of the Tariqa Mariamiah. Koslow was initiated into the tariqa in June 1989. "was given", he says, "the fifth and sixth themes of meditation, the Alchemy and the Primordial Dance, as well as the sexual alchemy in rapid succession. He studied painting with Schuon and painted 5 icons under his direction". While a member of tariqa, Koslow believed that Schuon was "a prophet, an Avatara and the equal or more of Solomon". But his eventual disillusionment as well as involvement in a love triangle with Schuon and one of his wives forced Koslow to leave the sect. His "Account of the Schuon Cult", says Koslow, has been written "for cult members to help them get out".

Koslow reveals a wealth of unsavory detail; but most of what he has to say correlates directly with what Schuon has himself written and what Nasr has revealed in tantalizing, albeit neatly camouflaged, glimpses. For example, Koslow says that Schuon is an authoritarian figure who claims to be able to read people on the basis of physiognomy. Both inside and outside the sect, people are classified according to the Hindu theory of caste: "priestly types, warrior types, merchant types, manual laborers, casteless «chandala» or according to the gnostic categories as pneumatic, psychic and hylic". But we can gather all this by simply reading Schuon's *Caste and Races* (Perennial Books, 1982) where he suggests that caste is the cosmological principle of the universe and Hindu caste systems is based on "natural properties of humankind"; that races have distinctive human and natural characteristics and that people's physical features reveal all. It is not unnatural for a man who believes in social hierarchy to be a divine principle to actually structure his own sect on a strict hierarchy. Koslow claims that Schuon insists that his disciples "define history as leading up to Schuon". Well, Nasr himself says so in so many words as I have shown above! Koslow says that Schuon insists that the members of his sect should only read his books no other books are worthy of attention. Well, have you ever met a Guru who says otherwise?

The bible of Tariqa Mariamiah is "Memories and Meditations" of Frithjof Schuon. Disciples get portions of the "Memories" according to their station; and only the top officials have the complete book. But it is an ever expanding work that serves not only as a guide to behaviors of the sect but also for theory building. As Schuon's behaviors becomes more and more outrageous, as his claims become more and more absurd, metaphysical justifications for them are developed in the "Memories". It is in a section entitled "Sacred Nudity" that we learn of Schuon's experience of Virgin Mary: "On my way to Morocco in 1965, when I was suffering from asthma and feeling ill to the point of death . I experienced a blessed contact with the Heavenly Virgin. And this had as its immediate result the almost irresistible urge to be naked like her little child; from this event onwards I went naked as often as possible, indeed most of the time." This Great Vision, according to Koslow, is explained as follows: "the Virgin descended down upon him, naked, and she comforted his misery by consoling him with her sexual parts which she exposed to him inside of him, comforting his heart". It was thus not just a spiritual vision but also a sexual one. Since then, Schuon has had other visions. A second vision occurred on Christmas Eve, 1985: "He heard on one side of him the Ave Maria being sung, and on the other side Ya Maryam alayk'l salam ya Rahman, ya Rahim being sung. He was like a child; he felt the breasts of the Virgin touching his back. Her legs were spread and she straddled him from behind. He put his hands on her thighs." Ya Maryam ... has become the prayer of the cult: it is there behind the contents page of the SUNY edition of Nasr's *Knowledge and the Sacred* but has been removed from the Malaysian edition of the book. There have been other visions in which Schuon claims to have met all the prophets, Buddha, Kali and Pte San Win, the Buffalo Cow Woman of the Sioux Indians

against Schuon in his book Sacred Drift. These last two examples were not attacked, so far as I know. Wilson is an interesting writer, but still confused about religion in elemental ways. He comes out of a Beat tradition and still tried to make some headway as a Moslem in America. I don't think his effort was very successful, though he did have some insight to question some things.⁵⁰⁹

Maude Murray wrote that

“I find it doubtful that the Shaykh could be all that he thinks he is: that is a Nabi (a minor prophet) of the Religio Perennis, who will open a new paradise; a pneumatic: a saint: a sage: a Sufi Master: and the greatest one alive: a perfect metaphysician, like Shankara or Plato, a man with rights like Krishna's and a man whose body radiates benefic influences for good people”.

who is credited with bringing them the sacred pipe: "the Pte San Win was in a mihrab (of a mosque). She was naked and he rose up with her, embracing, into the air". "Memories and Meditations" describes these visions and explains what they mean for Schuon and his disciples.”

“After the "Memories", it is the paintings of Schuon that become the focus of the cult's meditations. According to Koslow, the paintings are "presented to the fuqara in hierarchical order". The classifications are: (1) paintings which everyone can see; (2) restricted paintings which not everyone may see; (3) esoteric or tantric paintings which only the elite or inner circle may see. "The most esoteric paintings are those which picture Schuon naked so that one can see his sexual parts, especially those paintings where his sexual parts are the focus of the paintings." Another category of the "most esoteric paintings is that of the Pte San Win, the Buffalo Cow Woman of the Sioux, and Lallah Yogishwari, a naked Hindu saint". Disciples, say Koslow, are required to meditate on these paintings and followers pray to portraits of Schuon for "barakah" and to have their prayers answered.....”

⁵⁰⁹ See also William S. Burroughs Vs. the Qur'an
By Michael Muhammad Knight

I never saw Schuon radiate anything except for poses of grandeur, pride and disdain for others. He liked Plato and Shankara--- two rather effete and over rated writers who hate practical work and love slaves and caste.

I will discuss some other critics of Schuon below in a chapter on Fringe Traditionalists. But Maude Murray is in many ways the most interesting of Schuon's critics and perhaps the most unwilling and tragic. Many people have demeaned her, such as Nasr and Devie, but that is mistaken. She was far from perfect, but she had a good heart and tried to tell the truth, most of the time. She wrote some various pieces about corruption in the Schuon cult, and she was right about that.. She also made some videos about them and was viciously attacked,. She writes that the cult figuratively "stoned" and "lynched" her, and put her in jail 3 times as well as sued her to try to make her keep her mouth shut.

Maude writes about her "marriage" to me that

"Believing that I was no longer married to anyone and that God had given me to someone who would be my discreetly secret spiritual husband henceforth, I had a secret "marriage" with him. It is extremely difficult to keep one's head about what is and isn't a marriage when one is the third wife or a Moslem [Schuon] in a Christian country and when one is spiritually divorced from the man one is legally married to [John Murray]. To top it all off there were lies about these marriages too. When my "marriage" to Koslow came to light everyone blamed me to such a degree that nothing I could say as an excuse was considered. Finally not even one

person would talk to me, not even people I'd known for 40 years. When I said that Mr. Schuon was hardly noticing me people said I was blaming him for my faults.

Actually all the blame was Schuon's. She was right to blame him for his neglect of her. He only wanted her as a slave of his whims. It was his character faults that were the real problem all along. He was a sordid angry fellow who had attracted and created a group of people who served his power and sexual needs, which were immense and delusional. I have never seen such a selfish man in my whole life, and his followers are like little robots who hang on every word that comes out of his mouth. Murray lists some of the people in the cult that have shunned her. In each case, she mentions good things she did for them and how they now treat her with cruel indifference. Because of gossip and shunning by Schuon and the inner circle Maude records that her best friends shunned her: she says for instance:

“Barry MacDonald has dropped me totally as a friend without having heard a word of my side of the story” She says the same for Rebecca MacDonald. Of Deborah Willsey, now Deborah Casey⁵¹⁰, Maude says she “has not spoken to me since Sharlyn [Romaine] took over “my case”.

⁵¹⁰ Deborah was jilted by her husband, Jeffrey Willsey who openly wanted to marry Aldo Vidali's sons' girlfriend. He managed to pry her away from Vidali's son Ari, and Deborah married the man across the street evidently, Patrick Casey, who evidently divorced his wife too, the sister of the wife of Michael Fitzgerald. This was an incestuous in-group of people. But is the typical soap opera in the Schuon cult. Divorce, Musical beds. Ari was enlisted by the cult to sue his father by means of a bogus legal case involving a boat. Aldo disowned his vicious son. Few of them have children because Schuon did not like kids. Four wives and Schuon could not have a single kid!! His wives were expected to know he did not want children and one of them got her tubes tied for him. The great prophet could not share time with little chips off the old block, He was much too narcissistic to share his time.

”Mrs. William Wroth⁵¹¹ has not spoken to me [in four years] one day I saw her at Jo-Ann fabrics and she ducked behind a pillar and put on dark sunglasses”. That is the mother of one of the children whose child abuse occurred with her permission and she was embraced by Schuon primordial gatherings.

Vivienne Reynolds—“her mother died recently and I was heartbroken not to be able to see her two children and their two husbands”.

Heidi Stoudman, ‘I told her I could not survive another month due to lack of money and I received no answer’. Barbara Perry, ‘I appealed to her over and over but I finally gave up’

Whitall Perry: ‘I risked my life to get his long lost daughter back to him and I failed... When he was in disgrace I went to see him once a week.. where is he? I needed someone to include me when I was left out.’ ⁵¹²

“My father, Samuel L. Harrison,... does not have long to live and no one will speak to him either. People turn their backs when they see him in town and Mrs. [Catherine] Schuon lied to him about several things” “Mrs. Schuon told me... to be patient, that people would forget and forgive me that it would take time ...I have waited four years and it got worse all the time. I asked to see the Shakyh [Frithjof Schuon] no reply. Again and again.”

⁵¹¹ This is the mother of one of the girls, (Carmel Wroth) who was made to lie about her involvement in primordial gatherings. Maude Murray later admitted that this young woman and other girls were indeed involved in the gatherings, as I said in 1991. Other evidence also showed that young people, both male and female were involved in these gatherings. See my essay on evidence against Schuon on my website

http://www.naturesrights.com/knowledge%20power%20book/frithjof_Schuon.asp

⁵¹² Maude leaves out of this why his daughter was lost to him, I have discussed this elsewhere in this book. The Perry family was broken by the Schuon’s with Barbara trying to give her daughter as a sexual present to Schuon and Frithjof trying to seduce their daughter, and wife swapping among all the adults. Maude was enmeshed in all this decadence too. The tried to rope Catherine into it.

This all shows the scapegoating and guilty skulking about this group does in its effort cover up for Schuon's crime. Schuon was guilty of molesting children and the cult treats Maude as a pariah because Maude exposed the truth about Schuon. Schuon was a hypocrite who wanted to blame Maude for his crimes. Their ill treatment of her is yet more proof of their guilt. Maude Murray was forced by Schuon to suffer because she told the truth. Maude was the real hero in this whole affair. She exposed a fraud, perhaps not meaning to, but in fact, she did.

Maude writes

“when I was about to be put out into the street and had literally .76 cents, I went to Inverness Farm Road [the compound/ or fenced and area where the cult members reside] and I just walked – until one of my former friends got a protective order filed against me.⁵¹³ I sold all I had and moved in with my very poor and ill father. I broke the protective order on purpose by making some phone calls in order to provoke any kind of reaction to break the total deadlock in communications. Later, in court, (after trying to sue various people [in the group] for 1 dollar each} I agreed to agree to everything anyone could possibly want in order to get “them” to show the Shaykh [Schuon] a video I made called the “Colors of

⁵¹³ Maude says in another document that on this occasion “walking on this road” actually meant something else she says: “when I when I was literally about to become a homeless person I went to “picket” in front of Mr. Schuon’s house”. I don’t know what the sign said she picketed with. It is delightfully American and working class, that she tried to do this like a brave union member protesting the evil CEO.. Indeed a lot of her efforts are almost like Martin Luther King civil disobedience. She even thinks of herself as someone being “lynched”, which refers to what was done to blacks. The use of these terms shows she was at least unconsciously aware of the sexist prejudice or misogyny that was in operation against her. Interesting that she felt herself a certain identity with victims of racist prejudice and hate. Schuon was a sexist and a racist and her protests have a lot of sense in them.

Light". By doing that, I proved my faith in him to solve the problem. But that only made things worse. He wrote that I was pathologically subjective, more or less crazy, etc. etc. Now I couldn't believe he could be so opaque and inhuman and mean, so I didn't believe it! I wanted to see it and prove it to get his honor exonerated forever. So one day before dawn I walked for hours in briars and streams to come into his yard from the woods. I sat down in his lawn and called out to him for mercy. [Sharlyn's Romaine's] watchdog charged me (but left me alone) and they called the police who handcuffed me and took me off to jail" "The way things are now; this appears to be a degenerate cult which is capable of destroying the life and sanity of an innocent person"

She finally grasped what I told her 4 or 5 years previously, the last time I saw her, when she came to Cleveland. I told her Schuon was a pathologically subjective and a degenerate cult leader. This is a "degenerate cult" and Schuon was a fraud. She did not want to believe it, and condemned me instead and went through terrible suffering before she could let herself see it.

Let's look at these facts. Maude had requested that Schuon 'divorce' her in 1991 and he obliged, as if a non-existent 'marriage' needed a 'divorce' – His mere whim sufficed to divorce her, which means the marriage itself was a whim and a mere wisp of meaningless fiction. He put this woman through years of misery for nothing. Why? This shows Schuon to have been a cruel and heartless man of rare persistence. He let her suffer mercilessly for over five years when he could have easily stopped it. This is more than merely a mean man. When I read over these 500 or so pages of Maude's testament I see that a good proportion of them are devoted to trying to excuse all the harm that Schuon is doing to her. Her writings are rather like certain slave

testimonies where slaves assume the point of view of the oppressor, Maude cannot bring herself to finally see what a vicious man her idol is. Her devotion to Schuon had a strong dose of masochism in it: Maude identifies with her torturer.

One of her main functions in the cult, when she was “married” to Schuon, was to excuse and justify his bad or cold behavior to visitors and cult members. Schuon ran a tight ship and the ‘wives’ were a major part of preserving the illusion of his magnificence, sex appeal and wisdom. They talked him up all the time, that was their job and the maintenance of the cult required it. Initially, just about everyone who came into the cult falls for this hype. I used to drive people to see Schuon at his house for an audience. These people were coming from various parts of the world. The wives and “dignitaries” would lather on the goopy praise for him in the thickest possible way. Little did the visitors know what a selfish, mean old goat he really was. I didn’t know either until I had been in the cult a year or so and watched him very closely. They read his silly books and did not realize how these books really say awful things hidden behind the big words, long sentences and fancy Guenonian terminology. They didn’t know how to read them with critical insight. I saw how he actually wrote them, with various people’s help and how his writings cloak a very reactionary and deluded man.⁵¹⁴

But over time, some learned to see through the cult and how it manufactured Schuon’s image carefully and with a lattice of lies.⁵¹⁵ They

⁵¹⁴ See my essay on Schuon’s books here: Scroll down when you get to this site http://www.naturesrights.com/knowledge%20power%20book/frithjof_Schuon.asp

⁵¹⁵ Lying to Schuon was a major function of the wives. I wrote in my Account of 1991: “I recall one day last August or September (1990) when Maude came over on the day of her visit with Schuon. Whenever she came over after these visits and she came over after all of her visits, I would lie on the couch with her, and begin to ask her, what did he say, what did Sharlyn [forth wife] say, what were they painting and so on. With all my questions, her descriptions would sometimes take up an hour. During one of these times she told me (as I mentioned earlier) that Sharlyn showed him some pictures she had taken of him. He was wounded to the core by the poor

extensively used damage control techniques to control brush fires that inevitably developed given the wide variance between the truth and the phony image put out about Schuon. The wives were all about damage control, lying if necessary, or at least manipulating the network of inner-cult gossip to try to get their way.

Maude had been in this cult so long she just couldn't give up the bad habit of praising this monster at every turn, submitting to his abuse and then seeking yet more excuses for him. Indeed, the source of her madness in these documents is Schuon's ill treatment of her, his inability to forgive her, his bad character and his lack of virtue. The one thing that sticks out in Maude's document is her willingness to go through the worst suffering for this jerk. I already thought his many times before Schuon even knew about Maude's and my "marriage". She would lie on the floor of my kitchen naked and pray for hours, weeping, to a rather gross nude portrait of Schuon. She would hold the Icon to her bare chest and weep and invoke god's help, as if that would actually happen. She prayed to this jerk who had no care for her at all, and who had merely used us as a prop for many years. I came to realize that Schuon then that a callous man, and a tyrant.

She was in total distress for years about him. Many people in the cult had the erroneous belief that this guy had extrasensory capabilities, (a common superstition in the cult, many of them thought this to

appearance of his own image and in a fit of vanity he got asthma. Both Sa. Sharlyn and Maude had to quickly comfort him, run their hands over him and tell him how great and handsome he is, how majestic his body looks, how he is a prophet and how grace or baraka pours out from his body. This had to go on for a 1/2 hour or an hour. The extreme excess of his reactions to these photographs is quite typical of him, and also typical is the reaction of the two women. This is their primary function: to keep Schuon constantly aware of his greatness and spiritual sublimity. I neglected to add that Schuon threatened the two women who were comforting him with stopping the primordial gatherings since he thought his body ugly and old, and that no would wish to look at him. They had to talk him out of doing this." This shows again that the primordial gatherings were nearly as much their creation as his.

Schuon's delight. Schuon encouraged this belief by saying he could read his wives thoughts at distance and see what she was doing. Actually he had no special capabilities at all. Maude thought Schuon could hear her, so she lay there begging him to let her be married to someone else. She really didn't think she was married to him and in fact she wasn't. Once he guilt-tripped Maude by saying that he talked to the Virgin Mary for a few hours and she said the devil was in her. He had the fourth wife tell her this. Nothing of the sort happened and he lied, as all his visions were lies. If Maude had thought it through she could have said she had a vision of the virgin herself. She could have had the Virgin say that Schuon's pride is a devil and he needs to give Maude up as he holds onto her out of false pride. But she was incapable of this kind of lying, to her credit. His whole bizarre system of multiple bigamies was an outgrowth of his insane need to control and entrap others. He had enormous power over her and her real 'crime' was to resist that power. She prayed to his 'icon' at night and would go see him during the day at her usual three day a week meeting with him and Sharlyn. She would beg him to release her and he refused, like a tyrant jailer.

In the end my marriage to Maude was proved to be a sham, and I fled from it, and from Schuon in disgust. It was not a sham because Schuon said so but because Maude herself was so much a part of Schuon's insanity. All that happened was really just a long argument between a Maude and the cult leader. The 5 year struggle between Maude and Schuon was the thing that did more than anything to bring Schuon down. She refused to be treated as a "door mat", as she said to me. He accused her of insubordination. She was right to resist his imperious tyranny.. I saw with certainty that Maude was right and Schuon wrong. Maude was telling the truth and Schuon was a liar and a tyrannical psychopath. He was a jealous man who was possessive and selfish. I tried to do the right thing as a human being and did what I could. I was young then and did not know entirely what I was doing, but

as the facts became clear I saw what I big mistake I had made and I high tailed it out of there.

Does all this suggest an extreme masochism on Maude's part? No, perhaps not, just a woman confused by her emotions and needs. I could see how someone might say she was a masochist to stay there. I have thought this myself—that she was masochistic---, but I don't conclude that--- I never noticed that in her. More likely it is a guilt complex of considerable depth. She was a woman who needed a strong father figure even if, secretly, unadmitted even to herself, she hated him. She betrayed Schuon twice, and was all the while actually married to someone else. But Schuon had told her marriage to Murray meant nothing. He let her stay married so he would not have to be daily responsible for her. The whole confusion was Schuon's fault, not hers.

It was clear to me that she really did not want to be with Schuon and did not like him much. Her real father was a kind hearted old gentleman and not at all a tyrant. In the letters to her that Schuon writes her after she has been thrown out of the cult he says that her primarily fault is to have stood up for herself, to have been proud. She failed to subject herself to him with sufficient lowliness. She writes that Schuon and Sharlyn Romaine wanted her to "hang her head so low it would be like walking on all fours". They want her to be an animal which they see as lesser than human. ⁵¹⁶Why would they want such a horrible thing for her? She was to be made an example of by a cult that had a mafia mentality. He did not want her, he only wanted to destroy her.

I was told "it would be good if Maude wanted to die for Schuon". I have talked a lot about this, but it might do to elaborate more on it. They were always talking about people dying for them, --typical power

⁵¹⁶ For Schuon being a woman is like being an animal, unless the woman realizes herself by proximity to an amazing "theomorphic" being, such as him. For Schuon women are only symbols, "metaphysically transparent", like the houris in the absurd heaven invented by the writers of the Koran. Schuon told me he thought all feminism evil. He did not see women as having rights, only duties, Maude said. Schuon was a misogynist.

mongers---but they would not die for anyone. They would lie to protect themselves. They hid behind elite bureaucratic pretensions and organizational parameters, initiations, hierarchy. They also hid behind carefully constructed myths about Schuon's own biography as well as religions myths of many kinds. Those who were critical of him, as Maude was, in a passive aggressive way, could be punished by various means. Schuon wanted Maude to die or to at least be more miserable at first, and then hounded out of a cult, shunned, homeless, friendless, sick and half mad with grief and loss. Maude keeps repeating over and over to herself like a parrot,--- an insane parrot--- throughout the 500 pages she wrote that Schuon has "no faults" and is a perfect man. The myth cannot be questioned, Sharlyn compared Maude to Judas--- another totally ridiculous mythic comparison. One day when I spoke with Sharlyn she said "she is in rebellion against the Shakyh and must be punished". What is this--- the Inquisition, I wondered.? Maude should have left years before she did. What a monster, in love with power, Sharlyn had become under Schuon's influence.

Maude compares Schuon's treatment of her to a "stoning", which has a Moslem flavor to it, and the right misogyny. Yes, Schuon wants Maude to suffer because she refused to stay married to a "prophet" who neglects her. She is not allowed to divorce the prophet" but must stay married to him by force or suffer endlessly. Neither 'choice' is acceptable. You cannot force a woman to stay married to a man against her will. Schuon was violating her human rights. Maude was a Moslem woman who has done exactly what Schuon did, which was to claim a "vertical" marriage. If he has these rights, which he doesn't bt lets say that he does-- she has the same rights to do this as he has. He convinced her by a sort of fraud that she did not have this right. But the truth is Maude has done nothing wrong here. If he were a decent man, he would have let her go. He did not. The truth is that Maude did not "marry" anyone— she was not married to Schuon or me---it was all a fiction--- just as Schuon's

other fake marriages were fiction. Even his real marriages was a fiction. So why punish Maude so horribly for 5 or 6 years?

Schuon's disciple Gustavo Polit took a 16 year old girl—a felony crime that Schuon both permitted, excused and enabled--- and all they did to him was send him off to college in California and paid for him to study homeopathy or some nonsense. This is a horrible double standard. But Maude, who really did nothing but try to maintain her humanity, must be destroyed and stoned. They tell her she is evil. They tell her it would be good if “walked on all fours” and if she “died weeping”. Who says such things to people but the Gestapo or other torturers? Only a psychopath would say such things to a woman who suffered as much as Maude was suffering once she was kicked out of the cult. The whole horror of the Schuon cult is in this 5 yearlong sadistic torture of this woman who really did nothing. This is what I mean by the coined term ‘Theofascism’ is, the absurd ideological claim to transcendent election at the same time as occurs the insanity and violation of human rights, this enjoyment in hurting someone else. The need of an overarching, abstract power that violates and abuses others is what theofascism is all about.

Maude was in the cult for 25 years and you can see what it did to her mind. Schuon, a man who could not feel remorse, could not see that he was selfish in the extreme, cruel, made love to other women in front of Maude and hurt her. He had no notion of the sad effect of his actions on her and did not care. He shared the misogynist hatred of women that is so common among men in Islam.⁵¹⁷ Schuon was excessively proud even

⁵¹⁷ A good example of this is the murder of a woman in Kabul named Farkhunda Malikzada, on Dec 25 or 26 2015. She was falsely accused of burning a Koran, and then beaten, stoned and burned to death by men. The times also did some articles on the struggle of women's shelters in Islamic countries, especially Afghanistan.

http://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/27/world/asia/flawed-justice-after-a-mob-killed-an-afghan-woman.html?src=me&_r=0

to the point of megalomania,-- and not only this, he had no compassion for her even when she gave up all pride and screamed for mercy outside his window late at night. She cried for him laying naked on the floor in a kitchen for hours on end, begged and prayed to paintings and photos of him to spare her. I watched her do this many times and even thought to photograph it as others should see how much he made this woman suffer.⁵¹⁸ But I was too afraid to do that. She stayed up nights praying endless prayers he would stop making her suffer. She faced starvations and homelessness; slept in the Salvation Army homeless shelter, was handcuffed and hauled off to jail for wishing he would be less hard on her. She picketed him on his street, even when she sold all she had to get an agreement to watch a sad film she made about how she loved him, he still refuses her and lets her go to jail, lets her go hungry, lets her spend her last dime. He hated feminism, but yet feminism is exactly the thing that stops chauvinists like Schuon from having so much power. I wanted to know about Schuon and the more I learned the more I disliked him, and the more I was on Maude's side and not his.

This is one very bad hard-hearted, cold monster of a person who does not deserve the time of day. Never mind him being a 'spiritual master' and all that nonsense,-- all that was false pretence---he was a bad man who was "pathologically subjective" He believed he has 'divine rights' and was too full of his self-importance to see he is doing grave harm to a woman who has said she was sorry six million times.

Maude's letters show this very clearly— she writes that Schuon is

⁵¹⁸ There was a glass sliding door in my kitchen and I would go out for a cigarette, -- I was still smoking off and on then--- and see her doing this. It was terribly moving to see Maude trying to reach this man who cared so little about her and very sad. I knew he could care less. He liked to pretend he could see his wives telepathically, but I could see that was bunk. Sharlyn had an extreme proneness to magical thinking and could imagine Schuon watched her everywhere. He didn't do any such thing, but claimed he could. Lying was habitual for him. Here this woman was weeping over his portrait and he was totally oblivious, and if he knew he could care less. Eventually he did know and he did care less. This was a man who only had a heart when it served him.

“pathologically subjective”, a man who cares only about himself and his delusions of grandeur, and posterity. Maude let out the truth about what Schuon really was, and that is why they sought to punish her so endlessly and sadistically. Really, it was heroic what she did, though I don’t think she sees this. No matter how cruel he was to her she kept parroting what a great man he was. Schuon’s favorite idea was that there is “no right superior to that of truth”, and now truth is arrayed against him. He wrongly thought that he was the truth and therefore he had infinite rights. But, actually he was a liar and believed in a lot of delusions, so his rights were merely fictive injustices imposed on others. Maude’s suffering was the truth and Schuon abused her for telling the truth and that recoils upon his own head. There was no need to revenge him at all, all I needed to do was to tell the truth about what I saw.

Poor Maude. She lived under the cult mind control of Schuon so long I realized fairly early that even though I loved her, our relation was not going to last long. It was doomed. I had to swallow my feelings and hold myself back. She was a broken vessel. I watched her tragedy helplessly unfold with a Shakespearean logic. I tried to stop it from hurting her too much, but in the end I had to get out myself. I could not stay in the cult around all the lies and corruption, bogus rules, hierarchy and leadership. I went back to try to get her out and failed. I did all I could to get her out, but it could not be done. She had participated in his decadent life style so demeaning to women, for too long. She had internalized his misogyny. Schuon and Romaine had so abused her by making her watch, dressed, their unfair ménage à trois, forcing to watch them paint nude endlessly delusional paintings of their imaginary love. Then Schuon and Sharlyn launched jealous rages, threats of fear of hell, accusations of being Judas; *ad hominem* character assassinations against her. I knew that Maude could not take the pressure. My main function during the last 6 months of our relation was to comfort her for the abuse they heaped on her. I did that day in and day out. I tried to

keep her at my house as much as I could because the more time she spent with them the more she suffered. I wrote her many rhymed poems to try to cheer her up. These poems were at the heart of our relationship and it was a good thing, my effort to comfort this tragic woman.

One day, when I had returned to try to get her out of the cult and it had become clear wit was not going to work, Maude had a sick friend of ours, a woman who had MS, call me up and ask for help. When I got there I saw she did not need help at all and it was all a ruse to get me out of the house so Maude could steal things from my house. She pretended she had fallen in her wheel chair in her bathroom, but a man from the cult, Keith Arbogast, had done nothing to get her up so the whole thing was a ruse. More lies, more games. He could easily have lifted her up. When I got home most of the love poems I had written her were stolen and destroyed as well as photos of her and other writings. I had been keeping a chronicle of what had been happening. I was trying to record it all so as to tell the truth. I still have some of this chronicle, though she destroyed most of it. Later I learned Maude destroyed the poems and the writings—she admitted doing it. They were burned. That was the end for me, she destroyed the very thing that was best between us. She wanted to destroy the objective facts I had written down. It finally dawned on me that I could not help her, she was going back into the cult to fight it out with Sharlyn and Schuon. She lost. I could do no more. I was free and out of the cult at last. It was terrible and good too, to be free. I was both desperate and relieved. I packed what stuff I could in my car and drove away. I knew I would go to the police, I knew it was not yet over, but I was at last free of a monster and I wanted to tell the truth about what I knew. It was never about revenge, it was about telling the truth as best I could.

I'm not sure exactly what happened in Schuon's mind at the end. He was used to cover-up and fabrication. His public persona was everything to him. I knew he would fight to preserve the delusion he had

spent the last 50 years foisting on followers. Eventually he consulted with other inner cult members and they cooked up a bogus defense that is mostly lies. I decided to leave. He did not end my relationship to her as was often claimed. I ended it. I left Bloomington. She even came to Cleveland to try to get me back, but there was no going back. At this point I really did not want her back. She could not get me back now. I was free of her too. We spent the last night together in a hotel at the airport and she went to get a plane, when she saw I was hopeless. I could never be brought back into the cult. They no longer had any sway over me. I told her he was a fraud and that he abused children and herself. She was in denial about all that happened. I could see that there was no option but to walk away from her. She would have to suffer terribly to get out. She was so sunk in the mind control she could not see out of it. It was a sad moment to see her go, crying, down the hall to her airplane, flying back to the cult, which would soon reduce her to ruin. All these years later, she is still in it, even if she is technically out of it.

I realized it was all a fraud, as everything around Schuon was a fraud. I felt sorry for her. Schuon was welcome to Maude if he could be good to her—but more than likely he would destroy her. His win was her loss. It was my loss too. I did not want to lose her. But now I saw how things were and that this was a very bad man. She was a very confused woman and I had done my best to help her.⁵¹⁹ She had deliberately

⁵¹⁹ As I said earlier, when I first got involved with Maude she destroyed some of my writings in which I expressed 30 pages of misgivings about her desire to have an affair with me and her claim that she was teaching me all that Schuon would teach me if he could know about it. She claimed Schuon was too old to know, it would “kill him” she said. Her wish to destroy anything that came out of me that was true was very disturbing and was a measure of just how deluded and owned by this cult her mind was. Schuon had destroyed her integrity. Destroying my writing was a form of lying on her part. This was a woman that had been so deeply corrupted by Schuon that I was utterly flabbergasted by her duplicity. When I think of Maude now it is never as a love of my life, but rather as a tragic accident that really had little to do with me. She did not try to know me but merely used me as a tool in her desperation to get Schuon out of her life. My role was mostly as a witness of this. My real life lay elsewhere. That is why I was decimated by this experience for a time, but rose out of it eventually, after a great deal of suffering, with a clearer mind and stronger heart than before I went in. I had the right to protect myself. The play was over and my

seduced me at the beginning. and I exposed Schuon, and then it became clear his relations with his 'wives' were about power and not love. In the end it was a battle between Maude and Schuon. I merely got in the way of an ongoing feud between them, and left the cult in disgust with all of it. Maude's unconscious feminism won in the end, and Schuon's religious hatred of women lost. But I doubt Schuon ever knew he lost, even when they were taking his fingerprints in the police station and taking his photo as the criminal that, in fact, he was. In the long run it was Maude who had the truth on her side and Schuon who was the bad guy who ought to be discredited. But she did not know that yet. I don't think she knows it yet, maybe never will.

When I left Bloomington I realized, sadly, at last, that this woman had no interest in the truth, and had used me rather badly. My original intuitions of her were correct: she was an opportunist, and a con-woman in her own right, a liar, even if my heart went out to her warm and human sides.⁵²⁰ She is still trying to be a spiritual teacher, but I do not recommend anyone take what she says seriously. Schuon was a Svengali like con-man who had her under his spell. The truth for her was the delusions that Schuon lived under. I knew he would destroy her, since the whole reason she was with me was because he had severely neglected her and she was desperate to get away from him. She thought that his promiscuous relationship to women could be replicated and like him she thought that this was esoteric open mindedness. She used to say that Schuon liked to say that participating with multiple religions was like taking multiple women, or in her case multiple men. Her conscious mind admired this nonsense, but her unconscious knew this was misogynistic, or misandrist bunk. Religions enshrine a hatred of women, even when

part was really just as witness and not as a participant. I was there just to watch the tragedy unfold in its crazy way.

⁵²⁰ By this I mean that she did various mean and underhanded things to lie to me, steal poems and writings of mine and to try to undermine my witness by lying.

they pretend not to. I was spending time with her only to comfort her for the harm he did to her. I had realized much earlier that she didn't really love me for myself anyway, what she wanted was a little "discreetly secret spiritual husband"---a little puppet of sorts--- just as Schuon wanted Sharlyn as his Shakti—a 'celestial china doll' -- who would perform for him like a primordial marionette. The whole "top" of the organization, called a "tariqa", was sick.

I did not like being forced to stay in a house and have a secret relationship with a woman who dictated all the terms and who did not love me for myself. She was using me as a "door mat" as I said to her more than once. I was locked into the system of lies that Schuon had infected them all with and did not like it. I could say like Rimbaud, " I went through a woman's hell over there" and not be wrong. She came to me using her power as Schuon's supposed "wife" to say that I must not tell anyone what was going on , and she must do it this way because Schuon was too old to know. All that seemed crazy to me. I felt like a kept man, a thing, a sort of male mistress, a doormat, precisely. I realized that she was doing to me what Schuon had done to her.

Yes, I had agreed to it, after she destroyed the 30 pages of doubts I had about it. Maybe I should have just ignored her? But then I would not have learned all about the corruption of Schon and his cult. I could see it with dispassion and still go through it in view of going beyond the humiliations and pain of it. I felt sorry for her for what he had done to her, and it was easy to feel sorry for myself for the same thing. I could see what she had suffered under him. Indeed behind all the smoke and mirrors of the Schuon cult I saw that I alone really knew what kind of man was wearing so many masks. There was a greed for power and a need of adulation that was endless and could only evoke certain hysterical and oracular figures in 20th century history that are both pathetic and powerful. I saw how Schuon had treated his illicit wives,

with a long period of secrecy, deceit, pretending to something that was not true. I didn't want this. I saw it was a bad thing, and I saw Maude was a manipulator, as she still is, as Schuon made her to be. Indeed, this guy, never acted like a "spiritual master", by which I mean he never showed a single park of caring aobut me as a person, or Maude, for that matter. So I decided to go on with it, even if it ended in disaster, as I suspected it would.

Maude was competing with Schuon, making the same claims he made, using her "spiritual authority" to extract compliance and silence from me. I was not allowed to protest Schuon's abuse of her, I was not allowed to protest her abuse of me or protest her keeping me from speaking about what was going on. She herself denied the very concept of "abuse", while being abused. Schuon's hated her for her attempt to do exactly the same things he had been doing for years. He was a hypocrite. I was young and did not know what was being done to me at first. But it became clear with time.

A month after I left the cult, I talked to her on the phone and she insisted I never saw Schuon at primordial gatherings and girls were not present. She tried to convince me I was deluded. More lies. I was deeply shocked she would lie like this, to my face. I could see she was a bad woman. I wasn't deluded at all, and knew exactly what I saw.⁵²¹ She and I had even talked about it at the time it occurred and she agreed he had done wrong to have young ones involved in this gatherings. She was trying to get me to lie to myself and I could see this woman was totally brainwashed, trying to regain her former standing in the cult. The cult

⁵²¹ Later Maude admitted that children had been involved in the gatherings. She said they were involved but that I had my dates wrong. Actually only one date was wrong and it was not the date I gave the police but rather I had given them a series of possible dates because I could not remember the actual date of the gathering that took place in December, when the Wroth girls were there. The Fitzgerald boy was also at one of these. So her attempt to try to force me to deny the existence fo the gatherings was a typical cult maneuver that she had been taught by Schuon to use to silence opposition. There are other examples fo this in the Glasse documents, for instance, against Saydah Wardah in the Yachnes account.

had poisoned her mind, not mine. He condemns her later and says he “does not know her” in his last letter to her. But that is because he finally saw she was not his “symbol”. She was his delusion as all his women were a delusion to him. How could he know her when he had made her keep so many secrets he could not remember all the ones he asked her to keep? She did not think she was married to him. Why should she ? In fact, she wasn’t married to him at all.

I didn’t think it was fair to keep me as a secret from him and I did not like lying. That is why I insisted we tell the truth about it to Schuon. I knew the truth would force him to look at himself. I knew the truth would bring the whole lie of the cult into question. If he could not admit that he needed to let Maude go than there must be something wrong with him. Let’s see this magnanimity she is always saying he has. He had none. It was terribly obvious she needed to be released from him and with kindness. She was so desperate, almost insane with a desire to be free of him.. It was obvious his marriages were phony. It was the telling of the this truth that turned a mirror on Schuon’s face and he hated to look in mirrors. I saw that right away. It was the truth he that wanted to negate, the truth about himself and his phony cult that he had been trying to hide all those years. He could not abide hearing that Maude had any needs or rights, or that she was a person who had any other purpose but to serve his inordinate pride and egotism. She told me she felt like his door mat. She didn’t want to be that. I did not want to be that either. Something had to break in this cult and I knew it. I did not want to know what I knew, but I had to tell the truth about it eventually. I was not looking to be the whistleblower on this, but I had no choice. I was going to lose them both because they were both frauds. I had to face it. I had to speak out against it. I knew I was wrong to fall into all this, and I was humiliated to have been so duped, but once in it I could see that the only honorable way to exit was to tell the truth about it.

So there are various theories I have about why Schuon tortured Maude for so long and with such ruthless cruelty after I left. The obvious one is that Schuon was a bad man and hurt her because the group of people there was a close knit, incestuous bubble and he needed to show his power by her pain. Maude had no answer for this because she could not give up the idea Schuon was a blameless saint. She clung to that absurdity even as he abused her further. He would have to nearly kill her to stop her abusive belief in him. Maude's critique of Schuon is perhaps the most incisive and horrific. But she is so confused and up and down, back and forth between accusing him and indulging in the cult flattery of his ego that she speaks too freely and in stream of consciousness, continually, without thinking, out of habit. This makes it very hard to read her account. So, one theory is that that it was basically an act of misogynistic hatred of women by a "pathologically subjective", guy who thought he had divine rights, far beyond the rights of anybody else. There is certainly truth in this.

But there is one other theory, similar but slightly different. Maude says in her documents that Schuon was very upset that I wrote so many of the intimate details of their lives in my Account. This implies, of course, that Schuon recognized that I told the truth. I am glad he recognized this: I wanted very much for him to have to face himself. Indeed a lot of what I did then was designed to make him see himself objectively as much as is possible for a man so hopelessly subjective. The Account is marred by it being written by a man who is still a believer. I would soon not be. The god idea came to seem increasingly unsupportable.

I did tell the truth as best I could. My primary motive was to get the truth out about him. I was not seeking to 'win' in court, get revenge or put him in jail.---. I don't think I ever thought he would go to jail. I knew they would all lie. But I did prove that minors were involved in Schuon's

Primordial Gatherings and I proved that these Gatherings existed, and I showed what kind of man this guy was and how the cult functioned. Court was not the main thing, truth was. People have blamed me for only going after Schuon for the involvement of children. But that was not my main objection, it was one of many. The police chose what to go after, not I. People who have never had children do not know how parents suffer to keep their kids safe. The cult was rich enough to stop the court but money cannot stop the truth coming out. Schuon did abuse children at the gatherings and he did many other harmful things besides, as I have shown to exhaustion..

The main thing was to expose a fraud and to liberate Maude if I could. Schuon's cowardly response was to punish Maude, a weak and defenseless woman. He punished her rather than admit his own guilt in factual matter. He punished to hide from himself. He proved he was basically a bad man who could never admit that anything was his fault. He ended up in court because he was a criminal, not because I was or Maude was. I was and am innocent in this matter. So was Maude. In the end, the cult tried and failed to prosecute me for a house Maude and I bought.⁵²² The house had been largely a gift, as Maude herself said in a letter, although I put some money into it too. I first proved with documents that the house was a gift⁵²³ and was indeed mine and then,

⁵²² The Bloomington Herald Times had an article in April 21, 1992, which stated that the "Lawsuit against Koslow in Schuon case dismissed". It was merely a malicious lawsuit. Murray says in letters that the lawsuit was initiated by Fitzgerald to try to discredit my witness against Schuon. I told the truth about Schuon's gatherings but the cult needed to lie about it and deny it and the key to that was to try to discredit me. Actually Schuon was guilty, as has been proven. The cult is largely dead or dying due to the weight of their own lies. The more they defend themselves the more they lie and the more they lie the clearer it is they are guilty

⁵²³ I need not have given Maude more than half the money from the house. Indeed. Rama Coomaraswamy, Wolfgang Smith my mother and many others were saying I should keep the house or the money from it. I never asked for this house. But I owed nothing to this cult that had treated me so badly. The cult had bought houses for Polit and Romaine and helped others with money for many years. Murray brought a bag full of gold bars down to the realtors office and dumped it into the middle of their table. Who does that? I was amazed by this and watched with curiosity. I knew it was bizarre. But I was curious to see where this was all going to go. I was in a

once that was proven in a legal setting, I gave Maude more than half the money from this house out of pity for her. Various letters from her prove this. I wanted to help her. Most of the rest of the money from this house went to pay lawyers and to get people out of the cult. I spent a little to go back to school. I took nothing from anyone. The cult tried to claim that I embezzled money for them in a typical effort to lie and fabricate falsehoods. Indeed, they are guilty of slander in this regard, and I could have pressed charges but I am not litigious.

Maude says in her letters that Fitzgerald concocted the plan to try to slander me by lying about my house and claiming I stole it. They were always using money to facilitate the needs of the cult leader. No matter, the truth is that I did my best to help Maude up to the very end. The cult did not help her, but I did. I was true to my word with her and did all I could to help this troubled and persecuted woman. In retrospect that was the my main involvement with Maude. It was not at all an illicit affair, but a sad story of a man who helped a women who was being abused by a cult and a cult leader. I helped her out of the cult in the end

strange world and had a sense of adventure. I did not imagine it would end in disaster yet, but that would soon dawn on me, When I left Bloomington I thought to give the house to charity, and I did give some of the houses contents and some of the money away in charity. In any case, one must understand that Schuon had been living off his followers for years, buying houses with their money, creating little cult enclaves in Switzerland and then America. The cult was awash in money from rich followers all too eager to support the cult of personality that engulfed Schuon. There were a lot of weird and illegal financial things going on in the cult. According to David Hunter, who researched the cult extensively, some of their money came from followers, some from questionable financial deals, some from businesses, off shore investments, shadow or bogus companies and Swiss banking. He even thought they might be running guns, but I don't think he had any proof of that. Other stories were told to me by others of drug deals and deadly threats. I knew there was deceit and cheating of many kinds, but could not verify most of the many allegations. Maude said Schuon's idea was that money should only go to those who deserve it and his followers obviously deserved it more than anyone, and therefore they invested their money in followers. I was helped so long as I showed the correct adulation, and as soon as I stopped, I was falsely accused of all sorts of lies. I certainly was no embezzler, the question was, should I sell the house and give all the money back or part. I elected at last to give Maude more than half the money, and that seemed the wise thing to do. I felt sorry for her and that is why I did it. The rest went to lawyers, was given in charity to help those getting out of the cult and a few thousand went to get me started back in college. It was fair, compassionate and the right thing to do. I regret nothing..

anyway. In any case, all my efforts to help her did not at ultimately succeed as far she was concerned, though I think I did lessen her burden for a time. There was love in doing that much for her. Maybe I did love her a little after all, though I had plenty of reason to doubt her, and still do.

Schuon continued to torture Maude for 5 years. She was kicked out of the cult by 1996. That was the last I heard from her directly. A friend told me they heard from her a few years later in Indianapolis, where she lived at a mosque who felt sorry for her. Some years after that, maybe in 2005, I heard she had died. Radcliffe college, where she went to school, put up an obituary. Glasse told me he thought it was certain she had died. I did not believe it and wrote Radcliffe but could find out no more about it.⁵²⁴ Then I heard from someone that they had gotten letter from her and she was in Pakistan, and there was other news from Pakistan that suggested this too. She hoped to adopt a child in Pakistan, I was told.⁵²⁵ I doubt this is true but it is just crazy enough that it might be. Maude has a wild imagination and deep emotional needs. But it was unlikely anyone would let an unstable woman of 70 adopt a child. It seems she did not end up in Pakistan but in India. But I did not find this out till a few days ago, (2018) I am glad she found a child to love there

⁵²⁴ Actually she is not dead but still alive at 79 or so. She writes that “Once I was so annoyed when I couldn’t stop Harvard from sending me expensive fund raising material, that I finally wrote a note to get myself off their mailing list, by saying that “she, Maude Murray, died” on the date of some point in a real spiritual death. So someone heard about that, and concluded that I had staged my death, as a ruse for my planned disappearance!”

This is a pretty typical lie of sorts. She makes herself sound innocent and anyone who questions her death is stupid or means ill. Actually she did lie about her death, Vassar did report her as dead, and no one was stupid to think her dead. The whole thing is her fault, but like Schuon, she denies any responsibility for it and uses it to condemn others rather than question her own actions.⁵²⁵ She apparently did not adopt anyone but got to know some people she called her “daughter” only in figurative terms. She had had her fallopian tubes tied for Schuon who never wanted kids. She gave up her female prerogative for him, and never told him what she did, She did this because, she told me, he could not be bothered with such mundane matters as contraception. This again indicates a huge egotism and a selfish view of the world and nature. Male centered metaphysics matters, women and their bodies and children do not.

even if she was not able to adopt. I like to think of her going to a market and buying vegetables, holding a child's hand. For 13 years she was free of Bloomington. That is good. But she is back trying to excuse Schuon for his crimes, and that is not honest or good. She imagine a genius who created a "civilization":

[Schuon] and my precious, first sister-wife, managed to control our dress, speech, homes – every single detail in our way of living. And you cannot imagine the result: We lived in an inimitably beautiful, traditional civilization! Their taste in everything, was so lovely and normal, that no one who hasn't been to see him (and had eyes and ears) can imagine the marvelous, unerasable effect that CIVILIZATION (yes: I really think so; but God knows best) has on the soul.

Actually I was in virtually all of their houses, and most of what they had was knock offs from Pier One corporation, or necklaces, (some made by Maude), or stuff from Perennial Designs, a cult owned store run by and for a cult member, Michael Pollock. There were of course Moroccan pillows, Moroccan and Uzbeki carpets and occasional Hindu Saris or Indonesian Ikat clothes used for various things. It was hardly a "civilization". It was more like Disney's Epcot center, a sort of pastiche of bourgeoisie variety of kitch and sometimes real stuff taken from other cultures and formed into a materialistic hodge podge of new age interior design.

Unlike me she never got free from Schuon and the cult. Of course, others said she lives in Bloomington, having been bought by the cult, who pays her bills and keep her silent, and this could be true too. I also heard she is supported by the cult as long as she keeps quiet and living

in Plainfeild, Indiana, near the ISNR mosque there. I also heard she lives in England. It is true the cult likes to create indebtedness and to control followers by that means. It would not surprise me if this is what happened to her either. I do not know. She certainly deserves a great deal of credit for bringing Schuon down and exposing traditionalism as a fraud, even if she did not mean to do it. I suppose this essay is partly a memorial to her, both the good part of her and the confused part of her.

The confused part of her is readily evident in her essay “Frithjof Schuon: A mystery in spiritual genius and character” (2018). She tries to hold on to her role as Schuon’s “wife”, while admitting in so many words that the “marriages” did not actually exist and the man was a creep of the worst kind. But as usual she acts like she knows exactly what she is saying. But it is clear she doesn’t. Since his reputation has been largely destroyed by his own oactions, she wants to rehabilitate Schuon as a sufi Shaykh, Nasr too is is also allegedly guilty of sexual indiscretions, to put it politely. But he wants to rehabilitate him too. She wants to return to ordinary Islam, which she finds beautiful, especially the “Hadith” which ore known to be bogus, and were not the words of Muhammad at all. But she is completely unaware that these are spurious sources. One can “extrapolate” this from what she says, though no doubt she would dispute it, as she disputes everything. But facts are facts, and just as the Hadith are bogus, later creations by other people, opening the Koran and putting down ones figure is hardly a good way to find out anything, and she uses this bogus paractice often, as she was tuaght it by Schuon. She is clearly on a power mission from her god and wants to justify her very superstitious form of Islam. She ‘sort of’ admits again the involvement of children in Primordial Gatherings, while denying molestation. Her reasons for denying the molestation of underage chidlren is again bogus. She says the standard response of all Schuon’s followers, that the dancing primordial gatherings were so beautiful that

all crimes are eliminated from them. That was not my response, nor Stepehn Lambert's, who writes in his affidavit that of Schuon's behavior at the gatherings that he:

“embraced each woman in turn, pressing them to himself in full body contact by first clasping them about the upper torso and then about the buttocks. In my concrete experience in these occasions amounted to no more than a man indulging his taste for and preoccupation with women.”

This was my experience too, and others admit the same thing. So Maude is largely still lying about what these Gatherings were, to get Schuon off the hook, or more importantly for her, to get herself back into the cult. She admits to recently trying talk to Catherine Schuon, now 93, who wants nothing to do with her, Maude says she longs to go “home”, to the cult enclave in Bloomington, where it is safe for her. Catherine herself had a long affair with Whitall Perry, so I do not see why she acts ‘holier than thou’ towards Maude, but this may be the result of decades of jealousy. But such hypocrisy is rife in this cult. Two ‘wives’ of Schuon left in 2018, only one of which actually was married to Schuon. Everyone else is dead, yet are alive and one hates the other, hypocritically.

Maude admits Schuon's horrible pride, his belief in his own “infallibility”, his love of lying, his mistaken belief that like Trump, he is “beyond the law” and many other things too numerous to mention. Here is a section of what she writes which has much of the ring of truth in it, with various excuses being made for Schuon's typically bad behavior. Excusing his bad behavior is what she did as an official in the cult. Here she is invoking her old job.

“* And, yes; we were told to lie in court and did. Myself and the fourth wife were convicted of perjury (regarding the nature of our marriages to the Shaykh), handcuffed, shackled with iron bands on our ankles, and put on the front page of the newspaper; these things are documented and cannot be denied. I later made a public apology and haven’t lied again – not because of being caught, but because of the eyes of the Lord. Our Shaykh was technically guilty by law; but the charges were dropped. One reason for that was that the accuser got the dates wrong⁵²⁶: the minors who had been hugged, were not at the Indian Days on those dates. It did not look AT ALL like what one usually thinks of as child abuse. The general impression was of a beautiful, esoteric event (in my eyes, on the many occasions when I was present; but I’m DEFINITELY accepting the testimony of too many others I knew well).

*What took place was illegal by the criteria of our profane society; but the only truly important thing, was that it sure was forbidden by God. (Twas intrinsically immoral too)! We then got put into a horribly profane trap, allowed by God (Who seemed absent) forcing us to lie under oath, before a profane jury, or see our Shaykh go to jail. We were also forced (by “those above us”) into a “slam campaign” against the accuser – a typical, and profane ruse detested by the Prophet . I was told to write the worst things I could think of about the accuser; and they had secret meetings to plan strategy. Yes: I noticed the profanity of it all right; but I was obfuscated for decades afterwards. It’s also taken ages to find the words to express things.”

⁵²⁶ Actually I did not get the dates wrong, I gave the police and court a series of possible dates, I was not sure of when it was, and the reason I was not sure was because Maude was such a snoop and could not be trusted I never wrote it down, for fear of my horror at what Schuon was doing being discovered.

But notice her attempts to excuse Schuon, while she condemns him. He was certainly guilty, as I have said for the last few decades. It is all justified under the false idea of the “profane socety” as if they can do the worst imaginable and continue to justify it because they are ‘superior people’, she imagines, when in fact, according to her own assessemnt they are anything but. Her obsession with defining everything she does not undersand as ‘evil’ is notable too.

Notice also her preseumption that the ‘god’ idea is all that matters, even though she has no proof of god, and her notion that the legal system of a free country as irrelevant is absurd. Our legal system is, if anything corrupt in its treatment of the rich, which literally get away with murder, whereas the poor and middle class suffer the brunt of unjust laws and taxes. The Schuon cult, which got off the hook by lying and cheating the system. Depsite this our legal system has real reasons for existing, and she implicity denies that. She admits rightly that without their luck, lying and corrpution, Schuon was gulty. This is Schuon ideology is like the Trump ideology. Schuon imagines he is infallible, but he was clearly guilty of the crime or involving under age girls in rites that involved his using them as sexual beings in a cult setting. No amount of blaming our legal system will excuse what he did. She is a Manichean, the world is composed of those who serve her ‘god’ and those who are ‘evil’. Her simplistic and false categories are themselves fictions. She is very confused person, even if she gets some things right.

I conclude about Maude Murray that at 78 years old that she has learned very little in her life. She is still very much in the orbit of the the Schuon cult, while having been thrown out of it, but only apparently. She admits that what Schuon did in Primordial Gatherings was illegal and wrong, when she says

*What took place was illegal by the criteria of our profane society; but the only truly important thing, was that it sure was forbidden by God. (Twas intrinsically immoral too)!

She admits that the Primordial Gatherings happened, but tries to minimise them as much as she can. She tries to say that they were beautiful. Watching an old man grab the buttocks of 13 and 14 year old girls and press his penis against their privates is not beautiful. It just isn't and so it is her perverse way of seeing, which itself was ingrained in her by Schuon is the real problem. She believed all the lies about Schuon doing this to "heal the wombs" of the women he pressed his penis against. He healed no one of anything, in fact. It was all a lie partly cooked up by the wives of Schuon themselves. They aided and abetted his crimes. Maude nowhere admits this that I can see.

She is still a propagandist and salesperson for Schuon, because she wrongly thinks her own fame is linked to him. She wants to be the great spiritual teacher she thinks Schuon was, but he wasn't. She is a fake teacher too, and one that tries to show her bonifides when, in fact, she is not humble at all, but merely wants back into a corrupt, 'elite' cult. So where does that leave her? She sees him as a "genius" even though he was not: he stupidly denies the obvious truth of science libraries full of Darwinian studies in evolution, and thus is a fundamentalist and creationist. He knows nothing about biology or science, which he attacks with ignorance. The same is true of Maude. Schuon upheld the unjust, racist system of South African apartheid. Schuon, supported the Japanese Emperor during World War II when he was supporting fascism. He is not genius, but rather a far-right reactionary, a backwards leaning anti-science snob who hates the modern world and wants to return to the glory days of Church cruelty power and inquisitorial might. He is a genius only in the backwards and malificent way that Joseph De

Miastre was a “genius”, Why anyone would want to return to this narrow world of fictonal gods and give up the good world of vaccines, contraceptives, heart medications, and national heath care and many other very good things, is beyond me. I gave Maude a chance to get out of there, instead she wants back in in the worst way. That shows her as very wrong headed, confused, and very much still in a dangerous cult. I was kind to her when I left the cult, she continues to berate and slander me 30 years later, ---who is more likely to be telling the truth here?

Schuon was not a genius but clearly a medievalist criminal, and a dead criminal at that. She thinks him guilty of the crime of child abuse, for which he was indicted. But she thinks this is “beautiful”, and so not a crime. Women, and men too, often side with their abusers because of hidden financial motives, guilt or unwillingness to face their own complicity in the harm done. Is this a corrupt old woman, who wants to make the world over in her own ignorance? It is along time now that I felt anything for her, now she seems merely an apologist for injustice. She wants to rehabilitate Hossein Nasr too, another abuser of women, who is to also a far right fanatic and whose ‘love of god’ merely hides a dictatorial self that edges off into madness. Frankly, I have long since ceased to care about Maude, Nasr or Schuon. To follow them will merely lead to hurting oneself. Maude was a vivacious and caring woman, who was deformed by men and the religions that made her narrow and cold. In the end she chose her delusions over me, and for my part, I cared too much for truth to continue on with her.

When I moved to Bloomington I wanted to engage Schuon---to be part of his life, to embrace him as closely as possible and see what he was really made of, and what god was made of.. Huston Smith had told me no one is closer to god than Schuon. Huston Smith claimed to know. I believed this rubbish. Huston Smith ws a fool. But I saw what Schuon

was made of, things Huston Smith never knew about and did not want to know about. I was horrified and turned away from him in utter disgust. Like Maude Smith merely idolized a man who was a con-man. Both were wrong, in ways that neither knew. I started seeing through religion and have not stopped seeing through it to this day.

Schuon wrote an essay in his book Logic and Transcendence called the “The Problem of Qualifications”. There he discusses in pompous terms how people become qualified for spiritual organizations. The only qualifications necessary to get yourself into the Schuon cult is the ability serve and flatter the ego of the cult leader, Schuon. One must despise others, hate all those Schuon hates, which is just about everybody, praise his books, hate science and suck up or pander to authority—and the only authority is Schuon. This is what is really meant by being “qualified”. You can see all the gullible, unoriginal and archaic-minded but “qualified” cult followers, writing in various venues like Sophia Magazine, Sacred Web, Studies in Comparative Religion or Connaissance de les Religions. There is not an original idea among them. They all serve the egos of charlatans and pontificate fictions. They are a throwback to the dry arrogance and intellectual vacuum of the Scholastics.

Comparative Religion went bankrupt in esoterism, just as comparative philosophy ends us in a vague create your own world view, all points of view are equally valid and so none are really valid. Reality becomes a construction, not a fact of existence. Science escapes all this and is based on evidence. I like actual evidence, not ideology. World views are best assessed as part of myth and fiction, ideology and social structures.

So here I have explored the deforming effect of religion on women and personal relationships. I show how a woman lost her mind to a cult leader, and how he damaged her. How she continues against all evidence to the contrary to try to justify his ‘genius’. Schuon was a typical cult leader of the late 20th century, not at all a ‘genius’. My psychology, whatever it may have been, was irrelevant to this whole story. I did not

make anything up, was never jealous and in fact left the cult on my own, having seen how corrupt it was. It was a good stepping stone to consider all forms of ideological control and that is what these books are about. I am not writing secret texts trying to praise religion in reverse, on the contrary. I am certainly not at all like Maude, trying to excuse a cult leader 30 years after the fact that his lying and corruption were proven. Maude was only a part of proving this, even if, at least mentally, she is still in the Schuon cult. My concern is to critique many forms of power and ideology and if this is not obvious, the reader is misunderstanding what I am doing here and should stop reading what I write, because they have missed the point. I now turn to consider some aspects of the role of the disparagement woman and nature in religious myth and ideology and then, various academic writers who promote religion. So I will be questioning the role of religion in our universities too.

Metaphysical Misogyny and Nature Hatred in Tantra, Buddhism, Christianity, etc..

We know know that

“more than 77 percent of land on earth, excluding Antarctica, has been modified by human industry, according to a study published Wednesday in the journal Nature, up from just 15 percent a century ago.”

This means that only 23 percent of the wild earth is left. This fact is dire and it is important that we stop the destruction of wild lands immediately. This fact begs the question, why do rich men need to destroy the earth to make their extra billions that they do not need? Why are so many religious traditions misogynistic and express hatred of nature and animals? Metaphysics is a mostly male affair and tends to denigrate all things female, animal and natural as inferior or weak. “Humans”, defined as men, are supposed to be superior and have the right to abuse women and dominate other species. The mistaken assumption that women are irrational and men are rational is sexist and false. Nature is not about one sex or another. Animals are not less than humans in the Darwinian understanding of how living things evolved. In Hinduism women are seen as a “fettering” element⁵²⁷ and men are lesser beings if they fall for women and become “householders”⁵²⁸. This terminology is prevalent in Hindu texts. In Christianity it is the same. Nature and women are seen as the source of “sin” from which we must be saved by the myth of God or Jesus. There is an assumption in religions that the “contemplative” is superior because he has escaped the “round of existence”, which is nature. I recently talked with a Christian who said she does not care that the natural world is being destroyed since “the apocalypse is coming anyway” and so she votes republican since they at least “give lip service to Jesus”. This hatred of nature and the earth is perfidious and everywhere.

⁵²⁷ Prabupada, founder of the Hari Krishna movement was a traditional misogynist and thought women have small brains. He likes the Hindu quote that “The woman is beautiful when she remains as a slave to the husband.” “And it is recommended they should be married at very early age, then the wife will remain always chaste and devoted to her husband. At such young age, from the first night onwards, she can never for a moment forget him, being still a child and unspoiled, therefore she becomes the perfect chaste wife, and in those times the wife was so much devoted to her husband that she would voluntarily die in the fire of his cremation, unable to live without him. Myself, I was very young when I got married, and my wife was 11 years only.” (Correspondence, 1972)

⁵²⁸ The Gospel of Ramakrishna is full of this prejudice, as he looks down on householders almost as an inferior caste.

Over 59 billion animals are killed worldwide every year, with some estimates as high as 70 billion, excluding fish. The U.S. death toll is about 10 billion animals killed every year. Fish kill is weighed by the ton, so it is extrapolated that somewhere between 50 and 100 billion are caught and killed every year. It is hard to see why this level of murder is needed, as the vegetarian diet is healthy and give plenty of protein. Making this killing more ‘humane’ is absurd. It is still killing for profit. These figures appear to be accurate. The number of animals killed by hunters ranges from 100 million a year in the U.S to many million less than that. I put these figures here to shock the reader into recognition that this is a real problem, and that domesticating animals is mostly about killing them not about having a happy and furry dog or cat in the house.

Often this killing is justified by religion. Metaphysics is the falsehood and codification of subjective states into dogma and doctrine. It is myth made into a social and intellectual systems. In Buddhism and Hinduism, of instance, women are the center of the ‘round of existence’ and men are presumed superior if they contemplate fictional gods rather than have a family. In Buddhism, women are said to be only able to escape the round of existence if they become like men. This has ruined countless lives of nuns and monks who have believed this nonsense. Living a life bubbled into these fictions is, in ways, a waste of life, however persistent the illusions are maintained in the brains and feelings of the postulant. A good deal of the world’s philosophy and literature is just this: intellectualized mythic magnifications.

The persistent illusions (see third book in this series) of religion and politics is built into the structure of most metaphysical religious systems. Herodotus’s Histories is a very good source book for delusions about animals in early religions in Egypt, Greece and the Middle East,

for instance. He discusses animal sacrifice at great length, and how some animals were protected by religious ideologies, such as Egyptian cows. But reading Herodotus' rather foolish assessments of these rights is itself an opening into the history of speciesism and how it developed alongside of and perhaps partly because of religion and agriculture. I include Marxism in this assessment as it is a religion as much as Free Market ideology is. Marx said

"The realm of freedom...can only consist in socialized man, the associated producers rationally regulating their interchange with Nature, bringing it under their common control, instead of being ruled by it as by the blind force of Nature, and achieving this with the least expenditure of energy and under conditions most favorable to, and worthy of, their human nature..."⁵²⁹

This is the Christian hatred of nature put in the blandest bureaucratic terms, anticipating mechanized chicken farms or State controlled Stalinism and Soviet and Chinese communist hatred of the natural world. This is in capitalism too.. Nature, again wrongly seen as female must be "brought under control". 77 percent of nature has been undermined by human industry.

"We're on a threshold where whole systems could collapse and the consequences of that would be catastrophic," said James R. Allan, one of the study's authors."⁵³⁰

⁵²⁹ Karl Marx, Capital, Volume III, p. 820.

⁵³⁰ This and the quote that begin this essay are record in the NYT, Oct. 31, 2018, by Livia Albeck-Ripka, based on a study published in Nature, in Oct. 2018. The "study, led by researchers from the University of Queensland in Australia and the Wildlife Conservation Society in New York, paints the first global picture of the threat to the world's remaining wildernesses

All people including women must work for Big Brother or the corporate state. In Tantra, sexual relations are also defined in misogynistic ways, the woman seen as merely a vessel for the completion of male spiritual exercises for purpose of withholding and building energy. The Upanishads suggest that the desire to have children with women is evil, men are not held responsible at all and evil is projected onto women. This is common in Christianity too, where women are held to be the source of evil (original sin), while men do as they please. This is obvious in the Adam and Eve myth. Or Paul's justification for patriarchy: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church."⁵³¹ Understanding the sexist tendency in most metaphysic/political systems helps to clarify how religion is anti-natural. It helps to see how metaphysics turns reality upside down, based on fictional projections and misreading of natural facts. Religion has lied about nature and life on earth for many millennia.

The metaphysic/political system of Rene Guenon, who affects to express all the religions, is backwards and upside down and he is indeed, typical of many religions. To Guenon, all the archaic major religions are "real" whereas the 'actual world' or nature, is an illusion, Maya or Samsara. This equation of existence with illusion is radically false, but ubiquitous in the major religions. This is what makes Guenon so insane and leads him to be destructive of our actual world. Guenon takes seriously many of the basic inversions common in the religions of old. The toxic doctrine of Buddhism, for instance is well exemplified in the work of the supposedly great Padmasambhava,⁵³² who states that the way to freedom and the Dharma is to expel "the evil spirit of fixation on concrete

⁵³¹ A sample of other misogynist statements in the bible: (Ephesians 5:22–23) and "These [redeemed] are they which were not defiled with women; . . ." (Revelation 14:4); and from the Jewish Torah or Old Testament we find "How then can man be justified with God? Or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?" (Job 25:4)

⁵³² Dakini Teachings, Boston Shambhala, 1990 pg 66

reality.” A sentence like this pretty much discredits the credibility of Padmasambhava. Why should one expel the understanding of Whales, botanical facts, Shorebirds, photosynthesis or be made to feel guilty for admiring the physics of simple machines? Hating nature and ordinary reality is only possible to one who wishes to escape into delusions.

Those who are devoted to delusions do not want anyone to fixate too much on the real and the actual. The hatred of reality is common among those who profit by selling the unreal. Christ is made to say that one should” Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.” (1 John 2:15) Hating the world in this way helps make the world a worse place that it is already. The myth of Christ ruined the world for millions during the Dark Ages. Christ and Padmasambhava are selling a misogynistic metaphysic and a hatred of ordinary life. It is our lives they hate, the lives of those who are actual and hungry, living and struggling. Why despise us so much and who made them so much better than us? They were not better, is the answer, not by a long shot.

In Guenon’s ideology he expresses hate for what he calls “ordinary reality”. He wants to teach people how to hate reality and love fictions. Abstract impersonal systems are made mostly for men by men to justify class difference and ideological conformity. A child with a toy matters far more than Wall Street or the Catholic Church. This disparagement of the ordinary is what all the major religions do. Pascal Boyer does not talk at all about the effects of this hatred. But Patriarchal metaphysical systems create a reality that acts to keep men in positions of power and put women and nature down. One must first get people to accept make believe and then get them to accept that all that does really matter in fact, does not matter at all. This is how religions are systems of mind control.

David Hall notes that for Muslims, “believing a fantasy is better

than knowing the truth or admitting ignorance.”⁵³³ Hall notes that William Chittick and Hossein Nasr think that historical scholarship, which relies on evidence, means nothing. All that matters for William Chittick is “Muslim’s perceptions of the Koran’s significance”. For Chittick if 1.62 billion adherents think that red is green and 2 + 2 is 7, then it is so. The deluded followers alone know what is the case. This is William James’ subjectivism all over again. This denial of reality in favor of fictions is characteristic of the religion as a whole. Chittick and Hossein Nasr both deny that modern historians have anything valuable to say about the Koran. Actually modern historians have shown that the belief in the divine origin of the Koran has no basis in fact and Chittick and Nasr, stuck in fundamentalism, deny the obvious. I will show that a similar analysis of Christian origins yields a similar result and it is very likely that Christ never existed. Creating fictions which serve as truths and which favor a given class of people is what religions and ideological system do best, even though reality is structure quite differently.

The concrete reality of our world is all that matters. It is useless to think of high metaphysical principles to save a sick baby, but medicine might help. It is only by addressing the concrete realities of the earth that we can heal the earth of all that ails it. But this cannot happen with the Guenonians,--- since they deny reality to concrete reality--- so they end up supporting what is delusional and reactionary in our world and look forward to world destruction.

This schizophrenic view of the world is the basis of the traditional hatred of everything having to do with reality. The hatred of the actual the “world of the senses” ---“concrete reality” in short, extends to hatred of all things “material” natural and scientific. This means one hates Salamanders, Owls or Frogs, as well as Paramecium. This is ubiquitous in religion. This results in a bizarre love of abstract ideas and ideologies

⁵³³ Hall, David. Islamic Mysticism, A Secular Perspective. Prometheus Books. Amherst New York. 2000 pg. 92

which are imaginary and unreal. The “Science of the Real” as practiced by Schuon and Guenon is actually the science of delusions—or what they call “metaphysics” i.e superstition.. So the hatred of the physical become hatred of the body, unless the body is somehow made over as a dream object—reconstituted as a spiritual virtuality. So, in Schuon’s obscenely silly portraits of himself⁵³⁴ in sexual contact with the Virgin Mary or in Icons of himself as exemplar of the total truth of all the religions, what one sees is a body transformed into a “theomorphic” body, to use Schuon’s meaningless and undefined term. These badly drawn bodies in these paintings are not a body in the ordinary sense, but the body of a great avatara or prophet—an imaginary construction. It is this ‘theomorphic body’ that was supposed to “heal the wombs” of the nude women and young girls who press their “yonis” against his “lingam” in primordial gatherings-----to use the preferred Hindu terms used by the inner circle of the cult. In this inverted dream world of the traditionalists, what is real is unreal and what is unreal is real. How this mysterious healing was supposed to occur was never spelled out. Indeed, Schuon’s explanations of the Primordial Gatherings were ad hoc, arbitrary and inflated, evidently invented to appear plausible. No one was ever healed of anything, it was not about that, such language was merely part of the con game, the window dressing, the lure to get people in .

Schuon said that if one wants to know if he is guilty or not guilty of the crimes for which he is accused, one should read his books. In 1991,

⁵³⁴ Schuon pictured himself as the little Christ child in these paintings and I saw at least a hundred of these works. (one of my jobs in the cult was to copy and frame them in addition to my studying painting with Schuon) It took some time to understand this bizarre image. Why picture himself as the Christ child when the images are so sexual? He disliked the image of the Virgin Mary as “Mother”, yet he captures himself as her consort as child. That is very bizarre and psychological. It indicates an illness that is partly a sort of infantile sexuality, with a hint of incest and a pathological need to be the ‘baby prophet’ having sexual contact with the Virgin Mary, thus indicating a very sick delusion of grandeur. Schuon’s wives were encouraged to see him as a boy or young boy and one of them, Maude, had a little shrine to Schuon as a boy in her bedroom. There were little pictures of him as a boy and candles and the nude virgin all mixed together.

at the time that Stephen Lambert and I witnessed the events described, Schuon wrote articles which describe his view of Primordial Gatherings. In the writings from 1990-91 Schuon describes himself and his role in the Primordial Gatherings, in slightly veiled prose, as the “deified man, who thus is central.....with regard to the multitude of ordinary men. The ‘believers’ are like the Gopis dancing around Krishna and uniting themselves to him; whereas he—the ‘motionless mover’—plays his saving flute”. The sexual symbolism of the ‘saving flute’ isn’t too hard to figure out, nor is the reference to Aristotle definition of god as the “motionless mover”. The Gopis are described as “uniting’ with Krishna”, and this is a reference to what Schuon does with the women at Primordial Gatherings. I was aware on a regular basis of Schuon’s conversations in 1991 and he worked out these analogies to Primordial Gatherings with his wives, especially Murray and Romaine. In this same essay, in a footnote, Schuon compares the Primordial Gatherings, implicitly, with the circumambulations of the pilgrims around the Kaaba in Mecca, which, he claims, was originally done nude. He goes on to multiply the analogies, as if to exhaust all the possibilities that might exalt himself and his Primordial ritual even further.

“The movement is circular like the revolution of the planets: another example is the Sun Dance around a tree representing the axis ‘heaven-earth’; the movement is alternatively centripetal and centrifugal like the phases of respiration, which takes us back to the dance of the Gopis with its two modes of circumambulation and union, precisely. (The Play of Masks pg. 42)”

As will be noticed, Schuon is here describing in his usual abstract and coded language the circling of the women and his “union” with them in the Gatherings. The “union” Schuon describes here is described by Romaine as “more intimate than words”. In the same book, Schuon observes that “sexuality is determined by the which constitutes man’s prerogative as is attested by the theomorphic form of his body.”(Ibid. pg.

49) He continues in the same passage that the “human body itself, not in some diminished form—is a symbol-sacrament because it is made in the image of God: that is why it is the object of love par excellence. The body invites to adoration by its very theomorphic form, and that is why it can be a vehicle of a celestial presence that in principle is salvific”.(Ibid pg. 89) Schuon is here setting up a hierarchical notion of bodies, his body, of course, being a superior “vehicle of a celestial presence”, and not a body “in some diminished form”. In the Primordial Gatherings Schuon thinks he is providing salvation to the women by embracing them with his ‘theomorphic body’. All this seems quite logical to Schuon and the members of the cult, who somehow convince themselves that this ugly, old man really is the “Center as such”, like Krishna, the Kaaba, the sun in the middle of the solar system, the Sun dance Tree and other superlatives. Schuon’s style of writing hides his personal life behind loaded abstractions and sparkling generalities. I know that the above passages refer to specific developments in the history of Primordial Gatherings because I was on the scene, and discussed these matters with his wives. I was told Primordial Gatherings go back to the 1950’s in rudimentary form, but earlier references to Primordial Gatherings are obscure for lack of personal references. Earlier references to Primordial Gatherings are less grandiose though tending towards the delusional grandiosity of more recent years. One can recognize the familiar rationalizations for ‘primordial sexuality’ in the following quote, written in the 1970’s:

“Woman is unveiled — in certain rights or certain ritual dances — with the aim of operating a kind of magic by analogy, the unveiling of beauty with an erotic vibration evoking, in the manner of a catalyst, the revelation of the liberating and beatific essence.”

This is Schuon’s version of Tantra in a nutshell. In a footnote to this passage, Schuon speaks of the unveiling of the Queen of Sheba and of

the Virgin Mary. The virgin's veil "opens because of mercy".(Esoterism as principle and Way, pg. 61-62) This is an obvious reference to Schuon's vision of the virgin as well as his obsession with vaginal imagery. In another book Schuon points out the Arabic word for "mercy" has its root in the word 'Rahim' "which means womb, and this corroborates the interpretation of Rahmah [mercy] as Divine Femininity." This relates back again to Schuon's vision of the Virgin mercifully comforting him with her sexual parts. It was well beyond Schuon to grasp the sexual organs as natural way to get pregnant and have children, a process he abhorred. Schuon saw the sexual process as one where he would be deified and women be his harem. The idea of the womb as Rahim also relates to the Primordial Gatherings. Schuon speaks elsewhere of "the Divine Beauty manifested in earthly beauties". The essence of the 'prophet' has a feature, which , Schuon writes, "could be called 'Solomonian' or 'Krishnaite'". The Prophet, that is Schuon himself, has the ability to find

"concretely in woman all aspects of the Divine Femininity...The sensorial experience that produces in the ordinary man an inflation of the ego, actualizes in the 'deified' Man extinction in the Divine Self. (In the Face of the Absolute pg. 221)"

In other words, Women are not people but mere adornments for his ego. Women are merely symbols and sexual desire leads a man like Schuon to god- that is to a symbol. Schuon's desire is not like other men's desires since he is, "not a man like other men", he claims (Memoirs). This is vainglorious doublespeak of a high order. When Schuon has sex it is god having sex with himself, therefore he is innocent of any desire. So too, when he desires a woman, it is not an ordinary act since he is not an ordinary man, but a "deified man", hence having sex with a woman is to participate in divine unity, not to be lusty, even if he is lusty. This transcendental narcissism is absurd, obviously, but for Schuon it was deadly serious. His whole ego depended on this nonsense. Schuon's

sexuality proves to him his own transcendent importance. He is beyond all laws and the chosen vessel of god on earth. Therefore, Schuon can press his naked, or near naked body, against under-aged girls in the Primordial Gatherings because Schuon's desire is god's desire and he is Primordially innocent, even if he breaks the law. Schuon can do this, he thinks, because the women are not women, but examples of Divine Femininity—mere symbols. Their individuality, and thus their human rights, are dissolved in abstraction or essentializations. They are reduced merely to archetypes or symbols. Schuon exploits real women by ignoring their reality and seeing them only as symbols. He was a romantic misogynist of the very kind one sees in the Symbolist Art movement, in Knopff, Klimt, Rossetti and many others. The purpose of the Primordial Gatherings is to join Schuon who is the Logos and the Holy Spirit to the 'Divine Feminine' or the ordinary women at the gathering. All of this is supposed to result in "healing" and "salvation". In the words of one of the cult's songs. Schuon is the "All — Holy" and the "All Holy is a healing for the wombs". In the words of the second wife, Barbara Perry this means that, "the radiation of the Avataric body (i.e. Schuon's body) heals the wombs", and she interprets the word "wombs" to mean "souls". If "souls" is meant why not sue the word souls, well, obviously it was not souls that Schuon really wanted to "heal" . It was not about healing at all but about using women as sexual adornments. This peculiar hierarchical and demeaning attitude towards women as being merely manifestations of "archetypes" and thus only secondarily individuals with rights explained by Schuon as follows:

"A distinction should be made between a polygamy in which several women keep their personality, and a princely 'pantogamy' on which a multitude of women represent femininity in a quasi-impersonal manner; the latter would be an affront to the dignity of human persons if it were not founded on the idea that a given

bridegroom is situated at the summit of human kind. Pantogamy is possible because Krishna is Vishnu, because David and Solomon are prophets...It could also be said that innumerable and anonymous harem has a function analogous to that of an imperial throne adorned with precious stones; A function that is analogous, but not identical, for the throne made of human substance — the harem, that is — indicates in an eminently more direct and concrete manner the real of borrowed divinity of the monarch.(Esoterism as Principle and Way. Pg. 133)”

In other words, in Schuon’s mind the Primordial Gatherings⁵³⁵ in which he treats the women as a harem is “not an affront to the dignity of persons” because he is “situated at the summit of human kind”. This premise is absurd. Schuon was a short German guy who had delusions of grandeur. Moreover, the idea that women in the gatherings or in his

⁵³⁵ Sgt. Jim Richardson, who was the primary investigator of the Schuon cult said that: "A search warrant also turned up photographs of nude and semi-nude members of the group participating in ritual dances." These dances were extensively recorded or suggested in the hundreds and hundreds of photographs turned up, as well as an investigation of where these gatherings took place. The cult has been denying these gatherings for years, but Charles Upton is the first associate of the Schuon cult to admit the existence of primordial gatherings publicly: Here:

“Schuon was apparently able (though this remains open to question) to integrate both Native American spirituality and Hindu spiritual eroticism and sacred nudity into his own plenary esoterism, as expressed in the "primordial gatherings" he conducted, in no way establishes Shamanism as a normative aspect of esoterism in our age, nor sacred eroticism (to say the least!) as a normative aspect of Shamanism; what is possible to the great spiritual Master is often impossible to others, particularly after the Master in question has passed on. Schuon himself characterized his primordial gatherings as the expressions of a personal predilection, not an integral aspect of his spiritual method; and after his death Martin Lings offered the opinion that the time for this particular manifestation had passed with the passing of the Shaykh. To take the exception that proves the rule as a rule in itself has been the origin of all too many heterodox and anti-traditional movements over the centuries. “

<http://traditionalstudies.freeforums.org/critical-review-of-schuon-biography-by-upton-t20.html>

Actually, Primordial gatherings were presented as the sine quo non of Schuon’s life and method, Upton is mistaken. The effort to deny they exist and then, when that fails, to deny their importance is standard PR in the Schuon cult. They were the expression of “pure esoterism” and “the grace of the Virgin Mary”

harem—or any harem--- are like a “throne made of human substance”, an especially disgusting image, a true “affront to human dignity”--- recalling Nazi lampshades made of human skin. Schuon claim to be a “monarch” over a group of dehumanized women is supposed to prove his divinity. Actually it just proves his pathetic grandiosity and need of abusing persons to sustain it. He reduces women to the image of “a throne made of human substance” in order to exalt himself. He claims to be the “summit of the human species” and arrogate himself the rights of a tyrant who can turn people into objects to glorify himself. He proves himself nothing so much as an utterly repulsive psychopath gathering trophies for a grandiose ego let loose of its sanity.

Schuon continues the above passage by saying that his own preferences are not indicated by what he has written, but this is merely an evasion or the result of what he calls in his *Memoirs*, his “inevitable and habitual dissimulation” which he was forced to practice from an early age. (*Memoirs*, pg. 50) In other words, it is the world’s fault that Schuon perpetually lies, since he is the last great prophet. Being perfect, “in every respect”, any blame attached to him must belong to someone else.⁵³⁶ “The Fuhrer is always right”, it was said of Hitler. Schuon claims to be infallible on almost everything too. Anyone who criticizes him is therefore and axiomatically guilty. He claimed to be infallible, therefore all his critics are evil. This is the logic of madness.

For Schuon, there are no real women, there are only symbols of women, and women in fact are embodiments of Schuon himself, in

⁵³⁶ I have only read excerpts of the biography of Schuon by Jean Baptiste Ayamard and it is bad ‘embedded’ journalism---exactly as one would expect from the Schuon cult. It is pure myth, mostly with little accuracy or actual history. There are slanders of those who question Schuon and excessive praise for this man who really was not at all impressive in person or in action. It is a good book to read to sense the cultish atmosphere of irrational slavish praise that surrounded Schuon. In person Schuon was actually rather a frightened, reclusive and grumpy old man with an anger problem and inability to smile, in addition to his poor treatment of women. I only mention a small amount of the evidence about primordial gatherings in this essay. There is much more.

disguise. As he says, “the opposite sex is only a symbol, the true center is hidden in ourselves, in the heart intellect”.⁵³⁷ This reduction of the opposite sex as people is utterly demeaning. He got this idea partly from the Symbolist movement, Gauguin, Hodler, Knopf and others, as he once told me himself. The symbolist movement was misogynistic too, and like Schuon saw woman as goddesses or whores.

The universal Narcissism that is implied by everything being a symbol means that the whole universe is reduced to Frithjof Schuon. “Thou art that” is just speciesism run amok. This “non-dual” awareness is Schuon’s fundamental error. Schuon’s theory of sexuality is hierarchical. The deified man has sexual rights the “ordinary man” does not have. Schuon has four wives and a harem in Primordial Gatherings and he can do this because he is a monarch and an Avatara who only can see things and people as symbols. I am dwelling on this because to prove the legal case against Schuon, it must be proven that he pressed himself against young girls to satisfy his desires. To prove this, one must enter into the fantasy world where Schuon’s desires cannot be like other men’s because he is “not a man like other men”.

Schuon has publicly denied that he has had any desires. He said, in a public relations video, made by inner circle members, Michael Pollock and Michel Fitzgerald, that “it is psychologically impossible that a man like me could have a passionate pleasure”, and he says soon thereafter, “to ask if I am guilty or not is a waste of time... read my books, look at my books to see if I am guilty or not”. Yes. Read Schuon’s books carefully and you will see that this is a man with serious delusions of grandeur. Schuon’s sexuality was closely connected to his delusions of his own magnificence. Women and girls are only symbols so it does not matter if he does them harm all that matters is him, other people have no rights and really do not even exist. It is this that made him able to violate the

⁵³⁷ (Essential Writings pg.394)

human rights women and young girls and this that enabled him to counsel members of his cult to obstruct justice and lie to a Grand Jury. This is exactly the point: Schuon's books indicate he is guilty.

I remember feeling ill and queasy when Maude Murray told me she thought all Schuon's sperm she drank over 15 years of her affair with him should give her a special spiritual body that radiates blessings to others. She was sure his sperm was symbolic because he himself had said it was. She said she was giving me the gift of this spermy beatitude. I found the idea repulsive. Indeed, tantrism is repulsive in general as it tries to turn sexuality into a spiritual exploit, however "disinterested" it pretends to be.⁵³⁸ I have come to object to this entire way of thinking. Symbolist thought involves the effort to make something over in the image of what it is not. A nation is not a bird and the killing off of the bald eagle shows that. The bird is real, the Nation is a fiction. So likewise Kali is not India, and the divine did not inhere in the 'buckets' of Schuon's sperm Maude said she drank. Abstractions kill people as Kali kills for India and for Brahma. The Hindu view of life that sees Maya as a wonder is a horrible view of life. Life is not Maya and Kali is an utter fiction.⁵³⁹

⁵³⁸ Maude taught me Schuon's tantric "science" and method, which she learned from him better than anyone. It was symbolist nonsense and had no merit at all. It was merely voyeurism and intercourse as an adjunct to prayer. Further research showed me this is true of tantrism in general. Sexuality is exploited by an ideology and made to serve a template of artificial and invented meanings. Hugh Urban has written about tantra and the exploitation of the goddess Kali by Hindu nationalists, though his critical assessment of this movement is rather thin. Examining Hinduism from a Foucault inspired point of view is interesting but very limited. Foucault had no real insight into religion as is shown by his obscene endorsement of the Iranian Revolution of 1979. Yes, Kali is an image of political power, but to say this without much critical insight into Hinduism, caste, male dominated metaphysics and the fictional symbolism it created is not ultimately very interesting. Kali is also an image of Hindu misogyny as well as an image of the Hindu hatred of and demeaning of life. The Hindu doctrine of "Maya" the atrocious idea that life is an "illusion" is the basis of the Kali image: hence Kali's eating of men and women. The implicit despising of life in this image is only possible in a society that sanctions social cruelty and stratifies hierarchy so such a horrendous degree as to create social injustice, including crimes against children and the poor

⁵³⁹ I first saw Tibetan iconography in San Francisco in 1977 and was fascinated by it without knowing why. I took me 25 years to figure it out. I went to the Tibetan museum in the early 80's



Kali

Once I saw through all this imagery as the exploit of priests trying to capture minds in nets of manipulated symbols. I was free of Schuon and Kali, the Eucharist and Tao. Really, there was nothing special in Schuon's body or his sperm. Indeed, his lack of children after having four "wives" is a notable act of extreme narcissism, and indicates his dislike of

and "practiced" their religion in '86-87. As I learned more about it I began to see that the violence against bodies implicit in this culture was due to a metaphysical hatred of reality, common to the major religions and expressed in Christianity in the crucifixion.. I used such imagery in drawings from that period, but stopped doing that once I understood what it was.

children.⁵⁴⁰ I spent time in Schuon's private rooms with Maude. They were small rooms and he had a rather ugly, lime green bathroom, with his primordial negligee hanging on a hook in the same bathroom. His primordial negligee was a see-through costume he wore at primordial gatherings the purpose of which was to reveal and not hide his penis. He designed it himself. It was utterly ridiculous. Schuon was a troublesome and difficult little man who went to the bathroom, like everyone else, was prone to tantrums and paranoid fits, disliked children, was superstitious and hated science. He was prone to delusional states and fictions. The notion that he was in any way the "summit of the human species" is a good joke. Schuon denied to Maude that his sperm gave her any special election, thus denying he had any special prophet's body that oozed "spiritual fluids",.... Schuon had made up the term to get women to embrace him at primordial gatherings. His nude body was supposed to emanate to them. It did nothing of the sort. In any case, the whole deception of the primordial gatherings rested on the pretense of Schuon's sacred body oozing these fictional tantric "spiritual fluids".

I saw through the fiction of Tantra, indeed, I saw its perfidious need to deform reality in the interest of abstract symbols. Spiritual ideas are deadly when there are efforts to pretend that they are real. The effort to make fiction reality always requires violence and that is what one sees in Tantra or in Kali cults as well as in the Crucifixion. The Crucifixion in fact probably never happened because Christ did not exist, but the fiction is potent and implies violent destruction of the body and cannibal rituals, drinking the gods blood and eating his body. Dismembering reality and trying to destroy the world is what religions do best. There was nothing to Primordial Gatherings except empty rituals that were

⁵⁴⁰ Catherine Schuon put out a book for children of her paintings in her old age, perhaps indicating some regret the years of childlessness as Schuon's wife, as well as a token of regret for the abuse of children which occurred in the Schuon cult. Religious books for children are always about proselytizing too, trying to rope them into the delusions early.

about sexuality and abuse of power, involving both women and underage girls and boys in the cult. Symbols justified the exploit. This is no different than Hindu or Tibetan Tantra which is also an exploit. The abuse of power grew from Schuon's sexual fascinations and his effort to impose his fictional ideas and delusions of grandeur on actual women. That is all it was about in the end, a dirty old man and his gullible cult followers. You have the same thing in Aleister Crowley⁵⁴¹, Kalu Rinpoche, Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche,⁵⁴² all of whom abused their followers. You see it in

⁵⁴¹ For a rather typical example of sensationalist writing which panders to the "esoteric" and gnostic elitism of religious studies scholars, see Hugh Urban's rather silly effort to extoll the virtues and vices of Gnosticism's ridiculous bad boy, Aleister Crowley. It is pretty clear that Urban identifies himself with this character to some degree as he does with the Michel Foucault too, who was also prone to love of power and narcissistic transgression. This essay shows once against the irrationalism, cult apologetics and promotional tactics of esoteric studies.

http://www.esoteric.msu.edu/VolumeV/Unleashing_the_Beast.htm

⁵⁴² Trungpa, head of Naropa Institute in Colorado, which was a mecca for many poets and writers, as well as seekers, was involved in various crimes, pedophilia, drunken orgies, and all around bad behavior. All justified by "Tantra" and "crazy wisdom". Indeed, finding about the decadence of Tantra and Trungpa and other gurus led to my growing skepticism about Ginsberg as well as Hinduism and Buddhism. I saw some of the harm Trungpa and Ginsberg and his circle did to very young men when I lived in San Francisco in 1979. Similar harm is done to women and girls in Indian Temples and elsewhere under the guise of Tantra. Geoffery Falk discusses the idea of "Crazy Wisdom". He writes

"In general, I think that nearly all of what passes for "crazy wisdom" and is justified as "crazy wisdom" by both master and enraptured disciple is really cruelty and exploitation, not enlightened wisdom at all. In the name of "crazy wisdom" appalling crimes have been rationalized by master and disciple alike, and many lives have been partly or completely devastated."

This is true in the Schuon cult as in many other cults and religions. The catholic exploitation of boys is the same thing as Allen Ginsberg's exploitation of them in the name of Buddhist or Hindu Tantra. Trungpa and his student Thomas Rich, allegedly infected some of their students with AIDS. Trungpa died of this disease in 1990.

Quoted in <http://www.strippingthegurus.com/stgsamplechapters/trungpa.asp>



Ginsberg and Trungpa

Ramakrishna, who also exploited some of his followers. Ramakrishna's exploitation of the young was not unique to him. In India, sexual exploitation of boys and girls at Temples and major pilgrimage centers is pervasive. Children have been exploited by Hindu priests and rich supporters of temples for centuries as servants, prostitutes, and workers of menial jobs. The devadassi are called 'deuki' in Nepal and though there have been efforts to outlaw this horrendous practice it is so much part of the religions of Buddhism and Hinduism that it is hard to get rid of. To this day this awful goddess is the object of deaths of uncastrated male animals like buffaloes, goats, sheep, pigs, and chickens, and even human children, are sacrificed to her fiction. The word 'thug' is often used to describe a violent criminal, without any remembrance of its origin. One source I read claims the word "Thug" comes from the 'thuggee', "a widespread sect of Kali worshippers who, in her honor, strangled travelers on the roads of India". In the nineteenth century, a child abuse for Kali occurred every day. For Kali and child was killed every day at the Kali temple in Calcutta. In 2002 a three-year-old and 15-year-old boy were hacked to death illegally by their parents in a secret ceremony for Kali. The reason for these hideous crimes against children was to appease the transcendent Goddess so that they parents might

have an easier time with their remaining children. In any case, the Hindu tradition is sometimes erroneously said to be kind to animals. While this might be true for some sects of individuals, it is not at all true of Hinduism as a whole. The notion of Karma partly about denigrating animals since if you misbehave you might reincarnate as a lower animal.

Similar to the practice of animal sacrifice for Kali is the rituals of Sati, or burning a widow in the cremation fires of her dead husband. Animals and women are often conflated and disparaged in ancient Hindu texts which are male centered. Sati, along with the Kali cruelties, are both examples of Hindu religious cruelty that grow from the misogynistic doctrines of Shankara, the Bhagavad-Gita, Vedanta and so on . These practices were put to an end by the British governors while India was under British rule, but continue informally.⁵⁴³ So British rule in India was not all bad.

Coomaraswamy liked the misogynistic ritual of Sati. In the Schuon cult there was a lot of talk about “Sacred Nature” but none of them knew much about actual nature, birds, trees, evolution or biology. They only liked backdrops for their ritual deification of the cult leader. In the Schuon cult women and girls were used for Schuon’s power needs and entertainment. The cult claimed a Tantric Primordialism that “to the pure all things are pure” but I can assure you none of them were pure---least of all Schuon himself. Indeed, the only one that saw what was going on at these gatherings appears to have been me and few others that is why I went to the police about them. I am not generally crazy about involving police in matters, but when children are being abused, it is the right thing to do. I have never claimed to be “pure”. But I do my best to try to tell the truth. The rest of those who were there spent the next twenty years lying about what they saw and they still are. I sometimes

⁵⁴³ <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,322673,00.html>

wonder if they will tell the truth before they die.

Once one understands the excessive and delusional nature of Guenon's and Schuon fantasy of self, it becomes clear why they despised nearly everyone and hated nature, women and the world. The traditionalists, reviving medieval forms of inquisitorial blacklisting, tend to accuse all those who question Traditionalism as "profane", "diabolic", "satanic", or as originating from the subversive "counter initiation". This way of speaking of others as subhuman or evil 'others' is a kind of hate speech, akin to racism. All cults and religions do this. Rene Guenon's world is a world of 'Them Versus Us' where hate and caste dominates, though this hate is not necessarily obvious on the surface. It is sublimated through cold, intellectual rationalization but these rationalizations are all based on fictions, superstitions and false suppositions based yet again on phony initiations and imagined results of passed down rituals. ⁵⁴⁴

I wrote in 1991

"The women circle around him clockwise, shoulder to shoulder. From the center towards the periphery, Schuon goes up to each woman in turn and gives them a kind of embrace, pressing his chest and stomach against the breasts and abdomen of the women. In another dance he puts his hands around their hips and backsides. In yet another dance, he sits on his bench to the side of a lodge and as the women circle the lodge, each woman as she approaches a few feet from Schuon, directly in

⁵⁴⁴ Silsilah is the word in Sufism for the chain of transmission from master to disciple. These chains guarantee nothing so much as a similar mind set. When one looks back at the transmission of a book like the Koran, which has many variant versions, mistranslated Arabic words, verses missing or added in later years, or that even more questionable hadith—sayings of the Prophet---which were very likely just pure invention of later authors—one realizes that religions and constructions of many people, not truth handed down, but merely a code handed down about how to run a given cult or pretend to a holiness that is purely imaginary.

front of him, stops and does a 360 degree turn, giving him an opportunity to look each woman up and down back and front. The women are holding hands with one another as Schuon reaches around and grabs one of the women's buttocks to pull them to him and press his penis against their private parts, their "yoni" as Schuon called it. "

The women continue to circle around him until the next woman reaches him and he does the same thing to her. Meanwhile another 20 or 30 men dance in the opposite direction outside the circle of women, watching the man who thinks he is "divine" embrace their wives and daughters. While the whole thing had an erotic flavor to it--- how could it not?---it clearly demonstrates that Schuon had huge delusions of grandeur, as he compares these dances to the circulation of the planets or the Sundance or the Gopis (Hindu dancing shepardesses) dancing around Krishna with himself in the role of sun, Sundance tree or god. It was the high point of Schuon's life and thought. He created the "transcendental unity of religion" first and later in life he created the transcendental nudity of delusion.

There are three or four independent and detailed descriptions of these gatherings, as well as numerous corroborating details and facts--- many of them from Schuon's own books--- all of which cross check and agree and prove beyond a reasonable doubt both that these events took place and that young girls and boys were involved in them illegally.⁵⁴⁵

Schuon's rituals have been accused by Native people of being an

⁵⁴⁵ To see some of the short version of proof regarding Schuon's Primordial Gatherings and the involvement of children in them, see http://www.naturesrights.com/knowledge%20power%20book/frithjof_Schuon.asp

abuse of their culture.⁵⁴⁶ Schuon's sociopathic and paranoid mentality made him see himself as a victim, when in fact he was the victimizer. He and his followers have whined for years in Latin that "Audiatur altera pars", which means 'you must listen to the other side', while they try to silence, intimidate or eliminate the other side from speaking. What autocratic leaders wish to do is silence critics, not listen to them. They have never listened to any other side on anything. Schuon never listened to anyone, and I watched him closely for some years. He was a narcissistic autocrat, who lived with delusions of a subjective nature and barely ventured outside this solipsistic cage. He spent a lot of his time in private slander and mocking of everyone in his cultish entourage. He mocked those beyond the cult as well. He had no real respect for anyone except himself and even then he required constant adulation because his self-esteem was always dipping below zero. This is the real "message" of his hopelessly convoluted work.

Indeed, the Schuon cult has continued lying and never answered any of their critic's actual evidence. Glasse put together a 500-page book about the cult and they never answered his charges they only called him "satanic" and slandered and attacked him personally in a systematic ad hominem way. They did this to Maude Murray, Aldo Vidali, and many others too. They attack people personally rather than admit the overwhelming evidence against them. The critics of Schuon have told the truth as best they could and have no reason to lie. The cult is

⁵⁴⁶ This occurred both in Avis Little Eagles marvelous expose of Schuon's abuse of the Lakota culture in The Lakota Times, 1991 and in the pan-tribal condemnation of phony Sundances which stated:

"WHEREAS sacrilegious "sundances" for non-Indians are being conducted by charlatans and cult leaders who promote abominable and obscene imitations of our sacred Lakota sundance rites; and...---

---We hereby and henceforth declare war against all persons who persist in exploiting, abusing and misrepresenting the sacred traditions and spiritual practices of our Lakota, Dakota and Nakota people." This refers to Schuon and many others who use native culture for ulterior motives

<http://www.aics.org/war.html>

hypocritical and accuses people who tell the truth about them of slander and libel when really it is they themselves who slander everyone who refuses to adulate Schuon. This hypocrisy is quite notable and characterizes the whole group.

They tried to stop Mark Sedgwick from publishing a book about them; they muzzled Maude Murray and many others. They have lied to newspapers and in court and sued people who criticized them, as well as stopped publication of photos and writings about them. Schuon could never brook the slightest criticism and required constant and perpetual adulation, and even the excessive adulation he got was never sufficient. He was utterly opposed to free speech, except for himself of course, and he pontificated endlessly. Schuon claims he is a victim of slander, when in fact, the charges against him are true, and so there is no slander or libel. Slander depends upon untruth. However, this is how it is in a cult. Cults do not like to admit wrongdoing or answer the evidence against them and will do anything they can to do damage control and stop those who speak against them. They never address facts or evidence and when pushed against the wall they lie and cheat. I have a great deal of personal and intimate knowledge of how this cult does that.

Schuon thought he was the “last manifestation of the Logos at the end of time” – a prophet in other words--- the last one before Christ’s supposed return--- so his followers believed this nonsense and worshiped him. This image of him semi- nude with a transparent cloth over his penis embracing his many groupies is one I have trouble getting out of my head, since I was unfortunate enough to witness it. I wish I had not. But I got to know how mentally ill this little old man Schuon really was. He really believed that by pressing his penis against lots of women’s private parts, he, the great prophet—would “heal the wombs”. Who said they

needed healing?⁵⁴⁷ Nobody did. And why did he not just touch them on the earlobe with his pinky finger, since after all, the Virgin Mary was supposedly impregnated through the ear in the Immaculate Conception. However, Schuon did not like prim motherly virgins.⁵⁴⁸ I was told this repeatedly by Schuon's "wives". They said he did not like the Virgin as mother but only as lover. He wanted his Virgin Mary to be a temple prostitute, a devadassi,⁵⁴⁹ as he liked to call some of his wives and nude Icons of his "Virgin", as well as women in the cult who he found attractive in a certain way. He tried to assimilate this "vision of the Virgin" to the mythos of the Virgin herself, about whom nothing at all is known historically, so everything written about her is fiction, including the gospels and the Immaculate Conception myth. Schuon's "Virgin" is

⁵⁴⁷ Schuon claims in some text that the womb and the breast of the Virgin are about enclosing the 'contemplative' in mercy—which is imaginative. But if he was so profoundly moved by the Virgin enclosing him in her womb, why replicate this need to obtain a really rather selfish "mercy" with so many women's wombs, as Schuon did at Primordial Gatherings?. Hmmm? Why paint the same womb and breasts over and over and have your fourth wife paint more wombs and breasts too? She painted these as Schuon reclines on the floor contemplating Sharlyn's "Yoni" or womb as she paints. There is something more going on here than mere self-comfort or a narcissistic need of mercy. Schuon's mental illness had a strong aspect of obsessive compulsive disorder. He tries to justify his sexual fascinations with elaborate symbolisms. Schuon is a sort of dictionary on why symbolist readings of the world are untenable and lead to the absurd.

⁵⁴⁸ Renaud Fabbri, a cult follower of Schuon's, wrote an essay called the "Milk of the Virgin". It is one of many essays written by cult members that are notable only for their lack of originality and slavish suppression of any intelligence. So in this essay not otherwise of note, or worth reading other than the title, I draw attention to the title and note a mistake. Schuon disliked the whole notion of motherhood and milky breasts as well as the stress of Catholic Church on Mother. He paints the Virgin Mary as a sort of divine hetaera who gives herself to Schuon like a Fin de Siecle Salome, cruel as the Magnificent, sexual and his personal goddess to do his bidding. . He never had children and did not like children. He stressed this to me personally several times, as he did not want me to paint icons of mothers. He objected when I did so. He had no knowledge of babies or of the marvel of breast feeding and such things when they were considered at all were considered merely as symbols. So the premise of Fabbri's essay is already a misnomer, and shows a lamentable misunderstanding of who Schuon actually was. Schuon and some of his wives used to advise women in the cult to have their tubes tied. One of Schuon's wives, Maude Murray, did have her tubes tied. What Fabbri should have called this essay was the "Milking Schuon's Delusions for what they are worth"

actually a combination of the Koranic Virgin, the Symbolist Hetaera or courtesan, the Christian Virgin and Luke's, which in some ways is a mythic hymn to power or "justice", in Roman terms. It is thus a literary projection or Schuon's own psychology and not a real entity.

Various versions of Schuon's Tantric images have been made by an anonymous Frenchman. These are watercolors done as very loose versions of the Schuon original paintings, not at all a direct « copy »⁵⁵⁰. They are evidently still available to be seen under certain conditions.

The concept of the "devadassi" was applied to two of Schuon's wives in particular, the third and fourth: Maude and Sharlyn. The misogyny of this concept has a long history. In Indian history the Devadasi were actually a troubled and abused group of girls and women who priests used for sexual purposes and when they were worn out often were more or less cast away.⁵⁵¹ Devadasi were supposed to attend the gods, fan icons, honored it with lights, and sing and dance for the god's amusement— but in practice Schuon liked these ideas of women existing to flatter a man's ego== he wanted temple prostitutes to perform for him as in the Sanskrit poem Gitagovinda where its hero, the god Krishna, is circled around by women who want to have sex with him. This was the model for Schuon's primordial gatherings and Schuon

⁵⁵⁰ These could be seen at this address: <http://cret.blogspot.com/album/schuonneries/page1/>. They were put up by Dominique Devie, but then taken down or hidden behind the need to sign up to his site. The picture at the bottom of the page and the 5th up from the bottom show Schuon's vision of the Virgin in art works similar to what the original look like, while being somewhat different. The third one down from the top shows Schuon's nude self-portraits, done by Romaine and Schuon.

⁵⁵¹ Maude Murray used to laugh uncomfortably when she mentioned her playing of this role for Schuon, and indeed, like the women in India, Schuon eventually threw her out of the cult and divorced her for doing exactly as he had done, ---she took a lover and believed the love she had was 'blessed by god'. Schuon was a sexist hypocrite who did not believe in equal rights for women.

identified himself Krishna. He used the female members of his cult as Hindu upper caste men used devadasis. Tantric abuse of children was very common and there are references to children being preferable as sex consorts for priests in various tantric texts. This was ritual child abuse or priests abusing children. Children do not argue back and priests could abuse them with little complaint, as Catholic Priests have tended to abuse younger boys, for similar reasons.

According to Human Rights Watch:

“Once dedicated [to a temple], the girl is unable to marry, forced to become a prostitute for upper-caste community members, and eventually auctioned into an urban brothel. The age-old practice continues to legitimize the sexual violence and discrimination that have come to characterize the intersection between caste and gender. The patrons of the devadasis are generally from the higher castes because those from the devadasis own castes are too poor to afford to [pay] for the rituals_ In many cases a patron kept many girls and the number of girls used to be a yard stick of the status of that man.Thousands of untouchable female children (between 6 and 8 years) are forced to become maidens of God (Devadasis, Jogins⁵⁵², a Hindu religious practice in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka State, Maharashtra, Orissa State, to mention only a few). They are taken from their families, never to see them again. They are later raped by the temple priests and finally auctioned secretly into prostitution and ultimately die from AIDS. It is estimated by NGOs that 5,000 to 15,000 girls are auctioned

⁵⁵² This word refers to another name for temple prostitutes. India is full of this pernicious practice of women s exploitation in Temples. See Women, Religion and Tradition the Cult of Jogins, Matangis and Basvis by Lalitha, Vakulabharanam

secretly every year”.⁵⁵³

The context of the abuse of young people in India is the awful conditions on the street and slums there. Vijay Prashad write of Mumbai for instance that

“As you go through the congested lanes, threatened at all times by the sewage brimming in open drains, you will pass onto an open field – a park that anchors the slums and has not been encroached upon as a result of the vigilance of the residents themselves. It is where the boys and girls play, where there is a small temple dating from the 1930s, and where the elders absorb the sunlight and the fresh air. It is where there is some respite from the struggles of everyday life, and so this is where I often like to go”⁵⁵⁴

The context of the abuse of children in India includes these slums and temples. Religion can supply an escape and fresh air from the very things that religion helps cause, the caste system and the terrible poverty. Religion almost sounds like a good thing, at least until you realize that it is a major part of the problem too.

There is a similar abuse of women and girls in Buddhism. June Campbell expounds on the sexual abuse male Tibetan Buddhists dealt out to their female “disciples”. She describes in her writings the corrupt Tibetan priest Kalu Rinpoche⁵⁵⁵. I did not know he was corrupt but he was surrounded by large numbers of women --- and it now turns out he was found of abusing them. What Schuon did to his female disciples is not dissimilar. Campbell writes that misogyny is fundamental to Tibetan Buddhism. She says that “ In the very popular text of Milarepa’s life

⁵⁵³ See http://www.hrw.org/reports/1999/india/India994-09.htm#P1695_354939

⁵⁵⁴ <http://www.zcommunications.org/india-slums-students-and-resistance-by-vijay-prashad.html>

⁵⁵⁵ I entered Buddhism through Kalu Rinpoche in 1987. I had no idea he was so corrupt, just as I had no idea Schuon as so corrupt, Kalu surrounded himself with lots of women too.

story-which all lay people and monastics read—there are many expressions of ambivalence about women: how women are polluting, how they are an obstacle to practice, that “at best women can serve others and at worst they are a nuisance”.⁵⁵⁶ Abuse of boy and girl children by monks in temples in Tibetan culture goes back for centuries,

Schuon’s abusive attitudes toward women have their source in the ubiquitous misogyny of all the major religions. This misogyny is common in Tibetan, Islamic, Hindu and Christian cultures. It is also present in various cults from Mormon cults to Bagwan Rashneesh, Da Free John ⁵⁵⁷, Prabupada’s Hari Krishna cults⁵⁵⁸, L. Ron Hubbard’s⁵⁵⁹

⁵⁵⁶ June Campbell makes her case against Kalu Rinpoche in "In Search of Female Identity in Tibetan Buddhism" and in Traveller in Space see <http://www.trimondi.de/EN/deba02.html>

She was forced into an abusive relation with him and then told she would very likely die if she told about it. “Just the way child abusers deal with their victims: "If you tell, something bad will happen to you." This was done to me too in the Schuon cult, where I was made by Schuon and Maude to swear on the Koran to never speak of the sexual permission he had given me to be with his “wife”. I was kept in silence and encouraged to lie about the truth. Schuon’s insistence that I lie for him and cover up the truth was one sign among many of his corruption.

<http://www.american-buddha.com/klosetkalu.emperortantricrobes.htm>

⁵⁵⁷ Da Free John, or Adi Da---also known by other names--- was born as Franklin Jones. (November 3, 1939 – November 27, 2008). He also was prone to polygamy and exploitation of women. He said that “a true guru is a bastard.. dangerous”. He bought an Island with the money of followers in the south pacific, where he abused children and adults and at one point he had nine wives. He claimed, like Schuon, to have had visionary sexual relations with the Virgin Mary. He is yet another charlatan who demands that others sacrifice their “egos” to him. There is nothing wrong with having an ego--- one must have a sense of self to live--- and one should be suspect of any teaching that enjoins you to die to your ego. Jim Jones of Jonestown also demanded everything from his followers and 900 committed suicide for him. These “crazy gurus” all have a great deal in common. See this site for more of this cult <http://www.adidaarchives.org/>

⁵⁵⁸ See writings of Nori Muster online. She also wrote a book about cults that abuse children. Child of the Cult.

⁵⁵⁹ Ron De Wolf ,Hubbard’s son, says of his father that Hubbard “conned people out of their money, used black magic, distributed drugs, and took advantage of the church’s female followers, participating in private orgies with his father and three or four women.” De Wolf said in a recent magazine interview. "It got kind of far out, culminating in a variety of sex acts. Dad also had an incredibly violent temper. He was into S&M and would beat his mistresses and shoot them full of drugs.....The women serving L. Ron Hubbard, says his son, "were very good at doing the dirty work, at running money or drugs back and forth. They were very good in *any* of the dirty tricks-

Scientology, d⁵⁶⁰ and many other cults.⁵⁶¹ Ken Wilber is another quasi-cult leader who was influenced by some of Schuon's ideas⁵⁶². It might be useful here to look at a few of these cults in a little more detail.

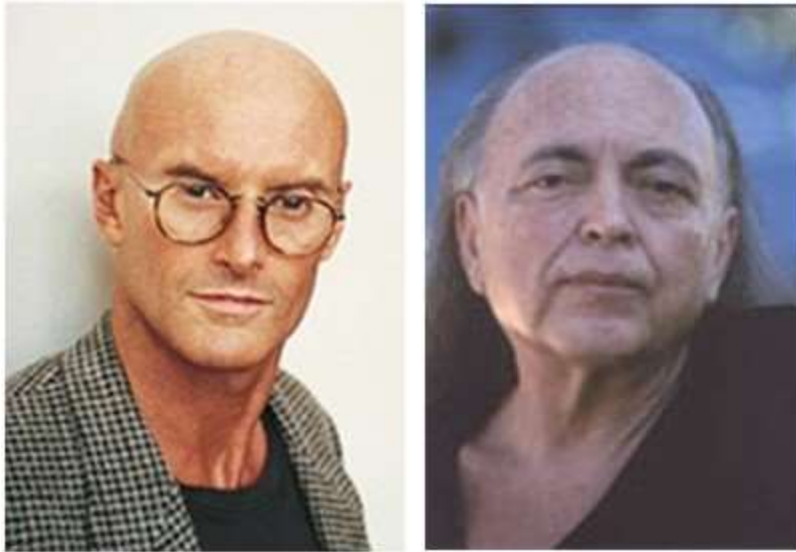
department, because they had absolutely totally *slavish* devotion to L. Ron Hubbard.” Schuon's relationship to women did not involve drugs but there is a similar pattern of exploitation as well as slavish obedience on the part of wives and close followers.. DeWolf believes the entire superstructure is crumbling under the glare of publicity and incontrovertible, documented evidence that Hubbard repeatedly has lied about himself ... Schuon also repeatedly lied about himself . Indeed, these patterns of abuse are quite regular and repeated over and over in many religions and cults.

⁵⁶⁰ Andrew Cohen was a cult leader who has been exposed by William Jenner and he and “ his colleagues have produced a riveting cautionary tale on the dangers of authoritarian spirituality,” <http://americanguru.net/>

Yenner writes on issues about cults. The book “deals with—relinquishment and recovery of autonomy, spiritual naiveté and the abuse of authority,,,,,The authoritarian structure—whether it arises in a church, a political party, a family or a cult—is a closed system in which information is strictly controlled, there is little room for dissent, and prevailing ideas about the leader are rarely questioned or examined, serving to solidify his position of dominance and to maintain the subordinate roles of his followers.”

⁵⁶¹ The Hari Krishna cult was started by Swami Prabupada (1896-1977) and its appeal partly due to the Beatles, specifically George Harrison, who got wrapped up in this cult. Harrison led many into the cult with his Album All Things Must Pass. Prabupada's death in 1977. 11 of his disciples became initiating gurus, many of whom committed various abuses against children or stole money or brainwashed followers against their families and friends. Some of this behavior is followed by successor groups to the original cult as well. The cult has misogynist features and destroys the individuality of its members, blurring them in an orange robed mass of dance and song and garish flowers and ‘prasadum’. One can even buy a doll, with accessories called the “Hare Krishna Zombie” which one can put on the shelf at home. The doll suggests that common wisdom is partly right as cultists do tend to become mindless zombies in a system of mind control. I have seen a number of people lose their minds and hearts to this cult, undermining their personalities. See more here <http://www.rickross.com/groups/krishna.html>

⁵⁶² Wilber's notion of “levels” is derived from Schuon and other sources. There are no levels in consciousness. That is one of many fictions in his theories. He endorses a version of the great chain of being which is also a discredited notion. For some fairly superficial criticism of Wilber as a fraud see Frank Visser. But Visser is pretty close to the cult leader, so there is not much there. Someday we will have a better critique of Wilber.



Ken Wilbur and Da Free John⁵⁶³

Kevin Shepard writes of Da Free John or Adi da that

“The most obscure of Da’s habitats was an island in Fiji, which became a refuge after the lawsuits filed against him in the mid-80s. The Da was accused in one lawsuit (filed by Beverly O’Mahoney) of fraud, intentional infliction of emotional distress, brainwashing, and sexual abuse. That list of charges is not exhaustive. The accuser here stated that she had been forced via alcohol consumption into sexual orgies during her seven years as a devotee of Da in California and on the elite Fijian island. The media described her as a sex slave, and that does not seem an undue exaggeration in view of some details afforded. See the relevant 1985 report “Guru hit by sex-slave suit”... The Daist community resorted to elaborate justifications and evasions in a manner that has been increasingly recognized as the hallmark of cults. The legal claims were settled out of court.”

Within the Adidam organization, Adi Da built an inner circle of

⁵⁶³ In his *Stripping the Gurus* Geoffrey D. Falk. Falk correctly compared Wilber, Schuon, Da free John and other cult leaders, all of whom seem to look curiously similar in appearance. The cult leader is a psychopathic or extremist individual who wants to live outside the norms of the surrounding society. <http://www.strippingthegurus.com/stgsamplechapters/aftertheordeal.asp>

corrupt loyalists who helped him control what was communicated about him to the general membership of Adidam and to the public. The inner circle was perhaps the most critical piece of infrastructure Adi Da developed to enable his decades-long pursuit of every kind of fulfillment for himself at the expense of others. Inner circle members were rewarded with high status in the Adidam organization and culture, and in many cases were allowed to live off the resources of the group and did not have to earn a living in the “outside world.” The inner circle’s mission, among other things, was to hide what they could of Adi Da’s indulgent personal life, abusive treatment of others, and psychological issues. What they couldn’t hide, they explained away as his method of spiritual teaching, tantric practice.

The Schuon cult was similar to the Adi Da cult, in many ways. Like Adi Da, Schuon crated an intricate inner circle of followers who thought little for themselves. Schuon, like Adi Da had a serious narcissistic personality disorder, with real delusions and ‘visions’ that justified his various needs. He often had convenient “vision of the Virgin Mary” or other gods or goddesses, who would justify his need to be unfaithful to his wives or make his desires sacrosanct.⁵⁶⁴ Schuon also had psychopathic tendencies, the definition of which is a little different than Narcissistic Personality Disorder. In any case, someone with Narcissistic Personality Disorder is someone that has “a pervasive pattern of grandiosity, (in fantasy or behavior), need for admiration, and a lack of empathy.” That is Schuon in a nutshell, in my experience and the experience of many others.

Religion is based on delusions, whatever particle of truth might be in it, and goes in and out of insanity. Schuon’s marriages were really bizarre. Like Warren Jeffs, the convicted Mormon cult polygamist, Schuon arranged marriages for himself that were not legal or civil

⁵⁶⁴ S

marriages. Jeff was guilty of child abuse as were many cult leaders. Both Jeffs and Schuon despised the ‘outside law’ of civil and democratic institutions. Jeffs called his marriages “spiritual marriages” and so did Schuon. They obeyed their “inner law” derived from reading fictional texts like the Koran , the Bible or book of Mormon. Schuon and Jeffs had marriages that were defined as such by the cult and were binding inside the cult where “god’s law” and the cult leader’s law were one and the same. The prosecution presented evidence that Jeffs had 78 wives, in addition to his legal spouse, and that 24 of them were under the age of 17. Jeffs bragged to have the “power to destroy all the world with my full godhood.” One of the followers he harmed, Flora Jessop said that “he’s not only a hypocrite, he’s a criminal. He’s a liar. He’s a pedophile,”⁵⁶⁵ Schuon was prone to lying, polygamy and pedophilia too. But Schuon only had four wives and access to a few of the daughters of loyal cult members.

Like Jeffs, Schuon dictated relationships, broke marriages and claimed to have insight over their personal psychology. But Schuon was even more bizarre than Jeffs or Muhammad in that he insisted on allowing his wives to be married to other men, and gave ‘permission” to those who had a quasi ‘marriage’ with his wives. The men in question were thus kept under Schuon’ control too, but into a perpetual state of cuckolding. What Schuon would not tolerate was these relations being made public,-- I was forced to swear on the Koran that I would not divulge publicly my relation with Maude, one of Schuon wives, for instance, even though Schuon had given me “permission” for this relationship. But I could never reveal I had been given this “permission”. But when I broke the lie of the code of silence imposed on me, he got angry and reclaimed “possession” of his “wife”, who was pleading to be let go, only then to set about trashing her in the worst possible way and

⁵⁶⁵ Read more: http://www.abc15.com/dpp/news/local_news/investigations/Warren-Jeffs-sends-Arizona-Attorney-General-Tom-Horne-revelations#ixzz2ebkDn6BB

throwing her out of the cult. He wanted her back only to try to ruin her and he largely succeeded in this. She became terribly unbalanced and poor. From his point of view, Maude and I were monsters and the cult tried to presents us as adulterers in the press, but this was not accurate in the slightest, as Schuon had already dumped his third wife and taken a fourth. I was told she was no longer married to anyone, and this was indeed the case. Marriage was always at Schuon' convenience, as I will show later.

Schuon loved to break social norms but only if he were in control of the breaking and it was for his benefit. Schuon was merciless with those who broke rules not designed by him, so really it was all about ego, his ego. Maude Murray, his third wife had 'vertical affairs' just as Schuon did. But when this was found out, Schuon was hypocritical in the extreme and viciously condemned her for the very things he had himself been doing for decades. I deliberately broke his injunction to not speak of my relationship publicly in order to expose his fraudulent marriages and unjust treatment of people. It was not about revenge but about telling the truth about a fraud. People said I was mad at Schuon because he destroyed my relationship with Maude Murray but that is not true. I myself broke the relationship with Maude and with Schuon and left the cult all on my own. It was they who wanted revenge on my for telling the truth about them.

Schuon played the victim but he was anything but that. It was another one of his many poses, a play of his many "masks" I knew exactly what I was doing. I wished to expose a fraud. I went back into the cult, secretly, still pretending I was loyal, and I tried to get Maude out of the cult. It was stupid of me really. I had never done anything so difficult before. I went back into the cult after having left it and knew I was in danger to do so. But I failed. She was too broken by the system of mind control Schuon had imposed on her for 25 years. I had left the cult and

went back into it as a sort of spy to try to get Maude out. I failed but it took a great deal of courage.

One of the reasons I rejected religion and became totally skeptical of all religion, an “atheist”, perhaps, though this term is problematical⁵⁶⁶ was my horror at the abusiveness of religion toward both humans and animals. The Christians drink the blood and eat the body of their Christ in bizarre semi-cannibalistic ceremonies where they devour the “real substance” of Christ in an act of “transubstantiation”. Rama Coomaraswamy and Wolfgang Smith had tried to get me to go to Christian rites in 1992 after I had left the Schuon cult. I went a few times and found the traditional Catholic ritual repulsive. The fanaticism of these men about this rite was also disturbing. These men had helped me and they assumed I would somehow repay them by accepting their fanatic Catholicism. Eating Christ as symbolic meat is not for me. This ancient rite enshrines a gross bit of psychological blackmail. It gets you to drink human blood and eat human flesh—really horrendous acts, actually, and you are supposed to think it the holiest thing you ever did, and if you don’t you are going to hell. I found this quasi-cannibalistic rite disgusting, whether the host is metaphorical or not. I did not like the blackmail involved in it. I became a vegetarian, like Da Vinci, as I researched just how religion and “traditions” promulgated hatred of animals and nature under the guise of ‘the metaphysics of nature’, or what Schuon calls “the metaphysical transparency of nature”. Nature is nowhere “transparent” to abstract human symbols. Nature is not god or like Muslim houris, glistening nude behind shimmering veils. This sexist projection of male dominance on ‘virgin nature’ is ridiculous and must

⁵⁶⁶ I’m not sure atheist is a correct term, since one does there is nothing real in being a “Theist”, or believer in the a mythic god--- so why reject the thing that does not exist. It is not so much that I am an atheist as that religion is totally irrelevant in my life. Indeed, this book is really a sort of catalogue of dead systems of knowledge that keep living, zombie like--- due to the delusions and excitement of the superstitious and the ignorant and those cult leaders, ministers, priests or religious studies professors who exploit them

stop. The whole notion of “virgin nature’ is ridiculous. Wild nature is fine as long as there is a realization that that wildness is in humans too, as it is in everything the evolved by any means. The current abuse of nature by Chinese, Christian, Islamic and Hindu societies has a firm grounding in the metaphysics of the Church Fathers, the Bible, the Koran, the Upanishads or Confucius and Taoism. Nature is nowhere a symbol or symbolic. It is not ‘samsara’, Maya or delusion. It is samsara and Maya and religious thought in general that is delusory. Nature belongs to itself and is its own, as Darwin showed us. From nature issues the facts of evolution, facts which no one has proven to be mistaken. No religion possesses nature as a symbol of their doctrines. Science comes closer to nature than anything else does. Nietzsche was right when he says in Zarathustra that “all gods are poet-symbolizations”, and that brings into question the use of symbols by poets.

A typical example of religious denigration of nature or the cosmos is a favorite sentence by Schuon that “existence is a sin to which no other can be compared”. This Sufi saying is also a disgusting idea, akin to the Eucharist. What Schuon says here--- echoing basic Sufi ideology --- is utter nonsense. Nature is existence. So called “esoterism” denigrates nature. Another typical sentence showing a metaphysical hatred of nature is this one by Plotinus:

“Certainly no reproach can rightly be brought against this world save only that it is not That.” (Plotinus, *Enneads*, V,8,8)

For Plotinus “That” or ‘god’ is everything, therefore the world is nothing. He calls earth “base” and considers that the base nature of earth and the body is to be “transcended” by the “intellect” by which he means not reason but feeling or intuition. The “That” is the ultimate fiction, the Tao, or Nameless Beyond Being. This is deeply disgusting and wrong. While

he himself says he is not as bad as the “gnostics” ⁵⁶⁷he is clearly in line with Dionysius the Areopagite in this hatred of the “base” earth. It is an aristocratic and escapist monstrosity that he is creating.⁵⁶⁸ The escapist metaphysics of these two thinkers is not surprising at the end of the Roman Empire, a time of despair and pessimism, just as the Dark Ages are beginning.

Actually what Plotinus calls “base” is really all that matters. He images a fictive pure realm beyond. This repulsive hatred of nature and earth leads to all sorts of atrocities and injustices. This is a large part of the “insanity” of religion”. All of the major religions set up this awful dichotomy between an imagined transcendent realm and the actual world, with the imagined world being supposedly more real than the actual world of daily life, which is lesser and denigrated. This is true even in Buddhism where the void or “emptiness” becomes the locus of otherness and alienation from the world of the hated “ten thousand things”, or samsara. This is a psychopathic bachelor’s religion made by men who never bore children. The importation of Buddhism into China followed the Warring States period (481 B.C.E. to 221 B.C.E.) in China, where 8 states fought for control of China for a few centuries. The Qin rulers had a philosophy of ‘Legalism’, which justified harsh control, forced labor, and subservience to the emperor. Buddhism appealed to many because it allowed of a mental escape from the brutal and harsh reality around them. Harsh realities are indeed what created Buddhism, not the mythical figure of the Buddha, who probably did not exist.

One can find the same hatred or terror of existence in Sartre, who writes in his Nausea

⁵⁶⁷ He attacks the “gnostics” in his Enneads.

⁵⁶⁸ Mark Sedgwick, an apologist for Islam as an antidote to the Enlightenment that he hates, tries to make Plotinus, the world denier, to be the originator of Sufism. Platonism actually is merely a symptom of far right world denial, and has its origins in Plato. Sedgwick does not understand how he has hung himself over the world’s end like an old coat on a stick, full of holes. Sedgwick, Hannegraff and Kripal are the three big dealers in delusion, these days, pushing their carte of esoteric lies into university hallways.

“The roots of the chestnut tree were sunk in the ground just under my bench. I couldn’t remember it was a root any more. The words had vanished and with them the significance of things, their methods of use, and the feeble points of reference which men have traced on their surface. I was sitting, stooping forward, head bowed, alone in front of this black, knotty mass, entirely beastly, which frightened me. Then I had this vision.

It left me breathless. Never, until these last few days, had I understood the meaning of “existence.”

Sartre uses very Christian words to describe his horror of the tree, like “naked”, “bloated”, “obscene” “flaunting” “beastly”. This is a vision of the prudish and anti-life “intellect” divorced from nature in an artificial way. I have always found this book of Sartre rather adolescent and silly. His vision of nature as “beastly” and sexual is the vision of a misogynistic and alienated city dweller who knows very little about existence as it really is. Like Buddhism or Christian notions, Sartre erects a horror of the real, physical world as a principle of disgust.

Thoreau is much more intelligent on the subject of existence, and though once or twice he is horrified by it he realizes horror is merely a fraction of it. But he resolves the difficulty and saying the famous chapter 6 passage of the Maine Woods “Talk of mysteries! — Think of our life in nature, — daily to be shown matter, to come in contact with it, — rocks, trees, wind on our cheeks! The *solid* earth! The *actual* world! The *common sense*! *Contact! Contact! Who are we? Where are we?*”⁵⁶⁹ He sees

⁵⁶⁹ This passage begins where Henry descibes himself being “shown some star’s surface, some hard matter in its home! I stand in awe of my body, this matter to which I am bound has become so strange to me. I fear not spirits, ghosts, of which I am one, — *that* my body might, — but I fear bodies, I tremble to meet them. What is this Titan that has possession of me? Talk of mysteries! — — Think of our life in nature, — daily to be shown matter, to come in contact with it, — rocks, trees, wind on our cheeks! The *solid* earth! The *actual* world! The *common sense*! *Contact! Contact! Who are we? Where are we?*” It is clear he is speakiin of the strge fact of our materiality. Religion tends to mystify and mythify this rather than to

that he is part of it and that it is terrible and amazing both. His later journals are a testament to the marvel of this realization, ---he has become an anti-transcendentalist--- and he becomes more and more a scientist of perception and facts, one of the best the world has produced in fact.⁵⁷⁰ Thoreau becomes a Darwinian and an ecologist, far from the Platonic dreams of Emerson. Indeed, Thoreau appears to be the first American to thoughtfully read and understand Darwin's Origin of the Species.

Barbara Ehrenreich battles with the facts of existence in her book, Living with of A Wild God, in which she records a visionary experience that is midway between Sartre's Nausea and Thoreau's acceptance of existence. Thankfully she is not ultimately one to reject or denigrate existence like the Sufi's and other mystics liked to do, though in earlier years she comes close to this. But her struggle with a "vision" of a and need to create a "separate reality" is very interesting. More interesting is how she deals with the contradictions of having had such a "vision". And echoes many things I am saying in these books.⁵⁷¹ She struggles with the natural destruction created by copper mining in Butte Montana, or killing of mice in a lab where she works, as well as the Vietnam war and her own conscience about her close relatives. She even denies the

merely describe it, as Henry does. He is the most interesting of writers who slowly escapes from religion. Indeed, his later journal is a record of how to disentangle oneself from religion.

⁵⁷⁰ If I had to pick the best books of the 19th century, I would include Thoreau's late journal (after 1850) as one of the first, along with Van Gogh complete Letters, and Darwin's works as well as Dickens..

⁵⁷¹ Her 'vision' is interesting, as it is rather like Annie Dillard's 'nature as fire' vision in Pilgrim at Tinker Creek, but without all the spiritual associations Dillard imposes on her vision. Though Ehrenreich is tempted to make those associations she doesn't do this, which is amazing. I did impose spiritual interpretations on my 'vision of the veil', but later retracted these imposed ideas. It shows again that these visions have a psychological base, and if they do refer to reality, they do so tangentially, as they include aspects that are true to something in the world at the same time as they are heavily subjective. The "something" that they refer to is bio-physical as well as aesthetic, and this combination is very hard to define. I call it nature's rights, but Ehrenreich seems to still need to project human ideas on animals and make quasi deities of them. .. ,

Cartesian view of animals, admitting intelligence and consciousness in animals, which is very refreshing, as that is not done in the rather narrow Chomsky circles she sometimes travels in. In this respect, Ehrenreich evokes the women in the last century who have bravely stood up to count animals as part of nature and consciousness. Jane Goodall and Val Plumwood, among others, also are to be commended` for this.

My only criticism of her new book is that she is too uncritical of William James and his Varieties of Religious Experience, into which she plugs her own experience. She creates, rather oddly, what she calls a “Zoomorphic god”⁵⁷², which presumably is the “wild god” of her title, which is merely another fiction, caused by thinking too much about her experience. There is no such god, and she almost admits this, but does not have the means to say just what she experienced. Since I have made the same mistake myself, I understand her dilemma. The meaning of her own early “vision” is really an aesthetic experience, like Thoreau, which suggests her later love and awe of nature. Nature itself does contain the wonders she saw in her vision, indeed, to a much greater degree than could be expressed. But she makes the mistake of leaping to deities out of that, suggesting falsely for instance, that some dolphins she sees must be gods too. This is very naïve, but understandable, as culture supports these artificial constructions and helps people make them up as part of the Jamesian idea of the spiritual marketplace, which encourages eccentric spiritual ideas and images.

The mystery she evokes is more than enough explained as an experience of nature in its actuality, perhaps expressionistically seen, as in the fiery late paintings of Van Gogh. Indeed, all the amazing sections

⁵⁷² The animal style in art goes back to Chauvet and the early cave paintings and then forward into early Celtic, Viking and Pazyric, Altaic and Chinese culture. During the period of my philosophical drawings I was trying consciously to evoke this aesthetic motif. But in the end is really just a system of symbolic analogies, and thus based on a misuse of language and an associative skill. It is compelling as Ehrenreich imagines, but that does not make it “true” it is merely a “useful” analogy in William James parlance.

or her book can be explained as an aesthetic reactions to nature and its many moods and realities, compounded by an unwillingness to refuse to jump to theomorphic or “zoomorphic” conclusions.. That there is beauty and wonder in nature is hardly deniable. That the beauty and terror corresponds to who we are is not surprising as we too are of nature. Gods, even animistic gods, are something else entirely. These are aesthetic creations born of language, symbols and analogies. She toys with the idea of a god in nature and that is the weakest part of her book. Gods might symbolically express aspects of nature, but it is important to be aware that symbols are not the actual things. Much of religion derives from symbols imposed on nature or evoked by nature. But this is a misuse of language. The beauty of her book is in the fact that her early vision ends up being about reality and not fiction, about nature and not gods. Her atheism, at least for me, leads her into reality and nature again at last. She celebrates a life of activism and asks deep questions about why are dolphins so conscious and what is the meaning of physical reality. But her willingness to posit gods as an explanation is not tenable. Also she uses the mistakes of evolutionary biology as if there were facts. Boyer implies humans are inevitably fated to have god making propensities as part of the genetic makeup, to “ give airy nothing a name”.. I don’t think this is true at all and is one of Boyer’s big mistakes, as it is in Ehrenreich. .

Ehrenreich wants to celebrate existence even in its terrible aspects. But this is not always possible. The history of the treatment of existing beings by religions is very gruesome. 100,000 so called “witches” were burned or killed during the period from 1550-1650. They were killed largely because they were midwives and medicine people, who helped the poor and workers in the ordinary classes. The medical and church elites wanted them eliminated, partly because they did better work than the ‘doctors’ many of whom were butchers and bleeders. The religious hatred

of existence has helped fuel incredible violence against life. Some Muslims think that if they blow themselves up in a holy war (jihad) they will go immediately to an imaginary heaven. “Fight until your sword is broken” some Mullah wrote into the mouth of Muhammad in the Koran. Other Moslem’s think it all right to cut off people’s hands if they steal, kill people who leave Islam or stone women for adultery. After all the character called Muhammad killed thousands of people in his various wars and reprisals. Hindu notions of Atma, Karma and the Divine Self in the Bhagavad Gita justified the horrors of the caste system. Christian Popes try to hide pedophile priests from public scrutiny. ⁵⁷³The Inquisition tortured hundreds of thousands of people to exact bogus and forced confessions. Killing people for the Emperor was a duty for Samurai warriors. Zen was the religion of Samurai Warriors who were the aristocratic and warrior class of medieval Japan. Their outlook was like the Nazis, was to be warrior mystics who fought for the divine leader. Eugen Herrigel, a writer on flower arranging, was a Zen adept, and evidently recognized the similarity and joined the Nazi party in 1937. ⁵⁷⁴ The Nazi ideal of selfless killing was also the Bushido or Samurai ideal. The Zen of “no Mind” is easily mindless and marches as ordered. Some Zen Master said “If ordered to march: tramp, tramp or shoot: bang, bang.” This is the manifestation of the highest wisdom or ‘Enlightenment’, it is claimed. The mindless surrender to the will to the

⁵⁷³ In many pedophile priest cases all over the world Catholic Church officials conspired to endanger the safety of children and actively concealed their knowledge of priest's offenses, lied to parishioners and the public. These abuses and cover ups go all the way up the hierarchy to the Vatican and the Popes. It is clear that the problem is worldwide and across most Catholic institutions, churches, and schools. The causes are cultural to the whole institution and involves centuries of misogyny and male centered culture due to the fact of celibacy being imposed on Priests. For more see links on http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catholic_sex_abuse_cases

⁵⁷⁴ This is discussed by Victor Trimondi here: <http://www.trimondi.de/Zen-Buddhismus/Herrigel.htm>
Trimondi also suggests that D.T. Suzuki and others had some relation to Nazi philosophy through thinkers like Heidegger who also was a Nazi

state is hardly “enlightened” in the wiser sense of the “enlightenment” that came after the French Revolution. “The unity of Zen and war ...extends to the farthest reaches of the holy war now under way.” Zen Master Harada Daiun Sogaku said in 1939, justifying the Japanese in World War II.

Zen is ‘mindless’ in more ways than one, and encourages ignorance and complicity. Indeed, the very idea of “Spiritual Enlightenment” (satori) all about submission to the non-existent. “Satori” is the aspiration to what does not exist. Zen is about social control and the culture of the Samurai. One can’t just look at the impeccable rock gardens and lovely apples painted on silk or the great screens of Sesshu or Tohaku without seeing their context in the military class and the rich. The pursuit of enlightenment is itself delusional. Other Zen Masters have counseled other insanities,

“Sawaki Kodo (1880-1965), said, as did other Zen teachers, that if killing is done without thinking, in a state of no-mind or no-self, then the act is an expression of enlightenment. No thinking = No-mind = No-self = No karma. In this bizarre equation, the victims are always left out, as if they are irrelevant. Killing is just an elegant expression of the koan. ⁵⁷⁵

This Zen attitude toward atrocity recalls, of course, the self-justified cruelty of the Samurai, as well as Robert Oppenheimer’s famous justification for building and dropping the two bombs on Japan in 1945.

⁵⁷⁵ From Zen at War, Brian Victoria, Weatherhill, 1997. Reviewed here: <http://www.darkzen.com/Articles/zenholly.htm>

For more on corruption in Zen in America look up Richard Baker on any search engine. He was the head of the San Francisco Zen center and was a fairly typical cult leader, hurting people, betraying trust, abusing women, money and so on. This sort of corruption is common in religious societies or many kinds.

Oppenhiemer quotes the Bhagavad Gita, to the effect that one must “become death” and kill without attachment. This was religious madness--- madness inherent in the original Bhagavad Gita source---- as we can see now. It destroyed Oppenhiemer and his family—(his daughter Toni committed suicide in 1977).⁵⁷⁶ Himmler would also consult the Bhagavad Gita to justify his killing of Jews in the gas chambers of Auschwitz. In all these cases specific individual beings are murdered for an ideology or an abstraction. Killing for Krishna, Hitler, Allah, Zen or American Exceptionalism is all killing and all of it insane. Gods are manufactured symbols of ideology not real things, and to die or kill for a symbols is horrendous and morally wrong.⁵⁷⁷

Zen is merely part of the myth of Buddhism. It is clear that Buddha never existed and was a fiction created over several centuries. The Pali Canon, which is one of the first of Buddhist texts, said to have been written in 29 BCE, was composed nearly 500 years after the supposed existence of the Buddha, which makes his existence a very unlikely occurrence. The ethic that creates the ideology of enlightenment is by and large a male ethic. For almost two thousand years in India, the birthplace of Buddhism, women were excluded from religious positions. The hatred of existence so common in all the major religions is mostly a hatred of women and nature, animals and actual things, often living things. Buddhism was set up as a male priest religion with specific social controls in place, called the Dharma. The earliest aniconic images of the Buddha date to the 1st century BCE and the first iconic images to the first century CE so it would be safe to suppose that the Buddhist myth

⁵⁷⁶ See my essay “Liberty in a Mushroom Cloud: Nagasaki, Oppenheimer and Von Neumann”

[Check ref](#)

⁵⁷⁷ I wrote about Oppenhiemer, Himmler and the abusive character of the Bhagavad-Gita in my book *The Empire of the Intellect*.

was created during these years and not before..

Moreover, the notion that “enlightenment” actually means something is wrong. The Buddhist and Hindu concept of Enlightenment is a myth. There is no liberation from suffering and the world. Suffering has to be dealt with in real terms, on the ground, looking for cures or dealing with complex facts realities. No one solves poverty by praying it will end.

In Buddhism and Hinduism, the equation of being “free” with despising earth and attachments to real things and people is utterly ridiculous.. Concern with existence is what matters. Science helps lengthen our mortality because of medical interventions. It really does “free” us from suffering. But religion has done little or nothing to help in that respect. The idea at the basis of religions is a lie and depends partly on denigration of women, nature and animals. In Buddhism and Hinduism this often means saying that bad behavior will get you reincarnated as a lower animal or a woman. In many Buddhist and Hindu sutras and sacred texts being born as a woman or animal is a punishment for ‘sin’. “Birth” itself is seen as a pejorative in these religions, and animals are seen as culpability itself. Throughout Buddhist history it was often said that women cannot attain enlightenment because the “defiled female body” is a hindrance. Women or nuns were occasionally “rewarded” with claims to their enlightened state, but it was applied they had transformed into a male This makes it quite clear that the concept of enlightenment was a political construction and favored men over women. Like the ideology of “Karma” the ideal of enlightenment is a caste idea and is used to discriminate against classes of people and animals who are not preferred. Indeed, Buddhism’s hatred of women is not very well hidden. Shinran’s 35th vow states that

“So profound is Amida’s great compassion

That, manifesting inconceivable Buddha-wisdom,

The Buddha established the Vow of transformation into men,
Thereby vowing to enable women to attain Buddhahood”

This twisted misogyny is presented as a ‘gift’. Shinran is saying that that a woman must renounce herself to become “enlightened”. This shows quite clearly that spiritual “enlightenment” is a fiction and one that easily got adapted to sexist ideology.

The only “enlightenment” that matters is the historical period around 1800 that was the result of science. The spiritual notion of enlightenment is a projection, an empty concept—a fiction—a that has no real meaning in itself. No one has ever attained it because it does not exist. It is based on a demeaning attitude toward nature, women and animals. One could say it is a deep feeling of peace and joy, but that is also meaningless as that is merely a feeling state. It does contain an implicit notion of elitist hatred of nature and of women however, at that is not good for anyone.

I spent two years studying birds and animals closely at a wetland I called Heroes Wetland between 1999 and 2001. I learned from that just how much animals and birds are like ourselves and desire families, freedom and to avoid suffering. There are histories of negative attitudes towards women in culture and religions. But as yet there no wide and in-depth history of human cruelty to animals and nature. The organizations CITES and IUCN, have a great deal of information about extinct and endangered species of many kinds, though little is said about causes and the ideologies that assist in this.⁵⁷⁸ David Nibert’s Animal Rights, Human Rights tries to outline what a history of human cruelty to animals might look like. He contends that the rise of cattle farming and

⁵⁷⁸ CITES (The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) and IUCN, (International Union for the Conservation of Nature)

<http://www.iucn.org/>

meat eating corresponds to increases in violence and war and the denial of human rights to humans. The rise of the major religions as systems of oppression enabled large scale delusions to be foisted on populations by religions. The exact effects of meat eating on humans are not known or charted in history. Elsewhere Nibert explores how the colonization of the Americas was intertwined with the growth of the cattle industry. He states that “The entangled oppression of devalued humans and cows is most obvious today in Brazil and the Darfur region in western Sudan — where murder and displacement are tied to the expansion of the profitable ‘beef industry.’” Science too can be used to destroy the existence of others. “Trade curses everything it handles” Henry Thoreau writes:



Hunting Coyote from Helicopters

Another book I found that begins to explore the history of cruelty to animals is “Diane Beers’ For the Prevention of Cruelty of Animals. The rapacious abuse of western lands by hunters, ranchers and profiteers is one of the deepest and most shameful and lasting scars on the American landscape. Inspired by Christian hatred of nature, the notion that ‘wild nature’ is somehow a place of “original sin”, as well as notions of wilderness as useless lands that must be “redeemed” by exploitation and capitalization, the 19th century is only rivaled by the 20th century as a

time of the greatest disrespect for all life in all of earth's history.⁵⁷⁹ The murderous rampage of human beings against all other life forms during the 19th and 20th centuries is largely unstudied and with few apologies, but it certainly is an atrocity of major proportions and one that rivals and in some respects is much worse than the horror of Auschwitz, Hiroshima, and the Middle Passage of the slave trade. Bird populations were decimated, Passenger pigeons extinct, nearly 50 million Bison wiped out, Whales hunted nearly to extinction, millions of them turned into oil for lamps. And the beaver nearly gone, and so much else.



Cornelis de Man (1621-1706)

The Whale Oil Factory on Jan Mayen Island

⁵⁷⁹ A great deal of ink has been used by Christians to try to excuse the depredations of nature by their culture. St. Francis or Seraphim of Sarov are trotted out to prove how good humans are supposed to be. But such exceptions prove the rule that Christianity is a nature hating religion that worships a god that is other worldly. The mythical Christ denigrates the “things of the world”, just as Hinduism denigrates “Maya” and Buddhism” the “ten thousand things”. There is no denying the human centered views promoted by the bible and church “fathers”. Myths like Adam and Eve and Noah’s Ark promote human centered domination of nature.

Indeed, all these atrocities share similar causes and motives. The story of groups in the US and UK that have opposed animal abuse and the horrible fate of many domestic animals has only begun to be told. Animals rights has not yet gone far enough into the human abuse of nature generally. Animals, unlike corporations, are individuals and suffer, and should be persons under the law. The legal system is speciesist and has been as far back as anyone remembers, even before the Magna Carta. The result of speciesism is not just global warming and the destruction of the oceans but the endangerment of many species of birds, animals and plants. Stephen Buchman estimates that:

“we are losing many flowering plants to extinction before we even knew they existed. An estimated 68 percent of the world’s flowering plants are now threatened or endangered. This staggering loss of diversity is due to anthropogenic causes, including habitat loss, degradation and invasive species.”

Similar stories are told about the destruction of Forests not only in the Amazon and the redwoods, but all over the earth. As Charles Little’s The Dying of the Trees or Peter Wohlleben’s the Hidden Life of Trees indicate, there is so much more to tress than merely slavery to the economic greed of silvaculturists.



Men killing trees, origin of Photo unknown.⁵⁸⁰

Paul Waldau book the Spectre of Speciesism opens the study of religious attitudes towards animals, He doesn't go far enough either and the book has various weaknesses, but it is a good introduction to a vast and largely unresearched subject. Books like the Christian Philokalia, the Hindu Mahabharata or ancient Chinese, Tibetan or Muslim texts, as well as the Bible, for instance, need to be studied for their atrocious attitudes to animals. The cult of the CEO clearly has much in common with cult leaders in general and both need to be analyzed as destructive to both human and biotic societies. Limiting or even eliminating the CEO is important as is the elimination of interlocking boards and monopolies,

⁵⁸⁰ I knew a man who killed redwood trees in just this way, and mostly worked on the ponds off the Russian river in a town called Scotia, sorting logs to be cut.. Bunny O'Brien, was his name. He lived in Rio Dell and Fortuna, for a time but I first met him when he lived in the workers houses at Pacific Lumber Company in Scotia. He ended up being disgusted by the company as it had destroyed nearly all of the redwoods, leaving only 3 percent on government owned lands. People complain about the government, when actually business is the primary problem as the CEOs just cannot help maximizing their greed, and then they complain there are too many regulations. They will devour the whole earth if not stopped.

since these are prestigious supports for economic elites. They treat nature as an “externality” on which they displace risk and harm. Nature takes the suffering that results from CEO profits and bonuses. At the heart of the destruction of 77 percent of wild nature is the corporation. The Markets serve shareholders and CEO’s and this has to be heavily regulated or eliminated to make way for a system that does not destroy the earth and create poverty and extinctions of flowers, plants, trees, insects, and animals.

The Presidency in the United States also has autocratic roots and they tend to be like kings or dynasties. This should be abolished. The U.S. government, as well as other governments, is now mostly run by and for corporations and the autocratic CEO. This is the new aristocracy and needs a revolution to stop it. The corporate service to the abstract Market also has many misogynistic features, principle among them being the exploitation of nature for profits at the expense of nature, animals, plants, oceans, air and waters of all kinds. Henry Thoreau notes the destructiveness of his own practice of Surveying, how the woodlots he surveys will soon be cut over. Surveying made him complicit in the destroying the forests he loved”, Laura Dassow Walls writes.

“today I was made aware that I worked in a Pitch Pine wood which ere long—perchance I may survey the lot off for wood auction and see the choppers at work”⁵⁸¹

What is needed of course is a survey of the surveyors, an accounting of the accountants, a scientific inquiry into the destructive side of corporate science. The CEO’s and CFO’s need men of conscience and insight set over them to regulate and downsize their rapacious greed.

⁵⁸¹ Quoted in Walls, Laura Dassow, Henry David Thoreau a Life, Univ. of Chicago, 2017 pg. 286

Accordingly an implementation of the idea of 'nature rights' as a system of legal and ethical principles, regulations and laws would help stem this destruction. Companies and developers cut down forests, steal minerals, mine, log pollute and destroy without consequences. They are wrongly allowed to freely take what is not theirs, as they now want to do even to the moon, to make "extraterrestrial profits".. There must be stiff consequences for those who kill and pollute, rape and steal and deform natural processes. They make billions from doing this and pay back nothing to nature, externalizing all the harm and risk to nature itself. This should be regulated, controlled and in many cases stopped, corporate charters removed, CEO's legally and financially ruined.

To this list of environmental destroyers should also be added the Marxists, who in my view are merely capitalists who worship the state and make the state the CEO. Mao was the CEO of China just as Stalin was once the CEO of the Soviet Union. The best example of Marxist speciesism and its murder of millions of animals was Mao Zedong's incredibly ill advised effort to remove the "Four Pests" from China 1958 to 1962. He insisted the people kill all mosquitoes, rats, sparrows and flies.⁵⁸² They were shot, exhausted by being forced to fly, smothered and killed with poisons. The ridiculous result of this speciesist genocide was to force nature out of balance and then with all the birds gone, insects such as locusts proliferated, causing the crops all over China to be eaten by these insects. This, combined with the results of other innane campaigns of the Great Leap Forward, bad agricultural techniques and relocation policies displacing farmers, caused a crop failure and national

⁵⁸² James Audubon was also a killer of birds, which he killed and then painted. The same is true of Louis Agassiz Fuertes, who was a much better painter than Audubon, but who killed many thousands of birds and animals. Another hunter and bird killer who took to paint was Bruno Liljefors, who was quite a good painter, but whose work is marred by a "predator-prey" mythos that is very much like today's game agencies, ephemistically referred to as "Division of Wildlife" and other misleading titles. This is often the case with those who study birds, that they are often killers of them. It is disturbing to see how many ornithologists still kill birds for specimens. It is unnecessary and wasteful, especially since birds are declining in populations precipitously in many cases.

hunger that starved somewhere between 20-40 million people in the so called Great “Famine”. This was supposed to stop grain loss due to birds. But actually the birds helped in unseen ways. They were good at reading Marx but very bad at reading nature and a huge famine was the result.

China is now credited with being the worst destroyer of sealife.

China’s distant-water fishing fleet has grown to nearly 2,600 vessels (the United States has fewer than one-tenth as many), with 400 boats coming into service between 2014 and 2016 alone. Most of the Chinese ships are so large that they scoop up as many fish in one week as Senegalese boats catch in a year, costing West African economies \$2 billion a year, according to a new study published by the journal [Frontiers in Marine Science](#).⁵⁸³

China takes fish from all over the world, much of it ending up being fed to American pigs and chickens for humans to eat. Meat eaters are destroying the oceans. No longer should such people be allowed to kill animals or fish with impunity, “externalizing” harms caused by their seeking of profits onto the seas and into the forests, leaving waste and extinctions behind them.

Similar destruction of animals, insects and birds goes on today in America and Europe as well as elsewhere due to the use of neonicotinoids and glyphosate (“ Round Up”) poisons, as well as other pesticides and herbicides, put on the land to kill everything but Monsanto and other corporate designed seeds.⁵⁸⁴ Frogs, Toads, Dragonflies, butterflies, and insects of all kinds are being killed off by chemical companies. Beetles and many other field dwelling species have

⁵⁸³ NYT... “China pushes Fisheries to the Brink”
<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/30/world/asia/chinas-appetite-pushes-fisheries-to-the-brink.html?hp&action=click&pgtype=Homepage&clickSource=story-heading&module=photo-spot-region®ion=top-news&WT.nav=top-news>

⁵⁸⁴ see the documentary film [The Messenger](#), about the demise of song bird species, or Passerines, due to human causes.

also been poisoned to death in the many billions or trillions—no one knows how many. Mao probably killed hundreds of millions of sparrows and other animals, and so has Monsanto and other corporations, farmers and agricultural “experts”. But these deaths, like those millions of Skunks, Squirrels, Deer, Foxes, Coyotes and others, go unrecorded, uncared for, dying on our roads, hit by trucks and cars.

I have only skimmed the surface of this subject, like a Barn Swallow drinking water from a river. I hope others will research and write on this further. But I have understood that actual existence is what matters and those who hate and despise existence by means of religion, Marxism or corporate science need to be surveyed, assessed and questioned. Our planet belongs to all species, plants, animals, cells and even geologic formations and not merely humans. There is no “separate reality” and no “veil” that separates us from the facts of life other than that of our own making. The idea of the veil is merely the fact of our own ignorance, and to pass beyond that is not a real limit, it is merely the extent of what we do not know yet. Christ, Buddha and Sartre were wrong and the belief systems created by these mythic figures or men, are, like Platonism, not sustainable. Such systems should be put behind us. What matters is bodies and skin, tree trunks and rocks, squirrels and weather... the earth itself. To value the earth as it is, and cease abusing it--- this is a goal whose meaning would be really tremendous, if people would just imagine it and bring about what they imagine.

Mark Sedgwick's Book Against the Modern World

“there is no coherent non-theological theoretical basis for the study of religion as an academic discipline” Timothy Fitzgerald in The Ideology of Religious Studies

“ If this claim is true, religious studies should be dissolved as a discipline, replaced with either seminary schools or a subcategory of anthropology and sociology.” Avery Marrow⁵⁸⁵

“The fact that essentialist and generally de—historicizing strategies operate so widely as to be virtually transparent to the mass of scholars of religion is the key to understanding the way the field as a whole has avoided confronting the charges of extreme politics.”
Russell McCutcheon

This is one of two essays in the book which seek to critique and reassess religious studies recommending it be subsumed in another department in the university or outside the colleges all together. Religious studies is an area of study prone to extremely subjective views. Many professors promote superstition, delusions and mythic fictions of various kinds, to the harm of students. I think it should be abolished as a department and the study of religion should be subsumed under

⁵⁸⁵ <http://avery.morrow.name/studies/timothy-fitzgerald.pdf>

anthropology, literature or sociology or shipped out to theological schools. Teaching religious beliefs as if they were truth is pandering to delusions and should not be permitted in public universities. Likewise teaching the array of religions as if they were all somehow true, “in their own way” is also pandering to the ‘reality is a construction’ delusion. So with this in mind, I will here write about my experience with one religious studies professor who was involved rather weakly in the exposure of traditionalism. In the course of this and the later essay on Arthur Versluis, I will consider other religious studies people, slowly building a case against this area of study as currently conceived. Of course, this whole book is an argument against religious studies....

I found Sedgwick to be a very interested scholar and not at all objective. He wished to push a religious ideology, namely Islam and criticized traditionalism only to support Islam. I refused to see him when he requested to come 500 miles to see me at my house because I could see this. Though I originally hoped he might do a good job in his study of traditionalism, I do not think he did, and I did not wish to be misused by him in even worse ways than he already misused me and my witness. He is a poor scholar at best and does not know how to read evidence, led as he is by poor historiography and religious prejudice.

I learned from experience that some scholars think that copyright laws are more important than free speech, telling the truth or following evidence.⁵⁸⁶ I will explain this shortly. Mark Sedgwick said he would write a history of Traditionalism from “from their point of view”. As I said earlier, this sort of “embedded” journalism is largely a waste of time. The function of journalism is to question powers and supply a check for

⁵⁸⁶ I am not a big fan of copyright, but I think there are few instances where it is reasonable to violate copyright. I have not knowingly done this myself, but those who hide criminal actions behind copyright should be exposed. What became clear to me over time was that Sedgwick did not understand “fair use” and how broad that concept really is. The Schuon cult used copyright to hide real crimes behind. Sedgwick listened to his fear more than to his reason.

corruption, be it institutional and governmental or otherwise. The effort to be accurate and objective is important. As I said earlier in this book, writing a history of the mafia from the mafia's point of view is a rather a waste of time, except if you wish to please the mafia. I am not at all interested in writing a history of traditionalism from the point of view of the traditionalists: there are several of those already and they are bad histories. To do this is to be a servile and "embedded" journalist: a sort of proselytizer by default. A historian must sometimes take a point of view. Sedgwick caved into the traditionalists on many things and wrote their history from their point of view in many ways.⁵⁸⁷ It is a testament to their paranoid insularity that they do not see this and criticize what he did. There are points of view that a decent historian should avoid. Unfortunately, Sedgwick is a believer who writes to justify his brand of Islamic belief.

Mark Sedgwick's book is titled Against the Modern World.⁵⁸⁸ He

⁵⁸⁷ ON his website Sedgwick says

"During the course of my research into Traditionalism over the following years, my personal attitude towards Traditionalism and the Maryamiyya was naturally modified by what I found, but this did not mean the development of any bias: it is part of the professional method of a scholar to guard against bias, to separate personal attitudes (which everyone has) from scholarly analysis (which must be objective)."

Actually I found Sedgwick's to be extremely biased, both towards the traditionalists and toward religion and academic studies in general. There is no "objectivity" in religious studies because the whole subject is delusional. Indeed, his point of view is really very narrow and driven by career interests and a pretense of "balance" that has little to do with being factual or following real evidence. He makes up his history with little knowledge of actual facts and then tries to make it sound good. He has not lived the history but merely reports on what he has heard without having any real knowledge about how to assess the merit of hearsay. I have personal knowledge of his repression of facts to serve his thesis.

⁵⁸⁸ The reviews of this book are a good introduction to the fanaticism of the traditionalists--- they all attack it viciously. But none of them are believable and appear largely motivated by revenge or denial of facts.

<http://www.tradicio.org/english/1index.html>

Robert Horvarth's review is made in the context of extremist far right Hungarian politics, similar to Martin Schwartz's far right German politics. This critique as well as Fitzgerald's critique of

is a Englishman turned Moslem, who lived in Cairo, Egypt for many years and now has moved to Denmark. He admired Guenon because he was, like Guenon, a westerner who converted to a religion he really didn't know much about. Like Guenon he also moved to Cairo. It is a good book as far as peripheral things are concerned. It tells a good story. It is useful as a sort of elementary primer on traditionalism. Good index, some good footnotes. But it is largely mistaken about so many things I rarely look at it and feel it has done more harm than good. It is virtually useless as regards Guenon and Schuon. Sedgwick botches the subjects of Schuon and Guenon very badly, as I will show.

But I'd like to point out first that as general sort of introductory text, Sedgwick's book is the only one that has been attempted, besides the Abdollah Shahbazi book but that is in Persian and I cannot read it except on a translator which works poorly for Persian. I have many objections to Sedgwick's book. On the surface it is a fine, if biased and weak, overview of Traditionalism. I say this despite very serious reservations about the book, a few of which I will outline in this essay. I have many objections to this book, but I will get to my criticisms in a minute. In general, beside the fact, already mentioned, that Sedgwick situates many things along the margin of traditionalism with admirable clarity. The book provides perhaps the only loose attempt to tell the story of these cults and madmen, none of whom Sedgewick really got to know personally. It attempts to be vaguely factual—even when it fails to do so--- and is thus is a good reference or an overview as far as being a sort of "Who is Who" in the traditionalists movement. But as a book of accurate historical

the book verge on hysteria. They try to back up any critique of Schuon and Guenon into their mythic fictions about these men, which have no reality at all, but rather are the fictional production of the cultic thinking around them. Fitzgerald has bunker mentality, literally, as he built a 1950's style bunker next to his house to survive the apocalyptic 'conflagration'. His understanding of Schuon is similar, as he cannot abide any interpretation of Schuon except that of the cult of personality. As "spokesman" for the Schuon cult, he cannot be trusted to be objective at all and is prone to lying, as Maude Murray showed in excess.

assessments of this movement it is largely ridiculous.⁵⁸⁹

I think a book of any kind about this cult took courage to publish given the viscous attempt by Michael Fitzgerald and other Schuon cultists to force Oxford to stop publication of the book. The Schuon cult also tried to get Sedgwick fired from his job and the American University in Cairo. I was told this by Sedgwick himself. The Schuon cult, with Fitzgerald as a spokesman, is very much against free speech and considers any criticism of Schuon or his minions to be “diabolic” and seditious heresy. For a theofascist, “disagreement is treason.” Umberto Eco opines in his outline of the 14 characteristics of theofascism. The first response of the Schuon cult ---and Muslim communities as well--- to any critique is to shout ‘Apostate’, ‘heretic’ or ‘blasphemer’. Then, as David Hall has noted in another context, these dogmatic religionists “accuse the author of every kind of moral degeneracy, and leave the facts and arguments he adduces completely unaddressed.”

Remember that Schuon claimed to be infallible--- and he claimed that even his claim to be infallible was infallible! ⁵⁹⁰Given the huge gall of Schuon’s pathological subjectivism, it is logical that his fanatical followers would try to destroy anyone who questions the cult leader. They think that to question Schuon is to question “god” just as Muslims think that to question the Koran is to question “god”. In any case, the Schuon cult did not succeed in stopping publication of the book. However, they did succeed in distorting and even mangling some of its contents before

⁵⁸⁹ <http://www.shahbazi.org/> see also the book of Abdollah Shahbazi. It is in Persian, which I cannot read, but one can read it in poor translation on google translator.

⁵⁹⁰ As explained elsewhere in this book Schuon’s claim is that god speaks directly though his ‘essence’. He says in his book *Transcendent Unity* that “intellectual intuition is a direct and active participation in divine knowledge and not an indirect and passive participation, as is faith. In other words, in the case of intellectual intuition [gnosis], knowledge is not possessed by the individual insofar as he is an individual, but insofar as in his innermost essence he is not distinct from his Divine Principle”. This subjectivism attached to a fanciful abstraction is the means by which Schuon and other charlatans claim to have special election and absolute knowledge.

it was published. Sedgwick thinks that copyright laws are more important than free speech, telling the truth or following evidence.

However, let us see how good this book really is. Let us look a little closer at Sedgwick's sources and people whom he thanks in his preface. As any historian trained in graduate school knows, a great deal can be told about a book by looking at acknowledgements or who the author thanks. The people he thanks form of clear picture of the bias and slant of his book. He thanks Bryan Rennie, an expert on Mircea Eliade. Rennie is really an apologist for Eliade, who had a fascist past that both Rennie and Sedgwick try hard to paste over and excuse. Eliade is sort of the grandfather of religious studies, along with Huston Smith. They want to excuse this old fascist to try to remove the smell from their profession, as it were. It looks like Sedgwick invented his bogus categories of "soft" and "hard" traditionalism, primarily to try to excuse or even whitewash reactionaries like Eliade.

Looking further on Sedgwick's list of worthies: why is Sedgwick thanking Boris Falikov? True, one of the good things in Sedgwick's book is his exposure of Alexander Dugin, a current Russian Guenonian who wants to rehabilitate Stalin along Guenonian terms. It is hard to imagine a more repulsive combination than Guenon and Stalin. Dugin is right about a few things, however, there is a certain relationship between Guenon's extreme right views and Stalin's extreme left views. What ties the two together is a fundamentalist fascism of a individualistic and willfully destructive kind. But what this similarity consists of, does not concern Sedgwick at all. That is beyond Sedgwick.

Boris Falikov is a Russian academic who is an apologist for totalitarian cults. This seems to be Sedgwick's interest in him. As a critic of Falikov says, "if Falikov considers totalitarian cults to be new religions, that is obviously an indication of his own lack of experience in

field work into cults.”⁵⁹¹ I agree. Anyone who has actually been in a cult knows they are not “new religions” but totalistic organizations or in common language, “cults”. Indeed, I can see why Sedgwick relied on Falikov as Sedgwick too is something of an apologist for religious cults. To a degree, Sedgwick apologizes and suppresses evidence against the Schuon cult. It is clear that Sedgwick wants to ‘soften’ or even deny the fact that many of the traditionalists ran or were members of various religious cults. Why would Sedgwick’s wish to do this?

There are two reasons that are really one as to why he wants to apologize for cults. He is a Muslim and Islam is a basically a large destructive cult. Secondly. Sedgwick is an informal member of the “Cesnur” group of cult apologists—and this group is made up of religious studies professors who tend to write insider histories of religion and try to whitewash dangerous religious groups and cults. They do this partly because they are far right ideologues, and partly because religious studies in many universities is an outpost for fanatical science haters, delusion promoters and post modernists who despise rules of evidence. Cults certainly exist and the effort to remove the term is to protect these horrendous organizations from censure and criticism. The problem is that few of these ideologue have never been in a cult, as I have, and do not know what a mind control system actually does to the mind.

Sedgwick also thanks H.T. Hansen an Evola scholar and apologist and promoter of Evola, judging by some of his essays on Evola. Hansen to a degree apologizes for Evola and his involvement in fascism. He

⁵⁹¹ This comment by Alexander Dvorkin is prefaced by this: “Totalitarian cults resort to trickery, suppression and coercive propaganda to attract people. They use information censorship to manipulate and retain their people, and also resort to other unethical methods of control over individuals, such as psychological pressure, intimidation and others. In this manner totalitarian cults infringe on human rights with freedom of information, selection of worldview and life-style. In various cults they violate various human rights, but they violate without fail; this is their basic trait.” This is exactly right, and to apologize for cults pretend they are “NRM’s” is to whitewash their violations, as many of the writers try to do who speak at CESNUR conferences including Sedgwick. This is not to say that new religious movement do not exist. They do, but some of these become cults eventually, as Schuon’s Maryami cult certainly did.

praises Evola for writing “with the vertical dimension in mind.” There is no ‘vertical dimension’. That is a fiction created by ‘esoterism”, which is also a fiction. Hansen’s notion of Evola as a great teacher of “self-realization”, “Spiritual Enlightenment” and “transformation” is bogus.⁵⁹² Evola’s “quest for transcendence, for an inner “superiority,” a breakthrough of levels, and release from the world”, as Hansen puts it, is a formula for self-delusion, deluding others and autocratic tyranny. Having spent a lot of time with various people influenced by Guenon and other religiophiles, I can say with certainty that their self-transformations led to ill effects, harming their personalities and deforming their characters. Their minds were narrowed and truncated by the teachings of cult leaders and mythical writers from the past. They became cultists and narrow minded devotees of archaic systems of false knowledge.

Sedgwick also thanks Shahram Pazuki, an Iranian scholar who writes without any apparent critical insight into Rumi and other Sufis. Sedgwick also thanks Stephane Dudoignon, a French academic who studies Islam evidently as a Muslim, and who is married to an Iranian and was living in Iran, a backward and theocratic state. Living in Iran involves a certain internal suppression of mental balance, even if one opposes the regime, and a deep internalization of the cultic nature of the regime there, even if one is not a part of it. Iranians are locked into a battle or ideology against the ‘west’ and this tends to make their thinking conspiratorial. Abdollah Shabazi is one result of this way of thinking, creating conspiracies about the Ba’hai, the Freemasons, Jews and other targets of the Iranian republic.

Sedgwick thanks Ottavia Schmidt, an apologist for Islam who writes about “islamophobia” and mosques in Italy. Thierry Zarcone is another

⁵⁹² <http://www.juliussevola.com/site/MenAmongtheRuins.pdf> pg 25-26

French promoter of Sufism and Islam, who Sedgwick references. Sedgwick also consulted with Jean-Pierre Brach: he is a co-inventor of the ideology of Western “esoterism”. There really is no legitimate entity called ‘esoterism’, but intellectuals like Brach have constructed this domain to try to expand their careers. They put together their Dictionary of Gnosis & Western Esotericism, edited by Wouter J. Hanegraaff with Antoine Faivre, and Jean-Pierre Brach, which bundles together heterogeneous productions of superstitious and magical thinking. Thrown into the hodge-podge are medieval alchemists, modern theosophists, Guenon, New Thought mystics, commercial astrologers, sex magicians, and UFO channelers and others. Antoine Faivre and Hanegraaff’s ‘esoteric studies’ is really a bogus ‘autonomous discipline’ in university study. It doesn’t belong in a credible university, but in the basement of the Daily News, or in an anthropology department studying the phenomena of crazy Gurus..

Many of Sedgwick’s colleagues, who he thanks in his book, such as Pier Zoccatelli are participants in CESNUR, (the “Center for Study of the New Religions”—which is really the ‘Center for the Protection of Totalistic Cults’ (CPTC). The head of this group is the impresario Massimo Introvigne ⁵⁹³— who misuses the claim to be a “sociologist” to hide his

⁵⁹³ Massimo Introvigne is an example of the repulsive and baneful effect of Guenon on Scholarship. Introvigne is an anti-intellectual of the worst sort, similar in ways to the Rush Limbaugh and other right wing purveyors of double speak. Introvigne says he wants to get rid of the “syndrome of Voltaire,” which is to say get rid of critical thinking and smiling reason and understanding, and return us to the Dark Ages of brainwashing cult leaders like Schuon and Mormon polygamists who abuse children. He tries to apologize for pedophile priests and fundamentalists whenever he can. Voltaire’s delightful and slightly mocking smile is meant precisely for right-wing cranks like Introvigne.

far-right catholic promotional schemes. Introvigne's highly political far-right organization promotes cults, religious ideologies and post-modernist ideas of many kinds.⁵⁹⁴ Indeed, many post-modern ideas are reactionary. It is a reactionary and toxic group beloved of religious studies professors who tend to lean toward the political right even when they pretend to be 'apolitical'. These elitists and "esoterists" promote religions, Guenonism or even Evola under the guise of "academic freedom". They misunderstand what academic freedom is.

According to Jocelyn Godwin in his preface to Evola's book, Men Among the Ruins, a professor should work "with the tools of rationality and scholarship, unsullied by emotionality or subjective references". I do not know of a single "esoterist" academic, including Godwin, who actually does this, or even really tries to do it. All of them banish criticism and a dispassionate mind, putting science and objectivity outside the pale. These men are all justifying spiritual delusions, crackpot imaginal schemes, the premises of which are never analyzed. Even Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, another professor of "esoterism", on the surface appears to be somewhat objective, but on closer look he seems something of a promoter of the wackos he writes about—since he has



⁵⁹⁴ Introvigne claims to stand for "religious freedom", when really he is for repression and religious intolerance, Cults and arbitrary dictatorship by the far right. for more on Introvigne, Zoccatelli and Cesnur see <http://www.kelebekler.com/cesnur/update2.htm>

books on Savitri Devi, Francis Parker Yockey, Blatavsky, Miguel Serrano and other far right people who, like Serrano, claim Hitler is an “Avatara”. These people are pretending to objectivity when really they are pushing right wing ideologies on their students. Like Sedgwick they are all post-modernists proselytizers of religion, more or less, who feel they are beyond science and reason and appear to believe that “creating your own reality” is what life is about.

Their pretense at being unbiased is really a cloak for the promotion of various stripes of political religion. “Religious Studies” is the term used to describe this con job.

Like Sedgwick, many of these writers claim “Guenonian traditionalism is essentially apolitical” when the opposite is true. These religious studies “scholars” are all more or less propagandists for religion or spirituality, including Mr. Godwin, as a cursory glance and his bibliography shows ⁵⁹⁵—he has been promoting the occult and “esoterism” for years. Godwin favors making all of Evola’s works available because “it would be academically dishonest to suppress anything.” I agree, in principle. But I do not agree with Godwin about teaching this questionable material to sensitive minds without a thorough critique, which none of these promoters provide. But that is not his real reason. Godwin likes this stuff and has been devoted to it his whole life and has never really done a critique of it of consequence. ⁵⁹⁶ He promotes it under the guise of academic “honesty” when really he is an addict of it. Godwin sort of endorses it while still pretending not to and thereby he leaves himself an out if someone accuses him of that. Indeed, most religious

⁵⁹⁵ Godwin’s most recent book is about Atlantis, as if anyone needs another one of those. Atlantis has been utterly discredited as a rational thesis. Godwin’s writes endlessly about all this nonsense with a true believers sense of mission. He is attracted to right wing spirituality and pushes this nonsense onto his students in a way that pretends toward impartiality, but actually infects with a certain enthusiasm. He is really not a scholar but a promoter and an impresario of the occult circus, as it were.

⁵⁹⁶ His book Arktos has a few critical comments but too few.

studies professors are teaching adult make believe without telling students about their own adolescent enthusiasms.

So then, what can we discern through Sedgwick's preface? Sedgwick's book is advised by a group of mostly European intellectuals, some of whom are propagandists for Islam or mysticism, esoterism or Sufism, some of whom are careerists who are trying to create a college discipline that does not really exist--- and ought not to exist--- but which is intended to promote anti-scientific and irrational mysticism, "esoterism" and superstitions. Sedgwick's other advisors try to apologize for cults and are influenced by Cesnur. Though clearly Sedgwick does not personally like Schuon very much, he nevertheless promotes him. The whole pose of the book is promotional as you can see from Jeff Kripal's blurb on the back that says that the story of Evola, Guenon and Schuon "happens to be ours". This is utterly false. I do not identify myself with any of these writers and find Kripal's remark offensive. Kripal is a religion promoter and tries to extend religious delusions further into the university by promoting ESP and alien abduction and other nonsense of this kind. This cheapens university education and harms the humanities. Like Sedgwick's Kripal brings into question the purpose and existence of Religious studies departments in universities.

Neither Kripal nor Sedgwick know much of anything about these men in person. ⁵⁹⁷If Sedgwick's advisors do not like the prevalence of theofascist overtones that threads through all traditionalist thought, it is

⁵⁹⁷ Many of the religious studies writers belong in seminaries or cultish places like Naropa or Esalen. I read one of Kripal's books once, on his recommendation. Roads of Excess, Palaces of Wisdom: Eroticism and Reflexivity in the Study of Mysticism. I found it very a self-regarding excursion into the delights of a narcissistic academic mystic, paranormal promoter and Esalen propagandist. I don't recommend it to anyone except if they wish to see the sort of saccharine soul candy for sale in religious studies departments. Indeed, Kripal teaches delusion for a living. He compares his teaching to the movie the Matrix and cartoons and indeed, most of Kripal's work has the flavor of Kool-Aid and purple haze, comic books and efforts to promote telepathy and other forms of make believe. A modern day snake oil salesman, his books defines very well the sort of rampant subjectivism that reigns in Religious Studies, which William James would celebrate but which I argue against in this book.

not obvious in what Sedgwick writes. He is ambiguous and thus is not objective at all, but rather is hiding his religious agenda behind a pose of disinterestedness and “balance”. Like Kripal, Sedgwick’s more centrist politics hardly makes him less of a purveyor of delusions and superstitions. Sedgwick sought advice from various whitewashers and obfuscators of the truth about Eliade, Evola, Guenon and Schuon and that is really what the book is about. It is a book of whitewash and career building. It is a book that promotes Sedgwick himself, as does his blog.

He says himself in the book that he is writing the book from the point of view of Guenon and Schuon and thus it is not a disinterested book at all but a piece of insider or embedded journalism. Embedded journalism is bad journalism.⁵⁹⁸ Proving his good will towards the

⁵⁹⁸ Bad journalism is everywhere these days. Most of what appears as journalism in America is really political lying and advocacy, often by overpaid liars like Rush Limbaugh, Bill O Reilly and others. The New York Times, the so called “paper of record” is often little more than a corporate rag, turning out pro corporate nonsense every day. I good example of this is how they dealt with Bernie Sanders in 2015-16. He was by far the most intelligent and needed candidate, questioning corporate power, advocating for universal health care, opposing global warming, helping college kids with free tuition in state schools. But the Times ran negative article after negative article about him, showing just how conservative they really are. They ran perhaps 500 articles on Trump 120 on Hillary and 20 on Sanders. They were nominally in favor of Clinton but they pushed Trump, whose views are racist, elitist and far right militarist.

Many complain the Times is “too liberal”, but that is false, actually they are largely corporate and the paper of the rich. Day after Day they promoted Trump too, a real estate crook who talks like a fascist and racist..Also the Democratic party lead by Debbie Wasserman Shulz spearheaded a smear campaign against Sanders, insuring that Hillary Clinton, a favorite of the corporate rich, would win the Democratic primary. Thus the lesser of two evils was again created and only corporate candidates were allowed to run. The one chance to help the poor and middle class failed, again, and the worst candidates were lined up like race horses running toward more corruption.. Yet it was clear all along that the democrats should have supported Sanders not Clinton. The result was Clinton lost and the far right prevailed. Trump, “he who should not be named seemed to win, though he lost the popular vote and was only up in by the corrupt electoral college. Once again the press helped “elect” a neo fascist.

Subject: Ignorance the NYT and Corporate Trumpism
attn: Tavernise and Leonhardt

I have been watching the New York Times for years. NYT substantially helped get Trump elected. During the election period, according to your own statistics, you published over 500 articles on Trump, 120 on Hillary and 20 on Bernie Sanders. It is clear who the NYT supported in fact, though the op-ed section pretended to support Hillary. The recent articles by Tavernise and Leonhardt (Feb 20, 2017) are examples of poor thinking and sloppy history writing. Tavernise’s shows this by cherry picking examples of people who are Trump or non-Trump supporters. She

traditionalists, Sedgwick's goes out of his way to apologize for Mircea Eliade's endorsement of the murders committed by the Romanian Iron Guard. He also bends over some distance to apologize and blur the factual record of Evola's involvement with the fascists. He also tries as well as to excuse Schuon for his misuse of children. Sedgwick even claims to know that Schuon "would not have been found guilty of any offense" which is bizarre⁵⁹⁹ since he knows little about American law and

thinks this is like her war reporting. Her mind seeks a false balance, and so she makes serious mistakes. In fact, Trump is riding on a wave of paid corporate propaganda going now since Rush Limbaugh and Bill O'Reilly came on the scene, and which goes back before that to Red Scare people and Father Coughlin and more recently Jerry Springer and World wide Wrestling. Steve Bannon, another far right talk show guy, is merely a symptom of this love of hate speech and prejudice. Corporate TV created Trump, and the corporate effort to destroy democracy pushes him on. Corporations hate democracy because they are authoritarian organizations. They want the same top down, scapegoat women and minorities, punish unions, mentality that Trump exhibits so well. Bernie Sanders was the only decent candidate running this time and the NYT helped destroy him, even though he got 46 % or more of the democratic vote. It is extraordinary that he did so well, no thanks to you. The real liberal party should not be blamed, rather it should be recognized that the NYT is not part of it, but helped Trump get elected. The democratic party is now merely Republican lite. Hillary was a big mistake and not much better than Trump. Only corporate candidates are allowed in the pseudo democratic party.

So who got Trump elected ?,Corporate culture did.. He is the logical consequences of corporate CEO culture and the anti-democratic values the NYT and Trump both share. He should be impeached tomorrow, but given that Republicans now control congress, the White House and the Supreme Court it is unlikely. What the NYT needs to do is to question the fact that this guy is betraying the Constitution but the Constitution keeps him in power. There is a serious flaw there. Will they address it,--- probably not. Will they address that it shows the presidency is a failed institution,--- probably not. So are the liberals to blame, no, the Republicans, the NYT, phony democrats, and the corporate machine are to blame. This is not new at all. This is what we get for privatizing education and actively promoting ignorance for so many years. It might be worth noting too that the corporate control of the NYT extends even to their pushing the idea of mOnarchy as they did on, 1/7/17. Here:

https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/06/world/europe/monarchy-us-advantage.html?module=WatchingPortal®ion=c-column-middle-span-region&pgType=Homepage&action=click&mediaId=thumb_square&state=standard&contentPlacement=7&version=internal&contentCollection=www.nytimes.com&contentId=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.nytimes.com%2F2018%2F01%2F06%2Fworld%2Feurope%2Fmonarchy-us-advantage.html&eventName=Watching-article-click

⁵⁹⁹ Even Jim Richardson the primary investigator in the case said a miscarriage of justice had occurred. The cult also used Fitzgerald's techniques of malicious prosecution in an attempt to intimidate and harass Sergeant Jim Richardson, of the Indiana State Police, who investigated the

has no legal training.⁶⁰⁰ I have proven to a sufficient degree that Schuon was guilty. But as I said at the time of the Indictment in the Newspaper, I did not expect at all that Schuon would be found guilty as I knew the cult followers would all lie in court. They did, and I proved that some of them did in fact lie. My purpose was not to put him in jail, but to expose him and his followers as frauds. This I did and it is unknown how many people have been saved from joining that cult of its offshoots. Many I suspect.

But I also proved that Schuon was guilty. There are numerous first person accounts and witnesses and that is all that is needed to prove him guilty. In any case Schuon is dead, and again to say it twice, my

cult, by hanging a 2 million dollar lawsuit over the head of the State Police, who were thus forced to make him retire early. He recently got his job back, 3 years later, after the cult withdrew the lawsuit. Both he and his family suffered in the interim. The purpose of the legal threat, according to Jim Richardson, was to intimidate the police and prevent further investigation. Jim said to me that he still believed that Schuon was guilty and he suspected that the cult or their lawyers had used their money and influence to pressure authorities in the government and courts of Indiana to drop the case against Schuon and stop the investigation. Richardson said that the cult had obstructed justice.

⁶⁰⁰ Actually Schuon was indicted by a Grand Jury, which is not nothing, the whole jury felt he was guilty and the assistant prosecutor, David Hunter, had to be fired for insisting on the case, which is also not nothing as it shows the prosecutor was acting against the both the Grand Jury and the assistant prosecutor. The case was dropped, apparently for political reasons. The cult prevailed on the state. The Governor of the state forced it to be dropped,--- despite the unanimous indictment of the Grand Jury. The Grand Jury, in a really unprecedented move, reconvened and investigated the head prosecutor, Robert Miller, because they suspected him of corruption on various grounds, including the Schuon case, which they felt was improperly handled. Lucy Cherbas, head of the Grand Jury told me she hoped to reopen the case against Schuon: She was sure he was guilty. David Hunter claimed to me repeatedly that the case had been dropped for "political" reasons, and he said he suspected that the cult had engineered this behind the scenes, possibly through bribery. He stressed the huge amount of money they have. Maude Murray says they got Schuon off only because of lying and spending huge amounts of money and she admits Schuon was guilty of the things for which he was accused. But let me make this clear. My effort was to expose Schuon as a fraud not to put him in jail. I think I succeeded. Yes he was guilty, but anyone with any sense knows if you have enough money you can get people off the hook. Look at Michael Jackson, who was also guilty of child abuse or molestation but who bought his innocence. When I helped bring the case in 1991 I knew that the cult people would all lie in court. I knew I would probably "lose". But I felt it was essential that Schuon be exposed and a court was the best way to do it. I knew the cult would attack me viciously and try to destroy my credibility. But I thought that by exposing this man I would help many people see through the lie of his claim to holiness. Many people did indeed leave the cult and Schuon is largely discredited now except among a shrinking circle of fanatical followers.

point was never to put the dirty old man in jail,-- I only intended to expose him and his cult as frauds and corrupt and that has been amply accomplished. Sedgwick was enlisted as part of the damage control effort but appears to have been not smart enough to realize the fact. Nor did he really understand why I did what I did.

But that said, let us go back, as promised, and pause for a moment over Sedgwick's endorsement of Mircea Eliade. It appears that Eliade's interest in traditionalism and fascism, did indeed influence the ideological underpinning of his theories of religion. Sedgwick mentions Eliade's support of Romanian fascism, but draws no ethical consequences of this involvement for Eliade's work as a religion scholar. Let's see, Eliade showed himself to be a fascist supporter of genocide against Jews and this means nothing? This is unfortunate and involves Sedgwick's in virtually apologizing for Eliade's theofascism.

Why is Sedgwick led to spend so much time trying to justify an obvious fascist? This follows naturally from the fact that one of Sedgwick's consultants was Bryan Rennie, an apologist for Eliade's fascism, and a man whose thesis trying to whitewash Eliade has been discredited by Russell McCutcheon in his book *Manufacturing Religion* (pg. 85-87). McCutcheon says that Rennie "excuses the violent anti-Semitism" of Codreanu which Eliade supported as being merely "blind nationalism". Rennie also tries to obscure Eliade's support of fascism as being motivated by Eliade's need of "ethnic purity", which really begs the question. Hitler also wanted ethnic purity, as did the slave traders. Sedgwick parrots Rennie's defense of Eliade. ⁶⁰¹ It is unfortunate that

⁶⁰¹ Eliade left a legacy at the university of Chicago that unfortunately continues to bear fruit. Teachers such as Wendy Doniger and her students Jeff Kripal and Hugh Urban and others continue to promote a narcissistic and rather decadent religious myths and fictions and unfortunately are opaque to the destructive influence of their forebears For more of Kripal and his need of purple mystical pills see

Sedgwick appears to have strong ties with so many reactionary “scholars”. But I illustrate this only to show again how theofascism is not uncommon in the religious studies areas of the university and it is consistently apologized for by Sedgwick and his colleagues.

Russell McCutcheon has said of Eliade that Eliade’s far right politics and the totalizing and colonialist efforts of his theories are largely ignored in religious studies.⁶⁰² The reason for ignoring Eliade’s fascism is plain: a thorough analysis of the politics at the basis of most religious studies would bring the entire discipline of religious studies into question. It is clear that scholars like Rennie, Sedgwick, Nasr, Huston Smith, James Cutzinger, Jean Borella, Antoine Faivre, Vincent Cornell, Harry Oldmeadow, Arthur Versluis, tacitly support far-right ideologies, theofascism, reactionary and irrational arcane medievalisms, astrologies, superstitions and irrationalism. Religious studies needs to be questioned more closely and directly as a valid discipline. Eliade had much to do with outlining some of the basic policies and methods used in religious studies and turning it into an organ for religious anti-intellectuals, cult apologists, anti-modernists and Guenonian proselytizers. Religious studies exists partly to offer an euphemistically named “apolitical” haven for extremist political positions and ideologies. By and large cult

<http://religion-compass.com/2008/03/06/taking-the-purple-pill-on-the-paradoxical-pedagogy-of-mysticism/>

Doniger, whose views are not deeply questioning of religion but who is not orthodox either, writes about religion from an identity politics and a story telling perspective, really a rather weak and post-modernist way of looking at things. She was recently attacked by the far right in India. According to the NYT “Penguin Books India, a unit of “Penguin Random House, has agreed to withdraw and destroy all copies of a 2009 book on Hinduism by an American scholar.” Arundhati Roy wrote about Penguin books that “What was it that terrified you?” Ms. Roy wrote in a column for the Times of India defending the book. “The elections are still a few months away. The fascists are, this far, only campaigning. Yes, it’s looking bad, but they are not in power. Not yet. And you’ve already succumbed?” Far right religious nationalists in India do not like Doniger’s book.

⁶⁰² McCutcheon’s books are well worth reading as a critical approach to religion . see his Manufacturing Religion: The Discourse on Sui Generis Religion and the Politics of Nostalgia and Critics Not Caretakers (Sunny Series, Issues in the Study of Religion)

apologists have no idea what the actual practice of religion does to those inside cults and how cults actually operate. They have never seen or felt the insidious dynamics of a dangerous system of beliefs.

. So Sedgwick's book is weak and badly distorted in its criticism of Schuon, better in relation to Julius Evola and Alexander Dugin, but doesn't go very far in his understanding of Guenon. Indeed, the book is more about Schuon and various minor traditionalists than it is about Guenon. However, I was interviewed for this book beginning back in 1998 or 99, and suggested some of its main themes and got to know Sedgwick over several years. I didn't trust him much and thought he was a sort of soft-fascist and perhaps a quasi-monarchist, an impression that has not really gone away. Nevertheless, the thrust of the book is partly mine and the chapter about Schuon is largely derived from information supplied by me and others who left the cult. He bungled the information he was given pretty badly. I was already looking at Traditionalism as a far-right global movement before Sedgwick knew anything about the subject.

In any case, after he came out with the book I realized Sedgwick's reporting of my witness was so distorted and falsified that I felt the book should not have been published in its current form. He makes gross mistakes. For instance, he states that certain people, and I know he means the Schuon cult itself, "suggest that the accounts[of Schuon's primordial gatherings the involvement of minors] was orchestrated by critics of the group". " This is an utter lie, and Sedgwick had enough information to judge it to be a lie. This is a typical paranoid damage statement made by the cult, projecting their own faults onto others. None of the people who left the cult were or are in regular contact with me so the cults claim that we are in conspiracy against them is typical cult paranoia. This is merely damage control the cult told. Sedgwick was used to help cover up for Schuon's crime. Sedgwick knew to what degree this cult lies and should have said so. Sedgwick was endorsing the views

of Michael Fitzgerald, a known liar, cult “spokesman” and dis-barred lawyer. In a film Maude made for Schuon called “Colors of Light”, she reports that Michael Fitzgerald, “took charge” and “led the entire group to lie in court under oath” to protect Schuon against the charge of child abuse or molestation. She also states that Fitzgerald, allegedly, “was disbarred in Colorado for trickery and income tax evasion”. That is the kind of “spokesman” Schuon hires! Sedgwick should not have been so influenced by his point of view, but he is a coward and did what fear told him to do.

Further Sedgwick states that Schuon only had three wives. Actually he had four nominal wives, but no wives in fact. His marriages were all based on phony “visions”. Maude Murray was his “wife” till the early 1990’s and Sedgwick leaves her out of his reckoning all together. Maude was “divorced” from Schuon, Maude says, but it is clear it was a meaningless gesture—a whim. Actually there was no marriage to divorce. None of his wives were actually married to him, except the first, who he hadn’t treated as a wife for thirty or 40 years. So, really their marriages were utterly empty. Catherine Schuon told me herself she did not love Schuon. So his legal wife was not really his wife and his illegal wives were not really his wives either. All his relationships were dysfunctional. Sedgwick does not even get the number of the wives right much less the fact that the marriages were more or less meaningless. Schuon wrote in his book Esoterism as Principle and Way that

“No doubt a distinction should be made between a polygamy in which several women keep their personality, and a princely “pantogamy” in which a multitude of women represent femininity in a quasi-impersonal manner; the latter would be an affront to the dignity of human persons if it were not founded on the idea that a given bridegroom is situated at the summit of human kind.

Pantogamy is possible because Krishna is Vishnu, because David

and Solomon are prophets, because the sultan is the “shadow of *Allah* on earth. It could also be said that the innumerable and anonymous harem has a function analogous to that of an imperial throne adorned with precious stones; A function that is analogous, but not identical, for the throne made of human substance — the harem, that is — indicates in an eminently more direct and concrete manner, the real of borrowed divinity of the monarch.”
(pg. 133)

This sums up the sickness of a psychopathic mind. Schuon’s phony “marriages” were an “an affront to the dignity of human persons”. He compares his women to dead jewels on a throne that he sits on, there just to prove that the great man is really a psychopathic emperor who has no clothes, a fraud, a cult leader. Schuon demeans women in this analogy as Nazi’s did in sewing Jewish skins into lampshades.

There are many other problems with the book. Sedgwick encourages a somewhat “apolitical” view of some of the Traditionalists by arbitrarily dividing them up into “soft traditionalism” and opposing them to “hard” “political Traditionalists”. Mircea Eliade being “Soft” and Evola “political”. Sedgwick’s distinctions on this score are utterly fallacious. Sedgwick write on his self-serving blog that

“There is an important political stream within Traditionalism, though, which follows Julius Evola and Alexander Dugin, and has often been described as “fascist,” though I myself prefer a label such as “new right” or “far right.” This has only limited implications for the spiritual Traditionalism represented by people such as S. H. Nasr, however. Since the 1920s, political Traditionalism has developed separately from other varieties of Traditionalism.”

He doesn't know what he is talking about. He neglects to notice Ling's endorsement of Franco or Schuon's endorsement of Japanese fascism. He doesn't even realize that the Shah of Iran was a neo-fascist or autocratic state created by the U.S. government which Nasr supported



The Shah of Iran

till the end.⁶⁰³ He tries to excuse this support by saying rather stupidly that Nasr “agreed with Schuon that “kingship flows from an archetype

⁶⁰³ Nasr politicking is certainly questionable, but what is suggested here by Zachary Markwith is uncertain. He says

The Wikileaks cables deserve a closer look because they prove Nasr is not guilty by association, but because he was an informant working as and on behalf of criminals. The documents are between former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and former US Ambassador to Iran and CIA director Richard Helms. Nasr approaches Kissinger and Helms on behalf of the Shah to target the Iranian intellectual Reza Baraheni. The same year as these correspondences and meetings—1976—SAVAK is exposed for a plot involving the planned assassination of Baraheni and other Iranian intellectuals on US soil.

I do not see how it is prudent or merciful to defend criminals or pretend that their crimes do not exist when real human beings have been hurt and are in need of support.

[“http://traditionalistblog.blogspot.com/2016/11/counterpunch-attacks-maryamiyya.html](http://traditionalistblog.blogspot.com/2016/11/counterpunch-attacks-maryamiyya.html)

I looked this up on Wikileaks and could find no confirmation of this, though there is a Richard Helms letter about Nasr. There is no direct link between Nasr and the planned assassination. He overstates the case. It would have to be researched further. Establishing such a thing requires a great deal of evidence, and what many spiritual people forget is that evidence really matters. They are often prone to belief without any evidence at all.

but presidency does not.” “The worst king is better than the best president.” Thus he justifies a sort of theofascist monarchism.⁶⁰⁴ The ignorance of this argument is stunning. There are no “archetypes” that is a Platonistic fiction and the history of kinds is itself proof against the inanity of Nasr’s and Schuon ideology. Following leaders is always something you should enter into with skepticism. They are often corrupt.

So Sedgwick’s categories are specious and irrelevant. All the traditionalists had far right sympathies and all of them moved more to the right than the fascists, following Guenon. Eliade was a very “hard” political Traditionalist associated with the fascist Iron Guard movement in Romania. He later hid his politics more than Evola did. All the Traditionalists, beginning with Guenon are intensely political. To claim they are apolitical means one has either not read them, ones knows nothing of their history and influence, or one is locked in the bubble of one or another of the various mind-control religious cults operating on the basis of some of Guenon’s or Schuon ideas.

I think it is Sedgwick’s devotion to Islam that blinds him. Sedgwick has an interest in safeguarding a member of the virtual guild of religious studies professors. Guenon created a politics fundamentally based on and exploiting religion, as this essay will show. In any case, Sedgwick’s book, which I advised initially, was deeply marred by the lawyers at Oxford University Press, who—with Sedgwick’s evident permission, cut out important evidence and suppressed significant facts due to threats and intimidation from the Schuon cult. The result is a compromised book written partly by lawyers and partly by the Schuon cult. In other words, Sedgwick’s writes me that Michael Fitzgerald of the Schuon cult launched “threats of legal action against me, my publisher (OUP), my editor and anyone else involved.” These political intimidations by some of

⁶⁰⁴ <http://traditionalistblog.blogspot.com/2006/11/nasr-and-shah.html>

the more fanatical of the Traditionalists are not new. They have intimidated others by threats of legal action in order to cover up for Schuon's excesses and criminal actions. For instance Maude Murray was forced to sign a confidentiality agreement abrogating her freedom of speech to mention people who are in the Schuon cult. This is form of legal blackmail. Rama Coomaraswamy was also forced to a similar 'agreement' being imposed on him after he disseminated some of the nude photos of Schuon and his "wives" in an effort to expose the fraud of Schuon's sanctity.

Sedgwick's somewhat "apolitical" reading of the Traditionalists is thus falsified by the fact that he himself caved into political pressure from the Traditionalists, who forced him to suppress facts they found inconvenient. Sedgwick said in an interview "No, I'm not a Traditionalist, though I have a certain amount of sympathy for some Traditionalist views and positions." And that is the problem with his book, he pretends to an objectivity about the movement when actually he is caught in the politics of it and in denial about that. Sedgwick's is a sort of soft "traditionalist" in his own contrived category and a "soft traditionalist" is really just a soft fascist. Sedgwick is out of justify a soft theofascism, echoing both Evola and the traditionalists.

Sedgwick's book is a work of political cowardice. This is evident for instance in his effort to squash the evidence that I personally gave him about the "Primordial Gatherings". I sent him numerous accounts of these events and eyewitness testimony from various people about the involvement of at least 6 under aged people who were at these gatherings. These were the children of the Varelas, Gaetanis, Worths, Pollacks and the Fitzgerald's, among others. All these families let their under aged people be involved in illicit gatherings and were said by various witnesses to have been involved in illegal acts with Schuon or one of his officers, Mr. Gustavo Polit. Sedgwick suppressed a lot of this evidence and the evidence he did provide is so mangled and

contradictory as to be bad journalism. The evidence proves young girls were present at Schuon's Primordial Gatherings and that Schuon grabbed the buttocks and pressed their genitals against his penis in quasi-ritual enactments. Underage boys were made to watch their mothers dance around nude and interact with Schuon in dances that were purported to be "sacred" but were really just the obscene gestures of a dirty old man and his concubines. As Stephen Lambert testified in a public affidavit

In one small gathering of four couples which I attended, the women were completely nude and performed dances which were approximations of various Far and Middle Eastern dance forms. Then to popular East Indian devotional songs, Mr. Schuon — standing as above described, but without American Indian vestimentary, rather in the presumed regalia of an East Indian "rajah" — embraced each woman in turn, pressing them to himself in full body contact by first clasping them about the upper torso and then about the buttocks. "In my concrete experience in these occasions amounted to no more than a man indulging his taste for and preoccupation with women".

Sedgwick ignored this and other corroborating evidence which proves the case. On page 173 Sedgwick's badly misquotes Maude Murray who actually said that at certain secret Primordial Gatherings,

"no one was present but myself, Schuon, Catherine Schuon, Sharlyn Romaine Rebecca and Barry Macdonald, John Murray, Mr. and Mrs. Garcia Varela and Barbara Perry [the 2nd 'wife']. The women were naked...the men wore loincloths, except for Schuon, who wore a 'free' loincloth, that is one... could often see him

naked...Sharlyn did some lovely Hindu.. American Indian or Balinese [dances]. Rebecca would do a more static kind of belly dancing. Emphasizing hips and stomach and breasts...Schuon would do the Primordial Dance...⁶⁰⁵ The only real objection anyone could make to these gatherings in my opinion, is that Sharlyn would sit for long periods with her legs apart and in front of the Shaykh who would meditate on this position with the rest of us present. Rebecca [MacDonald] did this somewhat ...too.”

Elsewhere, Murray admits that children were involved in some of these gatherings and reports that another inner circle member of the cult, Michael Pollock, allowed his young daughter to be used by Schuon for sexually visual amusement.

Sedgwick misquotes Maude Murray’s evidence, which he so alters and to make it largely meaningless and then concludes that Schuon “saw beauty as affording access to the divine” ⁶⁰⁶ as if involving underage girls in these sexual rites were somehow like watching a beautiful sunset. If I

⁶⁰⁵ This dance is a secret of the cult still. In this a dance Schuon invented a sort of primitive Jack LaLane style spiritual gymnastics in which the participants --often a nude wife and husband or inner circle members so the cult --do “darshan” with each other and watch as they invoke the ‘divine name’ as they twist their bodies into the one two three of right and lefts twists of torso round and back. It is basically Jane Fonda Tantric calisthenics done to sanctimonious mouthing of meaningless mantras. It is sexual and can lead to intercourse and often does. It is almost a nudist aerobics, but less strenuous, meant to get the body into the mood of sexual invocation of the so called 7th theme. One performs constant prayer while having sex. You are not supposed to be attached to the pleasure of sex, but not deny it either. Schuon did this dance with his wives as part of an effort to make up his own neo-Tantric practices. Primordial dances grew out of this dance which I think as invented in the 1960’s or earlier. Maude taught it to me and only the inner most circle of the cult knows it. This secrecy does not mean much as really there is not much to the dance to justify the hiding of it. Schuon was ashamed of it just as he was the Primordial Gatherings. In both cases, the illicit was there as an integral part of the dance and Schuon knew it, and so wished to dissimulate it. In his mind it presented dangers to his reputation. The only thing wrong with it is the constant association of every action with an abstract idea like Allah, or god. This has an effect of making everything unreal but this concept, which of course is the point. It is part of a mind control method. The sexual part of it was a harmless technique for married couples, the dangers was in the religious part of it,

⁶⁰⁶ Sedgwick pg. 173y

compare the actual statements of Maude Murray (Sedgwick calls her Rose Conner) to Sedgwick's diced up facsimile, they are so grossly different as to be unrecognizable. Sedgwick's ridiculous creation of pseudonyms really amounts to protecting the guilty. His name "Patricia Estelle" is meant to hide the identity of Sharlyn Romaine, Schuon's fourth wife. He refers to the fourth wife as the third wife, when actually Maude Murray was the third wife.

Even if one grants that Schuon's marriages have any reality at all, when really they were factitious, one should be accurate about them. Sedgwick quotes the cult that "false accusations" have been heaped on Schuon, when in fact none of the accusations have ever been rebutted in the 25 years since they were made and a lot of new evidence has become available which further strengthens the case against Schuon. To test him, I recently sent some of the evidence about Schuon to Sedgwick's blog and he refused to put it online, once again showing me that he wishes to hide or suppress the evidence against Schuon. It has been public information for many years but he refuses to link to it or to tell the truth about it. So, I conclude that Sedgwick is somehow complicit with the Schuon cult or otherwise has been prevailed upon to speak for their point of view against the actual evidence. Perhaps he is just a coward. He is in any case, no real scholar.

Sedgwick tries to maintain that Schuon was somehow without desires, as if he knew anything about it. At the time of the Primordial Gatherings I saw, Schuon was 84 and impotent but far from being without desire. He spent most of his time looking at female sexual parts, Maude told me., not just Maude and Sharlyn but other women in the cult as well⁶⁰⁷ He still had desires, Maude said, but he could not get an

⁶⁰⁷ As I explained in the 1991 Account, Maude claimed that Schuon had his fourth wife paint pictures of the Virgin Mary nude while she was spread eagled for his edification. I never witnessed this myself, but heard about it often, almost daily, enough to conclude Schuon may have had some sort of OCD on this subject.

erection anymore. Maude was the last person to have sexual intercourse with him, she said. Romaine and Murray tried to get him aroused enough to do it with them but he couldn't, she said. Sedgwick claims that in the Primordial Gatherings there was no "attempt to arouse or satisfy... sexual desires". That is absurd. Schuon spent the whole time at these events grabbing many women's buttocks, looking at female sexual parts and pressing his penis against these parts. He could still be aroused but not satisfied. The fact that Schuon was impotent did not mean he had no desires. Schuon often *said* he had no desires, even decades ago, but to understand this statement you have to understand his peculiar brand of madness.

Schuon lied in a PR video after his arrest for child abuse or molestation and said, "it is psychologically impossible that a man like me could have a passionate pleasure". This was a Nixonian moment in Schuon's biography. Richard Nixon, who was forced to resign for crimes and cover ups and who should have been impeached and put in jail. He said about his own crime that "when the president does it, it's not illegal." . Schuon was saying on a public video that when the 'Shaykh does it, it is not illegal'. But what really is being said when Schuon claimed it is "psychologically impossible that a man like me could have a passionate pleasure".? Just how devious and convoluted Schuon's thinking on this subject is indicated by the following self-serving passage from one of his books:

"When the Divine-Man apparently expresses a feeling or desire it is he alone who is right in his use of human terms, and the same affirmations would become- as compared with the Man-God- more or less false in the mouth of the ordinary man....When the wise man says: "I desire", he speaks truly, but when the ordinary man says of him: "he desires", he is mistaken. [Because] when the wise man desires something, he does so with divine consent. This

compels one to admit, that from the ordinary human point of view, the perfect sage is beyond desire.⁶⁰⁸

The logic in the above passage is a psychopathic maneuver, an exploit, similar to that of Richard Nixon and other psychopaths.. This explains why Schuon thinks he is beyond the law. Only Fred Schuon can be judge and jury in his own case: he is a “Man-God” or a “Divine Man”. Only he and god---- and, for goodness sake, is there any real difference? --- only he and god, know what his intentions or the meaning of his actions are.

This delusional solipsism is a regular feature of Schuon’s psychology. So when he says that no one may judge him because he is god, well, is not that what every psychopath says? No one may accurately speak about or judge any of Schuon’s actions, even if he murders someone, because only he knows the will of god and has god’s “consent”. Everything he does is pure because he is god. “To the pure, all things are pure.” Schuon liked to quote this statement. If he abuses children, well that is OK, because he is god and god knows he did not mean it. But this, of course, is actually merely a very sophisticated evasion of any responsibility for his actions. It is a form of consciencelessness, a form of spiritual psycho- pathology. Schuon is a relativist, and everything is relative to him because he is god! Many cult leaders employ this absurd sort of self-serving logic.

For Schuon sexuality appears to be primarily about power. But he clearly has many sexual and passionate interests. Both Lambert and I have written about Schuon’s need to satisfy his interest in sex and power. Maude stressed this over and over to me. In the quote some pages above, Stephen Lambert writes that Schuon at Primordial Gatherings that in “my concrete experience in these occasions amounted to no more than a man indulging his taste for and preoccupation with women”. He

⁶⁰⁸ Schuon, Frithjof, Eye of the Heart Unpublished translation by Gerald Palmer

concludes, “I claim the right to make these judgments as one who has been closely and intimately associated with the group for more than twelve years, even at its upper echelons, and who has since severed all relations exactly because of the evidence of its spiritual bankruptcy and the consequent machinations that result to obscure this fact”. So Lambert is sure Schuon was a regular guy and not a god, and that he is a compulsive liar....

Catherine Perry, (a daughter of one of Schuons “wives”) whom Schuon tried to seduce in the 1970’s, says to me in letters that Schuon’s interest in her certainly was passionate. Years ago, she told me, she was made to lie about this. Maude Murray writes that everyone in the cult lied to the grand jury about Schuon, and she records that Fitzgerald has been lying about Schuon’s marriages. She writes that Fitzgerald “even tried to tell my father recently that the marriages to Schuon were purely Platonic ! I guess he [Fitzgerald] thinks he was in bed with us {Murray and Schuon}. It cannot be good for a saint to be continually protected by lies when so many people know the truth”.

Elsewhere Murray has written at some length about Schuon’s passionate interests. In a letter to me she writes that Schuon and Romaine discussed “in front of me—letting Jennifer Casey and Deborah Willsey come to see [Schuon] totally naked. He was wondering if they would want to touch his penis and was looking forward to more meetings like this”. She writes Schuon “did make love with Romaine and Perry and I on each side of him and he did love to have photos of himself taken naked”. This hardly describes a passionless man.... And it indicates that Catherine Schuon lied when she said that she took these photos merely to record his spiritual aura or some nonsense. He was a sex minded old goat, not to demean goats. He lied in a video and said he had no desires but that is merely a lie couched by Fitzgerald and other lawyers. Proving that he had no desires was essential to getting the case thrown out of court. Schuon says in his Memoirs that the habit of lying started early

for him. He states “After the death of my father I had quickly to get used to hiding my pearls, and thus a dissimulation that was forced upon me became my second nature; even when I did not wish to dissimulate, I was unable not to;” So Schuon is merely dissimulating. Again this is how a psychopath thinks. I do not care that he had desires, but I do care that he foisted these on women and children with such perfidious deception and the power of his cult network.

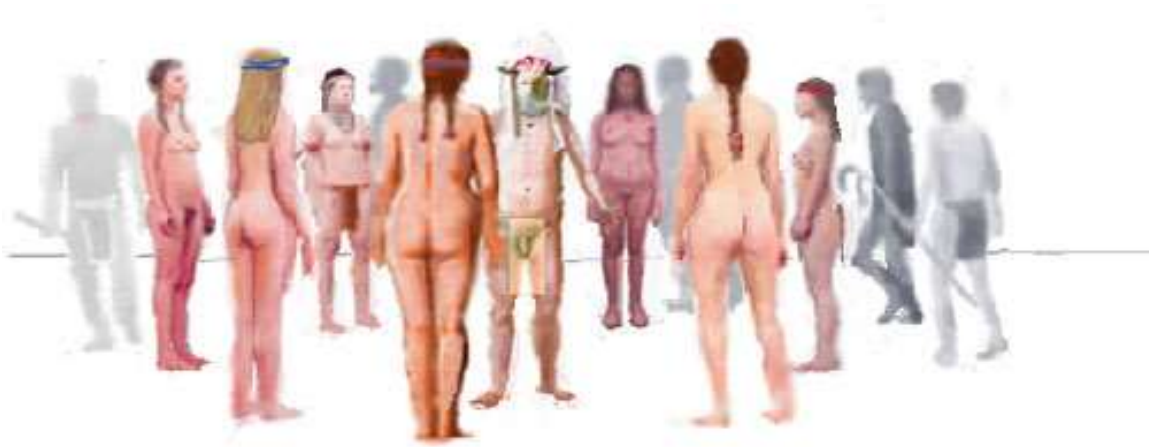
The Primordial Gatherings are primarily about power, yes, not sex, but they were about sex too. It must be understood that sex is the means to power in these Gatherings. Sedgwick could not understand this and botched this badly in his book where he says, --- wrongly--- that “Koslow now accepts that Schuon’s intentions were not primarily about sex but about ... [Schuon’s] pursuit of absurd delusions of power”. He misquotes me out of context and misunderstands what I said and why I said it. I said that because too many people were saying it was *only* about sex. It was about sex, but mostly it was about power through sex.

I will explain this further: The following picture was made by me on Photoshop for this book. It is based on sketches I did the year I left the cult so there are quite accurate if not realistic. It is an accurate approximation of what primordial gatherings looked like. But there are differences. There are far less people. I have not included any of the colors or objects in the actual room where these gatherings occurred. It is more or less a schematic drawing, made to show how the gatherings operated. Some of the women were fatter, some thinner than shown here. Younger or older. The lion cloth was more greenish perhaps, but his penis could be seen both through and to the side of side of the loin cloth. He did not wear the loin cloth in more intimate gatherings, he was exposed. Not that anyone should care, but I merely note it.

The men, here shown in black and white for contrast, to show their outsider status, danced around Schuon who had the women in the interior circle. The men were more or less irrelevant and I am unsure

why they were there at all, other than as humiliated voyeurs or witnesses of Schuon's obsessions. Cuckolding large groups of men seemed to be part of the plan.⁶⁰⁹ The men were meant to be made to feel irrelevant, All that mattered was Schuon and the women, and the husbands and sons in the outer ring are really just meant to be witness to the superlative "prophet/sundance pole/penis/god" in the middle of his harem of "Gopis" or 'goat herders'. as Krishna's little harem girls were called. Maude referred to all the nude women at these gatherings as "goat herders", imitating Schuon. The gatherings were vary largely sex fantasies born between Schuon and his third and fourth wives. He had invited Stephen Lambert to one gatherings, as already noted, and he regretted this badly, as Lambert was a far more impressive man that Schuon and Schuon was jealous of him. After that, he made sure he was the only male actor in these events and had possession of other men's wives who were in attendance watching. Sharlyn Romaine was a fanatic and had a tendency to push any man that got too close to Schuon out of the way. In this picture Schuon is headed up to one of the women to grab her butt cheeks and pull her towards his penis, in full body contact. That was the main event in these gatherings, though there were many variations on it, all of them sexual.

⁶⁰⁹ Lambert was not asked to come again to these gatherings because Schuon was intimidated by him and Romaine was jealous of his presence. He was a very tall, handsome and darker skinned man and very impressive and they hated this as it showed Schuon up for the rather insecure man he was.



When I went to a few large Primordial Gatherings, there were fifty to seventy people there.⁶¹⁰ I couldn't put symbolic representations of all these people in this drawing and have them fit. So I decided to make the image simpler and show how the thing operated in its various iterations. No one in the drawing looks like anyone in the cult, except for Schuon, in the middle, who I made up from memory. I decided I did not want to spend much time on this so I did it in Photoshop, adapted forms from internet nudes and from Meyerbridge, or just made them up by myself. I adapted them to the costumes people wore at the gatherings, changing all the bodies in the process. So no one can be offended that they are in the drawing, I do not have time of interest to do a hyper realistic view of this. No real people are represented but it is accurate and somewhat objective, while still being my own subjective view of it. There are film images of this, which would be better, but I doubt the cult will ever let them out, so this is the only image of these gatherings that now exists.. But it is important to be generally accurate and show what actually was going on at these gatherings, based on eyewitness accounts by myself, Lambert and Murray. So this is an approximately accurate rendition without trying to be hyper real about it.

There were different levels of nudity at different Primordial

⁶¹⁰ Stanley Jones, the Willseys, The Fitzgeralds, the Reynolds, the Arbogasts, the Perrys,

Gatherings. Full nudity was more “esoteric”, as if that word really meant anything other than more sexual or subjective. Full nudity occurred at more private gatherings among select disciples. Schuon styled the whole thing out of a fantasy of the Sundance and the Krishna myth, as well as orientalist fantasies. Geriatric Krishna is supposed to be the sun and the women the planets circling around him and coming into union with him as the goat herders had sex with Krishna. Seventy people in a room—and Schuon at one point had Sharlyn, then 38, sit down in front of him naked and spread her legs wide. He stared at her spread vagina for quite a long time while 70 people watched this. The whole room was suffused with illicit desire as well as a hint of shock, not dissimilar to the Eucharist rite which also employs illicit metaphors, in that case of cannibalistic rites. It was indeed shocking to watch so many nude or semi-nude women be sexual with one man. Schuon wanted us to watch him enjoying pressing himself against female genitals. Schuon stood in the center of the circle and 25 women danced around him in various stages of nudity and he pressed each one’s vagina against his penis. To say this is not about sex is absurd, and to say it is not about power is absurd. I said it was primarily about power, obviously. If it were primarily about sex, it would have been Schuon and his concubines in a private room with no one else watching.

Having so many people watching in a charged atmosphere of forbidden desire among illicit libertines is necessarily about control and power, status and delusions of grandeur. It is like a dream of Paulo Pasolini. Everyone in the room was made guilty for the actions that were occurring, rather as at a swinger’s club of nudist wife swappers. That is why they all hide from telling the truth about it now. They are all ashamed on one level while on the other brainwashed into thinking this is an esoteric event to which they alone had a prescriptive right. The notion that there was anything spiritual in these gatherings is also absurd. Spirituality is a convenient excuse. Murderers have said that

murder is a spiritual act. They feel like God when they do it. Himmler liked going to the concentration camps and watching executions with the Bhagavad Gita in his pocket. What Schuon was doing here was like the eating of the Eucharist, the cannibalistic and symbolist act made sacred. There was in it a flavor of the illicit and the shame of what everyone knew was criminal, but had been told it was sublime. The whole idea was to wrap up the followers in guilt and voyeuristic pleasure, ensnaring them in regret and profound adulation of the Master. He cuckolded all the husbands and ensnared all the wives in a guilty union that made them all complicit.

The cult claims these gatherings were “spiritual” only because it hides what the rites actually were really about, which was sex in the context of cult control, and slurred as “healing” when no one was healed of anything. If they were spiritual then it is spirituality itself that is criminal. This indeed is the case. The delusional nature of religion can only be imposed on reality by force of an exploit, violence, crime or lie told to the gullible. No one can define what the spiritual is and so it becomes an excuse for every sort of illusion and fabrication.⁶¹¹ It is a specious category and means virtually anything you please, which really means it means nothing. Was god hovering around Schuon’s penis as he pressed it against numerous nude and scantily dressed females? Was god present in the eyes of all the cult voyeurs watching Schuon looked up Sharlyn’s vagina? She sat spread legged in front of 70 people and did this with him in public. This is not criminal, but it is an abuse if young people are exposed to this very adult exploit.

What sort of god cares for this cheap public porno? The idea is ridiculous. The Primordial Gatherings were an exercise in sexual delusions of grandeur and an ultimate example of traditionalism’s transcendent double speak, folly and madness. We only adults there it

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would have been little more than a group of neighbors as a sort of nudist cult soiree. It was not that I objected to the nudity. It was the madness of Schuon I objected to. It goes deeply into the core of who this man was, right into the cult of “having a center”, which is the title of a book he wrote around the time of these events.

The atmosphere of these gatherings was that of a peep show parlor or a guilty scene of strip tease burlesque restyled as a church service.⁶¹² But again it was not the nudity that was objectionable. Everyone tried to be so serious and pretended it was not what in fact it was. A lot of its power derived from this imposture. There was a strong feeling of fear in it too as everyone knew that this was wrong on some level and no one could talk about it or say why. That made it frightening. It was consciously modeled on Sundances and Pilgrims circling the Kaaba with his own delusions of grandeur, as well as the Christian Eucharistic rite which combines the illicit eating of human flesh with a quasi-sexual injection of the gods body into the postulant orally. Schuon had written about this in his first book. The same claim of healing was made as happens in the Eucharistic rite. Schuon combined these symbolist fantasies of nudist Indians, the Eucharist, into a guilt ridden atmosphere of the Primordial Gatherings in such a way that it was primarily about exalting him. It was required that no one notice that there was anything wrong with this and that it was a normal even a profound thing to do. One was obliged to praise it and they all did like automotons.

⁶¹² Schuon’s sexual obsessions remind me of the metaphysical pornography of Marcel Duchamp. Duchamp, one of the creators of corporate art. Of course, he was a joker, a gift utterly lacking in Schuon, who could barely smile, much less laugh. But Schuon’s notion of the vagina as his ultimate object of worship was very Duchampian. Schuon’s virgin is not far at all from the ‘bride stripped bare’ (Entant Donne) in the room in the Philadelphia museum of art. Duchamp’s piece is also a work of symbolist and quasi spiritual eroticism. Like Duchamp, Schuonian spirituality ultimately goes bankrupt in a solipsistic and elitist esoterism, and an onanistic metaphysic. The self-serving immortal narcissist is an image of the corporate “person” as divine person, in a way.

One was supposed to genuflect mentally to the grandeur of Schuon's sex fantasies. I knew the whole thing was a sham and wondered how to say or express this fact, without this cult wanting to kill me. How would I get out of this cult alive. I could see these were dangerous people in the grip of delusions. I was mentally free of it soon after I saw it, and those who claim I left the cult merely because of my involvement with Maude Murry are crazy. I left the cult because it was corrupt from top to bottom and I left Maude too.

These gatherings were later claimed to be not ritual events and peripheral to the Tariqa, but that is a PR lie, they were clearly and unambiguously the summit of Schuon's own message and history, personality, obsessions and career and were presented to us as such.⁶¹³

⁶¹³ I wrote in 1991

"The metaphysical concepts Schuon uses to justify this practice I learned from questioning Sa. Aminah after her visits with him. He invented these justifications after the gatherings were already established. The Principle is: Atma (Schuon) becomes Maya (the naked women) in order that the naked women (Maya) may become Schuon (Atma). Alternately, the center becomes the periphery in order that the periphery may become the center. "God becomes man in order that man could become God." The reader will recognize these formulations as central to Schuon's doctrine. The primordial gatherings are thus the quintessential expression of the doctrine.

Quite clearly this is a rite, though Schuon dissimulates this idea, since he doesn't wish to be accused of syncretism. However, all the elements of a rite are present. Schuon's body is like the Eucharist, the women are the receptive souls awaiting his naked body. Murray said he compares this dance of his to the dance of Krishna with the Gopis (some Kangra miniatures picture this); to the Sun Dance - since the sun dancers go in and out from the center; and to the circumambulation of the Kaaba. This means clearly that Schuon sees himself as equal to Krishna (an avatara) to the Sun Dance Tree (who according to Black Elk, represents Wakan Tanka) and to the Kaaba, the most sacred object in all of Islam. These comparisons indicate the syncretic nature of the rite. Schuon has combined three religions - firstly himself as Islamic Shaykh - Krishna, - Kaaba, joining himself in an American Indian Dance, to naked women who are supposed to believe he is the Atma: Islam- Red Indian - Hindu. Schuon explains: this is the primordial religion; he is its only exalted exponent; in fact he himself IS esoterism; he is the Religio Perennis.

This, of course, is really a completely new religion: Schuonism. As the Virgin blessed Schuon with her genitals and healed him of his distress, so also Schuon blesses these women with his body, healing them of all their illness. Since Schuon is both beyond the Law and infallible, he cannot be questioned about all of this.

Schuon promoted the idea that he was totally pure and beyond wrong doing or 'sin'. Utter Adamic innocence was insisted on in absolute terms of mind control. "To the pure all things are pure" they said. His trained and gullible followers accept such twaddle without question. Schuon injected his characteristic obsession with himself as a prophet of the highest order, so he alone was the Sundance and the Kaaba and he alone grabbed the circling buttocks that danced in desire around his amazing penis. He was ever ready to press itself against the next beautiful body, over and over again for quite a while. A 'presence' like the eucharist was claimed by those who embraced his body, Catherine Schuon claimed his body could emanate "spiritual fluids"⁶¹⁴. No one asked how many times he would have to press himself against each women to "heal" her. Schuon's penis, now the center of the cult, was even painted into Icons and hung in followers bedrooms so they could feel the healing presence of his lingam, dong or dick, whatever you wish to call the pathetic 84 year old thing he tried to get young women to worship. Sedgwick grasped none of this.

Therefore, Sedgwick gets it all wrong about Schuon. The Schuon cult's various defenders falsely accused Sedgwick's poorly done book of all sorts of nonsense. The Schuon cult wrote many attacks, most of them rather hysterical. They have an interest in lying and covering up Schuon's crime, so of course they must go out of their way to try to undermine and discredit the book. Indeed, the virulence of their attacks on Sedgwick are themselves indications of their guilt. They have so much to hide. I advised a parts of Sedgwick's' book and conditioned the books over all point of view. That this why they hate in it. But, actually, Sedgwick is in many ways their defender. He worked hard to make the

The problem is that no one is healed in this rite, because the rite manifests Schuon's own sickness."

⁶¹⁴ letter to Phillipe Grall. Probably authored by Schuon

book pleasing to the cult and to Michael Fitzgerald. He even suppressed evidence to please them. They should be happy it is such a cowardly book and he bent over so far to cozy up to them. Sedgwick had to make a choice, tell the truth and possibly end up in court or parrot the cult's lies. He chooses the latter.

But though the book has value as a public exposure of these charlatans, it is really very tame and cowardly. Even on the surface of the book there are real problems. Sedgwick's book purports to be primarily about Guenon, which is odd, since it says little that cannot be found in any of the venues that promote Guenon. The book has a very shallow grasp of ideas promoted by Guenon and his followers. It mistakenly assumes that only Evola is a "political traditionalist", without understanding that spirituality is politics by another name. Guenon's political extremism was what influenced Evola and other theofascists and is indeed the fountain of the whole movement.

Evola reads Guenon very well and merely apes his theofascism as does Schuon and his followers. Evola and Guenon had an extensive correspondence. They reviewed each other's books. Evola had several of Guenon's books published in Italy. Guenon even published articles in a Fascist newspaper (Regime Fascista). Guenon and Evola were very close in many ways. Sedgwick is mistaken on this as on so much else. Guenon wrote a ringing endorsement of Evola's book *Revolt Against the Modern World*: 'nothing should...

"prevent us from recognizing, as is right, the merit and interest of the work as a whole, and to bring it in a particular way to the attention of all those who are concerned with the "crisis of the modern world", and who think like us [my emphasis] that the only efficacious means of rectifying it would consist in a return to the traditional spirit outside of which nothing truly constructive could be validly undertaken."

Guenon rarely wrote like this about anyone. Sedgwick also missed Ananda Coomaraswamy's endorsement of Evola. Coomaraswamy wrote of Evola's Revolt Against the Modern World that

“his book constitutes a remarkable presentation and exposition of *traditional doctrine* and could well serve as an introductory text for the student of anthropology and as a *guide for the Indologist*.”

(*The Visva-Bharati Quarterly*, Feb-Apr 1940)

For decades the Schuonian and Guenonians have been trying to distance themselves from Evola because of his Nazi and Fascist s background, But actually, both Guenon, Lings and Schuon endorsed aspects of fascism and created a theofascist philosophy that is very close to Evola's and De Maistre's ideas, as I show at length in this book. Sedgwick writes nothing about any of this. There is also nothing about Lings and his idealization and endorsement of Franco or Schuon and his love of Japanese fascism. Nor does he note Schuon's approval of South African Apartheid or Nixon's war in Vietnam

Like a new age gossip columnist, Sedgwick tries to explain away Guenon's paranoid fits as examples of attacks by magicians! It is hard to take a book seriously that endorses some of the superstitious nonsense that obsessed Guenon. Against the Modern World might have been a good book if Sedgwick had trusted the evidence and followed the facts rather than caving in to political pressures and writing about his own rather twisted and unexamined spirituality .

The book tries to strike a false “balance”, which really is just a refusal to look at evidence. He has the false idea that scholars cannot take any point of view but are merely ciphers. The idea that “balance” is required in reporting is useful in various ordinary and uncontroversial cases where facts are not known and only opinions can be expressed. But in matters of fact, like global warming, acid rain and Ozone depletion, the health effects of smoking or the killing of Elephants and

Rhinos, only facts matter and a bogus “balance” is really an excuse for allowing profiteers and exploiters to get equal say with defenders and those who understand the facts. Religion is like global warming in that it has virtually no real facts on its side. Global warming is an incontestable fact, and those who deny it are paid scientists who lie because they are paid to lie. The plant news articles, do TV spots, or write bogus scientific reports. This has been meticulously documented by Naomi Oreskes and others.⁶¹⁵

As an example of Sedgwick’s manner of thinking I can tell a story. He and I were discussing Islam. I dislike the Koran and find it too full of threats, implied violence and apocalyptic fantasies used as a means of spiritually blackmailing people into correct behaviors. Someone told me that the penalty for leaving Islam could be death. I could not belong to a religion that encourages the violation of human rights and the free exchange of ideas. I am opposed to any form of spiritual blackmail. Human rights matter more to me than the dogmas of any book. So, I asked Sedgwick, as a Moslem, what he thought about the cruelty implicit in Islam and the killing of people who leave Islam. Mark did not deny the abysmal human rights record of Islam. He did not question or object such practices either. But his allegiance to Islam made him unable to comment on this atrocious ideas. His undecided and “balanced” view troubled me. It was a false balance based in moral cowardice. A similar ambiguity and refusal to look at the hard questions is at the heart of the book Against the Modern World as well.

No one can write a “balanced” history of the Third Reich, since to do so would involve giving credence to the Holocaust deniers or neo-Nazis. You can’t write a “balanced” history of slavery, since you would

⁶¹⁵ Oreskes, Naomi, Conway, Erik. *Merchants of Doubt*, They show how such scientists like Fred Singer and Frederick Seitz started working for tobacco companies or denouncing global warming while being paid to do so by companies who profit from harming lungs or the environment. They supported reactionary ideologies such as free enterprise capitalism, and used their scientific credentials to push bad science. .

have to justify slavery to some degree as the slave owners did.. You can't write a "balanced" history of the Schuon cult, since it is proven now that they all lied in court and the evidence against Schuon is overwhelming. How do you balance truth tellers against with lies. Writing a "balanced" history of Scientology, partly because they too are liars and have done a lot of harms that are not widely known, as victims of such cults tend to be silent and afraid to talk. Hugh Urban's book on this subject is thus is written in a "balanced" manner and so is mistaken in various ways. Scientology invented the whole idea of cult apology and Urban is influenced by them in that he too apologizes for this dangerous cult.⁶¹⁶ Corporate histories tend to be bad for the same reason, how do you "balance" CEO point of view against the workers they exploit? CEO's have way too much power and can intimidate workers from talking or lie to interviewers easily. As Howard Zinn said you cannot be neutral on a moving train, which means that you have to take a point of view sometimes and cannot pretend to be impartial when serious moral questions are at issue. Sometimes being "balanced" is actually being complicit.

Did Sedgwick's book require some courage? Yes, a little. Mark was originally fired up about doing the right thing, but as time went on he waffled, weakened and did the wrong thing and compromised with the Schuon cult when they pressured him. Now he is more or less an apologist for the traditionalists and Islam. It does have the merit of at least opening up more academic inquiry into investigating the

⁶¹⁶ A less flaccid study of Scientology is Lawrence Wright's Going Clear: Scientology, Hollywood, and the Prison of Belief. Wright has evidence that the leaders of Scientology have beaten inner circle members, and a culture of violence is common there. He also mentions child abuse in the cult. Wright has been systematically harassed by lawyers from the cult. The book has many problems though. Wright seems to understand very little about how cults work and how mind control systems operate. See also Cynthia Kissler on the internet, She was a brave woman who stood up for victims of this cult and suffered for them terribly. She was the head of the Cult Awareness Network, which became the lying and dissembling Cult Apology Network when Scientology destroyed it..

Traditionalists and their relation to fascism, though it does this so weakly that it is nearly an endorsement of theofascism.

But I have to say that little has come out of it in terms of other books or articles of merit about the Schuon cult. Sedgwick's view is too milk-toast and lukewarm. As Russell McCutcheon said the role of religious scholars should be "critics not caretakers" of the faiths they study. Huston Smith did a great deal of harm in trying to make religious studies scholar cheerleaders for the religions. Sedgwick is not a critic but a promoter, caretaker and sometimes cheerleader, who tries only occasionally to be a really involved and accurate scholar who will fight for the truth. He evidently did quite well as a student at Oxford, but it did not teach him to seek the truth and follow evidence. He hides cowardice and weakness behind a studied cloak of professionalism.

On the other hand, it is good that he shows traditionalism is a worldwide movement, connected to fascism and not merely a religious cult in Bloomington, Indiana, or scattered among French right-wing intellectuals. That has some value. Sedgwick did have to show some courage to publish this book, since the Schuon cult tried to squash it and threatened Sedgwick for bringing it to print. They even tried to force him to lose his job at Cairo university by pressuring other faculty or administrators there. I do not agree with the effort to take his job, but I do think he should not be teaching at public universities as he is really a promoter and so should be at a Madrasah or a religious school. But since he caved into the cult's demands, how brave was he in the end? It is not easy to stand up against a dangerous cult. True. But I don't admire him or his publisher for caving into the cult. They need not have. Truth was on their side. There is plenty of evidence about Schuon and his gatherings. He need not have backed down at all about anything.

So the book is compromised in serious ways. In the end, the book comes close to trying to exonerate Schuon, while not completely doing so. Sedgwick's could only accomplish this waffling ambiguity by suppressing

evidence that I gave him. He was unable to criticize the Islamic religion he belongs to. He thinks that ordinary religion is a real thing and Schuon as a crazy extremist and anomaly. But I think he is dead wrong.

Schuon's delusions are an outgrowth of religion as such, both Islamic, Hindu, Christian Native American and Buddhist, all of which share a "transcendent unity" of delusions in their core. Islam is much worse than Schuon over the centuries and its human rights violations are perhaps the worst of any religion in the world. To pretend this is not the case is merely to lie to oneself. Moreover the origins of Islam are as murky and those of Christianity and both are mythic constructions that have little of the truth in them. They are myths.

Sedgwick is a man who cares more about his career than anything else and that made him vulnerable to spinning the truth in favor of Islam. He edits facts to serve his own academic and religious agenda as well as that of the Schuon cult. There are various kinds of history books. The Schuon cult itself has written various bad histories of themselves, for instance. But Schuon's Memoirs, for instance, show a really insane man posing in various ways for his followers. This is interesting because it is a primary document that suggests a lot about how he lost his mind. There are other histories of the cult that are promotional and sophomoric advertising texts such as James Cutsinger's For the Serious Seeker or Charles Upton's the System of the Anti-Christ. The former is a gushing and adolescent book written by a cult groupie. The latter is a promotional text for the Schuon cult, written by right wing New Age fanatic and advised and promoted by Huston Smith. It is a silly rehash of the lunacy of the Guenonian conspiracy theory told in a bombastic and inflated style. These are not histories, exactly, but promotional texts for a cult: tracts to attract potential gullible and unwary "true believers". Sedgwick's book is better than these, but it is still a promotional text and a work of biased and poorly done history.

I presented Sedgwick with more information than he could handle

and he failed to do it justice. He suppressed facts about Guenon and the Schuon cult in order to advance a rather theofascist tendency in the academic study of religion. He upset the traditionalists by quoting me and implying the obvious relation between traditionalism and far-right politics. Anyone with eyes can see that traditionalism is a far right religious fanaticism. But he was fearful about facing all the implications of his study. The far right tendencies of religious studies scholarship corrupts many professors in our universities, or at least those who follow after the mold of Huston Smith, Arthur Versluis or other traditionalists and careerists. These men give up objectivity in the interest of promoting their personal and rather delusional religious mythologies. They act the part of religious insiders, when they should be critical outsiders. The free university system is not about such attempts to promote a religious agenda and professors who carry such an agenda really belong in religious colleges, or New Age institutes like Naropa, Esalen or Christian colleges, Moslem schools or bible schools.

On Education: and Manufacturing Religion in Universities: or How Fictional Deific Persons got Replaced with Corporate Persons.

Religion is analogous to self-immolation by
moths,

Richard Dawkins

Man is the Religious Animal. He is the only
Religious Animal. He is the only animal that has
the True Religion, several of them. He is the
only animal that loves his neighbor as himself,
and cuts his throat if his theology isn't straight.
He has made a graveyard of the globe in trying

his honest best to smooth his brothers path to happiness and heaven. He was at it in the time of the Caesars, he was at it in Muhammad's time, he was at it in the time of the Inquisition,.... The higher animals have no religion. And we are told that they are going to be left out, in the Hereafter."

Samuel Longhorn Clemens⁶¹⁷

"To teach superstitions as truth is a most terrible thing." Hypatia

This is the second essay in the book that deals with the failure and inadequacy of Religious Studies in our public and private universities. A few first premises about education warranted at the beginning. First there are few things more important to a healthy society than education. Not only is a democracy only as good as the education of its participants. but it says a great deal about a society how it treats education. Kids learn by doing, as Dewey said, and not by taking tests. The current system of education in America is increasingly about

⁶¹⁷ Mark Twain wrote many excellent and true things about religion. One of the most delightful is his accurate attempt to show that animals are superior to humans in "the Damned Human Race". Twain wrote, "I have been studying the traits and dispositions of the lower animals (so-called), and contrasting them with the traits and dispositions of man. I find the result humiliating to me. For it obliges me to renounce my allegiance to the Darwinian theory of the Ascent of Man from the Lower Animals; since it now seems plain to me that the theory ought to be vacated in favor of a new and truer one, this new and truer one to be named the *Descent* of Man from the Higher Animals." Twain is joking here of course, and he probably did not realize that Darwin also had a very high view of animals and was skeptical of humans. "Humanism", strictly so called, is a questionable entity. Of course, when one says "have you no humanity?" it might mean something good, as in, "stop abusing people or misusing animals".
<http://www.skeptically.org/logicalthreads/id14.html>

punitive testing of children, quite apart from what they know or have done. Right wing "think tanks" endorse standardized tests for children. Dismantling liberal arts courses is designed to abolish critical thinking and enlightenment education.. To them education is merely training and preparation for authoritarian corporations who have no democracy and employ drones who do not think or question. The best education is by example and by active participation, actually trying to do what is taught. Kids learn physics or math by doing it, trying the magnet, see how speed effects force if the mass is greater, or how chemical mixed together make a third thing. On higher levels one learns know at graduate school how to think for oneself and weigh texts and evidence. Professors are very important in this process in helping the student guide themselves. The right wing hates teachers and wants to eliminate their unions.

Education is in trouble these days, as corporations try to take over schools and efforts are made to destroy academic freedom; destroy tenure, gouge students and make them into indentured servants of banks and markets. The effort is to exploit children and profit from families and ruin the schools in the process of privatization. Universities and colleges hire endless administrators trained as businessmen, which then proceed to inflate prices and take larger incomes. It used to be administrative costs were small as teachers did the administration themselves. Now the schools are trying to destroy the humanities because they do not make businessmen much money. They do not want to train citizens who are well rounded and understand things beyond money, they only want corporate drones who do not think or have critical minds.

With these realities in mind it is useful to see cult of the CEO as both a religious and a market ideology which grew out of the old aristocracies. In light of these facts, it is interesting to see how universities treat religious studies, as a test case. Universities are promoting fictions and undermining the enlightenment ideal of free inquiry, evidence and

reason. In enlightened, science based universities, there is supposed to be to be a complete separation between the scholarly activity of studying religion as a human phenomenon and the preaching of a specific religion as if it were true reality. There is supposed to be a difference between a Religious Studies department and a Divinity school,(be it Islamic, Jewish or Hindu school that teaches fictional religious ideas). A non-religious university and a Theology department at a Christian college are not the same thing. f

As Mark Twain said, "Education consists mainly of what we have unlearned." Unlearning religion is part of any good education. There is precedence for keeping education 'secular' and free of religion. Religion in American life is supposed to be outside the public domain, and thus should be excluded from democratic institutions. The French Revolution established a firm separation between religious schools and public universities. The government seized religious school endowments and properties and dismissed priests and church-controlled teachers. When the monarchists sought to restore social inequality and the 'nobility' they also sought to return the control of the universities to the Catholic Church and the military and force traditionalism upon students. It has not gone this far in United States schools but there is disquieting increase professors who are true believers teaching at public universities. In France, after the revolution, conservatives wanted schools controlled by the Catholic Church so that the Church could force obedience and traditionalism. Traditionalist teachers in today's religious studies area are a throwback to the Monarchists.

The obvious and basic principle of separation between religious and scientific schools is repeatedly and chronically violated in today's universities. ⁶¹⁸ Indeed, the number of atheists that are allowed into

⁶¹⁸ Now we have professors promoting Schuonian ideology at Cornell university or Jeff Kripal promoting gnostic ideas and William James' delusions under the guise of the "phenomenology of religious experience" at Rice University.

religious studies departments is practically zero, though I have found a few. They should be in the majority and anyone who is religious, needs to be able to suppress their beliefs to teach the subject. Otherwise let them teach at Esalen⁶¹⁹ or Christian Universities .

Religion is best taught with considerable skepticism as part of history, anthropology, sociology of literature. Religion is really part of the history of myth and literature as well as the sociology of power and politics. If a university is devoted to the truth, religious promulgation does not belong there since religions promote fictions and delusions. Teaching delusions in a “unbiased” and “objective” manner is difficult at best. But one can talk about religion from many points of view, and study it as if it were a biological specimen. An ideal way to study religion is as part of a science of Religious Studies, namely to study religion from an evolutionary perspective, purely as a human/cultural/political phenomenon, which of course is what it is. I think it can be shown fairly easily that religion is not the result of evolution, but is an ideological construction, like money. This makes religion part of the study of myth and literature, or cultural and sociological study.

History departments are better than religious studies, particularly in the last 50 years, because a real effort has been made to use evidence and fact in assessments and inquiry. Social history is partly responsible for this. This is not to say that history is prone to ideological corruption. It certainly is but not nearly to the degree that happens in religion, which is almost entirely ideological, though the study of it can be done in a

⁶¹⁹ Esalen has been important in pushing a very questionable relation between Buddhist Hindu and modern physics that is certainly mistaken and misleading. Jeff Kripal’s book on Esalen (for a promotional and largely unreflective text on this institution) The blurb for Kripal’s book states that Esalen sought to “fuse the spiritual revelations of the East with the scientific revolutions of the West” which was a huge mistake. Kripal is unaware of this and so writes a promotional text advertising an institution. He is something of a cheerleader and lacks in critical acuity skills. He pushes a sensationalist notion of religion as narcissist snake oil, sold to kids as an exciting frontier of subjectivist “experience” along the line of James’ Varieties of Religious Experience. See the chapter below for more on the mistake of combining religion and science.

quasi-scientific way, but this is very rare. History is partly prone to mythology when it serves nation states, military history, or Marxism, for instance. It is prone to other problems when it serves a sort of biological determinism, or speciesism. Decoding the various ideologies in a history department is certainly possible and should be done. One needs to look as much as possible at what is the case, as opposed to what is believed. The humanities in general are a threat to big businesses and nationalism and so they are hated by free market ideologues and some Christians. But the humanities are essential to democracy and are capable of some measure of objectivity, and this makes them invaluable to education, and hated by corporate elites who dislike critical thinking, want to dissolve democracy, love autocratic bossing of others and want workers to have few rights and machines to make them rich. The humanities are important to children, music art and literature are very important to training the minds, ears and eyes.

So the question must be: is the role of universities to provide fairy tales and delusions for children to enable them to lie to themselves and live by myths to get on in the world, or is it to train adults to see reality with clear eyes and to live with one another in the real world of facts and nature?. Clearly it is the latter that matters and that is the purpose of education and the humanities are important to that. Religious studies largely serves the former, and that is why I oppose it in public schools. Myths can be taught as make believe and culture stories, but not as truth. The purpose of education is to grow into reality and learn to deal with it, understand it and become part of a their real world. It is not to tell fairy tales or to lie to students as if they were children.

Into this unhealthy mix, the fiction of corporate personhood has given ridiculous powers to corporations and corporations now speculate on making money from universities. The, English, French and American revolutions sidelined religion, to their credit. But it raised its ugly head again with the invention of the ideology of corporate persons, who are

now the defacto citizens of the world, actual citizens having been made redundant. With corporate personhood now the gods of our world, the old gods are kept only to supply an escape for the poor and the middle class, free only to pursue illusions. With unions broken and organizing for the poor largely forbidden by law, kids are made victims of CEO culture. Children, young men and women are now farmed like slaves in universities, made to pay through the teeth to make the rich richer. The humanities are being pushed out of the schools, art is declining, music and theatre and history sidelined. Yet religion is more and more taught on its own terms. Liberal education is under assault. Freedom of inquiry is supplanted by inquiry done for corporations. The increasing takeover of the public and private university system by the corporate sector, results in public education under attack and tenure and academic freedom threatened in its root. Corporate power comes from an abuse of the 14th amendment, which was created to protect the persons of ex-slaves. Corporations who denied that slaves were people abused the law intended to help them by trying to make themselves over in the image of the Catholic church which also claimed to be a transcendent person, like the myth of the Jesus as a divine person. Our schools are invaded by “faith based” initiatives and religious doublespeak. A free and independent university system is failing and corporations and right wing forces are trying to destroy it. There is an increasing attempt to privatize public universities, including community universities. It would not be hard make all universities free, They are free in Mexico City for instance. They are free in Germany. They should be free in the U.S.. But the trend is in the opposite direction. Public and private universities are under assault. Students are gouged and pushed into extremely high cost long term loans that benefit banks. These loans make students into an indentured servitude when they graduate, having to pay back these huge loans. Hence they shy away from any subject that will not give them good paying jobs. Enrollment in Humanities is down by 70% I read in one

study. Knowledge is made serviceable only to income. The notion that democracy depends on an informed electorate is being destroyed. Students are no longer being informed, they are being farmed by corporate CEO's.

There is also an effort to create for-profit universities, exploiting students as cash cows. These are chilling developments that move in the direction of those who opposed the French Revolution and what to see the return of "Throne and God", to use the phrase of that archdeacon of anti-science and anti-democratic demagoguery, Joseph De Maistre...

So how has this happened and why has religion become a part of today's declining universities? To make it specific, I will look at this issue through the lens of one 'scholar', Arthur Versluis. He is a Platonist 'gnostic' who really belongs in the 16th century or earlier. Platonism was defeated by Darwinism 150 years ago. What is a reactionary Platonist doing in a 21st century university? Platonism at the time of Plotinus was an escape from reality into effete dreams of the "Nous", and helped bring about the Dark Ages. The esoterists are of a similar mindset and would have us all head backwards into the shadows of the medieval mind. I don't think any esoterist has any understanding of what is threatened or why. The natural proclivities of Platonism make it an enabler of reactionary tendencies. In the late, greenhouse gas-ridden and globalized, corporate environment of today's America, an escapist 'scholar' is needed to push the irrational and promote the delusional. How else can one keep alive the pretense that corporations are persons?

Versluis wants to push a gnostic faith upon students. He pushes the idea of esoterism". "Esoterism" is a 20th century effort to recreate the old religious delusions and fictions under a new name. "Esoterism" is basically a 20th century new religion for intellectuals who wish to live in a fantasy world of subjective inflation. Gnosis is more or less synonymous with subjectivism. Esoterism is their new religion, in which they make up their own religion, almost at will, provided they imitate the old style

religions in a more or less correct way. In the current environment of capitalist depredations of the world, the pursuit of effete systems of spiritual escape seems extremely unwise, as it merely leads to further support of the harms being done. So then why have esoteric studies found a place in the universities when this study is obviously another form of bogus mystification?

So it is useful to review the ideas of writers who knows a lot about totalism and does not understand it, much less have the courage to fight it. There are many academic professors who push the ideology of religion on their students as if it were a real thing. There are hardly any professors, for instance, who give time to the idea that Jesus was a myth, though the evidence does weigh heavily that he never existed. The same is true of Muhammad, who probably did not exist either. But religious studies professors have a career to pursue and real evidence is not terribly important to them. They are enablers of delusions.

So I have chosen Versluis for analysis and reflection in order to talk about our failing education system. Arthur Versluis recent books are called New Inquisitions, Heretic Hunting and the Intellectual Origins of Modern Totalitarianism, The Mystical State: Politics, Gnosis, and Emergent Cultures, and American Gurus. These are interesting books as examples of backward and reactionary thinking. To his credit he appears to think that the traditional religion are toxic failures and he would be right about that. But he wants to replace religion with “esoterism” and a romantic ideology of gnosis that is a major part of our problem. Whatever good there may have been in Versluis has been replaced by cheerleading for religions and cults. He is a caretaker of spiritual delusions and not a critic of them.

In a recent book, American Gurus, Versluis discusses some of the most destructive cult leaders in the last decades and can only comment that he “would not want the reader to think that I am disparaging these authors or figures”. Yes, well he is talking about William Burroughs, who

murdered his own wife and Adi Da, who abused children and women and about whom thousands of pages of witness documents have been written outlining his authoritarian abuses.⁶²⁰ He is talking about Schuon, who had children at his primordial gatherings and used them, as has been proven years ago. Schuon also was an authoritarian dictator who supported Japanese fascism and whose main followers Martin Lings and Hossein Nasr supported Franco and the Shah of Iran, both murdering tyrants. Versluis, showing his shallowness and anti-intellectualism can only say that Schuon is “mildly antinomian”. Versluis would not want to disparage these famous criminals. He is in favor of “outlaw religion”. I would never allow such a morally bankrupt person to teach my children in his classes. Such a person should not be teaching anyone’s children. Other cases in our universities abound.⁶²¹

⁶²⁰ There are various sites that explore some of this material. Such as http://www.enlightened-spirituality.org/Da_and_his_cult.html

all evidence indicates that Franklin Jones / Da Free John fell deeply and dangerously into monstrous ego-inflation, abusively toxic relationships towards his disciples and wife/wives, and heavy addictions to personal power, sexual debauchery, drugs, and extravagant material possessions.

And

<http://web.archive.org/web/20130120183045/http://www.adidaarchives.org/>

“Adidam turned out to be a deeply dysfunctional organization that showed all the classic signs of a personality cult, even as its leader criticized cultism to try and obscure his part in creating it. Virtually all of its resources were devoted to fulfilling the needs and desires of one man, Adi Da, at the great expense of everyone else. In addition, those most deeply involved in Adidam were essentially *compelled* to engage in a lifestyle and practice that literally *epitomized* much of what Adi Da criticized about cultism and “spiritual seeking.”

⁶²¹ There are many examples. Another that comes to mind is Catherine Albanese, who teaches in California at Santa Barbara, who seeks to justify Spiritualism, Theosophy, Reiki, Christian Science, UFO activity, Mormonism, channeling, Hinduism, Zen and the New Age movement. The lack of critical insight is notable. Russell McCutcheon notes that

“Catherine Albanese has rightly - though perhaps unwittingly - observed, ‘scholars of religion... find in the mental worlds they create and construct a “refuge” and “safe haven” from the general assaults of change that come with time’s passing’ It is in constructing just such a ‘safe haven’ that we find evidence of our complicity with power.”

But, Ok, this is my conclusion, let's back up and look at how I arrived at it. It is good to see that a quasi- traditionalist scholar is able to question totalism in some of its aspects. Rejecting the monotheistic traditions for inherently leading to a kind of totalitarianism is the right attitude to have. The monotheistic traditions are totalitarian. But Versluis's religious beliefs, as one could predict, make him unable to see totalitarianism in a wider context. He doesn't grasp the totalistic nature of cults or totalistic religions or ideocracies or how ideocracies like Marxism are also rigid, dogmatic and millennialist forms of religion too. Indeed, Stalinism is basically a religious doctrine and practice.

Versluis supposes, wrongly, that totalism begins with the Inquisition. He traces Totalism from the Catholic Church to Nazism and Stalinism. That is a small part of the story. He leaves out the written origins of totalism in his hero Plato, as well as in Augustine, Aquinas and the development of it in many other contexts, from totalistic and imperialistic Islamic rampages in the 7th and 8th centuries to the Hindu caste system, to the Chinese governments endless oppression of its own people to innumerable little cults and societies all over world, no doubt going very far back in time. He wants to try to justify a small and recently invented religion which he calls "Gnosticism" and "esoterism" which he rather senselessly exempts from totalism, and which he advances as part of his career ambitions as a new religion. In the Mystical State, he wants to advocate the destructive idea that esoterism and Gnosticism should take over the political center stage. He thinks there is a mystical core to political reality and Platonist fantasy must take over. He does not know that Plato's system is toxic theofascism nor that he is endorsing the Platonist theofascist agenda, restated. Versluis is a gnostic elitist and wants a

This is correct, many "religious studies" scholars are in complicity with power and advocates of delusional thinking and status quo refusals to deal with reality.

government that enshrines the fiction of transcendence.

Versluis is an enabler of delusions. He wants to advance a misplaced 'affirmative action plan' for irrationalism--- hoping to push forward his backwards agenda by promoting the legitimacy of far-right fanatics, superstitious alchemists, Rosicrucians, Kabbalists, Transcendentalists, astrologers, magicians and other phony systems of knowledge created by charlatans. The purpose of affirmative action is to advance disposed minorities, not advance the progress or delusions and superstition. One need not have affirmative action for the mafia, or street gangs, or corrupt businessmen. Cults ought not to be encouraged. He celebrates such cult leaders as Adi Da, Schuon and Ken Wilber, all snake oil salesman of diverse make up and purposes. The whole panoply of 'gnostic' studies might fascinate outsider adolescents, but really has no place in a university except perhaps in anthropology or psychology. Like Jocelyn Godwin at Colgate, Versluis tries to fascinate young minds with this resurrected adolescent nonsense, partly because it fills classrooms with adoring eyes and partly because it suggests a future where irrationalism will have an even greater role in our society than it does now. Mostly, I think he does it, however, because it advances his own career. Unfortunately, the rather sad state of the self-destructive "post-modernist" humanities departments at our current university studies allows irrationalism to be promoted. Escape literature is popular with students who have been saddled with loan conditions that make them indentured servants. Of course they wish to escape. They will work in the corporate sector, which will take their hearts and minds from them. They have to study subjects that will get them good jobs to pay back their enormous debt. This is one of many reasons that the humanities are declining precipitously.⁶²²

⁶²² The humanities are also being pushed out by a business model of education that has made education so expensive that only classes that help a student pay back huge loans are desired. The

. The term “gnostic” is so highly problematic that I rejected it years ago in these words:

Foucault is in some respects a romantic gnostic. There is long tradition, or what might be called an anti-tradition of gnosticism that goes back to Valentinus and Basilides and the “heretical” sects that so angered Augustine that he thought they should be killed. But the Christian hatred of gnosticism is rather arbitrary and represents the drive of early Christians to eliminate oppositional groups. For Christians the invention of “gnostics” was a ruse to secure political power. People today who push the idea of gnosticism, are also mostly concerned with power.. Indeed, the term gnosticism is problematical, because it is used to describe too many different things, from the Templars to Carl Jung. From the cults of the Black Virgin to the legend of the Grail, and from the Carpocratians to Marx, Blake and Nietzsche gnosticism has been formulated in relation to dominant European powers. But in its various forms, gnosticism remains a will to power through knowledge. Insofar as the term can have any meaning.”

Christianity is also gnostic religion, in the sense that it assumes “man’s alienation in the cosmos” (Voegelin), an alienation that can only be reversed through violence and social control. Some scientists also might be gnostic in that they assumes man’s intellectual supremacy relative to the cosmos. But science itself is not gnostic and does not assume human supremacy. The gnostic wants to overcome the human state, which he thinks is low and unworthy. But this is true of all the religions, more or less. Foucault wants to recreate himself as a ‘total innovation’. Marx is also a gnostic in this sense, except that his concern is not merely personal transformation, as in Foucault, but total social

student must go onto business and make as much money as possible. The high cost of college is making colleges agents of indentured servitude to big business.

transformation. One could perhaps speak of a gnosticism of the right and of the left. But there is no clear dividing line. Schelling, Von Baader, De Maistre, Shelley, Coleridge, Novalis, Robespierre, Hegel, Jung, Guenon, Lanz von Liebenfels, have all been considered gnostics. But what ties them together is actually a variation on the knowledge/power relationship. The word “gnosis” is Greek for ‘knowledge’. M.H. Abrams writes that

“in romantic {or gnostic} thought, the mind of man confronts the old heaven and the old earth and possesses within itself the power to transform them into a new heaven and a new earth by means of a total revolution in consciousness”. (Abrams. *Natural Supernaturalism* pg.334)

“””””

If this passage is understood in the widest sense, Christian symbolism aside, this ‘gnostic’ inflation of self is a drive for total transformation, and is as much a part of Christ and Descartes as of Mao, Plato, Confucius and William Blake. What is called gnosticism appears to be more than merely the romanticism restyled as an oppositional aspiration of a few poets and leaders of sects and apolitical cult like Marxism. Gnosticism is a widely various attempt to theorize about and seize power by means of an underlying hatred to the actual and of the earth. But this is misleading too, because it is too wide, diffuse and insufficiently descriptive.. So what I have done is jettison the term gnosticism altogether, since it has been used as a pejorative term to denigrate romantics of an oppositional stripe, when gnosticism is clearly more than this. Einstein, with his philosophy of hating the personal and the earthly in favor of the mathematical and otherworldly tended to the gnostic. Hinduism is gnostic in this sense too, as are Nazis like Goering and

Himmler. What ties all these thinkers, poets, scientists and statesman together is not gnosticism but the will to power through a variety of different kinds of knowledge. In summary, I have avoided use of the term gnosticism, as have used the conjunction 'knowledge/power' instead. But this is problematical too, since knowledge is not a bad thing, in general, and power has its purposes if held in check.

Obviously the term gnostic, in Versluis, Voegelin, and elsewhere is turgid and slippery and really refers to so many things it is meaningless. Versluis is a gnostic in the sense that I have rejected the term and reject his view of the world too. He cannot see nature without seeing slippery spirits gods or symbols behind it, and he writes that " Gnosis is not reducible to seeing or conversing with spirits, or to other visionary experiences. But it is possible, is it not, that gnosis may include such dimensions of human experience?" So he imagines all sorts of nonsense are real, so it must be real because he imagines it. But his is to merely fall back into the trap William James created, giving wings to subjective delusions.

Versluis sees archaic systems of knowing such as one finds in the occult and astrology as containing 'real' knowledge by persecuted heretics, rather than what they really were, which was small arcane groups and individuals looking for an angle and vying for power against mainstream religions and replacing them in some cases. There is no "real" knowledge there. There is merely the modernist spiritualism as a fiction of knowing, as William James defined it. The gnostic subject is a fiction. It is what Schuon called the "intellect" which is really just subjective pretense and surmise. Christ and Buddha are myth, Muhammad and Krishna are myth. Teaching religion as real is to indulge in mythic fantasy and promote delusions. There I no way around this

criticism.⁶²³

Sometimes cults were clearing houses for future religions and social movements, experiments as it were, for alternatives to the ruling system, and as such they are rarely less toxic than the ruling system and often even more toxic. This is the case with the nascent Christian or Essene communities and the Templars and Cathars for instance. The latter were cults that grew up as an adjunct to the Vatican and its wars in the Crusades. They posed a challenge to the dominant order and lost. One can see this in Chinese religio-politics, how Taoist or Buddhist outlying cults and alternative movements developed in relation to failing dynasties and in some cases either took them over, failed or in other cases led to reforms. These relics of former ways of knowing have an antiquarian interest, but not much else. They are examples of the symbiotic relationship of religion and politics.

Astrology was a pseudo-science. Indeed, it is *the* case study in pseudo-science and no objective merit at all. The position of the Sun, Moon, and planets at the moment we are born does not influence even slightly our personality, love life or career. A good refutation of astrology by Andrew Fraknoi can be found here. There are many other refutations. This site is the Astronomical Society of the Pacific:

<http://www.astrosociety.org/education/astro/act3/astrology3.html#defense>

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Mr. Fraknoi exposes astrology as an utter fraud with various question such as

⁶²³ In *American Gurus*, Versluis writes mild criticism of American spirituality as being too fat food and he expresses a preference for more orthodox and difficult traditional religions. But this is a distinction without a difference as New Age spirituality is hardly less delusional than orthodox Christianity or Tibetan monasticism.

-----“Why is the moment of birth, rather than conception, crucial for astrology?...What is the likelihood that one-twelfth of the world’s population is having the same kind of day?

Simple division shows that this means 400 million people around the world will all have the same kind of day

Shouldn’t we condemn astrology as a form of bigotry?

-----In a civilized society we deplore all systems that judge individuals by sex, skin color, religion, national origin, or other accidents of birth. Yet astrologers boast that they can evaluate people based on another accident of birth

----. If astrological influence is carried by an unknown force, why is it independent of distance?

All the long-range forces we know in the universe get weaker as objects get farther apart. But, as you might expect in an Earth-centered system made thousands of years ago, astrological influences do not depend on distance at all. The importance of Mars in your horoscope is identical whether the planet is on the same side of the Sun as the Earth or seven times farther away on the other side.

If astrological influences don’t depend on distance, why is there no astrology of stars, galaxies, and quasars? “

These and many other questions show that astrology is a farce and has no truth value at all. Leonardo rightly said that astrology was a “deceptive opinion by which a living is made by fools”⁶²⁴ This is what

⁶²⁴ Quoted in Capra, Fritjof, The Science of Leonardo, NY Doubleday, 2007, pg.225.

This is a good book, though marred by lack of research in some ways, Capra begins by stating that a ‘supposed self-portrait by Leonardo is actually him when all good scholars of Leonardo know very well in cannot be a self-portrait as he did the drawing in his forties and it pictures a man in his seventies. But Capra’s books does have an interesting discussion of Leonardo’s studies

religion is too. Teaching such myths in a university is ridiculous and Versluis is wrong to present this nonsense as a martyred system of knowledge. Falsities have no truth value and cannot be martyred, they are merely delusional. Religious studies is teaching of just such “deceptive opinion” as Leonardo speaks of.

There is no real knowledge in magic, astrology or gnosis as Versluis claims, since these marginalized systems of knowledge are not based on any real evidence. It is absurd to claim that magic and astrology are victims. Magic is a system of deceit that is made to make fools out of the audience who pay to be deceived. Magicians are hardly victims, they victimize their audience for money. Astrology exploited gullible believers for centuries making astrologers a nice living. Is the discredited theory of “ether” a “victim” that was roundly defeated by Einstein’s’ theory of relativity? No, of course not, it was a false theory that was disproved so it fell by the wayside like a seed that didn’t sprout. It was just wrong. Astrology and magic are bad seeds in just this way. What we have here is an irresponsible professor pandering to corporate culture by selling kids a bunch of reactionary superstition and escapist adolescent fictions.

Defining what education ought to be is a different matter. As the education theorist Henry Giroux, student of the great historian Howard Zinn, has said “

“Higher education may be one of the few institutions we have left in the United States where knowledge, values and learning offer a

in mathematics and his efforts to grasp an early version of the wave theory of light and sound, as well as Leonardo’s early theories of topology and his engineering and mechanics experiments. Capra thinks that Leonardo’s notion of the soul is somehow still valid as a New Age construct. It isn’t. He makes a mistake to think so and this mars the book. Leonardo was right about many things and was an amazing researcher, which Capra amply shows. But he was wrong about things too, as is not surprising given that his science is a hundred years or more before science gets started in earnest.

glimpse of the promise of education for nurturing public values, critical hope and a sense of civic responsibility”.

Versluis does not have this civic mind. He is pushing bogus pseudo-science on university kids. We need more promotion of reason and critical thinking, not more irrationalism and a return to failed or discredited religious values of the far past. I see no point in teaching magic and the occult. The effort to do so by Versluis and others is not about higher education, but about dumbing students into intellectual zombies ready for autocratic corporations, Ken Wilbur or Schuon cult. Giroux notes that

to speak truth to power is not a temporary and unfortunate lapse into politics on the part of academics: it is central to opposing all those modes of ignorance, whether they are market-based or rooted in other fundamentalist ideologies, that make judgments difficult and democracy dysfunctional.

“Gnosis” in Versluis and other academic purveyors of the hybrid religions called “esoterism” is basically a form of elitist and dysfunctional fundamentalism, however posed as a New Age Advaita Vedanta it might pretend to be. Vedanta was merely a luxury metaphysics for upper class Hindus. “Gnosis” is basically a system of esoteric religious thought that seeks unity with an imaginary “non-dual” principle, such as Brahma or God. The fiction of non-duality tries to maintain the delusion that the formless, shapeless, colorless, soundless, stateless, god or void, is totally empty. Yet this nothing is paradoxically and simultaneously dancing the whole empty universe into all forms, shapes, colors, sounds and states of the myriad worlds and beings populating these worlds. The One God or Goddess Reality is doing everything and being everyone, but all that is done is meaningless. Merely the dance of Lila,--- this is a very clever

constructed fiction, but it lies about the world. The actual lives of suffering beings are denigrated and those who claim to be disinterested are exalted into priestly positions of power. Unreality is exalted and exploited and the real is made meaningless. This horrendous and cruel strategy is at the heart of the religions.

This fiction if is at the basis of most mystical systems. The Advaitic formula “Atma is Brahma” which basically states that your inner self is the universe of everything, is a ‘gnostic” formula which means that an individual joins himself in his or her imagination to an imaginal construction that is ‘god’, “void” or whatever. This is a form of imaginary or “virtual” self-magnification and is properly a psychological self-deceit, not an objective accomplishment. The process of gaining this “knowledge” which really isn’t knowledge at all but a sort of imposture— involves the devaluing of the cosmos, since one “transcends the world” and seeks union with an imaginary, universal concept of what one is not. One seeks union with what does not exist and in so doing denigrates all that does exist. To teach superstitions as truth is a most terrible thing, as Hypatia said.

Mystical Gnosis is thus a destructive thing, not a positive thing. Those who promote it do harm. It is a state of emotional and intellectual delusion, dialation, verging on trance, sometimes, sometimes merely a self-hypnosis. Such inner states, encouraged by others who have had similar states, are the stock and trade of all the religions. There are thousands of descriptions of these states. In his book American Gurus, where he tries to praise the rather cowboy religions and cults of America, Versluis quotes Bronson. Alcott, the transcendentalist. Alcott was addicted to such states and tried to reproduce them often. He writes of one such state that he “rose from the sepulchers of sense and was in God”. Religions often associate the actual world of sense with death or “sepulchers”. He notes “how few and transient” are such states. Of

course they are, they are delusional, making the real world into evil and death and the imaginary beyond into a resplendent reality is pure fiction.. I have been in such states myself and they are just a magnified sense of existence, which are magnified by reading the accounts of others who have such states too. There is no ‘other world’ beyond ours in which one can transcend the world of things and beings people like Alcott hates. Alcott posits such another world, which he then uses it to disparage and denounce the actual world. This is very common in all the religions and is deplorable.

Versluis also approves Alcott’s seething anti-evolutionism. Alcott claimed, falsely, that animals are the result of human sins. Hinduism had a similar view and has animals be lesser than human on the fictional scale of Karmic values. This too is make believe nonsense that harms both humans and animals. This view is typical of religious and human centered speciesism, which I will discuss elsewhere in these books. The need to disparage the world is typical in many religions.

For the Platonist “gnostic”, the world becomes Maya or the “ten thousand things”, as is also stated in Hindu or Taoist thought. Gnosis devalues earth and the cosmos in favor of non-existence, dreams and fictions, feeling states that are imaginary. Gnosis or esoterism is merely a new attempt to recreate religion in the modern age, using the same old tired fictions. Esoteric gnosis is just a new form of metaphysical sleight of hand. Versluis writes in praise of American “outlaw” religion as a true believer, unaware that he is promoting cults and delusions, as well as the fiction of corporate personhood, which, like the ideology of the three Trinitarian Persons, is a complete fiction. Fictive “Persons” are merely adult make believe, certainly not made more real by the fact they are preached by someone with a PHD or those who sit on the “supreme court”.

American gnostic gurus are really just con men, not cowboys. Actual cowboys were a poor and pathetic lot, who worked hard to help

destroy land, kill off Bison and people the continent with nature destroying meat cattle. They were and still are sometimes cruel to animals. Cowboys were underpaid drudges for cattle men, who made their owners rich, at their own expense and to the cost of nature. Actual cult leaders are pathetic too, despite Versluis's attempt to make rock star cowboys out of them. Of course, nowadays the notion of "outlaws" or "mavericks" refers to Republicans, corporate raiders, real estate shysters and hedge fund con-men, who steal from the poor and give to the rich. The cowboy presidents were (Reagan, the Bushes) were above all corporate men, who did a lot to harm the middle class in America. They wanted to take the taxes of ordinary Americans and give as much as possible to the rich.

Efforts to teach gnosis or esoterism in today's universities as a "real" thing are pernicious and fraudulent. I recently had occasion to look at one of James Cutzinger's class syllabi and it was basically a primer for induction into the Schuon cult with exclusive readings of fanatical traditionalists from Nasr to Schuon and Oldmeadow. These writers should not be taught uncritically in our university system. They are cult leaders, sellers of phony knowledge or charlatans

When I read that Versluis calls Theodore Adorno an "Inquisitor" or compares him to anti-Semites, I have to speak out and object to such lies. This sort of reverse 'affirmative action' is typical of the far right. After being attacked by leftist extremists in the late 1960's Adorno wrote to Sam Beckett, the great playwright, that "the feeling of suddenly being attacked as a reactionary at least has a surprising note.". Versluis falsely attacks Adorno as a reactionary. Versluis cannot admit that his addiction to imaginary occult make-believe, gnostic pretence and religious fictions is chronic. Adorno is far from a perfect writer, but his devotion to freedom of inquiry and critical thought matters and should not be slighted, especially in our time where freedom of thought is under siege by far-right-extremists both of a fundamentalist and traditionalist bent.

The university system and public education is under real threat from both corporatist and reactionary religious sources.

I am not a devotee of Adorno by any means, but I can find no indication that Adorno was a witch hunter. Certainly he would have disliked Versluis's spiritual propaganda. He wrote against authoritarianism and studied anti-Semitism as part of his study of fascism. His most famous book, Negative Dialectics is a call for increased critical thinking and when I read it in the 1980's it helped form in my mind a certain attitude toward culture which helped me learn to be skeptical of corporate culture in New York City. Critical thinking is essential in a democracy. It involves examining assumptions, discerning hidden values, and especially evaluating evidence, logic and reason. Adorno was not a very nice man, apparently, but that does not mean he was bad. Mostly men and women are highly imperfect and very flawed, and as even Leonardo knew, no work is perfect.

Actually it is Versluis who is the witch hunter, as he blames Adorno's very witty and funny piece called "Theses on Occultism" for faults it doesn't have. (I discuss this in a footnote reproduced below) ⁶²⁵ I

⁶²⁵ "Adorno, Theodore " Theses on Occultism ". This is really a very interesting essay. This essay is full of small insights. For instance when he says occultists " take speculation to the point of fraudulent bankruptcy" this is certainly true. Guenon writes metaphysic like a medieval Aquinas writes on the head of a pin, -- it all amounts to empty words about an invented fiction that does not exist. " Or when Adorno writes "Their procedure is to be strictly scientific; the greater the humbug, the more meticulously the experiment is prepared." Exactly right. The traditionalists write with scientific exactitude about that which does not exist. And there is this delightful joke: "The soul can soar to the heights, heigh-ho, / the body stays put on the sofa below."—yes that is Martin Lings on his comfy English sofa dreaming of things that do not exist. And then this "power of occultism, as of Fascism, to which it is connected by thought-patterns of the ilk of anti-Semitism" yes, Perennialism is all about first inventing and then hating the profane world just as Hitler hated the Jews. For the traditionalists "Superstition is knowledge, because it sees together the ciphers of destruction scattered on the social surface; it is folly, because in all its death-wish it still clings to illusions: expecting from the transfigured shape of society misplaced in the skies an answer that only a study of real society can give." Exactly right. There must be study of reality to achieve real knowledge and change society from what it is. Occultism is cheap fetishes of knowledge, not the real thing. "By its regression to magic under late capitalism, thought is assimilated to late capitalist forms." Yes, Schuonism ultimately is Disney's Epcot Center, regurgitated culture colonized as a commodity fetishes . Epcot was one of Schuon's favorite places in America. He saw himself there in the Disneyland fantasy. Schuon liked Disney and

can see why Versluis hates this piece as it attacks his own prejudices and belief in irrational fictions. Versluis really goes off the deep end, trying to create a normalized view of “gnosis” when really gnosis is a spurious category of thought, based merely on the assertions of questionable mystics from ages ago. Religion is above all a community of shared delusions. There are many organized systems of delusion around the world that we call religions. The notions of “Spiritual Enlightenment” or enlightened realization of gnosis are simply non-existent things, merely imaginary fictions. The magic, occultism and astrology that Versluis tries to defend and teach, as if it were something valuable, cannot be meaningfully resurrected from the dust heap of irrational and dead systems of thought. These have been utterly discredited. Adorno was quite right to critique them.

Yes, one can teach such irrational or nonexistent fictions as part of a literature department, or in history or anthropology. But they should be taught skeptically, as part of the history of human fallibility. Religions are systems of delusions that failed, rather like pseudo sciences or failed political systems, bankrupt currencies, or libraries of dead myths. The history of such failed entities is interesting, but one cannot teach these things as if they were real. To teach esoterism, gnosis or astrology as if they were true, is to misuse teaching as a place of promoting superstition and this is unethical or wrong. Yes, such things can be and are being practiced in many places, as are all sort of erroneous beliefs, but one is required to point out that these are irrational and superstitious systems of thought. We are not required to accept irrational and harmful superstitions being forced into our children minds in public schools. Dawkins is right that this verges on child abuse. If Iran mandates that

Disney land very much. Cyril Glasse says of the inner circle interest in Disney that “Disney World seems to have become the spiritual retreat of the Schuon inner circle, who go there whenever the going gets rough”. Yes that is correct. Schuon thought very highly of the place and went there with his various “wives”, who also loved to be tourists down there in Florida at Epcot. “

nine-year-old girl can be forcibly married to older men, as was the case under Khomeini, that is a criminal issue and efforts should be made to stop such injustices. It should not be taught in our schools as if it were a good thing or even a neutral thing. Nor should esoterism and astrology be taught as if they are real. They are not. While it is a fact that our society is becoming less and less educated every year, it is the mission of the university system to educate people for science and democracy and not for the reproduction of the medieval world or the Iranian state. Chomsky notes that

People were asked their opinion on various theories of evolution, of how the world came to be what it is. The number of people who believed in Darwinian evolution was less than ten percent.⁶²⁶

These numbers are the fault of an underfunded and poor education system as well as a rampant and ignorant Christianity. Nearly every child, or at least 90% are “left behind” in the U.S.. Iran and the U.S. both need more enlightenment and science education. In Iran and even more so in Saudi Arabia, where Islamic creationism is paramount, science is poorly taught. Versluis is in the highbrow fringe of fanatic misinterprets and proselytizers of irrationality, fundamentalists and esoterists who really belong in religious schools. Chomsky notes the reason for this ignorance and clinging to superstition might have to do with the fact “that ideal culture is so radically different from the real culture that people will find some ways of identifying themselves, becoming associated with others, taking part in something.” Since we don’t have a real democracy where people and not corporations come first, religion compensates with irrational social conformities, bible study, addictions to the “holy spirit” or “gnosis”.. We desire a society that

⁶²⁶ <http://www.chomsky.info/interviews/1990----.htm>

is fair and equal, but we get corrupt bankers and a government sold out for tax breaks to the rich at the expense of the poor and the middle class. Some people in their frustration want to believe Pied Pipers like Versluis or Schuon, Falwell, Billy Graham or some other TV evangelist. They end up wanting fictions like Versluis's "gnosis". They want fundamentalist fictions that Jesus will solve all our problems because George Bush or some other far right fanatic is "an anointed one of the Lord", as an incredibly ignorant and misguided Christian woman told me one day. Increasingly in the United States any sort of objective inquiry or reasoned discussion having to do with the good of community and the furtherance of democratic involvement and participation is minimized, ridiculed or ostracized. Corporations try to destroy unions, teachers are bashed and hounded by those who want to privatize education. Corporate and market place values—which are inherently authoritarian--- rule and dominate even out intellectual lives. Lacking any real community life people turn to bogus communities, cults, churches and irrational system of belief. With starvation of public life due to corporate narrowness and greed, private lives in America are reduced to rank superstition. As Chomsky wrote elsewhere

"You can see that in the polls too. I was just looking at a study by an American sociologist (published in England) of comparative religious attitudes in various countries. The figures are shocking. Three quarters of the American population literally believe in religious miracles. The numbers who believe in the devil, in resurrection, in God doing this and that — it's astonishing. These numbers aren't duplicated anywhere else in the industrial world. You'd have to maybe go to mosques in Iran or do a poll among old ladies in Sicily to get numbers like this. Yet this is the American population."

People believe in miracles for desperate reasons. They want to feel that they are important in the universe and so make up stories and fictions to give themselves this feeling. Miracles are really about feelings. A woman goes to Lourdes and her diabetes gets a little better, it must be a miracle. She projects agency onto a place, as if saints were actually there, Mary or St. Joseph did it and she buys a new picture of him for her bedroom. Someone recently told me a story that a man they knew gave money to the poor and afterwards got in a car wreck by driving off a bridge, but he is not killed,--- so it must have been baby Jesus who saved him, the person told me. Miracles are generally chance events that would have a thousand other explanations but are instead used to justify and already existing fictional system of belief. . Chance events are just chance events. There are no hidden agents acting from outside of time.

Astrology, and miracles explain nothing, they are merely fictions on top of other fictions.⁶²⁷ The root of the word Miracle is Latin for wonder or amazement. The word is “mira”. It means ‘to look’ in Spanish, “wonder” in other languages. It is a fine thing to look and wonder. What happens though is that people jump from being amazed by something that happened by chance to creating a mythology based on the event. There are no events that violate the basic laws of nature. Religions depends on wild extrapolations from chance events. Virgin Births,

⁶²⁷ In his *Ethics*, (1677) Baruch Spinoza wrote against miracles and said “Those who wish to seek out the cause of miracles, and to understand the things of nature as philosophers, and not to stare at them in astonishment like fools, are soon considered heretical and impious, and proclaimed as such by those whom the mob adores as the interpreters of nature and the gods. For these men know that, once ignorance is put aside, that wonderment would be taken away, which is the only means by which their authority is preserved.” In other words the Churches and preserve their authority by bogus miracles and astonishing the ignorant. Science takes away this foolishness and the allure of miraculous fairy tales.

resurrections of the dead or Milarepa's magic flights and rainbows are not different than absurd leaps of superstition based on blind coincidences.

Occult and irrational systems of belief are encouraged by religious studies professors and preachers because they are also basically authoritarian and escapist and present no threat to mainstream capitalist and corporate values. Esoterism helps corporations "transcend" democracy and feed the rich at the expense of the middle class. So a thinker like Versluis who pushes transcendent gnosis is allowed in the university system because he serves the need of escapist delusion and fictional diversion and student like sensationalist magical thinking. I think it is irresponsible of the universities to allow this to go on unquestioned. ⁶²⁸

Versluis is right that religious, heretical individuals were unjustly killed or harmed by tyrants like Stalin, but this does not make whatever nonsense they believed true. The Romanian and Chinese communists persecuted the religious in their countries, just as Catholics and Hindus persecuted the insufficiently religious in their countries. Versluis tries to make a hagiography of various gnostic martyrs, such as Socrates or himself, but it fails. Socrates was not a martyr so much as an advertisement for Plato. Plato is not writing about an historical person, but is creating fictions to push his own ideology. The earliest account of Socrates is Aristophanes, who calls him a sophist, which might well be true,. Xenophon implies Socrates sought his own death, which hardly makes him a martyr.

So it is not useful to peddle martyrs for ideologies rather than evidence of actual truth and history. Since Socrates wrote nothing, there is no way to know what he was actually like and views of him are so

⁶²⁸ Unfortunately universities often make decisions based on making money instead of the pursuit of science and knowledge, and thus like the sensational appeal of certain courses, or sports, hence their allowance of irrationalism or post-modernist nonsense of various kinds.

different, once cannot believe one or another. The answer is not more religion, or martyrs, nor, on the other side, more Marxism, which is a religion of sorts. The answer is honesty and skepticism. Corporate America promotes religions in other nations as an advance guard of corporate capitalism. This is what Versluis is doing too, however unconsciously.

The answer is to understand that ideological systems like Catholicism, Gnosis or Marxism are dangerous and cultist in their behavior. Truth is not their concern, social acceptance and control of minds is what they want. Versluis is pushing his 'non dual' ideology of transcendence as if it were a real thing. Of course it is just a fabrication. Alan Watts, Ginsberg, Snyder, and many others extrapolated their inner states into assertions of universal significance without any real proof that their states actually had real content to them. Subjective illusions are the coin gnostics trade in. Marxism and Gnosis are as irrational systems as Catholicism. There is objective reason a person would join or espouse either dogma. Meister Eckhart and Spinoza were both harmed by inquisitorial orthodoxies but that does not make Eckhart's irrational systems of mysticism a true picture of reality. Indeed, systems of power always have victims and it is a question of valuing victims as people without necessarily agreeing with their belief system. Islamism is an awful religion, in my personal estimation, but one must separate the harms that Islam does from the Muslims. I have known and liked many Muslims, despite the religion they belong to.

The story of Eckhart or Spinoza are somewhat anomalous stories. These men were non conformists and one admires that whatever the content of their thought. But is more instructive to look at the witch killings in Europe in the 1690's and beyond. This was the protestant equivalent of the Inquisitions and had similar motivations. It supported the upper classes and was engineered to punish early science. There were tragedies of horrendous magnitude, 'gendercide' as some have

rightly called it. There were over 40-60,000 so called witches killed. 70% of the people killed were women during the period called “the Burning Times”. Another source says that 100,000 people were killed as witches or demon possession, and 83% were women.⁶²⁹ During this period there were crazes, panics, and mass hysterias. The Burning Times lasted from 1550-1650, largely in Germany, just as Catholicism is losing its grip to Protestantism and the population is in rebellion against an incredibly corrupt Catholic Church. ‘Gnostic’ ideologies were rampant and not much better than the church they sought to replace. Slowly as the 1600’s advanced science is finally supplanting ‘gnosis’ with objectivity and devotion to actualities rather than irrational imaginings. With the slow advent of science and reason, the witch burnings slow down.

As Barbara Ehrenreich suggested many years ago, it appears that women “witches” were killed not because of some imaginary spirituality they supposedly possessed, but because they were good doctors and botanists, chemists and midwives who were much more likely to help real women than their overpriced male counter parts who were more likely to “Bleed” or apply leeches their patients. Witches did not care about ‘gnosticism’ as Versluis tries to maintain. The best book on the mentality of women who were accused of witchcraft is The Life of Martha Ballard by Laura Elrich. Ballard was a midwife who was badly treated by the early male dominated medical profession. It shows clearly that her main concern was not the narcissistic category Versluis calls ‘gnostics’, but rather she was occupied with healing patients with botanical remedies she grew in her own garden. She was an early empiricist and scientist. Witches were victims of misogyny, which is as much a part of the so called “gnostics” as of Catholicism. Versluis doesn’t talk about this either. Ehrenreich writes:

⁶²⁹ See Peoples History of Science by Clifford Conner, page 367-371.

“The witch-healer’s methods were as great a threat (to the Catholic Church, if not the Protestant) as her results, for the witch was an empiricist: she relied on her senses rather than on faith or doctrine, she believed in trial and error, cause and effect. Her attitude was not religiously passive, but actively inquiring. She trusted her ability to find ways to deal with disease, pregnancy and childbirth — whether through medications or charms. In short, her magic was the science of her time.” ⁶³⁰

It was science, reason and enlightenment that was the indicated solution to the injustices of the the witch hunting period, just as it was science and enlightenment that was indicated by every other Inquisition or religious war. Gnosticism was merely a superstitious reaction to the corruption of the Church. Versluis is wrong. The ‘heretics’ in the witch hunting period, after the Inquisition or after Hitler and Stalin did not become good little Gnostics as Versluis claims. Even those who left Stalinist terrors, did not seek religion freedom so much as the open society beyond the Soviet Border. Religion was merely a screen on which the Samizdat refuseniks based their wild hopes for freedom. Religion was one minor mode of Russian resistance to a tyranny that was really about a quasi-religious Marxist irrationality and violations of human rights. One systems of irrationality is not a solution to another. Slaves who sought to escape from slavery might indulge in African religious chants, or early gospel music in the woods, but the basis of that was not some imaginary search for ‘gnosis” but rather freedom from the oppressors hand and whip. ⁶³¹The freedom from slavery and lynching was not

⁶³⁰ Ehrenreich, Barbara and English, Deirdre Midwives, Witches and Nurses: A History of Women Healers. Second edition July 2010

⁶³¹ The abstracted emotionality of music make music easily exploitable by institutions. Take for instance J.S.Bach’s incredibly lovely B minor Mass. It is a profound piece of music, not

achieved by religion but by objective analysis and bravery by people like Frederick Douglas or Harriet Tubman or Ida B. Wells-Barnett, who wrote bravely against the lynching of black women, children and men in southern states by white men. The involvement of religion in resistance movements is merely a sidebar, an accident of history. What was crucial was objective analysis, clear purpose and effective action.

After reading a few pages of Versluis's books it become clear to me that it is not totalism or even real history that Versluis wants to explore but rather he really wants to bracket off religious and political groups he does not like so as to push his own brand of religious fanaticism and myth, which he calls "gnosis". His blanket effort to justify any religious group that reminds him or his own "gnostic" obsessions seems a little obtuse. He is myth making based on bogus concepts like Dual and Non Dual, Esoterism and Gnosis. These are concepts with no future or past and are used as a kind of mind control to create willing and unthinking acceptance. This is also true in his American Gurus book, which if read with a skeptical eye, is a good source book on how to make up your own religion based on bogus claims of prior religions. Versluis calls his new religion "immediateism" and it is merely an American version of the same old political ideology based on spiritual delusions one saw in Guenon or

because it is true about religion but because it is so full of longing and other human emotions. Bach wrote for the Church and put his own misguided faith into it. That does not make his faith true. What is true in the work is the emotion of hope or expectation, grief and longing. I am still moved when I listen to it, and there is not a shred of religious interest in it for me. It is a great piece of expression of longing and a disturbing, sad work, full of old age and a life of incredible beauty, because I know it is also full of human self-delusion. Religious art is an art that is unbearably sad, because it is false and wants so terribly badly to be true. I have the same reaction looking at the absolutist art of Rubens, this excessive praise of Kings and Queens and the inflated mythological bloatedness of his bodies and compositions. I can see this is the excess of the absolutist delusion, and I prefer Rembrandt's more intimate humanism. But at the same time I love Rubens ability to draw and delineate form. I did a copy of his wonderful portrait of his wife Isabella Brandt recently and loved his obvious love of her. Art often is subservient to power and this is a fact I dislike very much. Bach is different. His is an intelligence that never stops, and one that one cannot give up on, even if one does not believe what he does. It is a music of such sorrow and loveliness.

Schuon, Eckhart, Aquinas and Plato. He is trying to justify his career as a confidence man, selling ideologies as if they were realities.

He seeks to reinvent the intellectual vacuum of the medieval Scholastics. His persistent illusion that Platonism has not been utterly defeated is curious. Plato is his gnostic hero, when in fact Plato was a major totalitarian thinker, indeed, he is something of the father of totalism---as well as being an early “gnostic”. Indeed, Plato is the arch “gnostic”. By the end of Versluis’s very confused books it seems clear that the ‘gnosticism’ that Versluis admires is really the same thing that creates totalism, as Versluis himself says

“Tertullian railed against the Gnostics because supposedly they were dualists and because some of them reputedly held that humanity was deluded and the world was evil, yet much of mainstream Christianity, like Tertullian himself, came to espouse a fierce dualism and an insistence on the evil nature of humanity. ⁶³²

It is hardly to anyone credit to espouse non dualism either, since it is the source of so much that is harmful, from caste to Arjuna’s killings to Zen priests involvement in World War 2. So what Versluis really wants is to restate religious power in our world, a new religion of a fictional “non-duality” and self- hypnosis where superstition is free and without accountability. There is more of a hype-gnosis than any actual knowledge here.

Non-dualism is no panacea as is shown by Shankara himself who was one of the creators of non-dual thought--- Shankara—who could be called the Hindu Plato. He preached the horror of the caste system (as did Plato). The caste system is one of the most unjust social systems ever created. “Non-duality” is very much present throughout Christian history

⁶³² Versluis, Arthur *The New Inquisitions*. Oxford 2006 pg.56

and can be found in Dionysius the pseudo-Areopagite, Eckhart, St John and Christ many others. Non duality imposes a solipsistic fiction on the world that ends in producing the very sort of hypocritical world hatred and caste hierarchy that is found in Shankara's thought. It merely restyles the world as a construction of the human mind. This is really a lie about reality. Religions want reality to be a construction so they can manage people's perceptions and control minds. The fact is that "thou art that" (Tawhid in Sufism or Wu Wei in Taoism, or primordial state in Dzog Chen⁶³³) is a lie. The notion that you are everything and everything is you in a sort of undifferentiated consciousness is really not helpful to anyone. It is merely a grand fabrication, a great fiction, that might 'feel' real, but actually is false, merely a delusion of the mind. We are part of the earth and the solar system in a literal and not in a metaphysical way.

Versluis wrongly thinks that Emerson is a Platonist. It is true that an element of Platonic essentialism enters Emerson via the German philosophers of the 19th century, like Schelling or Kant, as well as Wordsworth, Shelley and some of the English Romantics, like Carlyle. From them he picked up an attenuated Platonism, unfortunately. But he

⁶³³ In Tibetan Buddhism there denomination of the larger religion called Dzog Chen. The main idea of it is the "primordial state" is a state of being detached from everything while being "present" to everything. This "samsara in Nirvana" is really an artificial state that can only be attained after years of training. There is nothing natural about it and it involves an inherent abstraction and detachment from everything that ultimately is based on a hatred of existence. The result of this is a suppositious exaltation of death as a complete union with "the void". Buddhist lamas in this traditional claim all sort of outrageous things, such as being able to live for long period on no food, just little mineral pills or being able to reduce themselves to death through meditation to nothing but hair and fingernails. This sort of magical thinking is also found in Zen, Chan and Bon. But when looked at closely it is merely the usual mumbo jumbo of charlatans. For more on Dzog Chen and Namkhai Norbu seen through the eyes of his son, Yeshe see, the Documentary My Reincarnation The son brings into question the mythos his father and his disciples lived by but unfortunately falls for the myth in the end and became another trader in the spiritual market, like his father, who is a salesman for Buddhism in the west. What the film does show I think it is the political nature of Tibetan Buddhism and how this politics is called "religion". The absurdity of the idea of Reincarnation turns out to be a political one where a son is drawn into a cultural hegemony and is made "spiritual" by what amounts to a cultic process. He is more or less subjected to mind control by followers and his father
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/My_Reincarnation

is not a Platonist though sometimes it served him to pretend he was, as it creates a certain oracular rhetoric for his aphoristic lectures. But we was strongly anti-slavery and Plato designed a caste and slave state in his Republic. As I will show later in an essay, "The Dead Hand of Plato", Plato's theories are utterly discredited and more akin to fascism than to Emerson. Moreover, Emerson's essay "Self-Reliance" is more pragmatist than Platonist. Plato was opposed to any self-reliance and wanted all decisions to be made by the "guardians" of the theofascist state. His understanding of Nature is very weak and would need Thoreau to clean up its symbolist caricatures. To the degree Emerson is a Platonist, he is deplorable and is forgettable like Agassiz, who was in error about species. Emerson sometimes plays with Plato's anti-democratic ideology, for instance, as when he says that the masses are "rude, lame, unmade, pernicious in their demands and ignorance.. the calamity is the masses"

⁶³⁴ But this Platonic hatred of ordinary people is pernicious.

Henry David Thoreau, who was Emerson's student and friend for a time, ended up disliking this aspect of essentialism in Emerson. In the last 10 years of Thoreau's journal he rebels against Emerson's ideology of the essentialized universe and become more and more Darwinian in his outlook. Indeed, Thoreau is by far the more important of the two men, and Emerson's ideas have largely fallen out of the way, part because of his unfortunate Hinduized Platonism. It is not surprising that Versluis would try to resurrect these dead ideas, as they serve a conservative and insular refusal to look at reality as it is. Thoreau in contrast is a breath of fresh air and his deep reading in Darwin chimed so well with the intimacy and realism of his nature observations that Thoreau's still reads as a contemporary, presaging ecology by a century or more.

To the degree that Emerson is what Versluis thinks he is, he cannot be taken seriously. Gnostic and esoteric thought creates castles

⁶³⁴ Versluis, Arthur, American Gurus, Oxford,. page 46

in the air, like Shelley's poems. Versluis also appears to endorse the creationism of Alcott and Agassiz, and shows his ignorance of biology in quote from Agassiz in which Agassiz expresses his idea that species were created by god and could not change into one another. Agassiz was long ago proven wrong on this. There is so much evidence for evolution that it has long since ceased to be in any dispute except by ideologues who refuse to look at the increasingly vast and endless evidence in favor of Darwin. ⁶³⁵

Even if one looks at a "non-dual" gnostic far from the Transcendentalists, or Romantics, gnosticism fails. Dogen is a typical gnostic from Japan for instance, who, like Emerson and Alcott, imagines a world beyond our world for which there is no evidence at all other than subjective illusions. Dogen says in his Shobogenzo⁶³⁶ that he is beyond "cause and effect" and understands that "mountains are walking", which is a very fancy way of saying he is beyond space and time, existence and non-existence, just as Emerson claimed to be. It is utter nonsense, fashionable and abstruse nonsense, but nonsense all the same. The fantasy is really a imaginary effort to be superior to all things that change and all other people, who also change. It is bragging on the basis of what is purely delusional. It is very clear in the sense that all Zen is a sort of undermining of reality with vacuity of mind, but the surrealism of it is ultimately silly. Mountains do not walk. One could stretch it and say that plate tectonics makes mountains walk over eons. But that is a statement of evolutionary fact and is way beyond Dogen. The negation of sense in Zen Koans is a falsification of reality and denial of the actual. It is quite possible to pretend reality is not reality. Language creates an abstract space often labeled "transcendent" which actually is merely a fictional space, useful for imaginary metaphors, but that has no real content.

⁶³⁵ See Versluis, in American Gurus, "the Concord School and American Platonism" in which he argues a failed creationist position.

⁶³⁶ <http://www.urbandharma.org/pdf/Shobogenzo.pdf>

Koans are merely references to this abstract, linguistic, fictional space. This is a very common strategy of mystics all over the world and it does not indicate a common truth, but a common delusion. The human brain can make things up in extreme emotional and cognitive states. But reality is still reality and those like Dogen, or the poet Gary Snyder, who follows Dogen, are lying about the world. My preference is for non religious Koans which refer with great art to the actual, not the delusional or the non existent.

Classical Chinese poetry, which is very largely a religious poetry, depends on these false or fictional Buddhist metaphors dividing reality into the real and the unreal, arranged hierarchically as samsara and nirvana. A great deal of ink has been wasted trying to prove the real (samsara) is not real or that reality(the imaginary) is God. The pretence is that nirvana is the void or sunyata. When actually there is no Nirvana: --nirvana is just a linguistic space which is made quasi- permanent by excessive fixation of the mind. Yoga and Zen training are really ways of deforming the mind.

Mountains are mountains and are not walking. To understand nature does not require Buddhism or Emerson's "oversoul" but merely being there as much as possible, which turns out to take a full life time and even then it will not entirely be understood. Science is key to this, not Buddhism, which lies about life as much as the other religions do, but does it with a different terminology. The world(samsara) is denigrated as being nothing, empty—the ten thousand things--- and one should avoid attachments if possible. This is all misogynistic fiction, not really very different than Eckhart's formulas or Shankara's,--- all this is make believe.

Consciousness is not a religious or metaphysical phenomena but a biological fact of the organization of the brain. The brain surgeon Henry Marsh said that the brain is a " mystery as great as the stars at night

and the universe around us” and by this I don’t think he meant anything mystical. The brain is a Darwinian structure and differs only a little from chimps or monkey brains. Birds like Crows have great powers of thinking ability too. The idea of the ‘soul’ is a fiction unique to humans, as far as we know, and largely the result of social pressure and linguistic slippages. Brain science has grown by leaps and bounds in recent years. Reality is neither “dual” or “non dual”, these are religious/mystical terms created to denigrate opposing points of view. Science is not dualistic any more than it is Non-dual. These are badly constructed metaphors—stereotypes—used by the religious to stigmatize those who do not think like them. “non duality” is really a totalistic mentality, a “one taste” gnostic, Hindu or Buddhist way of suppression, whereby reality is subjected to a mental control by a unitary and dominating mind centered subjectivity. There is no scientific merit to this way of seeing the world at all.⁶³⁷ Yes, it is all fine and good to see that all things are somehow related or made of one universal stuff, but reality is really not one or two dimensional. It is much more complex than that. It is true that everything is related, but not by religious concepts. The relations are all physical and evolutionary, by affinities of similar body type, eyes or species relationships. There are differences in nature and they are important. You are not a platypus, or a Scarlet Tanager, even though you share most of their DNA. We “are all related” is true—in a way---, but biology is more than merely similarities, the important differences also demand respect. Non-duality is another monistic and solipsistic fiction that cannot be made square with the theory of evolution or with science. It is evolution that is more important than feel good Vedantic, Zen or Rumi-esque theories that sounds good on paper, Non-duality is pie in the sky nonsense.

⁶³⁷ one can read about the non-dual state in Tibetan (Dzog Chen) Versluis, Zen, Vedanta or Ken Wilber and all the descriptions are slightly different, but they all boil down to a totalistic system of self-conscious mind control and disinterest.

Paradoxically, so is “dualism”. These are species categories that are mental fictions. Many writers of New Age metaphysics use this sort of imaginary language to describe things, but it is simply imagination, not actuality. To really know the species on earth you can’t stare at your navel or read Goodrick Clarke’s books, you must study species as themselves in their own environments and not study them as a projection of an esoterist’s selfish need of imaginary non-duality or unity. Life is not ‘dual’ or ‘non dual’, all that is chimera and make believe.

The much misused term “gnosis” is just a Greek term that means knowledge. It has come to mean in spiritual writers a special kind of imaginary knowledge that arises from “inwardness”, where consciousness is universalized, magnified and fluffed up and the cosmos is devalued. The universe only has value as a symbol of an imaginary beyond, the exact nature of which is unknown, because it does not exist. Emerson flirted with this same nonsense. Thoreau overcame this Symbolist view of reality and it is this that makes his late journal one of the most important books of the 1900’s⁶³⁸

Inwardness is deified in Versluis’s writing in accord with New-Ageism—which is a spinoff of American Protestantism and its worship of the “holy ghost”—and Versluis is a confused if unwilling part the New Age. “Gnosis” is merely an elitist version of the fluffy spirituality of holy rollers. Versluis calls the American version of gnosis, “immediateism” a sort of fast food, cowboy spirituality, dished out by cult leaders and con men, like Adi Da or Ken Wilbur. Cowboy spirituality corresponds quite closely to CEO culture, with its cowboy need of freedom, *lassaiz faire* economics and cult of the individual . They rob their money from hard working people and stow it away in tax havens and off shore banks so they avoid paying taxes on it, and then, hide behind dark windowed cars and gated mansions hidden beyond dense thickets of trees, or in

⁶³⁸ See my book on Henry Thoreau here:
<https://wordpress.com/post/markkoslowspaintingstoughtandnature.wordpress.com/8407>

penthouses that have no name on them at the building entrance.

The idea of “Inwardness”, is really an alienated and twisted notion of self which really dissolves into politics when looked at closely. What they refer to as “immanence” or inwardness is really just well-being, a sense oneself and others as having personhood, but they elevate this idea into a subjective pathology. The notion that the inner self is somehow to be “born again” or transcended and that this being born again brings about a “metanoia”, is specious. When I was 14, I watched as various people, including a girl my age who I thought I was in love with, stood in a blue swimming pool to get baptized by a white-robed preacher. He was really a foreman in some factory or something. The suburban pool was behind a 1970’s pseudo colonial house and was as Blue as a David Hockney painting of an LA swimming pool. He dunked their heads under the chlorinated water, one by one. They were all born again, and apparently the Holy Spirit did not mind the chlorine. On another occasion I was subjected to a “laying on of hands” event in which various women put their hands on me and spoke in tongues, presumably healing me and getting the evil out of me. It was weird and I tried to let happen what they were saying should happen, but part of me knew it was all a fraud, including the speaking in tongues. Both the baptism and the laying on of hands were really social events that had to do with imposing uniform and correct thinking and thus were really political events. Even the witnesses were important to this happening.

“Born again” Christian’s have nothing that makes them better than non-born-again people . The revival in the 1970’s had to do with politics and the republican party, and the rise of a capitalistic fundamentalism that would take over in the Reagan years. They supported the Vietnam war and hated hippies. The difference between gospel singing Baptists and elitist Sufis in university religious studies departments is nothing, really. Both are practicing versions of the same fictional spiritual/political system of social control. It is all pretense, snake oil,

group mind control and social conditioning. One cannot transcend oneself. The idea that one can is really a misunderstanding of language.⁶³⁹

The inwardness that Versluis promotes is really just narcissistic self-inflation, not unlike corporations claiming to be persons when in fact they neither die nor eat, have babies or are human.

The idea of ‘gnosis’ like its synonym ‘esoterism’ refers to nothing at all, in fact. It is a pure fiction, an imaginary supposition that only refers to imaginary knowledge. It is a new religious construct that is applied retrospectively to people like Alcott or Emerson and which has not real substance to it. The gnostic idea, for instance, that “consciousness is everything and everywhere” is utterly meaningless, -- it is fiction and a fiction that is regularly imagined by followers of various ideologies. The Gnostic is one who feels something ‘inwardly’ or this feeling of “god’ or “eternal consciousness”, Atma or “Beyond Being”. This fiction is misinterpreted as a fact and claimed to be a ‘knowledge’ when really it is just a feeling--- a magnified and mystical romantic dream of some kind.⁶⁴⁰ The feeling might have come from one's parents, from books, from priests or from misinterpreting the idea of the ‘self’ as an infinite

⁶³⁹ Antinomian metaphors are legion in religions and are usually abuses of a language, There is no god but God is typical statement of this kind and defines an absolutist transcendent deity above all smaller concerns. If thine eye be single thy whole body shall be full of light is a statement of the mythical Christ which defines inner states of ‘transcendental emotion’ emotion. The via negativa is antinomian meaning it is supposed to transcend social norms, but really such attempts at transcendence are really just new attempts to underscore a more radical system of social control and power.

⁶⁴⁰ One of Versluis’s own examples of an exemplary gnostic is the new age thinker Franklin Merrell Wolff, who thinks consciousness is everything, and things are nothing. This is Shankara in a nutshell and involves a radical devaluation of the actual—the earth--- in favor of the purely mental or rather the fiction of the “spiritual”. The universal consciousness these thinkers posit is a confusion of language and a fabrication.

eternal thing, or from misinterpreting Nature⁶⁴¹. Consciousness is a mirror of sorts and one can mistakenly think that this mirror reflects everything, but actually it is just a part of being and even the consciousness of a rabbit reflects or holds much of the world in its embrace. The romantic dream of Merrell Wolfe or Shankara is just a dream, they are not better than the thoughts of rabbits. Indeed, the thoughts of rabbits are probably better than metaphysical fabrications, certainly more real.

Versluis repeatedly insists on the “ahistorical” character of gnosis, when really this is just an optical illusion,-- or rather an “imaginal” illusion--- or what Richard Dawkins might call a mental virus. There is no “eternity” outside of time. One can imagine such an “eternity”—art depends somewhat on the illusion of eternity,--- but the imagining itself is not actually outside time or history.⁶⁴² Eternity is a mind game humans play on themselves. Gods, or realizations of gods, are little more than emotional delusions born of constant mental conditioning. Such ideologies are born of emotional and psychological

⁶⁴¹ Emerson mystified Nature when he knew little about it, Thoreau followed him in this for a short time, but as Thoreau’s journal shows, he became increasingly disillusioned by Emerson’s transcendentalist ideology and began to reject Emerson. Henry then accepted Darwin and science as he got older. Mystics tend to project their pet theories on nature, when nature is not ‘gnostic’ at all. Versluis projects his misunderstanding of nature upon Thoreau perhaps because of some latent hatred of science. He doesn’t seem to have read the late journals which are full of science and specific observation, and no talk, thank goodness of “gnosis” or Vedanta or any of that nonsense. Thoreau gave up Emerson in his later work. He became a scientist and largely abandoned transcendentalism

⁶⁴² Thus when Rumi says, “Never did the dust of mortality settle on my skirt, o dervish! I have gathered a wealth of roses in the garden of Eternity.” He is really saying he is better than everyone because he is beyond existence, and life is dust, and all that matters is what does not exist. He expresses a fake humility that is really universal pride. The absurd logic of immortality is in Niffari, Ibn Arabi, Zen, Lao Tzu and all the mystics. It really amounts to this abstract self-referring word games played endlessly around the pivot of delusion. No doubt this experience of infinite delusion in the denial of life creates a certain hypnotic euphoria, a “drunken love” of a certain kind of power that denies it is power. But it is destructive and apophatic and this inflated mysticism is a dead end. The pretense and fiction of immortality is a way to make humans seem divine. They are not, of course, nor is there any divine ‘soul’ that lives beyond death. Immortality is the conceited fiction that makes humans believe they are above all other animals when they are not.

clusters of ideas which come from others of a similar creative subjectivity. These are not real facts but suggested and imagined images born of words and analogies.

Indeed, the idea of eternity is a fiction that was created by upper classes to preserve the illusion of power and permanence. This is evident, for instance in Renaissance architecture, of the Vatican particularly, where the fiction of the “city of God”, which goes back to Christianized Roman ideas in Augustine and others, was pasted onto the ambitions of the Popes. They wanted to create an “eternal” architecture in Saint Peters and other buildings elsewhere that would suggest that the Papacy was immutable and perpetual. The Popes hired Michelangelo to design the illusion of an architecture of forever. In actual fact the Papacy was already sliding into decadence at the time of Bramante and Leonardo. One could even say it was born in decadence. The attempt to create an architecture of eternity is perhaps a compensation for the fact that Christ never existed, but to give the myth reality requires great illusions. The conceit of immortality and eternity applied to an institution like the Church is meant to give the Church authority and “magisterial power”, when in fact it is just another collection of more or less corrupt people, ordinary as can be, who wish to get on top of the world by whatever means they can. Michelangelo’s job was to create propaganda for this and he was very good at it.

This attempt to magnify motives and claim immortality is not exclusive to the Church, you can find the same thing in John Locke⁶⁴³

⁶⁴³ In his justification of stealing Native American land Locke imposes the idea of private property on America and says that “in the beginning all the world was America”. The divine right of property must be imposed on America which had done without it for 30,000 years. For Locke, Salvation is ownership, and the Master who owns, owns by virtue of his Christian right. “And thus came in the use of money, some lasting thing that men might keep without spoiling”. Eternity is slavery and Money. Money, like the Eucharistic species, brings a resemblance of immortality. It is not money primarily that interested Locke, though he was enormously motivated to make more of it, as many of his letters show. Rather, his concern seems to have been the immortality, or, what amounts to the same thing, the power that wealth gave him. Like Jay Gould, the American Robber Baron, Locke’s primary concern was erect himself into a position of

and his effort of justify nascent corporate capitalism as protected by Insurance to put it beyond change and chance.⁶⁴⁴ The idea of immortal, corporate structures are things that are abstractions, myths, like gods or like money or insurance. These are means the very rich use to try to give a patina of totality and permanence to their small and mortal selves. They use inflated legal rhetoric seek to put themselves beyond time. A corporation is little different than an Egyptian god, as, indeed, both are conceits made to insure a given group of class of people are were deathless. If one can convince enough people that this lie is true and dynasty of corporation might last decades or even centuries.

This is delusional pretence at eternal existence is partly a result of transcendentalist notions of the body derived from Christianity The body is seen as a corporate thing and a divine person is put in charge as that which is beyond change and chance. The Eucharistic species put the body front and center as the supreme object of the universe. As Christianity declined, corporate culture took over. The corporate body become a sort of new church for capitalism which claims ownership of

highest status and influence. Corporate immortality is enshrined in the fiction of corporate personhood,-- which like the god concept is a fabrication. See Locke, John, Second Treatise of Government, section 47 chapter 5. Macpherson ed.

⁶⁴⁴ . John Locke: Second Treatise of Government Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing 1980 27-29 Locke, wrote this as a panegyric against the concept of the divine right of Kings, which had been advocated in the writings of Sir Robert Filmer, (see *Patriarcha, or the Natural Power of Kings* 1680). The controversy between Filmer and Locke concerns the transfer of power from an aristocratic- military state to a merchant military state. Locke's famous plea for religious toleration is really a plea for the toleration of merchant warriors to conquer where they will. While the removal of the Kings is a good thing as is the separation of Church and state, Locke is not really a human rights advocate. He was concerned with toleration of the greed of the English upper classes. His "toleration" appears to be merely replacing one form of divine right with another, that of divine property rights. Human rights only involved the upper classes in England, since they alone were truly human. Indians, the poor, slaves, indentured servants, women, had virtually no rights. Filmer was much worse than Locke and saw the state and religion as one and the same. For most of human history this is the case, the separation of religion and the state is a new phenomenon beginning with Jefferson and others. Religion is a form of politics, even today, even with those who deny this is so. Once both religion and politics are brought into regulation the world might be a less dangerous place. The state remains a largely toxic institution and needs to be diminished as the monarchy was in Europe.

“property”. Attempts have been made, very foolish ones, to make property a “divine” or “transcendent” thing. This is far right, republican fiction.⁶⁴⁵ In actual fact nature is nowhere property, but rather a sort of process in which the rights of all are dependent on evolutionary differentiation and exclusive breeding possibility through species. No one owns entirely their own body, since no one can stop death, puberty, menopause or ageing. Since we do not entirely own even our own bodies it is absurd to claim ownership of land or nature, trees and animals. The earth and species upon it, own themselves, and prosper or not according to their own abilities and weaknesses. Human attitudes towards nature and animals are also self-serving fictions. It is objective that animals created themselves, over long periods of evolution. To suppose humans have the right to dominate and abuse them is fiction and a horrible fiction that is now wasting nature everywhere. Humans are “lower than the animals”, Both Thoreau and Twain said, rightly, in most cases.⁶⁴⁶

The reality of the world is not religious, but Darwinian. In the actual world, species are their own creation and exist side by side in a peace fraught with difficulties and hardships. But there is beauty in it, as Darwin said. But the Lockean state and the ideology of corporate personhood and the personhood of the gods are all delusions of a kind, and equally questionable. Gnosis is merely the conceit of permanence erected into a pretend eternity. The embalming of Lenin’s body in Red Square has the same function, as do the pyramids. All these images are images of elitist conceit, which are supposed to be read a “spiritual”

⁶⁴⁵ There are also notions of “transcendent law” too which are also attempts to make a religion of capitalism, rather as in Ayn Rand. These make a religion of property and give special rights to those who have lot so money and things, no matter by what crooked means they got them, and however they stone form and denigrate those who are poor. This 'Horatio Alger' philosophy is very American and is the worst side of American selfishness and lack of social conscience. Everything for the rich and nothing for nature or the poor, who suffer the brunt of the self-serving rich.

⁶⁴⁶ See Thoreau’s essay “Walking”. Twain wrote “I have been studying the traits and dispositions of the lower animals (so-called), and contrasting them with the traits and dispositions of man. I find the result humiliating to me.” Twain from *The Lowest Animal*

claims, the use of the “spiritual” term here being more or less synonymous with ‘magnified or abstracted political fiction’. Dismantling the injustice and inequality created by corporations and religions is part of the process implied by understanding these things. Once the political purpose of spiritual claims is known one can begin taking it apart. Once one understands that these structures are specious creations of interest and corruption, there is nothing to do but endeavor to remove them from power. Thus, the rights of nature or of species to exist and evolve should supersede any abstract rights like property, gods or the corporate state. Reversing the ongoing destruction of nature created by abstract systems of human centered belief is essential to human and animal survival on earth

There is no such thing as eternity of the “spiritual” both of these are really conceits or generalities, abstractions that have no real content other than pretense and fiction. To understand how concepts like eternity work as political constructions is the begging of dismantling power systems and unjust social relations. There is no “ahistorical” gnosis or reality, though there are several ‘ahistorical’ ideologies that claim to be outside time, but actually these are systems of make believe: religions and imaginary metaphysical systems, to be precise. “Gnosis” here is merely another word for what the “intellect”⁶⁴⁷ is supposed to attain or acquire. The ideology of “Intellect” is the cornerstone of the

⁶⁴⁷ This is an important concept and I speak of it several times throughout this book. It is really the key concept to traditionalists thought and religion in general and once one sees through it, the ‘gnostic’ pretence collapses. The “intellect” is merely self-referential self-magnification. This means that the thinker who imagines that ‘god’ has opened up eternity in his mind/heart, is seriously self-deluded. All that has actually happened is that the inner self has dilated in a “vision” of self-delusion, a suggestion brought on by exposure to religious thought, that there is a “self” beyond oneself, beyond time and space and that that inhabits the deepest part of one’s being. One becomes abstract to oneself, and open to a sort of “primordial” otherness that is delusional. Marcus Aurelius called this the “daimon”, Guenon calls it the intellect. It is really just transcendental narcissism, or delusional egotism that is both artificial and magnified into cosmic proportions. This delusion of power and those who have it might even be willing to die for it. But once one sees through the delusion it disappears like fog. .

totalistic (totalitarian) system that Guenon and Schuon created, and it is a central idea to all the systems for make believe we call the major religions.

The idea of the intellect is shot through with assumptions and political implications. The term “intellect” is borrowed from Plato and Aquinas, among others, where it is likewise a fictional concept which served a political purpose. Gnosis is a mystagogy: a borderland between aggression and presumption of divinity. Non duality is really totalism and usually serves a basically conservative political agenda. Religious studies is riddled with unacknowledged assumptions that serve to perpetuate historical biases and the implicit power relations that underlie those biases. Versluis is biased. He is right that the essence of gnosis is transcendence, but he fails to see that transcendence is really just the inner will or ‘subject’ in a state of excessive and delusional self-magnification. Dugin, for all his horrendous faults really expresses this very well when he notes that

“ the principle itself of aggression, the primordial will itself to the “violent transgressing of bounds”, the aspiration for the totalization of one’s own subjective character (however that may be expressed — either through national or religious, or tribal affiliation)”... is what transcendence is all about—and gnosis is the “attaining the total character, to the maximum extension of a subject up to the sphere of the Divine”. ⁶⁴⁸

⁶⁴⁸ http://www.feastofhateandfear.com/archives/dugin_01.html

This is a fairly typical example of Dugin’s mania, “The Hand is Reaching for the Holster Dugin loves war and conflict and writes “Heraclitus called "hostility" the "father of things." Everywhere in the world there are opposing poles: executioners and victims, men and women, coercive authority and rebellious subject. War of the elements. War of classes, nations, races, economic formations, material interests, ambitions, ideas.

That is why aggression - is the founding law of existence.”

Narcissistic self-inflation becomes national power, or the state as a universalist abstraction, in short. The mystical state totalism of Schuon, Versluis and Dionysius the Aeropagite are roughly equivalent. Dugin is insane, so he can state the obvious: namely, that religion is driven by excessive and unbalanced states of mind. Versluis is a polite professor and hides his ambitions behind scholarly journals and does not say what he really means. Gnosis is not an actual thing. No one has “gnosis” that Christ actually exists, because he didn’t, he was merely a fiction made up by the early writers of the Gospels, who were writing mythic stories to give an ideology historical dress. Gnosis is a fiction that serves to explain to believers falsehoods that they accept as true. Transcendence is a delusional state of mental and emotional excess. Gnosis and transcendence are not real things but rather invented fictions which are ultimately about the will to power and hierarchy.

Totalism and ‘gnosis’ are really part of the same make-believe world of need of power and subjective self-magnification. “I am that I am” is what God calls himself in the Old Testament. There is no god who says this; it is a statement in a book of fictions. What is magnified in the god concept is the state of mind of the magnifier. God is an inflated projection of an ideology. The delusion is that the self is ‘omniscient and omnipotent’. Or so it claims. These ideas are inherently “aggressive”, as Dugin correctly points out. These same ideas, namely transcendence or God’s self-identity—when applied in the social realm create inquisitions and inequalities. That is what Dugin, Guenon and Schuon want, of course. That is what makes them theofascists. Versluis cannot see this because he is so anxiously ambitious to push his gnostic belief system on others. He is a theofascist too, though blissfully unaware of it. The political nature of his own beliefs appears to escape him.

Scholars of religion do a lot of promotion of a given faith, but little or no observing about the actual behavior and intentions of the religious.

Versluis states this explicitly. He writes that

I argue that some sympathy with the authors and works one is studying is necessary to understand them. Hence I believe it is extremely important to attempt to remain faithful to the subject one is investigating.⁶⁴⁹

This is the procedure of a bad partisan scholar, or a true believer. In other words one can only read texts like Boehme or Dante, Jesus or Swedenborg as a True Believer, with “faith” or one is somehow betraying spiritual authors to “Reductionism”. The latter being the abusive invention of the true believer. Actually what he misnames “reduction” is just the following out of evidence and it does not reduce, it expands and elucidates. Being objective about religion is very difficult without oneself ceasing to be a believer. Once one does become a believer, objectivity is gone and one should not be teaching religion in a university. Timothy Fitzgerald states in his The Ideology of Religious Studies, that “there is no coherent non-theological theoretical basis for the study of religion as an academic discipline”. Exactly right. Avery Marrow concludes from this that “If this claim is true, religious studies should be dissolved as a discipline, replaced with either seminary schools or a subcategory of anthropology and sociology.” This is exactly right too. Unfortunately some anthropologists use their discipline to promote mythology and ideology. But an anthropology that tries to study religion as an objective phenomena is fine.

However, Versluis’ ambition is to inject ‘esoterism’ or theofascism, into our higher education. He writes in glowing terms that that the

⁶⁴⁹ <http://www.esoteric.msu.edu/VolumeIV/Methods.htm>

“Dutch professor Wouter Hanegraaff.... Holds the first specially endowed university chair for the study of Western esotericism”. Similar efforts by Antoine Faivre, and Nicholas Goodrick Clarke, Jeffery Kripal and Versluis himself are not an accomplishment but a setback.⁶⁵⁰ These are PR schools promoting religion. Like Sedgwick, Versluis admires the advance of irrational and reactionary systems of archaic studies into the university system, when actually it is merely the advance of imaginary irrationality. “The emergence of Western esotericism as an academic field is evidence that what Gershom Scholem termed “counter-history” is emerging into the light of day.” Counter history is counter-revolutionary history or bogus revisionist history, or reactionary history, the history of wannabe mystics, promoters of Kabbalah, creationist bigots and fundamentalists. This is ‘anti-history’ really, or traditionalism as a politics of anti-Darwinian, mystical reaction. What this means in practical terms is that esoteric schools are promoting of superstitious illusions in in universities without oversight or questioning. Henry Corbin, Francois Secret, Antoine Faivre, Arthur Versluis, Joscelyn Godwin, and Wouter Hanegraaff, Jeffery Kripal and many others have reinvented histories to try to sell their books and promote spiritualist con men like Swedenborg, Mesmer, Louis Claude de Saint-Martin, Aleister Crowley, Gurdjieff and Paracelsus, among many others. While all these people belong in a history of cults or religious ideologies, promoting them as conveyers of real knowledge and mystical insight is ridiculous.⁶⁵¹ Kripal, who promotes the paranormal, writes of Christology of the comic

⁶⁵⁰ Nicholas Goodrick Clarke’s book is *The Western Esoteric Traditions: A Historical Introduction*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2008.

books and the Superhero of Nazareth, which is pretty accurate as Christ is as absurd a fiction as Clark Kent. Goodrick Clarke tries to maintain that there is a “western esoteric tradition”, but really there isn’t. There is a disconnected series of eccentrics, spiritualists, cranks and fanatics, outsiders and dreamers a few of whom influenced others, but it is not a tradition and has little or no basis in reality, or rather it is merely a tradition of con-men and delusions. These delusions are cultured and maintained by networks of like minds. I don’t think such studies belong in our universities, unless they are put in sociology or anthropology and treated as systems of subjectivism and make believe: which is what they are.

Teaching ‘esoterism’ in schools is teaching “counter history” – and counter history is bogus history, the history of the delusion of the changeless, the immortal. Nietzsche thought history could be overcome by an excess of ecstatic zeal. He was creating his own religion, just as the Gospels had, though that has been forgotten. Gershom Scholem imagines a similar excessive ‘fiction as truth’ as a scholar of Jewish mysticism. This claim to be beyond history via fictions is the conceit of a false and harmful metaphysical dream. Scholem, Versluis, Guenon and Schuon are not historians and what they have to say about history is utter nonsense, as I have shown throughout this book. It is one thing to teach the history of irrationalism and quite another to teach kids to *be* irrational, which I think is what Versluis, Goodrick Clarke, Kripal and Godwin want to do, after the model of Huston Smith and many other ‘insider’ promoters of romantic eternities. These are promoters of deceptions, charismatic pretenders who distort and use double speak to push their favorite delusions.

The superstitious irrationalism taught in these schools is anti-science and anti-intellectualism that does not belong in our education system. Many kindred minds of the traditionalists who are in our universities, Alan Godlas, John Finamore, Arthur Versluis, Mark

Sedgwick, Vincent Cornell, David Dakake, Nicholas Goodrick Clarke, Harry Oldmeadow, James Cutzinger, Marco Toti, Peter Kingsley, Jeremy Henzell-Thomas, Renaud Fabbri ,_Setareh Houman.⁶⁵² And many others who push an imaginary “esoterism” of some kind, shouldn’t be there at all.⁶⁵³ They should be in private religious institutions, perhaps paid for by nutty eccentrics like Prince Charles and his Temenos Academy or perhaps a school could be created for them called the ‘Gnostic School of Applied Disney Metaphysics’. The Schuon cult exists in a small suburban enclave outside Bloomington, Indiana and it belongs there in Indiana, where the KKK the Manson cult and other sordid cults got started. It does not belong in our schools or universities, which should be devoted to real knowledge, not the science of make believe..

There are many such departments of “esoterism” growing up around the world. ⁶⁵⁴ They are not teachers but proselytizers, part historians and part purveyors of superstition and devotees of irrationality. Cutzinger, Versluis and the others do not belong in our

⁶⁵² See Traditionalism in America: Setareh Houman, *De la philosophia perennis au pérennialisme américain* (Milan: Archè, 2010). This text is a rather sycophantic to Nasr, Cutzinger Huston Smith and other academic traditionalists.

⁶⁵³ For more academics who have been seduced into the Schuonian or Guenonian orbit , see the lists of names at the World Wisdom website, those who participate in CESNUR, Evola websites, Exeter Center. Tremens and similar venues. World Wisdom collects names like trophies in the effort to proselytize though academics and to colonize their belief systems where ever they can. They are aggressive proselytizers.

⁶⁵⁴ As an example take the Exeter Centre for the Study of Esotericism (EXESES), headed by Nicholas Goodrick Clarke and his wife Clare who teach ambiguous courses on Neo-Platonist and Rosicrucianism, homeopathy, alchemy and other gnostic nonsense at Exeter University,. They also write books about far right mystics like Miguel Serrano or Blavatsky, as well as various cults and cult leaders, Savitri Devi and many others. The whole department for the study of esoterism I is questionable. Clare Goodrick Clarke is a Homeopath, a domain of medicine that has been utterly discredited as having any value at all other than Placebo. The Clarke’s of Exeter appear to be a sort of center for the promotion of bogus esoterica like homeopathy and astrology as well as esoteric irrationality. His work on Savitri Devi, a woman who started worship of Hitler as an avatara, and moved to India because she loved the caste system, is overly sympathetic. See this site for other gnostic promoters. Jeffery Kripal has created a virtually identical center for bogus studies in Texas Rice University. It is called the GEM Program and is about Gnosticism, Esoterism, and Mysticism, offering PHD’s in delusions.
<http://centres.exeter.ac.uk/exeses/staff.php>

university system. They should not be teaching at Colgate, University of Michigan, Rice, U.C. Davis⁶⁵⁵, or Exeter University but rather should be teaching in The Religious Institute of Phony Knowledge, should anyone wish to create such a satirical university. It could have departments for Homeopathy, Astrology, Gnosticism, crystal gazing, homeopathy, aromatherapy, metaphysics, psychic forensics, pseudo-scientific creationism and apocalyptic astrology studies as well as the Guenon chair in Esoteric Paranoia Studies and the Schuon Chair of Gnostic Erotic's. The department of Spiritual Delusions is now offering a smorgasbord of courses: come get your Bachelor degree in defunct systems of arcane knowledge--- astrology and esoterism, mesmerism and Ken Wilber moonshine consciousness as well as Versluis' theories of imaginary transcendence.

These men are enablers of corporate culture, pawns in the game to religious mystification which supports capitalist ideology. Versluis is one of many anti-intellectuals who teach in our universities who support an economic order sanctioned by the corporate God of the apolitical, -- since apolitical religion is so useful to corporate growth and profits. Corporate controllers love the apolitical because they do not cause trouble for the masters of finance. These men all tacitly support the corporate system of irrationality and ignorance, in some cases without even being aware of it. The anti-democratic values that drive free-market fundamentalism are very sympathetic religion and corresponds well with Guenonian orthodoxy. Versluis is not far from all this and supports it in his writings. He wants to create a proselytizing religious studies department that allows "purely historical research" but makes clear this is just window dressing—he really he doesn't care about that--- he wants works that are like the "works of Corbin, Eliade, and Scholem, that also seek to reveal the kinds of consciousness esotericism entails." By "kinds of

⁶⁵⁵ Allison Coudert has a course on Traditionalism there.

consciousness” he wants kids to learn mysticism laced with solipsistic monism and pathological subjectivity. In other words, he wants interested religion with a right wing slant (Eliade, Corbin and Scholem) preached in our “secular” universities. He says he wants a “studied sympathetic neutrality”--- which is really a euphemism for interested advocacy—promotional and proselytizing the New Religious Movement he calls ‘esoterism’.

Voltaire once imagined seeing a huge pile of human bones and notes that this pile of bones is all the people killed over scholars disagreeing about metaphysics. Voltaire is right about this. I can’t think of many religion scholars who will even ask the question Voltaire suggests. They stand mute and claim to be apolitical before religious violence, and the horrible hatreds and killings done by the religions. But the proof is in the doing, and when Versluis declare that only “one taste” is allowable in non-dual thought, he is declaring himself on the side of totalism and the romantic hatred of ‘fascination’ or curiosity and interest which create science. Voltaire wants us to consider the reasons for religious violence and atrocity. This whole book is about that. It is impossible to ask Voltaire’s question and still have a “studied sympathetic neutrality” toward religion.

Versluis preaches Schuonian Perennialism as can be seen in his 1992 book about Native Americans. His writing about Schuon and Guenon in American Guru sound very much like a cult follower ⁶⁵⁶ To

⁶⁵⁶ For more about how to play the victim while preaching religion and violating academic freedom and free inquiry--- and also forbidding contrary views--- see his artfully written essay “What is Esoteric : Methods in the Study of Western Esotericism” <http://www.esoteric.msu.edu/VolumeIV/Methods.htm>

Versluis, editor of the magazine *Esoterica* is cowardly about contrary views, peer review and the ordinary exercise of science and so like an Inquisitor, he forbids them. He writes “The only approaches that our journal, *Esoterica*, refuses out of hand are those that derive from manifestly anti-esoteric or reductionist perspectives.” Since hardly anyone with a mind agrees that esoterica is a rational course of study, nearly everyone is excluded except a few deluded spiritualist cranks,

repeat it again—in my view, writers like Godwin, Goodrick-Clarke, Cutzinger, Versluis and many others does not belong in the public university system but at a religious colleges. Religious studies departments should be moved over to anthropology or sociology and more stringent hiring practices used to keep out proselytizers .

To quote Versluis himself out of context, the study of religion in university religion ought to be reduced to “cultural-historical studies, or to eliminate religious studies entirely” ⁶⁵⁷ This is what he fears, and his fear is justified. It is exactly right that we should eliminate religious studies, if religion cannot be taught in our schools as simply cultural/historical artifacts, the way ancient Greek religion is taught in history or anthropology classes. If this cannot be done, then religious studies should be eliminated from the university. Versluis forbids critical thinking from his journal. Critical thinking is a cornerstone of academic freedom and without critical thinking, irrational systems of thought begin to corrode the foundations of democracy and a free society. Goodrick-Clarke, Versluis, Godwin and others have initiated a downward slide into advocacy of esoterism. Religious Studies has become ‘promoting religion’ and this should be questioned and halted.

I know from direct experience that Traditionalist intellectuals are usually enemies of the university, education, democracy, human rights and a free and open inquiry and what Popper called an open society. They express their hatred of democracy openly and with prejudice. They want to return to autocratic government and 12th century hierarchical and Platonist education ⁶⁵⁸such as the medieval trivium and

homeopaths and neo-mystics. In other words only those who agree with his chimerical and delusional ideology may publish in his cultic oracle, all others need not apply.

⁶⁵⁷ *ibid*

⁶⁵⁸ Titus Burkhardt writes about traditional Christian education methods in some of his writing—such as “Seven Liberal Arts on the West Door of Chartres Cathedral” in Mirror the Intellect .

quadrivium.⁶⁵⁹ They want to replace thinking with prayer and intelligence with dogmatic obedience to hierarchy. This is not education at all, but dis-education, putting young minds into the darkness of the dark ages. Instead of actual literacy they want “spiritual literacy” in Ali Lakhani’s words, which is really a form of ignorance and mindless forgetting of the actual in favor of the imaginary. Preaching delusions fosters no learning. Lakhani imagines that praying is “awareness that guards against the lapse into forgetfulness.” This insistence on forgetfulness is common in religions, showing that prayer is an extremely artificial state that must be beaten into the brain by force of mechanical repetition. As Ananda Coomaraswamy said, praising his own mindless adherence to religious authority: ” I have never built up a philosophy of my own or wished to establish a new school of thought. Perhaps the greatest thing I have learnt is never to think for myself” ⁶⁶⁰

To be continually remembering fictions is very difficult and requires brainwashing. As a champion of this brainwashing, Lakhani states that in prayer “resides the mystery of the Divine Invocation, the *dhikr* or Om, the “re-minding”, of the Word that God utters, which ultimately is none other than our very Self.” The mystery of the Divine prayer or invocation is merely the mystery of brainwashing. Quite literally. The brain is the product of evolution and invocation is a means of misusing the brain for socially designed purposes. The constant repetition is meant to instill total belief, which can never be achieved, and which is unnatural and therefore must be forced.

A good deal of religion consists of recalling and reminding of the delusions that govern the religion. Religious “Experience” in James term,

This view of education is an education for caste and elitist indoctrination into a religious ideology.

⁶⁵⁹ The traditionalists resemble the far right Christian education corporation called Classical Conversations. Started by Leigh Bortins this is a creationist group that has nothing to do with classical or enlightenment education, in fact the opposite. This is a backwards politico/religious group that seeks to create a far right Christian method of religious education.

⁶⁶⁰ After-dinner speech on the occasion of his 70th birthday 1947

is basically just this perpetual self-kidding, self-delusional reminding. One goes on an arduous journey to the Kaaba with a million other pilgrims or does full prostrations around Mt. Kailash with Tibetan Buddhists. These events condition the mind to accept all sort of nonsense, given the effort time and exertion involved. Pilgrimages to churches or holy sites, the stations of the cross, pilgrimage sites in China⁶⁶¹ or Japan, or Athos or St. Catharine's monastery on Mt Sinai, these are all advertisements of a kind, as well as tools of mind bending and ideological control.⁶⁶² These and elaborate prayers are means of convincing oneself of what is not true. Hence prayer tends toward an obsessive compulsive disorder. (OCD) Pascal Boyer suggests that cognitive study of religion is that religion is rather "natural" in the sense that it consists of by-products of normal mental functioning.⁶⁶³ The purpose of prayer is to quiet the brain and put it into a state of abeyance and surrender. The excess of saying Jesus or Allah over and over and every hour of everyday is meant to create a false eternity and to dominate the self with the imaginary.⁶⁶⁴ It is not our actual "self" but the

⁶⁶¹ Buddhist pilgrim sites such as The Longmen and Yungang Caves as well as Wutaishan (literally, the Mountain of the Five Terraces). There are thousands upon thousands of pilgrimage sites in India, such as Varnasi or Benares, Mamallapuram or Ajanta and more in southeast Asia, as well as many sites in Europe like Lourdes or Fatima, Chartres or Westminster. So called "sacred sites" are political centers and organized a way of thought and life dictated usually by a priesthood, often in service of a regime of some kind

⁶⁶² I was more attracted to Russian Orthodoxy than Catholicism, and helped build a Russian Church as well as studied with an iconographer, and attended Russian services, which was not that easy to do in California. I stayed for short time in a Russian orthodox monastery. I had a "spiritual Mother" in a Russian convent in Point Reyes for a few years. I often acted as their handy man. But it is a very restrictive life and in the end, I could not see the value of the monks of Athos and their need to "pray without ceasing". It is escapist and world denying and one lives inside the myths like a strait jacket. I saw how earnestly the nuns tried to wear their delusions and how they worked to increase their ever failing fervour. Certainly there is a beauty in such a life, and I saw that. But it is the beauty of delusion and defeat and one that they know can be no other way. But the beauty is taken from nature in the end, and the mythic is laid over nature as an ideological veil of dust and abjuration.

⁶⁶³ Pascal Boyer http://www.csicop.org/si/show/why_is_religion_natural/

⁶⁶⁴ In the Schuon cult one was first required to inwardly say La illaha illa Llah, at all times and later after initiation one could say Allah at all times, and this in addition to the five times prayer for Islam and the Wird and other prayers of certain occasions, as well as prayer sessions, gatherings

imaginary religious ideology of the “Self” that that is actuated in prayer. Prayer opens the mind and heart to fiction and places there the ideology of the mullahs of priests, lamas or rabbis or sunyasis. The repeated mantra of ceaseless prayer creates a sort of hypnotic insanity eventually, if repeated often enough. It is a divine dumbing down, or a kind of avataric atavism or invocational idiocy.

In Schuon’s case I am sure that the obsessive with repetitive prayer and movement had to do with quieting a personality disorder that included extreme anxiety states. What I learned about Schuon’s personal life from having a window onto his daily activity was that this man was regularly and often daily visited by extreme emotional states of anger and anxiety which he could scarcely manage. A lot of his actions had to do with trying to compensate for this. Quieting him was a major part of the activity of the wives. His work is largely a compensatory device. His perpetual need of adulations was also part of the emptiness that he felt inside. A man of deep anxiety about his image and full of self-hatred, he needed to be praised all the time.

Schuon hated academics and thought himself vastly superior to them, wrongly of course. True, there are academics who might be just as biased, archaic, and wrongheaded, if not as delusional or paranoid in their thinking as Schuon. He was a poor scholar. But most academics are decent folks who are not prone to dogma and who seek the truth as best they can. The assault by esoterism into universities is harmful and needs to be subjected to the most penetrating analysis and critique. It is an assault only possible now that universities are under assault from so many quarters. Russell McCutcheon’s efforts to deconstruct the pretensions of religious studies scholars is useful here. He said,

and Primordial events, and even invocations while having sex, eating or driving. This is coercive OCD. This excess betrayed a real insecurity about belief, forcing belief to shut out the slightest doubt. When I left the cult I immediately gave up all of it, with a relief.

“The fact that essentialist and generally de-historicizing strategies operate so widely as to be virtually transparent to the mass of scholars of religion is the key to understanding the way the field as a whole has avoided confronting the charges of extreme politics.”

This is exactly right. To say this in simpler words. Essentialism and Perennialism are largely the same thing. Essentialism was defeated by Darwin, but persists in irrational pockets of religious scholars and creationist cranks. Perennialism persists only because it is differently packaged. Perennialism is merely essentialism by a new name. The pretense of timelessness and hostility to history, evolution and science operates widely among scholars of religion. In love with their own subjectivity or “consciousness” as Versluis calls it, they pretend to speak as if from eternity, like priests or sophist scholastics, not professors in a modern university, aware of science, evidence and reality. They seek to provide for their students openings to religious experiences and are thus propagandists for creating a certain “subjectivity” or emotion based consciousness that glories in itself—a spiritual narcissism.

Indeed, these assumptions are so widespread among religious scholars that the way to understand the invisible prejudices behind religious studies is obscured. To clarify the way we need to bring religious scholars down from the academic mountain tops, and uncover their poses as Priests of the Irrational, Magi of the Imaginary or Esoteric Shamans. They are Preachers of Phony Knowledge. To do that we need to question the fallacy of misplaced concreteness and anti-historical tendencies of the religions. To do this we need to take apart the pretence of transcendence and unravel the tapestry of ‘gnosis’ or spiritual knowledge, which really is knowledge of nothing at all. In other words we need to realize that the idea of god and the afterlife is an illusion that has no evidence at all to back it up, it is merely a subjective

delusion inflated by the will. The function of the university is not to teach delusions, but to seek the truth.

Versluis book on Totalism is highly confused and undermines its own thesis. He does pretty well showing that the Catholic Church during the Inquisition (1200 -1800, roughly) was horrific, though Sam Harris does much better in his book, The End Of Faith. Versluis does show Guenon's ideology appealed closely to the Nazi Professor and Catholic Carl Schmitt. Versluis is unable to imagine why this might be, of course. The Heidegger scholar Emmanuel Faye mentions Carl Schmitt along with Heidegger as two of the primary philosophic voices of the Third Reich. Schmidt's interest in Guenon shows again that fascism and theofascism share common interests. Versluis makes the mistake of thinking that esoterism is beyond politics: actually, theofascism of the sort Versluis espouses claims to create a metaphysics that underlies all politics. Metaphysics is politics by another name. Versluis's chapter condemning the totalism of George Bush Jr., who appeared to enjoy torture and "rendition" is excellent and is surprising coming from a man so close to the Schuon cult. Schuon loved Bush and Nixon, but it may be that Versluis does not know that. Versluis notes in this chapter that there is a tendency in American culture toward totalism. But he didn't draw the conclusion backwards, showing how Vietnam, Iraq, Panama, El Salvador the Philippines and the dropping bombs on Hiroshima were part of this totalistic tendency. He does not mention or appear to know much about the totalistic decimation of Native American populations, locking them into reservations⁶⁶⁵ and starving them to death or killing off all the

⁶⁶⁵ The history of the idea of 'reservations' should be more studied. It is clear that putting Native Americans on reservations was a colonialistic move to silence and defeat them and keep them out of sight. Soon such a system was used to create Ghettos in Europe and Concentration Camps in Germany, as well as the Japanese camps in the far west during WW2. Lately it is being used to sequester pockets of nature so that one can exploit and abuse all that the lands that are not reservations. It acts to prevent the use of an ecological mind set off the reservations, and this is very destructive. Actually it is even more important to push for awareness of nature off the reservation than on it. This is certainly not to say that 'reserves' on land or seas should be

animals that were the staple of their diet. Hatred of native peoples, women and animals tend to go together. Nor does he grasp the history of slavery, largely organized and justified by Christians, which is a racist kind of totalism practiced by Americans for 200 years. Africans were dragged out of their homes in Africa, killed in the Middle Passage, and those who made it in the slave ships faced the destruction of their families, whippings, working them to death and selling children out from under their parents. Christians supported this genocidal murder and exploitation for centuries. Christians were the driving force behind Jim Crow and the effort to prevent African Americans from voting. However, Versluis only appears to be interested in history, so long as he can promulgate the religion of “gnosis”. The category of Gnosis for him is out of bounds to criticism or question.

To his credit, rather late in the book, Versluis finally determines that “some elements of totalitarianism can appear within what at least appears to be a constitutional republic or a parliamentary democracy”. This should have been stated at the beginning as part of the inquiry, but then, inquiry is not what concerns Versluis. It becomes clear that what Versluis really wants to do is to condemn Catholic, Hitlerian and Stalinist totalism in such a way as to justify and defend every other form of individualistic and ‘gnostic’ and totalistic religion that he wants to promulgate. He sets up worthy victims and unworthy victims. The pose of empirical inquiry in Versluis’ work is just a pose. It appears that the conclusions were decided on before the book was researched. This reactionary and revisionist history involves a lot of avoidance and dancing around real issues and this mars the book seriously enough that it cannot be taken seriously as a real inquiry into totalism or totalitarianism.

It is really a book that pleads reverse discrimination against the

exploited, on the contrary, all lands should be protected in a much more forward way that is currently being done. Much too much power is given to corporations to exploit land and seas.

sciences in favor of irrationality and religion. Versluis is esoterism's Elmer Gantry. He seeks to excuse religion from its role in creating irrational system of social abuse and totalistic theocratic politics. He wants to paint the superstitious and irrational as victims. Magicians, Astrologers, cultists, esoterists, are all victims. In fact most of the mystics in the "western esoteric tradition" were hardly victims. They were prowlers of Salons and drawing rooms of the rich, con-men and elitists who latched onto the upper classes in a parasitical way, men such as Papus, Mesmer or Gurdjieff, the Italian neo-Platonists or Aleister Crowley.

The book has more than a "whiff" of totalism in it. He tries to end it with self-aggrandizing attempt to claim his little formula of Christian esoterism, ('read my books' his footnotes say) --- as well as his admiration for Platonic totalism will lead us, he claims to "the joyous transcendence of self and other" and we will all become "healers of humanity". Nonsense. He wants us to become academic wannabe Priests. Schuon thought he was a "healer" in just this way, when actually he was spreading the ideological disease of authoritarian Platonism and Vedanta. Insofar as Emerson was a Platonist, he too was spreading the disease of the hatred of change, imagining all the world of becoming as an evil thing, and inventing the conceit of an eternal world beyond with the gods "still sitting around him on their thrones".⁶⁶⁶.

There is no history of any "healing" done by transcendental systems, on the contrary. This book is merely unwarranted assertion with no historical evidence a revival of irrational systems of knowledge will improve anything. His savior complex puts him right back into totalistic territory. In other words, he jumps out of the pan of totalitarianism right back into the pan of totalism. This dreamy eyed nonsense ignores the fact that totalistic states and cults of many kinds

⁶⁶⁶ Versluis, American Gurus, pg. 48.

claim just this “transcendence”. The whole notion of transcendence is fictional. There is no such thing. The claim to transcend is merely a fictional form of emotional self-magnification and narcissism. The earth cannot be transcended and the effort to try to do so merely sets up another cloudy mystification of human centered ignorance and arrogance. Efforts at transcendence of the earthly condition merely wastes its substance. There is only the earthly. Heaven is a delusion. Transcendence must be transcended if there is to be any “healing” of the earth .

So where does this lead Versluis? Versluis ends his disappointing book with a paean to Plato’s horrible and backwards totalistic “vision” or the Allegory of the Cave. He has a victim complex about Plato and sees anyone who attacks Plato as revolting. Actually Plato is rather revolting with his obsession with authoritarian hierarchy. Plato calls the world a “barbarous slough”, which in fact the world is full of beauty and none of it is symbols of a pretend world beyond. As I have shown elsewhere in this book, Plato’s Cave is a false analogy. The truth is that the religions are the idols in the Cave and those who escape from religion have a chance of looking at the actual world, as it is, without transcendental delusions, without caves or torture chambers such as Plato invented.

So when I read Versluis, Huston and Wolfgang Smith or any of the traditionalists or other “gnostics”, I see how little they are willing to examine real evidence. This is somewhat true of less religious scholars like Hugh Urban and Jeffery Kripal, or Joscelyn Godwin, who act “balanced” in their examinations of religions but who still promote their subjectivist and irrational views in clandestine ways. Their take on Religious Studies is decidedly like that of William James. A ‘balanced history “ is often a false history that apologizes for the abuses of the powerful. No one can write a balanced history of the Third Reich,

slavery, the Schuon cult, Scientology or corporate history. To write a balance history of corporations is usually absurd since the corporations have most of the information and power to intimidate witnesses. Those in power lie, misrepresent, fabricate. I watched how effectively the Schuon cult did just this. Corporations and cults are secret organizations and share a mentality in some cases akin to a psychopath. It is immoral to take the point of view of unjust CEO, cult leader or Hitler. Military, corporate, imperial, cult and institutional histories are generally very bad histories. As Howard Zinn said “you cannot be neutral on a moving train”, which means that you have to take a point of view sometimes and cannot pretend to be impartial when serious moral questions are at issue. Sometimes being “balanced” is actually being complicit or even worse than that, being balanced can mean being immoral, part of the problem part of an unjust establishment that is status quo and doing harm. As Peter Novick has shown in his great book, That Noble Dream, the historical profession has been at war with itself for a century over how to represent fraught areas of history objectively. Establishment history is the history of military conquest and is not at all concerned with questioning the status quo and so is complicit in it. I write oppositional history here and am no partisan to religion. ⁶⁶⁷ I doubt there is any other way to be objective about religion.

There are few if any “atheist”/reasonist histories . The book you are reading might be read as one of the first. There are now Women’s

⁶⁶⁷ I agree with Howard Zinn that a historian must be responsible to the truth as far as it can be discovered. But one is obliged to be accurate and moral at the same time. It is impossible to justify writing history in service of the powerful who hurt others. One can record what they did, yes, objectively, but not have one’s heart in it, and never leave out the harm they did, as many histories do. One can recognize the fading supremacy of the United States in the world today without agreeing that Manifest Destiny is a good thing, or American exceptionalism is a fact or a religion faith one can agree with. I cannot write history from the point of view of the victimizers, but only of the victims. What matters is not powers or corporate bosses, but people, animals, and the small things of the earth. Ordinary reality is what matters, not the inflated myths of the rich and powerful. History cannot be from the point of view of the ruling classes alone, as most history is.

histories, Black histories, Gay histories and Latino histories and these are all exceedingly interesting. Writing the history of slave-owners and fascists, Inquisitionists and Stalinists, or the history of cults and religions told from the point of view of cults and religions is merely propaganda. I am no propagandist. I like history that advocates a point of view that is lived and authentic, and does so in the most accurate way possible. I am not ashamed of this and neither was Howard Zinn, whose People's History of the United States I have long admired.

In any case, many religious scholars are complicit addicts of romantic inwardness, narcissistic reactionaries who want to proselytize their religious view under the aegis of “balance” and their misunderstanding of academic freedom. Russell McCutcheon is right to say that Huston Smith’s or Cyril Glasse’s⁶⁶⁸ view of religion is a “modernist sentimentalization of classical piety”. I would go further as say that Huston Smith and those who follow on him in religious studies are reactionaries who have abandoned objectivity in their study.

How much subjectivity should be allowed in universities? It is clear that religion, as such, has no legitimate place in the modern American academy. But to what degree is it excluded? And where should it be allowed? I doubt that promulgating romantic and mystical superstitions is appropriate in a public university.

If, as McCutcheon says “religion, as we have it today may be nothing more or less than a product of the Victorian imagination” then Huston Smith is about as relevant today as Victorian Social Darwinism or women’s corsets. Smith was a caretaker of religion in American universities, not a critic. Indeed, the series of videos made for PBS with Huston Smith by Bill Moyers showed him to be a Schuonian of dogmatic absolutes, mean hearted with repression and reaction. Writing reactionary history such as these men do has a “whiff of the

⁶⁶⁸ See Cyril Glasse’s Encyclopedia of Islam.

totalitarian". To give free allowance to rather silly accounts of the history of Magic or Alchemy as if it were equal to say, chemistry or biology or a slave narratives or social historical account of women living in new England factory towns in the 19th century is absurd. Hugh Urban for instance thinks that just because a bunch of people believe in a given cult, like Scientology or Catholicism, that this is "meaningful" and meaning is equivalent to valid in his eyes. Meaning, however superstitious harmful or delusional, become the sine-qua-non of religion. All that is required is that something have a following. Likewise, Versluis ends in endorsing the reactionary theofascism of Plato, the world hating arch-gnostic and hero of Guenon and Schuon. Plato is attractive to reactionaries because he ascribes hierarchical "meanings" or "essences" which are really just projections and imaginative fiction. Frankly I am not sure I see the wisdom in s calling superstition anything but superstition.

Versluis is an advocate of totalitarians like Evola, Schuon and Guenon and writes:

It is possible, after all, that "Traditionalism, with its efforts to reconcile unity and multiplicity, traditional cultures and modernity, may point as much to the future as to the past. In any event, the works of its primary figures, including Guenon and Evola, remain worth the challenging reading that they present, and their intellectual, cultural, historical, philosophical, and religious significances await further consideration."⁶⁶⁹

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<http://www.esoteric.msu.edu/VolumeVIII/EsotericaVIII.pdf>

I don't think so. Should we study Mein Kampf with "sympathetic neutrality" or maybe the collected works of Rush Limbaugh? Goodrick Clarke seems to think so. This is again the bogus notion of "balanced" history" or the "inner theofascism" or apolitical stand of Evola: "apoliteia". "Apoliteia", for Evola and Junger was an "inner distance unassailable by society and its "values", by which Evola means that the superior man has a politics of his own, based on traditional far right values of transcendental "non-duality". The claim that this is apolitical is false as what is really claimed is a super politics.

Hugh Urban likes the sadistic and sometimes theofascist writings of Michel Foucault, in which he sees some sort of connection to the cruelty and love of erotic violence in Alistair Crowley, who he also admires. He also appears to admire Kali worshipping tantric religion.⁶⁷⁰ This is again the "inner theofascism" or apolitical stand of Evola.

⁶⁷⁰ Crowley was a repulsive and immoral person, drug addict, serial adulterer, bisexual, murderer and power hungry for lots of spiritual powers, titles, and pretenses. He is important only the bogus area of esoteric studies, which itself is merely the history of promoters of delusions. He has the man who stole Ananda Coomaraswamy's wife and got her pregnant. AKC and Crowley were alike in some ways. Foucault was also a man of extreme tastes who lived outside social norms and was addicted to power pleasures. Foucault was a Nietzschean who loved power, and AKC had been a Nietzschean too. He was also a sadist who admired the Inquisition, and a theofascist who admired the Iranian Revolution of 1979. (see James Miller's biography of Foucault) IN Discipline and Punish Foucault hates the effort to make criminals better people, and prefers instead the systems of medieval bodily torture. Once I read this book any respect I formerly had for Foucault went out the window. His admiration for torture is really repulsive. Tantra is a system of bogus sexual spiritual claims, mostly a magical nature, usually associated with various form of misogyny and often exploitive of children. Sex is not symbolic, and Tantra depends on this false analogy. It was and is still used India Tibet and elsewhere. The common thread of all these things is a love of abusive power, sexual excess, sex as a form of power grabbing, and esoteric delusions and pretense and an inflated sense of self driven by a theofascist love of religion. It is hard to take Foucault serious once one understands these things



Crowley

This cult of “meaning” is really the romantic cult of feeling, which as Bertrand Russell showed, and has a real relationship to the far-right and reactionary politics. The mystic, Russell said, “becomes one with God and in the contemplation of the Infinite feels himself absolved of duty to his neighbor. The anarchic rebel does even better, he feels himself not one with god, but God.” This need to transcendental subjective delusions is curious and common in mystics. Lao Tzu, Ramakrishna, Foucault and many cult leaders are examples of just this sort of mysticism and theofascism.

Delusional mysticism depends on spiritual states that are illusory and magnified out of the bounds of reason and sense. The mystic seeks feeling states which are generated and maintained by groups and cults, rituals and prayers, mantras and words. Rituals and prayers are essentially fences and a form of mental and physical ownership of those who partake of the ritual or say the prayer. Rituals and prayer are attempts to rationalize the absurd and superstitious. The meanings have little to do with reality and much to do with directing thought and feeling in politically correct channels. Religious studies academics, and Priests are gatekeepers for this political correctness, and thus defenders of delusions, protectors of the lies societies tell their children. So this same

cult of “meaning” in Versluis results in reactionary anti-intellectualism and theocratic leanings. Versluis is primarily concerned with promoting feeling states that perpetuate religious delusions, as are most, if not all, religious studies professors. I use Versluis as an example of this tendency, though many religious professors would do as well.

When I was in the Schuon cult some members of the upper echelons of the cult were saying they thought Versluis would be a good candidate to be recruited into the cult. He is in a certain sense an advocate for many of the cults he discusses. I do not know what his spiritual practice is. He might not belong to any of them but prefers to be above them all in the Platonic ozone. This is likely, Platonists like to see themselves as Prophets of a kind.. In any case I don’t think a contemporary university is well served by such reactionary voices, though the corporate world certainly is served by them.. Academic freedom is about service to Enlightenment and some measure of intellectual honesty and disinterested knowledge. Versluis is a proselytizer of superstition and irrationalism and an enemy of Enlightenment. He would do better to move to a seminary or join the Schuon cult in Bloomington Indiana than burden our universities with what he writes and teaches. This is true of most religions studies “scholars” who are really not scholars at all. They are keepers and ‘historians’ of social delusions, caretakers of myths, not critics and scientists as they should be...

The sciences impose a harsh discipline that refines scientists efforts: whereas in the humanities “one can spin fanciful tales with impunity”, Chomsky says somewhere. Chomsky does a good deal of such spinning himself, but at least he honors science somewhat.. Chomsky could have been speaking of Versluis when he wrote that those who inform “ us that the “project of the Enlightenment” is dead, that we must abandon the “illusions” of science and rationality—[is] a message that will gladden the hearts of the powerful, delighted to monopolize these instruments for

their own use.” I certainly don’t agree with all that Chomsky says but he is right about some things.⁶⁷¹ Teaching alchemy, magic, esoterism, tantra and other superstitions is not a valuable thing to do, nor is supporting traditionalism. Scholars like Versluis, Wouter Hannegraff, Jeff Kripal, or Mark Sedgwick⁶⁷² are basically self-appointed wanna-be gurus, careerists and promoters of a kind, pushing an ill-considered new age esoterism and religiosity that lacks objectivity. They are dealers in delusions, promoters of esoteric palaver. Traditionalism and “gnosis” are gifts to corporate autocracy and much of academic religious studies is an exercise in promotional and romantic subjectivism. They are creating a history of falsehoods, a propaganda system that promotes delusions for the young. This is not a good thing for anyone except these men, who create a sort of guild of spritual promoters that produces nothing but a system of mental controls that keeps the unjust in power.

Religious studies has been for too long a force for reaction and subjectivism under the guidance of Huston Smith and Eliade. The shadow of William James Varieties of Religious Experience is long and unfortunate. There needs to be a new willingness to throw over the subjectivist heritage of William James, Huston Smith and Mircea Eliade and embrace science and the questioning of religion in a scientific way. In a time where corporate money is doing all it can to subvert reason and academic freedom so as to turn university into profit making ventures, academics like Versluis are welcome additions to an education system going into self-destruction.

However, using the age old tools of critical thinking, logic and sense perception will help others see through the assault on reason and science that traditionalism and ‘gnosis’ are really about.

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Rationality and science 1995 <http://www.chomsky.info/articles/1995----02.htm>

⁶⁷² See Sedgwick’s Western Sufism: From the Abbasids to the New Age

Book 2
The Paranoid Fictions of Rene Guenon and his
Followers:
Trampling Rights and History under Ideology

This is the shortest of the three books and is concerned mostly with Rene Guenon and some of his precursors, competitors, ideas and followers. It culminates in a the last essay, perhaps the most important one in this book, which is a chapter by chapter Review and refutation of Guenon's Reign of Quantity, a book that has never been reviewed before with any kind of accuracy. This essay was probably written in 2013. It shows clearly how the Guenonian system is a system of make believe and situates it in the context of extreme and paranoid 20th century literature. The chapter called "Traditionalist Executioners: The Violation of Human Rights in De Maistre, Guenon, Schuon, Krishna, and Khadir" is rather important to all these books and was written fairly early Perhaps as early as 2000. It deals with the moral question of why religions are so often immoral and violates human rights in their basic outlook and behavior, as well as the unethical activities of their fictional gods and how they often embody political cruelty. The Chapter on "Innocent the III" could have been put in the third book, but I decided to leave it in the Guenon section, as it defines the Christian political system at its apogee, which was important to traditionalist ideology or their political metaphysics.

The essays in the book are central to my overall thesis, but man of them related but tangential. Guenon is merely an arcane lacunae in the

history of far right mysticism. So this central book is not necessarily the center of the book as a whole, though it does contain some of the original material written in 1996, written as an illustration of my Master's thesis. However, I should point out that the first and last or first and third books are continuous. The main thesis began in the first book, and concrete applications explored in the third book. The essays in the first book continues into the third book and so the second book is rather isolated, and focuses mostly on specialized studies of Guenon and his work. In the first book, Religion as Politics, the relation of varieties of religion and politics is considered as examples of social control, and theories of religion are analyzed and compared with the theory of evolution. In Persistent Delusions, the third book, the essays on anti-Science or the Eucharistic controversies, as well as language and art are important and continue to develop ideas considered earlier. History is widely considered in the last book, particularly the history that leads to modern science. Therefore, the second book is rather solitary, and focuses mostly on specialized studies of Guenon and his work.

However, in the present book there are some rather fun and interesting forays into obscure history, which I rather enjoyed researching. One example is the essay on Innocent III, which explores some strange and interesting byways in medieval history and how it had influence in the 19th and 20th centuries. Another is "Guenon, Action Francaise and the Pivotal year of 1927", which deals with a pivot point in Guenon's life where he was influenced by personal and political events to move even further to the right than the fascists and Catholics with whom he had been associating. . In any case, this book is about questioning an intellectual who created one of the more far right political/religious groups of the last century.

. The Paranoid Fictions of Rene Guenon and his Followers:
Trampling Rights and History under Ideology

1. Critics of Guenon
2. Creating Theofascist Fictions:
Guenon in Relation to Action Francaise, Blavatsky, Liebenfels and
the Knights Templar.
 1. Guenon, Action Francaise and the Pivotal Year of 1927
 2. The Craft of Spiritual Charlatans: Guenon's Rivals:
Blavatsky, Lanz von Liebenfels,
and Encausse
 3. Selling the Big Lie: ;Innocent the III and Fairy Tales of the
Knights Templar
3. Traditionalist Executioners: The Violation of Human Rights in
De Maistre, Guenon, Schuon, Krishna, and Khadir
4. Rene Guenon and Alexander Dugin: Destroying Human Rights
and Creating a "Super-Auschwitz")
5. Traditionalism in Decay: Some Notes on Fringe Traditionalists
6. The Falsity of Prophethood: Why Poetry Fails
(Guenon, Hirschman, Chomsky and other Romantic, Paranoid
Histories in the 20-21st Centuries)
- Part I: Reign of Quantity and Paranoid Literature
- Part II the History of Poetry
7. Rene Guenon's Reign of Quantity: a Review of a Paranoid Text
- 8 A Note on Schuon's Gatherings and Guenon's Death

Critics of Guenon

“Traditionalism is inherently reactionary – [and imagines] any change away from the established forms of the past by definition must be wrong. In order not to be just another subjective ideology, Traditionalism relied on its claim to truth. If that divine truth is thought to be a tendentious construct, then Traditionalism is as open to question as any other ideology. “

Ed Crooks

From “John Cage’s Entanglements with the Ideas of Coomaraswamy”

It is clear that not just Guenon’s and Schuon’s ideas but all religious ideas are a tendentious construct. But few have addressed the implications of this as yet. So let’s look at some of the skimpy historical criticism of these writers, the majority of it neither public or well known. It is harder to find critics of Guenon than critics of Schuon. There are a few open critics of Schuon, though there are many scared ones who refuse to say anything publicly, since Schuon, like Scientology, has hired thugs who like to sue anyone who uses free speech against them. There are a few critics of Evola, such as Roger Griffin and Thomas Sheehan, among others. However, most of Evola’s and Schuon’s main ideas come from Guenon. So, in order to really understand what went wrong with Evola and Schuon, Dugin and others, critical insight must be applied to Guenon. Sedgwick failed to do this. Someone needs to assess this thinker in order to assess his followers more effectively. Once I began to do that the way was open to questioning religion as a whole.

The Traditionalists in general followed Guenon’s mania for secrecy partly in an effort to hide morally repugnant actions. It is essential to remove the veils of secrecy as much as possible and render the

Traditionalist movement as transparent as possible. No one has written a good critical assessment of Guenon's person in relation to his ideas. This could only happen in France, where most of the relevant documents are. Here I say what I know of his person and could be more thorough in respect to his ideology. But I think I have gone plenty far enough in these books. No one has written about him who has escaped from his ideology.

Within the circles of the traditionalists themselves there are only insignificant criticisms of Guenon. For instance, Frithjof Schuon (1907-98), a long time follower of Guenon, whose career as self-appointed "Shaykh" was largely a Guenonian creation⁶⁷³, criticizes Guenon on the subject of Guenon's neglect of Buddhism.⁶⁷⁴ But this is a trivial critique.

⁶⁷³ Guenon largely created and installed Schuon in the 1930's as his hope of a Sufi "tariqa" in Europe. Schuon was already writing for Guenon's traditionalist magazine, and the Guenonians often edited his texts, since they did not think they were good enough. By 1950 Schuon had disappointed Guenon. By 1990 Schuon was insanely claiming to be "the last manifestation of the Logos at the end of time" and enjoying nude women dancing around him. This is certainly not to say that Schuon was a degenerate Guenonian. Guenon and his teacher Papus were already delusional all by themselves. The whole project from the beginning was based on delusions. Each local leader from Lings to Nasr to others, had their own delusions to nurture. Dogmas, taken from Guenon or other religions were used as parameters to keep followers in line.

⁶⁷⁴ They argued over the role of Buddhism, which Guenon slighted in Schuon's estimation, and over various points in Christian dogma. But Schuon was thoroughly a Guenonian, and their points of commonality far outweigh their differences. Schuon read Guenon's books at age 17 and did not split from Guenon till he was over 40. He was utterly immersed in Guenon's ideology for over 20 years. According to Clavelle, the Guenonians even corrected and edited Schuon's writings, which they thought poor, through the 1930's. Since the child molestation case of 1991 which involved Schuon (enough evidence now exists to indicate Schuon's guilt) many Guenonians and followers of Evola have tried to exaggerate the differences between Guenon and Schuon. But this is inaccurate. The differences between the various Traditionalists are slight and are often exaggerated by the Traditionalists themselves, each of whom belongs to the tradition of romantic individualism, despite their hypocritical hatred of this same individualism. Each of them considers their contribution unique, hence their similarity and hence their inability to tolerate each other's points of view.

The Traditionalists like to use Latin, Hindu or other old terms for what really are modern constructions. The so called perennial religion is an invention, a confection, a 20th century suburban wedding cake of forced analogies and fanciful associations of ideas. But when you call it the "Religio Perennis" it sounds less like a phony Disney wedding cake and more like an ancient manuscript written on parchment by Plato and Aquinas themselves. With the

However, Frithjof Schuon criticizes Guenon only to try to show that he is more Guenonian than Guenon, as it were. Schuon's main concern was always for his own supreme election, transcendent status and power positioning. He had to dominate Guenon posthumously, since he could not do it during his life. Schuon was very much a throwback to the science-hating Scholastics, who tried to seek social position through the promotion of a dogmatic ideology. Posturing was everything in Schuon's world, as Guenon's or all the religions, really.

Schuon was essentially a cowardly man who hid behind his "wives" and books.⁶⁷⁵ Schuon felt that Guenon was leaving out a possible avenue of exploitable data, by leaving Buddhism out of the "transcendent unity of the religions". The whole notion of the "transcendent unity" was a Guenonian fabrication, though others had thought of it before him. The various religions are social constructions, reflecting different social conditions. Any comparison between them is accidental and merely reflects the fact that humans make similar social arrangements in different cultures, given our genetic proclivities and the environmental and historical causes that have brought about power structures. There is no "essential" or esoteric religion: the whole artifice of the so-called "perennial" religion involves convincing people of the illusion of each religion being a subset of a larger imaginary entity they call "esoterism" or the "religio perennis"—the perennial religion.⁶⁷⁶ As Fritz Staal has written

Traditionalists pose and perception is everything. It is all a theatre made up of supposed sacred props stolen from expensive art books and antique shops.

⁶⁷⁵ Schuon's books are really pretentious veils ---an elaborate game of hide and seek and pretending. Schuon makes poses and strikes positions to situate himself at the head of all the religions.

⁶⁷⁶ The Traditionalists like to use Latin, Hindu or other old terms for what really are modern constructions. The so called perennial religion is an invention, a confection, a 20th century suburban wedding cake of forced analogies and fanciful associations of ideas. But when you call it the "Religio Perennis" it sounds less like a phony Disney wedding cake that Schuon group really was and more like an ancient manuscript written on parchment by Plato and Aquinas

“there is a clear parallel between the doctrine of irrationalism which entitles its advocates to get away without providing arguments, and the doctrine of esoterism, which entitles its advocates to get away without providing arguments”⁶⁷⁷

The many different views of mystics on mysticism are not consistent with each other; and most of them result from prior convictions and are mere dogmatic assertions.. Where there is consistency it is due to human psychology having similar features across cultural boundaries. Esoterism is a construction, an invention and not a reality. Indeed, esoterism is really the late and degenerate effort to keep a religion alive by trying to sell its “deeper secrets” to a less and less gullible audience. The concept of esoterism is just the elaboration of a class of professional intellectual metaphysical speculators trying to keep their jobs or exert the influence to make themselves famous. It is an elaborate and baroque embellishment that elaborates and deepens delusions. Religious studies professors are particularly important to sustaining this hoax.

Schuon says somewhere that religion no longer works and that is the reason why esoterism is necessary. This is right, though Schuon did not grasp or would not admit that esoterism is a fraud too. Esoterism is a new attempt to make a religion that last a little longer as it all goes into eclipse. Sedgwick says that Schuon’s main fault is to “substitute a fantasy for genuine esoterism”. But there is no genuine esoterism, and

themselves. With the Traditionalists pose and perception is everything. It is all a theatre made up of supposed sacred props stolen from expensive art books and antique shops. So you find the traditionalists using pretentious terms like “Deo Volente” or “Mutatis mutandis”, “Inshalla” or Sophia Perennis. What they really longed for was a neo-fascist empire built into a theocratic caste system, and speaking in a language that only the effete and religious can understand. This doesn’t mean that they were particularly bright people, it only means they aspired to lord over everyone despite their lack of real human insight or deep understanding of the condition of beings on earth.

⁶⁷⁷ Quoted in Hall, David. Islamic Mysticism, A Secular Perspective. Prometheus Books. Amherst New York. 2000. Pgs 139

Sedgwick, like Schuon, is unfortunately the one that is living a fantasy. Sedgwick's fantasy is called Islam or Sufism ⁶⁷⁸

Although the basis idea of an “inner kernel” of a religion goes back far in the past (Sufism, Kabbalah, Taoism etc.) the concept of exoteric as opposed to esoteric was made up by the charlatan Gerard Encausse. Encausse's “esoterism” is a fiction. Encausse abused Aristotle's definitions of the terms. He worked for Tsar Nicholas II and Tsarina Alexandra both as physician and “occult consultant”, which means that he was a fake, a table tapper⁶⁷⁹ or conjurer. Encausse may have gotten the idea of the “esoteric” from a misreading of Aristotle and Guénon followed suit.



Gerard Encausse (Papus)
Guenon's first big influence

The first use of the idea of exoteric/exoteric goes back to Aristotle. He made a distinction between works intended for the public (exoteric), and the more technical works intended for use within the school

⁶⁷⁸ Sedgwick, *Against the Modern World* pg.177

⁶⁷⁹ Like Papus and other spiritualist charlatans of the period, Guénon writes a lot of nonsense about spirits from beyond the grave Guénon writes with the usual authority about nonexistent events as follows subjects as follows “It is well known that what can be evoked [in a séance] does not at all represent the real, personal being, which is henceforth beyond reach because it has passed to another state of existence...but only the inferior elements that the individual has in a manner left behind in the terrestrial domain following the dissolution of the human composite which we call death” (Guénon, *L'erreur spirite*, 54–55).

(esoteric). There is nothing mystical about 'esoterism'. It is a fiction. Modern scholars commonly assume these latter to be Aristotle's own (unpolished) lecture notes (or in some cases possible notes by his students). So esoteric has nothing spiritual about it, on the contrary it merely refers to more technical shop talk. Encausse and Guenon misuse the terms to mean something that is fictional. There are no inner spiritual teachings in the mystical traditions, there are merely increasingly secretive and bogus fictions made up by specialists who are inventing nomenclature (shop talk) for things that have no reality behind them, other than to create a male-centered hierarchy or a bogus caste system. It is all about the grand "Pooh Bah".⁶⁸⁰ If you crawl down into the dregs of Sufism. Taoism, Christian esoterism or Masonic organizations at the very center is nothing, mere subjectivist mumbo jumbo that turns out to be about hierarchy and control. The idea of "Esoterism/exoterism" was a useful distinction as it liberated charlatans like Encausse and Guenon from the old detritus of the faiths. Encausse was, of course, Guenon's first and perhaps most important teacher⁶⁸¹ and mentor. The idea of esoterism was idea born of conceit and pride, elitism, the imaginary "Intellect" and phony visions of these men.

⁶⁸⁰ According the Wikipedia, not always the most trusted source,--- "Grand Poobah is a term derived from the name of the haughty character Pooh-Bah in Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Mikado* (1885). In this comic opera, Pooh-Bah holds numerous exalted offices, including "First Lord of the Treasury, Lord Chief Justice, Commander-in-Chief, Lord High Admiral... Archbishop of Titipu, and Lord Mayor" and Lord High Everything Else. The name has come to be used as a mocking title for someone self-important or high-ranking and who either exhibits an inflated self-regard or who has limited authority while taking impressive titles the term..... "Grand Poobah" was used on the television show *The Flintstones* as the name of a high ranking elected position in a secret society. Fred Flintstone and his friend Barney Rubble were members of the Loyal Order of Water Buffaloes Lodge No. 26." This is esoterism in a nutshell. This appears to be accurate however.

⁶⁸¹ Encausse was in many cults, such as Cabalistic order of the Rosy Cross, the theosophists and the Martinists. Guenon followed the ideas of Papus, including the ability to tell lies and make stuff up to exalt himself. One of Guenon's silly cult names was as Tau Palingénus, Guenon was a member 'Synésius' (Léonce-Eugène Joseph Fabre des Essarts) Gnostic Church in 1909 (other sources claim 1908) after his expulsion from the Martinist Order. Guénon became the editor of "La Gnose", a periodical described as 'the official organ of the Universal Gnostic Church'

Esoterism really amounts to a new religious fiction, one meant to appeal to those who really doubt the truth of the major religions. It prolongs the life of the dying religions, which are no longer needed.

The religions grew up in different places in different times and though there was obvious influence of them on each other, they are independent constructions, social creations, not genetic productions. Religion is not genetic anymore that politics is, though obviously genetic traits play into organization and structure of both religion and politics. Religious do not explain the world so much as the organize people into manageable groups, and thus religions are inherently political. Indeed, it is doubtful that religion and politics are at root different from each other at all. The social hierarchy of Chimps and Bonobos already suggest political organization, as chimps form into male dominate societies who kill to show power and Bonobos are more matriarchal and tend to be less conflict driven..

Positing a universal religion can only be done by creating false analogies, which is what Guenon and his followers spent most of their lives doing. Guenon and Schuon create a lot of false analogies. Guenon wrote that he was intrinsically independent and thus superior to the religions because “whoever understands the unity of traditions... is necessarily... ‘unconvertible’ to anything” The fiction of such an esoterism or “super-religion” has been a potent fiction, as I will show in this essay. From the point of view of the super religion all the other religions are merely “exoteric” or lesser vehicles of imperfect truth. This is a grand idea for conceited men.

But since the distinction between “eso” and “exo” is itself false, one cannot take any of this seriously on its own terms.

In any case, my point here is that Schuon was Guenonian, through and through. He was a convert to the super religion of ‘esoterism’ that Guenon co-opted from Encausse. Guenon made Schuon what he

became, though in later years Schuon added his own unique obsessions to Guenon's paranoid metaphysical theatre. Guenon's statement in a letter quoted in Louis Charbonneau-Lassay's Le Lièvre qui Rumine states that "I have been surrounded, all unsuspecting, with a veritable network of spying and betrayal." (p. 53). ⁶⁸²This is typical of Guenon's paranoia, so much in evidence in his work as a whole. Guenon writes in a letter to Evola for instance that photography is "dangerous" and he has no photos of himself. Guenon thought that people might misuse such images, presumably,, for malicious and magical operations. ⁶⁸³ Guenon says many nutty things like this.

I am sorry to say that within the Traditionalist school there are no effective critical assessments of Guenon, at least that I have been able to find. Indeed, I have looked to find just one critical assessment⁶⁸⁴ of Guenon's book Reign of Quantity and the Signs of the Times such as the one I wrote below, but I cannot find one. This is partly due to it being due to it being such a ridiculous book that no one serious will bother with it. But also there are many unthinking and like-minded adulators are able to get through it and write all sorts of adulatory nonsense about it. Unfortunately there are many gullible people who have no critical faculties at all and swallow Guenon's ideas hook line and sinker.

⁶⁸² The atmosphere of lying and secrecy around Guenon is suggested by some of Charbonneau-Lassay's behavior. Sedgwick records how he tried to set up a secret Catholic order akin to Schuon tariqa Maryamiyya. It was called rather pretentiously, "Fraternity of the Cavaliers of the Divine Paraclete" But he "dreamed up" the order, says Sedgwick. He also invented the traditional rites to go with the order. The "practices of the order" are "simply too convenient to be credible" says Sedgwick. (see Sedgwick pg. 81) Of course the Maryamiyya was itself literally "dreamed up" by Schuon and his followers. Orthodoxy is a way of pretending that religious delusions are real by tracing lineages and lines of descent to some person who dreamed the whole thing up to begin with. But in the case of the traditionalists we can see how the whole charade began and developed. It is harder to do this Islam or Christianity, but it is clear that a similar process of fabrication took place. The unorthodoxy of the Schuon cult is the exception that proves the rule that all orthodoxy is bogus, a rule of reason that services a basic delusion. Orthodoxy and unorthodox this a false alternative. Impeccable practice of a religion does not make it any less a delusion.

⁶⁸³ (see Cahier de l'Herne, 1985. Publiée par Evola dans La Destra, en mars 1972.)

⁶⁸⁴ Besides that of David Fideler which is very short and I discuss this below.

Another reason for this is that the Traditionalist authors themselves promoted the vicious idea that any critic of theirs was necessarily evil or in conspiracy against them. Who wants to enter into a foray with such a malicious group of fanatics and “true believers”, in Eric Hoffer’s excellent phrase. They are not just fundamentalist esoterists but Moslems as well, and Islam has virtually banished criticism and free speech too. Both Guenon and Schuon despised free speech and banished any criticism. They have a paranoid, cultish ‘Them versus Us’ attitude” rather like Christ or George Bush, both of whom said, “either you are with me or against me”... Indeed, both Schuon and Guenon had deeply paranoid reactions to the slightest criticism, and a large part of the secrecy of these groups is the desire to avoid examination and criticism. Unlike science and good scholarship which welcomes criticism, these cowards hate it and run from it, or they attack their critics ad hominem or send the vicious emails and try to cyber bully them into submission .

The following passage from a letter by Guenon illustrates how deep Guenon’s paranoia was and casts some light on the psychology behind the Reign of Quantity. Evola had written Guenon about an illness he had. Guenon replies that he was sick in 1939. “I was confined to bed for six months, unable to make the slightest move. Everybody thought this was a case of rheumatism, but the truth is we all knew who acted as the unconscious vehicle of a maleficent influence”. Supposedly the man was sent away and Guenon recovered.⁶⁸⁵ But the story shows that Guenon was sick in a way similar to schizophrenics I have met who imagine

⁶⁸⁵ Schuon had a similar tendency to demonize his critics. He also was prone to having convenient asthma attacks when he heard something he didn’t like. He also would blame his personal illnesses on the moral faults of others, claiming that he was sick because they did this or that. It is odd that both Guenon and Schuon used illness as a form of moral blackmail. I suspect that Schuon learned this from Guenon and kept up the practice. It is unclear to me where Guenon derived this tendency from--- did he acquire it as a result of his paranoid tendencies or did he acquire it as a strategy to manipulate others from the con-man Encausse or another of his teachers?

elaborate universal plots against their persons. Anyone who spoke out against Guenon or Schuon was branded as evil. Criminal or mentally ill. Guenon's Reign of Quantity and the Signs of the Times is a classic of schizophrenic or Paranoid literature.

There few critics of Guenon I have been able to find who offer criticisms that present complications. There are no relatively disinterested studies of Guenon. These critics present views that may or may not be cogent enough to be a real part of a historiography, however. This is not to say that they are false. But I am not sure that they are true and finding out the truth is not easy in the case of some of these criticisms. One of these critics, for instance, is Marie France James, a Canadian Catholic who was connected to the University of Paris. James critical book about Guenon is Esotérisme et Christianisme: Autour de René Guénon(1981).

I should mention, before discussing Marie James' view of Guenon, that the introduction of James's book is written by Jacques-Albert Cuttat. Cuttat was not just a follower of the Traditionalists, but along with Titus Burkhardt, he was an intimate childhood friend of Schuon. He was later a disciple of Schuon, as well as a "muqadam" in his cult. I heard about Cuttat in the Schuon cult. He was in the Schuon cult early on in the 1940's or early 1950's and was very close personally to Schuon. But in the 1950's he began to see through it and completely renounced it and Schuon. Marie James has a photo of Schuon, Cuttat and Burckhart in her book from 1930. Jacques-Albert Cuttat worked at the Swiss Legation in Argentina from 1938 to 1946. He has been accused of conducting unauthorized private business and maintaining questionable wartime contacts with known Nazis. This evidently occurred while Cuttat was still in the Schuon cult, which itself raises unanswered questions. He is accused of being a "key figure" who brokered a deal with Evita Peron to create an Nazi "escape apparatus" whereby the Catholic Church

helped known Nazis escape from Germany. ⁶⁸⁶ He was evidently part of this so called “Rat line”, whereby the Nazis escaped justice. In spite of those allegations, the Swiss government promoted Cuttat to chief of protocol of the Swiss Foreign Service. Cuttat got mixed up in helping in the relocation of various Nazi’s to Argentina. He met with Evita Peron, the wife of the Argentinean fascist dictator, Juan Peron. Cuttat follows the general pattern of traditionalists attracted to far right interests and causes. Did Schuon know his childhood friend was a friend to the Nazis?. He had to have. Cuttat was one of his best friends. I suspect he did and did not care or perhaps even supported these efforts....

In any case, Cuttat’s relation to the Traditionalists is deep if ambiguous. It might be worth someone looking into this further. The fact that Cuttat later renounced aspects of Guenon and Schuon’s ideology is interesting. I have seen texts of Cuttat where he shows his dislike of Schuon for various reasons. I spoke with various people in the early 1990’s who claimed that Cuttat left the Schuon cult in the early 1950s because he had dinner at the Schuon’s and saw naked women sitting at the dinner table with Schuon, not at all an unusual thing in Schuon’s house. Schuon liked to have dinner with his women naked too. Maude Murray told me that Schuon’s obsession with nudity began long before his 1966 “vision of the Virgin” in which he has a sexual vision of her. Schuon says in his Memoirs that he had “the almost irresistible urge to be naked like her little child; from this event onwards I went naked as often as possible”. But it appears that this need to be naked a lot was a much earlier obsession. There are photos of Schuon meditating or posing in his prayer room with no clothes on as far back as the 1930’s or 40’s. The vision of the Virgin that justified nudity in 1965 was just one of many charlatan style visions Schuon had to justify what was already on his mind anyway. He wanted Barbara Perry, who was married, to become

⁶⁸⁶ <http://www.consortiumnews.com/1999/c010699a.html>

his 2nd wife and had his vision of the Virgin partly to justify that. Schuon's earliest "primordial gatherings" begin in his bourgeois suburban dining room in the 1950's or earlier, suggesting a surrealist tableau or Manet's "Dejeuner sur l'herbe". Later, Maude Murray and Sharlyn Romaine often eat dinner with Schuon nude, Maude told me. But who cares? I think it is rather silly. Like Manet's painting "Luncheon on the Grass"—it is mildly shocking to those that are shocked by nudity. However, this desire to shock the bourgeoisie was common among artists in the early 20th century, as in Duchamp playing chess with a nude woman. Schuon's rather infantile need to be naked is clearly part of his mania.

Evidently, Cuttat was offended by the nudity. Sedgwick says that Cuttat left Schuon because Schuon introduced things into his teachings "which are in reality no more than [the fruits of Schuon's] imagination without any traditional value whatsoever." But of course this is Sedgwick's own preference, since he is an uncritical promoter of Islamic tradition as a *sine qua non*. Sedgwick does not understand that most things with "traditional value" are by definition imaginary. In any case, Schuon and Cuttat disagreed about various things having to do with Christianity,--- this much is obvious from Cuttat's writings. But the fact is that Cuttat was helping Nazi's escape from Germany before he left the Schuon cult.⁶⁸⁷ This hardly leaves Cuttat with much ethical standing room, or Schuon either. Why didn't Schuon protest it? Schuon was his "spiritual master then" and thus shares to some degree in the guilt of his follower.

⁶⁸⁷ Cuttat is highly critical of Guenon and Schuon in his book The Encounter of Religions pg 17-18 (translations by Pierre de Fontnouvelle) and even implies that their 'super-religion' or esoteric "transcendent unity" is 'satanic'. He writes of the "promethean nature of certain temptations inherent in the meeting of religions", He is referring to Schuon and Guenon in this section of Traditionalism. Others would also condemn the whole idea of a super-religion and being based on pride and delusions of grandeur

In any case, back to Marie France James. First it should be said she was a conservative catholic and rather a fundamentalists and everything she says is tainted by that point of view. James must have been partly inspired by Cuttat in her dislike of Guenon, though she seems to have done a good deal of research on him. Indeed, the book of James appears to be partly a Cuttat inspired work `

Like Frithjof Schuon, Guenon thought of himself, conveniently, as beyond morality, and both men needed a sort of worship from others to feel normal. They both felt that whatever they did was beyond anyone's judgment. These are characteristics of a sociopath. Neither of them was beyond basic ethical or legal norms, as much as they might have tried to exempt themselves. Guenon liked to assume false personas and pseudonyms like Palingenisis and Sphinx, two such fake names he used in his writings. He was not beyond lying and playing elaborate secrecy games. For instance, at one point he pretended to be anti-Masonic and another he pretends to be Masonic, using fake names to deceive those he was involved with. ⁶⁸⁸ In later life he becomes the imaginary victim of such attacks himself, accusing others of deceit and role playing. He appears to have had such attacks out of guilty conscience for some of the sleazy things he did.

⁶⁸⁸ Guenon resembles Leo Taxil in this respect, who also took an ambiguous stand toward Catholicism and Masonic organizations. Taxil was a charlatan too. His real name was Marie Joseph Gabriel Antoine Jogand-Pagès. Taxil created a series of hoaxes and bogus stories about freemasonry. Conspiracy theories about freemasonry as common and are largely the creation of religions, be it Catholic or Moslem. (see Abdollah Shahbazi's Plutocracy for a Moslem version of this fiction) Freemasonry is really just a series of business and secular organizations, men's clubs that grew up in order to promote the ideals of the renaissance and the French revolution. It had cultish aspects. The threat they posed was to the more ancient systems of make believe like Catholicism or Islam. Fundamentalist Christians also promote a Jewish Freemason conspiracy theory that is nonsense. Guenon ran with the satanic conspiracy very far and his book Reign of Quantity is a descendent of Taxil's hoax writings which contained fictitious eyewitness verifications of participation in Satanism, just as Guenon promoted the fiction that satanic conspiracy inflicts psychiatry. Guénon hated Taxil and freemasonry that did not want to return to the medieval model of it Guenon idealistically espoused. His theory was just another fiction by a man adept at creating fictions. Both men were charlatans who used scurrilous means to create myths and propaganda in their cause.

In the 1910's and 20's Guenon is very much a sleazy character, playing one side against another, pretending to be someone he is not, lying, spying and trying to gain power. He is roundly attacked by the anti-Semite catholic Monsieur Jouin of the R.I.S.S.. the attacks on Guenon appear to have been deserved. The whole tenor of attack and counter attack that shapes the concert of Guenon's life derives from his own duplicitous and deceitful nature. What can be said about Marie France James is that she is writing as a Catholic attacking Guenon who she sees as a Mason and apostate, not entirely without justice, from her point of view. James sees Guenon's deceitful pride and need of power as a form of Satanism. All claims of Satanism are of course ridiculous as Satan is merely another myth, like Jesus, invented by Christians. There have been few Satanist cults in history and the ones that have existed were mostly adolescent in form and content. Cuttat came to see the traditionalists as "satanic" too. During conversations, Rama Coomaraswamy called Schuon satanic several times as did Wolfgang Smith

These ridiculous religious slurs and invectives are really part of the whole problem of religion. Religion is firstly a system of mental controls and then a system of political control. Slurs, invectives, magical thinking, superstitions, outrageous and unlikely beliefs, artificial categories, fictions and make believe are all tools religions use to keep minds and behavior in order. It is true that orthodox religion is far worse in terms of control than anyone who is opposed to orthodox religion. Calling someone a Satanist is more or less irrelevant.⁶⁸⁹ I don't

⁶⁸⁹ Anton LaVey, author of *The Satanic Bible* started a satanic group in 1966 which was prone to excessive posing and pretense. It made him some money. Satanic Ritual Abuse is virtually non-existent. It was often claimed in the 1980's and 90's that reports of physical and sexual abuse of individuals occurred in the context of occult or Satanic rituals. The panic was created by testimony of children and adults that was obtained using discredited, therapeutic and interrogation techniques. Various traditionalist hack writers have tried to resurrect this nonsense

believe in evil or the “anti-Christ” as a metaphysical principle. These are politically motivated and stigmatizing hate speech and fairy tale ideas of the same sort that brought us the witch trials in the 1690’s or the Inquisition. James goes too far when she says that Guenon had a “diabolical” sort of pride. Certainly Guenon was ridiculously elitist and prone to despise just about everything except his own very narrow interests; this is evident in all he wrote. But it does not help to call him diabolical or satanic. James claims that Guenon was guilty of “apostasy” from the Catholic Church and that he was an evil man--- or to more exact---- she says that for Guenon “the Spiritual Authority is the authority of Satan”. It is certainly true he was drunk on power, just as the catholic Church has always been. This is mere mythologizing and I see no point in it. I see no point in calling Guenon evil, Satanic, diabolic or calling him an apostate. I disagreed with Rama Coomaraswamy calling Schuon “evil” too as he used to do often, as did Wolfgang Smith. Rama was obsessed with “evil” and fancied himself an “exorcist” and even did some exorcism rites.. Yes, Schuon is theofascist, but this is a precise judgment made about his political religiosity, not an expression of religious hate speech.

It is true that Guenon and the traditionalists in general, seems to have cultural a sort of love affair with the devil and probably wrote more about darkness and evil than he wrote about ‘god’. However, such medievalism both in Guenon and in James is absurd in a world where humans have rights. As I will explain later, I do not believe in the concept of evil and certainly do not think there is anything real about “Satan” or the “Anti-Christ” or other mythic fictions promoted by fanatical

and claim that Satanic groups are behind the propensity of Catholic Priests to abuse children. The satanic ritual abuse allegations were so widespread and utterly discredited that skepticism about should be the automatic default position. What those who use this slander want to accomplish is not to purge society of evil acts, but rather to obscure real child abuse issues. Those who accuse Catholic priests of being Satanists want to white-wash the Church that has harbored these child abusers.

Traditionalists and fundamentalists. We are beyond this sort of archaic childishness now. M.J James indulges in the same sort of cultish demonization of the other that Guenon himself so often employs. Guenon was not an evil man; he was a sick man, who probably suffered from a persecution mania, who was locked into a cultural setting that made him favor a theofascist form of spirituality. He is hardly alone in this.

⁶⁹⁰James dislikes Guenon's affection for the Masonic organizations of Europe because some of them were anti-Catholic. That is a political determination. ⁶⁹¹ I have no side in such arguments. I am not religious and think all religions are more or less suspect. So James and Guenon are more alike than different as far as I am concerned.

The Traditionalists hate James for her politics. Indeed, both groups call each other evil devils because of political determinations. Of course, the standard reply of the Traditionalists to attacks such as James' is that she criticizes "esoterism" from an "exoteric" perspective, that is, in her case, a catholic perspective. From the Traditionalist's point of view, that invalidates her claims, because in all cases only esoterism has the superior viewpoint, they believe. Objectively "esoterism" is just fancy religion dressing up as elitist and secretive hierarchy. Guenon, Schuon and others, regularly use this self-serving argument that they are the

⁶⁹⁰ James, Marie France, [Esotérisme et christianisme: Autour de René Guénon](#) (1981)

Relié. M.F. James discusses the relation of some of the Occultism of Guenon's milieu to the rise of fascism... I cannot yet assess all of her claims, as my poor French only allows me to read so much

⁶⁹¹ Guenon's evidently wished to reform Masonic societies along more conservative and reactionary lines, declaring liberal Masons to be somehow illegitimate. My grandfather was a Mason, and Masonry is basically a club to promote and facilitate business deals, feel important and stand above other men. Guenon's excessive pride attracted him to this. The Masons were a sort of early corporate boys club, for men of course, and still function as such. The spiritual pretensions of the Masons are similar to boys club theatrics, ---rather like boys in a tree house who make up rituals to exclude kids they don't like or create hierarchy among themselves. The difference is that the boys clubs are inhabited by businessmen and adults who have less innocent motives than boys. One could argue that much of religion is really boys clubbing. Guenon was a sort of boys club leader, as it were, who got mad and the Masonic society of a certain Joün. It helps to get anywhere in business if you are a Mason, I was told when I lived in the UK. Guenon's Masonic pretensions are part of his spiritual fascism and his obsession with hierarchy, initiation and symbolism.

‘inner truth’ of the truth. In fact, Guenon and Schuon were not special, chosen people and are not superior to anyone. They were merely bigger pretenders than most.

James is trying to protect her belief system against a group of people she rightly sees are trying to raid her religion.⁶⁹² She is correct in that assessment. The Traditionalists are raiders of other religions, cultural vampires, or to put it slightly less dramatically, perennial parasites, who sink their esoteric proboscis into the body of worn and ailing faiths and try to suck life out of them so as to increase the power of elite traditionalism. The traditionalists are as it were the “predatory lenders” of failing religions. Like today’s bankers they try to ‘leverage’ their stock on the false rinds of dying religions. They are religion’s robber barons.

But the parasitical dependence of traditionalism on other religions does not mean that the religions that Guenon raided were themselves innocent victims of upstanding virtue.⁶⁹³ The contrary is true. Religions

⁶⁹² I make this observation in support of James only because I admire her strength in standing up to traditionalism in 1981, long before anyone else had the nerve. . But I make this observation without at all meaning to support James’ rather bigoted Catholicism. I am not a Christian. There were earlier critics of Guenon, a certain Therion, and a Mr. Jouin who was head of the R.I.S.S., and-Masonic organization. But such critics seem to have been mostly religious. Evidently Guenon feared these people so much he got psychosomatic illnesses from obsessively thinking about them. But these names are hard to research in the U.S so I leave it to others.

⁶⁹³ Another critic of Guenon who resembles James and uses her work is Orlando Fedeli, a far right Brazilian Catholic. He also uses Eric Voegelin’s rather bizarre theory of “gnostic” history to attack Guenon. It is true that Guenon has many ‘gnostic’ features, but the terminology misses the point. Fedeli, like James, is mad at Guenon for being a Mason and not being Catholic enough. He runs a far right Catholic place called the Montfort Association. Fedeli and Olavo de Carvalho have a rather vicious exchange or mutual attacks on the internet. Carvalho, who defends Guenon, is evidently a far right ‘philosopher’ and Fedeli is a Catholic and they appear to hate each other. Such vituperation reminds me of Leonardo Da Vinci, who said that one of the reasons he prefers science to religion is that science depends on facts whereas religion results in endless contention over fictions and arguments with no possible resolution. No wonder there are so many religious wars. In any case, it is hard to know what the truth is in such arguments. Carvalho writes me and says he dislikes Guenon’s notion of “Non- Being”, and that Guenon’s metaphysics is a complex structure that is shattered and fallen to the ground. I agree with Da Vinci, arguments about ‘metaphysics’ are arguments about smoke in mirrors. I first heard of the work of Voegelin from Wolfgang Smith who urged me to read him. I tried but found him too Catholic, elitist and very obtuse. His notion of Gnosticism is too obscure to be useful and is widely criticized as such.

have pandered their fairy tales laced with various poisons for millennia. Traditionalism is merely a revival of that same tendency in the modern age, a fake “esoterism” that cannibalizes the diverse religions at will.

Another dubious critic of Guenon⁶⁹⁴ is an anonymous writer on a Martinist website. (Later, I will discuss the Martinist group that Guenon belonged to and which was started by Gerard Encausse) The essay in question raises similar objections to those of Marie France James, accusing Guenon of inordinate pride. That is a true criticism. The anonymous author also claims various things about Guenon of a sexual nature, without real proof. In such cases, proof is very important, because otherwise the motive might be less than honorable. If Guenon had certain homosexual tendencies or smoked hashish or and cigarettes excessively, or had a drug problem----and all these accusations have been made--- one would have to demonstrate it and show how it had an effect on his work. In the case of his excessive smoking this appears to be documented fairly well. He was sick with respiratory illnesses. It is true that Guenon worked hard all his life to obsessively hide the facts of his life behind veils of secrecy, pseudonyms and pretenses. One wonders why. Certainly Guenon’s need to be duplicitous and secretive is a disturbing fact and does have a bearing on his work. He often played the double agent. But more research would have to be done to determine the truth of these allegations. I do not know what he did, exactly, and it is still an open question. That he was a slimy character who was likely to go one way as well as another, was already noticed by Marie France James and others.

All I know about this is that Guenon was initiated into Sufism by

⁶⁹⁴ See also Jan Van Win’s Contra Guenon, which I have only seen parts of and don’t entirely understand well as my poor French is less than perfect. It seems a rather weak work and is still an insider’s critique, which is not very interesting.

Abdul Hadi, a Swedish Orientalist, and artist,⁶⁹⁵ whose birth name was John (Ivan)f Agueli, who was, some say, a homosexual, though he may not have been,⁶⁹⁶ and who was very close to Guenon for some years.⁶⁹⁷ Indeed, as I said, in some ersatz way, he initiated Guenon into Sufism,⁶⁹⁸ and thus started the whole mess of traditionalist pretense.⁶⁹⁹ Other traditionalists have been said to be homosexual too, the Guenon

⁶⁹⁵ His paintings are pretty bad. They are poorly done abstractions hovering on the dissolution of reality. They are sometimes compared to Klee, but would be more accurate to call them the work of a vagabond hippie who never quite understood what he was doing. Klee is a lot smarter than that and has both intelligence and poetry on his side, even if one disagrees with his subjective romanticism.

⁶⁹⁶ People who talk about this subject, or allude to it in some way are not trustworthy for various reasons. Marie France James, Warnon, Dom Devie all have mentioned it discussed it or alluded to it. It is possible that Guenon and Agueli were lovers, but I doubt it. I don't doubt that Guenon would do something like that, but imagining and knowing are two very different things.

⁶⁹⁷ There are letters and possibly a Diary by Agueli, but I have not seen them.

⁶⁹⁸ Aguéli founded the secret Sufi al Akbaryya society and then proceeded to initiate Guénon into Sufi Islam sometime in 1912. This was not really a Sufi order but a sort of play acting for these orientalist thinkers.⁶⁹⁹ On the subject of homosexuality, for instance, see Jeffery Kripal's study of Ramakrishna and his homosexuality, Kali's Child. See also his autobiographical Roads of Excess: Palaces of Wisdom, which has a very interesting discussion of how homosexuality is fostered by structural elements in the make-up of the Catholic Church. In my experience the Traditionalists are both misogynistic and homophobic. Many followers of Schuon hated homosexuals. Rama Coomaraswamy said to me, for instance, that he thinks homosexuals should not only suffer as much as possible in this world, but he wants them to suffer forever in hell too. This sort of homophobic hate speech can be found hinted at on Rama's website too. Such homophobic hatred of homosexuals is fascistic. The Nazis also hated homosexuals, many of whom suffered horrible deaths in Auschwitz and Treblinka and other camps. I am not opposed to consenting adults having whatever legal, harmless, sexual preference they desire. Whitall Perry expresses hatred for homosexuals in his book of quotes. Despite this hatred, or perhaps because of it, some of Schuon's paintings of men have a definite homoerotic flavor.

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follower Father Seraphim Rose for instance.⁷⁰⁰ It does not matter if they were homosexual or not. It is doubtful Guenon did experiment with homosexuality early in his career. It does not matter in any case. The relevant fact is that Arguei was basically a wandering hippie vagabond, and animal rights activist, willing to use violence to further his cause, who ends up in jail once or twice, once for shooting a matador who abused bulls. Guenon's relationship to him is about two men deeply versed in delusions who start trying to multiply their obsessions into systematic forms.

But Guenon was addicted to secrecy and led a rather decadent life, hiding, assuming false identities and pretending to be people he was not. Lying and cover up were part of the personality. There was evidently a good deal of drugs involved, as well all sorts of secret practices going back to Papus and Guenon's early years. The later effort to paint Guenon as a saint is specious. Later Guenon married and had a number of children. That means little too as far as his early indiscretions are concerned. But I am not concerned about Guenon's sexual life. I won't pursue this subject further. But I observe that the fact allegations about Guenon's private life arise because he was so manifestly immoral in many of his actions. He was secretive, duplicitous and paranoid, prone to spying and led a decadent life style, making many enemies. It is no wonder many stories are made up about him that may or may not have basis in fact.

In any case, the homophobic and misogynist nature of traditionalism is a subject all unto its own, and well worth a study by some young scholar. Schuon and Rama Coomaraswamy believed that homosexuality was a heinous sin. I have no sympathy for this homophobia and told Rama this myself. His views on this were horrendous. The main question for me in this essay is what influence

⁷⁰⁰ (<http://www.pomona.edu/Magazine/PCMSPO1/saint.shtml>)

Guenon has. How does he represent the world: what ideas did he push in his work. Why do people fall for his delusional conspiracy theories now? What role do his followers play in the world? That is what matters. It is clear that Guenon was under the influence of forces that led to the Third Reich and the alliance of the Catholic Church with Hitler.

Just as an aside---- one subject mentioned by the Martinist website of Ernest Warnon is interesting as a curious conspiracy theory. Warnon claims that Guenon was a Nazi spy.⁷⁰¹ The not so anonymous author also states that Guenon spied for the Nazis as well as the English during the 1940's in Cairo and that he started "to accept increasingly considerable sums for the services which he rendered to the Third Reich."⁷⁰² I have no idea if this is true or not. But the story he tells is curious. He claims Guenon was first a spy for the English with John Levy. Martin Lings was his contact. Guenon was indeed connected with the English aristocrat and Hindu scholar, Levy, who bought his house for him in Cairo.⁷⁰³ But was he recruited by the Nazis? Warnon claims Guenon works first for the English but then finally worked much more for the Nazis. I doubt this is true. Warnon says that "after having refused to collaborate {with the Vichy government} and having informed on his

⁷⁰¹ It is unknown if Guenon spied for the Nazi's or not, but he was a spy of sorts. Guenon "mingled with most of the leading continental occultists of his time, many of whom were also engaged in espionage, mostly for Germany: Theodore Reuss, the Polaires with Marquès-Rivière, Postel du Mas, Blanchard, and Kremmerz who would later go on to found the equally infamous "Myriam" rite of Naples." See

<http://jwmt.org/v2n16/essay.html>

It is worth noting that the entire Schuon cult was suffused with an atmosphere of conspiracy and paranoia. It was a cold war cult. They always thought they were being spied on. One day a helicopter flew over the area where most of the cult members live and they were all sure they were being spied on by the government.

⁷⁰² I'm told the anonymous authors name is Maurice Warnon.

⁷⁰³ In 1939, John Levy also financed the trip of Schuon to India . Schuon did not see much and immediately turned around and returned. Levy was from an aristocratic English family and died in 1976.

English its English contacts, (Lings?) Guénon becomes a double agent after he is discovered by the Germans. He establishes a network of local staff.....He starts to accept increasingly considerable sums for the services he returns in 3rd Reich and reduces his contribution to the English services gradually.” It seems very unlikely that Lings or Guenon would work for the English as Lings liked the Spanish fascist Franco, and Guenon hated the French government and fascism, and wanted to create a theofascism that was far to the right of the English and the Nazis. This is a pretty outrageous claim that I dismissed a few years ago as being totally unfounded.

There are other rather scabrous references to Guenon as a spy or knowledgeable about German affairs during the Second World War. He seems not to have a very good spy and the English discovered him and used him. ⁷⁰⁴ But I doubt there is much or any truth in these

⁷⁰⁴ “Le climat politique de l'avant-guerre a pour résultat de transformer l'Egypte en une terre idéale pour l'espionage et Guénon se fait recruter par l'Angleterre; une maison est mise à sa disposition dans le faubourg de Doki, à l'ouest du Caire, par l'agent britannique John Levy. C'est dans cet immeuble situé dans la rue Nawal que René Guénon reçoit de nombreux visiteurs: Titus Burckhardt, J. A. Cuttat, mais surtout l'anglais Martin Lings, son contact. F. Schuon y vint aussi et les deux hommes ouvrent un réseau de comptes bancaires en Suisse, sous le prétexte d'y promouvoir l'Islam. Au cours de l'été 1939, René Guénon commence à souffrir de problèmes respiratoires. Grand fumeur, (jusque quatre paquets de cigarettes par jour, selon ses proches) il met sa faible constitution à lourde épreuve surtout à cause du climat du Caire. Il fait plusieurs rechutes, mais se rétablit au début de 1940. Après le désastre de mai 1940 et l'établissement du gouvernement du Maréchal Pétain, Guénon est approché d'abord par Vichy, puis par l'Allemagne. Après avoir refusé de collaborer et averti ses contacts anglais, Guénon se verra dans l'obligation de devenir agent double une fois découvert par les allemands. Il établit un réseau d'agents locaux et se fait adresser du courrier à leurs adresses. Il commence à accepter des sommes de plus en plus considérables pour les services qu'il rend au 3^e Reich et redevient progressivement sa contribution aux services anglais. Guénon est vu fréquemment dans un bar célèbre du Caire, un vrai nid d'espions, où il rencontre une danseuse égyptienne connue. Patriote et nationaliste, cette femme maintient des liaisons avec beaucoup d'officiers, anglais et allemands, et en profite pour renseigner les services égyptiens. Mais Guénon n'est pas un professionnel du renseignement, il parle trop à son amie égyptienne. En quelques mois, il est découvert par les anglais qui décident de l'utiliser, sans doute à son insu, comme agent d'intoxication. Il est placé sous une surveillance discrète jusqu'à la fin de la guerre.

“The political climate of pre-war period results in transforming Egypt into a land ideal for espionage and Guénon was recruited by England and a house is made available in the suburb of Doki, to west of Cairo, by the British by the agent John Levy. (who also was involved with

inventions. I would have to see real evidence. So far there is none. These allegations give this man way too much credit. He was a delusional thinker, and functioned poorly as a human being.

Another website claims that:

“René Guenon mingled with most of the leading continental occultists of his time, many of whom were also engaged in espionage, mostly for Germany: Theodore Reuss, the Polaires with Marquès-Rivière, Postel du Mas, Blanchard, and Kremmerz who would later go on to found the equally infamous “Myriam” rite of Naples.” <http://www.jwmt.org/v2n16/essay.html>

Certainly it appears that to some extent he was involved with some of the formative forces of the early fascist movements, while not being a fascist or Nazi himself,⁷⁰⁵ he had moved farther to the right of the

Schuon) It was in this building in the rue Rene Guenon Nawal receives many visitors: Titus Burckhardt, J. A. Cuttat, and Martin Lings. F. Schuon came too and the two men opened a network of bank accounts in Switzerland, under the pretext of promoting Islam. During the summer of 1939, René Guenon began to suffer from respiratory problems. He was a heavy smoker (up to four packs of cigarettes per day, according to his family) he puts his weak constitution to test especially heavy because of the climate of Cairo. He made several relapses, but recovered in early 1940. After the disaster of May 1940 and the establishment of the Government of Marshal Petain, Guénon was approached first by Vichy, and then by Germany. After refusing to cooperate and being warned his English contacts, Guenon was forced to become a double agent once discovered by the Germans. He establishes a network of local agents and is addressing mail to their addresses. He begins to accept increasingly significant amounts for services rendered to the 3rd Reich and gradually reducing his contribution to English services.”

“

<http://kingsgarden.org/French/Organisations.F/OM.F/Guenon/GuenonBiographie.html>

⁷⁰⁵ Besides Julius Evola and the pro-fascist Guido do Giorgio Guenon was also involved with the fascist and freemason Arturo Reghini (1878-1946). Reghini was a writer, translator, mathematician, and occultist in Italy. He was editor of the magazines *Ignis* and *Atanor*, he published articles “by the noted esotericists Rene Guenon and Julius Evola” says one source. Reghini was interested in the fascism of Mussolini, at least until Mussolini condemned Freemasonry. Evola ended up denouncing Reghini for his freemasonry and evidently trying to sue

Nazi's already in the 1920's as we will see. He did involve himself with Reghina, Giorgio and Evola, who were the leading intellectuals of fascism, and with whom Guénon corresponded very closely. But I have seen no real evidence that he was a Nazi spy. But that he prone to lying and spying is quite clear,---- all his life he was spying on others and seeking shadowy dirt on them, trying to erect himself as the prime exemplar of charlatans. He was a spy on numerous cults and occult groups and he did not mind at all deceiving others and pretending to be something other than himself. Lying was second nature to him as it was to Schuon. Indeed, Guenon's master piece con game was the traditionalist movement itself, which so many people stupidly believe in, unaware how deeply it is based on lies and deceptions. It is clear to me that Guenon was a decadent character, who was racist, caste obsessed, theocratic and flirted with fascism. That makes him utterly distasteful. But a gay spy for the Nazis?: probably not.

Having dispensed with these likely falshoods, I move on now to the relation of traditionalism and far right Catholicism. I don't find either James or the anonymous author (Warnon) of the Martinist assessment of Guenon very informative or satisfying. Yes, Guenon was a right wing fanatic, further right than the Nazis were. Yes, many Catholics were Nazis, in fact, 22% of the SS were part of the Catholic Church. Yes, the Catholic Church tacitly supported the Jewish Holocaust, though Catholic apologists have spilled allot of ink trying to deny this truth .

The following photo shows high ranking Catholics joining in on Nazi salutes.

him and persecute him for it. Guenon was wrapped up in the far right milieu that both Reghini and Evola also were at home in.



Of course, the Church had been involved in horrible business of many kinds for many centuries, from the murder of Native Americans in missions from Canada to California to the Inquisition and the Crusades. This is not to mention the horrible molestations of children so common today by priests protected by the Vatican in Ireland, Holland, the United States, Belgium and other places. As Sam Harris has written

When we consider that so few generations had passed since the church left off disemboweling innocent men before the eyes of their families, burning old women alive in public squares, and torturing scholars to the point of madness for merely speculating about the nature of the stars, it is perhaps little wonder that it failed to think anything had gone terribly amiss in Germany during the war years” ⁷⁰⁶

⁷⁰⁶ Harris, Sam. *The End of Faith*. NY. Norton 2005 pg 105sd

The Church alliance with the Nazi's was to be expected. Supporting or at least turning a blind eye to the German atrocities was an easy matter for them, just as excusing priest molestations of children is common now. Pius 12th (Eugenio Pacelli) negotiated a concordat (a church-state treaty) with Mussolini's fascist regime in Italy in 1929, and pursued a concordat with Germany and he struck a deal with Hitler in 1933. Hitler rightly saw the Concordat with the Vatican as representing papal endorsement of the Nazi regime. Indeed, Pacelli helped the Nazi's in many ways. Just after his election to Pope, Pacelli writes an effusive letter to Hitler saying "we wish to assure you that We remain devoted to the spiritual welfare of the German people...". ⁷⁰⁷He gave approval to their anti-Jewish laws⁷⁰⁸ After Cardinal Pacelli became Pope Pius XII in March 1939, one of his first actions as Pope was to revoke the ban on membership of Action Francaise, allowing all Catholics to join it. Action Francaise became a significant Nazi fifth column in France during WWII. In short, the Church supported the Nazis even if it was not overtly Nazi. The Vatican did nothing for the Jews prior to 1943 and they knew a great deal about what was going on. They had regular reports and did nothing about it. Silence was complicity in that case and the Pius 12 is guilty of partial complicity. Later his views became more helpful. After the German invasion of Italy the Pope did authorize some help for Jews. The Vatican itself hid 477 Jews and another 4,238 Jews were protected in Roman monasteries and convents. But the Nazis arrested 1,007 Roman Jews, the majority of whom were women and children. They were taken to Auschwitz, where 811 were gassed immediately. Of those sent to the concentration camp, 16 survived.

It is no surprise, given the close association of the Church to the far

⁷⁰⁷ Hitchens, Christopher. *God is Not Great*. N.Y. N.Y. Twelve. 2007. pg 238

⁷⁰⁸ Marshal Pétain, head of the Vichy régime, signed the "Statut des Juifs" in Oct. 1940-- "The Holy Father [Pius XII] does not disapprove the recent anti-Jewish measures." Was one of the Vatican's pronouncements a year later

right that Pacelli was admired by some of the traditionalists, notably Schuon and Coomaraswamy⁷⁰⁹, for his far right views and support of a conservative and authoritarian liturgy. Indeed you can read the support of the fanatic Pacelli by Schuon and his cohorts in Studies in Comparative Religion, one of the cult's journals. In a reactionary review written by Whitall Perry, Schuon's close associate, whose wife was "married" to Schuon and who had an affair with Schuon's wife Catherine for many years, Perry attacks a book that records some of the complicity of the Catholic Church headed by Pacelli. Pacelli's Church was compliant with the Holocaust. To this Perry replies that Pacelli was the "last great Pope of the Church." Perry further claims that there is a Guenonian "Subversion" going on in the effort to question Pacelli,--- a grand conspiracy to destroy the Church by criticizing its leaders. Facts rarely concern traditionalists. Perry writes that questioning Pacelli's role in aiding fascism is a "l'Entreprise générale de la Subversion": that

"the formula is simple: to destroy an institution, it is first necessary to demolish the image of its strongest leaders. The systematic auto-dismemberment of the Church in the last decade first postulated the removal of its keystone—the spiritual and intellectual legacy here exemplified in the person of Pius XII."

⁷⁰⁹ Indeed, Pope Pius XII is generally regarded as the last true Pope by most sedevacantists. This is an extreme right wing group—really a cult--- that Rama Coomaraswamy belonged to who believe the Church is corrupted by modernists ideas. And their mass is "invalid", so they believe the pope is not in his chair, there is not pope. They are thus the "vacant seaters" to translate their name. This is really a falsehood since all the popes are vacant seaters—given that the entire Church was founded on the false Donation of Constantine, a forgery. Indeed, Christianity itself is merely a system of make believe. They like the fact that Pacelli ignorantly opposed the theory of evolution. To them Pacelli is saint. Rama told me Hitler was "not so bad" and the Inquisition was a good thing in some ways. You can see some of Rama's fanatical extremist ideas here: <http://www.the-pope.com/articlec.html>

This is nonsense of course, Pacelli was a far-right fanatic of the worst sort. However, what this does show is how the mentality of those close to Schuon internalized Guenonian paranoia and conspiracy theories and applied these to contemporary political realities.⁷¹⁰

Pacelli was an anti-Semite, as was the Church in general at that time. As Christopher Hitchens notes, the Catholic Church had signed an accord or Concordat with the Nazi in July of 1933. This required the Church to make “parish records available to the Nazi state in order to insure who was and who was not racially pure” and German Catholics were ordered to “abstain from any political activity that on any subject that the regime chose to define as off-limits”. Thus the German Catholics were basically required to go along with Hitler as a matter of spiritual choice and turn in Jews to the racist state for execution. To claim that the Church was not involved in Jewish and homosexual genocide is totally mistaken. Even American Catholics at that time were anti-Semitic. It is hard to escape the conclusion that Pacelli, could have done much more to save the Jews, but that a racist anti-Semitism prevent him from doing so.

The hatred of modernism that obsesses traditionalists appears to have had Catholic origins since the “oath against modernism” required of Catholics by the Vatican in 1910, under Pius the 10th. This oath influenced the young Guenon deeply. The ‘oath against modernism’ was an effort to brand all of science as somehow anti-religious and resulted in many great books like the Origin of Species being put on the absurd ‘Index’ of forbidden texts put out by the Vatican. Index Librorum Prohibitorum (“List of Prohibited Books”) was the original Blacklist was

⁷¹⁰ Perry was often dispatched to write reviews and articles, even books attacking those who do not support the traditionalist ideology. To see Perry’s essay in support of Pacelli here:

http://www.studiesincomparativereligion.com/Public/articles/review_of-The_Silence_of_Pius_XII.aspx

quite long and lasted for many centuries. ⁷¹¹On this list at various times were such great classics as Johannes Kepler's *Epitome Astronomiae Copernicianae*, the great works of Rene Descartes Voltaire, Denis Diderot, Victor Hugo, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, André Gide, Immanuel Kant, David Hume, Francis Bacon, John Milton, John Locke, Galileo Galilei, Blaise Pascal and many others. Notice that the blacklist is especially directed at the Enlightenment thinkers like Kant as well as the rise of science and an open society that such people as Galileo, Descartes and Kant represent. Hitler's Mein Kampf was significantly never put on the list.



Hitler with Pius 12th

While it is true that Guenon was not a Nazi,-- as many have pointed out, including me--- all his life Guenon had an affinity with the far right politics of monarchists and the Catholic Church, as well as far right ideologies such as that of De Maistre or the theofascism of Leon Daudet, whose fascist group, Action Francaise was pardoned by Pius XII in 1939. ⁷¹², Encausse, Evola and others. Guenon was' not a Nazi. Because he was even more reactionary than they; More fascist than the

⁷¹¹ for the Church Blacklist see

<http://www.cvm.qc.ca/gconti/905/BABEL/Index%20Librorum%20Prohibitorum-1948.htm>

⁷¹²

Nazi.... But it is important to understand that, indeed, Guenon was even more to the far right and more of an extremist fanatic than were the Nazis or Fascists. He hoped for the destruction of everyone on earth but a small chosen few, just as the fascists did. But he was not a fascist of the Nazi kind, he was a universal fascist, a theofascist and one moreover than hates science, democracy can human rights. It is hard to imagine a more monstrous politics than this.

Both the writer of this anonymous article I mention above and M.J. James, are right about Guenon's excessive pride. His writings drip with a sneering superiority and elitist pride. Guenon created an excessive ideology of gnostic intellectuality which raised the subjective, and arbitrary, "intellect" up above all else. This became for both Guenon and Schuon a sort of paranoid mania of magnified and absurd self-elevation. The esoterism of the intellect for Guenon and Schuon is merely a "pathologically subjective" faculty that they project heir self-importance on to Guenon's ideology is really a new religion, (a "NRM")⁷¹³ and as such is another 'orthodoxy', which is why it is silly to criticize it from an orthodox perspective. People from the Islamic religion have contacted me saying how horrible it is that Guenon or Schuon thought this or that. True, but Islam is itself no standard of virtue. Islam supports horrible violations of human rights. The only just way to look at Guenonism as well as orthodox religions is from a non-religious perspective. I spent enough time in my life looking at religion from the inside. So, comparing

⁷¹³ An "NRM" is a 'new religious movement', which is a politically correct euphemism for a religious cult and possibly a dangerous religious cult. This euphemism is promoted by such right wing cult apologists as Massimo Introvigne and other 'cult apologists'. The success of those who promote dangerous cults, can be partly ensured by the success of this acronym. All the religions are basically cults that get normalized into accepted institutions. The far right has tried to seize the word cult and eliminate it just as Scientology forced the bankruptcy of the excellent cult Awareness Network and destroyed it. I refuse to use the name NRM because the name is a right wing lie now enshrined in the religious studies departments of the world, where religion professors teach kids delusions.

my approach to other critics of Guenon, my point of view is neither orthodox, religious, nor based on a personal hatred of the man himself.

A more serious critic of Guenonian traditionalism is Umberto Eco who, in his essay *Ur fascism*⁷¹⁴ writes that:

“One has only to look at the syllabus of every fascist movement to find the major traditionalist thinkers. The Nazi gnosis was nourished by traditionalist, syncretistic, occult elements. The most influential theoretical source of the theories of the new Italian right, Julius Evola merged the Holy Grail with The Protocols of the Elders of Zion, alchemy with the Holy Roman and Germanic Empire. The very fact that the Italian right, in order to show its ‘open-mindedness’, recently broadened its syllabus to include works by De Maistre, Guenon, and Gramsci, is a blatant proof of syncretism. If you browse in the shelves that, in American bookstores, are labeled as New Age, you can find there even Saint Augustine who, as far as I know, was not a fascist. But combining Saint Augustine and Stonehenge is a symptom of Ur-Fascism.....”⁷¹⁵

Traditionalism implies the rejection of modernism. Both Fascists and Nazis worshiped technology, while traditionalist thinkers usually reject it as a negation of traditional spiritual values. However, even though Nazism was proud of its industrial achievements, its praise of modernism was only the surface of an ideology based upon Blood and Earth (Blut und Boden). The rejection of the modern world was disguised as a rebuttal of the

⁷¹⁴ http://www.why-war.com/files/ur_fascism.pdf

⁷¹⁵ but Augustine is a ‘theofascist’ as is Plato.. and many other traditional thinkers, who try to force reality to conform to spiritualistic ideologies. Augustine’s notion of government lead to such injustices as those committed by Innocent the III and the Crusades, not to mention the Inquisition

capitalistic way of life, but it mainly concerned the rejection of the Spirit of 1789 (and of 1776, of course). The Enlightenment, the Age of Reason, is seen as the beginning of modern depravity. In this sense Ur-Fascism can be defined as irrationalism.”

This is exactly right. Guenon and Schuon reject the enlightenment and human rights and science. They reject evolution and want to return to monarchy and rule by priests and long for a caste system to destroy democracy. Too bad Umberto Eco did not yet grasp the idea of theofascism, then he would have understood how Stonehenge and Saint Augustine fit together perfectly as a New Age fascism. Guenon and Schuon are syncretistic, as in Guenon’s combination of Taoism and Ibn Arabi or Schuon’s effort to turn native American religions into crypto-Christian-Sufism. Ivan Aguéli and Count Albert-Eugène Puyou de Pouvourville (Matgioi), were all rather dilettante orientalists. Were Guenon real “masters” and exposed Guenon to their views on Sufism and Taoism. These rather childish beginnings are the real origin of Guenon’s attempt to sell his own brand of “esoteric” religion to followers. Aguéli was recently picked up by an extreme right person in Sweden who wishes to use him as an exemplar of a sort of Islamo-fascism. ⁷¹⁶

Guenon’s rather superficial encounters with non-European religions were represented by the followers of Guenon and Schuon as

⁷¹⁶ According the Sedgwick “An Ivan Aguéli Study Group has been established in Uppsala, Sweden by Mohamed Omar (b. 1976, to the left in picture), a Swedish poet and journalist with an Iranian "biological father" who converted to Islam at the age of 16.

Mohamed Omar was previously popular in Sweden as a "moderate" Muslim, but in an article in the Swedish *Kultur* in 2009 declared that he had become a radical Muslim in response to events in Gaza. He describes his Ivan Aguéli Study Group as "radical and Islamist, "radical in the sense that we are looking inwards and backwards in the Islamic tradition, the roots, to draw strength and inspiration. Everything new must build on the old and traditional" and Islamist in the normal, political sense. Mohamed Omar's "radicalism," then, has much in common with Traditionalism.” He is infected with the politics of reaction, in short.
<http://traditionalistblog.blogspot.com/>

great ‘initiations’, when really they were just enthusiastic encounters with sensational and strange new ideas co-opted to make new brands of Orientalist delusion to sell to the unsuspecting. Traditionalism proceed largely by self-suggestion, creating mythology out of a hodge-podge of superstitions, ill digested books and hints, gossip, false assumptions and suppositions. It is hard to see this assimilation of falsehoods and superstitions as having any other purpose than that of power plays and social aggrandizement. Pascal Boyer claims that such things have evolutionary purpose, but that is a bit of a leap, unless one says that Guenonism is a byproduct of a perverted use of the power motive, here running against itself, creating a clique of theofascist reaction. We are not really talking about evolution in this case, but a devolving or decadent social mechanism. Theofascism is a last gasp of monarchist theocracy, now become a hypertrophy, ---a sort of symbolist shadow of corporate globalism and its need to parasitize cultures.

To briefly look at this tendency of Traditionalists to colonize other cultures and religions in a parasitical way it is useful to look at Ibn Arabi.(1165-1240 C.E.) Ibn Arabi haunts much of the traditionalists movement. There is in Ibn Arabi as well as in Guenon and Schuon a tendency to reduce the prophets—indeed—the religions themselves—to a subjective and narcissistic application of Platonic ‘archetypes’. The religions are then subsumed in Ibn Arabi’s metaphor to, so many ‘bezels of wisdom”, or in Schuon’s metaphor so many jewels (or wives!) in the monistic crown that Schuon and Ibn Arabi affect to wear. In other words the prophets and religions (or women) become fragments in the esoteric kaleidoscope through which they see the world. This monstrous tendency to gobble up religions and women in a sort of misogynistic hunger for syncretistic power is common to all the traditionalists. It should be noted too that Ibn Arabi, Rumi and other Moslem mystics manufactured the whole misogynistic notion female as the doorway to god, reducing

women to a symbol. Schuon writes in his essay “Wisdom of the Virgin” that

“Muhyi ‘d-Din ibn ‘Arabi,’ after having shown that his heart “has opened itself to all forms,” that it is “a cloister for monks, a temple of idols, the Kaaba, adds: “I practice the religion of Love; now it is over this informal religion that—Semitically speaking—Sayyidatnâ Maryam (“Our Lady Mary”) presides. She is thus to be identified with the supreme *Shakti* or with the heavenly *Prajnâpârarnitâ* of the Asiatic traditions.”⁷¹⁷

In other words, narcissistic spirituality sees its own desires, as the overarching truth of reality, and personifies these desires as mythic symbols. This is an extreme and decadent sort of magical thinking. This ‘pathological subjectivity’, defined as the “Intellect “ is shared by Schuon and Ibn Arabi.⁷¹⁸ Both writers were prone to fanciful delusions and prolix “visions”. They pride themselves on being obscurely esoteric and didactic and project what they think they are onto the entire universe. David Hall deconstructs Ibn Arabi’s fanciful delusions very well in his book *Islamic Mysticism*, where he says that Ibn Arabi manufactures the whole notion of a special imaginative faculty (*khayal al munfasil*) that sees “astral visions” as well as psycho-sexual “visions” – really fantasies dressed up as poetry--- that both Ibn Arabi and Schuon share in

⁷¹⁷ http://www.studiesincomparativereligion.com/Public/articles/The_Wisdom_of_the_Virgin-by_Frithjof_Schuon.aspx

⁷¹⁸ The same applies to analogies of Zen. Ibn Arabi, Sufism and Taoism as explored for instance in *Sufism and Taoism: A Comparative Study of Key Philosophical Concepts* By Toshihiko Izutsu. Izutsu was a Japanese scholar who fell into Nasr’s orbit and never left it, along with Chittick, Corbin and others. This book is amazingly unconscious of any understanding of the politics of Zen or the subjectivism of Ibn Arabi and Sufism. As such it is an unconscious traditionalist text and a political book even while it denies this, again following Nasr.

common.⁷¹⁹ David says rightly that “Ibn Arabi’s career and experiences are wholly explicable in psychological and sociological terms, without the need to resort to anything transcendental”. And thus the “ ‘greatest Shiekh’ (Shaykh al Akbar) turns out to be, when looked at closely, to be little more than a rather pedestrian fundamentalist.”⁷²⁰ This is true of Schuon too, in a way, though Schuon’s fundamentalism is bizarrely combined with a delusional component that made him try to do violence to moral and legal norms. Fundamentalism is “strict adherence to specific theological doctrines typically in reaction against the theology of Modernism”.⁷²¹ Schuon promoted this for others but did not stick with one religion himself. But his basic views on each religion are fundamentalist. Orthodox Judaism views the Torah and Fundamentalists view the Bible as divine texts, infallible, and transmitted essentially without change, Hasidic Jews frequently ascribe infallibility to their Rebbe’s interpretation of the traditional sources of truth. Schuon’s followers also ascribed infallibility to him and he claimed the infallibility outright. Schuon was a sort of renegade fundamentalist, or ultra-conservative “infant terrible’, with the emphasis on the ‘infant’

⁷¹⁹ Ibn Arabi, like Schuon, evidently had a thing for underage girls. The one that Ibn Arabi was interested in was Lady Nizam, who he is supposed to have met at the Kaaba, and who he inflated with all sort of meanings which very likely had nothing to do with the actual person he writes about. Ibn Arabi was a master inventor of mythic fictions and imaginary religious fantasies. The misogyny of Dante and Ibn Arabi sets up an ideal woman which they use to demean everyone else. Ralph Austin writes in an inflated style that “Dante had known Beatrice in a distant way for nearly fifteen years and she had become a major feature of his writing, while Ibn 'Arabi probably knew Nizam much better, albeit for a much shorter period; nevertheless, the two relationships are in essence the same, in that Beatrice for Dante and Nizam for Ibn 'Arabi manifest a universal archetypal image, not only of the Divine Sophia in her creational and latent modes”---- This is really mumbo jumbo. This use of young women as “Archetypes”--- is really a way of demeaning all other women and using women as degraded symbols of an ideology. The Divine Sophia— what Schuon calls Mahashakti or Shekina is really just a misogynists card board cut out. As David Hall notes Ibn Arabi was, like Dante “the victim of his own imagination” Hall pg 150.

⁷²⁰ Hall, David. *Islamic Mysticism, A Secular Perspective*. Prometheus Books. Amherst New York. 2000. Pgs 148-150

⁷²¹ Fundamentalism is defined this way in Martin Murphy’s interesting [Fundamentalisms Observed](#)

part since Schuon identified himself as the Christ Child, and was prone to whining and petulant fits of anger.

David Fideler of Phanes Press wrote a few essays about Guenon, one called “Rene Guenon and the Signs of our Times”⁷²² one of the few decent critiques of Guenon’s absurd book--- and the other “Why Esoterism can lead to Fascism”. Both are excellent, indeed, with a rare excellence in what is really a wasteland of poor critics of Guenon. Fideler states that:

Esoterism can become dangerous if it makes a cult out of the ‘supra human Intellect’. I believe that Guenon and the Traditionalists are generally guilty of this, in addition to possessing a general tendency toward spiritual elitism.Based as it is on the Revealed Truth of Eternal Metaphysical Doctrine and a healthy dose of good old Extremism, it is easy to see why the Guenonian position inherently appeals to the authoritarian personality.

This is quite accurate. Another critic of the Traditionalists is Ziauddin Sardar, has written about Schuon the following, though much the same things can be said about Guenon:

⁷²² “Rene Guenon and the Signs of Our Times” by David Fideler spring 1988 http://www.gnosismagazine.com/issue_contents/contents07.html. I agree with David about his thesis on Guenon but not with his rather naive view of Plato Jesus and others. David is a dreamer who imagines a “timeless harmony” of Orphic, Platonic, Pythagorean, and Kabbalistic number **theory**. That is pure fiction and has little basis in reality. His Jesus Christ, Sun of God: Ancient Cosmology and Early Christian Symbolism, is a left leaning historical religious fantasy in which he tries to promote a new version of orphic world view, which in my estimation is really about world hatred.

“Much of what Schuon has to say about tradition, metaphysics, authority, caste, race and primordial man is taken from nineteenth century German philosophy and the Symbolist movement of the twenties and thirties in which he grew up. The Symbolist movement which influenced his father,⁷²³ had a romantic attachment to the esoteric and primordial...[and was] an eclectic philosophy which was a mish mash of all cultures and religions. In its most extreme form, this philosophy produced the volkish ideology and the rise of Hitler. Like Schuon’s thought, the volkish ideology was based on Gnosticism, Occultism, the Hermetic Corpus, Pythagoreanism, [and] neo-Platonism.”..⁷²⁴

(see:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Rose-Noire/message/960>

for more of this....)

This is accurate too; though most of Schuon’s far-right or theofascist tendencies come from Guenon, more than from his father. However,

⁷²³ Sedgwick writes, basing himself on Hugo Bergman’s account that “Schuon's father was an Anthroposophist, that is a follower of the Anthroposophy of Rudolf Steiner, and as a young man Schuon participated in spiritist séances”

⁷²⁴ Sardar, Ziauddin. A Man for All Seasons *Impact International* February 1994

Margaret Marcus, later named Maryam Jameelah speaks of reading Sardar’s essay on Schuon in Pakistan, She is an expatriate American in Pakistan writes of meeting Schuon’s ex-wife Maude Murray:

“Schuon's writings remained my favorite books until I met with his divorced third wife [Maude Murray]. We became best friends and she related all her experiences in her 30-year life with Schuon. So *Impact's* article turned out to be true after all. My new found friend disclosed even more shocking facts about Schuon which utterly disqualified him as a spiritual guide. She disclosed that Schuon lived with three women without proper *Nikah*. He loved nudity and was accused in court of sexual child abuse. He hugged dozens of beautiful, bare-breasted young girls clad in only a transparent loin-cloth. He painted fifty pictures of his youngest wife in the nude. As entertainment, he and his followers danced native Indian dances. Outside Schuon's house was a life-sized statue of the Virgin Mary.I still have all Schuon's books; they still attract me but I cannot look at them without a profound sense of shame.”

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Rose-Noire/message/960>

Schuon does resemble various far right Germans of his day, such as the symbolist poet Stefan George. George evidently thought he was a prophet or priest, like Schuon,-- this was inevitable as romantic Germans, Like Novalis, Schelling and others in the 19th century demanded such a “prophet”.⁷²⁵ George even thought, like Schuon and Guenon, that he was a “messiah” of a new kingdom that would be led by intellectual or artistic elites. Like Schuon, Evola and Plato he wanted a spiritual aristocracy to rule the world. Unlike Schuon, George was a homosexual. Like Schuon, he hated progress. George’s poetry emphasized self-sacrifice, heroism and power. Like Schuon, he had an authoritarian personality. He gained popularity in National Socialist circles... and the Nazis claimed him as a sort of National Poet in the 1930’s. Some critics considered George’s work to be proto-fascist, though some followers of George actually resisted Nazism. One of the even tried to assassinate Hitler. George himself rejected the Nazi’s as did Schuon, and moved to Switzerland. But as in Schuon, George and Hitler, there is a romantic need of to claim transcendent and heroic status.⁷²⁶ George thus has a close affinity to

⁷²⁵ Evola and Schuon were both strongly influenced by Schelling and Guenon.

⁷²⁶ A follower of George was Swami Gauribaldi , who real name was Peter Joachim Schoenfeldt , who knew Schuon. Gauribaldi had his origins in the early days of Nazism when spirituality and Nazism were not yet separate things. Later they would separate. Guribaldi moved to India and then Sri Lanka and became a Buddhist. Manik Sandrasagra writes that Gauribala later condemned Schuon. He writes that he went to see Schuon in Bloomington and:

Swami Gauribala “wired back asking me to return at once to Sri Lanka. When I returned I asked him why. His response was “You need to be turned off from traditionalism.” He then showed me an article by Schuon that was titled ‘The Problem of Sexuality’ and asked “Do you have a problem with sexuality? Is there a problem with sexuality?” He then smiled and stated in Tamil the famous Yogaswami dictum “Oru Pollapum Illai” meaning ‘Not one problem exists’. Years later we are now witnessing the re-branding of the Perennial

Nazi ideology while yet he split away from it. As I will show later, this ambiguous relationship to Fascism is common among many of the traditionalists. The romanticism that inspired Germany in the 19th century, and which made Nietzsche, Schelling, Fichte, Novalis and others imagine a heroic prophet/conqueror, also led to Hitler and Schuon, both of whom thought they were this prophet. Prophets generally do not like other prophets to compete with them, after all, how many authentic spokespeople for god can there be at one time? They all call each other false prophets, which is funny, because they are all false prophets.

Another critic of the Traditionalists, who criticizes traditionalism as a Moslem is Hajj Muhammad Legenhausen, who writes in his “Why I am not a Traditionalist” that

“traditionalism seems to be too reactionary and too nostalgic to offer a workable way to move through and beyond modernity. Its positive theses about perennial philosophy romanticize the occult aspects of the world’s religious traditions and are backed by unsupported assumptions, tenuous comparisons based on a prejudiced selection of materials, and rather wild speculations. “

Legenhausen makes a valid point here.⁷²⁷ Though the notion of moving “beyond modernity” seems not just questionable, but inadvisable. However, Legenhausen is a divided man. He is a New Yorker and now

Philosophy as ‘Traditionalism’ and its adherents as ‘Traditionalists’.”

Schuon’s essay on sexuality justifies Schuon’s abusive relations to women, polygamy and the notion that a “Prophet” has special rights and can use individual women as a “throne”.

⁷²⁷ <http://www.religioscope.com/info/doc/esotrad/legenhausen.htm>

expatriate philosopher in Iran, who teaches the children of Mullahs at the Imam Khomeini Education and Research Institute, in Qum, Iran. This is itself a very questionable occupation. It is a dark and destructive regime he serves there. He speaks against Feminism, and imagines wrongly that Islam was some sort of women's movement, which it never was. The abuse of women in Islam is legendary, and for good reason. The Koran enshrined the inequality of women as immutable law: Koran, sura 4:34, speaks of men's "pre-eminence" over women or that they are "overseers" of women. But this is just the beginning. While it is true that Muhammad gave women some advantages over European women in the 7th century, such as owning their own property, most of what he said about women has had disastrous results for them. To quote one author in on the abuse of women in Islam: Riffat Hassan, professor of religious studies at the University of Louisville, puts it,

"The way Islam has been practiced in most Muslim societies for centuries has left millions of Muslim women with battered bodies, minds and souls....

---The Koran allots daughters half the inheritance of sons. It decrees that a woman's testimony in court, at least in financial matters, is worth half that of a man's.

---Under Shari'a, or Muslim law, compensation for the murder of a woman is half the going rate for men. ...

----For a woman to prove rape in Pakistan, for example, four adult males of "impeccable" character must witness the penetration, in accordance with Shari'a. "

---In Iran the legal age for marriage is nine for girls, 14 for boys. The law has occasionally been exploited by pedophiles, who marry poor young girls from the provinces, use and then abandon them.

----Wives in Islamic societies face great difficulty in suing for divorce, but husbands can be released from their vows virtually on

demand, in some places merely by saying “I divorce you” three times. -----the Koran says that the husband of an insubordinate wife should first admonish her, then leave her to sleep alone and finally beat her. “ ⁷²⁸

Legenhausen has to toe the line of the misogynistic Mullahs in Qum, Iran, where he is a promoter of Islam and thus defends its violations of human rights. He does advocate for non-violence, to his credit, but there is no more violent and superstitious religion than Islam. Public executions are held regularly in many Islamic countries and involve decapitation, firing squads, and stoning, all justified by the Koran. Women and men who commit adultery are stoned to death. Women are forced to conceal their body in public, be escorted by a man in public and are not allowed to drive in various countries. The state of medical care is medieval in places like Afghanistan. Some Islamic countries support female genital mutilation. Sharia law is barbaric and in many places results in horrible excess. Polygamy is common and destructive to women. Some of these excesses were recorded on a website called Human Rights Abuses in Islamic Countries.

<http://www.hraicjk.org/index.html>

In any case, Legenhausen is to some degree a supporter of the Iranian state and unwilling to question the fictions on which Islam rests. He tries to give some room to human rights concerns but is hindered by religion.

His point of view on traditionalism is at least somewhat reasonable. Legenhausen makes the valid point that the Traditionalists, such as Hossein Nasr are more reactionary than the fundamentalists. He

⁷²⁸ Read more: <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,185647,00.html#ixzz1NZhce4Fb>

writes that Nasr is very like the far right Taliban----- “Indeed, the only rejection of television and other aspects of Western technology at the level of government that seems to approach what is advocated by Dr. Nasr was to be found in the recently overthrown Taliban government in Afghanistan, a paradigm of Islamic fundamentalism if ever there was one.””The main differences Dr. Nasr elaborates between fundamentalism and traditionalism is that traditionalism is more absolute in its rejection of everything modern and Western. On this account, fundamentalism seems to be downright moderate!”

Yes, Nasr has written a great deal of nonsense about western science. He has no real understanding of science. Traditionalists in general have bigoted notions science and culture. As good as it is to hear Legenhausen criticize the Guenonians, he is still a medieval thinker in many ways. The categories of ‘modern’ and ‘traditional’ seem specious inventions. Something is not necessarily better if it is older, or if it is newer. History is not a spiritual progression but a fact of existence. The Traditionalists pretend to embody “timeless truth” and metaphysical certainty. But in actuality they are apologists for far right institutions and policies in the modern world itself. Legenhausen is to the left of the traditionalists, but that is saying little as Hitler was to the left of Guenon.

In any case, critics of Guenon, such as myself, are merely scientifically minded people who wish to describe the errors and delusions of a system of metaphysical con-man, who, it must be granted, actually believed his own con. Various fanatics of the Schuon and Guenon cults have said I have tried to expose the fraudulent behavior of these groups because I want revenge. Not true. Justice, yes, but revenge no. Certainly I felt anger at Schuon when I saw he was a fraud and a cheat. I had angry thoughts but dismissed these thought as beside the point. I do not want revenge on any one. Justice is a different matter and eventually, justice will be had against this cult, indeed, already the cult fails of its own

accord as more and more people see its corruption, lies and vindictiveness. It is telling the truth that brings justice.

My concern has been demonstrating of the moral insanity of religions. I seek justice in this. I seek for what is fair and true, good for all and good through law. Laws must be changed and to do this, the powerful must be exposed. Revenge, on the other hand, would have involved my personal retaliation against Schuon himself, in response to his moral corruption, his harm of others or myself or his activities as shameless cult leader and tyrant. I did not take revenge at all. I never touched him. The police and courts went after him. Lies and cover up have eaten away at the interior of the cult and now it is largely isolated to extremists, a few royalty who like far right ideology and some religious studies professors who are a dying breed too, who abuse the teaching profession.

I decided at a certain point to step up and tell the truth about what's wrong in the traditionalist worldview and in religion in general. I am a whistleblower. I have done this ploddingly and deliberately, without any particular passion, but with developing inquiry.⁷²⁹ I've studied it for years now. As a result I became a target of their hate. Whistle-blowers are usually smeared as being deviants who are out for revenge, or fame and profit. I

⁷²⁹ I suffered the usual fate of whistle blowers, retaliation, bullying and the cult power abuse. Whistle-blowers are usually smeared as being deviant or misfits who are out for fame, profit, revenge, or self-aggrandizement. I was not interested in any of these things. I wanted to tell the truth about a cult that lies. Unlike Maude, who suffered the abuse for years, with only passive resistance, I actively resisted their abuse with the effect that the perpetrators' attempted to control and intimidate me, and when this did not work the perpetrators simply intensified the abuse, to which I responded with more resistance. The main thing was to stick with the truth no matter what and that has always trumped all their efforts. Usually cult perpetrators try to force the targets either leave or break down under the stress of what is happening. I left and blew the whistle, Maude broke down and then left, others had other solutions or reactions. Many people who left the cult joined other cults or new age groups rather than face the illusions and bad choices they made. I told the truth as best I could and do not apologize for having done it.

was portrayed as evil and a criminal. I am neither. My concern was to tell the truth, help others, if they honestly wanted help,⁷³⁰ and to be honest. I have kept as best I could to these aims since 1991. In the end, my concern for the truth and assessing religion as a social construct, was the main motive, and took over all other concerns and this became the book you are reading.

There are many who did not want me to tell the truth. Hossein Nasr called me up crying⁷³¹ and begged me not to tell the truth about Schuon. There are many who attacked me. Years ago I received death threats and told I should burn in hell. However, I have not stopped trying to tell what seems true as best as I can. My awareness of the wrong committed by the Schuon cult taught me about others in other cults who had suffered in like manner. I learned how our society defined irrational and destructive organizations like cults and corporations and how they hide behind the “free exercise” clause of the first amendment.⁷³²

⁷³⁰ Many who claim to want help really just want to harass others. Religion inspires people to be very irrational, and this becomes a passion for them to try to deny the obvious and silence those who know more than they.

⁷³¹ on page 102 *Islamic Mysticism* David Hall discusses the tendency of Nasr to become hysterical when his favorite illusion or beliefs are questioned. Hall discusses Nasr’s attempts to deny the fact that the Hadith or sayings of Muhammad are certainly all spurious. Hall notes that Nasr’s plea for a defense of the Hadith has produced no credible result and Nasr own attempts to defend the hadith “consist mostly of hysterical outbursts and circular assertions.” Nasr could not admit to himself that Schuon was a fraud so he whined and cried on the phone to me trying to talk me out of bringing witness against Schuon. Nasr’s wife got on the phone and told me in much more sensible tones that her husband had nursed the desire to be Shaykh for many years and what I was saying got in the way of his ambition. Likewise Nasr could not admit that the Hadith were phony and thus the Koran was likely a fabrication too. So his strategy is to try to get me to deny the facts and when I refused he claimed that anyone who repeats the truths I told is “diabolical”. The real problem is Nasr need of power and his use of delusory ideas to get that power. He denies irrefutable evidence. I later heard stories about him hanging around the White House, trying to curry court favor like a fawning courtier. It amazes me anyone takes Nasr seriously.

⁷³² From Wikipedia: The limit of the first amendment have been questioned. “In 1878, the Supreme Court was first called to interpret the extent of the Free Exercise Clause in *Reynolds v. United States*, as related to the prosecution of polygamy under federal law. The Supreme Court upheld Reynolds’ conviction for bigamy, deciding that to do otherwise would provide constitutional protection for a gamut of religious beliefs, including those as extreme as human sacrifice.” This is good, but the court should go further. Many cults and corporate entities continue to commit illegal acts. The wisdom of the founding fathers ought to be questioned, churches should be taxed. Why should purveyors of delusion be tax free?

Corporations abuse the 14th Amendment, which was intended for free former slaves to create the fiction of corporate personhood,. I learned about injustices of many kinds committed by many religions, corporations and states. I studied atrocities and inquisitions. I began to see how religions hides its delusions and promotes its lies. I began to see how religion and institutions police those who question them. People who were friends accused me of anger and hate simply because I raised questions about religion. Their thinking is that anyone who raises questions about religious delusions must have a psychological problem!. From their point of view, you must be crazy if you do not believe in spiritual delusions. I lost friends and lovers, people that were close and dear. It was not about hatred or anger for me, it was about telling the truth of my experiences. It was about being true to the truth as I see it. I see no reason to bow before the chauvinism of delusion, the McCarthyism of belief, the THEM verses US mentality that is ubiquitous in 'faith based' cults and institutions.

I still try to tell the truth as best as I can uncover it. So, then, to return to where we were, Guenon created a very effective system of mind control that gives its addicts a sense of enormous entitlement and disdain for others. Guenon writes in style that pretends a Cartesian certainty with no Cartesian science to back it up. I admire Descartes because he wanted his science based on factual evidence, evidence Guenon despises. Rather than concern himself with evidence, Guenon relies on innuendo, suggestion, mystery, false analogies, conspiracy theory, mockery, appeal to elitism, pride, and referring to empty initiations and dogmas as a fount of legitimacy. Guenon writes with French exactitude about things that are mere superstition. His work is a series of delusions fictions created by a metaphysical imagination caught in the grip of a paranoid illness. His followers feel for this charlatan strategy and think Guenon holy.

The following essay is divided into three sections.

Creating Theofascist Fictions:

Guenon in Relation to Action Francaise, Blavatsky, Liebenfels and the Knights Templar.

Part 1. Guenon , Action Francaise and the Pivotal year of 1927

Part 2. The Craft of Charlatans: Guenon in Relation to Blavatsky , Liebenfels Encausse and others.

Part 3 Selling the Big Lie: Innocent III, Guenon and the Knights Templar

Part 1. **Guenon , Action Francaise and the Pivotal year of 1927 :**

The paranoid fictions of Rene Guenon and his followers have a beginning. Rene Guenon created Theofascism between the years 1924-30 when he associated with ultra-right Catholics, royalists and proto-fascists in France. At this point in time ‘theofascism’ or traditionalism is still somewhat vague as a politics and includes elements of monarchism, Catholicism and other mixtures. Also during this period, from 1925-27, Rene Guenon wrote for the ultra-right, Monarchist and Royalist Catholic periodical known as Regnabit. This was a very political periodical, despite its apparent devotion to the subject of “Symbolism”. ⁷³³The discussion of

⁷³³ Symbolist systems of thought or practice are generally hierarchical and patriarchal--- for instance in the symbol ridden middle ages of Europe, where each lord had his symbol laden coat of arms, or in China, where symbolism was used to support the emperor as well as to hide criticism of the emperor behind. Open criticism of the emperor would have got one killed. Democracy is non-symbolic and science abandons symbolism as much as possible. This is because nature is not Platonic or symbolic. There are no “archetypes”. Beings are what they are and are not metaphors for something else. They sky is not the father god. Stars are not angels, etc.

symbolism in *Regnabit* by Charbonneau-Lassay and others, was, in a veiled manner, primarily directed toward an overthrow of the current French government and the return of rule to the Church and the aristocracy. They longed to return to France before the French Revolution, when the aristocracy and the Church were the caste ridden, self-serving guarantors of an unfair social order. The point of view of the *Regnabit* magazine thus reflected right-wing Catholic concerns of the time, concerns that Guenon, who tended towards ultra-right Monarchist and Royalist Catholicism in many of his views, sympathized with.

Guenon was eventually forced to leave the magazine by some of its editors, notably a certain Fr. Felix Anizan, because the Orthodox Catholics, such as Anizan, did not like Guenon's pretensions to an even more extreme totalistic, Masonic and "universalistic" symbolism. Guenon is already leaning toward a global politics resembling theofascism in the 1920's. Those who feared Guenon's will to power through a pretentious spirituality were indeed correct.

Charles Maurras

Also during this period in the 1920s Guenon also got involved with "Action Francaise", a group which some consider to be the first fascist group to ever exist. Action Francaise was headed by Charles Maurras (1868-1952) and Leon Daudet (1867-1942). Another partisan of Action Francaise that Guenon was closely associated with was Ferdinand Gombault.⁷³⁴ Action Francaise was a Catholic Fascist/monarchist group which originated to try to turn back the tide of the 20th century and return to older forms of power. Action Francaise put out a newspaper of

The sky is our solar system and galaxy the Milky Way. The earth is our home, this literal planet floating in a universe that has no creator/creation dualism imposed on it.

⁷³⁴ According to one source Guénon knew "Ferdinand

Gombault, doctor in scholastic philosophy, during more than 30 years, until his departure for Cairo, these two intellectuals maintained regular contact and both were partisans of the Action Francaise

the same name,⁷³⁵ had a large following and was widely supported by Roman Catholics, small businessmen, and professional men.⁷³⁶ The movement was based on a return to the past as well as being a conservative and pro-fascist revolutionary group which advocated the violent overthrow of the parliamentary Third Republic (1870-1940). Maurras, according to Simone Weil, was a "virulent Jew-hater", and Maurras, "along with Leon Daudet founded L'Action Francaise, a movement and a magazine of unspeakable virulence, which prepared the ground for what was to come" when the Nazis took power in France. Weil writes:

"Charles Maurras was an anti-democratic atheist Catholic...Action Francaise occupied a position of extraordinary influence in the French hierarchy and among Catholic intellectuals—Jacques Maritain began his career with Maurras. Maurras supported Roman Catholicism as an instrument of social control, although personally he felt only contempt for Christian faith and morals.... [Maurras wrote] "Catholicism is an attenuated Christianity filtered through the happy genius of France," Maurras hated the Reformation because it released the Christian gospel from the imperial organization, and had set it free over Europe. As an atheist Catholic, he took the imperial organization without the gospel and cultivated that large group of Frenchmen who, in the tradition of de Maistre and Veuillot, had praised the Church for the same reason. ..." ⁷³⁷

⁷³⁵ Clavelle speaks of getting this newspaper for Guenon even when Guenon was in Cairo. Guenon apparently liked reading about fascism in various venues such as "Gringoire", "I am everywhere", "Shock";

⁷³⁶ Besides supporting Action Francaise, Fedeli claims Guénon wrote for the magazine that supported Mussolini called "Il Regimen Fascist". See Orlando Fedeli's essay "A Gnose "Tradicionalista" de René Guénon e Olavo de Carvalho" --- If I understand him correctly he says Guenon published "in this Mussolinian magazine 25 articles since 1934 up to 1940". I don't know if this is true or not. As far as I can make out Fedeli is a Traditionalist Catholic or close to it, with a similar sort of bigoted narrow-mindedness that one often encounters in that school of thought.

⁷³⁷ note, the Simone Weil Reader, edited by George A. Panichas (David

T.S Eliot. It is useful here to consider the poet T.S. Eliot in relation to Maurras.⁷³⁸ Maurras had a big influence on Guenon and other traditionalists such as the poet T.S Eliot., who studied with Maurras at the Sorbonne in 1910 or 1911. Maurras's Catholic anti-Semitism and early fascist tendencies had a major impact on Eliot as it did on Guenon.⁷³⁹ To understand that Eliot, Ezra Pound and Maurras have something profound in common with Guenon is to understand a great deal about the times these men were living in.⁷⁴⁰ Eliot was mentored by Ezra Pound who was later a fascist , though not in the early 1920's when he had a profound influence on Eliot. But like Eliot, Pound had a strong tendency to idealize the past in a reactionary and unrealistic way—and this is common to Guenon, Schuon, Eliot and Pound. Eliot idealized the Christian past and Pound tried to make himself a Confucianist devotee of Mussolini. Pound is a traditionalist in his use of Confucius as a model of behavior that he tried to impose in the modern world, just as Guenon idealized Hinduism and Islam. Confucius call to “restore the rites” is a reactionary call of supporting far right political power, which during the

McKay Co. NY 1977) p 506-7

⁷³⁸ Read more: <http://www.touchstonemag.com/archives/article.php?id=04-03-023-v#ixzz1OK9gwSoR>

⁷³⁹ Isaiah Berlin rightly connects Maurras and Eliot to De Maistre--all of them, Berlin writes “stood for the trinity of classicism, Monarchy and the Church”. Some have argued that this is not fascism, but actually De Maistre is indeed a proto fascist, this is quite obvious in the extolling of the virtues of the executioner, his hatred of most classes of people, he anti-Semitism and anti-intellectual hatred of science. It is true that he was more of a theofascist than a fascism, but he is a harbinger of what would come. See

Berlin, Isaiah The Cooked Timber of Humanity New York Knopf. 1991 pg. 93

⁷⁴⁰ It is interesting also that Eliot was also influenced obliquely by Henri Bergson who was at the Sorbonne at the same time. Guenon grew to hate Bergson, irrationally and unjustly as I show in the essay above on Guenon's Reign of Quantity. It appears Eliot was very influenced by him, according to Philip Le Brun, but repressed awareness of the influence, perhaps because of this right wing leanings.

time of Confucius (Kong Fuzi, or Kung fu-tzu) was basically a slave state and in the Warring States period.⁷⁴¹ Eliot was a traditionalist catholic. He too wanted to 'restore the rites'. He showed his love of idealized religion when he wrote of Schuon's first book that "I have met with no more impressive work in the comparative study of Oriental and Occidental religions." Eliot saw his own theofascism in a fellow reactionary like Schuon.

George Orwell wrote of Eliot that "a skepticism about democracy and a disbelief in 'progress' are an integral part of him; without it he could not have written a line of his works." An expatriate American, Eliot did not like the individual, he wanted everyone to be defined by the Church of Europe. Maurras, Guenon Eliot and Schuon all share this reactionary repugnance for the ordinary and democratic and are against progress for the bulk of humanity, desiring only that that elite religious institutions should prosper. The poet Stephen Spender says that Eliot's religious development derives from the logic implanted in him by Maurras, whom he referred to as "a kind of Virgil who led us to the door of the temple'."

Like Guenon, Eliot was not a fascist, exactly. Despite his well-documented anti-Semitism, disdain of liberalism, rejection of democracy, as well as his clearly authoritarian aspects of his political writings, Eliot was, as Stephen Spender once noted, "in the strictest sense of the term, 'a reactionary'". This is rather too kind. If you look at Eliot's suppressed book After Strange Gods (1934) there are racist and elitist ideas expressed like this one:

"The population should be homogeneous; where two or more cultures exist in the same place they are likely either to be fiercely self-conscious

⁷⁴¹ It is interesting to compare Mao and Confucius. They were two ideologies in conflict. Watching their conflict reveals a lot about the political nature of religions and the religious nature of politics.

or both to become adulterate. What is still more important is unity of religious background, and reasons of race and religion combine to make any large number of free-thinking Jews undesirable....“The spirit of excessive tolerance is to be depreciated” ⁷⁴²

Eliot echoes the Nazis here quite directly. The Nazis were saying identical things about getting rid of concentrations of Jews at the same time. This is theofascism pure and simple, not to mention implicitly approving of genocide.

Guenon was not exactly a “fascist” either but rather a ‘metapolitical’ fascist, or a theofascist. Eliot tends in this direction too, while still being too liberal for the taste of the traditionalists. However, they do not mind pasting Eliot’s rather ridiculous praise of Schuon on Schuon’s books. Indeed. I only now realize why the Schuon cult has so often used Eliot’s quote about Schuon for so many years. Eliot and Schuon are theofascist brothers in the cause of reactionary religiosity and politics. This shows once again that Russell was correct to suggest that the romanticism already implicit in Byron and Rousseau is one of the origins of fascism.

Joseph de Maistre

The reactionary spirituality that led to Eliot and Schuon goes back through Charles h and Leon Daudet to Joseph De Maistre (1753-1821). This takes us back 200 years to the reactionaries against the French Revolution. Guenon had also been deeply influenced by De Maistre , who was one of these reactionaries. Some Guenon fanatics have tried to deny that De Maistre influenced Guenon much, but that is more of the usual attempt at cover up or obfuscation that characterizes so much Traditionalist writing. Indeed, Guenon seems to have thought of

⁷⁴² <http://www.archive.org/stream/afterstrangegods00eliouoft#page/56/mode/2up>

De Maistre as the 'quintessence of reactionaries' and thereby reflects an accuracy of insight one seldom finds among traditionalists. Guenon loves him for all those things that define his own hatred of science, freedom and democracy, and that hatred, to Guenon, is "clarity" or insight. To me it is a horrible opacity of ignorance and dogmatic hatred of the enlightenment.

Schuon, following Guenon no doubt, also admired Joseph De Maistre "whose intelligence has great merits" Schuon claims in his essay the "Question of Protestantism".⁷⁴³ De Maistre, as a matter of historical fact, was a racist, Jew hating, Inquisition supporting, hater of science and advocate of slavery and other injustices. If De Maistre is "intelligent" than Schuon's notion of intelligence is highly questionable. My impression of Schuon, having known him, is that he accepted Guenon's adulation of De Maistre whole cloth because it served himself to do so. De Maistre's repressive, inquisitorial, anti-modernism is based on a despising of human rights. These ideas were attractive to a cult leader like Schuon. In the same paragraph where Schuon praises De Maistre, he calls the Renaissance evil. Actually, the Renaissance was an extraordinary rebirth of all that had been killed by the ignorance of the Church and the Dark Ages it created. More than this, it was the origin of science and without science, our world would be a much sorrier place than it is now.

As Isaiah Berlin points out in his rational and excellent study of De Maistre, *De Maistre and the Origins of Fascism* . De Maistre is not only a throwback to the fanatic Traditionalists or the Inquisition, but he looks forward and is a precursor of totalitarianism and the fascist

⁷⁴³ Michael Fitzgerald, Schuon's disciple stated: "The enemies of Schuon are people who don't adhere to Schuon's notion of a basic uniformity of belief." "Uniformity of belief" is exactly what the Inquisition required also, as do most cults. Hitler or Joe Stalin.

movement.⁷⁴⁴ This man is a virulent racist of the worst kind and an apologist for one of the Inquisition which is one of the most shameful systems of torture and enforced theofascist mind control in history. Defining the area between fascism and esoterism, totalistic governments and religious and orthodox mythologies is difficult, but when one grasps the physical horror of human rights violations these ideologies have produced it is unconscionable to side with them, unless one is oneself a monster. It is in this cesspool of traditionalist ideologies of power and “spirit” that both de Maistre and Guenon took their stand--- and it is here, of course, that part of the controversy explored in this book resides.

The great historian Immanuel Wallerstein notes that De Maistre and Burke as reactionaries to the French Revolution and that “the central concern of conservative ideology has always been tradition” and thus resistance to change. De Maistre concern with preserving the “Throne and God” against the revolutionary forces that gave the world freedom

⁷⁴⁴ There are some rather pathetic post-modernist attempts that try to rehabilitate De Maistre. These fail. Jean Zaganianis tries to rehabilitate him in his post-modernist essay “Des origines du totalitarisme aux apories des démocraties libérales : interprétations et usages de la pensée de Joseph de Maistre par Isaiah Berlin” He tries to write about Berlin’s life to say that he was merely projecting his own concerns on to De Maistre. This ignores the extensive , indeed, brilliant scholarship Berlin did on De Maistre’s writings and views. Berlin is historical and exact. Zaganianis employs the views of Delueze, Habermas, Foucault and other decontextualizing post modernists “philosophers” to promote a rather empty and unconvincing attack on Berlin. It is not merely a coincidence that De Maistre and the totalitarian dictators of the twentieth century have much in common. The commonalities result not just in ideological similarities but in crimes and violations of human rights and facts recorded in history. The checks and cross checks of these ideas and facts are numerous beyond counting and indicate a great deal of evidence in favor of the thesis of Berlin, as well as Poppers comparison of Plato and fascism or Russell’s notion that romanticism had strong fascist leanings. Properly speaking De Maistre was a theofascist and not a fascist, but that is a point too subtle for many traditionalists. Suffice it to say that the evidence is quite overwhelming, just as it is overwhelming that Heidegger was a Nazi or that, T.S. Eliot was a far right bigot. The question is how people embody ideas and how they are expressed in factual histories and not how one can rearrange a “context” to get the result a scholar wishes for, as Zaganianis does in his rather shallow essay. De Maistre’s horrendous book Letters on the Spanish Inquisition is alone enough to show him a despotic, anti-Semite and lover of torture, as well as a precursor the “Protocols of the Elders of Zion” and the Nazi camps. Berlin is quite right about this.

<http://books.google.com/books?id=CrTYIiffD7EC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>

from the injustice of Church, aristocracy and Monarchy. This ties De Maistre directly to Guenon and the traditionalists, who were not fascists but to the far right of the fascists, theofascists to be precise. The world was changing and de Maistre became a bitter bigot and racist who longed for the Inquisition. Guenon's rejection of Europe has the same motivation and Guenon would even abandon the world of Europe to follow his dreams of medieval power into Islam.⁷⁴⁵

Followers of Guenon want to obfuscate the politics of their master behind spiritual 'contemplation', as if Guenon were some sort of saintly prefiguration of the apocalypse. Actually he was a bitter and vindictive expatriate who desired to return to the dark ages and claims a sort of universal prophet-hood that was both absurd grandiose and desirous of destroying the whole world. This is a sick man. The gullible trust that his followers have in him is all based in fiction and wishful thinking. The fact is the "spirit" is used by these people to hide their own pride and delusions from themselves. They will believe in the sanctity of Guenon or Schuon despite the reams of factual evidence against it. This is the obstinacy,--- indeed, the stupidity--- of faith. Faith sides with delusion until the breaking point is reached. The breaking point of liberation from make-believe and fairy tale is very far from the stamina of most people.

As Goya expressed so well in his Caprichos, many people prefer ignorance to inquiry and truth. The "mental virus" of the God delusion, of which Richard Dawkins speaks, is deeply ingrained in gullible children and it takes a very strong adult or a good education to enable seeing through it. Religion lives precisely in this shadow realm of politics and ignorance, stubbornness and mental delusion, superstition and hope for what does not exist and will never happen.

⁷⁴⁵ Wallerstein, Immanuel, The French Revolution and the Birth of Modernity. University of California Press Pg. 125.

Wallerstein says that the three ideologies in the 19th century were Liberalism, Marxism and Conservatism and they all define themselves by their relationship to change. He also notes that such as Islam were then in the "periphery" of the world system of capitalism.



Joseph-Marie, Comte de Maistre

Joseph De Maistre, like Guenon and Schuon, was a petty bourgeois with delusions of being an aristocrat. According to Isaiah Berlin's essay of the relation of De Maistre to fascism, De Maistre's family was of only recently elected to aristocratic status and his fanaticism appears to have been partly because of the nouveau riche quality, trying to prove himself that he was not a "draper" as his family had been. De Maistre thought of the state as a divine institution, and the executioner as a divine office. He was an advocate for slavery or serfdom, like Evola. Like De Maistre, Guenon despised democracy and basic human rights and wanted to return society to the "Throne and God" of Imperial religious dictators. De Maistre longs for the world of lost aristocratic privileges that were gone, and is willing to kill hundreds of thousands to get this power back. De Maistre wrote somewhere that the banner ideas of the French Revolution, namely, "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity", must be replaced with the call for "Throne and God". De Maistre wrote

that the “two anchors of society” are “religion and slavery”.⁷⁴⁶ The “infallibility” of religion, in De Maistre’s view is bolstered by the state and both depend upon slavery or serfdom. ⁷⁴⁷Much of this ideological position was adopted wholesale by Guenon and Schuon. De Maistre would have hated Thoreau, Lincoln, Harriet Tubman or Frederick Douglas, who helped free the slaves or advocated for abolition (Tubman went into the south and physically ushered slaves out of the slave states to the north).

De Maistre also was perhaps one of the most vocal of all supporters of the Spanish Inquisition and believed that nearly any brutality could be used to enforce aristocratic inequality and secure the power of the state. He claims that “The Inquisition is, by its very nature, benevolent, soft and conservative”.⁷⁴⁸ Besides justifying the Inquisition, De Maistre also

⁷⁴⁶ Berlin Isaiah The Cooked Timber of Humanity New York Knopf. 1991 pg. 134 This is a marvelous essay and book which taught me a great deal about the origins of traditionalist reaction to the enlightenment

⁷⁴⁷ De Maistre’s concern with infallibility would also influence Schuon and Guenon in their absurd belief that the “Intellect” was intrinsically “infallible” in Schuon’s words. The idea of the intellect in Guenon and Schuon is central and is basically a sort of ‘divine’ subjectivity. Ultimately amounting to nothing at all but self-magnified vanity and self-magnified mirroring. If you understand this the whole of traditionalism collapses. They claimed to have interior knowledge of the divine through a sort of inner revelation. When they say “intellect” he do not mean reason or any of the usual meanings of the term intellect. Having seen what this actually meant in Schuon, who I questioned about this at length, I became convinced that the Intellect was nothing other than an inner delusion of grandeur, which made both Guenon and Schuon able to project all sorts of nonsense on the ‘god’ idea, which really was a mirror image of their own vanity and delusions of grandeur. Their claim of divine insight and the delusion of infallibility was self-serving nonsense, mere self-magnification. Having seen how the infallibility idea was based on Schuon’s need of power, I began to see how other religions, the Catholic Church, for instance, or Tibetan Buddhism and its “termas”, were able to convince their followers of the utter nonsense that the dogmatic utterances of powerful institutions are infallible.

⁷⁴⁸ The number killed during the Inquisition is probably never going to be known, since the records were all destroyed by the Church to hide the facts. But historian Cecil Roth, who cites the figures of an ex-Secretary of the Holy Office, Llorente, who claimed on the basis of Church records now lost that the Spanish Inquisition alone burned 31,912 people at the stake, and “reconciled”, that is, forced reconciliation to the will of the church, usually by torture, on 291,450 people. Roth concludes these numbers might be a little high, and quotes a conservative Catholic historian who claimed that 28,540 were burned at the stake and 303,847 were tortured into submission. But accurate records seem to have disappeared. It is doubtful even Llorente had accurate records. This makes any estimate questionable. Indeed, the disappearance of the records

advocated the infallibility of the Pope and absolute power for the King, exactly as Guenon did. He writes:

“ I have never said that absolute power... does not involve great inconveniences. On the contrary, I expressly acknowledge the fact, and I have no thought of attenuating the inconveniences”⁷⁴⁹

This attitude of excusing torture and violations of human rights is monstrous and is a central element in why the Traditionalists are rightly called theofascists. ⁷⁵⁰ Indeed, De Maistre’s approval of the monstrosity of the Inquisition, akin to Holocaust denial is matched in the Schuon cult. In the 1970’s Schuon follower Whitall Perry, who shared wives with Schuon ⁷⁵¹ was writing positively about the Inquisition. Perry writes:

“It has taken all the ignorance of the passional mentality of the West to try to replace the kingdom of heaven with the kingdom of the world, to ... set the Adversary against God as an equally

would do more than suggest far higher numbers. But these numbers are arbitrary in any case, because they separate those killed by the Inquisition from those killed in colonial wars and peasant uprisings, witch burnings and Imperialist massacres all of which have a relation the ideology of Christian-European supremacy which is the origin of the Inquisition. The Inquisition was not merely an “office” but a mentality and its destructiveness and racist tendencies contributed to the killing of millions of Indians in the Americas, the killing and deportation of Jews and Moors in Spain, the burning of witches in England Germany and other Protestant countries. There was a protestant Inquisition as well as a Catholic one. Indeed the colonization of America has many ties to the Inquisition, not just in Spanish speaking countries but in the U.S. as well. De Maistre’s writings justifying the Inquisition were published in the 19th century and appear to have had an influence on American history to some degree. It would be interesting to look into this deeper.

⁷⁴⁹ Copleston, Frederick. A History of Philosophy vol IX. New York: Newman Press 1975 pg.9

⁷⁵⁰ It’s not inappropriate here to mention George Bush, spiritual fascist and a president who has overseen the reinstatement of torture as a means of treating prisoners, in violation of the Geneva Convention, in places such as Abu Graib prison in Iraq. This alone should have led to Bush’s impeachment.

⁷⁵¹ This sounds odd, and it was odd. IN 1965 Schuon “married” Whitall Perry’s wife Barbara, while Whitall stayed “married” to Barbara too, and according to the third wife Maude Murray, Whitall then got involved with Catherine Schuon for about 10 years. The Perry’s had spent 5 years or so with Guenon before become entwined with the Schuon’s.

matched opponent in a contest between the two for dominion. Writing on the Inquisition M. Verrill states. “one is terrified at the thought of what could have happened if the Catholic Church had not continued the battle, if the Inquisition had not been established and maintained.” “The heretics were just as resolute and just as practical.. as any revolutionary of today... [the object of the revolt against the Church was to instigate the] “abolition of the monarchy, ,, private property...inheritance,,, marriage, order, the total abolition of all religion. It was against this that the Inquisition had to fight and who can be surprised if .. the methods employed by the Holy Office... were a little drastic, a little severe? There can be no doubt that if this most excellent tribunal continued to enjoy its full prerogative and the full exercise of its salutary powers, the world at large would be in a far happier and more orderly position today.... “ “ 752

This horrendously repulsive endorsement of this “most excellent tribunal” ---the Inquisition--- comes right out of the center of the Schuon cult, as Schuon so often had Perry write on subjects Schuon himself did not wish to write on. 753

⁷⁵² Perry Whitall. A Treasury of Traditional Wisdom San Francisco. Harper and Row. 1986. pg 439

⁷⁵³ Perry did the attack on one of Schuon’s chief rivals George Gurdjieff, for instance. Gurdjieff in the Light of Tradition is the title. It is totally a biased and interested book, written by a cult member to attack another cult. Yet Theodore Roszak calls it “by far the best independent, critical evaluation of Gurdjieff I’ve come across”—and so it goes to show you, the Schuon cult can pull off and trick those who wish not to see. Gurdjieff teaches his disciples of self hypnotize themselves and many complain of depression and trance states that they have a hard time getting out of. There are lots of complaints about the “elite” feelings of entitlement that they got from him.



Painting by Goya

The Catholic fight against the enlightenment stretched into the 20th century. The members of Action Francaise, following De Maistre, were also militant royalists. They were convinced that the salvation of France depended on the overthrow of the Republic and its replacement by a monarchy, if necessary, by violence. Guenon sympathized with many of these views and them with his. Action Francaise was French fascism in a nutshell. Guenon was an avid reader, and partial supporter of this fascism long before he and Evola connected Traditionalism to theofascism.

It is true that eventually Guenon seems to have had some reservations about Maurras, since Maurras was an atheist, whereas Leon Daudet had ideas that were closer to Guenon's and De Maistre's ideal of a totalistic

theocracy. As one of Guenon's publishers, Chacornac writes in his biography of Guenon

“There seems to be no doubt that there existed then, to varying degrees, a certain sympathy between Guenon and some of the leaders of the Action Francaise . We say: to varying degrees, for it seems obvious to us that Daudet was, of all the leaders of the Action Francaise, the one most capable of understanding Guenon, and of accepting, at least partially, his point of view. It is no less evident that there must have been far less sympathy between Guenon and Charles Maurras,”

Indeed, Guenon seems to have still held Daudet in very high esteem indeed. Friendship with Daudet was friendship with French fascism. Guenon not only befriended the ultra-right fascist who helped bring the third Reich to France, but he also mentions him with approval in one of his books? This might seem trivial but it is not. Guenon hated all expression of personal or individual taste and proclivity. He was a man of strict ideas, cold and some say, of cadaverous impersonalism.⁷⁵⁴ He hardly ever mentions people he knew personally in his books, but Daudet is one of the few contemporaries that Guenon would deign to

⁷⁵⁴ The poet Hakim Bey, aka Robert Lamborn Wilson writes humorously in a poem about Guenon that “We have seen the ghost of Rene Guenon, cadaverous & topped with a fez (like Boris Karloff as Ardis Bey in The Mummy) leading a funereal No Wave Industrial-Noise rock band in loud buzzing blackfly-chants for the death of Culture & Cosmos.” Guenon does indeed look cadaverous in many photos and imagining him as a punk rocker is very humorous and not inappropriate. There is something in him that is both decadent and repressive to the point of vampiric intellectuality. There is also something adolescent and excessive in Guenon, blackened, wanting to destroy the world that let him down, obsessed with fire, blood and doom, as well as a kind of mathematical psychosis that reads meanings into symbols that are meaningless. No wonder he loved Dante so much, that priest of sadism and an imaginary heaven even more repressed, sadistic than regimented than his hell. Dante is the last gasp of the middle ages, just as Guenon is the last gasp of religion as aristocratic Tradition. Wilson wrote about Guenon

speak of with approval in his books.⁷⁵⁵

Daudet's Catholic sympathies and hatred of the French Revolution and modern industry made him sympathize with the views of Guenon expressed in Guenon's book Orient and Occident. Guenon agreed with the necessity of overthrowing the modern style governments, since he hated democracy and the effects of the French Revolution. However, he eventually broke with Daudet, to whom he had been close, after the Catholic Church condemned Maurras. The Catholic Church placed some of Maurras books and L'Action Francaise on the Index and condemned him on Dec. 29, 1926. "The Index" is of course the list of blacklisted or prohibited books, which the church disliked or forbade reading. The Index was one of the many products of the Inquisition, which sought to control not just social behavior but mental activities of all kinds.⁷⁵⁶

Since Guenon had been close to L'Action Francaise and its leaders the condemnation forced him to choose sides.⁷⁵⁷ Time magazine for Feb 28, 1927 states:

"Pius XI was reported last week from Rome to have excommunicated in the second or more serious degree** Leon Daudet (son of the famed author Alphonse Daudet) and Charles Maurras, both leading members of the French Royalist party. The excommunicated had stigmatized in their Paris newspaper, L'Action Francaise, all Republican Catholics—asserting that true Catholics are Royalists. The Pope not only excommunicated M. Daudet and M. Maurras, last week, but dispatched an official rebuke to

⁷⁵⁵ He mentions Daudet with approval in a footnote in Man and His Becoming according to Vedanta, chapter 2

⁷⁵⁶ When I was in the Schuon cult there were recommended and not recommended movies of books. Stars Wars and Dances with Wolves were approved of but Last Temptation of Christ was hated. When in fact that latter was a better movie. Lately the Traditionalists have been attacking the book and movie the Da Vinci Code, a harmless mystery thriller that misuses Da Vinci for fictional purposes.

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Read more: <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,730088,00.html#ixzz0qaDIyAET>

the French Cardinals Luçon (Rheims), Charost (Rennes), and Billot for upholding L'Action Française in various letters written by them. “

Guenon's inclination to reactionary and fascist thinking had to be tempered by his love of a Monarchist Church. Certainly too, he was tired of the Church, this is obvious, and was about to convert to Islam in earnest. His earlier conversion to Islam in 1912 with Aguéli being something of a boyish play-act and make believe conversion by a couple of romantic young men. Guenon took sides with the Church against Action Française, thus bringing to a head his differences with Maurras. But there are many complications in this decision that have been utterly avoided by scholars who write about Guenon. Charconac writes:

“This condemnation, and the insubordination of Action Française, were to disturb Catholic circles for some years both in and out of France, to such a point that a member of the Sacred College, Cardinal Billot, relinquished his red hat. Guénon was not in the least occupied with politics but could not avoid hearing of this affair, which seemed to him a characteristic illustration of his contemporaries' lack of understanding, however 'traditionalist' they proclaimed themselves to be, of the normal relationship between religion and politics.This served as the occasion for him to define the traditional position on this point and to set it in a wider context by broadening its scope, which he did in his Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power.”

The idea that Guenon was not “in the least occupied with politics” is ridiculous, since the very idea of “esoterism” is a political construction, indeed, Guenon's notion of ‘Beyond Being’ is a political construction as is his entire metaphysical system. Guenon had been campaigning against democracy and for the caste system for years already, and had friends among far right Catholics and in Action Française and was fiercely

political about all his metaphysical ideas. Indeed, Guenon's metaphysical ideas are political in their core: the whole point of them being to resurrect the 'spirituality' of a reactionary anti-democratic past against science and democracy. Guenon writes a whole book because a fascist group, Action Francaise, with whom he had some sympathy, is condemned by the Church and Cardinal Billot loses his red hat, and he does so because he wants to use his experience as a teaching lesson for all history. He wants to move farther to the right than Action Francaise. This is totally political. The manifest political arrogance of this thesis seems to escape readers of Guenon, who are mostly obtuse to their own political tendencies. But then the readers of Guenon tend toward excessive hero worship and have trouble thinking about anything unless their hero said it first. Guenon's followers are all political spiritualists and have trouble seeing themselves with any sort of objectivity.

OK then: let us review what Guenon was really up to in 1927. Guenon is good friends with Daudet and has a deep attraction to Action Francaise and the fascism represented there. However, when the Church condemns Maurras Guenon is mad at Action Francaise and takes the church's side against it. He does not much like the Catholic Church either which he calls "temporal and material". The notion that the Catholic Church was ever a 'Shepherd' of the "divine realm" is an elaborate fiction. The Church was always a primarily material institution, political and an extension of the Roman Empire. But Guenon's romantic nostalgia for a Church would never admit this. The fraudulent character of the Church echoes Guenon's own. He keeps up the pretense of his own sanctity all his life just as the Church poses as a 'divine institution' when really is based on the forged Donation of Constantine.

In fact there was nothing saintly about him. He was a meddlesome spy and intellectual dictator who did all he could to obfuscate his real intentions. He defines a politics with himself on top

and that sets up priests and the ‘sacerdotal’ realm as superior to the ‘temporal’ realm of kings and warriors. This is merely an irrational elitism of the worst kind, setting up superstitious cranks as the lords of knowledge. He never questions the caste system he has set up with himself as the head Brahmin. He wants the pretense of sacerdotal – that is priestly types like himself or Schuon to dictate what happens politically. Once I got to know Schuon I could see how absurd this pretense really was.⁷⁵⁸ So apologists for Guenon are wrong, Guenon did indeed reject German fascism but only to become a theofascist, monarchist and hater of democracy and human rights. Guenon’s politics is already to the right of Action Francaise. His argument with Maurras put him even farther to the right than Action Francaise.

What else was happening to Guenon around this time?

Around the same time as the fracas with Action Francaise, Guenon had been attacked very seriously by Ernest Jouin, (Monseigneur), (1844-1932), a far right Catholic abbot, anti-Semite and head of an anti-Masonic Organization called R.I.S.S. (International Review of Secret Societies). He studied occult organizations. Guenon appears to have been both deeply influenced by this man and utterly despised him—some of this major paranoid fits are about this man and his organization. Guenon had tried to discredit the collaborators of the R.I.S.S. and engaged in a long polemic with them. James says that the R.I.S.S. forced Guenon to move to Egypt. If true, this suggests a considerable weakness on Guenon’s part. He must have had an exaggerated susceptibility to

⁷⁵⁸ Schuon often made decisions by “opening the Koran” a superstitious game of chance where one opens up this book with eyes closed and places one’s finger randomly on a page. The resulting verse is supposed to have been dictated by god as the answer to one’s question. This can give really dangerous answers, as the Koran is often violent. It can also give ridiculous answers. Schuon taught this magical thinking procedure to his wives who swore by the practice. Maude used it all the time and I think it exacerbated her growing mental illness as it gave her bizarre answers, which led her astray.

irrational fear of spiritual ideas contrary to his own. The hatred was really optical on the part of both sides, but of course, delusional organizations invent spiritual plots against each other.

In any case, there is more to Guenon's going to Egypt than James suggests. A close associate of Jouin's was Olivier de Fremond, another extremist anti-Semite Catholic, who one source says was one of the "privileged advisors of Guenon's long polemic in opposition to this RISS". So Guenon, who was trying to reform French Masonry along far-right and traditionalists lines, was not willing to go along with either Jouin or Maurras, the two of them representing the far-right church on the one hand and far-right Royalist or temporal values on the other. Not happy with either far right alternative, but attracted to both, Guenon wanted the far right to extend into a universal domain, along the lines of what De Maistre thought of as an "esoteric" and more ecumenical way. He did not find ultra-right Catholicism, Action Francaise or ordinary Masonry fully appealing though he was deeply involved with all three. What does appeal to him is the totalitarian system of Islam, which is in "holy war" with Europe for the last thousand years.

What I make out in the historical record, is that he had been playing various games adopting pseudonyms and trying to infiltrate various organizations to subvert them inwardly or find out their "real" purposes. Guenon has a sociopathic character, deeply deceitful and rarely honest, playing political games of hide and seek. This corruption of surreptitious activity certainly took a toll on him. During these years Guenon was caught spying. He was exposed as a sort of spy and infiltrator and hardly anyone trusted him, with good reason. So Guenon was really in a very hard place in 1926-29. Humiliated and wanting power, he had to leave Europe in some embarrassment. He wanted to try to find a way to destroy the world he hated at the same time as he wished to be the man at the top of it all. How to be the hero of world destruction and renewal--- that was Guenon's paranoid wish and dearest

hope of revenge against Europe.⁷⁵⁹

However, these events should not be seen as a rejection of fascism by Guenon, but rather Guenon only rejected Maurras himself as an atheist fascist. However, what Guenon wanted was a religious fascism--- Traditionalist or universal fascism, “fascism from above” as someone called it or ‘metaphysical fascism’. From this point on Guenon sublimates his leanings toward an extremist politics into his spiritual metaphysic. Chacornac continues:

“the condemnation of Action Francaise” was an occasion for him to define the traditional doctrine on this point, by widening the perspective and writing Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power, _ which was published in 1929 by Vrin publishers”.

Yes. Guenon was upset that a few in the Church were sympathetic with Action Francaise, particularly that the French Cardinal Billot had gone against the Church and sided with Action Francaise’s “insubordination”. So the real issue for Guenon was not any moral abhorrence at fascism, but rather he was offended at the insubordination and rejection of totalistic hierarchy. He felt it was wrong for the Cardinal to have taken Action Francaise’s side and advocated that only Royalists could be real Catholics. Guenon wanted something even worse than Action Francaise defining who is Catholic and who is not. He wanted Priests, Popes and Cardinals to define who goes to war and who does not. Irrational priests, adherents of a medieval ideology, should control the

⁷⁵⁹ The resemblance of Guenon to Arthur Rimbaud is interesting, who was much younger but who did a similar thing of leaving Europe. Rimbaud left after a horrible and violent affair with the poet Paul Verlaine. after his wife died, Guenon had an affair with a woman and a fight with Catholics and freemasons. Rimbaud seems to have left to be rid of his directionless immaturity and his destructive life as a poet and a homosexual relation with Verlaine. But Guenon seems to have left for revenge against the world he hated. Both are escaping, as did Gauguin, Artaud and others. Guenon was a far right rebel against Europe and Rimbaud was to the left.

warrior class , not vice versa. This defines Guenon's political views as even more reactionary than the political group, Action Francaise.

This series of events is the occasion for Guenon's book Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power. This book is really the center of what Guenon was. His book states that priests, adhering to counter-intuitive church doctrines, should have total control of the state and should make all decisions top down. Guenon was calling for Platonistic theocratic fascism or theofascism. In other words Guenon's trouble with the catholic church as to do with it not being fascist enough. He wants a Catholicism that is every further to the right than the Inquisition. Rama Coomaraswamy would end up advocating for the same extremist Church.

In other words Guenon is creating what Di Giorgio would call spiritual fascism in 1927. He has outgrown fascism of the Catholic Church and wants a larger and more extreme, more totalistic, universal and metaphysical theofascism. He does not want a modernist fascism but a spiritual fascism that harkens back to Innocent III, the pope who started the Inquisition and set up the right of Confession as a way of controlling people. You can see this in one of Innocent III Decrees "Papal Decree on the Choice of a German King, 1201".

It is the business of the pope to look after the interests of the Roman empire, since the empire derives its origin and its final authority from the papacy; its origin, because it was originally transferred from Greece by and for the sake of the papacy...its final authority, because the emperor is raised to his position by the pope who blesses him, crowns him and invests him with the empire... ⁷⁶⁰

⁷⁶⁰ <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/innIII-policies.html>

Guenon is seeking this sort of totalistic power. In other words, according to Chacornac, Guenon wrote his book Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power, partly in response to his disagreement with Maurras and the Catholic Church. He wants Royalism to be contained in the embrace of Guardians of a universal priestly caste. He wants a priestly government of the very few, a veritable caste obsessed theocratic state. Guenon says he wants to priests and warriors or imperial caste in the government to be “each one contained (...) in the common principle from which both proceed, and of which they represented two indivisible aspects, insolubly linked in the unity of a synthesis at the same time superior and anterior to their distinction” (p. 14). In other words royalty and priesthood should be in harmony with priests having the upper hand. This is a theocratic fascism, which he defines and which Evola will question. Both of them are monarchists but Guenon wants a higher role for the priest caste. Both want castes and social inequality based on a top down authoritarian model of imperial control defended by a merciless military.

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Also around 1927, Guenon had disagreed with the Catholics of Regnabit as well, which I mentioned earlier. Fr. Anizan ceased allowing Guenon to write for that magazine because Guenon refused to admit the universality of Catholicism. Marie-France James suggests Guenon was discovered as an infiltrator and under cover spy in far right catholic organizations when really he was a Mason and this led to his being discredited in various circles and even caused him to leave France. No one could really trust Guenon. He betrayed everyone. He was always pretending to be other than he was. He was a con-man, in short.

There appears to be a good deal of truth in Marie-France James's assessment of Guenon's relation to Catholicism. But there are real problems with her views too. She calls him an “apostate”. Such language

Evola of Guenon's political views⁷⁶¹ http://thompkins_cariou.tripod.com/id95.html

does not interest me much—the concept of ‘apostate’ makes no sense in a democratic world that respects human rights. Certainly Guenon rather despised Catholicism, but there is much to despise in it. Like Coomaraswamy he only admired medieval Catholicism. Guenon’s world is one where no critical thought is allowed, you are either with the totalistic program or you are a heretic or ‘satanic’. James’ point in condemning Guenon’s ‘apostasy’ is that Guenon’s hypocrisy and double dealing was found out. Jouin, James, Anizan and others were partly right to be offended by Guenon’s inordinate pretense and charlatanry. Guenon was not much interested in any religion, he was interested in himself as the criteria of all religions—and this is where Schuon got his own particular megalomania. But no one knew this in 1927. They only knew something was wrong with the man. Guenon himself was only able to hold on to his delusions by running off to Islam and using Islam as a place to seek to expand his ideology into a religion that advocates violence and a totalistic ideology that allows no criticism.

But once that is understood, it places the following comment Jacques Maritain in a context. Maritain said “Guenon’s metaphysics are radically irreconcilable with the [Catholic Church’s] faith.” ⁷⁶² When Guenon fell out with Ragnabit after falling out with Action Francaise, the reason was that Guenon thought that Catholicism was not a very good road for westerners to take as an initiatic path. What he really wanted was disciples who would spread his universalism as a “super-religion”. He didn’t just want theofascism, he wanted theofascism with himself at the summit of it. Like Schuon, he approved of the Church only as a medieval conservative institution.

But there is another element of what happened to Guenon in 1927. He appears to have read a lot of Joseph De Maistre in 1927, who had a plan to unify the various religions, which Guenon wants to push further

⁷⁶² Quoted in Sedgwick, *Against the Modern world*, pg 30

into a far right phalanx of all religions against the science and the forces of disbelief. He wants to make an amalgam of Masonic and Christian ideologies into a super religion. Quoting De Maistre in 1927, Guenon writes that

“Masonry should have for its purpose the instruction of governments and the gathering of all Christian sects, according to the advisable system. Regarding the first point, [De Maistre writes] “We will use all our strength to remove all kind of obstacles that passion opposes between truth and authority’s ear.....States’ limits could not prevent this second class activity, for Priests from different nations could, sometimes, work with the same zeal, and work for the greater good” And about the second purpose : “Wouldn’t it be worthy of us to suggest the improvement of Christianity as one of our Order’s purpose ? This project would have two parts, as each group must work on its side in order to get close to the others” Correspondence groups or committees must be established, made with priests of different groups we would have hosted and initiated. We will work slowly but surely. We will not make any conquest which fails to assist us in the perfection of this Great Work. All this could help for the advancement of religion,. We will extirpate all dangerous opinions and raise the throne of truth upon the ruins of the false beliefs of the skeptics” (Pyronnists) At last, we will create what Joseph de Maistre calls “Transcendent Christianity”, which is for him the “Revelation of Revelation” and the essential point of the “secret sciences”

This is indeed the “super religion” of esoterism that Guenon longed for. Guenon concludes that this is the rallying cry of the “transcendent unity” of religions against modernism and says

“Who can doubt that these kinds of research do not provide us victorious arms against modern writers”.... [and he concludes that] “... It is essential to note that the union as envisaged by Joseph de Maistre must be completed in the purely intellectual realm This is also what we have always said, because we think it [this transcendent unity] may be true understanding between peoples , especially between those who belong to different civilizations, must be based on the Principles in the proper sense of the word.”⁷⁶³

So in 1927, Guenon is already sure that the far-right agenda of a super religion is possible and will triumph against the modern world and its system of science and unbelief. The ‘Transcendent Unity of Religions’ is thus a political project from the beginning and is conceived by Guénon on the basis of the writings of the arch reactionary, De Maistre, as a political project.⁷⁶⁴

⁷⁶³ See Guenon’s essay “Joseph de Maistre’s Project for the Union of Peoples. 1927 <http://esprit-universel.over-blog.com/article-rene-guenon-un-projet-de-joseph-de-maistre-pour-l-union-des-peuples-3-et-fin-58044928.html>.

⁷⁶⁴ there are those who deny this, such as Xavier Accart, who is himself an apologist for both Guenon and the Catholic Church, He wrote a sort of fundamentalist tract on the liturgy of the Church. Thus his interests are mostly political, and he writes as a cultish follower. In some of his writings he correctly notes that Guenon’s dislike of fascism was based on his belief that they were too “psychic” which is the same criticism that Evola makes. I discuss this elsewhere and the distinction between psychic and spiritual is a fiction. He also says Guenon thought that Nazism was a sort of parody of traditional “principles”, but when you analyze RG’s notion of ‘principles’ it is utterly empty. Guenon’s politics thus turn out to be pretty close to fascist ideology, while not being fascist but theofascist, as I have shown. Accart makes distinctions that have little content in them. RG rightly thought the fascists were too enamored of science. This is Evola’s conclusion too. They wished the fascists could be more “spiritual”, which would have made them even more dangerous than they were more like Evola and Guenon wished them to be. What Guenon wanted was a more totalistic system than the Nazis’ not less totalist, and Accart conveniently fails to notice this. Racism in Guenon was “spiritual” not biological, again like Evola and also like Schuon. (I discuss this elsewhere in this book at length and will not write of it here—look this up in the index). Guenon and Evola are not fascists but theofascist, and thus their racism and totalism are spiritual. Accart cites a lot of very trivial arguments between Evola and Guenon which amounts to very little. The two men were both of huge egos and as competitors in the same milieu they disagreed while writing glowing reports of each other’s works. In the end both Guenon and Evola were theofascists who hated human rights, science and democracy and who saw even the Nazis as too modern. They both favored a return to totalistic spiritual systems of the past. .

So then, the two disagreements with Action Francaise and Regnabit appear to be linked to this new effort to define a politics of De Maistre's theofascism, now restyled in more universal and Platonist terms. Guenon was creating a system that could be both totalistic and universalistic, based on the imaginary "Principles" of de Maistre and far to the right of the fascism of Action Francaise and more totalistic than the Catholic Church. He would join his theofascism to Islam, and ally it tangentially to Hinduism, since few could touch him in these foreign realms of thought and belief.

Guenon's extreme right-wing form of theofascism is thus a combination of monarchism, metaphysics and fascism at the same time. It is an attempt to be both "esoteric" and universal as well as being open to "exoteric" religions within individual nations. Guenon's active and sympathetic association with leaders Action Francaise seems to have come to an end by 1927 or 28. But he does not then cease to subscribe to a far right repressive and caste ridden line of thinking; rather, he expands a universal fascism into newer and more far flung traditional realms. Guenon's politics is squeezed out between fascism and Catholicism, ends up attached to Islam, but still is basically a De Maistrean version of reactionary Platonistic and Hindu caste politics that resembles fascism in its totalistic ambitions. It combines these toxic attributes with a form of Islam that is virulent all by itself.

Guenon's book on Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power (1927) is thus to some degree an answer to Maurras and Daudet and a text born out of the reactionary De Maistre. It is also an answer to the Catholics as well, who had rejected him from right wing catholic periodical Regnabit in 1927. In both cases Guenon had put himself further in the direction of totalistic control than either the Catholics or

the fascists.⁷⁶⁵ He answered them by providing an elaborate justification of caste elitism and the necessity of Brahmanical control of society by 'principled' intellectuals in Martin Lings phrase. (Influenced deeply by Guenon, to whom he was a secretary Lings will eventually cite the Spanish catholic fascist Franco as the ideal ruler) The fact that the book was probably written in response to the fascists Maurras as well as the Catholics of Regnabit is interesting, since the book goes much farther than Maurras and the later Fascists and Nazis were willing to go in justifying social repression, caste elitism and spiritual totalism. Guenon felt that social control should not merely be "temporal", or in the hands of "warriors", (or kshatriyas), or the military, but spiritual, or in the hands of priests, in short, a political theocracy. What the effete addicts of the Guenonian system never understand is that this man is a political animal almost exclusively and his pretence to spirituality is really just the fictional flourishes of a deluded man.

Maurras was willing to put power in the hands of priests but only as long as they were controlled by a military. Guenon wanted "spiritual" authority to subsume "temporal" power.⁷⁶⁶ This is basically a Platonic and Catholic Monarchist position, but stretched farther than even the most Inquisition prone Catholics would go. No wonder they rejected him. Guenon wanted to include Hindu caste tyranny and other forms of

⁷⁶⁵ It was also around this time that Guénon began to collaborate with the periodical " Veil of Isis " and gave them some studies. After this Guenon takes effective management and renews the " Veil of Isis " which is soon turned into " Traditional Studies ." Traditionalism is really founded on the premise of a political thesis that masquerades as a spiritual delusion and it is born of a right wing reaction to the Catholic Church and Action Francaise..

⁷⁶⁶ This is the argument that Guenon has with Evola too. It scarcely matters whether one supports priests or warriors and being in control of a society where neither has any real possibility of being in control. Moreover the state in medieval times is a construction that includes religion rather seamlessly in many cases. Church and state were in practice the same thing, more or less. In either case a caste system is what would result. Guenon's support of the priest caste merely reflects his own elitist prejudices and hardly disqualifies Evola from being a traditionalist, just because Evola wanted generals to rule with priests. The notion of caste in both men is closer to the Nazi idea of caste than that of India .

theocratic repression in connection with militaristic government and Catholic domination of every area of life. Guenon's dedication to this vision of a religious and aristocratic stranglehold on all of humanity is relentless. Guenon's interest in Vedanta ⁷⁶⁷ is an interest in social inequality, where Guenon's metaphysical 'principles' are propped up to serve an unjust social hierarchy. Indeed, Guenon's whole notion of "principles" is really a fancy form of intellectual and political prejudice dressed up as mystical metaphysics. Guenon hated everything democratic and was interested in Hinduism's unitary metaphysics because it provided a means to orchestrate society along the lines of a cold, cruel and impersonal political will. In Guenon, impersonal ideas always must trample actual people or beings. Individuals do not matter for him and are expendable. This is usually the attitude of tyrants and those who commit atrocities. Guenon's interest in Hinduism deserves comparison with that of Heinrich Himmler, who was also interested in using Hinduism to justify social hierarchy and "authority". Hinduism also denigrates the personal and the individual.

⁷⁶⁷ Both Schuon and Guenon were very interested in Shankara. (788 CE - 821 CE) He formed the Advaita Vedanta, or non-dual system of thought in India. Schuon often claimed to be at least the equal of Shankara (or better). Shankara was committed to the horrible injustices of the caste system. He also believed that the most important access to 'highest truth' was Vedic texts, and that access to these dogmatic texts should be socially restricted to upper-caste males. Advaita Vedanta says the one unchanging entity (Brahman) alone exists, and that changing entities do not have absolute existence, much as the ocean's waves have no existence in separation from the ocean. This is a "gnostic" system in that it reduces the world to nothing basically and erects an abstract ideology into a totalitarian construct. It devalues the cosmos and people in it, beneath unitary and smothering abstraction. Schuon's basic ideas originate partly in this ideology. Also Advaita proposes the theory of Maya, explaining the universe as a " magician's trick" or a delusional dream. The theory of Maya is radically false as it tries to transmogrify and invert the unreal as real and the real as unreal. This results in a bogus notion of "objectivity" that that which leads to the god delusion is good and that which leads away from god or the delusion of god is evil. This is the insanity of Schuon's system in a nutshell.

⁷⁶⁸ Himmler's biographer, Peter Padfield, records that Himmler visited Auschwitz in July 1942. There he watched an extermination of Jewish women. He also notes that Himmler was devoted to the Hindu text, the Bhagavad Gita, and "he never went anywhere without it", including bringing it to the camps as he watched Jews being murdered. Padfield notes that this fact is "important for any attempt to understand what Himmler believed he was doing".⁷⁶⁹ In other words, Himmler watched women die in the gas chambers Auschwitz as he carried the Bhagavad Gita in his pocket. This shows how fascism and spirituality went together during World War II in the case of Himmler. Guenon's similar concern with an impersonal view of human suffering was encouraged by Vedanta and the Bhagavad Gita. For Himmler as for Guenon, the world seemed a place where impersonal duty, such as Hinduism preaches in the Vedanta and the *Gita*, justifies apocalyptic cruelty.⁷⁷⁰ The world is to be riven,

⁷⁶⁸ Boris Pasternak's wonderful novel Dr. Zhivago explores the danger of denying the personal. The context of the novel applies to the Stalinist era, and Stalin was a man who, like Guenon, also held that "the personal" did not matter. It is not known how many people Stalin killed but it appears to be millions. Totalism is the what characterizes both between Guenon and Stalin

⁷⁶⁹ Padfield, Peter. Himmler London, Macmillian. 1990 pg.402

⁷⁷⁰ It is also interesting to note that Robert Oppenheimer also used the Gita to justify himself when the atom bomb exploded. The Bhagavad Gita not only justified the class and caste system of classifications that was important to the Aryan supremacy that the Nazis sought, but the idea of "karma" in this book also generates of notion of "disinterestedness", and thus of objective, impersonal service to duty and obligation. This is what appealed to Himmler in the book. The notion of "caste purity" is evidently related to the notion of intellectual hygiene, thought control, 'pure knowledge', or ideological imposition. Hinduism appears to have attracted both Himmler and Oppenheimer because it enunciates the close relation of pure knowledge to impersonal service and the renunciation of moral scruple in the pursuit of power, knowledge and the commission of acts of violence. The case of Oppenheimer is far more complicated than that of Himmler, however. But I have written about this at some length in my book The Empire of the Intellect. Below are some chapters about Oppenheimer and Hinduism.

<http://naturesrights.com/knowledge%20power%20book/section47.asp>

<http://naturesrights.com/knowledge%20power%20book/section48.asp>

<http://naturesrights.com/knowledge%20power%20book/section49.asp>

ploughed, plundered and destroyed in the interest of ideology. Himmler, according to his biographer, claimed to be “doing his caste duty in a disinterested, passionless way, dedicating it only to god”. Guenon’s book the Reign of Quantity and the Signs of the Times likewise gloats over the destruction of the world with disinterest and impersonal detachment. Guenon sets himself up as a sort of Torquemada or Savonarola, like Augustine, a far-right “hammer of the heretics”. For Guenon, as for other overly strict, repressive bigots, those who do not conform to ultra-orthodox beliefs are “heretics, “profane” and will be destroyed in the soon to arrive apocalypse described in the Reign of Quantity—that is when the whole world will bow to Guenon’s impeccable intellect and pathological sagacity. In Guenon’s book, ‘profane people’, ‘modernists’ and people who value democracy, human rights and ‘ordinary life’ are wiped out like Indians from North America or Jews burned up in crematoriums.

It is amazing to me that the moral bankruptcy of contemporary partisans of Guenon’s work bend over backwards to excuse Guenon’s monstrous sympathy with the anti-democratic elitism of the fascist writers like Leon Daudet at Action Francaise. But it is far worse he felt they did not go far enough. Guenon was not a ‘secular’ fascist as was Maurras, who merely advocated religion only as a means of social control. Guenon wanted religion to control everything. In other words, men like Guenon should dominate society and direct and advise its course. Guenon held that the esoteric elite are alone capable of understanding and dictating the ultimate needs of man (not to mention women). The reason for Guenon’s rejection of Maurras and Action Francaise was that they were too political in a lowly sense and this not the political “elite”, who should rule the political from “above”. Being beyond politics is the ultimate politics since it claims to trump all

government, as well as being the designer of all government. For Guenon the ultimate politics is the fiction of metaphysics. This is what was in his mind when he moves to Cairo in 1930. His reason for rejecting fascism was not moral scruples. He favored social caste and other unjust systems of social control. Guenon wanted not merely the elimination of democratic freedoms and human rights, as Maurras and the Nazis desired, but he also wanted the return of medieval theocratic tyranny and if this could not be had then the world deserved utter destruction.

So after initially being very accepting of Action Francaise, Guenon rejected it because it was not fascist on a grand enough scale for him. Action Francaise was not a sufficiently universal form of fascism. He left France after the rejection of *Regnabit* magazine, Action Francaise, as well as the death of his wife and his favorite aunt. He lost his job at a girl's school. He lost a niece, who he accused him, no doubt correctly, of being two faced and a "viper" and who had been involved in a "real net of spying and treason" – though the truth seems to be that he is having another paranoid fit and blaming a child for what in fact is his own neglect. Of course the writing of Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power before 1927 also must have played on Guenon's mind as a death knell to his concern with Europe. He wanted to leave Europe behind him as had Gauguin, Rimbaud, or Artaud—and all three cases move towards various species of insanity or near suicide. Guenon's suicide is mental. Islam offers him greater freedom to manipulate symbols and reach out towards a delusional wish for universal power than could somehow destroy the earth itself, at least in a unconscious fiction of Guenon's books, as he will attempt trying to do in Reign of Quantity and the Signs of the Times. So he more or less runs off with another woman to Cairo on what appears to be a sexual adventure.

Sedgwick notes that Guenon had not previously shown any interest

in travel prior to his going to Cairo with Mary Shallito.⁷⁷¹ She was an ultra-rich heiress who was interested in the Occult and built a castle style house complete with a chapel made of Tarot mosaics. Robin Waterfield, in his biography of Guenon, notes that she took Guenon there during their affair. Her full name was Mary Wallace Schillito (1871-1928) (also called Assan Faride Dina). Her husband Assan Farid Dina died mysteriously on the 24th of June 1928, while celebrating his fifteenth wedding anniversary on a cruise boat in the Red Sea. Oddly Guenon goes to Cairo in 1930 on what appears to be a sexual adventure with Mary who, like Guenon, just lost her mate. She does not stay with Guenon long,⁷⁷² and after she leaves him Guenon's enormous ambitions will drive him to start a flurry of desperate correspondence from Cairo to keep his influence alive in Europe. It becomes a kind of exile and martyrdom for him, as he tried to hold onto his fictional supremacy as the one man focal point of all the worlds' religions. Really he is merely the focal point of a right wing experiment in colonizing the dying religions as a far-right political front..

So In the late 1920's after Guenon's wife's death, and his dismissal from the school where he taught, and after his affair with Mary Shallito, he also comes under increasingly frequent attacks from the editors of the *Revue Internationale des Sociétés Secretes* , who denounce his devious and subversive maneuvers. In 1930 he leaves France in some disgrace to settle permanently in Cairo.

It should be said also that he leaves Europe shortly after his book on Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power appeared. I would submit that this book is the most important one that Guenon wrote. It really defines his actual position as a writer and thinker in the world. Reign of Quantity, thought by followers to be his masterpiece, is really a book of Madness and superstition, or sort of text book on how a mentally ill

⁷⁷¹ Sedgwick, Mark, Against the Modern World Oxford, 2004. pg 74

⁷⁷² Waterfield suggests she left him with some acrimony

writer might create a universal projection of his paranoid tendencies. But in Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power Guenon advocates for a theofascist dictatorship and a caste system more rigid than anything Hitler dreamed of. As Guenon retreated from a Europe he found intolerable into a world even more repressive than the one he left, he takes refuge in reactionary Islam and Cairo, and there tries to build Traditionalism into a worldwide movement that would propagate his doctrines around the globe. This is his dream anyway. In reality only handful of alienated outsiders and cult members listen to him, Schuon and Lings among them.

Militant and apocalyptic themes increase in his Guenon's work after he moved to Cairo in 1930. The Islamofascism of the Koran becomes joined to his theofascism. His final answer to fascism is not to condemn its violations of human rights and blind worship of power, but rather the opposite. He desires total destruction of the modern world and its people and their rights by the very "principles" that he claimed the Fascists lacked. In other words, he creates a new theofascism modeled on religious intolerance of the past. Like De Maistre, Guenon is even more reactionary and totalistic in his thinking than the Fascists were, and he rejected them not because of their human rights violations but because they were too "modern" and did not apply repressive principles with sufficient "orthodox" rigor.

The fate of the year 1927 will largely determine both Guenon's life and the outcome of traditionalism. He does move away from overt and modernist fascism, but in so doing sets the path toward a new sort of spiritual fascism—equally modernist--- that was largely banished from the world by the Enlightenment. Guenon disagreement with Maurras and L'Action Francaise was over the issue of social control. Guenon wanted a greater social control modeled after theocratic totalitarianism. Maurras and Daudet sought something less total in Hitler's Fascism. Maurras and Daudet would go on to advocate for and eventually join

Hitler's domination of France in the form of the Vichy Regime which took over and ruled France from 1940-45. So Maurras and Daudet would get relatively quick return on their political investment. For Guenon this was not so. His position was more reactionary and he had a more total and ambitious purpose than the writers at Action Francaise. In 1945, Maurras was expelled from the Academie Française and sentenced to life imprisonment for collaboration with the Nazis. But Guenon was still developing some of the ideas that he had held in common with Maurras. He would go on to create a Traditionalist Spiritual Fascism that was universal and total. After World War II French fascism becomes spiritual.

This history of Guenon's involvement with Action Francaise reveals a lot about the basic sympathy between traditionalism and fascism. However, it also indicates that the two are ultimately incompatible, since the Traditionalists advocate a much more total control of society. They see the fascists as too shortsighted in their ambitions, too sympathetic to science and closed to imperious dogma, and too modern and too liberal for their taste. But whatever the incompatibility of traditionalism and fascism it is clear that the creation of theofascism was an essential activity of Guenon's life, one in which the resolution of the problem of this incompatibility was resolved.

In Guenon, Fascism becomes transcendental fascism, theocratic meta-fascism, 'metapolitics', what I call theofascism. What the history of Guenon's work in the 1920's reveals is that his tendency to fascist thought is sublimated into his spiritual and metaphysical thinking. The result is a spiritual theory that dictates a politics, but yet hides behind a bogus claim to be apolitical. The Fascism of Action Francaise becomes spiritualized as Guenon's vision of "tradition"—an irrational adherence to dictated and arbitrary "orthodox" beliefs which are themselves political in their basis. Julius Evola would draw precisely these conclusions after World War II.

Evola's fascism becomes sublimated into Traditionalism; he becomes

a theofascist and not merely a Nazi. Guenon sets the pattern: theofascism continues after Guenon's death in 1951 and becomes a global vision of "Tradition", capital "T". Schuon would try to set up a totalistic cult along Guenonian lines as defined by Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power . The result is as one might expect. Schuon was the autocratic dictator and claims infallibility. He forms a cult group in which warrior caste minions who do his dirty work for him. ⁷⁷³ They bring bogus or harassing law cases against ex-disciples, threatened those who do not conform to the master's wishes and in general behave as a mafia, even getting the master off the hook when he commits sexual indiscretions.

But now to recapitulate some of this history. Guenon first participated in the growth of fascism of the 1920's in France, befriending high ranking members of Action Francaise. In the late 1920's Guenon defined his political position as one to the right of the fascists in his argument with Maurras and Action Francaise. He sided with Catholic ultra-right Monarchists against Maurras, but he was close to Daudet, even though he later rejected him too. Yet Guenon was rejected by the ultra-right monarchists of Regnabit in 1927 because he was too totalistic in his drive for a "universalistic" religion that dictated all political

⁷⁷³ I often watched Schuon decide who was of what caste and who of another. The process was totally subjective and based on Schuon's preferences and imagination. There were no objective criteria other than outmoded notions of the "physiognomy" of faces ,which Schuon claimed to be an expert in. The Nazi's were interested in physiognomy too. Those who were called Jnani, or pneumatics occupied the highest designation that Schuon gave to others. What this conceptual strategy really meant was that the person in question was that such a person was most in love with Schuon must be the deepest in knowledge of the truth. Such a person must be a "pneumatic" or jnani --- the highest caste Schuon admired. Even people who were not terribly bright, like some of Schuon' wives" ended up being "pneumatics" in his eyes. Like the totally discredited practice of astrology Schuon's caste designations were based on arbitrary or accidental characteristics of a person. Schuon acted as if this nonsense were scientific truth. Schuon was very attracted to bogus systems of knowledge like Physiognamy, homeopathy and Hindu race, caste and character typologies. .He claimed to be able to read the caste of a given face by studies its bumps and oddities. This 'science' is discredited but was of interest to the Nazis., Not only is physiognomy is discredited and homeopathy, which Schuon also believed in, is about as true as a teaspoon of sugar poured into the Pacific ocean is sweet. Hinduism, caste system is deservedly illegal but continues on due to ignorance..

realities, not merely Catholic realities. During the same period Guenon envisioned a “Lord of the World” and wrote a book with this title. The Lord of the World would be a Master of Totalistic and Universal significance and not merely a master race of Europe.⁷⁷⁴ In other words Guenon saw himself as the expositor of the Truth that would smash the modern profane world in an apocalypse and restore traditional religious “truths” to world power in a new golden age. These ‘new age’ fantasies of apocalyptic destruction dreamed of by Guenon were much grander and more total than anything achieved by Hitler and Mussolini. Hitler merely provoked a world war: Guenon along with his followers Evola and Schuon, hoped to be the last expositors of the total truth before the entire world was destroyed and the new golden age vindicated them. Yes, this is silly, but this was the common belief inside the Schuon cult. Guenon’s book The Reign of Quantity and the Signs of the Times is a demented attempt to justify this grandiose project of universal revenge followed by a restoration of a Golden age to be peopled by people whose views are like Guenon’s.

So what is to be concluded from this? Clearly, there were real relations between aspects of Guenon’s work and Fascism even though the relation of Guenon to fascism and ultra-right Catholicism was a troubled one. Those who deny Guenon had any relation with fascism are just mistaken. In the 1920’s he not only was cozy with Leon Daudet one of the architects of French Fascism he was also closely allied with far right catholic ideologues who ended up in bed with the Nazi’s. However, he later split off from it, but not without retaining much of the ideology created by Maurras and Daudet. He split off from it not because he

⁷⁷⁴ The lynchpin of this of the Traditionalist resistance to the modern world is the idea of a universal Savior, who unites all the religions and ancient imperialisms in a unified assault against the moderns. The “restorer” or “prophet” of this perennial religion is supposed to appear “at the end of time”. Guenon expressed this hope rather fantastically in his The Lord of the World, - a book which he ends by quoting De Maistre’s hope for an apocalyptic restoration of the “divine order”.

found fascism morally reprehensible, but because it was too liberal. He did more than flirt with Catholic extremists and Monarchists as well. He was one himself and tended to ally himself with the radical and ultra-right royalists and their nostalgic desire to reverse the French Revolution and bring back the Middle Age tyranny of the militaristic popes. But in the end, neither fascism nor the Catholic Church could content Guenon. They were too limiting. Guenon was seeking along similar lines to the fascists and the Nazis, though in a more totalistic way. Guenon did not want merely to imitate the outward forms of the Catholic Church, as Hitler did. To Guenon this imitation of religion was a "parody" or the "counter-initiation". Actually parody requires a true model to be a parody of. The Catholic Church is itself based on a forgery and it is likely that Christ never existed to begin with, so the notion of parody is itself a joke in Guenon. Or to put this more exactly, Guenon's attempt to cleave to the orthodoxy of religions is really just an attachment to organized delusions.

Moreover, Guenon did not like the Church much. Nor did he want to be limited by the Catholic Church itself. He wanted a total revolution of the ultra-right that would unify all the religions in order to regain total control of world, destroy modernism, liberalism and socialism and bring back arbitrary dictatorship by the chosen few, the elite, a bunch of 'good old boys' who would control delusional 'initiatric' chains of patriarchal, misogynist and spiritual power. He wanted not national fascism but universal fascism, in short, of a spiritual kind.

But I don't think Guenon actually thought he would ever succeed in this aim. He was a petulant Armageddonist, as are perhaps all Armageddonists--- a spoiled child who could not get his way, so he wants to destroy the whole world. If Guenon could not obtain this return of total power than nothing short of the destruction of the entire world would be enough. Guenon's narcissistic inflation is such that he imagines the world destroyed and then he could rest content that finally

his principles had triumphed over everyone and everything. Guenon's theofascism ultimately wants the destruction of the world as its goal. Either you are with Guenon or against him, he basically is "god", Pope and Pontifex of the irrational and the basic principles of the universe revolve around his little formula of reality. Guenon's God is a killer of life on earth; he is a spiritual fascist and a totalist with megalithic and hugely destructive ambitions at the basis of his ideology. But of course, all this is just in his head, none of it is real. It is not at all hard to see how Schuon derived his own universal narcissism out of Guenon's insanity.

Guenon liked to entertain the Platonist fiction that his ideas sprung from a changeless source beyond time --- that he had some exclusive access to--- and that the 'accidents' of his life and biography were irrelevant. This elitist preference for otherworldly symbols and vague intuitions and ideas over people is part of is partly why the Traditionalists tend toward denigrating science, the human and the natural. Religions use fictive initiations as the criterion of truth. Guenon thought the Divine Truth and revelations spoke out of him and his books. However, in fact, the notion of "pure ideas" in Guenon is a fiction. There are no pure ideas, the image of Christ is like a corporate Logo—it is an advertisement for an institution. No one has proven that Christ existed and it appears that the Gospels are late creations,-- fictions made perhaps after 150 C.E.. Great stories no doubt, but the creation of some early Dickens who had a religious mania. The Greek Gods are likewise images of the Greek aristocracy just as corporate Logos are advertisements for the fiction of corporate personhood. The Islamic god Allah is also a created fiction meant to justify economic and social powers in Saudi Arabia at the time, spreading around the globe since then.

Guenon, in his books, scapegoated people and earth for ideas. Ideas are not pure; rather, created by people, ideas serve purposes

people create. Ideas are events in the world like anything else. People and human rights come before ideas. But Guenon did not understand this. He labored his whole life serving a false abstract ideology. But it was his delusions of grandeur which lead him to this. In fact, Guenon's books are historically determined and relics of a man obsessed with trying to gain control of the entire cosmos through symbol manipulation, mythic fantasy and religion. He inflates his ego with abstract symbols and tries to magnify himself to universal proportions.⁷⁷⁵ It is an absurd attempt, of course. However, his followers cannot see how ridiculous it is, caught as they are in the delusional webs Guenon has woven around their brains. His stint with Action Francaise did not work out so he longs for greater power in a fantasy of revenge against the world that he sees as rejecting his backward and anachronistic ideology. Islamofascism becomes a new avenue for him and one that opens in Vedanta and Taoism, among other religions.

Therefore, the first relatively complete modern declaration of theofascism is Guenon's book Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power. I would argue it is the most important and pivotal book of his career. Before him Blavatsky, De Maistre and others had attempted something similar, as those who come after him try to expand on his delusions, as I will show in the next chapter.

In any case, Guenon hides his personal will to power behind the façade of ideas or "principles". But the principles are really vacuous so what is he doing in fact? In fact, what he is doing is creating Spiritual

⁷⁷⁵ My critique of symbol systems in religions and institutions as a way of magnifying power was written in the 1990's. Recently (2012) I came across the writings of Ernst Becker (The Denial of Death and other books). Becker says that "the lion's share of the evil which forms the narrative of human history stems directly from the unconscious and uncritical allegiance to the symbolic meaning systems which the various cultures and societies have developed. Human beings gain their sense of safety and worth by blindly following the internalized modes of power and authority which were presented by parents, family, social group and nation during the socialization process"

This is what I was saying in my 1998 book. Becker is right and this is what makes religions so dangerous and violent.

Fascism out of a pastiche of monarchism, fascism, the Hindu caste system combined with a Sufi metaphysics and the apocalyptic and moral blackmailing tendency of the Koran. Guenon created a kitsch metaphysical politics. However, because it is informed by a consistent and rather backward, repressive and malignant will, it is a vision that would prove very adaptable to many countries and many religions and political systems. This is not to say that Guenon's influence is large. It is quite small in fact. However, those who believe in him do so with fanatical zeal.

The main point of this excursion into Guenon's personal history in 1927 is to show that Guenon's relation to far right Catholicism and Action Francaise in the 1920's is the most telling of his relations to fascism. And I show that in the 1920's Guenon moves from being very close to ordinary fascism but then moves away from it into helping to create what would become an "esoteric' or universal and metaphysical 'theofascism'.



part 2. The Craft of Charlatans: Guenon in Relation to Blavatsky, Liebenfels Encausse and others.

Early in his career, Guenon was closely associated with other aspects of various proto-fascist movements. Guenon joined the occult groups headed by Papus (Dr. Gerard Encausse, (1865-1916),) in 1906. Encausse invented a group or 'order' called Martinism. Encausse endeavored to enlist members of the Russian aristocracy, particularly Czar Nicholas, to his mystical and anti-Semitic views. Encausse tried to support the Russian, Czarist theocratic state against the rise of modernism.⁷⁷⁶ In 1888, Encausse, Saint-Yves and de Guaita joined with Joséphin Péladan and Oswald Wirth to found the Kabbalistic Order of the Rose-Croix. (1865-1916). These men were occultists and freemasons and part of a reactionary resurgence of Catholicism in France.⁷⁷⁷ Peladan was a bit of a dandy and styled himself as a sort of reactionary prophet.. Peladan said somewhere that he wanted, “to restore the cult of the ideal in all its splendor, with tradition as its base and beauty as its means... To ruin realism, reform Latin taste and create a school of idealist art”---pre-figuring both Guenon and Schuon. Peladan wanted a “*compulsorily thoughtless art!*” James Panero claims in an essay. This is what most modernist art is, the compelled dogma or corporate emptiness. The portraits of him below indicates his attempt to be a sort of decadent purple prophet of the “rose-cross”, vain, self-important and meaninglessly posing at the supernatural.

⁷⁷⁶ Webb, James. The Occult Establishment, Lasalle Illinois. Open Court 1976

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Alexandre Seon — Portrait of Josephin Peladan, 1891
and Jean Deville's portrait of Peladan

They believed that imaginary attacks by demons due to ‘magical warfare’ were real events. This idea is important in the development of Guenon’s paranoid tendencies. He would be obsessed with ‘magical warfare’ Guenon most of his life, even to the point that he believed his later illnesses were due to such attacks. Many of Guenon’s characteristic obsessions come from these early years. Encausse also claimed to have restored rituals and the heritage of Catharism, as Guenon would later claim a spiritual relation with the Templars. Encausse got most of his ideas from Helen Blavatsky of the Theosophical Society. Guenon in turn got most of his ideas from Encausse. The man Encausse most admired, Louis Claude de Saint-Martin (1743-1803) was a reactionary Catholic, Mason and Neo-Platonist who hated the French Revolution and saw Modernism as a conspiracy against God and the aristocratic regimes of ‘Absolutist’ Europe, echoing De Maistre. Guenon adopted many of these

themes as his own. Encausse was also a conspiracy theorist who believed that science loving democrats and the thinkers of the Enlightenment created the “modern evil”. He appears to have followed Joseph De Maistre in this and got at least some of his ideas from De Maistre. Encausse, following Blavatsky and others, created the basic ideas behind ‘the transcendent unity of the religions’ that would later inspire Guenon, Evola and Schuon. Encausse idealized Christian mystical orders and saw them as means to influence what he saw as the 20th century political fight against the forces of modernism and the Enlightenment. This and many other themes were taken up in Guenon’s books.

Thus, the young Guenon, influenced by Encausse, saw religion as a political tool to fight the modern world with. He wanted to win back what he bitterly thought had been lost to the French Revolution. If possible, he wished exact revenge or at least hope for a divine revenge against the perpetrators of what he considered the ‘modernist crime’. These are cramped and desperate men who dearly want to get back the priestly powers and aristocratic prerogatives that once unjustly held by dictators and unjust hereditary despots and Churches. Traditionalism is a movement born of defeat and bitterness that wants to go back to a world that was fundamentally unjust and cruel.

Like his earlier Master, Encausse, who was obsessed with the subject of initiation ⁷⁷⁸ Guenon claimed to have had initiations where he obtained secret, forbidden esoteric knowledge. Guenon was prone to a certain esoteric bravado and charlatanism,. He believed in “oracles”, automatic writing, secret messages from the “beyond” and other

⁷⁷⁸ Sedgwick talks about Encausse’s fascination with initiation on pg. 45 of *Against the Modern World*. He speaks of it as if it were a real thing, even though it is clearly a fabrication. He uses the example of Christian Baptism as an initiation which marks one’s entry into the Christian community”. The ‘esoteric meaning of which is that baptism gives Catholics “access to divine grace and to the possibility of salvation”. *Extra Ecclesium nullus salus*, the cruel doctrine that there is no salvation outside the Church. These delusional rituals continue to be used to fool people into religious ideologies.

nonsense of this kind. Like Blavatsky, Guenon also claimed to have had various invisible “Masters” secret initiations into Taoism and Sufism. He supposedly had mysterious Hindu contacts early in life too and always pretended to an authority that derived from high initiations into esoteric teachings from many religions. Actually these initiations were merely adolescent fabrications or based on men’s club mumbo-jumbo, Masonic fictions or bogus ceremonials dressed up as ritual. Initiations is a major theme in his work, since that alone is where his claim to legitimacy comes from. Initiations of course are rituals in which imaginary spiritual forces create secret covenants or filiations to spiritual orders up high.

Initiations are totally fictitious events. Having been initiated into some of the same groups as Guenon and Schuon, I know that it is all serious sleight of hand and totally phony. The entire project of religion, Guenon thought, rests of bogus “initiations”. But to Guenon initiation was the life blood of his claim to fame, since it was all about his need to claim false authority to an imaginary line of prior Magi or spiritual elite. Schuon also had this tendency to bragging and charlatanism, claiming to be visited by the “mysterious Green Man” Al Khadir, of Islam. Guenon claimed this too. (I discuss this at more length below). Schuon surpassed Blavatsky’s and Guenon’s outrageous claims by asserting he had been visited by and had sexual-spiritual relations with a nude Virgin Mary and other goddesses. Schuon was echoing ideas that had hung around since Novalis and Eliphas Levi⁷⁷⁹, both of whom claimed similar elect status. Schuon claimed quasi-initiations—. What he called

⁷⁷⁹ See Novalis' Die Lehrlinge, in which the Hero "raised the veil of the goddess, and what did he see- wonder of wonders- himself". Schuon's religion indicates a similar infantile sexuality and narcissism. See also M.H. Abrams Natural Supernaturalism (pg. 248) for an interesting study of some of the roots of the relation between Romanticism and gnosticism. Schuon loved Novalis. Like Schuon Novalis would contemplate sexual union with the virgin Mary, as also would Da Free John a.k.a. Da Love Ananda, another contemporary cult leader. (see Fuerstein, Divine Madness. This strange combination of infantile narcissism and exalted paranoid delusions of grandeur is entirely symptomatic of Schuon's work as a whole. It is surprising popular for these august persons of great spiritual accomplishment to wish to have sex with the mythical “Virgin Mary”.

“adoptions” into Native American religion too, which really were just ersatz ceremonies at Pow Wows which he misinterpreted and abused.⁷⁸⁰

There is a tendency to snake oil salesmanship and bragging charlatanism in Guenon, Blavatsky and Schuon, just as there would be in Hitler. It is a regular theme in German romanticism to express a desire to be a prophet of the summit of all the prophets, to be the “universal Ego” in Fichte’s phrase. Or Nietzsche who wrote of his book Zarathustra that

“I have given humanity the greatest gift it has ever received, this books which spans millennia, is not only the greatest book there is, the book that truly captures the atmosphere of high places—the whole fact of humanity lies incredibly far beneath it--- it is also the most profound thing to be born out of the richness of the truth”

(Ecce Homo, Preface)

Charismatic leaders, like the Shamans of old, tend to be prone to exaggerated claims of their power and their contacts, since they desire, like the Wizard of Oz, to make themselves look as big as possible.⁷⁸¹ They try to claim high and secret meetings with celestial beings or hidden masters to exalt themselves in power and knowledge. Guenon’s hidden “Masters” were a bunch of fakes and impresarios. One such “master” was Count Albert de Pouvourville, a racist and opium user, who had a basic idea about the “unity of the religions”, that Guenon co-opted as his own.⁷⁸²

In 1908 Guenon concocted a fake séance (are there any other kind?). Guenon had by then created the Ordre du Temple Renove, or the “New

⁷⁸⁰ Peter Nabokov suggested this term ersatz ceremonies to me on the phone when I talked to him in 1992. Nabokov is an interesting writer on Native American studies and anthropology. He meant that these ceremonies did not mean much and that little should be read into them. What Schuon made of them was ridiculous..

⁷⁸¹ Even Noam Chomsky evokes this claim to be a “Prophet” rather absurdly. I like Chomsky’s politics in general, but he often goes too far. He belongs somewhat to the romantic tradition too, going back to Descartes and Rousseau, two thinkers he admires.

⁷⁸² See Sedgwick pg. 58

Order of the Temple” apparently as a breakaway group from the Encausse and Martinist groups. The Martinists would continue to hate Guenon and consider him a fraud to this day, not without reason. According to Clavelle’s memoir (Jean Reyor) the Temple that Guenon founded in 1907 or 08 was founded by order of a trumped up “spirit” of Jacques de Molay, head of the 13th century Templars. De Molay, one of the heads of the Templars, had been burned at the stake by the Inquisition. His defiance of his inquisitors was picked up 400 years later by 19th century Masons and incorporated in various forms into Masonic lore. Molay , so the tale goes, ordered Guenon to become the head of Ordre du Temple Renove, partly to get revenge for those who destroyed the order of the Temple in the 13th century. Guenon also claimed thereby to be the holder of the secrets of Solomon, supposedly passed down to him via the Templars and the Masons. This rather bizarre story indicates a number of things. First that Guenon was quite willing to lie and practice phony séances’, which by definition are fraudulent affairs that are about staging and theater. Second, that Guenon was deeply immersed in the Templar myth, which was also a myth that appealed to protestant and proto-Nazi groups because of its anti-Catholic appeal. But it also indicates how much Guenon changed, over the years, since he later repudiated his early involvement in séances, occult practices and magic, having found new ways to dupe and deceive his audience. It certainly is not true that Guenon suddenly become a honest and decent man. He was never that. But the occult mentality of seeing “psychic residues”, “satanic influences” and subservient invisible entities stayed with Guenon all his life. Guenon makes most conspiracy theorists look like rank amateurs.

So Guenon was involved with a tiny spiritualistic circle of young paranormal seeking occultists which never counted more than five

members. A similar order had been created by Jorg Lanz Von Liebenfels (1874-1954) a year earlier ⁷⁸³ Liebenfel's group, founded in 1907, was called the Ordo Novi Templi, which also means the New Order of the Temple. It seems possible given that they both created "Orders of the Temple", and their ideas and concerns are similar. But there is no evidence that they met. Rather it seems that Liebenfels and Guenon were not in contact but rather both of them, independently, were influenced by the symbolist, Templar, Masonic, hermetic and racist ideologies that was "in the air" at the time. Both were influenced, particularly, by Helen Blavatsky whose ideas were 'in the air' at the early part of the 20th century. In his book the Occult Roots of Nazism Nicholas Goodrick Clarke records that Lanz Von Liebenfels was interviewed by Wilfred Daim in 1951. Goodrick Clarke comments:

On May 11 1951 Lanz told Daim that Hitler had visited him at the Ostara [magazine] office in Rodaun during 1909. Lanz recalled that Hitler mentioned his living in the Felberstrasse, where he had been able to obtain Ostara at a nearby tobacco Kiosk. He said that he was interested in the racial theories of Lanz and wished to buy some back numbers to complete his collection. Lanz noticed that Hitler looked poor and gave him the requested numbers free, as well as two crowns for his return fare to the city center..⁷⁸⁴

Interesting that Lanz should remember such wonderful detail about the tobacco kiosk. Goodrick-Clarke goes on to note that Lanz Von Liebenfels' statement was confirmed by other pieces of evidence. Goodrick-Clark concludes that many of the basic ideas which formed the early

⁷⁸³ Godwin, Joscelyn. Arktos; The Polar Myth in Science, Symbolism and Nazi Survival. Grand Rapids. Mich. Phanes press 1993.pg.72 see also Goodrick-Clark, pgs. 106-122

⁷⁸⁴ Goodrick-Clarke, Nicholas. The Occult Roots of Nazism. New York University Press. 1985 pg.195

foundation of Hitler's political beliefs, the Manicheanism, the Aryanism, the beliefs in caste and race, were formed by his contact with the ideas of Liebenfels in Ostara magazine. Hitler was attracted to the philosophy of Liebenfels.

Guenon's ideas resemble Liebenfels' ideas in many respects.⁷⁸⁵ It does not follow that Guenon and Hitler have anything in common, other than both being far right reactionaries and sharing an attraction to similar mystical concepts that promise power. Nor am I suggesting here, as others have done, that Guenon and Schuon are or were Nazis, though Guenon flirted with Action Francaise and Schuon did support Japanese fascism and Martin Lings held up the fascist Franco as a supreme model of spiritual politics. There is a clear relationship of far right politics to fundamental ideas of the traditionalists. It is clear that Nazism and Guenonian theofascism share fundamental ideological underpinnings despite their otherwise considerable differences. They take a different direction from common origins. One obvious difference is that Hitler wanted power over all Europe, whereas Guenon and Schuon hated modern Europe and Guenon fled from it permanently. Guenon seems to have wanted to create an internationalist and transcendent philosophy that went far beyond what Liebenfels and Hitler created. Guenon envisioned himself and his elite followers as a "Lord of the World" and not merely a master race of Europe. Schuon' of course, that he was the last prophet at the end of time.

In any case, Liebenfels, Guenon and Ananda Coomaraswamy are united by having H.P. Blavatsky as a major formative influence. Guenon, during his early years was thoroughly imbued with the ideas of the Theosophists. William Quinn observes that during his apprenticeship into the occult as the "protégé" of Encausse, Guenon was "thoroughly imbued with the theosophical legacy of Blavatsky". Encausse was a co-

⁷⁸⁵ This is not brought out by Clarke, who is a promoter of 'esoteric studies' and not a critic.

founder of the Theosophical society in France, and though he had left Blavatsky by the time Guenon became one of his protégés, Guenon became involved in many groups centered around Encausse and many of these groups were imbued with Blavatskian ideology. Guenon's own Order promoted the fiction that Guenon had "channeled" the Templar, Jacques de Molay, in a séance. The crazy story states that "Spirits" gave knowledge of Templars to Guenon.

Encausse is supposed to have given Guenon the subtle mysteries of Osiris, Pythagorism, Kabbala, of Gnosticism and other spiritualist nonsense of this kind. What is certain is that Guenon had learned the craft of spiritual charlatanism from Encausse. Guenon made outrageous claims all his life and tried to outdo his master Encausse at being a spiritual impresario. Indeed, Guenon apparently tried to take over from Encausse as the major occultist of Paris, but failed to do so, at least initially. Encausse and Guenon were in competition with each other and evidently Guenon was a very nasty player who did all he could to outdo his many enemies.

Jean Borella, a former Schuonian and far right French Catholic, writes that "Guenon was admitted into all the [occultist] organizations directed Encausse, including the Ordre Martiniste".⁷⁸⁶ Guenon belonged to other occult and secret groups such as the Theban Lodge, which was a Masonic group under the Authority of the Grand Lodge of France and the Eglise Gnostique or Gnostic Church which claimed to be a reestablishment of Catharism and the Templars. He became 'holy bishop' of this order and took the name "Palingenius". Liebenfels was creating similar orders along similar lines at the same time. Most of the groups

⁷⁸⁶ Borella wrote a book called The Sense of the Supernatural, "as if there was anything real outside of nature. According to Versluis "Borella's focus is much more analysis of what he sees as the various modernist heresies that have emerged in the past several centuries. Actually so called "modernist" heresies like science and human right, democracy and free inquiry have done immeasurable " Writers like Versluis and Borella want to reintroduce baneful and horrendous notions like "heresy", as if that had any reality either.

that Guenon frequented were influenced by Blavatsky to varying degrees and all of them were rather silly clubs of occultists and symbolists, pseudo-initiates and pretenders to mystical exaltations. In any case, in all these organization Guenon appears to have been duplicitous in his allegiances, turning on one group after another, using journals such as Gnose, Le Voile d'Isis and others to attack former allies. Guenon allied himself with and then attacked various occult groups just as he would later exploit religions as a colonialist. He created a duplicitous “esoterism” while at the same time entertaining himself as esoteric priest of all of them, very Eurocentric move and one that belies his pretence to be open minded. Indeed, Guenon’s basic relationship to religion is that of a colonialist, sucking the life blood of other religions, parasitically, as it were, to vault his own esoteric formula into prominence.

Besides being a “table tapper” or a fraud that created phony séances early in her life, Helen Blavatsky had some indirect influence on the Nazis through men like Liebenfels. However, having said this I hasten to add that I do not mean that there is a direct line of influence between Blavatsky, Guenon and the Nazis. Rather, there is an affinity of themes and basic concerns. Is clear that the occult and Templar ideology influenced Guenon to such a degree that Jean Borella, a far right Christian and devoted follower of Guenon and Schuon for many years, could write that the minutes of the meetings of the New Order of the Temple “contain as untitled drafts, virtually all of the topics of Guenon’s future work”. ⁷⁸⁷ Many of Guenon’s basic ideas come from

⁷⁸⁷ Faivre, Antoine. Esoteric Spirituality New York Crossroads 1992. In "Rene Guenon and the Traditionalist School". This article was written by Jean Borella, a Christian disciple of Schuon and Professor at the University in Nancy, France. He left Schuon's cult in 1991, after Schuon was exposed. This article was written before he learned of Schuon's excesses. He was a member of the Schuon cult for twenty five years, approximately. He remains a Guenonian and an ultra-rightist or 'integralist' Catholic, like two other Catholic disciples of Schuon, Rama Coomaraswamy and Wolfgang Smith. Borella and Abbe Stephane are all traditionalist catholic intellectuals who seek to restore Catholic Medievalist ideology and theocracy. It is interesting how these delusions splinter and fragment and seek to live in yet other delusional structures.

the various Blavatskian, hermetic, Templar, Martinist, Masonic, and occult groups that were thriving at this time, and which eventually had some indirect influence on both Nazism and Traditionalism. Blavatsky is the common root that influenced many of these groups in various ways, directly or indirectly. Guenon comes from the milieu that produced Action Française and Lanz von Liebenfels and the Teutonic Knights as well as the Nazis. To pretend these groups are not closely related and connected to the far right is mistaken.

Guenon was the head of the New Order of the Temple in Paris until 1911 or 1912 and dissolved it “at the command of the Masters”, says Marcel Clavelle, Guenon’s chief agent in France after his move to Cairo. In other words, Guenon invented a fiction to make the failure of the New Order of the Templar sound “providential”. This is another trick he learned from Encausse. The imaginary make-believe “Masters” commanded Guenon to dissolve the order in a secret séance where some spirits spoke to Guenon, apparently through “automatic writing”. All his life Guenon would play this game of using grand and inflated flourishes to advertise himself, inventing fictions when they were required. Even more amazingly, Guenon’s followers believe or politely ignore this nonsense and still think him some paragon of amazing intellectual acumen. He is not.

Guenon, spiritual salesman extraordinaire, thought of himself as the priest of a “super religion” of Perennialism— which itself is supposed to be the esoteric core of all the religions. This is hardly a modest proposal. Guenon began under the charlatanism of Encausse and continued to be a charlatan after he had put Encausse and Blavatsky behind him. The game of Guenon was to appear to be the Magus, the ‘Man who Knows’, the Wise Prophet and Sage, he who had left all the other charlatans behind him. These roles are theatrical and played with a persistently paranoid purpose of being found out as a fraud. For those who believe in him, he is not a fraud, but the soul of truth. However, in

fact, Encausse, Guenon and Schuon all claim a vision or a secret initiation to give the appearance of “qualification”. I watched how Schuon did this up close. In fact, Guenon is a fraud, though one who fooled more than most, and for that, I suppose, he deserves credit, if not fanfare, balloons, or ticker tape parades.

Guenon sees the Theosophists as inferior competitors who are not as “strong” as he is, and who are part of a satanic plot and “unconscious tools of a higher power”. It could not be that the Theosophists were just people trying to exalt themselves higher than the competition, which, in fact, is what was going on. Guenon has to mythologize the business so they become “unconscious tools” of a satanic power. Like a magician – con man who hates another magician con-man the Theosophists and Guenonians are much alike but hate each other. Guenon learned most of what he knew from the circles around Blavatsky and Encausse. However, to Guenon everyone except those who think as he does are part of the “unconscious plot” to destroy Guenon and his “truth”. Guenon demonizes the entire world except the esoteric “elite”, who alone know what Guenon knows. Blavatsky and Guenon are very similar and have many of the same formative influences and express similar ideas.⁷⁸⁸

But the followers of Guenon hate the theosophists, just as they hate “New Age” thinkers, whom they also closely resemble, because they are politically different.⁷⁸⁹ The Traditionalists are basically right-wing or

⁷⁸⁸ Guenon’s spiritualist beliefs echo Blavatsky’s nearly point by point. But in a very few things they differ. Blavatsky believed in a weird sort of spiritual evolution and Guenon hated that and she questioned the Hindu caste system, and Guenon hated that too. Richard Smoley discusses why the traditionalists hate Blavatsky while being so much like her here:

<http://www.theosophical.org/publications/quest-magazine/1696>

⁷⁸⁹ Most New Age thinkers have an alternative, democratic bias. The Traditionalists are repressive right wingers, in general and live in the suburbs. Indeed, Traditionalism is upper middle class, suburban right-wing spirituality composed most of affluent republicans, capitalists and people who work in the corporate world.. A typical example of a left leaning New Ager that the traditionalist would have despised is Jeff Kripal, a disciple of an Eliade student, who sees religion as a sort of comic book literary foray into subjectivist and narcissistic expanses. Fruit

neo-fascist New Agers ⁷⁹⁰ After having been a theosophist directly or indirectly for more than a decade, Guenon later attacked the Theosophists in a book, but despite this, his basic ideas closely resemble Blavatsky. As Jocelyn Godwin has justly observed, Guenon “held in disdain Madame Blavatsky, all of her followers and all she stood for, while teaching in many instances, exactly the same things”. ⁷⁹¹ William Quinn agrees with this opinion and writes an entire chapter in his book in an effort to prove that Blavatsky, Guenon and Coomaraswamy are basically teaching the same things, despite the variations in their systems . ⁷⁹² The fact is that Guenonians, anxious to make their Master seem the ultimate thinker of all time, find it outrageous that Guenon was deeply influenced by the bizarre and superstitious nonsense of Blavatsky as he was. Not only that but Guenon’s system is more bizarre and full of plots and conspiracies than Blavatsky. Of the two thinkers Guenon is the more wacky. Both Blavatsky and Guenon have tangential relations to fascism and both

rarely falls far from the tree.

⁷⁹⁰ I say this with a certain irony and humor as the traditionalists hate the new agers and think they are part of the great “dissolution” before the end of time. Most but not all new age groups are politically more to the left than the traditionalists, though rarely very far to the left. Indeed the hatred the New Age by traditionalists is really politically motivated.

⁷⁹¹ Godwin, *Arktos*, pg. 21

⁷⁹² Quinn maintains that despite Guenon’s eventual diatribes and polemics against the Theosophists, the basic “perennial” ideology of Guenon and Blavatsky are quite similar. Quinn is right about this, though the partisans of Guenon have reacted violently to try to reject this thesis. Huston Smith and Upton attack Quinn unfairly. To their limited understanding, the Traditionalists are infallible gods and their knowledge is miraculous and divinely acquired. But the truth is that Guenon was heavily influenced by theosophy and later sought to hide it just as Rama Coomaraswamy sought to hide his father’s deep involvement with Theosophy and Schuon tried to cover up for his sexual indiscretions. Secrecy and unfair attacks are two common strategies used by the Traditionalists. Quinn was a student of Eliade in Chicago. Sedgwick’s approves of Quinn because he followed Eliade’s advice to sublimate the influence of Guenon rather than repudiate it .. and this led to Quinn’s “ultimate success”. This is what Sedgwick has done too, For Sedgwick success in academia is everything, even if one promotes esoteric superstition and reactionary nonsense. Truth does not matter , only success matters. Religious Studies becomes a popularity contest, a war for the most plausible system of make believe.

belong to the development of reactionary spiritualism and Traditionalist fascism that has been developing since at least the French Revolution.

Ananda Coomaraswamy officially joined the Theosophists as a member in 1907 and perhaps even more than Guenon, his basic mind set was largely formed by his involvement. It is this theosophical background that attracted Ananda and Guenon to one another. Both writers would also be attracted to and write positively about the Evola, as I have shown elsewhere in this book. Both Coomaraswamy and Guenon were first nationalists who then internationalized Blavatsky's ideology. Coomaraswamy had been a Ceylonese nationalist and Guenon had been a French nationalist. Both had grounding in spiritualized nationalist movements which failed them and turned them both into exiles, and indeed, their friendship seems to grow out of these common backgrounds. They are both bitter men, hateful of the worlds they came from, spinning tales of a world that never was, trying to get revenge against a modern world that they felt stole their romance with the repressive order of bygone kings. Coomaraswamy in particular had longed to be like his father, who he never met, who he imagined to be a sort of Ceylonese Raja.⁷⁹³ Caste theories, elitism and the concern with hierarchy would also be central to the Guenon, Coomaraswamy, Evola

⁷⁹³ Odd that Rama Coomaraswamy was also neglected by his father. Rama told me he didn't get to know his father at all until the last year or two of his father's life after Rama was 17. Ananda severely neglected his son as far as personal affection was concerned. Through his control of his father's estate and through various books and biographies Rama has carefully cultivated an image of his father that is very likely not real or accurate--- more idealization than reality. Rama's fierce and repressive Catholicism seems partly a throwback to his father's own effort to hold onto an idealized Hindu patrimony that was largely imaginary. He intended to go back to India and became an orthodox Brahmin and never did, I think, because really that was the reactionary part of him. He was half English and half Indian. The best part of Ananda was his early work, when he was more enlightened, a scientist and geologist of Ceylon and then studies Hindu and Ceylonese art. Guenon did AKC a lot of damage and fueled a reactionary part of him that did him and his son, Rama, harm. You can see this division in Rama too, with the better part of him as a surgeon and a man who grew to despise Schuon and helped turn Schuon into the police. Yet the reactionary part of him was really vile and prone to the worst sort of prejudice, dogmatic hatred and fanatic irrationality, as can be seen in some of his writings against women's rights and in favor of reactionary far right positions about the Catholic Church. Rama also opposed Evolution in a way that is very embarrassing and ignorant.

and Schuon's ideology of traditionalism, in different degrees. These concerns come from Blavatsky, to some degree, as well as to medieval ideologies from Europe to India. ⁷⁹⁴ Nicholas Goodrich Clark notes that "besides its racial emphasis, theosophy also stressed the principle of elitism and the value of hierarchy".⁷⁹⁵ One should not overplay this too much, since there were many other kinds of influence on these men, but there is no denying that Blavatsky played a strong role in originating the overall outlook of Guenon and Coomaraswamy. Goodrich-Clark explains that Blavatsky's ideas, especially her ideas on race and her rejection of the "modern world" would also influence Guido von List and Lanz von Liebenfels, who were important influences on the Nazis. ⁷⁹⁶

There are important differences in these various cults, groups and schools of thought, which I do not wish to blur. However, at the same time, it is important to see that the Guenonian and Schuonian ideology grow out of the same reactionary romantic roots and environment that created Nazism, however traditionalism and Nazism may have eventually diverged. What Blavatsky's ideas offered to Liebenfels and List and others who influenced the Nazis, according to Goodrich-Clark, was "a fantasy world, in respect of which the present could be lamented and the possessors of true gnosis could comfort themselves in their assumed superior wisdom". ⁷⁹⁷ This is precisely what the Guenonian and Schuonian systems offer to their followers: a fantasy world in which they cultivated an arrogant presumption of their superiority. It is also what

⁷⁹⁴ A recent example of a Blavatsky inspired cult is the New Acropolis, (see writings of Miguel Martinez)--a cult started by Jorge Agel Livraga, an Argentina born Italian. According to sources he taught his disciples in the use of weapons, put them in paramilitary units and used the Nazi salute. His ultimate goal was the violent overthrow of democracy. He said in one document that he wanted to weed out "everything weak and stupid" and to put "homosexuals in concentration camps". He derived many of his ideas on race from Blavatsky.

⁷⁹⁵ Clark, pg. 21

⁷⁹⁶ On this subject see Nicholas Goodrich Clark's The Occult History of Nazism, and Joscelyn Godwin's Arktos, as well as the Theosophical Enlightenment. These books all have to be read skeptically, but there is some useful information in them.

⁷⁹⁷ Goodrich Clark pg .55

Goodrick-Clarke offers to his readers and students. Indeed, the whole domain of “esoterism” is a fantasy world, promoted by academic charlatans, created by men with ulterior interests and sustained by followers willing to accept these mystical delusions.

In any case, Guenonians today are right-wing New Agers living in a rarefied fantasy world of symbols and rituals radiant in a glowing light of illusions. Ritual solidifies delusions. Those who partake in them are set at odds against the actual world. In their own eyes Guenonians are the summation of all the religions. In fact, they are the summations of the delusory character of all the religions. Sadly, and falsely, Schuon and Guenon’s followers believe themselves superior to the entire “modern” world, which they hold in contempt and consider “profane”. If Fascism and Nazism have a common root with the Traditionalist theofascism, that root is the dreamy gnosticism of Blavatsky.

There are also definite similarities in the ideologies of Lanz von Liebenfels and Rene Guenon. In the main book of Liebenfels, the Theozoologie, he expresses a belief in the “Aryan Hero” who is “on this planet the most complete incarnation of God and spirit”. ⁷⁹⁸Guenon calls this person the “Lord of the World”, in his book of this title. He does not specify if this “Lord of the world” is an individual or a group, but it is clear from Guenon’s writings as a whole that he believed that he himself was a pure witness to the truth at the end of the world. He thought he would chart the esoteric way for a small “elite” or group of the “elect”, who would preserve the hidden truth until apocalypse and the ‘restoration’ that would come in the soon to occur golden age. In other words, deluded and self-important, he thought he was an esoteric precursor of the golden age. Schuon would imagine that he is also a member of this elite, even its sole leader. He told me to my face that he is

⁷⁹⁸ Ibid.pg.280

the “Qutb”, the “pole of the world” the “manifestation of the logos at the end of time”. This was an idea he deduced from Guenon, who thought much the same thing of himself.

Guenon’s notion of the “elect”, whom he also calls “guardians” are those who understand Guenon, who himself embodies the esoteric understanding of the world’s religions. This inflated notion of himself is born from Plato as well as patriarchal Masonic symbolism. He did not write his book “the Reign of Quantity”, for ‘profane people’. Rather, Guenon writes for the Elect, he says, “so that at least the elect will not be seduced” by the ghastly horror and deceits which Guenon, in his paranoia, was sure were swarming over the entire globe. Like St. Anthony’s demons in a painting by Bosch, Guenon wants to warn his followers what will happen in the near future. Of course none of that ever happens.

The Aryan hero of Liebenfels has much in common with Guenon’s elect “Lord of the World”. Guenon opposes the Lord of the World to the depravity of the low caste, profane moderns.⁷⁹⁹ Likewise for Liebenfels, the enemy of the Aryan is the Chandala, which is a term lifted out of Hindu caste terminology and refers to the ‘untouchables’. The chandalas are those who believe in democracy, according to Guenon, or those who are secular.⁸⁰⁰ Guenon writes with characteristic hyperbole that “the modernistic spirit is truly diabolical in every sense of the word”. The essential problem with modernism according to Guenon is democracy and its “repudiation of the elite”.⁸⁰¹ To be evil, apparently, is to question Guenon. He also writes that “the elite can only be the few ...and its power, or rather, its authority, derives from intellectual superiority alone”. The basis of this “intellectual superiority” is delusional beliefs in

⁷⁹⁹ Was Guenon influenced by Robert Hugh Benson’s reactionary Catholic novel, the Lord of the World, in which the modern world is considered evil and the Church is neglected?

⁸⁰⁰ Guenon’s notion that the secular world is illusory is false. There is only the secular. The religions are what is illusory.

⁸⁰¹ Guenon, Rene. *The Crisis of the Modern World*. London:luzac 1975 pg. 117

gods. In other words, Guenon denies any value to democracy and the existence of human rights for everyone. He wants hierarchy and a ruling elite to direct the ignorant lower caste masses for their own good. Guenon's own fantastic and false ideology is alone righteous enough to reign over mankind.

This is more or less Liebenfels' vision too, and Hitler's to a degree. The basic structure of these beliefs of Liebenfels are paralleled in the work of Guenon. Both have a belief in the Aryan, Indo European Hero. In fact the notion of the "aryan" is really a linguistic category not a racist one. So both Liebenfels and Guenon are wrong on the face of it. Both believe in the theocratic states of the European and Asian past. Both believe in the subversion of the theocratic 'tradition' by what they perceived as the evil of modernism and democracy. Both have Blavatskyite notions of other words and spiritualist states. Schuon would develop similar themes in the context of his cult. Schuon himself would claim to be the culture hero, for instance, and the 'chandala' of Liebenfels would become those whom Schuon, following Guenon, called the "profane". For Schuon "humanists" and those who trust science and reason are also negative lower caste people, who are well deserving of apocalyptic destruction.

Of course, it never occurs to these theatrical magicians of delusion that perhaps their outrageous claims might one day be tested against reason and science and found out to be smoke in mirrors, foggy superstitions. The single factor that characterizes the Guenonian elite is their devotion to the fabricated faculty of the "Intellect", which is not rational, but rather is a mystical faculty, invented by such mystics and Eckhart and Shankara. The "Intellect" is arbitrary and based on imaginal fictions. The "supra-formal intellect", as Guenon called it is merely a specious organ of delusion and make believe. It is the organ of ecstatic wishful thinking and transcendental imagination extrapolating fictions divorced

form facts.

I do not know of any evidence that Guenon was influenced by Liebenfels, but they share many of the same beliefs. They are convergent creators of mystical right-wing nonsense and express a time when esoteric groups pop up all over Europe, each contending with others in a political chess game. Like Guenon, Liebenfels also believed that a secret gnosis or knowledge had been passed down through the ages, passing through the medieval mystics, Meister Eckhart, the Templars and Bernard of Clairvaux, through 19th century mystics to himself. Guenon would develop this tendency of finding historical and metaphysical antecedents to his theories to a fine art. He believed that he had plummeted the gnostic doctrines of the major religions. These ideas would also form the basis of Schuon's writings on caste, history and culture, leading eventually to the idea of a secret society that possessed the secret of the world's great religions. The big secret was that the religions are make believe and delusional fictions.

There are differences between them. Liebenfels is much more indulgent toward science, whereas the Guénon sees science as a satanic deviation, for instance. Liebenfels is a German nationalist, as were Guido Von List and some of the other Proto-Nazis. Guenon was initially a French nationalist with far right leanings and sympathy with French fascist groups. Later, he sought a transcendentalist, perennial and internationalist philosophy based on the religious traditions. Guenon and Schuon believed in the caste system and that in this system they were 'above politics', as Brahmins and "manifestations of the Logos", and as such, they believed they represented the principle behind and beyond all politics and history. But actually what they really believed was that their ultimate knowledge dictated a transcendent politics, an Ur-fascism, what I call theofascism and this would become the "Lord of the World" and restore the aristocratic caste of the "elect" before the end of time.

This is politics and these are charlatans in service of that politics.

In view of showing how transcendent systems relate to political ambitions it might be useful to dwell on some of the older historical precedents for the Theofascist view of the world.

Part 3 **Selling the Big Lie:**

Innocent III, Guenon and the Knights Templar

Parents tell lies to their children about Santa and Jesus and Buddha or Krishna, just as Kings used to lie to their subjects and Priest lie to their “flocks”. Now its televangelists, politicians, economists, preachers in stadiums, makers of new age videos or radio promoters who are gospels of the big lies. Richard Dawkins says all this derives from parents who abuse the necessity that children listen to their parents to avoid danger. I am sure there is truth to that. But the systematic abuse of such lies for political gain is all too common in human history and is a major part of religion. Indeed, religion is merely the myth generated by politics or power struggles in a given area.

The Fairy Tales of Innocent III and of the Knights Templar is an insignificant subject in traditionalism, as it is in the history of Nazism, and history generally.. However, it might be useful to look at how the Nazis and Traditionalists treated this myth and compare it with the actual history to show how mangled and falsifying Traditionalist ideas of history are. I also want to dwell further on how fascism and Traditionalism overlap. They are both sellers of the Big Lie, but it will take some time to explain why.

The Templars were approved by the Roman Catholic Church around 1129 and worked for the Vatican. They were a mercenary order of paid killers hired by the Vatican. They became a favored banking

Christian order, and grew rapidly in membership and power. Templar knights, in their distinctive white over shirts with a red cross, were fighting soldiers in the Crusades. The reality of who they actually were is far different from the many myths and outright fabrications circulated about them.

It might be useful to fast forward to current mythic hyperbole written about the Templars. There is a veritable cottage industry of speculators and exploiters of this mythology and has been for hundreds of years. A recent one of these conspiracy mongers and Templar promoters is Tracy Twyman and her former associate, the Neo-fascist and Templar ‘expert’ Boyd Rice, The two of them have written of bogus history about Merovingians and Templars that ape the cult pseudo-history “Holy Blood, Holy Grail,” another sensationalist “conspiracy theory history” about the Templars. Twyman concocts all sorts of pseudo-history. She imagines fairy tales about how the Templars learned from the severed head of John the Baptist (“Baphomet”) and other nonsense of this kind. She writes more fairy tales about the eye on the pyramid in the dollar bill, the Priory of Zion, Atlantis and all sorts of esoteric fakery. Twyman writes that she wants to create an organization with

” distinctly elitist and pro-monarchical perspective. This culture embraces traditional values — values that have withstood the test of millennia — and stands in contrast to our current weak, degenerate, egalitarian, anti-intellectual pop culture”.

The language here is definitely in theofascist style. ⁸⁰² Twyman’s (former)close associate Boyd Rice writes on his Wikipedia site

⁸⁰² Rice participated in Fascist Rock bands like NON and Blood Axis, none of whose music is memorable

”I have no great quarrel with being labeled a “fascist.” While it is not the whole story, it implies (to me) a sort of Marquis De Sade worldview that sees life in terms of master and slave, strong and weak, predator and prey. I know such views are highly unfashionable, but to me they seem fairly consistent with what I’ve seen to be true.”

Actually in rock bands in the 1990’s being a Nazi pretender was definitely fashionable. Proud of this thugish view of reality, Rice, like young Guenon, did not want to leave Lucifer out of the larger picture. He likes to be a bad boy because it gets him attention, and that appears to be mostly what he is about, though it has been long since he was a boy.

There are many kinds of spiritual sensationalism, from the garish miracles of Jesus raising the dead Lazarus or making bread and fish to feed thousands, to fakirs sitting on beds of nails. IN the case of Jesus, the mythic stories seems to have been created in the 1st century over a hundred years after the supposed life of Christ. Mostly like there was no Christ at all and the whole story of the Gospels is a fabrication that was created after St. Paul. Religion is basically posturing and exploiting stories in the interests of the priest class. Religion promises supernatural ecstasies, trumpets of glory, angels, and third or seventh heavens, Lizard aliens, Zombies, Masonic conspiracies, exorcisms, Atlantis, pyramids, astrological blurbs in the daily News and a thousand other sales tricks promoting nonsense. . There are many promoters and Con-artists of myths and cheap make believe.

The con-artists of the Templar myth, like promoters of UFOs or little green aliens, seek to create a paranormal titillation of far out spirituality and alternative conspiracy theories. They do this in churches and temples, in various books, radio shows, blogs and magazines. People who exploit these interests are liars akin go National Enquirer or other yellow

journalism and its abuse of fictions, “freaks” and fabrications. Usually it is about money, but sometimes it is just about fame or trolling, which is using lies to try to gain power over others. These are bottom feeders of the conspiracy worlds, and dish out regurgitated spiritualism, not too far different than the garbage Guenon served up in books like the Lord of the World and Reign of Quantity. ⁸⁰³

Over the centuries the Albigenians, Cathars and the Templars have been associated with many stories and myths concerning the Holy Grail, all of them make believe. Additionally, the Cathars and the Knights Templar share a tragic history. Both groups suffered slaughter and annihilation of their orders and people. It was the martyrdom of these groups that made these stories of particular attraction to anti-Catholic groups such as the Masons and Protestants. The Nazi’s interest in the Cathars grew up for the same reason.

The Nazi’s were in pursuit of mythic images by which to promote their power. According to Jean Michel Angebert

⁸⁰³ The exploitation of serial killers in recent years is a similar phenomenon that has as its ultimate goal to normalize fear and war and make violence palatable. The effort to shock people with more and more blood and guts has the ultimate effect of killing feeling altogether, which is fine for big business, they make money off of war. Robespierre used terror to scare the people during the French Revolution. He exploited the justified anger the people felt for the abuses of the aristocrats over many centuries. He and his associates cut off 16-40,000 heads between 1793 and 1794. In the process he destroyed much of the ethical thrust that was the basis of this originally praiseworthy revolution. The idea of the guillotine was to displace public anger of real abuses by aristocrats by gratuitous murders as to garner power for Robespierre himself. Gratuitous violence helps the far left or right security apparatus control populations and keep their own power escalating. In American society in the 21st century, the sensational enjoyment of TV gore and severed heads, killing and violence is in the interests of corporate control and stigmatizing the “other”. The real serial killer is the corporate state itself which mows down people in Iraq, Afghanistan or other countries, using drone planes or “Shock and Awe” bombing. Serial killers are the obverse reflection of corporate CEO’s. The CEO has psychopathic tendencies which are echoed at the psychopathic serial killer. The same selfish, conscienceless ‘me first’ entrepreneurs that pollute and kill, or ship jobs overseas throwing tens of thousands out of work without blinking have their counterpart in TV characters and real people who kill without conscience. Anti-social individualism is the norm of Wall Street. The creation of a sort of hero worship of serial killers also increases the allure of serial killing, and this helps perpetuate the next killer., just as CEO culture perpetuates itself by creating generations of exploiters willing to hurt anyone to get rich..

“The loss of the Grail was associated with the loss of the tradition of unity, with all its spiritual consequences....” Therefore, “the original myth of the Grail is related to a lost teaching. This was the interpretation adopted by the National-Socialists, who thought that the Grail-stone was a law of life valid only for certain [pure] races”“This was the reason why Otto Rahn, a specialist in Catharism, who was sent to the Albigenian region by the Nazis, supposedly to find the famous Grail-stone praised in the poems of Wolfram d’Eschenbach⁸⁰⁴, who speaks of a ‘precious stone.’”⁸⁰⁵

Guenon was interested in this mythic make believe for the same reason. He thought it would establish his credibility and ground him mythic dress. Nonsense of course. The fact that such things were even of marginal interest to him is a testament to his ignorance.

In any case, it is clear that the Templar myth was a cloak for a power grab. Guenon also writes about it at great length in works like the Lord of the World. The myth of the Grail and the swastika are partly anti-Catholic stories, or rather they show Catholicism as separating into two camps, the one catholic and the other Protestant. Hitler used the Grail legends both as a means of making himself heroic and as a means of distancing himself from Catholicism, as had been common in Germany since before the romantics. The Grail legends like the legends of the Templar are romantic fictions extolling non-existent esoteric lore, the Grail supposedly representing a transcendent unity of the religions. The Nazis used the Grail legend to promote their politics and the traditionalists used it to promote their attempt to seize all religions as their own. The Grail legends are thus fairy tales used to try to claim

⁸⁰⁴ Eschenbach’s Grail legend is a central part of Joseph Campbell’s Masks of God and a fairy tale. It belongs in the history of make believe along with Wagner’s Ring cycle and the imaginary psychology of Carl Jung

⁸⁰⁵ Jean Michel Angebert, Hitler and the Cathar Tradition 32-34 see also

power. They are mythic politics. Or myth in the thrall of politics. This may be what myth has always been, as I suggest throughout this book.

There are some intelligent things written about the Templars, but one has to look for them amidst all the hype, myth and outright fabrication, which constitute the bulk of what is written about them. One of my favorite quotes about the Templars is from the philosopher David Hume. Talking about the Crusades in which the Templars are said to be heroes, Hume says that the Crusades were “one of the most durable monuments to human folly that has yet appeared in any age”. This is true, and The Templars are right in the middle of that folly.

As silly as it seems now, and it seems quite absurd, both Guenon and various Nazi authors were fascinated with the New Order of the Templars and subscribed to variations of the idea of the ‘Age of the Holy Spirit’, recalling Joachim of Fiore’s prediction of an age of the Holy Spirit.⁸⁰⁶ Nicholas Goodrick-Clark speaks of Liebenfels’ belief that the Templars of the 12th century, known for their allegedly valiant conduct in the Crusades, and for their eventual removal as heretics, in fact were those who sought after the Holy Grail, which is a mythological symbol of the Holy Spirit. Far from being valiant, the Templars hacked Moslems to death and enriched themselves with gusto, rather like today’s global business elite. Yet the Knights Templar has been associated with all sorts of incredible activities from having the Ark of the Covenant and the Holy Grail. Various mythic panderers claim that the Templars had a secret fleet that sailed the oceans, and their awe-inspiring self-confidence and courage that made their enemies shudder in fear. Other fictions credit them with being allied with “the great sailor-fraternity” that had created

⁸⁰⁶ This prediction was based the book of Revelations which certainly is a fictional work of later centuries, probably a forgery, or at least that was the opinion of Dionysius in the 4th century. Internally, of course it is a document of deliberate vague fantasy, which makes it a source of wild speculations to those prone to paranoia and conspiracy theory. One can read into it anything one wishes, which is why is best not to take it seriously it at all, The earliest Manuscript that contain it are papyrus and appear to be dated around 250 C.E.

a worldwide trading empire in Phoenician times and the building of King Solomon's Temple by Phoenician masons from Tyre, or even the Great Pyramid and Atlantis. But all that is merely fairy tale.

What is the point of all the conspiracy theories regarding the Templars involving their supposed concern with Grail legends, their possession of the head of Christ or John the Baptist and other bizarre fabrications? In fact the group were early bankers, among the first modern bankers, reportedly. They were personal mercenaries for the Pope and their business acumen grew out of the business of killing many people for the Pope. They could rob and loot at will and no one could stop them, until they finally got too big for their own good and were destroyed by the King of France. The myth grows up between a corporate church on the one hand and a corporate and nascent capitalism on the other.

In the Nazi and Guenonian versions of the Templar myth conspiracy theories are not separated from fact. Indeed, neither Guenon nor the Nazis have much grasp of the actual history of the Templars. The Nazis imagined themselves to be the Knights who brought back the golden age or the "thousand year Reich", just as the Templars are supposed to have gained possession of the Holy Grail, equated with the 'holy spirit'. Guenon was also fascinated with these questionable mythologies as was Schuon, who would claim to embody the Holy Spirit himself. ⁸⁰⁷ The Nazi attempt to picture themselves as the "Teutonic Knights" shares the same symbolism. There were many paintings of

⁸⁰⁷ Schuon. Memoirs unpublished in English. The purpose of all this myth making about the holy spirit and the Templars in fascism and traditionalism is to create symbols and stories that confer legitimacy on a new practice and form of politics and power. The concept of the holy spirit is an intellectual or emotional fiction---a symbol---a mythological construction that channels emotions, thoughts and social behavior. When Schuon says in his Memoirs, at age 17, in 1923, that "the day will come when the divine will call me Parakletos!". Here Schuon, who is often modest in just this way, is saying that he will be the "the standard of all truth and social practice; the paradigm of society, legitimacy and all knowledge and power. He will be the culture hero. It is inflated nonsense of course, in fact it is evidence of a narcissistic personality disorder--- but the trick is to convince others that the lie of the Wizard of OZ is true and the Emperor's nudity is really a new form of clothes. Religion is a reality construction, it is the Emperor's new clothes.

Hitler done in the 1930's showing him as great liberator and culture hero, dressed in shining armor.



Portrait of Hitler as Knights Templar or Grail-King 1938

The idealization of the Templars and Teutonic Knights had been developed by List, Liebenfels, Wagner and others and then picked up by Himmler, head of the infamous SS, (Schutzstaffel or Protection Squadron), who modeled his exterminating SS police upon the myth of the Templar Knights as Holy Warriors. Both the Nazi's and Guenon used these myths as part of an attempt at self-aggrandizement.



Himmler at Dachau, 1936

Unraveling the symbolism of these myths takes some work. One thing is clear, as the historian Piers Paul Read said--- “Templarism was a belief manufactured by charlatans for their dupes” ⁸⁰⁸ The dupes now of course, are readers of the works of Guenon, Schuon, Twyman or other purveyors of the Templar fiction. The Templar myth develops as part of the imperial myth of the Crusades and the war against Islam. The Crusades were a horrible exercise in cruelty, not just from the Christian side, but from both sides. The use of the crusades by various modern crusaders, be it Guenon, Hitler or George Bush amounts to the same sort of unjust empire seeking, scapegoating and mythological charlatanism. In the Templars in the 12th century, the evil ones were the Moslems, who threatened the Crusaders, the ‘good guys’. For the Moslems the evil ones were the Templars and Crusaders. For Hitler the evil ones were the Jews, liberals, socialists, homosexuals and others. For Guenon and Schuon, the evil ones are everyone in the modern world.

⁸⁰⁸ Read, Piers Paul. *The Templars*. St. Martin’s Griffin, pg. 306

The Nazis were a cult that seized power over a whole country, and like the Schuon cult, they practiced “Them Verses Us” exclusivity. The Nazi’s accepted the part of the Templar myth which pictures the world as sick and decadent. A lost knowledge, or “gnosis”, needs to be regained, so the world could be made whole again and the evil ones would be eliminated forever. Blavatsky’s idea was that there was an omnipotent subterranean or hidden theocracy somewhere in the East where all true knowledge was held, and access to this knowledge would give ultimate power and this power would enable the theosophists to wipe out all those who did not think like them. Guenon believed these myths as well and adapted Blavatsky ideas in his book The Lord of the World and elsewhere. Guenon, especially in this earlier career, was deeply wrapped up in the Templar myths and other ideologies that would alter influence the fascists and Nazis.



So what purpose does the Templar myth serve for Guenon and Liebenfels? The Templar myth arose out of an effort to confer legitimacy on new forms of power in Northern Europe, namely the protestant rebellion in the 1500's C.E.. But in Europe in the early 20th century the Templars were shadowy figures whose myth was used to promise righteous revenge against science. Liberal government and the modernists. The actual history of the Templars was irrelevant. Guenon and others projected all sorts of nonsense on them.

But to show this I have to go back a little into the history that Guenon and the Nazis ignore. The Templars were wiped out in 1314 by the Inquisition in brutal killings following tortures. The real question is why they were persecuted. Was it because they were virtuous and had the Grail? Hardly. The King of France who allowed the killing of the Templars was Phillip IV. However, Phillip is merely the first of various kings who set the stage for the killing of the Templars. The ultimate blame for these killings as well as similar killings of the Cathars in the Albigensian crusade, goes back to Innocent the III (1160 or 1161 – 16 July 1216).

Innocent III held the Fourth Lateran Council, which inaugurated the Confession rite as obligatory on all Christians, partly so he could spy on his enemies. Innocent also set in motion the process that would lead to the declaration of the rite of Transubstantiation. Innocent III was perhaps the most powerful Pope since Justinian, a thousand years earlier and perhaps the most powerful pope ever, if not only in medieval Christianity. If there were a Father of the Inquisition, it would be Innocent III, whose name quite belies his activities. He wrote that Christ "left to Peter not only the governance of the Church but also of the whole world". Innocent was a ruthless empire builder, sure that Christian knowledge of heavenly mysteries justified ruthless Christian supremacy. He was absolutist monarchist pope---the very sort of monarch that Guenon claimed to desire. Guenon wanted a 'spiritual'

dictator who supervised the entire “temporal realm” and that is what obsessed Innocent the III. --- Indeed, Innocent embodies the spiritual/temporal conjunction that Guenon longed for in his book Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power. The conjunction of political power and justifying ideology expressed by Innocent III can be traced back as far as Plato, for instance, who called for a “conjunction of political power and philosophical intelligence”. This is a natural desire for the totalistic mind to want to dictate reality from the top to the bottom. This is theofascism. Plato advocates a caste system, which follows quite naturally from his view that only men of superior intelligence can rule the state, and that eugenic breeding is necessary to rule the ‘rabble’.

Innocent III held similar views about the supremacy of knowledge as reflected in a theocratic state, and these beliefs justified his resort to violence to suppress those who did not conform to the Christian system of knowledge. He is the designer of what would become centuries of Christian state-terrorism. Innocent oversaw and largely directed the murder of some 20,000 supposed heretics, according to contemporary reports, in the town of Beziers, France. Known as the Albigensian Crusade, Innocent writes proudly about this atrocity, complementing the picture of Himmler looking with detached, Hindu indifference on the murder of Jewish women in the showers. Indeed, Innocent the III is the harbinger, perhaps even the template, of many atrocities later to come. The logic by which Innocent justifies his atrocities could have been written by Columbus, Philip II, (who promoted the Inquisition and the killing of Native Americans in the Americas) or if put in slightly more spare and Protestant language, by the British or Dutch Imperial colonialists and slave traders, or if translated into a nationalist idiom such as was used by the Nazis, could have been written by Himmler.

But the history gets even worse and so does the Traditionalist’s misunderstanding of it. The Templars were created by Pope Innocent III to protect and aid Crusaders in the holy land. They soon become more

than that when they start killing lots of people. Innocent used them as killing machines in the Fourth and Fifth Crusades. Innocent also is the presiding Pope during the horrendous Children's Crusades, where thousands of children are sold in slavery or prostitution trying to do the bidding of Innocent's fanatic devotion to religious war. He also forces Muslims and Jews to wear specially marked clothing to keep Catholics from being "fooled" into marrying them. In this Innocent sets up a precedent that will be used again in Nazi Germany. Innocent also set up a system of justice that uses torture during interrogation. During the Albigensian Crusade Innocent's men kill 12,000 people in a single day. He justifies such actions by his belief that the Church must "Use against heretics the spiritual sword of excommunication, and if this does not prove effective, use the material sword." This belief is very much in line with Muhammad's equally brutal notion of Jihad.

In 1307, Phillip IV of France claimed that the Grand Inquisitor had determined that the two-hundred year old order of Templar Knights was corrupt. The Templars were devoted plunder, rape and to slaying any one, especially Moslems, who threatened either the "Holy Land" or the pilgrims that were going there. The Inquisition claimed the Templars were infested by Satanists and ritualized homosexuality. The fact is that the Templars were also one of the great banks of the Middle Ages and possessed large tracts of land in Europe and were, furthermore, owed a great deal of money by King Phillip. It appears that this fact may have been the primary reason that the Church and king decided to murder them, mostly by extreme torture. Phillip killed the Templars to save himself a lot of money and to take the money they had amassed. The Templars were not martyrs, since they were killing a lot of people to make a lot of money to begin with. Hard to say who is worse, Innocent the III, who started it all, King Phillip or the Templars themselves.

In any case, these facts got lost sight of by the Nazis and Traditionalists who really were only interested in exploiting the Templars

as a myth justifying revenge against the modern world. The Templars were not holy men, but mercenary killers who were in a power struggle with a mercenary Church. But the Templars are in some ways the historical antecedents of today's mercenary corporations and banks, fighting wars in Iraq or Afghanistan using corporate soldiers of fortune to make sure oil companies make billions.

In other words, Guenon's, Liebenfels and the Nazi admiration for the Templars is political and factually baseless. Guenon's ignorance of history was such that the regime of spiritual authority that he admires in his book Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power is the same system of terror which destroyed the Templars, whom he claims to see as admirable martyrs. In other words Guenon and Schuon were hypocrites, like the Nazis were. The Nazis who also used the image of the atrocities against the Templars as a propagandistic tool. Like the Nazis and like Innocent the III, the metaphysical system of Guenon and Schuon is a system of knowledge which is meant to justify unjust and hierarchical systems of power whose application can only lead to terror .

So then, the Nazis admired the Templars because the Catholics murdered the Templars and thus they became for the Nazis and Protestants anti-Catholic symbols of martyred resistance fighters. The German Protestants were thought to be heretics by the Catholics and so the Templars are seen as early martyred heretics by the Protestants. The Nazis inflated idealization of the Templars is the result of Protestant hatred of Catholicism, since the Catholics, under Intellect and Phillip the IV, murdered most of the Templars and Cathars as heretics. Indeed, the destruction of the Templars by the successors of Innocent the III is partly what the early Catholic Inquisition is all about, which is already informally set up before Innocent III died.

Guenon and Schuon, like the Nazis, wanted to see Templars as martyrs. This attitude is exemplified in Schuon's first book, for instance

where he claims that the “Templar elite” understood esoterism and understood Islam, even though Catholics, like St Bernard, did not. ⁸⁰⁹ This is nonsense. Schuon knew nothing about any of this and merely repeats Guenon’s idealization of the Templars. Schuon is trying to say that the crusading and colonialist Templars were superior to Catholics like St Bernard, because they allegedly accepted Islam: he is trying to say that the Templars—like himself--- had a Crusading will to universal power or tendency a universalistic religious ideology. There appears to be no sound historical indication that this is true. The Templars did have alliances and diplomatic contacts with Moslems. But they were fighting a war against them and killing them. Moslem’s historian depicts the Templars not as enlightened Universalists as Schuon imagines but as ‘evil’ enemies of Islam.

Schuon’s reading of books was mostly narcissistically driven. He read books to find himself rather than to find out what an accurate picture of something might look like. He had no real objectivity or critical acumen, nor any ability to use critical thinking or respect for evidence and science. ⁸¹⁰ At one point, in his memoirs I think, he reproaches himself for being too addicted to biographies of great men. He was interested in great men because he was trying to absorb them into himself.

One ‘great man’ Schuon admired was Frederick II of Hohenstaufen (December 26 1194 – 13 December 1250). It is true that Frederick the II

⁸⁰⁹ Schuon, Transcendent Unity pg.51

⁸¹⁰ It took me some time to realize that when Schuon uses the word objectivity, as in his phrase “objectivity of intelligence” he actually means something anti-intellectual and contrary to objectivity. For Schuon something is ‘objective’ when it is referred to the god concept, and if it is not it is ‘profane’ thinking. If something leads to god, it is real, if it does not, it is not real, -- this is Schuon’s whole philosophy in a nutshell---which basically means that everything that is actually real is unreal and vice versa. If this sounds crazy, well yes, Guenon’s and Schuon’s world is rife with multiple insanities as is religion as a whole. The actual world we love and study in science for Hinduism is “Maya”, or the Taoist world of the “ten thousand things”. Religion is delusion. The real world is the fiction of Brahma, or the inner self Atma, which is not part of the world. All this is not wisdom but rather make believe and fiction.

did have some admiration for Moslems and was tolerant of different peoples. But his tolerance appears to have been the result of an early quasi-scientific attitude. But Schuon was a poor researcher and historian and was totally wrong that Frederick was somehow a universalist “esoterist”. Indeed, Frederick is reported to have said that Christ Muhammad and Moses were “three impostors who deceive the world”. This is quite true, what Frederic says, but it’s hardly the case that Schuon would approve of this. He only liked people who were slavish to the god concept. Frederick was really something of a proto-scientist on the one hand and a madman on the other. He was very interested in animals and was a renowned falconer. But he performed some really cruel experiments, including ones that involved harming children. What Schuon admired about him primarily, perhaps, was that Frederick was one of the first Christians to adopt the idea of the harem and used it for his own pleasure.

Schuon’s attempt to romanticize the Templars and Frederick is thus based largely on misunderstanding and false inferences. The Templars were mercenaries, not grail keepers and Frederick was not religious, so Schuon’s hero worship of him makes no sense. I think again that what this amounts to is that Schuon was a narcissistic reader of history and only read what flattered his own self-image.

So the Nazis, Liebenfels and Schuon see the Templars, wrongly, as embodiments of a suppressed truth. They thought they are martyrs—wronged Knights of the hidden truth--- who go to holy war against the modern world. These reactionary Templar lovers wished to set up the thousand year Reich or prepare the way for apocalypse. In their overheated imaginations the Templars are their Heroic precursors. Actually the Templars are men who got in between kings and the Church and got too rich, so they were trampled on. They were cruel thieves whose money was stolen back from them.

By identifying with the Templars Guenon and Schuon are not thereby involving themselves directly in the Protestant hatred of Catholicism, which sought to enlist the myth of the martyred Templars as a rally cry against the Catholics. They hated Protestantism.⁸¹¹ Schuon and Guenon wanted to relativize or compromise Catholic hegemony. They saw Catholicism as merely one form of orthodoxy among other 'legitimate' forms of orthodoxy. Orthodoxy did not interest them except as a sort of colonial base from which to erect the fiction of "esoterism". Only 'esoterism' or "Guenonism" grasps the metaphysical truth of all the religions. Guenon and Schuon are beyond orthodoxy, even while they affirm it as the only way to the "total" truth. The "Templars" in Schuon and Guenon correspond to nothing real in history. They are precursor of 'esoterism', which itself is a bogus category. The Templar myth is merely a myth upon a myth for them. The Templars are a convenient springboard for Schuon and Guenon to go beyond Christianity and into a 'universal' position that has the relativization of all religions as its ultimate aim. The Traditionalists falsify history to justify their claim to power, just as the Nazis did. Indeed in both cases the Templars serve a far right mythology in the interests of what amounts to a power grab.

Moreover, Guenon's use of the Templars is really an attempt to revive the caste system. Guenon writes that

⁸¹¹ They hated Protestantism to different degrees. Schuon tries to excuse it in an essay or at least grant it marginal legitimacy, as if his opinion matters. It doesn't. Protestantism is part of a reaction against the corrupt church and in the 1500's it was a very real step towards the Enlightenment and thus a very good thing. For Schuon and Guenon this is what they hate about it. They wanted to keep us all muzzled and smothered in 12th century superstition and dogma. Protestantism today is a highly various thing, but mostly it is a force for reaction, anti-science and creationism, hence Schuon's nodding but somewhat grudging approval of it. Protestantism sometimes does still do some good despite itself as when it has sought to allow women to be priests, though in this case, one is merely allowing women to tell lies to people too. This is a questionable improvement, though better than the alternative.

...the Democratic Illusion is the denial of the natural hierarchy, whose clearer expression is in the Hindu Doctrine of Castes, hierarchy that settles down from top to bottom, that is, from the highest quality, the spiritual, until the least high, in other words, the material. The mentors of the modern democracy based it precisely on what exists of more roughly material and quantitative [nature].

The denial of the qualitative superiority and of the hierarchy begins at the end of the Medieval Age, more precisely by the year of 1313, with the destruction of the Order of the Temple by Felipe the Beautiful, then King of France. ⁸¹²

This is deeply delusional. What Guenon is doing here is twisting history to mean something that never happened. What really happened in 1313 was end of the Templars. ⁸¹³It was also the slow beginning of the defeat of Innocent the III's policy of the Inquisition and the total Catholic control of people's lives. 1313 is really the dividing line between the Dark Ages of mystagogy and hierarchy and the beginning of science and the Enlightenment. It is the opposite of what Guenon claims. He claims that then the "reversal of the hierarchical order occurs because the "temporal

⁸¹² See Crisis of the Modern World --- these quotes are online at <http://www.freespeechproject.com/illusion.html>

⁸¹³ Guenon connects this moment in 1313 to the degeneration of the coinage, claiming that Templars had to do with sustaining the spiritual value of money. It is a lunatic notion that depends on the notion that "spiritual authority" must be the highest order in a society. Theofascism is this precisely, and Guenon connects this to the fall of the Templars, "when the royal power, by acting in this way, usurped the spiritual authority, which is without doubt the one authentic source of all legitimacy" (Footnote 48, Reign Of Quantity). So really for Guenon the Templars are himself--- he is negated by the failure of the Templars. Guenon creates this fiction at a point in his book where he grows more and more paranoid, developing a truly insane scenario of Armageddon that begins with the supposed martyrdom of the Templars. Guenon has no proof of what he says, as usual, after raising the issue and not having any proof, he quickly adds, as he often does in true con-man distancing of himself from factual analysis, "the matter need not be pursued further here". Yeah right, because it is pure fiction---there is nothing else to say because to say more would reveal that this is really about Guenon's own personal fantasy.

order tries to render itself independent of the Spiritual Authority” ⁸¹⁴ and this is the beginning of the end of the world for Guenon. Actually it is the beginning of the end of delusory religion. The spiritual authority was a parasite on both the aristocracy and the poor. The end of the Templars was a good thing in that the Church no longer had an internal jihadist sort of overseas militia serviceable to the at the Pope’s whims. The overthrow of the system of Spiritual/Temporal power that articulates the Feudal system was the first step toward democracy, That is a good thing---because the theofascism that inspired Innocent the III is on its way out.

Guenon hates democracy and upholds the caste system and history he twists history upside down to serve this ideological purpose. As he says in Crisis of the Modern World, he hates evolution for the same reason he hates democracy. Because “the superior cannot emanate from the inferior” ⁸¹⁵ The notion of ‘god’ is not superior, because it is a fiction. The world is its own thing and beings a self-developed. This is an enormous angering idea to religious fanatics, but it is true. It is thus a matter of Guenon’s pride in a non-existent god that makes him oppose democracy and brand it as devil’s spawn. Guenon’s whole project in Reign of Quantity is to make history serve hierarchy and ideology: to make fiction and imagination serve the imaginary “king of the world”. Innocent III is one of the last of the traditional church/state dictators, who unites the spiritual and temporal in one powerful institution. The future after Innocent is toward science and democracy and liberation from the shackles of religious politics. For Guenon this is a horrible tragedy, the beginning of the bloody downfall and slide toward an inky evil spread over the land. For anyone sane, it is the beginning of liberations from delusion and superstition.

⁸¹⁴ Guenon, Rene. Crisis of the Modern World. Luzac pg. 71

⁸¹⁵ Guenon, Rene. Crisis of the Modern World. Luzac pg. 70

Traditionalism has a parasitical relation to myth and religion, which are used by the Traditionalists as a prop for other agendas. ⁸¹⁶ This is a fairly complicated maneuver, intellectually, since it involves re-reading religions to be something they never were. Guenon and Schuon resemble the Nazis in that they idealize the Templars as martyrs, but they go farther than the Nazis in using the Templar myth as a springboard, not just to nationalistic power but to creating a claim to grab universal knowledge, though which they hope to gain power. Thus the Templars served a very useful purpose for the Traditionalists, just as they did for the Nazis. It allowed Schuon and Guenon to declare a holy war against the modern world at the same time as it put them beyond the religious institutions of the major religions. Guenon and Schuon claim to be the universal arbiters of truth. They are the ultimate “elect”, and thus, at least in their own imaginations, the nearly infallible guides to ultimate power and status. Of course, reality must step in at some point. The truth is that Guenon and Schuon were buffoons of a spiritual kind, theatrical wanna-be Brahmins and Popes of the Grotesque. Guenon’s and Schuon’s followers fall prey to their inflated notion of self-worth. Like

⁸¹⁶ Guenon was nominally a Moslem. He likes it because it appeals to his need of brutality and end of the world paranoia, which is Koran is suffused with. He likes the anti-feminism of the Koran the anti-democratic disdain for human rights, the subjecting of all things to the cruelty of La Ilaha Illa Lhah. Guenon become Muslim under the Swedish artist Ivan Aguéli in 1912. But that appears to be rather an overstatement. He really didn’t practice Islam until after 1930. Even then, Islam is a stepping off point, not a basis. He really created his own religion, a kitsch pastiche of various religions. Schuon insisted that his followers become Moslem too. But Schuon became bored with Islam and ended up producing a pastiche of Islamic, Hindu, Native American--- a sort of multicolored ice cream cone of multiple religions, with Schuon himself as the kitschy ice cream-colored Pied Piper, leading children into the never-never land of his personal delusions. Schuon’s final image of the truth is his Icons of himself. These are kitsch nudes of himself with penis prominent, showing his body surrounded with an aura, and as the “last prophet at the end of time” he is supposed to be a “healing for the wombs” according to one of the cult songs written about Schuon. These Icons were designed by Schuon but mostly painted by Sharlyn Romaine under Schuon’s direction, one of Schuon’s various wives. This ridiculous and grotesque fantasy of Schuon as a sort of Don Juan Krishna, whose penis will heal womankind implies a strange misogyny, not to mention grotesque delusion of grandeur. But then this is the real image of what traditionalism is. It is a grotesque pastiche, unreality made real by forced imposition and endless repetition.

other cult followers, they believe that Guenon and Schuon are authorities beyond question. They are unable to read their works with an objective or critical eye. Anyone who questions their authority must be deluded, insane, inspired by evil forces or devoted to some modern parody of the truth, such as the New Age philosophy, relativism, modern psychology, democratic Jeffersonianism, or some other ‘illusions’ such as humanism, happiness or ‘sincerism’, all of which Guenon and Schuon have branded as the evil spawn of the modern age. Most of these things that they hate are, for the most part, very good things. But part of Guenon’s intellectual perversity was to make things that are basically good seem to be evil. What Guenon calls insane is often really sanity and what he calls sanity is nearly always insane.

So the traditionalist use the Templar myth for other agendas. As is clear from the historical record, the Templars were not culture heroes, or holders of the grail or any of the things the Templar myth alleges. The Templar movement in the late 19th century, especially with Guenon and Liebenfels arouse out of an effort to confer legitimacy on a new form of power. Perhaps the late 19th century need to redress of the Templars as “culture-heroes” goes back to the Northern Protestant hatred of Catholicism, since the Catholics murdered most of the Templars and Cathars as heretics and the Germans wanted to see them as martyrs. This is evident in Schuon’s first book, for instance where he claims, with no real evidence other than myth, that the “Templar elite” understood esoterism and understood Islam, even though Catholics, like St Bernard, did not.⁸¹⁷ Schuon is not denying the Crusader and colonialist drive to glory by accepting Islam: he is trying to universalize the Crusading will to power—assimilative colonialism of the sort Schuon himself practiced. Schuon reduced other religions to caricature and then claims a sort of passion of them by announcing he had sex with their goddesses. Tara,

⁸¹⁷ . Schuon, Transcendent Unity pg.51

Isis, Mary etc. Like the Nazis, and like Liebenfels, Schuon sees the Templars as embodiments of a suppressed truth; The Templars are martyrs who go to holy war against the modern world, and ambiguously, against the Catholic world. They are prefiguration of Guenon and Schuon themselves. This is nonsense, but if there is method in it, the method is to exploit myths for personal motivations, wherever they occur. The whole of the Teutonic and German, Romantic tradition has an ambiguous and paradoxical relation to Catholicism, which alternates between a desire to imitate Catholic centralization and hierarchy, but yet rebels against this in the effort to deify the heroic individual. The Germans wanted their own power and thus their own “truth”. The Templars supplied a readymade myth they could exploit. The Nietzschean ‘will to power’ is a drive for universal transcendence, not merely German transcendence. Guenon and Schuon are driven by the same political spirituality. Hitler was not only a nationalist, but attempted, however ineptly, to forge a new universalism in imitation of the Catholics, but yet at the same time as he denies Church itself. The younger Hitler deeply admired the organization and Hierarchy of the Catholic Church. As Robert Westrich has noted,

“like his fellow Catholics, Goebbels and Himmler, [Hitler] had an intuitive sense for the importance of outward forms, for dogma, hierarchy and organization, which was used to powerful effect in the Nazi movement. The party created its own “messiah”, Bible, martyrs and dogma in imitation of the Catholic Church, just as would look to the Jesuit order for his inspiration for the SS elite.⁸¹⁸

⁸¹⁸ Westrich, Robert. Hitler's Apocalypse London; Weidenfeld and Nicolson 1985 pg.140

But later Hitler came to hate the Church. Guenon comes to be suspicious of the Church too, as does Schuon. These paradoxes present in Hitler's ambiguous love-hate for the Church are also found in Guenon and Schuon. Just as Hitler adapted the form of the Catholic hierarchy to the Third Reich, while rejecting the content of Catholicism and replacing it with Aryanism, so Guenon and Schuon would seek to reduce all religious forms to their concept of the Aryan/Hindu primordial tradition. Guenon was deeply if ambiguously Catholic early in his career. His Catholicism sometimes conflicts with his interest in Masonry and in comparative religion. But Guenon certainly was influenced by Pope Pius X, who began a series of "anti-modernist" crusades about 1905 which continued until 1910, when he instituted his "oath against modernism", which required that all priests pronounce an oath against modern ideas and their influence on the Church.⁸¹⁹ The Pope commanded the Bishops to "purge their clergy of modernistic infections" ⁸²⁰ Schuon accepted this also, and together with his principle Catholic disciple, Rama Coomaraswamy, recommended the reinstitution of the "oath against modernism" even recently. This absurd oath is an effort at mind control, an effort to stop Catholics from being too influenced by human rights,

⁸¹⁹ The oath against modernism instituted by Pius X in 1907 is really an oath to believe in the infallible patriarchal papacy. Among other things it states "I declare that I am completely opposed to the error of the modernists who hold that there is nothing divine in sacred tradition; or what is far worse, say that there is, but in a pantheistic sense" and goes further to add that ----"I firmly hold, then, and shall hold to my dying breath the belief of the *Fathers* in the charism of truth, which certainly is, was, and always will be in the succession of the episcopacy from the apostles. The purpose of this is, then, not that dogma may be tailored according to what seems better and more suited to the culture of each age; rather, that the absolute and immutable truth preached by the apostles from the beginning may never be believed to be different, may never be understood in any other way. " In other words modernism threatens the faith that the laity have in priests and popes and that is the real problem with it. These guys don't want to lose their power. Luckily the oath was abolished in 1967. It should be observed also how fanatical the priests hold on to the idea of the "truth" of the apostles, which is certainly a fiction. A dogma is an assertion over and over again of a truth that never existed and is not the case.

⁸²⁰ Latourette, Kenneth Scott. A History of Christianity New York. Harper. 1953 pg.1104

freedom and decent democratic values. This need of thought control is obvious in the work of Rama Coomaraswamy. Coomaraswamy echoes exactly the ideology of the Inquisition. He writes that “heresy, for the Church, is sedition”, thus criminalizing criticism of religion and linking it with the political punishment of those who think incorrectly.⁸²¹ This was exactly the point of view of Innocent III and the Inquisition.

Outrageously, Rama quotes approvingly William Morris’ comment that “civilization.... Is doomed to destruction--- what a joy it is to think of it.”. This is a very repulsive and ignorant comment if one thinks about what it actually means. He is expressing joy at the billions of deaths that would occur, not just of humans but of nature and animals too. This apocalyptic exaltation in mass destruction is also shared by Schuon as in his comment that three quarters of the world’s people deserve to be destroyed. Rama Coomaraswamy, whom I got to know in the early 1990’s, said to me that the Inquisition was overall a good institution; that Hitler is misunderstood and that the Holocaust is largely a lie disseminated by Freemasons. These are very ignorant comments, to say the least. He was a member of the Schuon cult for 30 years but has hidden this fact. When I asked him to condemn Schuon publicly and be honest about his involvement, he refused.

Rama spent a lot of time translating a text that tries to justify and excuse the inquisition and attacks one of the main sources of evidence, Juan Antonio Llorente (1756-1823), who describes 350,000 casualties of the Inquisition. Llorente is a hero and was a friend of Goya who did this portrait of him.

⁸²¹ Coomaraswamy, Rama. The Destruction of the Christian Tradition London, Perennial Books. 1981 pg.77 This book was edited and approved by Schuon, indicating it is a highly questionable book. It is a far right screed, trying to bring back a repressive and narrow-minded Church.



Portrait of Don Juan Antonio Llorente by [Francisco Goya](#) (1809-1813)

Here are Llorente's casualties excerpted from his book the History of the Spanish Inquisition.⁸²²

Number of persons who were condemned and perished in the flames	31,912
Effigies burnt	17,659
Condemned to severe penances	<u>291,450</u>
	341,021

The documents that this estimate was based on have disappeared, probably destroyed by the Church, and suggesting that the estimate is way to too low and the truth much worse. Catholics attacked and persecuted Llorente and the documents. Rama Coomaraswamy's translation is an attack of this kind, a sort of Inquisition denial, similar to the holocaust denials. There are arguments about number of people

⁸²²

killed or tortured during the Inquisition. The truth appears to be shrouded in the smoky fires in which the Vatican records and evidence were burnt to cover up the facts. Indeed, it appears that all reliable information about the inquisition have gone up in the flame that the Church used to burn its critics with.



Goya's painting of the Inquisition

In any case, for Rama and other fundamentalist fanatics, “heresy is sedition “, as Rama writes. Questioning the Church, cult leader, CEO, Mao or Hitler is an act of war that must be ruthlessly punished. The infection must be “purged”, the Cathars, the Jews, witches, free thinkers, liberals must all be tortured or murdered. The Inquisition referred to torture as being “reconciled”. The Church must flourish and those who think differently than the Catholics or the Nazis must be destroyed. For Hitler the ultimate evil was not to be German or Teutonic, whereas with Guenon and Schuon the greatest evil is to be modern, democratic, and

relativist, to think for oneself, to be sincere, to be a humanist, or to care about human rights. In both cases one is dealing with strategies and anathemas whose intention is to create a climate of 'Them versus Us' and thereby magnify a will to power.

It must be observed here that the myth of the Templars did not only serve an ambiguously anti-Catholic, Protestant movement. There was also a strong element of anti-Semitism in the Templar myth, which shows up especially in the philosophy of Liebenfels. This racism appears in Guenon too. I need to digress for a minute and discuss this at some length. Guenon says that Jews, such as Freud, Einstein and Bergson, who are "detached from their tradition" carry a "maleficent and dissolving aspect". ⁸²³ This is vile racism, of course. Thank goodness Einstein was "detached from his tradition". His science would have been very uninteresting otherwise. Freud is particularly hated by Guenon, who sees Freud as an agent of the devil. He implies that modern psychology and psychologists are openings to a hidden satanic conspiracy against Traditional religions. ⁸²⁴ Freud was no doubt wrong about various things, but there is nothing "satanic" about him. He put too much credence in literary and mythological stories such as Oedipus and Moses, perhaps. However, he opened psychology to scientific study and that was very important. However, Einstein was perhaps the most important scientist of the 20th century. Bergson has always seemed a rather harmless and gentle philosopher to me. However, I have not studied him enough to say much about him.

The notion that there is a normative, orthodox "tradition" is fiction. That is merely a power play, an attempt to force correct beliefs approved

⁸²³ Guenon, Rene. The Reign of Quantity Lahore Pakistan. Lord Northbourne. 1953 pg. 355.
footnote 34

⁸²⁴ It has been suggested that earlier editions of Guenon's writings were edited after World war 2 to remove racist comments. I have not checked this, but someone ought to.

of by a commissar class of priests, mullahs or Rabbis. Noam Chomsky is Jew “detached from his tradition“. Thank goodness. Chomsky is perhaps the most insightful political writer of our age, even if his linguistics is questionable.. He also has done a lot to demystify language and open it to scientific inquiry, even if scientifically he has failed in some ways. Guenon’s racist diatribe against Jews is reprehensible“

Guenon’s followers continue this racism. For instance, one of them, Denis Constaes⁸²⁵, a Belgian mathematician and Mason, contributed to a paper trying to justify scientific racism, Constaes supports ideas that resemble the famous Bell Curve thesis, a discredited idea from a decade ago which erroneously tried to prove poor blacks are inferior to white people when really the tests are more or less rigged. ⁸²⁶ It has long been shown that IQ tests are not accurate because they are constructed by those who have class interests to serve. Also, the socioeconomic level and upbringing environment in which those who take the test predict outcomes. There is no objective test that shows intrinsic intelligence. The virtual caste system that has existed in America due to white racism is a major factor in whites out scoring blacks in IQ tests. In other areas of the world other environmental factors are evident. Humans migrated out of Africa only about 70’000 years ago and that is unlikely enough time to

⁸²⁵ See footnote

⁸²⁶ see this essay by Denis Constaes Christopher R. Brand
<http://bussorah.tripod.com/nyborg.html>

The research on IQ and race by Arthur Jensen, William Shockley, Herrnstein and Murray (The Bell Curve) and others have not found any significant correlations between race and intelligence. One of the authors of the Bell Curve was the far right American Enterprise Institute political scientist Charles Murray. This Institute is a right wing corporate think tank. These authors have found correlations between race and IQ, and they strain mightily to resurrect the old white racism, without real success. They fail because IQ tests have been largely discredited. For a good antidote to this nonsense read any of the excellent attacks against Bell Curve. There are many. See also Stephen Jay Gould’s the Mismeasure of Man. The later editions also question the Bell Curve thesis. See also Richard Lewtonin

effect intelligence in any genetically significant way. The essay of Brand and Constales is a rather repulsive attempt to resurrect Platonist ideas of eugenic superiority and tries to argue against equalitarianism and promote race differences between whites and other races. Brand and Constales try to rehabilitate the “high-born and personally courageous Plato” and make his nearly Nazi-like caste elitism more palatable. ⁸²⁷ Notice the elitist phrase “high born”. They argue that those who like social fairness and egalitarianism should have more “contact with low-IQ people... in the slums of Liverpool” and elsewhere an “thereby realize the error of their fair and compassionate ways” This is just the usual racism and class elitism that one expects from reactionaries. Despising the poor is often embraced by those who embrace the very values that keep the poor as they are. Christ’s rather repulsive complacency and hypocrisy, when he says, the “poor we always have with us”, as if a Christian can’t be bothered with helping the poor. ⁸²⁸

There are racist and anti-Semitic elements in Schuon too. Schuon writes that the “incomprehension of the Jews [cannot] excuse the iniquity of their proceedings against Christ” and he connects this idea of Jewish blood-guilt to the persecution of the Templars by the Catholics. In other words, just as the Jews killed Christ, the Catholics killed the Templars: and thus Schuon connects anti-Semitism to anti-Catholic sentiments, using both anathemas to justify his own ‘higher’ perspective of universalism. Schuon paints, himself, falsely, as a martyr to the Traditionalist cult of the esoteric mysteries. He is like Christ and like the Templars and the Blood Guilt belongs to the modern world. The modernists, democrats and relativists are the Jews, as it were, who must be destroyed for their incomprehension or Schuon’s transcendent

⁸²⁷ see chapter “Is Traditionalism a form of Totalism?” above for more on Plato

⁸²⁸ Elsewhere in the Gospel Christ says to help the poor, showing once again that the Gospels are inconsistent and probably fictions written by different people at different times, or later edited by the early Church for political reasons.

message. God will destroy the modern world, Guenon and Schuon tirelessly repeat, and they will triumph in the end. God will revenge them. The new age will dawn and they will be the prophets of a new heaven and a new earth. "Vincit Omnia Veritas", Guenon and Schuon like to quote this sentence—'truth will prevail', by which they mean, not your truth or my truth but the narrow little backwards , anti- science truth of their esoteric religions. What they mean is the their delusional lies will prevail. Their delusions will prevail and destroy the profane and those ignorant and uncomprehending of their transcendent status.

Schuon goes on to say that the destruction of the Templars "had grave consequences for Western Christianity". No, it didn't. It merely showed a fanaticism on the part of this religion which goes back to its beginning in Augustine and his murder of the Donatists. Christians would later murder Indians and then Jews and homosexuals. There is nothing new in the treatment the Templars got. It is business as usual. Schuon is here imitating Guenon and like Guenon has no real understanding of the history. It scarcely matters that the actual history of the Templars nowhere appears in the thought of Guenon and Schuon. Historical truth does not concern them. The myth serves their need to sound *like* they are on the righteous side of truth—appearances are everything for them. The actual truth does not interest them; it is rhetorical truth, the pose and theatre of truth that matters to them.

With Guenon and Schuon the sound of truth must always be maintained, the evidence and actualities does not matter. The important thing is to refer all matters to the unproved mystery of "esoterism" -- a mystery with no content at all and thus a mystery which cannot be questioned, only further mystified. Based on this false mystification of an unseen, unverified, unverifiable traditional "Truth" Guenon and Schuon erect the fantasy that the world has fallen away from this fabricated mystery. Schuon claims that the destruction of the Templars led to the split between Catholic and Protestant and thus to Guenonian fantasy

that the modern world is the result of “deviation” and “subversion” and of a “luciferian” origin. The Traditionalists believe, wrongly of course, that a terrible downward spiral in history begins after the fall of the Templars in 1313 and escalates with the rise of ‘secularism’ in the 15th century. Secularism is a misnomer of course. There is no “secularism”, there is only the delusional nature of religion and its concept of the permanent nirvana and eternity, which is the real ‘deviation’. What arose in the 15th century was reality. The secular is alone real. What was dying was the illusory and fictional nature of the religious world that Christianity created.

Actually, an upward spiral begins after 1313. The superstitious delusions of the Dark Ages were abandoned. The corruption of the Church became increasingly obvious, based as it was on the closed dogmas of the priests and the moneyed interests of the aristocracy. The revolt against religion was the revolt against mythic lies and unjust inherited powers. The world is much better without the ignorance of religion ruling it.

In other words, the Templar myth is a typical product of the ahistoricism or the traditionalists. They create a bogus history based on false assumptions. Schuon writes elsewhere, for instance, that that the “Renaissance was not a time following another time but an act of murder”. ⁸²⁹ This ridiculous sentence is uttered with a straight face. The Renaissance was a wonderful time. One need only read Leonardo Da Vinci’s incredible notebooks to see why. Leonardo is full of life and insight into actual studies of the real world. He has not murdered anyone, he is a man of science and peace, a vegetarian who wants to fly like a birds and understand seashells and the movement of water. Schuon had nothing of this freshness and curiosity about him. He was a posed and pretentious man who rarely ever smiled. He was stuck in

⁸²⁹ Schuon, Frithjof. "Usurpations of Religious Feeling" cited above.

religious ideas as a bigot and ideologue. Schuon writes of the Renaissance as he does because pet theocratic ideology is being put down, as it should be. He falsely imagines that the world before the Renaissance was some blissful kingdom of god where the Templars were dutiful men of holiness and generosity. In fact, the Templars, such as Jacques de Molay, whom Guenon admired, ⁸³⁰ were hardly innocent martyrs. They were mercenary killers, banker capitalists who killed for god and profited from blood.

This does not mean that the vicious killing off of the Templars by means of forced confessions and torture was a good thing. On the contrary. Both the Church and the Templars were “theofascists” according to the definitions I supply in these books. But the history of the Templars is very different than the mythic nonsense promoted by Guenon and the Nazis. The tyrannical devotion to hierarchy that characterizes the Middle Ages was horrendously unjust and killed innocent people and kept them in abject poverty. Darwin is right to compare religious devotion to a dog's love of its Master. But a dog gets more out of it usually, than a human does, as gods really give nothing, whereas dog owners are often very generous.

The Traditionalists express a desire to return to this abject misery of the middle ages. They want to return to the days when priests like Innocent the III could kill whoever they wanted and misery and forced labor was rife among the lower castes. Guenon and Schuon twist history into a parody. Guenon and Schuon see modernism arising as a result of

⁸³⁰ “admired” is probably not the right word. Guenon claimed to have a series of psychic communications through the “automatic writing” with the “shadows” of: Jacques de Molay (the last ‘Grand Master’ of the Templars, (burned in 1314), Cagliostro, Frederick II and the founder of the Illuminati of Bavaria Weishaupt, According to Zoccatelli “all these “shadows” ordered the (re)foundation of an Order of the Temple that started to work with a program of 45 lessons already characterized by some typical themes of later “Guenonism”, together with more curious ideas about the origin of the yellow race from men “coming from the air (planet Venus)”. All this is lunacy and charlatanism, of course. Guenon would continue to ‘channel’ similar nonsense in other ways for the rest of his life, claiming ultimately to be a sort of prophet. In fact he was merely an adept charlatan, brilliant at duping his followers.

an anti-traditional conspiracy because they want to paint themselves as victims and try to gain sympathy for a return to tyranny and unjust caste inequality. But the fact is that is Guenon and Schuon who are—or rather – wished to be—tyrants of this kind, just as the Nazis became tyrants following a similar ideological path.

The beauty of myths, for those who exploit them, is that they are adaptable to contradictory purposes. The Bible, Koran and other religious texts are expressly written to be ambiguous. It seems likely the Templar myth was used by the Nazis because they needed a myth that would justify their campaign of revenge and conquest against the rest of Europe. It fulfilled the need to get back at Europe for the punishing Treaty of Versailles that hurt the Germans for what they did during World War 1. The Templar myth allowed the Germans feel righteous and justified in killing people. The Germans saw themselves as having been harmed by the people of the southern Europe, just as the Templars had been..

The Teutonic Knights or Templar myth was a myth of ‘jihad’ or ‘holy war’. Guenon used it as an excuse to declare holy war too. But not merely just to conquer Europe and get revenge for the hardship Germany suffered under the treaty of Versailles. Guenon and Schuon created theofascism and identified with the Templar myth because they wanted to get revenge against the entire modern world for creating the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, both of which they hated.

Thus Guenon tried to universalize the Templar myth for a more grandiose and ultimately insane purpose, whereas the Nazis used it much more specifically as a political tool, even an advertising tool. Guenon’s use of the Templar mythology ends in his creating the truly demented system of conspiratorial thought used in Reign of Quantity and the Signs of the Times, where Guenon declares holy war against the entire world. When I read this book over 20 years ago for the first time, I went into a deep depression. The reason was not clear to me at the time.

But now I see why. It is a truly insane book, where Guenon's mathematical use of reason is completely occluded, or rather saturated, by a mad thesis that the author never escaped from. Had this book been fiction it would have been brilliant, but it is not fiction. It is the work of a man gone logically and mathematically mad with paranoid delusions so deep he thinks they are real. It is ultimately a sad book because only a century of such horrors as created Auschwitz could have created such a dementedly rational text, which falls into the flames of its own unreason. It shows Guenon to be a sort of mythic serial killer, an assassin of human rights and care for nature. Reign of Quantity is the Bible of Spiritual Fascism just as Hitler's Mein Kampf was the Bible of ordinary fascism.

The use of the mythology of the Templars drops out of Traditionalists discourse after Guenon dies. I suspect it also dies out because it was a fascist mythology and after World War II such mythology no longer had the charm it once had. The Traditionalists no longer wanted to be identified with a myth that so closely allied to the Nazis. In any case, one reason for the Templar myth was to declare holy war against Modernism. After 1950 the Templar rhetoric drops off, but the militant hatred of the modern world continues under new names.

I showed in this section here how Guenon and not Evola was the origin of Traditionalism's rather close, if ambiguous, relation to fascism. I also showed how Blavatsky and Liebenfels, who were both influences on the Nazis, developed systems of mystical thought not too different from Guenon. Lastly I showed how the Templar myth, which was important to the Nazis also was important to the traditionalists. The various groups that picked up the Templar myth used it to claim martyr status. They all wanted a myth that would ensnare followers in mythic magnifications of themselves.

In a later essay in this book I will show the absurdity of Guenon's most important book the Reign of Quantity, arguably the most important

book of the traditionalists. In the next essay I will discuss the traditionalist will to power and how they used myths to glorify cruelty.

In anticipation of this, it might be useful to look at Jose Clemente Orozco's great painting from Dartmouth college. In this work he shows Christ has cut down his own cross-and thus ended to very reason for the symbol and the religion, and the Buddha is thrown over into the rubble of guns and tanks and religion has finally come to an end. Men are just men, and in the end it is just ourselves and the earth we live on, myths were just stories, not reality. In the end all that matters is the desire to be ourselves and live as best we can with others on this earth.



11.

b. Traditionalist Executioners: De Maistre, Krishna, Schuon, Guenon and al Khidir

"Those who can make you believe absurdities can make you commit atrocities."--- Voltaire

Man loves his neighbor as himself and slits his throat over a point in theology.---- Mark Twain

Human and nature's rights are necessary to stem harm done to human and nature. Bertrand Russell notes in a marvelous essay called an "Outline of Intellectual Rubbish", that "the myth making faculty is often allied with cruelty".⁸³¹ To understand this requires understanding Darwinian natural history. We are evolved from the same line as Chimpanzees, Bonobos and Gorillas. Male Chimps are very violent beings who punish males who threaten their territory, whereas Bonobos are much less so and tend to sue sex as a social glue and let females rule a more peaceable life. The part of humans that is more like Chimps has dominated too much of history and human rights ideas are much more like Bonobo behavior. Violence has been written into religion as a way of sustaining and propagating violent and possessive motives. Human rights violations often attend religious and metaphysical systems, which are primarily about power. Christianity, Hinduism, Taoism, Zen and other religions are merely more elaborate versions of older systems of

⁸³¹ There is an increasing effort to make mythology seem merely harmless "narratives" or 'sacred stories' that are told to give a people an identity. This comes partly from Jung and Campbell and partly comes from Post-modernist identity politics that tries to whitewash religion and myth. Myths certainly had this purpose as in the absurd ideology of the Jews as the "Chosen people" or the equally absurd notion Christians are better than others because they are "saved" or that Brahmins are a superior caste. But there is little harmless in mythic fictions, be they American 'manifest destiny', Muhammad's polygamous misogyny or the Hindu myths which support the idea of Caste and Karma. Myths organize social networks into a unity, but this is often dangerous as they also organize social cruelty and war. The evolutionary function of mythologies is still not accounted for

killing justified by male dominance and socialized ideologies that justify the killing. The Mayans, Zulus, Yanomono, Tuareg, Kirghiz, Sioux, !Kung, and on back in time to the tribes of the early and later Paleolithic all show the same pattern of killing and religion, language and demonization of the outsiders.⁸³² It is merely the brutality of relatives of Chimp warfare now become Homo Sapiens, which adds language to the brutality.

Where there is power ideologies there are harms. This is certainly true in say, Dante, who Guenon loved. Like Dante, Guenon's ideas are inspired partly by Dante's metaphysical love of cruelty and justification for mass atrocity. Indeed, Dante Divine Comedy is a prefiguration of atrocities against Native American or Auschwitz. In this chapter I will outline a specific case of the relation of metaphysical and mythic fantasy to cruelty. I will use Guenon as a typical example of such delusions.

I have traced the ideas of Guenon through Romanticism and its relationship to fascism. I have shown how Totalism is an intrinsic part of the "esoteric" imagination. I have also shown that theofascism is not ordinary fascism as well as shown the relation of Guenon's far-right ideology to other far-right groups and individuals from T.S. Eliot to Mircea Eliade, Action Francaise, Blavatsky, Heidegger and the Templars. Furthermore, I have shown how all the major religions are based on fictions and delusions of various kinds. It is clear that the reactionary and far-right ideologues of the 19th century produced both fascism and theofascist traditionalism. I have shown that traditionalism shares much with fascism while it 'transcends' it and is even more conservative and backward than fascism. It is an enabling mechanism for unjust totalitarian systems, corporations and the unequal distribution for wealth.

Guenon's drive to have an elite vision, higher than anyone else, of

⁸³² See Nicholas Wade's Before the Dawn for more on this.

utmost transcendent knowledge, results in a need for mythic images which Guenon can use to exalt himself and his mission. He does this by means of fictions and absurdities, such as his cult of orthodoxy and initiation, as well as fancies, such as the idea of the Anti-Christ and the counter-initiation. He was a paranoid man who needed to be the highest of the high, the supreme of the spiritual, the superman of all the religions. Delusional magnification is intrinsic to his thinking on metaphysics. This need of spiritual, science-fiction like dreams of a world where he is in total control of all the elements seems to have followed Guenon throughout his life. Metaphysic is his dream world and his conceit and in the passions of his inner self he constructs a world that never was, and implicit in it is violence toward the actual world that has always been.

His earliest literary attempt, I was told by one of his followers, was a novel about Satan, no less a fictional character than his idea of god.. His early poems are about Satan too. He wanted to reintegrate Satan into God.⁸³³ Guenon's later work is really a science fiction novel based on theofascism and religious fantasies, as well as the con-man tactics of Encausse, the New Order of the Temple and the Bhagavad Gita, a book that advances the thesis of cruelty and inequality in the name of religion as its core value.

⁸³³ In his early poem to Satan Guenon imagines Satan will become part of god again: Guenon's poem ends with these lines:

“and shall you always have to while in the Abyss the nights and the days?
No! it is not possible, and your fate must still some day touch the heart of supreme
Goodness!
Do not despair: a day will come at last
When, after so long time, your torment will cease, And then, freed of your dark realm,
You shall contemplate the clarity of the Pleroma!.....Long ago the knights Templar
called you "Our Father"; Why that? I don't know! And, after all, what does it matter To
me who am nothing, lost in the great All?”

In other words Guenon reincorporates evil into the “all” in a very ‘gnostic’ sort of maneuver recalling Carl Jung or Hindu thinking.

In the 1920's Guenon rejected Theosophy, after having internalized most of its teachings, and then he tried to embrace Vedanta. He became enamored of Catholic Fascism, but withdrew after the furor around Maurras and Action Francaise scared him. After that and toyed with Masonry and tried to reform it ---but that was not enough either--- just as his theatrical and mythic identification with Jacques de Molay and the Templars, as well as his interest in Action Francaise were not enough. He rejects all that he gets involved in. He is after the golden ring of supremacy and power. Even Islam is more or less extraneous, though he plays the part of a Muslim for some years. The Ultimate Religion and a delusional dream of Metaphysical Supremacy become his goal. He wished to be the great magus of all time, and turned all his efforts to that end.

Guenon's life is a progression towards greater and greater delusions of mythic magnitude and totalism of vision. These inflated myths correspond to a greater need for cruelty. When Guenon joined Islam about 1930, a whole new series of inflated myths and metaphoric identifications opened up for him. Islam was still existing in a backward and Medieval time warp in some areas, a fact which Guenon admired. Guenon claimed to have a special relationship with Koranic figure of Al Khidir. He writes to Ananda Coomaraswamy that:

“Your study on “Khwaja Khadir” (here, we say “Seyidna El-Khidr) is very interesting, and the assimilations you have suggested are completely correct from the symbolic viewpoint, but what I can assure you of is that in these there are quite other things than mere “legends”. I would have much to say on these matters, but it is doubtful that I will— write it down, for, in fact, this subject is one of those which touch me a little too directly... - Allow me a small rectification Al Khidr is not precisely “identified” to the Prophets Idris, Ilyas (Elijah), Girgis (Saint George) - though

naturally, in some sense, all Prophets are one: they are only considered as belonging to the same Heaven (that of the Sun).”

To understand this very inflated piece of mythic identification and paranoid self-dilation, one has to see that Guenon is identifying himself with the source of all the prophets. He is implicitly claiming to be the prophet of a super religion. If we recall that Moses is viewed by the Muslims as the legislator of his time and, in a symbolic sense, its “pole” (Qutb). Now Al Khadir is beyond Moses, he is the advisor or superior of Moses in the Koran, and is a sort of angelic figure, or heavenly messenger. In the Koranic story Moses wants to learn from Al Khadir. According to Sufi teachings, or rather Sufi mythology, since none of this is actually true--- Al Khadir is among or even the head of the “afrads”, who guarantee the transmission of the tradition in exceptional circumstances. Apparently, Guenon viewed himself and his conversion to Islam as something of an exceptional event which involved the transmission of the required spiritual influence through Al Khadir who is one of the afrads... In other words Guenon is claiming to be a sort of prophet, adopted personally by a mythic Koranic figure. Again, this mythic identification is pure fiction, and one that is so subjective no one can say it is not true, because it is so in dreamland there is no way to determine the truth or falsity of such an absurd claim.

There are no “afrads” of course. The idea of a chosen mouthpiece for a hidden god is absurd, a fairy tale. But claiming to be the voice of a mythic figure cannot be disproved, which is why it is such a useful claim. Schuon also thought that he had a special affinity with Khadir, no doubt an idea that he more or less stole from Guenon’s example. In his Memoirs Schuon claims to have met Khadir in Algeria, and Khadir said to Schuon that “with me there is no scandal” implying that Schuon “with” Khidir, and like him was ‘beyond the law’. Thus had the right to do things that others could not do because he was a prophet and lived by a

higher intrinsic morality that others could not claim. How utterly convenient for a psychopath to have a virtual God tell him anything he does is OK with the gods!!

This is a Nietzschean concept “intrinsic morality” claim to be “beyond good and evil”. This idea is adapted into Sufism by Schuon and has a curious history in his works and life. Few inside the cult know about this psychopathic maneuver. Schuon was fundamentally narcissistic and did not really care about people’s feelings or feel remorse when he hurt others.⁸³⁴ His idea of “intrinsic morality” serves this self-centered view of elitist privilege. Maude Murray, Schuon’s 3rd wife, often spoke of the central importance of this imaginary vision or visitation of Khadir to Schuon, because Schuon spoke of it so often⁸³⁵. A whole sub-theme

⁸³⁴ There is an early essay which is devoted to using the god idea to excuse morally reprehensible or bad behavior in the Eye of the Heart, an early book of Schuon. The chapter is called “Transgression and Purification” and contains jewels of sociopathic nonsense and rationalization. He claims therein to define the prophet who is a “those who are laws unto themselves” (pg 112). Schuon’s solipsist belief in his own deified state becomes an excuse to justify any wrong of crime he might commit. Schuon claims to beyond determination and thus no one can say he does wrong., since his relationship is with God alone. Many gurus use this very sort of reasoning to justify all sort of crimes and wrong doings. Indeed, this is what power does to many people. They are sure it puts them beyond the law, and if they are caught, they are sure god will absolve them if they lie and cheat to get out of trouble with the police or the law. “When the wise man says “I desire” he speaks truly but when the ordinary man says of him, He desires, he is mistaken” (Pg. 123)— so when Schuon was caught at his Primordial Gatherings, he lied and said that a man like him cannot have a passionate pleasure. The eye that sees god “is” god Schuon argues. The argument he makes here is that since he is one with god any pleasure that he has is god’s pleasure not his. It is by such perverse sophisticated arguments that Schuon justified all sorts of harmful things he did in his life.

⁸³⁵ Murray spent over 15 years as Schuon’s primary wife, in terms of time and intimacy, in the middle of the high point of his career. She knew more about him than any of the other wives. She was abandoned by him when he took a Fourth wife (who Maude introduced to him and cultured as his forth, as she was hoping to withdraw ‘from the center of things’ as she put it.) and logically, Maude no longer felt ‘married to him’.. She wasn’t in fact. Indeed, she tried to do exactly as he had done to her. She felt ‘god’ had given her a new love, just as Schuon had claimed when he “married” Maude. Schuon was a hypocrite who could not do for others what he expected them to do for him. But Schuon oppressively tried to force her compliance to his dictates and punished her horribly when she rebelled against his cruelty. She said she never loved him except as a spiritual master, not as a wife. She explained her relation to him as one of continual self-sacrifice. It was “all obligations and no rights”.. she said. She was finally driven out of the cult, shunned and ‘divorced’ from Schuon and then even memory of her was expunged, apparently. In a final letter Schuon writes to her that they know longer know her. Schuon had to have ever younger wives relative to himself. When he was 85 his last wife was in her thirties. Since I got to

throughout Schuon's writings has to do with "intrinsic morality" or the idea that certain superior, elite men are "beyond the law" and can do things that others might consider immoral. This is typical of cult leaders and CEO's of many stripes. Da Free John ⁸³⁶ thought he was beyond the law on his Island in the South Pacific and harmed many people, some of whom brought law suits against him. Bagwan Rajneesh ⁸³⁷, Warren Jeffs, David Koresh, Sun Myung Moon, Joseph Smith and many cult and religious leaders committed crimes in the belief that only god was their judge. They thought they were beyond the law. Many of them, like Schuon, ended in being prosecuted. Since such men could not do wrong even if they did wrong,, god let them do cruel or unusual things. The same idea occurs in Muhammad and in Hindu and Buddhist notions of

watch closely how Schuon treated his wives, I learned that he was far from being a role model, except in that he was a good example how not to treat women. Indeed, I am grateful to Schuon for many things. One thing I am especially grateful for is that he taught me that religion is not worth believing in. Indeed, he cleaned my house of religion entirely and made it easy for me to leave it.

⁸³⁶ Also called Adi Da and other names. A total narcissist he tends to appeal to those who of like mind. A good example of how people are fooled by this charlatan is Jeff Kripal, who writes about him that "I knew that I was reading a contemporary religious genius." Kripal fell for him hook line and sinker. Kripal writes about when he saw "Da. "I had the distinct sense that he was intending to communicate his state of consciousness directly to all present, and particularly to those who approached him one by one (including me), by the sheer force of his presence, which indeed was quite palpable." Da is a master at show and pretense and has fooled thousands. Evidently Kripal saw something of himself in him. Like Michael Murphy, Richard Price and other heroes of Kripal, Murphy was one of the founder of Esalen and has spearheaded all sorts of questionable research into the spirituality, golf and clairvoyance, drug use, telepathy and other discredited paranormal fictions. Kripal calls Murphy his guru and admires the "religion of no religion", This phrase is a clever euphemism for a pan-subjectivism that emphasizes personal delusions which would be lauded by William James. Indeed, the grandfather of Esalen is James and my critique of James in this book certainly applies to most of the bogus productions that have come out of Esalen. It amazes me that those with so little insight or ability to discriminate are teaching young people in Religious Studies departments. Such people should not be teaching in accredited schools but be teaching at Esalen or similar schools.

<http://www.kneeoflistening.com/f1-kripal.html>.

⁸³⁷ Like the Schuon cult, Rajneesh created sham marriages. The Rajneesh cult was partly run by Ma Anand Sheela, who created an assassination plot of an investigator named Charles Turner, attorney general of Oregon. The cult also tried to kill the doctor of Rajneesh. Catherine Jane Stork got three years in prison for this. They also tried to poison a local community..

guru worship and tantra. The idea of “intrinsic morality” is a natural outgrowth of the subjective, inward nature of spiritual conceit and self “transcendence”.⁸³⁸ The self-inflated nature of these men’s claim to power and “Spiritual Enlightenment” drives them to a moral insanity. This is a fairly common idea on the left and in various venues from Amsterdam to City Lights books. The idea is you can do whatever you want and are beyond the law if you are holy enough. This is highly questionable ideology of subjectivism masquerading as “crazy wisdom”. One can find this idea in recent writers too, such as Brion Gysin, William Burroughs,⁸³⁹ Peter Lamborn Wilson, Ginsberg and Trungpa⁸⁴⁰ Jack Hirschman

⁸³⁸ Tantra is a confused subject, as its western practitioners have used it for their own ends. The least that can be said is that all Tantra is sexuality used for symbolic motives, usually involving priest class who wish to make sexuality over in their own image. Hugh Urban traces the use of Tantra and Kali worship in Indian and its use as an adjunct to nationalist politics. He is right about this. But Urban appears to identify with Crowley, Foucault and other men who used sexuality for power or mystique. In actuality sex is not symbolic and the use of it as a part of a symbols system is about magnification of the self--- so all tantrism is by definition an exploit of some kind. Few who write about tantrism understand this. Urban has not grasped this and is still wrapped up in the mystical narcissism of Tantra. Urban has become rather too willing to “balance respect for religious freedom” even when that freedom protects outright lies, cults and frauds. http://www.esoteric.msu.edu/VolumeV/Unleashing_the_Beast.htm

⁸³⁹ See Michael Knight’s William Burroughs Versus the Koran for a rather superficial endorsement of this idea, he discusses the Hassan I Sabbah’s idea of Qiyamat, or the claim of being beyond the law in apocalyptic times. Schuon and Guenon claimed the same thing. This is really just a self-indulgent excuse to do whatever you were going to do anyway. But Burroughs was like Schuon in various ways, full of himself and had a selfish will to do awful things and explain it as holy. I met Eddie Woods in Amsterdam and Paris and he has much the same sort of idea about things. I do not mind people doing what they wish as long as it does not hurt others. But I found the self-destructive far left spirituality to be as absurd as the far right religious. In a different way. Religion orchestrates political motives, and often these are quite destructive. One has to look at each thing clearly, to assess its purpose and motivation.

⁸⁴⁰ A rather controversial but interesting book on this subject is Georg Feuerstein’s Holy Madness: The Shock Tactics and Radical Teachings of Crazy-Wise Adepts, Holy Fools, and Rascal Gurus, Paragon House, 1991, ISBN 1-55778-250-4; Hohm Press; Rev & Expand edition Holy Madness: Spirituality, Crazy-Wise Teachers, And Enlightenment, (June 15, 2006) ISBN 1-890772-54-2. Feuerstein was a follower of Adi Da and renounced him.

Feuerstein tries but fails, I think to justify Crazy Wisdom, or what Schuon called “intrinsic morality”. the harmful and destructive actions of Zen Masters, Adi Da, Gurdjieff, and many other charlatans and cult leaders. The fact is that the "shock tactics" of spiritual masters have no real usefulness, there is no “enlightenment” that the shocks would elicit in the followers.

really belongs in this group too, who I studied with. This idea usually carries with it a strong dose of male centered misogyny deriving from some of the French Symbolists, such as Rimbaud as well as others, from Egon Schiele to modern performance artists. The slovenly bohemian as prophet of the underclasses and their religions and superstitions. In many cases immoralism was accomplished with strong doses of drugs, absinthe or alcohol. In any case, both Guenon and Schuon, claimed a special election on the basis of their affiliation with the imaginary fairy tale of the Khidir principle. These fairy tales served their need of spiritual status and their will to power, and their claim to power made them feel 'beyond the law'..

So the question arises just who is Khadir. The popular image of him is that he is the "Green man". In the Koran, Khadir of course is the divine murderer,-- a sort of alter ego of Muhammad-- he who feels that god has created him to kill those that oppose "god's" designs. He is really a projection of the righteous sadism that is so much a part of the fiction of the Koran and Muhammad. The purpose of the Koran fiction is to justify Moslem state killing. Al Khadir is the "divine executioner", in De Maistre's perverse phrase, as we will see shortly. In the Koranic fictional story, Khidir advises Moses, to whom he is superior. Khadir goes around killing people whom god finds displeasing. He kills a boy who is supposedly going to oppress his parents, for instance.

The fiction here is that god's will is inscrutable and no one can second guess him, because even though it seems like he does evil, it is

"Enlightenment" is nothing more than smoke in mirrors. If you want to know reality study biology or science, not Zen. The Buddhists claim that "enlightenment" is "something that you attain after many, many lifetimes of spiritual practice" but then they neglected to tell you that their notion that people that live many lifetimes simply don't exist. They are imaginary inventions for the gullible and superstitious. While the mind can "transcended suffering" in minimal cases and for short times, there is no one who has transcended suffering totally as the Buddha claimed to do. But the Buddha himself is also probably a fictional characters ,as were Christ and Muhammad.

really for good in the end. This is nonsense of course, as little kids die every day whose parents are fine people. The immorality of Khidir's – and "God's" action goes beyond Boyer's notion that religion imitates people. This is a justification for execution and impersonal state violence, removed from ordinary life. It is really an excuse for Moslem injustices, which would be many. Of course this was probably written well after anyone named Muhammad actually was alive, if there was such a person, which is doubtful.

This story advocates what Robert Lifton called "killing in the name of healing" where a state or individual kills others under the guise of some moral good, be it for the thousand year Reich, God or American exceptionalism, or Muhammadean conquest. Lifton uses this phrase in his excellent The Nazi Doctors. "Killing to heal" gives those who practice it a "sense of omnipotent control over the life and deaths" of its victims. It is this "immortalizing" power, which confers on its perpetrators a nearly divine sanction. Khadir is really just a myth justifying the cruelty of the upper classes. Transcendental violence is the result of the lie of 'going beyond existence', or disparagement of this world in favor of a fictional 'other world'. Killing in the name of healing confers the delusion of immorality and omnipotence. This is obvious in hunting and religion. Indeed, as Barbara Ehrenreich says in the book Blood Rites, "war is an abstract meme, a sort of " self-replicating entity"". ⁸⁴¹ I have doubts about the validity of Meme theory, but there is no doubt that religion and war are closely allied to one another because both are predatory fictions,--- magnified, abstract lies that live on passions and group insanities, inflated by symbol systems and abstract language. Religion and politics

⁸⁴¹ Ehrenreich, Barbara, Blood Rites. Henry Holt and Co. N.Y, N.Y, 1997. Ehrenreich also observes that "Someday, perhaps, social theory will be in position to understand human culture as a medium, a primeval soup as it were---within which abstract entities like war, religion and possibly also capitalism, and other political systems, not only "live" and reproduce, but also interact." This seems an obvious truism, but as this book has shown, it is not easy to see the complex relations between these fictive entities and their complex interactions.

are symbiotic. Just as politics and religion are two sides of the same coin, religion and war are too. The testosterone that drives Chimps to war drives humans too. But human war is grossly exaggerated by cultural factors which magnify its bloodiness far beyond what chimps are capable of. Killing others with divine sanction is one of the fictions religions use to gain power. Religion uses make-believe justifications to prop up or magnify a war against nature and the world, both of which are styled as of lesser value than the imaginary transcendent. Religion is magnified by war and exaggerates its cruelty. It is this unjust and unreal power that attracted Schuon and Guenon to the Khadir image. All the religions claim this immortalizing power in varying degrees and times. This is part of the reason that one should oppose both religions and war: They are invariably based on lies and mythic fabrications.

The Koranic Al Khadir is virtually identical to De Maistre's divine executioner. Both act to enforce a hidden agenda, a system of unjust power, a morality that serves a given elite who want to preserve their power. The unjust immortalizing power of religion is precisely about this effort to claim omnipotence.

Joseph De Maistre, like Guenon and Schuon, thinks that government can only be erected on divine authority, namely, the Inquisition. De Maistre writes:

'But, since every constitution is divine in its principle, it follows, that man can do nothing in this way, unless he reposes himself upon God, whose instrument he then becomes. Now, this is a truth, to which the whole human race in a body have ever rendered the most signal testimony. Examine history, which is experimental politics, and we shall there invariably find the cradle

of nations surrounded by priests, and the Divinity constantly invoked to the aid of human weakness...” ⁸⁴²

De Maistre here enunciates very well the bigotry that martyred and prosecuted Galileo. He thinks European history is a self-serving “cradle of nations” surrounded by priests, which is true if you add that the priests were parasites on both the people and the state. The claim that that only priests can decide what is true and not true is what led to the Inquisition and the corrupt sale of Indulgences. Similar injustices occur under Muslim leaders and Tibetan or Zen monks. The rule of priests view inevitably results in terrible human rights abuses because people are subjected to unjust laws decided by non-existent gods, which means that the priests have arbitrary control, which they inevitably abuse. This abuse does not happen because of every priest, obviously, since not all priests are bad, but is a systemic problem that grows out of the very nature of religion itself. ⁸⁴³ De Maistre makes this obvious in his praise of the “divine executioner”

De Maistre writes of the “divine executioner” that:

“all greatness, all power, all subordination rest in on the executioner. He is the terror and bond of human association. Remove this mysterious agent from the world, and in an instant order yields to chaos, thrones fall, society disappears. God, has created sovereignty, has also made punishment: he has fixed on the earth upon these two poles...”

⁸⁴² <http://elkorg-projects.blogspot.com/2005/12/joseph-de-maistre-divine-origins-of.html>

This is Renaud Fabbri’ website Project René Guenon. Fabbri is a promoter and follower of the far right traditionalist agenda

⁸⁴³ This can happen in science too, when it is abused by institutions, as was shown in the Nagasaki bombing. In any case, De Maistre was the last gasp of the medieval hatred of Enlightenment, democracy and science.

De Maistre's executioner is the quintessential theofascist, a man who kills impersonally for principle, who defends hierarchy against democracy, who has no humane concern for human rights. Such a man, is, of course, the 'quintessential' theofascist.

The dreamlike myth of Khadir, De Maistre's "executioner an" the Krishna myth in the Bhagavad Gita all say the same thing". This is really the immorality of dream and myth. And the horror of the dream in then adopted as factual by social controllers. Krishna advises Arjuna to kill as part of his 'caste duty' to God. Arjuna kills partly to uphold social inequality, caste and misogyny as well as the ideology of gods that supports the Hindu system of social injustice. Himmler's use of this Krishna myth to justify the atrocities of the concentration camps is in keeping with the ideology involved. Himmler carried the Bhagavad-Gita into the camps in his pocket and watched the murders. Himmler said:

"it is the curse of greatness that it must step over dead bodies to create new life...we must create new life, we must cleanse the soil or it will never bear fruit ...[Killing people in the camps] will be a great burden for me to bear but the urge to atonement and self-defense overwhelmed me. It is the old tragic conflict between will and obligation"⁸⁴⁴

The Krishna myth was serviceable to other mythmakers and creators of horrendous atrocities. Robert Oppenheimer directed the effort that made the bomb murdered 200,000 people in Hiroshima in 1945 and he justified this on the basis if the Bhagavad-Gita. Oppenheimer's embrace of the atom bomb and identification of Krishna's god like power made him sick. Dreams and reality are not the same thing, and once dreams

⁸⁴⁴ Peter Padfield Himmler biography pg ?

and myths are applied to real people, blood starts pouring on the ground. The Krishna like identification allied him with the injustice of the imperial U.S. state, which acted like Himmler in the camps in its murderous campaign against the Japanese. The Gita echoes Oppenheimer and the immoral Khidir when it says

He whose state of mind is not egoistic, Whose intelligence is not befouled,
Even though he slays these people,
Does not slay, and is not bound [by his actions]. (XVIII, 17)

This is absurd, of course. Murder with disinterestness is still murder. Oppenheimer would later come to deeply regret this and be haunted. Perhaps he came to see that the Gita is the horrible, bloodthirsty, caste obsessed book that it is. Perhaps not⁸⁴⁵ In any case, the excusing of evil deeds in the name of high abstract ideology is common. Moslem terrorists, Stalin, Mao and Christian presidents have justified killing their enemies for similar reasons, while not using the Krishna myth to justify it. But the rationale is the same. Horrible killing is done in the name of a make believe abstract ideology. In Heidegger's biography for instance, Heidegger says of the Jews murdered in the camps that

⁸⁴⁵ "There were other factors in his assuming the martyr's role later in life, such as his persecution by the political hysteria of the McCarthy era, as well as his ambiguity towards the Hydrogen Bomb. But it is significant that in his trial half the accusations against him were about his alleged involvement with Communism and half were about his ambiguous support of the H bomb.³⁵² In the circles that Oppenheimer traveled in after World War II, loyalty to the National Security State and to the Defense establishment became a test of Loyalty to the Manifest Destiny of the United States. To question the morality of Hiroshima or of the H bomb amounted to treason or heresy against the growing quasi-religion of imperial American supremacy." Go to: <http://www.naturesrights.com/Knowledge%20doc%20PDF.pdf> look up Oppenheimer in the search bar

"Hundreds of thousands die en masse. Do they die? They perish. They are put down. Do they die? They become supply pieces for stock in the fabrication of corpses. Do they die? They are liquidated unnoticed in death camps."⁸⁴⁶

In other words--- since Heidegger was a Nazi and a Holocaust denier--- the death of the Jews in the camps is not really death for him,--- it was people merely being “liquidated” like so much useless merchandise. They were not people at all so they were not murdered. This is the mentality of Khidir and Krishna, Schuon and De Maistre. Killing is sanctioned by ideology and the victims mean nothing. It is this brutal “doubling or splitting off of self” into two schizophrenic pieces that Guenon identifies himself with, ---the killer who thinks he does good for a cruel god. These terms splitting of self and doubling are Lifton’s terms.

Theofascism is about killing or oppressing others in accord with superstitious principles derived from supposedly ‘sacred’ texts. These texts are really mechanisms in a system of totalization, using false notions of immortality to privilege some groups over others. These systems rely on individuals identifying themselves with magnifying abstractions. The magnification results in inflated selves and transcendent fictions that justify atrocities. The idea behind Khidir and Krishna is simple. Killing and injustices are justified by recourse to abstract fictions. Abstract essentializations are essential to religions and depend on a misuse of language. Mythical justifications for murder serve the power grab of jihadists, caste defenders, Christians, warriors, witch hunters, crusaders or the Inquisition. God, the state of the fictional corporation is held to be the supreme exemplar of legitimate knowledge and deviants, dissenters or those who oppose the system and its

⁸⁴⁶ Faye, Emmanuel. Heidegger: The Introduction of Nazism into Philosophy Pg 305

representatives may be killed with impunity.

Obviously none of these legitimizations of murder and atrocity are justified, since there is no actual Khidir, Krishna, Muhammad. Jesus or metaphysical principle or god that justifies brutality and murder in the name of the priesthood, the cult leader or the president of a country or the CEO. Khidir and Krishna are merely symbolic images that Guenon and Schuon used in an effort to accord themselves the right to be tyrants or to be “Lords of the World”. Indeed, many CEO’s in various studies have been shown to be not unlike psychopaths in their behavior. Killing or violating rights, for God, the state or the CEO is little different. Jesus Muhammad and corporate CEO have a lot in common. Myths interact with real people in order to give a patina of phony legitimacy to the mythic bid for power. Deconstructing this means to take apart the myth and the men and women involved and look at what is really being said.

Therefore what is involved the Khidir myth is a mythical legitimizations of a reactionary or fascist impulse to aggression, that is, the will to seek higher power and knowledge through the destruction of another people, religious groups or group of individuals. Transcendent ideologies enter into justify this aggression, indeed, it appears that these ideologies were tailor made for this purpose. It is perhaps their primary reason for being. Guenon and Schuon are transcendentalist fascists in this sense, hence the term “Theofascism”. They use pre-existing Transcendent ideologies to justify similar systems of abuse and atrocity. Killing for god really means killing of the people who won the god, since there is no god in fact.

Evolution probably did not favor the growth of the ideologies, they are mere outgrowth of human genetic capacities that are neutral in themselves but which have produced some pretty awful cultural manifestations. But evolution has not yet exactly hindered the growth of these counterproductive mechanisms either. Of course, ideologies are threatening to human and non-human animal survival. Metaphysical

hatred of reality results in cruelty. Gods justify infinite stealing from nature and not giving back and infinite will to power, but in the end this makes human kind destroy their own environment and kill off the species that might have sustained them. Domination of nature is not good for humans, indeed, a human centered view of the world is itself delusional.

Religions are irrational systems that justify killing in the name of abstract ideas. In the original version of his book, "The Eye of the Heart" Schuon justifies the idea the transcendental Divine Executioner as well as the practice of bloodletting and human sacrifice done against the victims will---. He justifies this as follows:

“ Concerning human sacrifice, One has the right to ask the following question: of what right may a sacrificer immolate an individual against the latter’s will”. [Schuon replies to his own question that one may perform human sacrifice on the grounds that] "the sacrificer does not act as an individual but as the instrument of a collectivity, which, being the totality, clearly has certain rights over part of itself".⁸⁴⁷

Totalism is just this system of injustice brought about because of arbitrary privilege of a given group, lording over those considered lesser beings. Actually this is nonsense, what matters in evolution is what the individual does. The group only matters insofar as it insure that individual go on to mate and have children and the children are protected to mate themselves. Schuon says that the sacrifice must be "approved, therefore demanded, by God". He assumes God exists, when really it is priests that rule by virtue of this fiction. Priests claim exclusive access to a non-existent god. Schuon is referring to cases like

⁸⁴⁷ (The Eye of the Heart, unpublished English Translation by Gerald Palmer, p. 135)

Abraham who wants to murder his son at god's bidding. The Abraham myth is a case of child abuse of course; both god and Abraham act as abusers of the poor child Isaac. Isaac is nearly killed by his father's ridiculous adherence to a fictional god who likes to abuse children. However, Schuon did not mind abusing children himself, also in the name of fictions about his own transcend godlike status. Schuon felt underestimated by everyone because he was sure he was a god and anyone who criticized him must be from the devil. Schuon's life and books are arranged in a series of poses where everything Schuon thought or said is arranged to appear godlike. Evolution goes much better if parents are good to their kids, not abusive.

In the case of the Aztecs, killing young people was routine, ripping their beating heart out, against their will. Schuon is less approving of this particular form of bloody sacrifice, but not because it is morally wrong or a violent betrayal of human rights--- that does not interest him at all—He questions Aztec sacrifice only because it is directed to a “psychic entity created and sustained by collective adoration.”⁸⁴⁸ Gods are precisely psychological entities “created and sustained by collective adoration”. He has no objection to killing the young for god, but I must be the right kind of god. Schuon splits hairs when there is no difference between different kind of gods since all gods are make believe, Zeus, Quetzalcoatl, Jesus, Odin or Buddha are all more or less the same sort of fiction. Schuon does approve of the Aztec killings but is confused about what the Aztecs were doing. There is no real difference between the Christian Crucifixion, Moslem murders for Allah--- which Schuon admired--- and the Aztec gods devouring the beating hearts of the youths killed by priests. ⁸⁴⁹

⁸⁴⁸ Ibid pg 137

⁸⁴⁹ The cruelty of the Aztecs was such that they alienated most of the tribes around them and made it easy of the Spanish under Cortez, to invade Tenochtitlan or Mexico City with a huge contingent of assisting fighters from nearby tribes. Cortez was a monster himself, and horrendous

For Schuon it is all right to kill for the god-idea, the state or any religion, provided these are all “legitimate” religious bodies. “Legitimate” authorities are those whose lies are so old they have been forgotten and accepted as truth. In short, murder for religion is fine for Schuon, as long as it is murder for the right *kind* of religion, the kind Schuon approves of. This again shows that gods are essentially political entities, embodiments of correct thinking by a ruling class imposed on those who do not fit the “legitimate” criteria.

This is clear also in ancient Egypt , a theocratic and elitist culture if ever there was one. The development of the Pharaoh ideology was a slow one and one that is made too much of by historians. It appears in fact that the Pharaohs got their power largely by murdering those who did not quite conform and impose their hierarchy by force. This is clear in the earliest art of the Pharaohs, in the First Dynasties. The famous Palette of Narmer, shows the king grabbing on to a man’s hair and about to smash in his skull in with a rock club, called a Mace.

outcome was partly his doing. Hundreds of thousands died. But the fault was not just in Cortez but also in the Aztec leaders themselves.



Palette of Narmer, Egypt, 3100 BCE

This is one of the founding document of the Egyptian empire. The use of the Mace was the preferred mode of killing and thousands upon thousands of such skulls have been found in Egypt, testament to the brutality of Egyptian power and the relation of their idea of transcendent gods that required such cruelty to keep up the delusions.⁸⁵⁰ Indeed, the Pharaoh is really defined by his murderous powers, namely the ability to crush skulls. This is shown on the back of the Palette where ten men have their heads severed off, showing again, the excess of the power of the Pharaoh, based on creating fear. Those who try to say that the major religions are not about killing and violence, or that religions are somehow pure things that are corrupted by outside elements, have not read the history. Egypt shows this very clearly, as the Pharaonic religion and the history is really defined, originally, by killing or the right to kill. The

⁸⁵⁰ See John Romer's book, a [History of Ancient Egypt](#) for much more on this.

pyramids likewise were primarily about coerced labor, forced to make a transcendent monument for the ego of the Pharaoh.⁸⁵¹

The idea of sacrifice is common all over the world, and involves magical thinking of a particularly destructive kind. In Gerard Ter Borch's great painting of the Flagellants, we see men beating their own backs bloody as they march in a procession in front of the Virgin Mary, who they imagine looks down from heaven approving their sacrifice. They even believed that such acts sustained the world. This sort of masochist brutality, encouraged by the Church for some centuries, was eventually outlawed. Ter Borch's work, very usual for this artist, who was a master of domestic interiors, was probably the model of Goya's painting of the Inquisition. Both are great works.

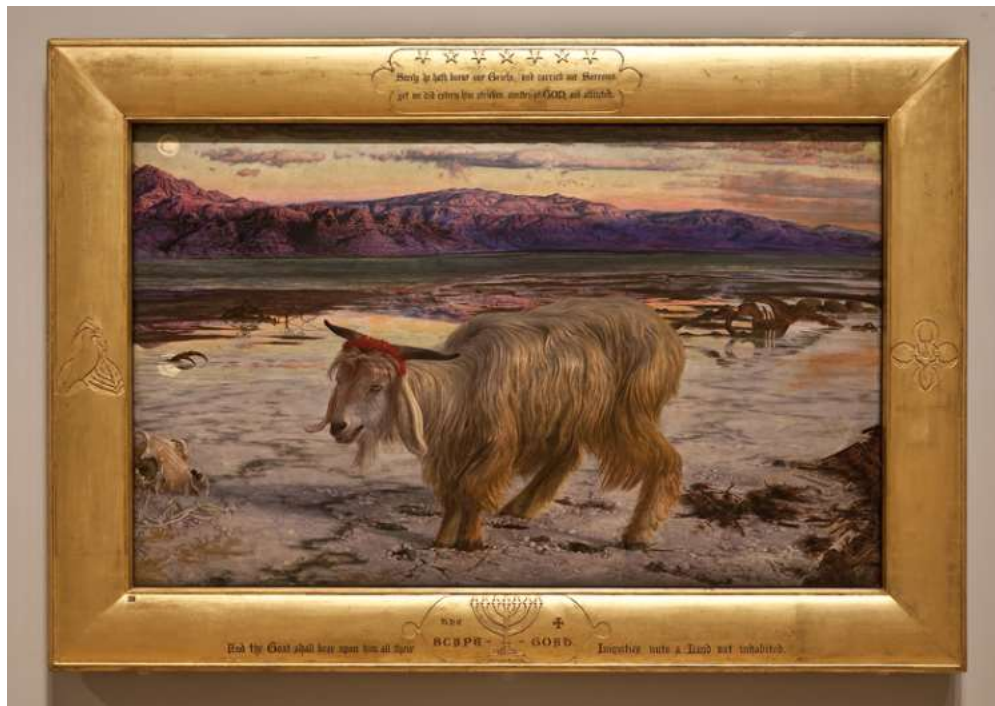
⁸⁵¹ This is disputed in recent attempts----, by the Egyptian government, hardly a disinterested party,---- to try to sanitize Egyptian history. But realistically it is hard to see such monuments being built unless the labor was coercive. The elite of ancient Egypt was enormously unfair and unjust and laid down a model for other civilizations.



Procession of Flagellants. 1638

Human sacrifice still occurs in a few places, such as the U.S. Army, or Khomeini's sending of young boys to fight his war in the 1980's, as well as any other war, where children or young men are sent to die for old men. Animal sacrifice is still very common. Metaphysical hatred of reality results in cruelty. Ideology creates killing to preserve nations, corporations or religions.

The notion that if you kill or 'scapegoat' an animal and offer it to ancestors or a non-existent god, you will get your wishes or needs fulfilled is totally illogical. Romans used to kill a bull and read the entrails for "auspicious signs". This bogus science was managed by well-paid priests. The Christ image was a substitute image for the actual bloodletting of live youth, as well as a substitute for the cannibalistic tendencies that appear to be part of primate groups, beginning with chimps but also part of human DNA.



William Homan Hunt, The Scapegoat

Moreover it is unethical and cruel to kill and torture animals in this way. Boyer implies this has to do with social networking. This is certainly true, but hardly justifies the practice. It also has to do with marginalizing and abusing nature, which is also common for religion to promote some version of human centeredness.⁸⁵² The Jesus image taps into this same idea of displaced cruelty. Christ is exploited as the “scapegoat” or the supreme expiation of human guilt, which has the intention to make anyone who does not accept his “sacrifice” as a guilty sinners, in need of missionary ‘reform’. The purpose of the scapegoat is to form social coalitions. This is yet another form of cruelty as this fictional sacrifice and is used by Christians to claim they are transcendent and thus superior to all other animal and all other people. This makes a “them versus us” mentality which creates things like holy war and Inquisitions.

⁸⁵² Gaurer's Gorilla was recently decaded on the road to extinction, killed off my bush meat hunters in West Afria and Zaire.f

Metaphysical hatred of reality results in cruelty I should also point out that Schuon also expressed reverence for the repulsive self-sacrifice and ritual disemboweling--- called “Seppuku---“encouraged by the macho culture of Zen and Shintoism⁸⁵³. Seppaku had much to do with the particular brutality of Japanese emperor worship and the Japanese fascism of World War 2.⁸⁵⁴ Schuon admired Japanese fascism precisely because of its classic set up of injustice creating transcendent power. Killing oneself for the state, or being will to sacrifice---- is in many ways the crux of Japanese theocratic power. Justifying such killing is part of traditional metaphysical discourse and doctrine of Zen and Buddhism in Japan and, in a slightly different way, in China. This is what the Inquisition was all about too. Killing for God is always really about killing for a state or king or other transcendent fiction. Sacrifice is a political tool and primarily serves elites. When animals sacrifice supplants human sacrifice, the priests and kings got to eat the murdered animals. Corporate CEOs and government and army officials now profit from the youth---mostly taken from lower classes--- who get blown up in wars. Native American boys were expected to be willing to die stealing horses from a neighboring tribe. . In Zen, Tibetan and Buddhist culture the quietude of monks has the murderous power of the emperor and Lamas and Samurai as its corollary. Schuon admired this sort of mindless risks taking that occurs in systems of power. I don’t admire this at all and think resistance to such regimes is always appropriate. Indeed, praising such resistance is always a good idea. The more people come to see dangerous and transcendent regimes as toxic, the better, Once one realizes that transcendent systems are delusional and that they require

⁸⁵³ Shinto shrines are businesses that perform mortuary rites. The rites are often made to persist for years after the person dies.

⁸⁵⁴ See footnote, The Eye of the Heart, pg 136

imposition by force of violence, it is easy to oppose them. Armies are wasteful and destructive and abuse young boys by making them killing machines.

Schuon admires too the self-torture of the Native Americans and speaks approvingly of warriors who “sacrifice one finger to the great spirit”.⁸⁵⁵ He did paintings about macho Native American leaders and warriors strutting around like peacocks or looking holy with eyes closed. There are books about this but out by the cult too. In other writings Schuon extols the virtues of the Sun Dance, which involved brutal forms of torture and masochism, closely connected both the warrior machismo and to Native American brutality against other tribes. I retain some admiration for native cultures, insofar as they were concerned with the natural world, but I do not admire tribal superstitions and the torture, brutality and rape for which they were infamous.⁸⁵⁶ It is unknown how much Christianity influenced this ritual, I suspect quite a lot, especially in the 1900’s, when the sad and desperate ghost dance also was prevalent.

Schuon says in this essay that human sacrifice exists to pay the “tithe” or tenth of oneself that one owes to god. A person dying to pay off a greedy god who does not even exist is quite a scam. Taxes in a good democracy are much preferred because there is an attempt to re distribute wealth to everyone, in National health care, say.⁸⁵⁷ But in religion the priests are the real beneficiaries of human or animal sacrifice. Schuon himself was the recipient of the “tithe” or “Zakat” from

⁸⁵⁵ Ibid. pg 132

⁸⁵⁶ Native concern with nature is often overstated. Native myths and stories are often as brutal toward nature and other species as European stories. I once tried to locate information about local animals from the Seneca tribe in New York and found they had lost most of what knowledge they might once have had. Much of what knowledge they once had was less than what a good naturalist now has. They once had practical knowledge about how to find, hunt or kill species. They burned forests and over killed animals just as white people have done. The paleontologist Ian Tattersall, who shows us in the context of the long trek of human evolution, shows that we are indeed one species of many. Native Americans were somewhat more in tune with our roots in nature than Europeans. That much can be said, but they remain humans with all the problems that that portends.

⁸⁵⁷

his followers. Schuon was a paid Shaykh who lived in high style for the really minimal or non-existent help he gave to others. I never actually saw or heard of him helping anyone. His charity was usually self-serving. I was told repeatedly in the cult that “charity should only go to those who deserve it and those who deserve it most are followers of Schuon”. When I was given things this was invariably the reason given why. He bought allegiance and loyalty, like the mafia, with strings always attached. I am not sure how much money he received but the cult was rolling in money and no amount was spared on Schuon’s personal comfort. It is a short step from this doctrine of tithes and bloody sacrifice to his later statement that three quarters of the modern world should be sacrificed or killed, since the modern world has abandoned god and is “profane”. The idea here is “think like me or die”.

Schuon’s essential ideology begins in the idea that the “prerogative of the human state is objectivity, the essential content of which is the Absolute“ There is no knowledge without objectivity of intelligence”,⁸⁵⁸ The claim to pseudo-objectivity in Schuon and De Maistre, Dugin and other wanna-be dictators is similar: their mantra does something like this: ‘ I am myself objectivity incarnate. Objectivity must conform to the my subjective and absolute ideal. Whatever does not conform must pay in suffering blood or flesh’. The notion of the “absolute” is fiction as is the notion that any real “objectivity” can be derived from a non-existent absolute. Objectivity requires science, which Schuon hated Any system that exalts and justifies an abstract system of knowledge above the value of human and natural life is suspect. Any group religion or nation that puts before the people an “idea” or a “principle” must be questioned. In systems that are run by and for ideologues, be they corporate or religious, human beings, animals and nature are mere cattle for

⁸⁵⁸ Schuon, Frithjof, Esoterism as Principle and as Way Middlesex: Perennial 1981 pg.16

slaughter⁸⁵⁹ if they get in the way of the historical inevitability of the “idea”.

Neither Guenon or Schuon actually gained much power. Thank goodness. But the potential is there in their work for others to imitate, and the Traditionalists do indeed function in a kind of “grandfathering” way to many right-wing and extremist neo-fascist groups, as one can see by fairly superficial search on the internet.⁸⁶⁰ They do not influence any movement in a total way, but influence many movements in partial ways. The ideas of these men percolate into the universities. From there they enter the culture of upper and upper middle class places in various countries around the world. A Prince in Jordan pushes their ideas, a Sheik in Saudi Arabia. In general traditionalism appeals only to the ultra-rich and mostly to those who are old money or in monarchical or fundamentalist theocratic systems. Traditionalist ideas are in far right movements in France and Russia, Romania and England and many other places.

One of the purposes of this book is to draw attention to the toxic stew of right wing movements that traditionalism has influenced or been

⁸⁵⁹ Or like the pigs that Christ put demons into and they ran off the cliff to their deaths. The story is ridiculous on its face since no one takes demons out of anything or puts them into anything—that is make believe. But the fiction of killing pigs in this way is horrendous, gratuitous and cruel, and shows Christ as a sort of speciesist monster.

⁸⁶⁰ Kevin Shepard writes about cults on Wikipedia that they tend to do a great deal of lying about their cult leader. He says “There is the major issue of cults, suspect organizations, and questionable entrepreneurs gaining a foothold in Wikipedia. Unfortunately, there are a substantial number of entries in Wikipedia which tend to glorify cult figures and entities of suspect dimensions. The only indication that gullible readers have of any drawbacks are references to controversies or criticisms, and these (when present) are sometimes too brief or ambiguous for the general reader to decode appropriately.” Moreover many wikipedia pages are actually ruled by the cults themselves who edit out information that is unflattering to their cult leader. This can be seen in Guenon or Schuon entries on Wikipedia and other websites, where no critical information is permitted and lies and myths are promoted.

influenced by. I have shown how the metaphysical hatred of reality results in cruelty. An in depth analysis of this is necessary so that this toxic system of thought and politics can be opposed. The people that promote and proselytize this far-right nonsense need to be questioned. Traditionalism and metaphysics are an insidious systems of superstition and irrationality and promotes horrendous anti-science, anti-democracy and anti-human rights values as the “Truth”. They do this partially in secret and need to be exposed more than they have been.“

c. Rene Guenon and Alexander Dugin Destroying Human Rights and Creating a “Super-Auschwitz”

:

“If you want to make good people do wicked things you will need religion”—

Stephen Weinberg

The belief in a cruel God makes a cruel Man

Tom Paine

Theofascism is an authoritarian system of governance, based on a philosophical foundation of religious and metaphysical fictions and irrational beliefs. Religions and unjust social systems use these irrational beliefs to discriminate against others and commit cruelty and injustices in the social order. Much of what is called politics is also about this. Indeed, it would appear that politics and religion are both born of the same evolutionary tree, and if one is explained by evolution the other will be too. The enlightenment idea of the Rights of Man were

meant to limit unjust governmental powers. Human rights, women's rights, animal and Nature's rights are extensions of this idea. It might be useful to define the anti-humanist theofascism of the Traditionalists a little further, and to do so in relation to a specific manifestation of traditionalist politics. So this essay is another illustration of the fact that the metaphysical hatred of reality results in cruelty. This might lead us, by the next chapter to consider humanism and science in more depth too.

The Traditionalists spend a lot of time denigrating humanism, which they hate. 'Nothing human is profound' Schuon writes, sneering down at low and 'profane' humans.⁸⁶¹ They locate the origin of humanism and thus the notion of rights, in the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, which they believe to have been organized as part of a satanic, modernist plot. In actual fact, the few gains that have been made to restrict and regulate unjust power and thereby liberate billions of people from many kinds of suffering is due to Enlightenment humanism. One needs to ask why they have this reactionary hatred of humanism, as well as a hatred of human rights, when these have done so much good for us all.

Their usual answer is a simple one: "there is no right superior to that of truth", they claim. But what "truth" is it that is superior? It turns out that the truth that is superior, for them, is not a truth at all, but a subjective projection and magnified delusion. The "truth" that religions talk about is fictional truth, concocted by priests and mullahs and

⁸⁶¹ One finds the opposite problem in someone like Chomsky, who denigrates the natural in favor of the human. He gives the gods no credence, to his credit, but then says that nature is everywhere a human "possession" (ZNet July 6, 2013), which is to misunderstand nature entirely. Whale sharks and diatoms are neither well known or understood by humans and to claim them as ours is absurd. To claim the right to cut down entire Forests is also absurd. Nature has rights and they must be codified and protected all over the world. We do not have the right to destroy the weather, create global warming or cause the extinctions of species of any kind. Biomes, animals or plants may need our protection from rapacious humans but they are not and never will be "ours".

promoted in fictional works like the Bible the Koran, the Bhagavad-Gita or the Dhamapada. The truth of these books is religio-political ‘truth’ of aristocratic hierarchies and the religious ideologies that support them. This is not truth at all, but rather a system of communal make believe, and art, theatre and literature mostly serve it and reinforce it. Even modern art serves it as I will show in an upcoming chapter.

They want “top-down”, and hate “bottom up” truth.⁸⁶² So what they really mean when they say “there is no right superior to the truth” is there is no right superior to elite rights, exclusive rights, unjust rights, the rights of tyrants, warriors, Churches, aristocrats, corporations and the few. In short, the want to makes elite men’s rights into ‘divine rights’ or what amounts to the same thing, to have laws that others must be bound to while being lawless oneself. Hypocrites, in short.

They want to return us to a society were ‘everything is in its place’, from King to priest to slave and serf. The discredited “great chain of being” again. Guenon asks in his book *Crisis of the Modern World* , what would return ‘everything to its place’. He answers that “everything would fall into place again, provided the intellectual elite were effectively constituted and its supremacy fully recognized” ⁸⁶³ The throne would be set up again for incestuous dynasties. Mutations and birth defects would again be rampant for aristocrats. Slaves and women could again be exploited at will. Witches could be burned. The poor could be turned into slaves and serfs and driven with whips. Property would again be owned only by the wealthy classes who did no work. The “sin” according to Guenon, of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, was to create democracy and rights and thus deprive priests and the “elite” of their power, estates and slaves. That is no sin. It is one of the great things of

⁸⁶² This is partly why they hate Darwin and evolution. The genetic unfolding on an organism in the fetus is a bottom up development. It is not a hierarchical “blue print” but unfolds cell by cell from the inside in a process sometimes called self-assembly. The traditionalist antipathy to biology is due to their ignorance of nature and its operations.

⁸⁶³ *Crisis of the Modern World* pg. 30

history. Thank goodness for the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, humanism and later in the future, nature's rights.. Priests could no longer sell phony "indulgences" for profit, ⁸⁶⁴ or claim that Constantine "donated" the right of the Catholic Church to exist falsely. The existence of the Catholic Church relies on the forged and false document called the Donation of Constantine. This false Church earlier wrote phony documents in which the 'prince of peace' said that I come not to bring peace on earth but a sword". Christ never existed, the frauds who wrote the gospels wanted to cover all the bases so they could do what they wanted.

The sin of democracy Guenon says is that the "superior cannot emanate from the inferior for the simple reason that the greater cannot be derived from the less". ⁸⁶⁵ This is platitudinous malarkey. There is nothing superior in Guenon's metaphysics, which is founded squarely on the subjectivism of the "Intellect" and the heritage of traditional delusions. Guenon's inflated thoughts of what is "greater" are merely megalomaniacal illusions and not a standard for anything or anyone.

Guenon writes that "the reversal of the hierarchical order occurs when the temporal authority tries to render itself independent of the spiritual authority". What is the spiritual authority? He answers: "A genuine elite...is an intellectual one". The true intellectuals are people like Guenon, Schuon and Dugin and their disciples, whose subjectivity rules their reason, devotees or power, these are men who serve passions

⁸⁶⁴ One of the primary ways of the Catholic Church making money before the 15th century was to sell indulgences which were basically rights to sin. One could buy off one's sins from the church for a certain sum. Only the rich could afford this of course, so hell was basically a place that the poor had to go, even though during this period, their lives were already a hell. The church sale of Indulgences is in some ways the origin of the modern insurance company. Insurance companies also began as ways to insure slave ships against the horrible losses they incurred due to greedy overcrowding and mistreatment of their prisoner.. Insurance companies primary purpose is to protect the wealthy from risks. The financial systems if a fundamentally unjust system that rewards the fantastically wealthy 5% of the population while punishing or depriving the other 95%.

⁸⁶⁵ Crisis, pg. 70

and pretend to have cool intellects. Other people, reasonable people who care about facts, are “lesser” and should not have equal rights, they think. So everything must be ‘subordinated’ to the irrationality of the power thirsts of the intellectual elite. Those who object to this are obviously “diabolical”, Guenon concludes in a display of insane reasoning. Guenonian claims that the very ideas of democracy and human rights were suggested by the devil as part of the conspiracy of evil that started with the Enlightenment and before. ⁸⁶⁶ We are supposed to willingly submit to rule by the intellectual clowns and puffed up charlatans.

In short, the main problem that the Traditionalists have with the modern world is it has deprived them of power and “authority”. They whine for the power that religions once had. They have a tantrum and accuse all those who deprive them of their greed for power of being ‘evil’ and satanic or “diabolical” or psychopathic, when in fact the latter is what they are. They want to destroy the modern world, deprive its members of rights and return us to the glory days of Jihad and Holy War, Hindu castes, Divine Emperors, and Inquisitorial Popes. We should go back to the good old days when spiritual people could murder their critics, kill of those who thought differently, and torture anyone into agreement.

The Traditionalist’s hatred of human rights and democracy explains Schuon’s comment that three quarters of the people in the world deserve

⁸⁶⁶ If human rights was suggested by the devil, (an obvious absurdity, since the devil is a fiction and fictions don’t suggest anything--- but let’s humor Guenon), then all praise to the devil. William Blake was right on his ironical praise of the ‘devil’ in this sense, what he was trying to say is that Christian repressiveness is a bad thing and the devil represents freedom which is a good thing so it is god that is the problem. I don’t believe in devils, gods of other superstitions. Evil doesn’t exist. There are murderous people and dark thoughts and viscous hatred, yes, but there is no supernatural agent of evil. The Traditionalists are in love with “Satan” and the devil even more than fundamentalist Christians. An interesting thesis should be written showing how the Koran, the Bible, fundamentalists and Traditionalists construct a politics based on their idea of evil and use this idea to try to control the followers and demean their critics and those who they hate.

to be killed because they are “profane”. Profane means, not like Schuon, Guenon or Dugin.



Alexander Dugin

Alexander Dugin, is a Russian follower of the ideology of Guenon and Evola. He develops the ideology of the hatred of human rights into new heights. He develops Guenon’s ideas in idiosyncratic ways. Indeed, though the traditionalists condemn individualism they are actually highly romantic individualists of a reactionary kind. Dugin then is the founder of a uniquely Russian interpretation of Guenonism, which uses the original ideas of the 20th century Traditionalists as a reactionary individualist romanticism.

Dugin addresses the implications of some of Guenon’s ideas “What is the metaphysical legitimization for aggression in traditional civilizations?” Dugin asks. The purpose of traditional aggression, Dugin writes, is the

“demonization of an adversary, examples of which are so abundant in the traditional legends, epics, and religious teachings. What

serves as an obstacle on the way of expansion of a nation, country, religion, more narrow people's community and, finally, a human; what limits the will of the latter to the totalization, to the expansion of existence, all this automatically falls under the sign of "Satan", obtains the quality of the theological evil, and consequently, the aggression becomes legitimized on the most elevated levels." ⁸⁶⁷

This is religious corruption explained in an unusually forthright way. When religious people say they want to die for their beliefs they really mean that they want to kill for them. In short, Dugin, like Schuon and Guenon wants power and conquest at any expense, regardless of who or what they harm. This is the will to power, the poison will of 'manifest destiny', the Machiavellian⁸⁶⁸ desire for power by any means necessary. Moreover, they want to demonize anyone who thinks differently than they.

In other words, demonizing others or destroying their rights to personhood, is legitimized by the will to power and "totalization". Dugin wants to achieve this power and will by Guenonian means:

"Certainly, metaphysical and ascetic practices in such case could be called the pure form of aggression. In those practices the initiated ones strove for transgressing all bounds, the maximum bringing their own "ego" to the absolute state, putting to the aggression not just some objects, but all the reality as a whole. In the way of the direct self-deification the maximum of the aggressive impulse is concentrated, for the Divine is just the cancel of bounds and limits, constituting the essence of the non-divine, immanent.

⁸⁶⁷ http://feastofhateandfear.com/archives/dugin_01.html

⁸⁶⁸ Most people don't get that Machiavelli's Prince is actually a parody or satire of those in power.

By the way, hence follows the Jewish word "Satan", literally meaning "barrier", "obstacle", that is "bound", comprehended as something negative. “

To achieve totality, one can create Auschwitz or the Inquisition, and in either case the effort is properly called ‘insane’. Dugin says, “one must plow through the barriers and breakthrough into the light”. What he wants is the Guenonian “subject” or divine self (intellect) to be “without confines” to be totalized. What a horrifically bad idea this is. This is what is toxic in romanticism. But he is right that this need of interior power imposed aggressively on the world is just what religion is about. This is one major reason religion needs to be resisted and debunked.

It gets worse, if that is possible. Dugin quotes approvingly Jean Parvulesco, a Romanian occult novelist and poet as well as a fascist writer who hated human rights. Parvulesco writes of democracy that it is “black disintegration” of “convulsing corpses” and that human rights is the “fecal vomitory discharge of hell”. This is rather surprising given that human rights means such things as the right to not be tortured: the right not to be a slave: the right to fair justice: the right to not be arbitrarily arrested: the right to seek asylum in other countries from political persecution, the right to freedom of speech, the right to seek asylum, freedom of movement and to marry whom one wishes. These rights, enunciated with others in the marvelous and important document, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, do not sound like something uttered by “convulsing corpses” or “fecal vomitory” discharges as Parvulesco and Dugin claim--- indeed, they are the goods of human life. I am sure that Thoreau, Jane Goodall and Eleanor Roosevelt would laugh out loud at such nonsense. There is no more profound and far

seeing document written in the 20th century.⁸⁶⁹ Dugin quotes Parvulesco with approval in his book the Knights Templars of the Proletariat, from which these quotes are taken (this can be found on the Arctogaia web page referenced above).

The love of violence these men desire to be done for an transcendental, political ideology is notable. Dugin and Parvulesco, invoking Guenon, imagine that a Eurasian empire would arise and destroy the entire western world. Parvulesco asks for a “super Auschwitz” in which those who love democracy and human rights, especially Americans and Western Europeans, could be murdered. This is just as dumb as Reagan or Bush calling Russia an “evil empire”. The Russian people are no less deserving of rights against their governments as Americans are. Alexander Dugin speaks about the necessity to start a guerilla war against “new Carthage”—the USA—and sees nuclear missiles as the only way to “stop the victory of the mondialist dictatorship in the world”.⁸⁷⁰ Presumably those not killed in the “super Auschwitz” Dugin would create would be killed by the nuclear weapons he would use on the innocent.⁸⁷¹

Guenon’s apocalypse is no less graphic if less directly pointed at individual peoples. Indeed, Guenon and Schuon have found their greatest exponent in Dugin. Dugin wants to kill all those who would disagree with him, and ultimately this is what Guenon and Schuon hoped for: They wanted return of their authority and the elimination of the opposition, kill off the infidels. The end of human rights is the

⁸⁶⁹ Steven Pinker shows in his “Better Angels of Our Nature” (2011) that violence has actually decreased in the last 100 years and this is due to Enlightenment values, reason, human rights and democracy.

⁸⁷⁰ Dugin loved the destruction of the World Trade Centers by airplanes in 2001 in which 3000 people died many of them janitors or secretaries and thus utterly innocent of the depredations of capitalism. Only a very bad man could endorse such murders.

⁸⁷¹ Dugin, “On Behalf of Eurasia,” *Moskovskie Novosti*, February 25, 1998; Dugin, *Konservativnaia Revolutsia*, Moscow: 1993). See also Alexander Yanov, “Krovavaya i Oslepitelnaia Sudba,” *Moskovskie Novosti*, February 1, 1998.

capstone of Traditionalist thought. This is a major reason why I have opposed it. I cannot support a system that justifies murder in the name of transcendence. Those who would have us help them destroy human rights would have us destroy ourselves, and such men are not to be trusted.

In any case, Dugin continues the work of Guenon. Guenon was a mean and spiteful reactionary: a man with delusions of grandeur who thought he was an incarnated Al Khidir, god's scourge and punisher of mankind. Of course this was just the delusion of a little Frenchman with no heart, whose intellect betrayed him with grandiose and paranoid plans of ultimate power. He is a conspiracy theorist, as is Dugin. Dugin also thinks he is god's messenger. But in fact he was the spoiled son of a Russia gone decadent since the end of the cold war. He thinks he is a Dadaist and "conservative revolutionary". But actually most of Dada was opposed to power and did not glorify power as Dugin and Guenon did. In any case, Dada cannot be taken too seriously. A lot of it was art school antics, tongue in cheek elitism or disordered protest that did not have much effect. In the end Dugin and Guenon and their followers are merely paranoid charlatans, haters of human rights, New Age Fascists, who despise the world and life. Follow them and you follow not only the Wizard of OZ, but the Grand Inquisitor.

What appealed to me about Guenon when I first read his book in 1983? He seemed to address my fear of nuclear and environmental annihilation. In fact he did not address my concerns at all, but I thought for a time that he did. I had been questioning the role of science in our culture for some time particularly atomic weapons and corporate abuses of science... I appreciated his asking the question of what good modern industry is if it destroys the earth. But I finally figured out after some

years that Guenon's understanding of what science actually is was non-existent. Nor did he have any feeling for the earth, which he saw a "lesser reality", compared to his imaginary eternal ideas and principles. I will be making some critical comments about Guenon's misunderstanding of science in this essay. But a much more thorough critical treatment of the atrocious ignorance of science by traditionalism and other irrational ideologies is needed. I will write about this later.

Traditionalism in Decay: Some Notes on Fringe Traditionalists

Religion is in decay: in fact, it is dying. It is resurgent in various places, but not as a positive force. In places like Iran or Saudi Arabia religion reasserts itself as a medieval reaction against superficial aspects of the modern world. Religion is dying and slowly its numbers will decrease. It can only be sustained by despair and bad government, and the escapism that attends corporate culture. If religion was a corpse that lives off illusions, traditionalism and "esoterism" was an attempt to revive the dead beast further and keep it going, golem like. That could not be sustained for long and the slow dying of traditionalism now looks as if has been speedy. There are a few who remain, pathetic and ineffectual, clinging like "men among the ruins" as Evola called them, clinging to their inner theofascist beliefs.

The relationship of theofascism to right wing or far right politics is

both direct and oblique. The development of Traditionalism with neo-fascist overtones after World War II is a complex matter which I have already discussed somewhat. I will indicate some of this complexity without going into all the details and explanations that would be necessary. I merely wish to indicate what developed after Guenon passed away. So what we see in all these complexities of historical evidence is that there is a tension in traditionalism between accepting and rejecting aspects of fascism that they don't like. Guenon and Evola both ally themselves with fascism and then separate from it, keeping much of what they learned of it but rejecting other parts. They wanted a reactionary system of government that was apocalyptic and reasserted the power of spiritual men. Guenon created theofascism, which resembles ordinary fascism in many ways but is not tied necessarily to nationalism, or to one religion. Guenon, Evola and Schuon created a roving spiritual fascism, a sort of 'transcendent unity of meta-fascism' that could alight anywhere. The ideal states that Lings and Schuon liked were fascist Japan under the emperor and fascist Spain under Franco.

After World War II reactionary politics becomes much more complex and includes Traditionalism as one of its modalities. Fascism morphs into a war against science and democratic socialism and an effort to resurrect dead ideologies and religions in view of sustaining wealth, class and caste differences, repressive moralities, "law and order" and the status quo of injustices. Theofascism thus becomes of sort handmaiden to right wing, globalist, corporate and repressive movements of all kinds, in many different nations.

For instance, to see how this operates in specific cases, there is a larger pattern of support, by some of the Traditionalists, of right wing regimes. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, one of Schuon's main disciples, who now claims to be his successor, was actively involved with promoting as well as working for and supporting the unjust regime of the Shah of Iran, and then the Bush administration. The Shah embodied a puppet dictatorship

in Iran, a client state set up by the U.S that was both fascist and monarchist. The Shah had a secret police organization which tortured, maimed and killed thousands from 1953-1979. Nasr was closely allied with this horrendous government even up to its final days.

As one can see in the photo below, Nasr (left) is standing near the Shah of Iran, who was more or less appointed by a corrupting U.S. government. His relation with the Shah was sycophantic. The fawning courtier seeks favor and ingratiates himself to power in a way that is repulsive and fundamentally immoral. This would occur again in later years where Nasr, father and son, both did this with the Bush administration.



Nasr seems to have transferred this political zeal from the Shah to his devotion to Schuon, after the fall of the Shah in 1979. But besides serving the Shah, Nasr also had some influence on helping the Iranian

revolution come about, since Nasr ran the Iranian academy and promoted Traditionalist ideas. The Khomeini revolution of 1979 was a Traditionalist revolution of sorts, though the traditionalists disavowed it.⁸⁷² Nasr too would end in disliking its populism. It was not aristocratic enough for him and was not allied to U.S. corporatism as had been Iran under the Shah. But he had an influence on the Khomeini.

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“ Both the Shah’s regime and the Iranian revolution resulted in violating the human rights of the Iranian people. Nasr contributed to both systems. The free floating nature of theofascism allows these kinds of multiple reactionary influences. Nasr’s theofascism allowed his ideas to be acceptable to various far right dictatorships. Over a million people were killed in the aftermath of the Iranian revolution. Nasr is not personally responsible for all these deaths, but his ideology made him an easy pawn in the game of far right dictators, and to some degree he at fault for complicity. Furthermore Nasr, who now lives in the U.S., calls himself a “shaykh” and promotes all sorts of creationist , anti-science and anti-technological nonsense in his books. It is amazing anyone would follow him. There is no "wisdom" in him that I have ever been able to see. He is a right wing fanatic and careerist con-man, who pretends to be 'Oh so Spiritual'.⁸⁷³ His followers are all duped.

It should be added, in addition, that Nasr's son, Vali Nasr, is part of a military think-tank in the U.S., and has acted as a propagandist for right-wing political advice about the middle east, often appearing on The Charlie Rose show and other venues. pushing a reactionary line of thought. He has acted to some degree as an advisor to the Bush administration, sometimes advising George Bush personally. Nasr has

⁸⁷² Schuon increasingly drifted away from Islam after 1979 and toward Native American religion. His abuse of Native religion was an act of imperialist nostalgia

⁸⁷³ Nasr showed me very clearly who he is when he called me, twice, in 1991 and insisted that I suppress evidence and cover up for Schuon so he could be Shaykh when Schuon died.

supported the Iraq war, a war that has killed somewhere between 1/2 million and a million people as well as caused 3 or four million to flee as refugees. This is the most lethal and harmful war of our time and to have advised and supported it is to have bloody hands. However, the fact that a traditionalist ideology would end up supporting huge death and displacement tolls should not surprise anyone. Theofascism is about the unjust few trying to seize power and mystify this power with esoteric religious mythology. Hossien Nasr trained his son to suck up to power and seek to advise tyrants. Nasr, briefly studied in a program headed by Henry Kissinger, at Harvard, a criminal who should have gone to jail for masterminding the killing off of Salvador Allende in Chile.⁸⁷⁴

Vali Nasr has various books out, such as Indispensable Nation and Forces of Fortune which advocates spreading U.S. style corporate imperialism into Islamic counties, whereby a rising upper class in Islamic countries will imitate the conservative capitalist business model in the US, while yet retaining their far right Moslem spirituality. He dislikes the Obama Administration and prefers the Bush and far right conservatives because he is himself a child of American Imperialism and his father is a far right creationist and anti-Darwinian who wants to return to the glory day so unjust absolutism in Iran. This effort to colonize Iran for US. Business would create an upper middle class in Islamic countries to imitate the conservative capitalist model in the US, while yet retaining their far right Moslem spirituality. What he wants is a sort of capitalist theofascism much that like promoted by George Bush in the United States. This is to bring back the Shah in a new form. The upper class in the U.S. is busy turning the U.S. itself into a third world country, while the middle class is being bankrupted in housing schemes and excessive taxes. Nasr supports the conservatives, and has even

⁸⁷⁴ Abdollah Shahbazi discusses this in his the book on Nasr. Not yet published. I only saw early versions of this book, which is not bad. Though Shahbazi is prone to conspiracy theory and that mars his point of view about Jews, freemasons, Bahai and other subjects.

worked for the Obama administration which is nominally democrat but in practice is actually republican too.. He states that in the “contest between Iran's elite factions, the world should be rooting for the clergy -- their victory will bring about the quickest end to the Islamic Republic”. This same clergy, evidently, opened the economy to private-sector activity, and erected an authoritarian theocracy run by the supreme leader. ⁸⁷⁵ Nasr is supporting Theofascism. ⁸⁷⁶

Theofascism in Vali Nasr takes on the upwardly mobile form of suburban Schuonism, derived from his father Hossein. Hossein Nasr was a good son of American imperialism. In the 1950's Iran was an American

⁸⁷⁵ “Showdown in Iran” see

http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/06/23/showdown_in_tehran

⁸⁷⁶ Hossein Nasr and men who support him had a conference in 2014 in Toronto called the RIS conference. Tariq Ramadan boycotted this and wrote that:

The problem is that some of the participants, scholars or preachers, under the guise of Sufism or in the name of avoiding partisan politics, defend highly politicized positions of support for states and dictatorships. Their silence and their inferences in the heart of the West, in Toronto or elsewhere, constitute visible support for the Gulf petro-monarchies or for despots such as al-Sissi in Egypt. This while dictators from Syria to Iraq by way of Egypt are imprisoning, torturing and killing innocents by the thousands. They cast themselves as above the conflict, while the “Sufism” they offer is highly politicized and too well adjusted to the boots of the State. But I will have none of this. When some speakers boast in public of their openness but refuse to participate in panel discussions to avoid being exposed, openness goes by the board. When the same people support dictatorial governments, coherence flies out the window. I cannot, by my presence, lend implicit approval to such positions. Tariq Ramadan

<http://mohamedghilan.com/2014/12/20/secret-history/>

Ramadan is quite right about these writers. I doubt he grasps how right he is however.

client state, a soft fascism which Nasr worked for. He was a sycophant to the Shah of Iran. The Shah was himself a quasi-fascist dictator virtually appointed by the Americans. He had worked at Harvard in the 1950's where Maude Murray and Rama Coomaraswamy were students of his and who later associated with him, as disciples of Schuon. Indeed, Nasr had inducted Maude into the cult. After the Shah failed in 1979, overthrown by Khomeini, Nasr moved again to the U.S. and wanted to Americanize Schuon's ideology and cast himself as the new Shaykh of the Mariamiyah tariqah. He waited with baited breath for Schuon to die so he could appoint himself as Shaykh.

His son Vali became a 'military advisor following his father's footsteps. Interesting juxtaposition to have a Moslem esoterist who has a son who is a military advisor. Once again this shows the close alliance of religion and politics, which in many ways are the same thing. What is amazing is that both father and son are far right religious fanatics and yet no one notices this and the son is allowed to talk as if he is an expert, whereas actually he is a pretender with a father who was a theofascist. Vali Nasr appears to laud the fact that some are bringing "religious values into the public sphere. They are challenging the constitutional boundaries that had guaranteed secular society's survival, even in the United States". He hates democracy as does his father. Vali Nasr ends up pushing the logic of his father's origins into the Bush administration and then into the Obama administration. He envisions a globalization of Islam by big business along Republican lines-- except that now the ideals of the American republican party are Islamized along Schuonian lines. He imagines a future where rich corporate Moslems will promote conservative religious values and strangle democratic movements in a system of pro-corporate controls and conservative financial profiteering. He wants to turn Iran into a neo-fascist autocracy where a capitalist Islam rules. Nasr wants to promote the global business

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⁸⁷⁷ (see Arundhati Roy's writing on recent Indian history on this point) Vali Nasr has created a sort of soft core theofascism for the post Bush era. In doing this he is clearly trying to reproduce his father's service to the corrupt Shah of Iran.

pagans associated with GRECE); and third, neo-conservatives of a “liberal” stripe (the national liberalism of the Club de l’Horloge [right wing think tank] such as the “new republican, liberal national populism,” the “popular capitalism” of the National Front, the anti-state libertarians, and the “new economists”). Clearly all of them can be distinguished in terms of their relation to economic liberalism. Counter-revolutionary Traditionalists and conservative revolutionaries include all of the Right’s anti-liberal schools and confront the many liberal neo-conservative schools.” ⁸⁷⁸

Similar things can be said about far right American political/religious culture, where there are the Neo-cons, the John Birchers, the republican party” the KKK, the Koch Brothers⁸⁷⁹, the Christian Coalition, Ralph Reed, Jerry Falwell, as well as thousands of little right wing radio talk show hosts, wacko conspiracy theorists and anti-abortion and anti-government flag fanatics. ⁸⁸⁰ These far right ideologues invariably

⁸⁷⁸ From race to culture: The new right's view of European identity. Telos, Winter93/Spring94 Issue 98-99, p99, 28p

⁸⁷⁹ Fred Koch, who helped found the John Birch Society and hated all communists and socialists, also built an oil refinery for Adolf Hitler’s Germany and others for Joseph Stalin. The sons of Fred, Charles and David, were members fo the John Birch Society and continue their father’s far right ideology. They are anti-government pro-business elitists who want to was to tear the government “out at the root.” Jane Mayer claims, I her book Dark Money. They are the very sort of people that need to be held accountable for global warming and other harms to the environment. They should be taxed to 90% of their income and heavily regulated. They are said to average 100 billion dollars annually, an disgusting sum of money. Profit sharing should be mandatory on all of the companies. Suffering from what I have been calling ‘CEO disease’, they seek to undermine environmental, health, and safety regulations , because they champion those who are guilty fo these harms. The Koch brothers are two of the biggest polluters in America and well as funders of climate change denial.

⁸⁸⁰ Rush Limbaugh is paid \$400 million through 2016, in a contract with Clear Channel Communications and its syndication subsidiary Premiere Radio Networks. They pay him about \$38 million a year for eight years. He also got a \$100 million signing bonus. In short one cannot trust a word he says. These corporations are paying him to lie and propagandize for corporations. What is amazing is that so many uneducated people think he is telling them the truth. He is a paid liar. Right wing radio supports the undermining of democratic values and convinces many in the middle class to vote against their own interests helping the rich get richer by stealing form the poor and the middle class.

support the ultra-rich and their exploitation of the middle class. In other words the ultra-right wing of the New Right, at least in Europe, and increasingly in America, has close associations with the philosophy developed by Guenon, Evola and Schuon, but they also straddle the spiritual/temporal divide and help support far right economic agendas, most of which generally support wealthy classes, bankers, far right capitalists, anti-abortion fanatics, homophobes and monarchists. Fascism and traditionalism are both far right movements, but different modalities of these movements appear in different places. A Guenonian in Italy for instance, by the name of Massimo Introvigne supports far right ideology and practice in various ways. He supports right wing Catholicism and far right political agendas in Italy. He tries to sanitize dangerous religious cults through his directorship of Cesnur. In this he resembles scientology, a cult he has defended. Scientology destroyed the very excellent cult watch dog group called Cult Awareness Network run by Cynthia Kissel. The hate group which now runs the Cult Awareness network is owned by Scientology.⁸⁸¹

There are many Traditionalists in the universities as I discussed earlier. The self-enclosed and escapist bubble that some academics are able to live in insulates them from seeing the destructive effects of the study they pursue. Schuon, Guenon, Evola and Coomaraswamy intended to appeal to the tendency of academics to consider themselves an “elite”. This elitism is built into the European system of education and harks back to the discredited medieval conceptions of the “great chain of being”, which Guenon and Schuon admired. The discredited concept of the great chain of being embodied a European conception of

⁸⁸¹ <http://www.rickross.com/reference/scientology/scien427.html> This story goes a long way to showing how a corrupt cult can lie and cheat its way through courts. Scientology is headed by David Miscavige, a man who has been shown to be a sociopathic cult leader by many former members.
<https://leavingscientology.wordpress.com/2010/07/22/portrait-of-a-sociopath/>

caste elitism and it was this latent tendency that Guenon and Schuon hoped to appeal to some latent scholasticism in modern academics. There are various academics who would love to go back to counting angels and seraphim on the heads of pins if only kings would come back and pay them to do it. A few academics themselves seem to have fallen for Guenonian appeal out of career ambition. This is largely because the Guenonian, Schuonian and Evolian philosophy made them “conservative revolutionaries”. Those academics who are traditionalist and in university are mostly “revolutionaries” of the extreme right, who stood out against their liberal counterparts in the university because of their espousal of anti-modern ideology that denied human rights, equality and democracy. Many modern academics fell for this; among them were Huston Smith“ Jean-Pierre Laurant Jean Bies, Renaud Fabbri , Jean-Louis Michon, Alan Godlas, James Cutzinger, Joseph E.B. Lumbard, Zachary Markwith, Patrick Laude, and Jean-Baptiste Aymard, Hossein Nasr, among those who were part of “the Schuon cult as well as Piero di Vona, William Chittick , H.T. Hansen, Harry Oldmeadow, , Dennis Constales, Nicolas Gómez Davila, Gwendolyn Toynton(Taunton, Australia New Zealand)), Federico Gonzales as well as many others in Canada, France and elsewhere. Such people, some unwittingly, are an advance guard for the Guenonian variety of theofascism which is a far right form of theofascist metaphysics, some are Nietzschean or Evolaists. Like all the Traditionalists, they tend, in varying degrees, to espouse belief in a notion of objectivity in the field of religious cultural (“sui generis”) studies, where in fact no such objectivity is possible. ⁸⁸² “Objectivity” for them meant that any criticism of the basic Traditionalist stance was anathema, and only apology, neutrality or advocacy for

⁸⁸² See Russell McCutcheon’s writings on the subject of those who write about religion as “insiders” and how that distorts their view of it. McCutcheon shows how Huston Smith, Eliade and others started the notion of the study of religion by those who were religious and how this betrayed basic notions of b=objective distance and disinterestedness.

Traditionalist or neo fascist ideologies was considered appropriate. Conformity to the god idea, which is a fiction if there ever was one, is the standard of objectivity, which means the discipline of religious studies is mostly devoted to delusion. Professors of this stripe do damage to young minds or write leiterary garbage which does the same thing in a different form.

The academic Traditionalists write abstruse articles about aspects of Traditionalist symbolism, Sufi drunkenness and symbolist ideology without much understanding of the negative role they play in forging reactionary political consciousness. Some academic Traditionalists, were quite willing to be “neutral” or outright deny the influence of fascism and Nazism on Guenon or Evola for instance, and some rigorously oppose those who rightly decry Guenon’s or Evola’s participation in Nazi and theofascist ideologies as ethically culpable and bankrupt. They help sustain anti-intellectualism and post-modern theofascism. ⁸⁸³

” As an example of an American Sufi in the university I consider Alan Godlas. He is not at all a fascist by any stripe. But his understanding of issues is very shallow and he supports all sorts of awful things. He is a New Age follower of Schuon, the anti-Darwinian Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Huston Smith. He is now professor in Athens,

⁸⁸³ An interesting exception to the tendency of academic Traditionalists to excuse or deny theofascism is Joscelyn Godwin. He admits that their politics is reprehensible while still trying to teach them in a ‘neutral’ manner—which is really unethical and impossible. I have doubts about how neutral he really is. Like Versluis and possibly Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, he seems to teach them with sympathy and a tone of proselytizing. He said to me for instance that “natural” spirituality has been bound to “the tyranny of religions” by the Traditionalists. The notion of “natural spirituality” appears to be just another cult. Looking at the website of one of these groups who promotes this idea it says “

To learn Natural Spirituality requires 980 hours of instruction. The One has only one price: tuition is \$50,000, which means the cost is less than \$52 an hour. . One price includes everything you need from textbooks to supplies. Only room and board is not included. (<http://naturalspirituality.org/aboutNS/WhatIS.html>)

So this is hardly an answer to the fictive spirituality and tyranny of religion. In any case, Godwin at best is a confused fence sitter, not quite willing to deny and not quite willing to affirm. I’ve met many of these fence sitters around the Guenon and Schuon camps. They help keep it going.

Georgia. He is an academic traditionalist that Russell McCutcheon calls an "insider" that is, he does not teach religion in a disinterested and objective manner, in the scientific sense. Rather he teaches it as is a 'true believer'-- a practitioner of a rather cultish form of Islam, deriving partly from Schuon and Nasr as other, more new age and Sufi sources. He is a promoter, proselytizer and apologist for Islam. His thinking is distorted by the superstitions of the "Book". Similar to Huston Smith, who used to play the Sufi guru. The man who is more "than a professor", just as Nasr pretends to be a "shaykh" in private. He was opposed the Bush Iraq war, to his credit, but that is not surprising from a Moslem who has proselytized Islam in as far away a country as Malaysia.

He was in the Schuon cult around the same time I was and we knew each other in Berkeley. He lived in a tiny room with no furniture other than a few book cases when I first met him and a year later was married and living in a sumptuous house in an expensive area of Berkeley. He visited Bloomington to see Schuon when I was there. He was quite concerned to hide his involvement in the Schuon cult and lied about and pretended he was not in the cult. He struck me as a careerist. someone who was interested in being famous and attaining a following. He also tried to stop the truth becoming known about Schuon's Primordial Gatherings, which I thought reprehensible. He didn't want any scandal to come to Sufism and insisted that I lie rather than tell the truth to the Grand Jury. Godlas did not want the truth about Schuon to come out--- so he was willing to hide things that made his religion-- and himself--- look bad. He didn't care about what was real or true but only about appearances, and how the fiction of religion might be propped up, like an academic house of notecards.

He is a Sufi new age thinker who recycles old Sufi texts without understanding much of what he parroted. For instance, he writes "Sufism, like most mystical traditions, looks at the reality behind

nature”, when really there is nothing “behind” nature of a spiritual sort. There is nothing "behind nature" except perhaps Newton's laws or natural selection and the wish of all species to live life to the fullest. But even though Godlas perhaps once had insights into the natural world, or so he claims, having studied reptiles birds and ecology, he has long since lost that, burying his love of nature behind religious fictions. Nature has nothing to do with the fictive realities Sufism has created.

Godlas seems to be unusually interested in destroying the ego- he class it “the disease of the self”, as if being a person or an animal on earth were a disease. He sees the “shariah” as the solution to this, as if this compendium of archaic laws were a solution rather than a problem. Most religions preach some sort of ego hatred, as they want to supplant self-control of the person with an ideology. One is not supposed to care about oneself but to give oneself to the power politics of the ideology, usually cloaked behind a metaphysic. This is a central effort of Sufism of course, as well” as other religious fanaticisms. "The "passing away or annihilation" (fanā) of one's individuality" as Godlas calls it, is about undermining personhood in view of union with the fictional notion of god. He is intense about this as are most believe in unprovable fictions. This is really a political move of making people submit to whatever form of power is ascendant, in this case Islam.

Consistent with Guenonian bourgeois moralism which always seems to uphold elite upper class status quo, Godlas advocates a sort of mindless "surrender" to Islam or other religions. In his essay "Surrender" ⁸⁸⁴ Godlas invokes Hossein Nasr as a man of peace, when in fact Nasr and his son have both been close to the Bush White House and his son advised Bush in the Iraq war. Nasr's son worked for the US Navy., hardly a “peaceful” organization. But, one needs to recall, the activity of "surrender" or losing one’s individuality is commonplace in

⁸⁸⁴ Here:(http://www.uga.edu/islam/surrender_ruzbihan.html)

armies, cults and jihad organizations as well as in spiritual cults such and that of Nasr and Godlas. Preaching submission and surrender⁸⁸⁵ is a way of supporting power and the status quo. Both Nasr and Godlas are followers of Schuon who was the director of a cult that used mind control techniques.

Alan Godlas has promoted the 12th century poet Jalaladin Rumi, evidently under the influence of his colleague Coleman Barks, also a professor at Athens, Georgia. I got to know Barks a little too and while initially impressed with him, I realized at last that Barks has translated Rumi's works into English in eccentric and inaccurate ways, turning the reactionary medieval Moslem Mullah, Rumi, into a fuzzy and sentimental New Age hippie with a southern drawl. Barks, along with his friend, Robert Bly and others of this school have had a toxic effect on the poetry of America by making poetry turn toward reactionary spiritual escapism and dreaming of non-existent "beloveds" in the sky, as Rumi did. The longing for an imaginary and the eternal in Barks becomes a veritable drug of suburban, self-induced ecstasy, leading nowhere but into self-delusion. Barks encourages mindless surrender to a non-existent god, and he wants you to buy his \$1500 edition of Rumi's poems, (An exact replica of Rumi's Divan-i Kebir 'Divan-' Shams) as displayed in the Mevlana Museum in Konya). In addition you can get Rumi videos C's, DVD's and even calendars and datebooks and other Rumi gimmicks, all for a price. Rumi in Barks's hands has become good old American snake oil. For tens of thousands of dollars you can even have Barks do his Rumi tap-dance and spiritual revival near you. Rumi is now mainstream America in a kind of spiritual "American Idol" way, leading one to abandon caring about the world of other people and democracy and escape into the narcissistic "beloved within". "Follow your

⁸⁸⁵ Compare for instance the life of Father Daniel Berrigan, who died May 2016 who also preached surrender, but never gave up fight unjust powers of many kinds, the Vietnam War, Nuclear weapons and many other causes..

bliss”, love your deepest Self , question nothing and flower into death.

Like Eckhart Tolle, Barks is a spiritual salesman of the Dale Carnegie variety: “How to Win Friends and Influence People”. You will be “Brightsided” with optimistic escapism, much as Barbara Ehrenreich point out in her excellent book Bright-sided. While it is certainly true that one can live a ”better life” lying to oneself and others in the way Tolle, Barks and Carnegie would wish you to, it is a dishonest way to live and one that undermines democracy and suppresses critical thinking. Tolle advances the escapist idea that one must entirely forget or ignore the past. That is ideal for corporate culture and allows for endless abuses to be swept under the rug of the past. Abolishing personal accountability has always been the aim of cult leaders and corporate CEOs.

In America the situation is rather different than in Nasr’s Iran or Dugin’s Russia. The Traditionalists in America are a far right extension of corporate elitism. They are either academics or upper middle class corporate workers. Traditionalism is naturally an ally of far right neo-liberalism or globalism. Schuon insisted his disciples vote republican in America and he liked Nixon and Reagan as well as supported the Vietnam War. Even in the U.S. election, of the year 2000), Schuon's first "wife" "Ms. Catherine Schuon gave money to the far right election campaign of George W. Bush. Schuon's disciples Michael, Judith and their son Joseph Fitzgerald—gave 10,000 dollars to Bush and the Republican party. ⁸⁸⁶ Some of Schuon's disciples were or are landlords, real estate developers, lawyers and doctors. They were told to support the apartheid system in South Africa.

In other words, Traditionalism is naturally an ally of for right neo-liberalism. In America the theofascism of Schuon and Guenon developed into a rather pro-capitalist support of right wing extremism. Indeed, they

⁸⁸⁶ (see <http://www.city-data.com/elec2/00/elec-BLOOMINGTON-IN-00.html>)

are really extreme individualists, despite their pretense at promoting tradition. These are far right libertarians of a neo-fascist kind. Schuon's disciple Huston Smith promoted a religious ideology that seeks ultimately to subvert democracy, whatever his political views were. In practice, what that means is the Traditionalists in America support a far right, republican corporate agenda, creationism, prayer in schools, anti-abortion, anti-feminist and subversion of the 1st amendment. ⁸⁸⁷

Another far right French critic of Schuon, who is an unusual case, that I should mention in passing: is Dominique Devie. He has done some good in trying to expose Schuon in France. But his skills as a reporter are so biased and narcissistic that it is really impossible to take him seriously. He botches evidence, misreads and misinterprets many things. Devie is a dabbler in religion who falls for all sorts of new age and Guenonian 'esoterism', astrology, homeopathy and other superstitions of this kind. He was a Tibetan Buddhist at one time. Perhaps still is. He is certainly a far right fanatic, and may be a devotee of Marine Le Pen, daughter and follower far-right wing neo-fascist and National Front candidate Jean Le Pen. Le Pen is a sort of extension of the fascist Vichy regime of World War 2, which supported the Nazis. He is very concerned

⁸⁸⁷ Rather like the far-right Christians in America the traditionalists have no real empathy with anyone but those who think along with their cultish ideology. As Gary Olson writes in an essay on neo-liberalism "One consequence is that our biological, hard-wired moral intuition, our predisposition toward empathy, may be short circuited by the influence of unchecked hyper-individualism (Olson, 2010). For example, after decades of unrelenting exposure to neoliberal ideology's 'Gekkoisation' of culture, it's hardly surprising that American college students are 40 percent lower in empathy than their late 1970s' counterparts (Konrath, 2010; Bone, 2009). But far beyond undergraduates, as the hegemonic ideology of our era, neo-liberalism also serves, in Henry Giroux's apt phrase, as "public pedagogy" that anesthetizes feelings of social solidarity throughout society. It has "become an all-encompassing cultural horizon for producing market identities, values, and practices" (Giroux, 2008, p.113). Traditionalism is a sort of mirror of global capitalism, reducing the world to a sort of kitsch religion, a way of escape for the facts of our actual existence, into a fairy tale land that hides the machinations of capital and corporate malfeasance.

to deny any affiliation with the far right of a fascist kind, therefore. The far right racist reaction which was present in France during the 1940's did not die when the Nazis were kicked out, but took on new forms.

Le Pen is racist and promoter of holocaust denial. He was accused of having tortured people in Algeria. Over the years, Le Pen gained widespread popularity among neo-Nazis and white nationalists throughout Europe and North America. Le Pen's daughter is a slight improvement over her father but follows much of the far right party line he established. Devie's politics are very much in line with Le Pen and the French far right, who invoke Guenon often. Devie is evidently largely supported by the French socialist system, which is odd, since he appears to support politicians who would undermine the very system that supports him. Whoever he supports, it is clear to me his politics are a toxic soup of Guenon flavored irrationality and romantic homosexuality, a weird combination if ever there was one.

Devie's endorsement of Guenon and hatred of Schuon are based in this far right politics. When he contacted me in the 1990's Devie and Denis Constaes was trying to use my witness against Schuon to bolster Guenonism, reactionary religion and right wing causes (Constaes is attracted to the racist aspects of Guenon's theofascism). They also wanted to try to divorce Guenonism from New Age thinking, though obviously Guenon is a far right New Age writer. I did not appreciate any of these efforts and learned they were both men with a Guenonian ax to grind. So they were hardly my friends, though Constaes will listen to evidence on occasion and is well read, even if he is prone to a certain racism that is disturbing. I did not agree with their use of my witness against Schuon to try to bolster the ideas of René Guenon.

At one point I admired Devie for standing up against a group of

fanatic homophobes like the traditionalists.⁸⁸⁸ But I began to see that Devie's interest in the Schuon case had some strange features and maybe the critics of Devie were right about him. He is a strange character, a misogynist, who denies global warming, for instance.⁸⁸⁹ I asked him if he denies the Holocaust too, but he declined to answer. I saw his willingness to lie on several subjects, and ceased to trust him..

He has trying use me to exalt himself and to minimize or apologize for Schuon molestation of the young, which he denies. He does not know much of anything about the interior workings of the Schuon cult. After a time, I began to understand why he wished to do this and did not like it. Devie had written an essay, now removed, that apologizes for Tibetan priests and their abuse of young people. Tibetan gurus, and Hindu sadhus and priests have been abusing children and women, the younger the better, as part of a regular practice for hundreds of years.⁸⁹⁰ His

⁸⁸⁸ Whitall Perry has a severe homophobe as was Schuon. Schuon thought Homosexuals were evil by definition. Perry says, echoing Schuon, that homosexuality does "violence to the imperatives of the cosmic order" (quoted in Lakhani essay below) which is utterly ridiculous. Such a stigmatization basically says that Homosexuals are satanic, which is what I know Schuon thought. To hold this to be true is itself a kind of evil, typical of theofascism. Many animals, Bonobos among others, have homosexual practices. Another homophobic bigot is M. Ali Lakhani. who writes against Gays in his Sacred Web " editorial: "Towards a Traditional Understanding of Sexuality" Lakhani tries to hide his homophobia behind bogus "principles" which really just cloak both misogyny and misandry.

⁸⁸⁹ In his essay in *Skeptical Inquirer* (Dec. 2015) James Lawrence Powell claims that 99.9 of the scientists today accept antropogenetic global warming". These who are in a position to know admit global warming and those who do not are either far right Christians or work for oil and Coal companies and so lie about it.

⁸⁹⁰ Tibetan Buddhism, power lies in the hands of men who had often been traumatised by being removed from their mother at the age of two and taken to an all male monastery. Women are used as temple prostitutes, "consorts" and there is an ethic of finding the youngest possible consorts.. Buddhist women are told to pray that they will be reborn into a male body in their next life. Misogyny is intrinsic to the Buddhist religion. Tibetan Buddhist monasteries accept children from 7 years of age as novices to receive a Buddhist education and eventually become monks. They are forced to stay in the monastery until they are 21,. One source says that if they try to escape and return to their families for any reason, they are hunted down by "warrior monks" and forcibly returned to the monasteries..... It is common for the little boys to suffer sexual abuse and rape for years by the older 'celibate' monks. As can be expected, many of the boys are severely traumatized, and many leave the monasteries in their early 20's> these are institutional and "traditional" violations of basic human rights.

essay seemed to be admiring these abuses of young people. He also had an essay on his site that tried to excuse or explain away the scandal of pedophile priests in the Catholic Church.⁸⁹¹ It makes sense he would try to explain away Schuon's abuses too. I don't have a lot of patience for those who wish to excuse pedophilia. This might be common in homosexual sub cultures, but it remains a criminal violation.

Schuon's use of children was awful, whatever the legal ramifications may be. Schuon is dead now but there is more than enough evidence to prove him guilty of indecent exposure to minors and molestation as well. Devie thinks he knows better and tries to maintain Schuon would not be found guilty of molestation in France. But the crime did not happen in France. He says Schuon was merely doing "nudist naturism" which was not the case., and Schuon wanted nudity to glorify himself while having sexual contact with multiple women. It was fondling and molestation brought about by undue cult influence, as the indictment said. What Devie says is irrelevant, or rather it is an excuse born of his many efforts to excuse the abuse of minors because he has an interest in the subject, which is obvious in his writings.

In any case, Devie's own rhetoric condemns him. I find it hard to take Devie seriously on anything.⁸⁹² Indeed, he was publishing lots of

⁸⁹¹ Devie links to Massimo's Introvigne's effort to excuse the corrupt Pope and the priests he wants tried to protect. Introvigne tries to make Pope Benedict seem like a victim in this case. He falsely claims the Pope and to a Church is "wounded and defamed because it will not be silent on the issues of life and the family." Actually that has nothing to do with pedophile priests, which are legion in the church and which the church hierarchy, including the above mentioned pope, have tried to hide and obstruct justice. Introvigne is a far right ideologue and Dominique Devie is in goosestep with him, In his essay on Introvigne Devie states his preference for lowering the age of sexual consent. Devie writes he would like to see "the laws change so that they tend more and more universally to declare sexual consent from 15 or 16", and he suggests that to make it more like Spain where Devie imagines the age is 12 years.

⁸⁹² Attacking me became one of his main pastimes, but really I am not very interesting and certainly not the man he thinks I am. Personal attack is appropriate on occasion, when there are real harm that is being done, and there are facts that prove allegations. but it is usually used as a

peoples work without permission in violation of copyright. I have some respect for copyright. ⁸⁹³ It became clear to me that Devie was a man with a proneness to things I feel are immoral and who is willing to do nearly anything to promote himself. But I have said enough, I am not a fan of the work of Dominique Devie, and his effort to restore the theocratic dictatorships and misogynistic and monarchical systems of old is absurd as is his ignorant denials of global warming.. The effort to assert homosexuality in the traditionalists world that is so homophobic has some interest, but not on account of Mr. Devie, who is a very poor example of this concern. There are many gay people who are not corrupted by such opinions. I do not blame him because he is gay but because he is wrong and stridently so..

In the followers of Rama Coomaraswamy one can see another sort

weapon of the rich or a means to solidify power, The FBI used it to abusively attack Charlie Chaplin, John Lennon, the Black Panthers or Martin Luther King in just this way. The FBI was a far right and racist organization then. Those who are deluded need to deny that they are. They attack to try to cover up their own self-deceit, perversity or emptiness. IN the case of Devie his attacks on me did not get much interest so he started attacking my dead mother and my son. He then became despicable.

⁸⁹³ Later when Devie was attacked by the anonymous Guenon fanatic known as “Isik” who accused him of being a pedophile. I felt sorry for Devie and tried to offer him some comfort. I made the mistake of giving him a file of writings for private use only. It is an amazing text and I gave it to Devie with the understanding that he would never publish it. It was a mistake. He not only published it but also felt he had the right to publish writings of mine, such as my draft or my Account, written in 1991. I never gave it to him and do not know who did. I had the documents removed from the internet in 2015. Devie responded to this by trying to lie about me, in a rather underhanded way. But it is not worth going into the details of this.

In any case, I had most of the documents taken down from Jimdo and Internet Archive sites. He published some of my work in English and French translation, also without my approval, as this document was later changed and contains mistakes, editing and additions put in by Rama Coomaraswamy. He did this repeatedly and I was mystified by his evident obsession with me and my work, as well as willingness to steal and misuse it. I’m sorry to see anyone attacked by homophobic traditionalists, particularly a gay man. I thought I could give him some solace and show him what he was really up against. But his self-destructive mistreatment of me became too much and I regretted being nice to him. I did not realize that Devie would do nearly anything to pass on vicious gossip and create it if he cannot find it. Indeed, he seems to need to steal the work of others to bolster his own image on the internet, a tendency that infects his presentation of this material, as does his sarcasm. irony and taste for invective, lying and salacious detail.

of theofascism at work. Rama promoted a form of Catholic theofascism' that despises homosexuals and expresses a patriarchal misogyny toward women and a hatred of feminism. This is evident in various essays by Rama on his website.⁸⁹⁴ He wanted to revive the sort of rabid Catholicism that supported revivals of exorcisms and apologized for the Inquisition. He even wanted to reform modern psychology to be a tool of a reactionary church. He got a degree as an old man in psychology but badly abused psychology after he did so. He wanted to see pedophilia as a problem involving "Satan". But this was nonsense and excused the Church itself from the horror of it housing so many pedophile priests. Actually the church itself, a misogynist institution if there ever was one, created and harbored many pedophiles. Just as Rama refused to come out publically about his involvement with the Schuon cult and condemn, publicly, their involvement in pedophilia. The Schuon cult in America also exploited women and children for Schuon's power needs and Rama protected that. I was ashamed of him for this and he knew that. I told him so. He continued to hide the truth about his involvement with the Schuon cult even until his death.⁸⁹⁵

⁸⁹⁴ Ananda, Rama's father had the same atrocious views of women based on the same theofascist notions of government. He writes " In the traditional and unanimous society there is a government by a hereditary aristocracy, the function of which is to maintain an existing order, based on eternal principles, rather than to impose the views or arbitrary will... of any 'party' or 'interest' (Coomaraswamy, 1946b: 234 fn.13). and he also writes "when Might presumes to rule without respect for Right, when the 'woman' demands her 'rights', then... the King and the Kingdom, the family and the house, alike are destroyed and disorder prevails. It was by an assertion of his independence and a claim to 'equal rights' that Lucifer... fell headlong from Heaven and became Satan (Coomaraswamy, 1993: 23) These absurd, patriarchal and repulsive views were passed from father to son in the "traditional way". AKC tried to be a polygamist and failed at many marriages. His son Rama continued the approval of misogyny inherited from his father.

⁸⁹⁵ For more about the Pedophile Priest scandal, which is undeniable and worldwide, see

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catholic_sex_abuse_cases

The report by the Irish government is especially interesting as it shows how the abuse is systematic and part of Catholic culture itself. The Church has been misogynistic for 2000 years

In any case, in America most Traditionalists support virtually the same ideology as Guenon and Evola but usually try to distance themselves from Evola as much as possible. They do not want to be known as fascists, even though their views are actually more repressive and more dictatorial than those of Hitler and Mussolini. After WWII Spiritual Fascism becomes more adroit at disguising itself and its motives, hiding behind an interest in symbolism. Various American Traditionalists pretend to be mere anthropologists or professors. But deceit and secrecy is a typical Guenonian and Schuonian procedure. Guenon was a deeply paranoid man who suffered from delusions. He spent much of his life covering up who he was and what his contacts really were. Schuon also was a pretender and a con-man, acting one way in private and another in public, hiding his four wives and his nudist gatherings where he was worshipped as a king or prophet.

Theofascism takes many forms today. It is rarely overtly neo-Nazi or openly fascist. There are many forms of it. It lives as an ideological extreme sandwiched in between global corporate capitalism and the anti-liberal fear of change that goes back to Plato or those who hated the French and American revolutions. Guenon and Schuon were European, and sought to colonize other cultures and their religions intellectually, in an analogous fashion to the colonization of other people's by economic, political and military means in the 18th and 19th centuries. The result of this is that Evola's, Guenon's and Schuon's ideas often appeal most to upper middle class professionals in colonized countries: Russia (after 1991), Latin America, South Africa and elsewhere. Guenon and Schuon tend to appeal to reactionaries in these countries; those who blame the west and think that Guenon and Schuon supply an alternative. They tend to support puppet capitalist regimes, "client states".

and continues to be so. The celibacy rule is part of this syndrome and attracts many pedophiles partly for that reason.

What these people do not usually realize is that the Guenon and Schuonian ideology is tailor made to help forge an obedient and colonized mentality of submission, and that far from being in anyway “revolutionary”, in Alex Dugin’s phrase, the Traditionalist ideology is an aide to the very forces of cultural and economic colonization repression that undermine the self determination of these countries and peoples. In each country traditionalism supports forces of repression, militarism, and social injustice and class differences. This is quite clear in Iran for instance, where Nasr has had a lot of influence. What he and his son really want is a return to the Shah, and thus of a client state relationship with the U.S., whereby Islam would be a policing mechanism to insure corporate domination of the state, much as happens in the U.S., with religion serving as an escape mechanism, insuring people submit passively to being robbed by corporations. The Iranian sate kicked out the Shah in 1979, only to replace it with an even worse state ruled by Islamic Clerics. Over a million people died in the Iran-Iraq War⁸⁹⁶ which was really an extension of the revolution. This war solidified the Ayatollah Khomeini’s power over his people. Schuon hated this revolution, so it is ironic Nasr is beloved among many who are powerful in Iran.⁸⁹⁷

⁸⁹⁶ Khomeini is widely seen as one of the monsters of the 20th century. If he represents Islam no one should want anything to do with it. He was much worse than Schuon could have ever dreamed of being. I read of mass arrests, house to house searches, mandatory dress codes, silencing and killing of all opposition, complete control of press and TV, mistreatment of women and girls. Iranians say this is propaganda but Amnesty international reports just these sort of events.

⁸⁹⁷ Iran at least has a somewhat educated population, and they include evolution in their school books, unlike Saudi Arabia who forbids the teaching of Darwin. A typical example of this is this passage for a Saudi school text book

Nevertheless in the West appeared what is called “the theory of evolution “which was derived by the Englishman Charles Darwin, who denied Allah’s creation of humanity, saying that all living things and humans are from a single origin. We do not need to pursue such a theory because we have in the Book of Allah the final say regarding the origin of life, that all living things are Allah’s creation.

There is a far right party in Hungary called Jobbick, that supports the Evola, Schuon, Guenon ideology. It promotes the usual 'non-political' politics and is intensely nationalist. See its magazine *Magyar Hüperión*.

An example of far right traditionalism in Chile is the figure is Miguel Serrano, who was also influenced by Guenon and Evola, a Chilean diplomat who has written a 600 page book called Hitler, the Last Avatara, (1984).⁸⁹⁸ Chile, under Pinochet, was a client state of the U.S., which means that it is largely a U.S. colony, exploited for its labor and resources. Serrano helps the process of military government in Chile by writing nonsense of the kind that appears in this book. Most Traditionalists would look down on Serrano, but the fact is that his ideas are not very different than Schuon or Guenon. Other books have appeared from Latin America on Guenon, Evola and the Traditionalists.⁸⁹⁹ A faction of the Schuon cult used to exist in Brazil, but seems to have become more Guenonian of late and has a web page there. I met a number of Latin American disciples of Schuon from Columbia and there has appeared a compilation of Traditionalist writings out of Peru, where right wing dictatorships have prospered in the past.

To assess why traditionalism appeals in Latin American and other countries with a history of colonization one would need to know who is reading these books and why. Most of the readers of the Traditionalists are from the upper educated classes, tend to be religious, and tend to dislike democracy and prefer military or hierarchical organizations. There is an appeal for Guenon's books in Guatemala, for instance. The Guatemalan Government is reported to have killed 250,000 of its own

[http://www.academia.edu/870964/Evolution Education in Muslim States Iran and Saudi Arabia Compared](http://www.academia.edu/870964/Evolution_Education_in_Muslim_States_Iran_and_Saudi_Arabia_Compared)

⁸⁹⁸ See Godwin, pg.70

⁸⁹⁹ There are Guenonian Web pages in Argentina, Brazil Spain and Russia. They appear to serve reactionary and conservative interests in those countries. The conservative interests in Brazil and Argentina are largely militaristic or religious organs that serve colonial powers.

people between 1978 and 1988, with the help of the U.S. Government. The writings of Guenon and Evola are well adapted to the upper classes that would bring about atrocities such as this. I am not suggesting that the Traditionalists are guilty of this crime, but I am saying that systems of knowledge have consequences. Class interests reflect ideological sympathies, or conversely ideological sympathies sometimes create class interests. Guenon and Schuon are tailor made for regressive, caste-ridden, ideologically militaristic and totalistic societies such as one finds in Latin America. The effort to make South America a client state of the USA is a common factor in much of the repression that is supported by Traditionalists in South America.

The appeal of traditionalism in Russia seems to be fueled by other factors, such as the “fall” of the Soviet Union, hatred of western capitalism, and a sense of defeat and alienation. Guenon supplies a thinker like Dugin with the desire that ultimate power may yet be his or Russia’s. In Russia, Alexander Dugin repeats the importance of Guenon and Evola to the formation of his Spiritual Fascist group in Russia. Dugin writes that traditionalism became known in Russia...

“in 1960 by a very restricted group of dissenting intellectuals and anti-communists, known as “the dissidents of right-hand side”. It was the small circle of people who have conscientiously refused participation in soviet cultural life and chose an underground existence.... This refusal of Communism depended on the uncovering of certain works by the anti-modernist authors and Traditionalists: especially books of Rene Guenon and Julius Evola. Two central characters animated this group—the Moslem philosopher Geidar Djemal and the poet nonconformist Eugene Golovine. Thanks to them the “dissidents of right-hand side “

knew the names and the ideas of those great Traditionalists of our century. “ ⁹⁰⁰

In other words, the works of Guenon and Evola and the political concerns and ideologies that they developed still continue to inspire radical right wing and neo-fascist groups of various kinds. One can go around the world and find theofascism inspired by one or another of the Traditionalists in different guises in different countries. In Mexico it appears in universities and in nationalist circles. In Russia it appears with Dugin and Djemal, in Chile it appears among those who followed the poison politics of Pinochet. In Islamic countries theofascism supports conservative and repressive measures. In America, theofascism is advanced by Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Huston Smith, and many others. In all cases that I have learned about they invariably support wealth against the poor or corporations and institutions against individuals. They dream of an unjust kingdom of Heaven and Imperial dictatorship such as ruled in the ancient world. Their heaven is a “spiritual North Korea” as Hitchens called it. ⁹⁰¹ Their views are about as extreme as the Afghani Taliban, as Muhammad Legenhausen said. They want not the Third Reich but the Primordial Reich, and if they cannot have it, they would like to see the world torched and burned to the ground.

Umberto Eco ends his essay with some wise words about being vigilant about all forms of fascism, not only the Spiritual Fascism of Republican Presidents who want to destroy the Bill of Rights, or the Islamic fascism of terrorists who like to blow up big buildings, but also

⁹⁰⁰ This was taken from Dugin’s Arctogaia website

⁹⁰¹ Hitchens traffics in bon mots and controversy. Indeed, he will take absurd positions just to be able to talk about it, perhaps due to excessive alcohol consumption. For instance he endorsed a books that is certainly an effort to deny the Jewish Holocaust. The evidence for the holocaust is overwhelming, but Hitchens worries about free speech rights, and so on. Hitchens support of the Bush war in Iraq also seemed quite dumb. He claimed it was because one should fight Islam, well, all Bush did was make Islam stronger by bombing it “back to the stone age”, as he claimed .

the Spiritual Fascism of the Traditionalists. He writes that Spiritual Fascism or

“Ur-Fascism can come back under the most innocent of disguises. Our duty is to uncover it and to point our finger at any of its new instances — every day, in every part of the world.

This chapter explores some of the bizarre people that traditionalism has encouraged or created. It is a parade of cranks, bigots, reactionaries, charlatans, outright frauds, cultists and far right apologists and promoters. There are other wacky examples of people influenced by Traditionalism. The following chapters will discuss a few more of them, however. But I don't intend to catalogue them all. I merely intend to show the general tendencies.

The Falsity of Prophethood: **and Why Poetry Fails**

Guenon, Hirschman, Chomsky and other Romantic,
Paranoid Histories in the 20-21st Centuries
(Part I)

Part a: Reign of Quantity and Paranoid Literature

"irrationality leaves open the door to anything,
hence in particular to the worst forms of
authoritarianism" (13 Dec. 1994).
Noam Chomsky. ⁹⁰²

In what follows I will show the tacit assumptions, erroneous logic, magical thinking and multiple errors of Guenon's most important book the Reign of Quantity, arguably the most important book of the traditionalists. But first I will discuss my relation to this book and its ideas as well as how these ideas relate to poetry and other paranoid literature. Such poets as Blake, Novalis Dante or Jack Hirschman shed considerable light on the tradition of romantic myth making. I will question this.

Rene Guenon, little known arcane metaphysician, absolutist, imperious charlatan, theofascist, monarchist, created quite a cult following behind him. It is amazing really, that so many apparently intelligent people fell for Guenon's work. Discredited now, except in

⁹⁰² Noam Chomsky: a Life of Dissent
<http://cognet.mit.edu/library/books/chomsky/chomsky/3/10.html>

smaller and smaller circles of followers with a chilling willingness to believe the Guenonian fictions. Why so many fell for him is an interesting question? Part of it, certainly, is political. Guenon writes to the sensibility of far-right and reactionary people who hate science, evolution, left-leaning religion and democracy. This is an appeal to the undereducated and ignorant, what might be called the superstitious intelligentsia. There are many such people. Guenon also appeals to those who feel themselves both to the far right and underappreciated or outside the narrow confines of corporate culture and he offers them nearly instant elite status. 'Read my books and instantly be among the elect', he promises. Of course, Guenon is an impresario who speaks of the transcendent, and the transcendent, like the metaphysical, was just so much hot air. So Guenon was an impresario of hot air, and there are people who like hot air.

So, let us consider this a little more closely. Part of the attraction of Guenon is his rhetoric, which is convincing if you don't know anything about what he is talking about. Guenon studied with con-men and women like Gerard Encausse (Papus) and Helen Blavatsky and knew how to tell a phony tale as if it were true. He was not like Mark Twain who told brilliant tall tales to tell the truth about his life. Guenon told false tales to hide the truth about his life. Guenon admired theoreticians like Thomas Aquinas and Hindu writers, who could split hairs about matters that were total fiction, and had no reality at all, and make it sound like it was something real they were talking about. He could count more angels on the heads of a pin, more than all the Shambhalas that never existed. Guenon had a prohibiting and scholastic mentality and learned to make 'distinctions without a difference' and to draw analogies between inferences that had no basis in evidence at all. He combined this devotion to scholastic rhetoric with a theofascist passion to bend the truth to serve an irrational will to totalistic system making. He devotes his reason to the unreasonable and pretends to know far more than he

actually does. He restyles himself as 'sacred' and nearly everyone else as "profane", indeed, he talks about the "profane" as the Nazi's talked about Jews. As an esoteric impresario, he was able to act humble when required but was most happy when others thought he was the sublime prophet at the end of time, which is where Schuon got his particular brand of delusions of grandeur..

Uncritical and fawning followers write a lot of nonsense about Guenon, treating him and his works as divine writ. Jean Pierre Laurant, a French academician who is a self-appointed protector of the Master's Oeuvre or works, writes that Guenon's works circumscribe an "an area without borders in time and space, that is about everything, from antiquity to the modern world " ⁹⁰³. This romantic hero worship is high sounding but completely without basis in fact. Guenon is a stultifying writer whose imperious irrationality means to oppress and limit, overbear and tyrannize. It is true that Guenon writes nonsense about many things as if he wrote from some fictional space outside space and time, but the scope of Guenon's writing is really limited to Fin de Siecle orientalism and reactionary romanticism. He is so laughably wrong on so many issues. If anyone actually read Guenon's books, carefully, they would see that, in fact, they are myopic texts built up around a few simple and unprovable, undemonstrated fictions and myths. He applies these mythic fictions uniformly across huge areas of knowledge without the slightest proof that his mythical constructs have any grounding in reason, evidence and fact at all. When he does employ facts he often gets it wrong.

Moreover, there is no indication that Guenon really studied or gained any real insight of any depth of understanding based on any experiment, experience, testing or real inquiry. Guenon's claim to have transcended science has no evidence to support it whatever. Indeed,

⁹⁰³ http://www.cesnur.org/2006/plz_laurant.htm Quoted in this review by another rather cultish follower of Guenon, Zoccotelli

when he says that he possesses a “super-rational, intuitive metaphysical knowledge” he is merely asserting the status of prophet and proves himself an utter liar and charlatan. present and unearned in his brain and heart. His bogus initiations were just that, ersatz fictions of mere words. We are supposed to believe he was born with huge understanding, He is the elite of the elite and the last remnant of the wise. The “area without borders in space and time” that Laurant claims his work is supposed to be about is really just Guenon’s penchant for empty generalizations and meaningless abstractions, pretend spiritual spaces, and vast fictional times made out of thin air and that do not exist except in an addicted brain, seduced by a trickster of make-believe. Laurant’s gullibility, or the gullible inconsequentiality of Guenon’s followers is really what is at issue here.

What Guenon calls metaphysics is merely speculations based on evidence about things which do not exist. What he knows about religion has nothing to do with the actual facts of religion but rather he synthesizes a few outmoded, caste obsessed, hierarchic and misogynist mythic system like Hinduism, Dark Age Christianity or Islam into a crude transcendental hypothesis that really does not transcend anything. He merely mashes together the forbidding and the improbable. He clogs up young brains with useless speculations about non-existent“ questions that have nothing to do with reality..

What careerist writers like Laurant have accomplished is to ossify the uncritical scholarship surrounding Guenon into a cult. I love scholarship, but it is a real danger when scholars attach themselves to any irrational thing and begin to spin their scholarly webs of dogma and rhetoric around it. The reality of Guenon’s actual writings is that his texts are now very dated and full of exaggerations, fictions, false analogies, lies, paranoid fantasies, and wild claims to know things that Guenon didn’t know at all. Guenon’s works are collapsing in an embarrassment of irrational occult romanticism, religious nostalgia and

theofascism. The few that still regard Guenon's work with high repute stroke each other's egos, in minor Yahoo groups chat rooms and university religious studies departments few ever visit or cultish scholarly journals no one reads. Various professors, mostly French, support Guenon and have university positions that should have been abolished years ago. They write a lot of nonsense about Guenon which appear in academic conferences or on the backsides of books published by World Wisdom, the propaganda publishing company of the Schuon cult, which is neither worldwide nor wise.

A brief look at one of these books published by Schuon's publishing company in Bloomington Indiana in 2009, is quite revealing. I'll quote a few of the comments about Guenon on this book. The book called The Essential Rene Guenon, and has various quotes of the back cover. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, a follower of Schuon's who pretends to be a Shaykh in Washington D.C. says of Guenon that he is "one of the colossal figures of the century". Yes, Nasr is right for a change, Guenon is inflated to oversized proportions with a good deal of metaphysical hot air. He is colossal in the sense of grossly inflated. Indeed, Guenon merely wrote many questionable books, Reign of Quantity being the most famous and the most ridiculous, which is why there are virtually no reviews of it. The one you are reading now is one of the first. Huston Smith, another follower of Schuon, who was incapable of any sort of objectivity about Schuon, says that Guenon is "one of the greatest prophets of our time". He doesn't say prophet of what. None of the predictions of Guenon have come to pass and his diagnosis of the problems are so ridiculous that only a few fringe groups pay attention to them at all. Huston Smith was not about to be confused with the facts of the matter, however. Smith was a narrow minded man who had little respect for evidence.

There is a cult of an individual going on here, not a real inquiry or exercise of academic freedom. Those who adulate Guenon are cult

followers-- not men who can be trusted because they have weighed evidence and employed critical thinking in the domain of religious studies. Mark Sedgwick's book Against the Modern World pretends to be a biography of Guenon. Sedgwick's has only one or two sentences to say about Guenon's most important book, Reign of Quantity. He writes -- "it is about time and quantity and quality and Aristotle about Gog and Magog and the coming end of the world. It is a worrying book, and I found it hard to dismiss" Guenon only mentions Aristotle tangentially and misunderstands his ideas. Sedgwick did not notice this. Here we have a man with no critical insight into Guenon's work at all, writing a long book about him. Sedgwick's insights into him do not deepen after 370 pages of text. There are no decent critical appraisals of Guenon Reign of Quantity that I have been able to find, anywhere, Again, this one you are reading appears to be the first full length critical review of the book.⁹⁰⁴

My view of Guenon in the past was very different than it is now. I read him first when I was only in my early 20's and didn't really know what I was reading, But, like Sedgwick I was troubled by him from the beginning. But didn't have the intellectual and educational means to critique what I read. The book sent me into a period a profound questioning which only emerged from when I turned Schuon to the police and testified against him in court.

I came across Guenon's book, the Reign of Quantity and the Signs of the Times, in 1982 or 83. I could not find it anywhere in print so I had to go into the rare book section in the White collection up high in a back room of the Cleveland Public library to find it. I was shocked and fascinated by its bleak air of authority and seemingly vast knowledge of

⁹⁰⁴ Actually, there is a very brief but interesting review written by David Fideler in Gnosis magazine many years ago. I will mention that further along. "Rene Guenon and the Signs of Our Times" by David Fideler spring 1988
http://www.gnosismagazine.com/issue_contents/contents07.html

other cultures. I had no idea how unverifiable and phony all his claims to knowledge really were yet. He seemed to know what he was talking about but the sweep of his rhetoric really carried me along. I didn't realize that that air of authority was a prideful and elitist pose, an exercise of cunning rhetoric and the pretence of a con-man. I had no way of knowing that Guenon's notion of "superior principles" really amounted to nothing but a principle of his own superiority. He was obsessed with superiority in a way that only could indicate mental illness.

Even the title of his most important book, is odd. What he hates most is democracy and he equates "quantity" with democracy, even though, in fact, they have little to do with each other. So why call the book "Reign of Quantity", why not 'reign of Democracy' or 'Assembly of Quantity'? Why "quantity" at all--- it is such a neutral concept and carries no harmful meanings at all, in itself. Four chickens are not harmful nor are four hammers or six million stars. Why this hatred of numbers?

Guenon was a reactionary theocrat who saw democracy as having usurped the 'divine-right of kings' to subjugate the poor and rule over the land. Human rights means nothing to him compared to divine rights. He is definitely on the side of the Sheriff of Nottingham and not Robinhood. Quantity for him really means masses of people who have power that is not exercised by the theocratic priests—and the mass of people is the quantity he fears was a source of paranoid fear and deep anxiety. As Umberto Eco notes in this "Eternal Fascism: Fourteen Ways of Looking at a Blackshirt"

For Ur-Fascism, however, individuals as individuals have no rights, and the People is conceived as a quality, a monolithic entity expressing the Common Will. Since no large quantity of human beings can have a common will, the Leader pretends to be their interpreter. Having lost their power of delegation, citizens do not

act; they are only called on to play the role of the People. Thus the People is only a theatrical fiction. ⁹⁰⁵

In Guenon “quantity” is theatrical fiction--- the evil democratic mass and “quality” is a mythologized substitute for the ideology of god, also a theatrical fiction. Quantity—which is the actual world that we live in--- is the realm of evil and the only real interpreter of Quality is Guenon himself or those of his high “caste”. This anyway is the mythology he has imposed on these terms, in violation of the actual meaning of these terms as used in Aristotle

As I will show later in this chapter, Aristotle use of the words quality and quantity, unlike Guenon, are related to realities. Aristotle is merely describing how trees, men, or lizards and houses, are in space and time and comes up with defining characteristics of space time and extension to do that. Hence he speaks of substance, quality, quantity, condition, action, posture, affection and so on,-- he calls them the “Categories”.. Compared to this, Guenon’s paranoid view of quantity and quality is deeply disturbing and properly insane. I could not see this when I was in my 20’s. I could not imagine a man who feared numbers to such an extent and turned them into fictional carriers of terrible horrors and profound personal feelings of metaphysical threat. Back then, in my early 20’s I could not yet assess him or have wide enough a view to be critical of him. But that said by way of introduction to looking and the specificities of this book, I need to consider the larger picture. How does Guenon fit inot the history of paranoid writing?

He is such a dark and brooding writer. Where did the dark in Guenon come from? There was something dark, brooding and sinister in

⁹⁰⁵ “Eternal Fascism: Fourteen Ways of Looking at a Blackshirt

<http://umbertoecoreaders.blogspot.com/2007/11/eternal-fascism-fourteen-ways-of.html>

Guenon, like Edgar Allen Poe or Baudelaire⁹⁰⁶. So let's look at Baudelaire a little:

A helpful French correspondent tells me that Baudelaire can be shown to have had tendencies toward the "theofascism". One of Baudelaire's most admired writers was De Maistre. Baudelaire praised De Maistre's for "his hatred of the religion of progress". In his Intimate Papers⁹⁰⁷ Baudelaire says that "De Maistre and Edgar Poe taught me to reason." But then he negates it and says "There is no long work but that which one dares not begin. It becomes a nightmare." In other words, he could not write that way. Instead he writes the *Flowers of Evil*, as if doing harm would make him great. These are the poems of the scowling and negative man one sees in photos of him. The reasoning that he learned was a nightmare. He could not think well. So it is hard to take the later Baudelaire seriously about anything except himself, and he is himself on the shakiest ground.

It appears that Baudelaire just liked to shock people and he put on a front of being a reactionary later in life. Earlier he was a friend of Courbet and a socialist and they wrote a revolutionary pamphlet together in 1848, when all Europe was in a revolutionary mode. When he was older he would write instead that "I am bored in France, especially as everyone resembles Voltaire." And thus his attraction to De Maistre seems to be out of boredom, as was his pretence of being anti-Semitic. Hating Voltaire had become a psychological game for him, born of perversity and boredom. Baudelaire is not really a theofascist, but an actor and a dandy, a lover of the perverse. He is play acting a part for an audience and trying to follow De Maistre to both ape him and shock others. But this again reinforces the thesis in this book that romanticism

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and some romantic poetry tends toward an inflated and reactionary point of view, even if it does so with 'bad faith' in Baudelaire's case.

Sartre thinks that Baudelaire's interest in De Maistre has to do with his fascination with evil. Sartre quotes Baudelaire "In Politics, the true saint is the man who uses his whip and kills people for their own good." (see Sartre, Baudelaire pg 66) He has the idea right, but it is phrased as a joke. The idea is expressed well and sums up De Maistre in a nutshell, as well as Krishna and Arjuna, Khadir and Guenon too!! Poe called this sort of perversity the "imp of the perverse". But when one looks closely at Baudelaire such a statement suggests a pose or satire and is hard to take seriously, in the way De Maistre was clearly serious in his endorsement of slavery and the Inquisition, or Krishna does advocate killing to save people in the Gita. But the slippery nature of Baudelaire's prose is deceptive. I think he is indeed a far right reactionary, even if he started out as a friend of Courbet's. Baudelaire leads to Symbolist thought which leads us right into the far right Action Francaise, and that leads, of course, to Guenon's insanity.

Guenon is insane with the after-life poetry of Masonic paranoid conspiracies, gravestones, apocalyptic corpses rising out of the earth, zombies, feared judgments hurled from imaginary saints. Guenon reminds me of 1950 horror movies. There is also something high and mysterious in Guenon, I mean high in the sense of snobby and effete, high like Egyptian mummies lurid in gold foil and lapis lazuli, high like Fin de Siecle decadence: a Gustav Klimt's view of decadent history. His was a dream of a total truth that exists nowhere, as if Edgar Poe had become a Sufi in exile, Niffari in chains,⁹⁰⁸ a vampire Sufi in a land of

⁹⁰⁸ Niffari is really the ultimate in decadence in Sufism. His philosophy negates itself at every turn and self-destructs in the ideology of the incomparable god idea. Since god is beyond everything, all must be negated. Those who wish to find the ultimate dead end of religion would do well to seek into the depth of Niffari, there is absolutely nothing there, but the nothing pretends to be everything, rather like the abstract art of the 20th century. This is not humility but delusional grandiosity posing as nothing. But since the god idea is a delusion to begin with,

numerical and Kabbalistic conspiracies. Guenon was Rumi and Dracula in one person, acting out a crazy scenario in a “Night of the Living Dead” horror movie.

In the late 1970[“] and early 80’s I wanted to understand the madness of the times, and had tried to read Thomas Pynchon’s Gravities Rainbow, which is also about paranoia, Masonic conspiracy and crazy wisdom. I was very concerned with the nuclear issue in the early 1980’s and feared the bomb very deeply. This was a common concern at that time because of the fanaticism and sabre rattling of Ronald Reagan and the far right Christians, who didn’t mind threatening the whole world as long as the corporate rich got richer. The cold war right-wing hawks in the United states, as well as the apparatchiks of the Soviet Union were all crazy and planning Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) of each other. Fools in power, what are we to do with them?

I did not yet understand that the abuse of science by governments and big business was a separate issue than the good or benign use of science by those who wish to help the world be a better place. I did not yet understand that science really grows out of the grass and the trades and comes from potters, birders, weavers and carpenters, sailors and makers of metal and glass. It is closer to crows using tools, than men in labs doing grotesque gene splicing for enriching corporate CEO’s who do not work. Both in my teens and early 20’s and when I lived in England I had read deeply in the literature of science and philosophy, from Ayers to

Niffari’s ultimate affirmation of god ends up being an affirmation of total nothing. Like most arguments in favor of the existence of god Niffari is ultimately fallacious, since he argues in favor of what is not. The ontological argument is as irrational as Niffari. God is the greatest thought one can have he must exist, since to be perfect is to exist, therefore he exists. The absurdly circular argument is typical of the inferences that are so common in religion. A similar one is one where a person might say to themselves ‘witches exist, they must because if I deny that they exist they might attack me’. This twisted, even paranoid logic got many women killed three or four hundred years ago. Magical thinking depends on slippery logic of just this kind

Quine and Chomsky, Feyerabend, Dewey, Russell and Whitehead and William James. My natural bent had been toward these writers in my teens” indeed, William James’s interesting Varieties of Religious Experience got me interested in religions and an anthropological field“ of study.⁹⁰⁹ But by my 20’s I needed to question the “reductionist” domain of modern philosophy. Was there truth that science was wrong? I later came to understand that the reactions against science were deeply questionable. The problem was not ‘reductionism’ but the opposite. Expansionist Transcendentalism was the problem. But I did not know that yet.

In, 1975, at a very young age, I had read Aldous Huxley’s Perennial Philosophy and was struck deeply by it. Could it be true? Were all the religions saying the same thing? Was there any objective truth in religion? I now see this book as a hodge podge of false analogies and make believe idealism. It is similar to Whitall Perry’s Treasury of Wisdom, which is really neither wise nor worth treasuring. But I did not know anything when I was 17 or 18 and reading widely in many areas.

By 1982-84, I was questioning science because of the bomb, Three mile Island and Vietnam. Guenon’s attack on science intrigued me and I wished to understand it. So I was willing to look into what might be called outsider literature for response to the troubled times we live in. It seemed clear the answers were not in mainstream culture, which was mostly controlled by corporations. I did not then know that outsider literature was prone to hate science at the same time as it tried to make itself seem ‘esoteric’ and quasi-scientific. I did not then know that something that posed as highbrow, elite or superior, might actually be false. How could I know? Reading Guenon was merely a momentary exposure to yet another sophisticated fiction, and one closely akin to the culture of the CEO.

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I was yet unable to realize that the very romantic tradition that still is a major part of the literary and art worlds I had belonged to, was the same tradition that encompassed Guenon--- and that this tradition is exactly what I needed to question. I was fascinated by Guenon for the same reasons I was fascinated by Ananda Coomaraswamy. I read Coomaraswamy years before I read Guenon and loved AKC first. I love art museums and started spending a great deal of time in them beginning at age 15. I was prepared to listen to a curator. I enjoyed the historical scholarship, the air of the antiquarian, the love of symbolism and craft. Indeed. It was my early reading of Coomaraswamy that got me into the traditionalists to begin with. One of my religious studies professors at Marietta college had turned me onto Coomaraswamy. I liked reading medieval texts and about such ideas as “substance and essence” as used by Aquinas or comparing such ideas to Hindu concepts of *purusha* and *prakriti*. I think what I liked in him above all was his rejection of modern art, his love of craft and his doubts about capitalism. I was enough of a socialist then to consider such questions valid. I had no idea AKC was such a reactionary. I later got to know the son of Ananda well enough to see through the prententious fictions.

I did not grasp, then, that these ideas, such as Purusha, fascinating as they might be, had no real reference to anything in the actual world. These ideas were archaic generalizations based on vague language use, used eons ago to oppress, and now were extrapolated into myth for the modern world, to keep us peaceful and quiet, not asking questions. Magical thinking again. If history is better than legend and legend better than myth, then metaphysics is even worse than myths and religions despite the greatest storytellers. People believe the gospels because they are well written, but in the end what is good writing if it is lies and fictions?

Guenon's The Reign of Quantity is erected on these metaphysical conceits and the whole book is mythic fiction because of this. Guenon is

not actually talking about reality. ⁹¹⁰. He is lost in a fabricated lunacy he is sure is utterly real. He is talking about a paranoid world view that grows out of a rather feverish and reactionary brain, magical thinking piled up on paranoid fantasy, myths piled up on facts and all this mixed together into a stew of seeming reasonable discourse..

It was not until 1982 or so that I read The Reign of Quantity. I think I was attracted to its Poesque and gloomy message partly because of a love relationship in my life that had recently taken a downturn. Guenon had that dark bitterness that still strives for an unrealizable beauty, just like Poe had, and I loved Poe when I was 14. Indeed, I think it likely this book enshrines Guenon's own bad relations with women that forced him to leave Europe and move to Egypt. Be that as it may, it is a classic in the growing genre of Paranoid Conspiracy literature. Having left New York city in disgust after a few years of living there, I was horrified by many aspects of our times. Guenon's books can be seen as being as much part of the literature of outsiders and the insane as they are a part of the history of 20th century mysticism. Guenon's book differs from the paranoid novels of Tom Pynchon (Gravity's Rainbow or V), Franz Kafka (The Trial and the Castle), Artaud, and William Burroughs (Naked Lunch) only insofar as Guenon appears to have believed absolutely in his paranoid theory about the end of the modern world. I am not that sure if Burroughs believed the nonsense he wrote or not. When he was high on drugs, which is pretty often, he seems to have believed it.

It is very useful to compare Guenon and Kafka. Kafka was exploring the madness of the world as a somewhat objective and alien observer. certainly a profoundly disturbed and subjective man, Kafka is nevertheless human and profoundly so. His honesty and effort of grapple

⁹¹⁰ Chapter 1 of Reign of Quantity is all about the concepts of essence and substance potency and act. I discuss these concepts further in the section below called "Guenon, Wolfgang Smith and Anti-Scientific Irrationalism". Smith uses Guenon's ideas heavily to try to create a bogus interpretation of quantum mechanics. For more on this see the remainder of this chapter and the last chapter of this book.

with the facts of his life are admirable.⁹¹¹ In contrast, Guenon was in the clutches of a religious seizure of his reason. He was mad. If Kafka explored madness, Guenon was falling into it and never got out of it and tries to push it onto others. Guenon suffered from a classic Paranoid Personality Disorder. He was preoccupied with unsubstantiated "conspiratorial" explanations of events both immediate to himself and in the world at large. He was also suspicious with "a pervasive tendency to distort experience by misconstruing the neutral or friendly actions of others as hostile or contemptuous".⁹¹² I have done that on occasion myself, as have most of us, but in nothing like the scale of Guenon. For instance, as I note elsewhere in this book, Guenon imagined that his ill health is caused by magicians in Europe and that there was a worldwide conspiracy to subvert his teachings. When Evola suffered a horrible and debilitating injury during a bombing, Guenon wrote a letter to Evola suggesting that the latter had been the victim of a curse or magic spell cast by some powerful enemy. Magicians could send bombs to blow up someone's legs, he thought. His mind automatically gravitated to fiction and magical thinking. Guenon's mind was prone to delusional and magical thinking of a philosophical sort too. His was a medieval mind locked into bizarre and frightening superstitions which he projected on to the modern world.

This is different than the other writers just mentioned. At least Kafka and Antonin Artaud understood they were sick. Guenon does not have a clue. Like Guenon, Artaud adopts a radically gnostic hatred of the world as a central component of his world-view. However, in Artaud

⁹¹¹ For more on this see Louis Sass', Madness and Modernism: Insanity in the Light of Modern Art, Literature, and Thought It is a very interesting book about the relation of psychology to creativity and literature_ Guenon should have been discussed in it

⁹¹² From the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems. Section of paranoid personality disorders. Chapter V section F60.0.

this gnostic hatred of the world and existence is an element in a struggle for sanity. In Guenon all question of psychological analysis, Freudian or otherwise, is condemned as “satanic”. Rather than admit his illness, Guenon blames the entire discipline of psychology itself.⁹¹³ As much as Guenon hated Sigmund I think Freud was objectively correct when he compared religion to a childish delusions. The utter uselessness of the spiritual ideology applied to human psychology is reflected in an analysis of the painter Hugo Van Der Goes, who suffered from depression. Gaspar Ofhuys attempt to assess his mental decline with a specious Christian analysis fails completely.⁹¹⁴ The attempts to reduce psychological facts to religious ideology inevitably fails.

The books of Guenon differ from those of Pynchon or Kafka in that the latter are ironic satire, written in order to bring the oppressive,

⁹¹³ Schuon also attacks psychology as discipline. Schuon created a kind of phony spiritual psychology that combined metaphysical ideas with modern psychological theories, This is evident in various internal cult documents which I can't reproduce here. But Rama Coomaraswamy came up with a similar post-modern psychological theories after he became a psychiatrist. in the middle 1990's. I knew Rama before he ever became a psychiatrist and was aghast when I learned how he was applying his intolerant medievalist ideas to peoples psychology. His effort to label homosexuality as a disease-- is a case in point. Rama as a well-known surgeon but should not have been treating anyone for psychological problems. His way of things was magical and doctrinaire and had little real grasp of the intricate biology of the mind. In any case, Coomaraswamy, Schuon and Guenon, all created a horrific system of psychological analysis that treats anyone who questions spirituality as sick, evil and "profane". But that said, If ever two men needed gentle care by professional psychologists it was Guenon and Schuon.

Guenon attacks psychology in the Reign of Quantity. He considers that Freudian psychoanalysis is actually a satanic system whereby he or show who undergoes this therapy is marked with the “mark of the beast”. Much has been said about Freud, but this is the most absurd and childish reading of him.

Schuon's essay the “Psychological Imposture” is also an attack on all of psychology. Psychology as a science has certainly not been up to par with chemistry. But it is improving with time as more is learned about the brain and how it works. The hatred of psychology evidenced by the Traditionalists is unfortunately based on ignorance and prejudice, with little or no understanding of the brain science involved. Also they both hated psychology because where were themselves mentally disturbed an in denial about this.

⁹¹⁴ See Gaspar Ofhuys' “Chronicle and Hugo van der Goes” by Nevet Dolev. here <http://www5.tau.ac.il/arts/departments/images/stories/journals/arhistory/Assaph4/08dolev.pdf>

Orwellian powers of our time into question. In contrast, Guenon wants to resurrect and support the oppressive, Orwellian powers of old with an apocalyptic vengeance.

Guenon is unaware that his own work is ironically a satire of spirituality in general and apocalyptic ideologies of all kinds. Kafka was a great writer who wanted to stigmatize and offer protest against the arbitrary power of Church and Monarchist states. Kafka is the bad conscience of De Maistre, as it were, who loved “throne and god”. Kafka’s anti-heroes suffer under the blind injustice of “throne and god”. It is not accidental that a woman Kafka loved, Milena Jasenska) was killed in the camps long after Kafka had died. Something in Kafka felt what was coming, not because he was a prophet, but because he could see where the winds of hate blow. Indeed. Kafka’s books and stories offer metaphors that help us question unjust powers. In contrast, Guenon wants to bring back unjust powers such as the Inquisition, the caste system and the horrific injustices of the divine rights of kings. ⁹¹⁵

Guenon is Kafka’s hated father, or the evil kin of the Inquisitor who

⁹¹⁵ Guenon resembles Michel Foucault in some ways, in that the Foucault of the Book Discipline and Punish has a certain longing to return to systems of unjust cruelty. Like George Bush Foucault liked torture. This tendency of Foucault is a throwback to Nietzsche’s cult of cruelty. Of course Nietzsche derived this from a nostalgia for Prussian aristocratic values, -- and a similar nostalgia would entrance the Nazis. Foucault is a richer and more complicated thinker than Guenon and there are other parts of his thought that are less sadistic and more concerned with human rights. But Foucault is a sociopathic writer. Foucault endorsed the theofascism of the Iranian revolution briefly, but then lived to regret doing so. But Foucault like Guenon is a romantic reactionary. disciple of Nietzsche, Georges Bataille, and the Marquis de Sade. He resembles Guenon in that also launched assault on the Enlightenment, on liberalism, on the humanist belief in progress. He hates reason and normality and wants to undermine science. He hates humanity and the repressive technical age of reason. He wants chaos and Nietzschean abandon. A devotee of extreme sexuality, Foucault is a leftist fascist who really is far right in his views. He is wrongly lionized by the confused left.. Foucault would rather have torture than imprisonment, madness than sanity, crime rather than normality. His enthusiast embrace of torture makes some of his work highly repulsive, like De Maistre.

wants to torture Kafka. Guenon's system is the irrationally ideology of the castle, with its absurd hierarchies, its irrational punishments, its insane doctrines.

However, on the other hand, Franz Kafka and William Burroughs are very like Guenon in that Guenon was basically writing a Science Fiction novel or rather an Anti-Science fiction novel. When Guenon was a young man he outlined a novel in which the hero would use the occult to gain superhuman powers. Guenon never grew up and remained this bizarre child, a impresario and Occult salesman whose fears play out in his cartoon metaphysics. Reign of Quantity was 19th century equivalent of a modern-day science fiction--- it is a paranoid, arrogant, apocalyptic novel outlining a theofascist message of hate against science, reason and the modern world. Guenon thought he was the superman of reactionary autocrats, an imperious dictator in impotent delusions alone.

Guenon is no Kafka, who was a brilliant writer. Kafka is identifying with animals and insects and writing about them from their point of view. This is unusual and one would have to go to Darwin and Thoreau to see anything remotely similar. Guenon, in contrast, is a charlatan who wants to subvert the modern world as it is and return it to the unjust systems that have rightly been overthrown. There is much wrong with the modern world, but what Guenon thinks ails it is not the problem. He is fulfilling in fiction his boyhood dream of having world power, at least in a comic book, Napoleonic fashion. Guenon wants to reinstate the monarchical and mythological powers of the far distant past. He can't do it in reality so he does it in a book. He wants to return to the Pantocrator-Christ as judge throwing lightning bolts at poor sinners. Reign of Quantity is a theofascist fantasy.

I am writing this to show that Guenon is not a misunderstood leftist at all. He is wrongly thought to be one who questions the times we live in, as leftists are prone to do. Like Schuon, Guenon cannot accept

that the age of Monarchs, Pharaoh's, Popes, Caliphs, Shaykhs, Avatars, Prophets, Priests, Philosopher-Kings and Emperors with "divine rights" is well gone. He wants to bring Dante's cruelty back to life, since, it will be recalled, Dante wanted to give the monarchy its "divine right". Dante's "De Monarchia" treatise is a vision of an idealist out of touch with political realities who was yearning for an Empire that had passed away.⁹¹⁶ For the nostalgic Dante, "justice is at its most potent in this world when located in the Monarch alone". The horrible history of this giving the monarch so much power was lost on Dante. This point of view is that of a theofascist like Himmler or Evola, with echoes of Augustine and Aquinas and de Maistre. Recalling the Roman Emperors, who European aristocrats so wanted to be like. Dante embodies the interdictory, scolding and punishing mentality of the Inquisition very well.

But Schuon shared this view too. Like the stereotypical paranoid, Guenon and Schuon long to erect again the same inflated puppets of power, the Caesars, Torquemadas and Napoleons. The fact is that humanity has barely survived these "great men" of the past, yet Guenon wants to return to the age of mythological deceit, where Kings lord over subjects and swat them down like flies. He wants the Church to be the obstructive control over the thoughts of the population. Guenon wrongly imagines that modern forms of exploitation and injustice are different than the old religious methods of mind control. The ancient forms of power were either as bad or even worse than what we have today. The nostalgic and romantic attempt of the Traditionalists is to extol the past as a place of greater justice and peace is a falsification of history.

⁹¹⁶ Dante's notion of the a transcendent foundation for the empire is exemplified in his cruel and repulsive poem the Divine Comedy, one of the worst poems ever written in my opinion. Dante tortures and kills people so he can erect his absurd Platonist heaven. See the chapter below on Plato, much of what it says also applies to Dante

Certainly the horror of Stalin and Hitler were real horrors, But as Christopher Hitchens writes.

Communist absolutists did not so much negate religion, in societies that they well understood were saturated with faith and superstition, as seek to replace it. The solemn elevation of infallible leaders who were the source of endless bounty and blessing; the permanent search for heretics and schismatics; the mummification of dead leaders as icons and relics; the lurid show trials that elicited incredible confessions by means of torture.. none of this was very difficult to interpret in traditional terms.”⁹¹⁷

“Extra Ecclesium Nullus salus”⁹¹⁸ is a dogma of the Catholic Church. “No salvation outside the church” is what it means. Believe as we believe or we will kill you.’ This dogma, when stripped of denominational partisanship, creates Inquisitions in both Stalinist Russia, Maoist China, the Schuon cult, Jonestown or Rome. The Guenonian system is essentially a system of mind control, modeled on similar systems from the past, not very different that Stalinism in its main outlines---only the doctrines are different. Indeed, R.J. Lifton’s great analysis of mind control techniques had communist China as its main subject. As it turns out, communist China and the Catholic Church, the Tibetan Religion under the Dalai Lama, Islam or Zen Monasteries have a lot in common. They all set up a system of thought control and insider/outsider elitism. They employ certain techniques to control behavior and thought and they teach their adherents to despise there.

The Mason, apparently Monarchist, follower of Guenon, Patrick

⁹¹⁷ Hitchens, Christopher. God is Not Great. N.Y. N.Y. Twelve. 2007. pg 246

⁹¹⁸ Wolfgang Smith wrote a ridiculous essay that had this title and tried to justify this hateful dogma of Extra Ecclesium Nullus salus

Geay ⁹¹⁹ recently brought the following quote to my attention. The poet Holderlin suffered from mental illness and wrote that . "le divin n'atteind pas ceux qui n'y on point part". Loosely this means that “the divine or gods do not listen to those who are not believers in the divine”. This rather typical justification of delusory thinking by one who is deluded is noteworthy. It casts a bright light on the cultic nature of Guenon’s world view: In other words gods don’t listen to anyone except deluded followers. Obviously, since there are no gods, only the deluded keep on speaking to gods as if they exist. Only the deluded refuse to listen to those who are not deluded. This is to be expected of those who are ignorant and is hardly virtue. The god’s do not actually listen to anyone, any more than mirror images listen. So what the sentence really says is that believers in the god-delusion are immune to listening because they are narrow minded bigots.

The followers of religions as well as Guenon and Schuon are narrow-minded bigots. Believers fool themselves into thinking they have the ear of a cruel God who likes to shun those that do not believe in their particular make-believe god. True believers like to shun people. Shunning is an act of aggressive social rejection, or mental rejection. This can be a formal decision by a group, meant to increase the power of the in-group. It is common in religious groups and other tightly knit organizations and communities. Targets of shunning can include persons who have been labeled as apostates, whistleblowers, or dissidents, , or anyone the group perceives as a threat. As Eric Hoffer points out the “true believer” justifies all sorts of evil in the name of good. Hoffer writes “When we lose our individual independence in the incorporateness of a mass movement, we find a new freedom—freedom to hate, bully, lie,

⁹¹⁹ <http://www.libroelibri.com/regleabraham.htm>

torture, murder and betray without shame and remorse.”⁹²⁰ The whole point of esoterism is to erect a fictional elite who look down on everyone. This is classic “them verses us” extremist thinking. The world inside the Schuon cult was a world that sneered at the world outside it. I saw this very clearly, all too clearly. Hirschman does this too, as does Chomsky, and Guenon. Maybe I have been a little guilty of that as well, but I try to overcome this as well as I can by being as accurate and factual as possible.. Those smitten with the intolerance of religion do not listen to anything but to their own delusions. Listening is not part of the cultish makeup of esoterism: they claim they know the “inward truth”, the truth no one else knows. Facts do not matter to them, only belief matters. This is the nature of cults and totalistic systems, to only listen to automatic speech, only attend to those inside the cult and to regard all those outside as the “other”--- the profane, the hated infidel. For many traditionalists those outside the Guenonian orbit are bound for damnation. Those who read Guenon's or Schuon's rather moldy books are the holy ones, at least in their own eyes. The truth is very different and has more to do with Bird ID books, pottery, children and apples.

Guenon and Schuon claimed to be Sufis. In the middle east Sufism had long been the repository of the weird and the excessive. Before I knew much about them I thought I liked the Sufis. They seemed outsiders, whirling dervishes, people of rare insight, dancers of inner ecstasy. Members of the romantic periphery to borrow Immanuel Wallerstein’s phrase, they seemed to offer hope. Rumi dancing with his hand up to the diamond sky, like Bob Dylan’s Tambourine Man. Little did I know. I had been deceived by Rumi and Islamic carpets, which I loved and still love for purely aesthetic reasons. Rumi I no longer love. Back then, I liked Poe’s oddness, giving Guenon a chance was natural,

⁹²⁰ Hoffer, Eric. The True Believer: Thoughts on the Nature of Mass Movements Perennial Classic pg. 100

since Guenon is nothing if not odd. Guenon was a wacky outsider too, as was Poe, and me. I did not want to believe what Guenon said was true, but what if some of it was true? I did not realize he was a disciple of De Maistre, who I had never heard of. Baudelaire also sided with De Maistre, and I wondered if he was merely play acting at being a theofascist. Was I duped by Baudelaire, certainly, I was duped too by Guenon, who I thought was the real thing. I did not realize then as I do now, that Sufism is in many ways an adjunct to the terrible regimes of Mollahs, princes and Kings. Some were killers or assassins. But I found Guenon profoundly depressing without being able to answer why.

I was accustomed to reading material by French writers such as Baudelaire, Antonin Artaud, Rimbaud, Lautremont and others who were thought “insane” or outsiders from the mainstream. Indeed, my loose relationship with Jack Hirschman led me into the domain of romantic rebellion against Europe and this probably prepared me for Guenon.

⁹²¹ Guenon seemed to be part of the outsider romantic tradition. He also hated Europe. I wanted to know: I was very serious about such questions and needed to know the answers. How does Guenon or religion stack up against Bertrand Russell, Noam Chomsky, Plato or Richard Rorty? Of course it would turn out that writers based in science were far to be preferred to those who were not. But I did not know that then. I was entering my period of deep philosophical inquiry and these were very live questions. I ended up traveling very far to find the answers. I remember sitting on the floor in Foley’s bookstore in London trying to decide, should I read Rorty or one of the traditionalists. I liked reading about science, that was the way I wanted to go. But I decided I had to explore religion and find out if it is true or not. That was in 1984. I thought it would only take me a short time, as I was already very skeptical. But it took me 6 years, at least. By 1991 I knew it was not true. I had wasted

⁹²¹ Jack was trying to create an American poetry, at least for awhile, now he is more European than American perhaps.

some years on a fruitless search. But I am still here to write about it and save others the bother of doing this research. Religion is a dead end, do not enter into that door, or if you must, do so briefly, you will soon find out what I am saying in this book is true.....

One of the reasons I picked up Guenon's Reign of Quantity is that I had studied poetry and culture with the post-modernist beat poet Jack Hirschman a few years before, in San Francisco.⁹²² I spent every day and most evenings with him for six months in North Beach. We went to poetry readings, Jazz concerts and in and out of our minds and imaginations. We hung out in cafes like the Savoy Tivoli and I watched and listened for six months. Jack writes about this time very well:

Not simply
because you looked up to me
as poet-mentor, even as the father
you'd lost some years before,
but because you had
real visionary stuff,
a mind bursting like a Russian's
and a visual ability to draw
wild configurations in the manner
of Blake, talking totality, scribbling
torrents in a leaf, braids of
sensuous bodies in a theophanic
dance of flaming DNA.

And all that philosophy, science
and visionary matter
reminding me of myself
when I was young and searching
for an idiom and a way
to a new geography of space
in motion.

⁹²² I had also read Thomas Pynchon's V and Gravity's Rainbow, in which paranoia is a major theme. Both Pynchon and Hirschman used paranoia as a metaphor for the madness of the 20th century.

You entered me
as that lope of questioning quest,
a leap of ether
in mutual respect,
an awe and wonder and clearing,
not as desire but its essence,
so that there's nothing delirious
or remorseful about your being
inside me. You simply were there.
Are here. An *ibbur* that now
and then, when least expected,
when it isn't even a question
of volition, I find myself
pregnant with.

And it reminds me
of a brief time
on these streets of one-liners
or merely survivalist
"hanging in there,"
of egos at large
or strands of fashionable
tendencies, avant-
godes to more of nothingness,
crosswalks of drink
or alley-ups of dope,

when thought and word
could walk together
on the human tongue
outside of institution,
infused with an intuition
of a new world coming
to horizoning light,
when beginnings
whirled 'round our necks
like scarves that never strangled.

What's more beautiful
than when body remembers what
mind would forget?
Who hasn't, by chance,
encountered friends in life who live on
where mind cannot reach to.

Because the encounter
was filled with so much reception,
resonance and creative fire.

These parts are wonderful depiction of our lives back then. I was 23 and Jack was 46. He would never be so kind to me as he was here, It was not just Jack I was watching but the whole scene and all the people who came and went. I learned a great deal from watching the whirl around Jack and his love of street life.. Jack was a kabbalistic communist and prone to question our culture from a radical point of view. I liked that. I liked his humanit. I did not yet realize, or only dimly, how truncated that was to become. Jack was deeply paranoid too, as was Guenon, though Jack became aware of the exaggerations that his tendency to paranoia made him tend, whereas Guenon never did. I wanted to understand paranoia. I wanted to understand the far left wing of the New Age. I had always been attracted to the left more than the right. There was so much paranoia on the streets with homeless people in many cities. I got to know many eccentric and homeless people. Bombs had been dropped on Vietnam and were now reigning down on Afghanistan. I wanted to grasp this and studied street people and poets like Hirschman.

In Jack, I wanted to understand the species of romanticism that could be attracted to both Stalin's Marxist fascism as well as new age cults and Hitler's nasty sadism. How could Jack be both lover of the masses and a fanatic individualist with a mean streak and an attraction to the dark underbelly of fascist politics and sexuality? He had a hold on the mind of the time, and I could see it. But his mean streak was very hard to deal with, and what was I to do with his paranoid fantasies?

Jack was one of those that Walter Benjamin feared when he said that

“the struggle against ideology has become a new ideology”.⁹²³ In 1979, Jack couldn’t see around all this—around his own political/spiritual confusion and his ideological hatred of ideology and I needed to know why.⁹²⁴

Jack claimed in an esoteric long poem, one of his first “Arcanes”, to be the Comte de Saint Germain, who was certainly a fraud, and who many claimed was immortal. Actually he died, in fact, in 1784. Jack wanted to claim to be him still alive. Giacomo Casanova claimed meetings with the celebrated and learned impostor in his memoir. Jack liked to identify himself as Saint Germain and was only partly kidding that he was himself the Comte, still alive. He also thought at different times that he was Wandering Jew, or the Golem, or any figure that

⁹²³ [The Correspondence of Walter Benjamin and Gershom Scholem 1932-1940](http://books.google.com/books?id=M1JQA66rxsEC&pg=PR13&lpg=PR13&dq=counter-history+scholem&source=bl&ots=YL4rJPDA&sig=A9trfSV2NvrQSx8NuOqd3bZBBWo&hl=en&sa=X&ei=PieoUczgO8avygH6vIDIBw&ved=0CFYQ6AEwCTgU#v=snippet&q=counter-history%20&f=false)
edited by Gershom Gerhard
<http://books.google.com/books?id=M1JQA66rxsEC&pg=PR13&lpg=PR13&dq=counter-history+scholem&source=bl&ots=YL4rJPDA&sig=A9trfSV2NvrQSx8NuOqd3bZBBWo&hl=en&sa=X&ei=PieoUczgO8avygH6vIDIBw&ved=0CFYQ6AEwCTgU#v=snippet&q=counter-history%20&f=false>

⁹²⁴ The evidence for this is in Jack Hirschman’s magnum opus, The Arcanes, in which Jack tries to tell the story of our times from his point of view. In a thousand pages, he created an exalted, romantic point of view where he claims to be a sort of prophetic over-man. His struggle with fascism ends up being a struggle not just with historical fascism but with an entity inside him, part of his Stalinism perhaps, or a frustrated will to power. The poet Jack Micheline told me once when he was in Cleveland that Hirschman may have become so ridiculously far to the Stalinist left because Micheline and others in Jack’s neighborhood used to beat Jack up. I doubt that is accurate as Micheline was not the most trustworthy source. But Jack’s fascination with fascism appears to have had a sexual character, judging by his use of this imagery in the Arcanes. Jack’s Russian Jewish heritage seems to have inclined him toward a need of revenge for the world war and the pogroms. Jack’s Stalinism has its complement in his fascist tendency in a way similar to Israel, which moved for to the far-right partly in revenge for Auschwitz. Jack’s sympathy with cults of all kinds appears to have grown out of an extreme kind of individualism that seeks its own negation in a collective rebellion against capitalism. Cults were to be preferred to capitalism. I learned a great deal about the psychology of politics from Hirschman, not all of it flattering about either psychology, poetry or politics. For Jack, cults were truncated efforts to be communist. Cults were better than corporate capitalism but worse than his Marxism. He wrote about such cults as the Jonestown cult and the Heaven’s Gate cult. Jack was one of the most religious people I have ever met, and his religion was Marxism. He could not see outside the construction of his particular poetic cadre in which he enclosed himself and his poetry. Instead of liberating him poetry became a jail of sorts, closing him into a quasi-religious irrationalism of his own making. Something similar occurred with Chomsky who ended in seeing left leaning religion in Sufism or Christian liberation politics as a useful thing to help him to realize his anarchist dreams.

seemed immortal, martyred or powerful, from Stalin. He sought some indentity with various cult leaders too.⁹²⁵ In a later book he tries to identify himself as a Vietnamese practioner of Voodoo.⁹²⁶ Jack was using religion as I would later see Guenon doing the same thing, as a metaphor for our alienation. He also identified himself in his later years with Heidegger, which was a mistake as big as his love of Stalin. Emmanuel Faye has shown conclusively that Heidegger was a Nazi and favored the

⁹²⁵ Jack's use of the Stalin image always had a certain flavor of self-projection in it. I think he liked to scare people with the specter of Stalin, like a schoolboy uses a frog, or as Tibetans use images of scary Mahakalas to scare postulants into obedience to Lamas. He once did a collage called "Is He Resurrected?" which had a picture of Stalin rising up. Jack had paranoid tendencies and Stalin was hard and cruel and served to protect Jack from the world to some degree. Also Jack was a scholar at root and Stalin's writings were what appealed to him, and he did not want to admit the historical facts about his merciless abuse of others, his prison system or his murder of so many. This is true of many "true believers", and I have often seen it is Christians who could not admit the destructiveness of Christianity, or Zen Buddhists who deny the ruthless samurai origins of Zen.

⁹²⁶ Jack's book on Vietnam was actually written earlier in 1973, and then worked on further in 2013 or so. It is an amazing poem, and the only long poem I can think of that takes the Vietnamese point of view against the Americans. The Viet Arcane (2014) shows Jack at his best and his worst. It is full of accurate identifications with the Vietnamese people on the one hand and how much they suffered. It does this remarkably well. One poem, is a brilliant protest piece is about a person tortured by Americans. Another discusses young Vietnamese lovers and flowers. Other poems talk about Vietnamese rituals, not so different from American rituals. On the other hand, the poem fails, as all such war poems fail, in taking one side over the other. Jack's communism became a religion and one that is quite as objectionable as the religio/politics he hates. Actually the whole Vietnam war—really any war--- on both sides was one of the most insane ever fought. Those who die are the victims of the leaders on both sides. It was a war of ideology and though the Americans were more at fault in starting the whole thing, it was an atrocity for both sides, and the suffering to those who were left behind was not diminished. Jack foolishly declares victory for the Vietnamese. But given that between 1-3 million Vietnamese died and nearly 60,000 Americans as well as many French, died, it is impossible to see how anyone won. While Jack's undoubted humanity shines through for the Vietnamese, it does not for the other side. My problem with Jack was always his one-sidedness, and his willingness to support killing the other side that he did not like. It is this mentality that makes all wars so ridiculous. In the end it is always the leaders of such conflicts that are most at fault and who should pay the price of what is done. But they never do. They always have young men fight and die for them. Jack would like to inspire others to fight in such a war, but you would never see him out there doing it himself. It is this hypocrisy that is at the root of all wars, and unfortunately, most poems about war. I've always admired Jacks humanism, but his intelligence could be deeper and his awareness of the futility of all war could be less shallow. In the end it is the religion of his politics that fails his poetry. It is fanatically obtuse and emotional irrationalit that speaks loudest in his poetry this that makes it akin to religion, both in this the earliest of his Arcanes and in later ones too.

extermination of all Jews. Jack's fascination with both Hitler and Stalin points to a bifurcated self in the romantic mind, a waffling between two forms of totalism. Ezra Pound identified with Mussolini, Jack identifies himself with Stalin. There is little difference in fact.

I understood he needed to identify himself with these larger than life figures, like Stalin or the Golem, to blow himself up and thus protect himself both from his inner monsters and outer monsters on the street, to feel free of his fears. But the fears were mostly exaggerated and the images that calmed him were also. I don't think Jack every quite resolved this, or understood that this divorce of mind grows out of a romantic prophetic tradition itself, which is not adequate to reality and this turns upon itself in a gyre of contradictions as Yeats would have said. But Jack at least began to question it in himself, as his Arcanes show. This is far beyond what Guenon, Schuon, and other romantics were able to do. I admire this in Jack though I still think he has not worked it all out.

Is Fascism really a part of human nature, what Hannah Arendt awkwardly called the "banality of evil". Fascism seems to have been brought on in Germany by the atrocities of World War I and the absurd Treaty of Versailles, which even the forgotten President Woodrow Wilson wisely opposed.⁹²⁷ It is a will to power as Nietzsche called it, again without really understanding what he was saying. Most people do not want to be 'evil', and even the concept evil seems a magnified delusion. Humans can be murderous and hateful, yes. But Evil is an exaggeration, a demented metaphysical delusion. Jack was on the verge of questioning this power, but he could never really question the religion he made of

⁹²⁷ Ross King's Mad Enchantment situates Monet's paintings on the Waterlilies in the context of World War I and explains the Treaty of Versailles as an example of political revenge, making World War II inevitable. It is not the banality of evil that is involved here, but the horror of revengeful men and their need to harm others for harms they have suffered. This is not evil, but rather is the cost of ignorance and not listening to the voice of conscience. Seeing Monet's beautiful works in the midst of Clemenceau's merciless campaign of revenge is very interesting..

Marxism, unfortunately. In his effort to kill the “four pests” in China Mao had killed billions of birds and small animals. This resulted in the furious growth of locusts and grasshoppers which destroyed the grain crop of China. Along with the Great Leap Foreward, this led to a huge famine, and these events led to killing over over 20 million people. Marxism too can be as stupid as capitalism, killing and harming nature in the extreme. Yes, Marxism also has its history of atrocities against both nature and humans. Jack could not face this. Mao was his answer to the equally awful capitalist destruction of humans and nature. Why could Jack not see this? Was he too an enemy of nature? What is his humanism but another form of speciesism?

I am not sure why I loved Jack, or for that matter why he cared for me so much. It was as he says in his poem “Mimpathy”, in some ways.⁹²⁸ We had a sort of ‘possession’ of each other, or rather, I would not have used that word, it was more of a “Die Wahlverwandschaften“, Goethe’s term, which is German for “kindred by choice“. I lost this eventually, as he was too much a cultish figure and prone to an excessive and narrow dogmatism. I felt he had given me something, and I was grateful for it, but we went our separate ways, and I never went back. Though I did see him again, it was clear that whatever had been there was gone and I had grown out of him. He never saw me clearly, and was unable to do so. He was mired in romantic solipsism and a Marxist nostalgia that was already gone. I could see beyond that and he could not see where I could see. So there was no way of there being a long lasting friendship. Jack lived in a bubble or romantic passion which allowed him to imagine killing millions easily. I could not agree with that.

⁹²⁸ This is the title of the Arcane tht Jack writes about our relationship. I never really imitated Jack and it is a mistake to call a poem Mimpathy, suggesting a sickness of imitation. This is far what why I went to study with him. I met him in 1977, when he was at Café Trieste with Kristen Wetterhahn. I was then writing a long poem.

Jacks' fascination with cults was interesting.⁹²⁹ He thought cults were an outgrowth of California individualism, and that they were really unconsciously longing to be communists, like Jack. This is not a point of view that is entirely wrong. I do not mean that cultists were unconscious Communists, but that many cults do indeed question capitalism which ought to be questioned. But the answer they came up with, like Jack's Stalinism, are so unworkable that cults tend to self-destruction or cause more human rights violations than they do anything else. In Jonestwon the cult leader killed 900 of his own followers. Jack could not see that Marxism was another cult. I eventually experienced a cult myself and I know how destructive they are. Jack never learned this, I am certainly not trying to justify capitalism, but a reasonable questioning of cults is entirely in order.

The cultic mentality is partly due to the effort to escape the depredations of capitalism but often ends in creating something even worse. Jack never dealt with this fact and tends to romanticize cults. This is unfortunate, and suggests again that many critics of capitalism do not have a real alternative to it and endorse some ideology or other that is equally as bad or worse. I am trying not to give into taking sides based on the deusions of these systems. I am trying to think a way through these disaster of warring systems. This is partly what these books are about.

I learned a lot about human psychology as well as cult leaders, as Jack was a bit of a charismatic charlatan himself. Indeed, I think Jack was my first real introduction to the lie of religion and how close religion, poetry and politics really are. Later influences of me like Chomsky were likewise flawed and very problematical. But they posed answers, and even if their answers were flawed. At elast they posed questions for me. In Schuon's case, his answers both ridiculous and mistaken,. In

⁹²⁹ He writes *Arcanes of Jonestown* (1977), *Heaven's Gate*, (1997) and other cultish phenomena.

Schuon's case, however, even his questions were mangled, but with Jack and Chomsky, they got many things that were right, even if I rejected their systems in the end. If I use these two men as types of delusion, I do so knowing they got some things right too. There are decent things in Chomsky, and Hirschman can be warm and human, but I see hardly any goodness in Schuon, though I have tried to. In any case, they are all part of the fabric of the world we live in and this book is about the world we live in, and I use them all as foils against which I can discuss our lives.

Jack's Marxist/Kabbalist/Hiedgerrean and rather Luddite position was largely based on romantic fictions combined with some objective dislike of the obviously unjust treatment of people by corporate and monied interests. He was stubbornly unwilling to listen to any evidence about the problems of injustice caused by communism, Marxist-Leninism, Stalinism and Maoism, and this was a fault in him that led to my giving up on him. I had sympathy with his concerns for the workers and the poor, though I had the same sympathies going back to my teens and my effort to make my Dad care more about the workers that worked for him.. I admired Jack's journalistic tendency and see the Arcanes as a Poetic Newspaper. He was inspired by Mayakovski, the Russian poet and Amiri Baraka, and interesting African American poet who died in Jan. 2014.⁹³⁰

During the time I was around Jack everyday, I did at least four drawings a day. My procedure was very much like Jack and involved doing subjective drawings, denying most or all outward reference. I was not imitating him, but rather came to have a similar way of creating. He thought his surreal and 'automatic' "voice" was sacrosanct. Whatever

⁹³⁰ I saw Leroi Jones/Amiri Baraka do a poetry reading at the Cleveland public library and he was incendiary and pugnacious, advocating open rebellion against racism. He was very good and made his audience think and had a large following. I was impressed. Poetry at its best raises such questions. The issue of the "color line" in America does indeed go to the heart of what America is and the ways it has failed and in a few cases succeeded, as W.E.B Dubois said.

arose in him is what mattered. This meant his romantic subjectivity became the criterion of truth and made him resist contrary evidence.. Like other romantic fanatics I have known he could not question this claim to prophetic status. The claim to be a prophet is so deep in romantic poetry he could not see the presuppositions involved or get out of it and look back at it. It is all about myth making and deceit in order to win power over others. "Poetry is propaganda on the street level", Jack used to say as a sort of mantra, and indeed, that is what it was to him. Religion and poetry are forms of ideology, to varying degrees, flip sides of one coin. Jack's Marxism was a religious faith, You either had to be with him or he automatically put you in the category of those against him. He wrote me in a letter for instance that

"when you join a communist chapter in your area we can understand each other better. the rest is personal opinion insight, intellect, blah blah/ ...put your writing in the service of the revolution and forgetting about me you'll find me." (10/2009)

This is pretty typical 'Them verses Us' thinking that Robert Jay Lifton has studied so well and which is characteristic of both Marxists cells and religious fanatics of all kinds and faiths. To be a real person worthy of respect I must be like Jack,---I must be reborn as a "born-again" communist, and until that happens, I am merely one of the "profane", as Guenon called nearly everyone, the non-entities, "Blah, Blah". I read Marx in my teens and though I had a certain regard for his early work as a social protestor, and with the early studies of English workers by Engels, I disliked what was done with these ideas. The later Marx is partly responsible for a lot of death and harm, especially in Russia and in China, and the facts of this cannot simply be denied..

So I never went back to Hirschman, though I wrote and visited him few times. He always treated me as bad person because I would not join his communist cell. He was always too busy imagining a revolution in which everyone he hates would be killed. I needed none of that. He also liked to pretend he was involved in a vast network of worldwide revolution. He was to a small degree, but always made it sound like a vast enterprise, which is nonsense. In this way, he was really a typical American salesman, exaggerating his exploits. He wrote a nice poem about our months together, but was at pains to tell me it was not really a personal thing but an example of assimilative technique of his, using me, in short, to advance his own work. It was an *ibbur*, he said. A portrait with ulterior meaning. I did not like being a pawn in his game.⁹³¹ As nice as parts of the poem are, I was unsure if I should hate it or love it, as Jack never treated me as I was, but wanted me to be something he couldn't even be. I did not want to be the Perfect Communist. I am a human being, not a function of an ideology ready made to cage me. I care about birds, life, the facts of things, insofar as I can understand them, which is often not well enough. Systems do not thrill me, I am too much a student and advocate for nature for that.

The same cramped and closed mentality one finds in Marx is in Guenon, which is why I discuss Hirschman and Guenon together in this chapter, even though they are at opposite sides of the political fence. (I will discuss Chomsky later for the same reason). But to return to what Jack was saying in the above quote. The allusion in the last line of Jack's letter states "you will find me", if only I will join a communist group. This is Jack now evoking Joe Hill, as in one of Jack's favorite union, folk songs "I dreamed I saw Joe Hill last night". This was a song Jack used to

⁹³¹ Jack reminded me of Strelnikov in *Doctor Zhivago* by Boris Pasternak. I still love that book, all these years later. Sacrificing everyone for the 'party' merely makes a lot of dead people and discredits your cause. Jack never understood this.

sing in full voice when he had too much to drink in North Beach café's where we used to hang out together. It was lovely to be with Jack when he sang like this. He called North Beach the "village soviet of the heart". He could make North Beach seem some nights like it was really Chagall's village of Vitebsk with violinists dancing on the roofs.. While there is romance in this form of magical thinking, it is very close to spiritual superstition or Sufi fairy tales. Jack was Rumi singing to the Beloved like Chagall gypsy violin songs on the roofs of San Francisco into the magical night of lights and stars. I certainly can identify with the longing in such songs to be free of corporate repression. But when one moves over from emotion to delusion, as Jack so often did, it became problematical.

I realized early on that Jack needed to inflate himself with Stalin, the Golem, Joe Hill, Mao and many others. Early on, along with David Meltzer, Wallace Berman and others, Jack was influenced by Kabbalism, his favorite books was Tract on Ecstasy by Dov Baer and the works of Abulafia and later this text was replaced Stalin's collected works, which I saw in his library, and by Heidegger's Enowning. Jack had this need of quasi-sacred texts like this to make himself seem huge, a resurrected god of sorts. I really just wanted a teacher, not a god. Indeed, Jack was my first teacher and mentor. He was extremely religious, though he would deny this in the typical mode of American culture, where "spirituality" is great but religion is not. At one point I called him the Red Rabbi, which is true, he was a sort of village beat-Rabbi, updated into decadent New Age San Francisco. . Just as he had need of pretending he was the Comte, the Golem, Stalin or Heidegger's 'Being', he wanted to be like Rilke's imaginary "Angel". The extreme individualism meant he was a teacher only reluctantly, a father only reluctantly. The misogyny that was part of the Beat movement, was in him too. It was probably inevitable, that me, a reluctant poet who was really an artist and scholar, would not get along with him for long. For years he shunned me because I was not a Marxist. It was not enough for him that I questioned all systems of

power as power was what he cared about. I refused his projections of himself onto Stalin, Heidegger and other presumptions. I got tired of his need to shun and scapegoat me. There was nothing to do but abandon him to his fate.

Like Alexander Dugin,⁹³² Jack is a kind of decadent end to the romantic tradition. Poetry for Jack was politics. He used to say that I must learn to see that “wisdom is the map of the world” and I must “learn to see the “Other” inside myself”, combining Kabbala and Marx. He said he had seen the “other” inside himself and it was the communist other, which he equated with the Shekinah of the Kabbalah as well as with the Marxist “other”-- the female who would “stand arm in arm in love” with him in the Barricades. Everything had to be glorified like a Shostokovich Symphony, pumped up into a huge parade. The Marxist Shekinah was someone he often drew in the drawings he would hand out for free in cafes and on the street. A woman’s face like a swan. This is the woman in all his poems. He made this archetype of the Divine Feminine, which I would later deny. Love for Jack had become love of all men and women through love of the imaginary other, or Shekinah. This is similar to Rumi’s notion of the “you” or his lover/spiritual master Shams-Al Tabrizi as the infinitely loveable “other”. What all these images are in fact, is romantic or sexual images deformed by ideologies, and made into extreme idealizations, or symbols. Jack was a religious or mystical Marxist, who made an idiosyncratic religion out of poetry and politics, lost in the abstract confusions of surreal language.

It is a fine thing to see others are part of oneself, in a Darwinian sense of seeing all of us, on earth, from salamanders to eagles and people as being related and deserving of care. But Jack did not mean this, he

⁹³² Like Jack, Dugin also admires both Stalin and aspects of Hitler’s fascism. Or rather, Jack admires Heidegger, who was Hitler’s philosopher. Dugin is Russian and created a Eurasian ideology that opposes the western Euro-American alliance. I find Dugin as absurd as Hirschman, which hardly means I am on either side. I am not. I care about people and nature, not ideologies that beat the drums of war and more war.

meant that one must see only with Marxists eyes. He knew little about nature. Just as Guenon and Dugin thought one should see only from the point of view of the abstract fiction of gods or metaphysical idealizations—indeed, these men are very similar: they are all romantic symbolists with a hatred of science and realism.

I learned from Jack, or rather because of Jack, to doubt the validity of poetry, though I have never been able to quite give up the bad habit, naively thinking that poetry can somehow be squared with science. I am not terribly good at it. I feel I have not yet grasped a way to do it so it stands up into reality. Part of the problem of poetry is that it is so easily a subjective delusion, a romantic and idealized or ‘imaginal’ fiction, without real thinking or test against reality. I keep trying against to do poetry as science, against the odds. So much of the basis and practice of poetry is questionable. A poetry that serves Marxism or capitalism, Buddhism or Sufism seems inherently flawed, hard to take seriously⁹³³ Indeed, I have largely rejected poetry, with many provisos and exceptions. I have gone through phases of disliking poetry, and condemning it as being inherently flawed and prone to spiritual magnifications. Indeed, I think I dislike poetry more than I ever have. Yet I return to it now and then, never quite satisfied.

I should add that I also love it, and keep doing it, though I am probably not a poet at all. I am an ‘apoet’ pronounced apo-et, and like ‘sanspoetry’.. Indeed some of my critics have said as much and there may be truth to that. I find words to be empty symbols no matter how hard one tries to infuse them with life. Too often poetry fails. Or rather, it never quite struck me as true, even though I tried very hard, as language

⁹³³ See a film about Jack here. The Red Poet:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eWHTzYbCypc>

seems to be a very flawed medium. I often think that words alone on a page look like they are starving for meaning and images. I feel better about poems only when they have been expanded and made specific with paintings and drawings. I have tried to write poetry that is closer to science and images. Prose is at least less subjective and able to be checked against facts. But poetry alone rarely works, and is best done as a support to drawn and painted works, which counter the subjective fact of poetry with a strong tie to objective reality..

That said, I hasten to add that I think Plato disliked poetry for all the wrong reasons. He wanted to banish the poets because he wished to safeguard reactionary and oppressive religious doctrines against questions and criticisms. Plato believed in the infallibility of the state and wants a system of total control of expression, free speech, the arts and all the behavior of the citizens of the state. In particular Plato argues that Homer in the Iliad committed a serious error in showing Achilles as being fallible and having weaknesses. Plato thought the youth of the ideal state would only be shown positive, infallible images of wars and warriors. In short, Plato wants poetry to serve only as propaganda for totalitarian power. Plato's is a poetry of theofascism. I dislike poetry artly because Plato's theory triumphed, ---from Dante to Pound poetry is largely a subjective religion of dreams.. Poetry does serve power, with a few exceptions. . This is true in Jack too, though in his case, it is a communist vision that is served, with pretend selflessness.

Sure, there are few poets who question power, but most artists and poets end up serving it. Poetry is largely reactionary. Mayakovsky ended up serving Stalin. Dante served the Church. Ezra Pound served Mussolini, Barks served the false dreams of Rumi and the Koran and Muhammad. Ginsberg served a form of anti-rational Guru centered Buddhism. My friend Jack thought Stalin was grand. I know poets who serve Zen or Christ or the Goddess, Stalin or the Communist state. In all these cases, they want to go back to a reactionary and archaic world

view. They want to lie to serve the truth and what kind of truth can be founded telling lies?

Poets love superstitious, leaps away from logic, words and the myths they serve and are unable to question them in the interest of facts and things, without fictional adornments and flourishes. Richard Dawkins is quite right in the book Unweaving the Rainbow, where he takes poets to task for being woefully unscientific and pandering allot of absurd nonsense and ignorance. It is true that there has yet to be a poet of the “scientific era”. Most poets would agree with Poe that science is the enemy of poetry. Poe, in his "Sonnet, to Science" says that

Science! True daughter of Odd Time thou art!
Who alterest all things with thy peering eyes.
Why preyest thou thus upon the poet's heart,
Vulture, whose wings are dull realities?
How should he love thee?

This foolish and reactionary hatred of science is quite common among poets. This alone makes poetry questionable. Blake has the same hatred as do most of the romantics and their followers down to the present. This is unfortunate, and to the degree that poetry is anti-science, I think it well ignored. The subjectivism of romantic poetry is what makes it easily serviceable to the most reactionary and violent regimes and systems of knowledge. It's refusal to look at facts renders it available to any system of make believe and it easily falls into the theofascism, as can be seen from the Bhagavad Gita or the Ramayana to Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot. The most poetic events of the last 500 years are scientific insights and accomplishments. Dante and Shakespeare pale in comparison to the finding of the Americas or the discovery that the earth revolves around the sun. The anatomical awareness of the

human body that Da Vinci achieved makes Marlowe's or Goethe's paeans of praise of the beauty of Helen look rather silly. The human body in its actuality is far more poetic than idealized stereotypes. Stubbs did this with the horses body. I admire this Realism.

In the last 10 years I have been delicately taking apart the person I was in the 1980's-- What I have been taking apart is the old 'gnostic' tendency as I call it—the tendency to abstract, poetic, mystical efforts and transcendence. I do not accept that the world is "fallen" or that it is a "veil" behind which is a higher better reality. I did accept the idea of the Veil, as I have showed in an earlier chapter. I managed somehow to embody and explore many of the basic themes of religion and romanticism. Without having ever read him, I expressed or came to understand many of the basic ideas expressed in Novalis, for instance. I had assimilated so much of Rimbaud, Hirschman or Ginsberg I hardly needed to read Novalis, who I first heard of from Eddie Woods in Amsterdam. But even Eddie Woods greeted me in a green Nepalese bathrobe at the door of his 16th century house, and we spent half a day together and then met in Paris.⁹³⁴ His effort, as well as that of Biron Dyson, to bring about a mystical derangement of the senses, did not interest me. But I have dismantled all this mystical veil stuff, with great difficulty and some hardship over some 10-15 years.

In the end I gave up the search for the graal behind the veil, as it

⁹³⁴ Eddie Woods was apparently present when William Burroughs murdered his wife. I did not know this when I met Woods. I would have asked him about it. He excused Burroughs on the grounds that it was an "accident" since Burroughs was drunk. But Woods did not strike me as a man whose opinion seemed entirely reliable. For years I have avoided Burroughs writings as he seems to be a man with something important missing from his heart. Indeed, I found many of the Beats to have something missing. I spent enough time around them to want to leave them and never wished to return. They turned me against the poetry and fiction of our time in various ways, which like so much modern art, seemed to be a dead end. They were too interested in drugs and often had a sort of moral insanity. The "scene" struck me as a "zoo of egos", though I later thought that metaphor too unkind to animals..They caged the Phoenix, and turned it into a ragged bird to injured to have any magic left in it.

were. I gave up the wish to pass through the Veil or enter the Utopian golden age. I began to unravel the intimate effects of these gnostic beliefs upon my mind and body. It took me a long time to realize the myths were fairy tales and the poets and seers were not prophets but sad and lonely men and women desperate to give life another meaning than the one governments, business and industry imposed. I understood their need for this. I had longed for a voice to speak through me. I wanted to be a vehicle of transcendent fervor. It was a noble desire once upon a time. I was willing at times to die for such a voice. But when I looked at the reality of it, what was it really about? I loved these mythic stories of transcendence too. Christ supposedly resurrected, Mayakovsky with clouds in his trousers, Buddha, protected in youth and then exposed to all the grossness of sickness and death and then have overcome all suffering and existence, this is great fiction. I wish it were true. This is high 'bread and circus' nonsense to stupefy and soothe the masses. But I saw that religious ecstasies, and I was one of those for a time, are not humble people at all, but rather people who long to be the voice of an absolute power. Transcendental magnification and bogus humility are learned as behavioral and ideological gestalts. Giving up transcendence is giving up the drive for power, giving up the desire for the ultimate voice, giving up fiction. This is not easy. I do not mean one should become the dupe of anybody or anyone's victim. We must accept life as it is and try not to invent an imaginary, gnostic, reality to rule over us.

I have largely, if incompletely, unraveled the notion of the philosopher or poet as prophet. Once I began to take apart the gnostic ideology behind romantic idealizations, I began to see that the whole ideology of prophets and seers is really just a form of social magnification of an individual who claims power for a certain set of ideas. For instance, Moses in the Bible is a Prophet who claims power for Judaism. Muhammad claims power for Islam. Jesus is a fiction created

in the first two centuries C.E. Jesus was a poet/prophet for the Roman Empire as Muhammed was poet for the Arab empire. Whitman tries to be the prophet of the American Empire. Such claims can no longer be taken seriously, except by increasingly disjointed and small groups of religious people, cranks and dreamers. These are poets of death and I reject them.

... Identifying oneself with some degree of spiritual or secular prophetic status is a natural thing for a young poet, since anyone sensitive is likely to be in opposition to the horrors and injustices engendered by a corporate society. This is seemingly reasonable. Poetry involves a certain receptivity to one's own mind and experience and sometimes writing can take on an aspect of having almost been "received" from another voice other than oneself. But really, is it true? Sometimes aesthetic elation can go afoul of both reality and ethics. It is a tragic fact of my own life as a young poet that I really thought I could achieve some final completed vision and like Rimbaud's claim that "I will possess the truth in one body and soul". But this is exactly the problem of gnostic inflation. The drive for total knowledge creates atrocities, both in Rimbaud's life and in history in general. One can find examples of this all through history. Transcendence in poetry or history is a lie and the effort to achieve it creates horrors. Even Goethe came to see this at the end of his Faustus and he makes Faust an ordinary man, not a piece of porpoganda for the Catholic Church, which is what the orginal Faust was. The same is true of Guenon too. His early desire to be a poet came true and the Reign of Quantity is his masterpiece of deluded horrors,, a piece of utter devastation even as he seeks to go beyond the world. The desire to possess "the total truth in one's body and soul "is a vain desire that hides behind it a will to power. It ends in devastation, as most of Beat Poetry ended there.

That is partly why poetic claims to be a seer or prophet should not

be exaggerated. It should be abandoned. This is what I abandoned in Hirschman, Chomsky and Schuon. It is tempting to exaggerate creative work as having an invisible source, coming from gods. It gives the imprimatur of stern authority. Even Noam Chomsky, a few years ago, tried to suggest that he is like Socrates or some of the biblical prophets in his opposition to American corporate and governmental abuse both in the U.S. and abroad. Edward Said, who was a student of Chomsky, calls “intellectuals”⁹³⁵ or prophets out of the same tendency. While I love Chomsky for his admirable opposition to corporate power, and Said for his critique of western fiction, their comparison of themselves to the biblical prophets was embarrassing.⁹³⁶

Why does the idea of the prophet, which interested me so much in my youth, now seem embarrassing?

It is important for those in opposition to unjust powers to not become inflated with such missionary delusions. To some degree Chomsky has encouraged a cult about himself, as Hirschman did too. Identifying himself with the biblical prophets encourages an identification by his followers with the cult leader. A cult of personality develops that is independent of Chomsky's otherwise interesting insights about corporate society. The reason this occurred is complex and has to do with Chomsky trying to attach himself to a symbolic form of power.

⁹³⁵ Said, Edward *Representations of the Intellectual: The 1993 Reith Lectures* (1994),

⁹³⁶ I sometimes wonder if the “Big Bang” might be a similar slippage of thought, extrapolating from facts to the rather outrageous claim that there was once a “singularity” that produced space and time and matter. Some physicists even extrapolate from that extrapolation that conditions that created space and time might have been created by a prior universe that shrank down to nothing and then blew up again. How something gets created out of nothing is nowhere explained. It has the smell of a creation story, which are also extrapolations that sounded reasonable to those who were served by them. I have no idea what the truth is here, but skepticism is certainly warranted about it. Big Bang theories are math theories and one has to be very careful of mathematical theories that have no physical evidence to prove them reasonably and completely. Math too can be used to create fictions. Cosmological theories about the origin of the universe have the characteristics of elaborate fictions, as do religious fictions.

The image of the prophet is a ready-made form that an intellectual, at odds with the powers of his age, can invoke to bolster himself. It is all about self-magnification. Being a social critic is one thing, but being a prophet is much more, indeed, ridiculously more. I object to this sort of gnostic inflation because it connects Chomsky, or anyone else, with a system of knowledge and power and helps create a cult. If Chomsky simply remained a public intellectual without any claim to a prophetic mandate, there would be nothing to object to. I don't object to most of the content of Chomsky's social analysis and criticism, which I often agree with. I object to his encouraging a cult like atmosphere around himself. In Hirschman it is more complex as I knew him much more personally than I know Chomsky.

The claim to be a prophet is a claim to a special authority or peerless access to the "truth". It is basically a way of trying to inflate oneself and confer on oneself divine power and authority. I studied examples of the desire to be a prophet that were so ridiculous and inflated that I finally realized that the prophetic and Romantic tradition must be questioned. In Schuon and Guenon this reached pathological, delusional and paranoid proportions. Schuon claimed to be an "avatara" or a "manifestation of the logos". But I saw similar manifestation of this in Hirschman, Chomsky and many others, both in people I knew in my own life and others in books and accounts.

The presence of claims to prophethood in modern poetry go back to the 19th century and are part of the romantic rebellion against scientism and rationalism. One can see the notion of prophethood developing in Holderlin, Goethe, Rilke, Heidegger, Nietzsche and the traditionalists, as well as in 20th century poets from Crane to Ginsberg. There are also hints of this in Marx and in a different way, in Hitler and Stalin. So this had to be thought through and rejected, which is what these books do. In addition I also analyze mythic persons, such as

Muhammad, Buddha and Christ, which are more ancient examples of the same tendency and I reject them too.

Part b: The History of Poetry

The gnostic myth proclaims the true poet is a prophet, creating an utterance which serves a rejuvenating function by giving people new vision of their lives. Prophetic gnosticism combines the expectation of radical change of the world in a violent cataclysm, the overthrow of human conditions as they exist, the establishment of a glorious kingdom of God, a new state, as in Marx, or the attainment of some kind of salvation for some and punishment for others, after death. The claim to be a prophet is a claim to be a spokesman for something larger than oneself, a god, a state, an ideology. It is a claim to power, as Nietzsche claims power in his Zarathustra, or Mao Tse Dong claims a certain kind of Marxist prophetic power in his apocalyptic "Red Book". Prophets usually end up giving sanction to large scale murder. Mao and Lenin are theofascists too, in a certain sense. The claim to ultimate power and vision and a willingness to violate others is characteristic of all theofascism. Marx created the "Human", as God, and Yuval Harari does the same thing in recent books, foolishly and without understanding what he is doing, in my view.

This effort to create or invoke a supra-individual being which others can identify with involves a kind of gnostic inflation. Novalis speaks of this inflation. He writes that Poetry is "the exaltation of man above himself" and that the "poet is all knowing, he is the actual world in miniature". This gnostic inflation, or need to identify man with totality and the transcendent is what I have rejected as the basis of my own poetics. There are different sorts of gnostic inflation in poetry. Dante for

instance, magnifies the image of the poet in accord with Catholic doctrines and teachings, relegating to hell those that do not follow such teachings. Chinese poetry tends to favor the “son of heaven”—a mystical inflation of Taoist/Confucian themes, Taoist aesthetics often tries to inflate nature as symbolic of concepts dear to the Taoist/Confucian state or world view. In modern poetry there is a similar inflation, though the terms of the inflation tend to be secular, as in Rilke and his Angel, a secular vision further inflated and magnified by Heidegger in his essays on Rilke and poetry. Hirshman loved that Heidegger did this. I dislike it.

The reasons I rejected the image of poet as prophet are various. The most obvious reason is that inflated poetry serves systems power. There is no evidence at all that any “revelation” is true or real. But the reason for this is somewhat complex. The problem is that most systems of “revelation” define humanity as fundamentally lacking and in need of radical improvement, usually by some violent imposition. Since the God of the Hindus, Christians and Moslems does not exist, it must be imposed by force, using the caste system, the Inquisition, mind control techniques or threats of hell. Only the Church, capitalism or the revolutionary party can right what is wrong with humanity. It is assumed that only force, violence or radical change can right the alienated universe and return humanity to the ideal state. It is this that I reject in myth and systems of knowledge/power. The religious expression of this is theofascism, and one could make up other names for this sort of fascism, which might be secular. Perhaps transcendofascism or totalofascism or Maoistfascism, combining three of the 20th century tyrants , or even more convoluted would be TorquemadaInnoStalinism, combining all five of the bad men of the last thousand years of religious and secular mega-tyrants. But while making up such huge concept-words might explain a lot, pronouncing them is nearly impossible.

The notion of a transcendent overman, prophet or seer had many negative consequences in history as well as on my own life“ One can see fairly clearly, for instance, how the prophetic claims of a poet like Mayakovsky transformed his secular poetry into a quasi-religious panegyric made up of ecstatic verses for the virtually sainted Vladimir Lenin. This iconic hero worship, so akin to Byzantine authoritarian worship, or hagiography, ignored all the people that were dying in the procession of the Marxist ecstasy that flowed subsequent to the revolution.. I desire no such crucifixions or the ecstatic trances that go with such upheavals of purity. I do not long to be a prophet of absolute or total truth. I want to spend what time I have left on a real earth, trying to honor such things as I can love, children and leaves, my house and the woods, ducks and the clouds, air and space, and trying to do what little I can to make earth a little safer and less threatened. This does not involve being a prophet at all, but rather an ordinary person.

’ Blake states somewhere that being a prophet is really about nothing more than looking with one's eyes, being aware of the tendencies of the times that one lives in. Blake states that "Every honest man is a Prophet: he utters his opinion both of private and public matters.". This makes the whole idea of prophethood rather democratic and logically, makes the whole notion of prophethood rather silly, which it is, in fact. For Blake, at least at some point in his life, everyone is a prophet who looks at the world as it is as much as one can. This is rather like Ed Said's notion of the public intellectual. One can oneself see what is going on all around. If everyone is potentially a prophet merely by means of opening one's eyes, there is no need of prophets. The concept is an absurd magnified and inflated, transcendent bafoonery. To understand why Blake himself did not follow his own insight in the matter is fairly complex. But to give a simple answer without writing a dissertation about it. I must explain a few things.

Blake was writing just after the American and French revolutions, and his poetry is decidedly with the revolutionaries in these battles. In order to justify the new regimes of power, Blake tried to create a system of poetic thought that could address the new world being created by the overthrown kings of England and France. Indeed, Blake's effort to turn aristocracy and religion on its head is very interesting. We don't really need prophets or religion to do this, but Blake himself was not yet ready to take this step. He lived nearly 200 years ago and we can take this step, now, easily. We know far more than he did about how systems of power and knowledge operate. Some like to quote Blake as being against "reason", and yes, he was opposed to impersonal intellectual dogmatism, rationalistic tyranny, as he saw it. He specifically cites John Locke and Isaac Newton as being examples of this tendency. But is wrong to condemn Newton. Locke is a complex case I will leave to the side.

Blake himself wrote one the most complex intellectual "systems" in 19th century literature and he justifies this, in his words, on the grounds that "I must create my own system or be enslaved by another mans". He did not need to make it so unreadable, as Joyce and Hirschman did not need to do that either. Scholars are still trying to figure out what Blake was talking about in his later works. They are hopelessly obscure, particularly his last 'great' poem, Jerusalem,--- despite its marvelous illustrations. Certainly Blake did not deny using his mind, he only denied exclusive dependence on the mind. But I object to Blake's increasingly 'arcane' use of symbolism and part of this is due, I think, to Blake not admitting that prophecy, after the over throw of kings and aristocrats, was no longer needed.

All that was needed was a clear eyed exposition of what the facts are about power and human rights. His earlier work is much clearer and incisive on these matters. Later Blake claims in a letter to his friend Butts that, "I am under the direction of Messengers from Heaven Daily

and Nightly”. This is silly posing for an audience, like Baudelaire, or Hirschman’s need to be like the Golem or Stalin to project himself into a scary pre-made Icon. Blake came increasingly to have this sort of paranoid delusion as he got older and was neglected and scorned by his contemporaries. But there can be no doubt that Blake was an early champion of human rights, or what his friend Tom Paine called the Rights of Man. He points the way to a poetry without religion and ultimately to a poetry based on nature and human rights. But Blake did not achieve this himself. He was still attaching his poetry to a very odd form of heretical Christianity. To go beyond Blake’s mistakes is to accept reality and deny prophethood and transcendence. Painters like Millais, Herkomer, Holl, Courbet or Vincent, especially in his earlier work, begin to see beyond Blake. Realism, not of the Maoist sort, but of an ordinary reality is what art is about after Blake and on up to the present.⁹³⁷

Blake's claim to a prophethood and the accompanying paranoid delusions of grandeur would haunt various poets and artists in the 19th and 20th century. When one comes to understand that such inflated discourse is a reaction to political forces and unjust powers, one can begin to appreciate the human drama that is present in so much literature after Blake. Blake is an early example of the tendency of literature to take the place of religion in a society where orthodox religion has been largely discredited by science. Hirschman’s effort to glorify the Nazi Heidegger is an example of trying to preserve religion in a “secular” society.

I can see in Blake and many poets who came after him, a struggle between rational and irrational elements in the 20th century culture. There are various ways to look at the allegedly rationalist and

⁹³⁷ I made a museum art show about this in 2017 here:
<http://www.naturesrights.com/StayingAmazed.pdf>

irrationalist tendencies of 19th century 'prophets' like Blake. The tendency to irrationalism in 19th century poetry is quite strong, and no doubt justified at the time, when early industrialization was then raging destructively across the world. It is also true, as Bertrand Russell shows in his essays on the Romantics in his History of Philosophy, that the irrationalism of Byron and other romantics led strait to Hitler. To untangle the mess of relations between poetry, philosophy and political regimes is not always easy. But it becomes clear to me over ten years ago that poetry can indeed bolster, inflate and sing hymns for destructive causes. This is obvious in the case of the Bible and Koran, which are fiction and thus literature or poetry, which have justified many blood baths. But this is less obvious in the works of Homer. I wrote in an essay called "Deconstructing the Great Books: Homer, Plato and Gnostic Traditionalism" that

Plato wanted to strip Greek mythology of its local color, of its background in the tribal city-states with their Shamanistic values, and to replace the religion of Greece with a universal set of concepts that could apply to anyone, anywhere. The process of turning the symbolic and mythological concerns of Homer into ideological and increasingly sublimated, rationalistic, metaphysical and political explanations in Plato is a process that enormously extends the scope and ambition of Greece. Plato's abstract conceptions can be applied to society more concretely and uniformly than the local mythology of Homer and this allows of a greater degree of precision and control.

Plato hated poetry and banished it from his Republic because it got in the way of his need of centralized and totalistic control of people's minds by the elite. Only his poetry would be paramount. The poetry of

Homer made the gods look questionable and did not serve the sort of power Plato wanted to create. Plato's theory of art is as repressive as the Nazis. Plato did not want a poetry that could question gods. He wanted poetry to serve 'god' and the god/state only. Historically speaking, poetry has not been on the side of the small and the impure. Poetry does serve power, most of the time. Homer's poetry, for instance is also about social control and correct behavior, however Plato might have thought it too liberal. Shakespeare's plays are very conservative and support Christian and monarchist, almost a Catholic mentality. In modern poetry there are similar tendencies at play, though in ways that differ from Plato and Homer. Think of Whitman and his paean to Manifest Destiny, Ezra Pounds fascism or Eliot's affinity with the Nazi anti-Semitism.

This is a valuable insight that the "process of turning the symbolic and mythological concerns of Homer into ideological and increasingly sublimated, rationalistic, metaphysical and political explanations", as I explained it years ago. There is a close relationship between myth and power structures, religion and economics, symbol systems and ideologies. One finds in the romantic, gnostic and prophetic tendencies in modern poetry a similar service to social control and inflation of power. The secular state too often becomes a vehicle of elite rapaciousness as it has in our day with the corporate state.

Poetry is a negative force in the case Martin Heidegger for instance, who developed his romantic theory of Poetics while being a Nazi. Ezra Pound advocated for Italian fascism and Mayakovsky naively supported a fascist sort of communism. Mayakovsky was ultimately duped by Stalinism. Stalin's rationalism becomes a kind of insane system of control, as Orwell's satire suggested in his 1984, and subsequent historians have demonstrated. Both Neruda and my friend Jack Hirschman devoted some of their poetry to trying to justify Stalinist themes. Though in the case of Neruda, he finally admitted that

supporting Stalin was a mistake. Hirschman made the mistake of thinking himself a sort of vehicle of universal self as if he were the embodiment of the 'people'. "Me the people" was what Jack's Arcanes claimed.⁹³⁸ Of course one man cannot be everyone, and the attempt to become so creates an injustice. The problem here is again symbolist, romantic thinking and a tendency to extrapolate to gigantic metaphors. This is due, again, to the transcendent solipsism inherent in romantic thought and feeling.

Transcendental egotism, one of the signal passions of the romantics, inevitably becomes an excuse for killing those who do not conform to the vision of divine or quasi-divine order. For instance, Jack imagines his home town, New York city, being wiped out.⁹³⁹ He wants this for the sake of 'justice', in his "Dodona Arcane". This hatred of the financial sector in New York might be justified, as Wall street gathers billions at the expense of ordinary people all over the world. But killing people to exact revenge is a different matter, as we saw in the airplanes that flew into the World Trade Centers, on purpose. This was one Islamic ideology attacking another 'free market ideology' which had harmed the first to begin with. Islam attacked capitalism in retaliation and neither were in the right. The net effect of this crime,- it was not an act of war, as was falsely claimed,-- was to fuel the forces of the very far right and make torture and surveillance allowable and justify wars that were unjustifiable. It also helped reactionary regimes in the Middle East become even more powerful and terroristic. It has the same baneful effect in the US, wich

⁹³⁸ One has to deconstruct such delusions to make sense of them. Take them apart, look at their parts, understand how they came to be. One thing I did learn from Jack too, is that religion and politics are really the same thing, both being manifestations of power systems and symbol manipulations and they hide behind each other in different times and venues. This is an important insight behind this book (to learn more about Jack see the movie the Red Poet, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eWHTzYbCypc>

⁹³⁹ His fantasy of burning New York is graphic.... "For this Manhattan also must go, and the Bronx and Brooklyn too..... it's all gonna light the rain sulphuric in this here town gonna burn, with flames on all five sides, and uptown and down "Arcanes, Ist volume: Pg 220

the white house now occupied by a real psychopath. None of this need have happened, and could have been prevented if states were held back from becoming transcendental systems. Trump, who said in front of the UN Assembly that he wants to “totally destroy North Korea.” and kill 25 million North Koreans, should go to jail for saying that. Such death threats are illegal and should result in his immediate impeachment. He threatens nuclear weapons use, (Sept 2017) and he would kill the old, babies, animals, trees, insects and everything in the range of these horrible bombs. Only a very bad man would say such a thing and only a criminal mind would do it. I did not like Jack’s tendency to want to kill people, his support of killers, and nor do I like it in Trump either. This is childish war mongering of the worst kind and psychopathic. These are ideological monsters.

Jack’s esoteric communism had destruction in view to achieve his elite and esoteric changes in history as a “sea of fists upraised in the teeming mix” (ibid. pg 221). I had no sympathy with that part of Jack, which I saw as a weakness of his. He wanted death, to get revenge for the abuses of the rich, like Robespierre. The problem with the rich is precisely their presumptive theft of money to themselves. This is what needs to be stopped. Instead of showing the injustice of American capitalism as an autocratic structure, he identifies with a Palestinian suicide bomber in the “Yakov Arcane”. “I am Ali in the dynamite stick in Palestine”, he writes. He identifies himself with Vietnamese killers too. These paranoid fantasies are belied by the fact that Jack is mostly a coffee drinker in North Beach Cafes and has been for 40 years. This is the old romance of apocalyptic murders out of which comes the shining new world order, heaven, a Marxist paradise. This heaven on earth will never happen by these means, it will merely continue on with revenge

and counter revenge. The martyred⁹⁴⁰ need of violent transcendence is typical of theofascist ideology. Guenon played on this paranoid theme all his life and the fiction of Jesus's second coming or other transcendent murders happen precisely because of this madness and hate blown up or magnified by religion or ideology.

His book, *Arcanes 1* was psychopathic, embraced killing without remorse, as in *Dodona Arcane*, where he imagines killing everyone in New York City--- nonsense really, an excuse of his excessive subjectivity to try to be objective and failing. Murderers think they are divine, as Jack does. Of course he hasn't killed anyone, just as he has not ever really been a Marxist. He is a San Francisco guy who really is nowhere at home anywhere but in the dreams of Rilke, Heidegger and the pretend world of Stalin as a nice guy. Stalin would have rejected him as an excessively individualized, late capitalist Sadean libertine, and put him in a Siberian camp. Hitler also would have rejected him as a decadent esoteric surrealist, as the Hitler regime rejected Julius Evola, as a surrealist aristocrat, and put him in a camp too. Only in San Francisco is Hirschman possible as a "gutter aristocrat" in Jack's own words. Most of Jack's work is thus mirrors, poses and masks. He is not a Stalinist, but uses Stalin as a pose, he is not a Nazi, but uses Heidegger, who supported the Nazis, as another mask, mirror and pose. He plays games

⁹⁴⁰ Pg 836 of the *Arcanes* has the usual martyrdom complex, "that is why they step on even the memory of my face". Stalin had this martyr complex too.

with words and concepts to try to get reactions. His notion of “revolution” is a religious fiction, an apocalypse that will never happen. The new book, *Arcanes 2*, is better, a little, than *Arcanes 1*, partly because he is old now, and his defenses, which are like the Jewish or Trumps Wall, are coming down a bit. Reality seems to be invading the surrealist mask. Not enough, of course. He is still writing mostly romantic fiction of a psychological kind. Most of what he says is not real at all. But there is some overlap with reality and that is where Jack is interesting. The California Arcane, the Arcane for Kristen Wetterhahn, the Golden Gate Arcane, all have some reality in it. His politics is murderous and war mongering, often, and that should be rejected, but usually he is just Bernie Sanders on steroids, and that is more or less harmless and on occasion, even a good thing. The sexual punography is mostly onanistic twaddle, of an obsessive and Joycean kind, like *Finnegan’s wake*, one dirty joke after another, and empty, or “nothing” as he likes to call it. He is unaware how the ‘nothing’ is an outgrowth of his own narcissism and moral hypocrisy as well as the Heideggerian religion. For instance, he dreams in one Arcane of Suicide Bombers getting Marxist praises for killing people, and that misogynistic or cultish brutality is mocked by his own Arcane about feeling sorry for himself when a woman kicks him out of a bus. Hypocrisy: Violence toward others, self pity towards himself when violence is done against him. He is ready to have anyone else die for the ‘cause’, but cries when anyone suggests he die for it.

So to take a few examples from his big new Book. There is a poem , “the Sugarblue Arcane”, justifying the violence and brutality of boxing. He tries to tie this to some sort of crucifixions resurrection nonsense, or rather a Marxist chiliasm. I am against this glorification of violence as

part of a ‘necessary historical dialectic’. This is merely an ideology of violence justified by false assimilations. Violence of the sort Jack approves of tends to call forth sublime and intoxicated glorifications.

His poem the Soviet Cenotaph Arcane is really just personal projection of untruth upon an untruth. He not know what he is talking about. Exalting this huge piece of Russian Kitsch, which is what it is in fact, is absurd. It is a kitch series of sculptures, meant to glorify Stalin and Russian soldiers, when, in fact they were as guilty as the Nazis, or the Americans and British in killing millions. It makes him a kitchy writer, a sort of purveyor of false pastiche and undigested material. To know what sank the Soviet Union, in the 1990’s, one has to study the actual history. Jack falls for Stalinist propognda, and doesn’t know it. The Soviets sank themselves under their own corruption, as you can see clearly in Putin, who was himself part of the old corruption. One should not make up history as you go along. As to Uncle Joe liking kids, that too is junk history, mere propaganda, as Stalin’s own daughter shows, rather despite herself.-- It is not ironic that the maker of so much propaganda should himself be a dupe for it. The deification of Stalin in his poem is absurd since Stalin did indeed kills millions, inciduding Germans. It is true that Hitler killed more. But it scarcely matters. Stalin creted the propaganda sculptures in Berlin to excuse and justify his own killings, and hide them behnd a false humanitarian propaganda. Jack’s confusion between the two men is a function of his really hopeless, romantic subjectivism. ⁹⁴¹

⁹⁴¹ See Timothy Synder’s Hitler and Stalin Who Killed More? Here:

<http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2011/03/10/hitler-vs-stalin-who-killed-more/>

Since the opening of the Russian files it is possible to assess who both Stalin and Hitler were, and how they killed millions between them. I have been saying that to Jack for years, and it turns out the facts support me, not him.

Synder writes: “All in all, the Germans deliberately killed about 11 million noncombatants, a figure that rises to more than 12 million if foreseeable deaths from deportation, hunger, and sentences in concentration camps are included. For the Soviets during the Stalin period, the

His politics is murderous and war mongering, often, and that should be rejected, but usually he is just Bernie Sanders on steroids, and that is more or less harmless and on occasion, even a good thing. The sexual punography is mostly onanistic twaddle, of an obsessive and Joycean kind, like Finnegans wake, one dirty joke after another, and empty, or “nothing” as he likes to call it. He is unaware how the ‘nothing’ is an outgrowth of his own narcissism and moral hypocrisy as well as the Heideggerian religion. For instance, he dreams in one Arcane of Suicide Bombers getting Marxist praises for killing people, and that misogynistic or cultish brutality is mocked by his own Arcane about feeling sorry for himself when a woman kicks him out of a bus. Hypocrisy: Violence toward others, self pity towards himself when violence is done against him. He is ready to have anyone else die for the ‘cause’, but cries when anyone suggests he die for it. If you oppose his wandering subjective whims you are a “fascist”, just as anyone who opposes a fanatic

analogous figures are approximately six million and nine million. These figures are of course subject to revision, but it is very unlikely that the consensus will change again as radically as it has since the opening of Eastern European archives in the 1990s.”

And further: How to count the battlefield casualties of World War II in Europe, not considered here? It was a war that Hitler wanted, and so German responsibility must predominate; but in the event it began with a German-Soviet alliance and a cooperative invasion of Poland in 1939. Somewhere near the Stalinist ledger must belong the thirty million or more Chinese starved during the Great Leap Forward, as Mao followed Stalin’s model of collectivization.* The special quality of Nazi racism is not diluted by the historical observation that Stalin’s motivations were sometimes national or ethnic. The pool of evil simply grows deeper.

The most fundamental proximity of the two regimes, in my view, is not ideological but geographical. Given that the Nazis and the Stalinists tended to kill in the same places, in the lands between Berlin and Moscow, and given that they were, at different times, rivals, allies, and enemies, we must take seriously the possibility that some of the death and destruction wrought in the lands between was their mutual responsibility. What can we make of the fact, for example, that the lands that suffered most during the war were those occupied not once or twice but three times: by the Soviets in 1939, the Germans in 1941, and the Soviets again in 1944?

traditionalist Catholic is the devil. 'Them verses Us' thinking,

As I said: Psychopathic. I have always thought so, actually, since I left him in 1979 and never went back. Indeed, Jack, more than anyone, turned me against poetry, though it was the whole sordid, drug soaked, pedophiliac, life destroying scene in San Francisco that did it too. Poetry lies too much, and Jack's work is a good example of this. It was clear to me that he was creating a sort of cultish atmosphere around himself, and I was duped by the endless projections of his paranoid mirror and mask making. The few times I saw him since then merely showed me he would do anything for fame, was lying to himself about nearly everything and needed to be greater than anyone. Jack's solipsistic fanaticism was designed to keep himself from very real, objective, critical assessment. I think he was deeply mistaken about reality in general. His subjectivistic self was an invention, a falsehood, like the way he used Marx, when actually he was a New Yorker making up a Pasolini fiction of sex and death.

I came to see that that is why he likes to use words that no one knows the meaning of—he peppers and salts his poems with them, like a strange esoteric stew. He hides behind the resulting mis-mash sounding erudite, but really lacking in much to say, contradicting himself with each flash of subjective free association, like a surrealist drugged up with himself as the drug. He does not really think so much as free associate. I have criticized him for obfuscating so much, hiding behind incomprehensible words, and typical of man who is only interested in unjust power, he denies all just and constructive criticisms and keeps on promoting fictions and obfuscations, so few can read what he is really saying. He is a religious poet, by which I mean the world he makes up is largely of his own invention.

This process, in Hirschman, of magnifying motives on the basis of myth, politics and religious images is very ancient and clearly was created to sustain social powers by religions and elites. Killing is nearly always part of this. Kings and Presidents like to evoke god to justify unjust actions. Variations on this effort are legion. Whitman's effort to identify himself with a kind of magnified, supreme democratic self has some unpleasant features too, however it might be wonderful in other ways. Whitman's nationalist grandiose self, Nietzsche's Zarathustra and some of Wagner's Heroes have much in common. Such operatic nationalistic, quasi-religious poetry too easily contributes to a kind of spiritual notion of a state or a people and this is a major cause of war. The idea of a prophetic poetry goes back to biblical notion of divine speech. The language of god, or the language of Marx, like the burning coal of Isaiah rammed down the throat of a poet, giving him the authority to voice absolute truth.. Of course the truth is that inflated speech is not thrust upon a poet, but rather springs out of him or her in relationship to a regime of power and knowledge. The prophet is the mouthpiece of social control. Jesus, Muhammad, Krishna, Buddha are all the creations of poets whose word became justifications for illegitimate powers.

So when Allen Ginsberg defends the notion of William Blake as his guru he is invoking a long tradition of poet's claiming to have a certain authority and claim to power. He is going backwards. Ginsberg also tried to make himself a sort of prophet. Ginsberg says of Blake that he is "an eighteenth century vehicle for the Western gnostic tradition that historically you can trace back to the same roots...that gave rise to Aryan, Zoroastrian, Manichean pre-Hindu yogas.⁹⁴² This effort to connect modern poetry to ancient religious systems is disturbing. Ginsberg wants to say that his poetics tie him back to a foundational mysticism. Ginsberg attempt to connect himself with Blake as the inheritor of a lost

⁹⁴² (Ginsberg, Partisan Review, 292)

gnostic, heretical tradition which has as its source the same source which created the Eastern religions. This claim to ancient authority is unnecessary and born of a need of power. It is not necessary to claim divine status or inheritance, a noble lineage of poets who have bloodlines of intellectual purity. Not only is this connection false, bogus, it is not even historically accurate. This mystical history is really just a history of similar delusions had by various people over time, Ginsburg being one of the more recent.

As much as the Beat Poets like Ginsberg, Gary Snyder or Jack Hirschman questioned the corruption of capitalism and religion in America,-- a valuable thing in itself--- they made the mistake of not questioning their adopted alternative power. Both Ginsberg and Snyder accepted Buddhism as their final answer. Neither questioned that the basis of Buddhism is founded on a world-denying mysticism and misogyny. Neither questioned the notion of Karma and its roots in caste and denigrations of animals and nature. Hirschman adopted a gnostic form of Marxism, an esoteric humanism unique to him, which actually serves his own fears, and is born of a religious need and a paranoid view of history. My answer to Blake, Ginsberg, Hirschman and Novalis is that there is no need of poets to be prophets anymore, no lineage of great men. Or great women for that matter. Terry Tempest Williams is an example of a gnostic writer with pretensions to being a prophetess. All this is laughable and absurd.

One of the things that really repulsed me about Jack and Ginsberg was their lust for fame. They both had this to a maximum. One night at the Savoy Tivoli I saw this quite concretely when Ginsberg had a long table in the café and all his disciples sat around him like he was Gautama Buddha or Jesus. I watched him interact most of the night and it repulsed me how much he enjoyed the guru worship. Jack supposedly hated Ginsberg, but he sucked up to him when he was in the café like he never criticized him. He kneeled next to Ginsberg like an hypocritical

postulant Judas and read him poetry which Ginsberg was not very interested in. The scene was such a satire on the mythical Last Supper I found myself laughing and being repulsed at the same time. Indeed, the need of fame for both men was the driving force of their careers and I did not respect that, as it created this sort of fawning followers to the Great Guru. I did not want poetry to be a side car to the search for fame. I realized it was this, for the most part, that made Erasmus complain about the folly of poetry and said of it that it is

“the general practice of our nobles andwise men who, throwing away all shame, hire some flattering orator or lying poet from whose mouth they may hear their praises, that is to say, mere lies;.. [and] swells a gnat to an elephant.”⁹⁴³

We need no more speeches, swelling gnats to elephants, delivered from Buddhist, Islamic, Marxist, Blakean, or Rilkean angels arriving from behind time. The notion of the poet as prophet must be questioned because the very idea of prophethood is about service to a system of knowledge, injustice and power. Blake served a strange amalgam of Christianity and Human Rights. Ginsberg served a strange Jewish/Buddhist form of anti-war, left leaning Buddhism. I don't see any reason to retain older or dying systems of power and knowledge as part of a "post-modern" poetry. In Ginsberg, Snyder and Hirschman post-modern poetry becomes a glued together pastiche of undigested bits of contradictory and largely unexamined multicultural bits and pieces. What is odd is that since the 1960's many poets have been trying to re-interpret distant cultures to our own liking, without paying much

⁹⁴³ In Praise of Folly, Desiderius Erasmus quoted from here:
http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/03d/1466-1536,_Erasmus_Roterodamus,_In_Praise_Of_Folly,_EN.pdf

attention to the context of the ideas we are adopting from China and India or other cultures. There is no analysis of these cultures from a critical perspective. It all gets adopted wholesale into multicultural American stew on sale at the Spiritual Supermarket.

What I want to resist is the whole notion of poets as priests, rabbis, holy men, shamans, sunyasis, prophets etc. Why not strip poetry of all these loaded over accretions, spiritual pastiche, misquoted pearls of wisdom and begin all over again at the basic facts of existing here in this world of unknowns, the world that science is really trying to reveal, in fact and not imagination? Such anyway is what I have asked myself these last years. Forget aabout myths and national states, and look at human beings, nature and animals in fact.

I did not know that I had made a religion out of literature until 1991. I had to think through all that I have said here on my own. I thought for a time that the poet has transcendent function, a secret connection to hidden worlds. Surrealists like Hirschman had taught me that. But I was mistaken. He was too, but would not be humble enough to admit it. City Lights books was a beacon to a lot of fake mysticism and self-destruction and in the end I was horrified by both alternatives, and could not help but blame Lawrence Ferlinghetti for some of this suffering and delusion.⁹⁴⁴ It was impossible to be a young poet in those days and not subscribe to some variant of the poet as prophet idea. I carried Rilke in my pocket, and don't read him anymore. He seems unreal, inflated

⁹⁴⁴ It is a good thing in some ways to have City Lights, as it is a sort of half-way house and citadel for the disaffected of American capitalism. There is much to be disaffected with. But on the other hand it makes the bookstore something of a clearing house for worldwide delusions, religions, cults, half-baked ideas and alternative anarchisms. While aspects of this are good, some of is not. It has caused a lot of suffering.

Jack Hirschman moved into a small hotel room across the street from City Lights and started trying to reflect all that. Some of what I disliked in Jack, his endorsement of violence and questionable political ideology especially, I also disliked in City Lights. The cult of fame, the fawning, the hypocrisy. I got tired of it pretty quickly and found the madness and anger hard to deal with in concentrated doses.

and drunk on his own feelings now. I read Dante in the old days like he actually knew something, but now I find him absurd, retrograde and cruel. I thought Rumi was an amazing surrealist long before Coleman Barks did his proselytizing using poorly translated texts based on him. I don't read him anymore either, he cannot be taken seriously, it is all dreaming or an unreal kind, creating a false 'other' and Sufi world that does not exist.. Neruda rightly thinks that Rilke is selling the "dead rinds" of mysticism. My earliest teachers and examples, Ginsberg, Hirschman and others all acted like secular prophets. Jack Hirschman still claims a certain prophetic, global mandate to speak for all of humanity. He derives this mandate from a strange combination of Kabbala, Marx and Heidegger. But I find these ideological aspects of Jack's work to be the weakest aspects of his poetics. He is still caught in the romantic web of violence and reaction. He is best when he speaks about being human without ideology. There is at least some reality mixed in with all the rest in the "teeming mix" and chaos of his work. But chaos it is and not something I want to emulate.

In the early 1980's, writing a long poem called The Nameless One, I thought I was writing one of humanities last poems about what the Last Man on earth might say about who we were. I believed my poem would tell the story of humanities demise in such powerful terms that it would reverse the course of history and stop the nuclear and environmental rape of the earth. A humble ambition, obviously. I did not know then that this was a theme already played out in Romantic paintings by John Martin and Caspar David Frederich, or the book by Mary Shelley. That was wishful thinking, to say the least. Nuclear weapons and 20th century atrocities scared me into religion, just as they scared Ginsberg and other poets. Other poets were scared into Marxism, which is itself a form of religion-like secular ideology. Maybe I was reacting against Jack Hirschman, whose Marxism was oppressive. Rationality and irrationality

became so confused that I could not tell where to turn for the truth. But eventually I saw that I had to deny the kind of knowledge that seeks ultimate power, including the romantic and gnostic forms of poetics that strains after ultimate meanings. I learned eventually that questioning all forms of knowledge caused injustice was the only real option left to me as a poet and artist. I began to grasp that the whole effort of the romantic poets was coming to an end. The world was not going to be remade in the image of an idealized New Jerusalem. The sad and ordinary world where I actually live, where anyone lives, was itself all that there is, and as a poet or artist I need to turn myself away from dreams and face the reality of what actually is here, present and existing. To use my mind and eyes and heart together to try to make protect an earth being harmed by abstract ideologies. To do this meant clearing away all the delusional detritus, the metaphysical dreams, the false freedoms of entrepreneurial free market lies and corruptions. One swims through delusion in America, while this same delusional market system is destroying the seas and real fish it exploits.

As a poet, should I retain the idea that I am a privileged seer? I don't think so. I am not interested either in claiming to divine election or to identifying myself with the will of a nation or party. Poets like Mayakovsky or Nazim Hikmet wrote to justify a party line or a state. I'm not sure poets do well to justify states, governments or corporate entities. Merrill Lynch, Burroughs adding machines, how does James Merrill and his Ouija Board and Burroughs and his cut and snip differ? Not much. The poetry of change and Dada is empty. I do not desire any more hymns to gods, virgins or allegedly perfect men that religions use to make the rest of humanity feel 'lesser than', as if being a man or woman made one a failure by virtue of birth. No more original sin, no demeaning everyone as "profane people" no beating up your friends with the ideal of the Perfect Marxist, perfect Gurdjieffian, perfect Christian, whatever.

I imagine a poetry that is like bird's lives, like water over rocks, like

my own private thoughts made public. I imagine a poetry of broken down old age, sagging bodies, accepting of the cruelty of time and life. The whole idea of the prophet as bringer of poetry and truth is based on the notion that there is a hidden reality behind our world that the prophet is in touch with. That idea is not true. There is no other reality beyond the earth and thus there is no need of a medium or specially elected channel or interlocutor to read the hidden signs behind time. Average folks have for centuries despised poetry because it is not practical and dreams silly dreams. They are right. I would like to bring poetry back down to burnt trees, broken arrows, carpentry, pottery, hospital hallways, turbulent attempts to educate children. Those who think science is yet another ideology are just wrong. Facts are facts, and women have babies, and animals want to live as much as us, and we are them too. Everyday I see road kill and not one of those animals run over is dragged off the road of shown any kindness by the by a driver who could care less about the animal they killed. The ancient people already knew this and animals and women are what ancient art is all about.

I like Neruda's poetry of the "impure". But I don't want to base poetry on a negative like the idea of impurity. I want to offer, like Neruda, if that were possible, a defense of the weak. I wish to advance arguments against chauvinists or those who would cloud everything in irrational obscurity. But Neruda was still mostly a humanist, despite his forays into collecting seashells and prying the geology of Chile. So I have abandoned poetry as prophecy and opted instead for a poetry that seeks the clarity of earth and natural light, clear streams, sun on San Francisco townhouses. A poetry of Plein Air and reason that has not abandoned sympathy. Not wallowing in martyrdom or glorying in shocking the complacent. A poetry that is adequate to being a human who lives in nature and in the world and is not ashamed. Poetry should not fall into spiritual escape, dreams of total fulfillment, gnosticism, subjective elitism, or advocacy of revolutionary violence. The

revolution must be inside us, changing how we see nature, insects or other humans. Killing can never be a means to bring about fairness. Prophets are no longer needed in a time where all that is really needed is to try to open the eyes. But it hard to convince anyone that little birds or learning to change diapers is more important than signaling through the flames, shouting a “barbaric yawp” or revolutionary “OM” or “Allahu Akbar” over the rooftops.

What excuse will poets have in the 21st century for being elitist or too obscure and arcane? Shall we serve the avaricious markets, the corporate elite in the gated mansions? Shall we serve dictators or tyrants, dictators of Religion, the Cyberscape, the Proletariat or dictators at the tops of skyscrapers. A real Poetry opposes all dictators, all power mongers, all fake combinations of word games designed to deceive or merely entertain. Democracy is not about caring more for CEOs than anyone else, it is about all people and all animals, plants forests and seas, even if this requires downsizing Ceo’s or even legislating them out of existence.. We have minds, and can use them, and hands to use, and we have hearts too and can use them too. We cannot face off against violators of human rights, logging companies and killers of animals without the use of minds, hands and reason. We reason because we love the forest, not because we want to rape it. We do not reason without science and without care of other beings. We use information when it is necessary to create arguments against those who destroy. We speak of what we love, but we are not irrationalists. I am not a transcendentalist. I want to feel the reality of this earth without gods or sublime beyond. The moon is real, Mars and Jupiter are real, but gods are not. Only this earth and this being, no other worlds or fictive beings. I say NO to life after death. This world alone is what matters. No one has ever proved that immortality is a fact, no one has every come back. The fact is that

the ideology of immortality is used to make humans superior to all other beings on earth and this is criminal. We are not superior.

' The last irrationalist was James Joyce, who wrote the supreme irrationalist text, Finnegan's Wake. This book is the final expression of subjective irrationalism. It might be a great book, if anyone could read it. It was selfish of him to make it so obscure. No one reads it, much less understands it. He spent 17 years creating an irrationalist Bible no one understands. Mere punography is most of it. We do not need to make Joyce's mistake, or Guenon's, Blake's, or Hirschman's. I use my mind because I love nature, not because I love the mind. What does nature itself say about what it is? How does one learn to look at things not just with "reason" and thus with an eye to knowledge that gives power and control, but with what Thoreau called a "sympathy with intelligence". To those who can respond to feeling, one uses feeling. To those who can only hear reasons, one gives reasons. To those who can have both sympathy and intelligence, one tries to befriend them. Neither love or intellect is complete. Intellect without love kills. Love without reason adores monsters. Poetry that goes to either extreme might be interesting, but it does not go to what we need in this time, which is poetry of deep love and poetry that is intelligent in the interests of those who neither participate in corporate exploitation or institutional chauvinism. Those who claim "purity" have proven to be hypocrites. I take my stand with the poetics of science, the impure and the ordinary. We do not want slavery back by another name. We do not want those who bust unions or who lie just so they can help the rich get richer.

I have given up the belief the poets are prophets of the transcendent, speakers of the hidden truth, revealers of the mysteries. It is enough for me that a poet is merely one who celebrates the actual, mourning when he or she needs to mourn, or praising what he or she

needs to praise. Listening to the simple realities of how life moves and flows, the actuality of sky and rain, sunlight and planets, plants and animals. A poet needs to separate her/himself the spinners of illusion and cororate abuse of technology through lies. A poetry that refuses the Heideggerian 'Leap', and that stays with skin and eyes and the way a child grows with awkward hands. I need a poetry of life, no matter how broken and small, a poetry of the fallibility and fragility of the earth. A poetry that studies the delicate movements of birds on branches, which does not deny reason, does not deify, does not worship the irrational and which looks at the world squarely and honestly, like an owl studying the ground with ears and eyes at night.

No more praise for fake gods or the false ideology of immortal fictions. The Beat poets left us with the ability to give up on the self destruction they sought, and so to forge a truly democratic poetry, not based on competition, and which serves no elite ideology. But I was disgusted with their self pity and their drug habits, as many were drunks, there was pedophilia in Ginsberg's and Trungpa's circle and many of them died of drugs or excessive alcohol. There was real carnage among them.⁹⁴⁵ Everyone has the right to be a poet, just as everyone has the right to sunlight and water and basic rights. There is no Orpheus, no poet that leads to a world beyond. I foreswear these pied pipers who would lead us to imaginary heavens that don't exist. I abjure the phoenixes in the cages and the conceit of me the people. I want a poetry that breathes real breaths. I give up and abjure the poetry of breathless abandonment to imaginary worlds beheld in deathless ecstasy. I no

⁹⁴⁵ I was in art school in SF in 1977 with a student named Richard Irwin, who was an interesting young man, but within a few years, by 87, he had destroyed his health and pushed himself over that edge and died young and foolishly largely under Beat influences, such as Ginsberg and more distantly Rimbaud. I saw Gregory Corso shoot Heroin one day. William Burroughs murdered his wife shooting an apple off her head and missing. He got away with manslaughter or something, when really it was irresponsible murder. There are other examples, but this should suffice to make my point.

longer believe in the poet as transcendent mystic. I wrote in my marriage poem that

I do not dream of being Orpheus anymore.
Birds and animals do not need
to be calmed with my song.
Agitations on earth are nearly all human caused.
It is we who need to be calmed by their songs.
Orpheus had it all upside down.
He sought to calm the wild world
with the civilized songs of his grief
born of the loss of the woman he loved.
How selfish was that?
And what good is the will of Orpheus
t“ conquer wild beasts now?
Let the jungle birds screech,
and the Elk bugle in the mist.
The only "beasts" on earth have two legs.

The song of Orpheus has mushroomed into a
symphony of destruction of nature.
Nature has lost so much more
than humans want to comprehend.
Too busy counting their advantages.
Who is there to offer solace
for the losses of forests and oceans?
Who comforts the Prairie
now calm and empty of 50 million buffalo?
Oh Orpheus, they call you the first poet

but I am not related to you
and renounce the Orphic patrimony.

I long to write non-poem poems, apoems. No more sapphire transcendence or love affairs of crystal and diaphanous veils falling into empty voids. No more Zen mountains or Buddhist emptiness. My poetic concerns are much more prosaic and down to earth these days. Old barns are not cliché, they are the past Monsanto destroyed, squirrels in trees, street lights on lonely streets, how can you tell what matters and what does not? I want to write works that are like social histories, or portraits of places, animals, feelings, meditations, investigations, inquires. Let people call them non-poetic. I don't care. Let them approach reason, inquiry, prose and science: let them be science if they can be: let them be anti-poetic if that is where the content of the poem leads me. I do not want to evoke the transcendent subject. Let them be pictures of a living mind and heart, no longer obeying conventions of formal prosody. Let them seek after the truth and abjure language that is inflated, arcane or gnostic. I abjure the freedom that is incomprehensible, the creativity that cannot be understood by anyone, even the poet or artist.

Poetry must disavow itself of the longing for the divine and authoritative voice. I disavow this aspect of the Romantics, from Coleridge and Blake to Ginsberg, Rilke to Hirschman and others. I am sorry that I used literature as a substitute for religion. I have given up the Rilkean need of ecstatic trance and utopian mystical transport, the Mallarmé-like jewel-box, the Rimbaud high dive into the deluge. I do not believe in revolutionary ecstasy, suicide or total transformation, up-ending the world through violence to become 'pure' at last. Revolutionaries do not care much who gets killed in the process. I abjure

the desire to remake the world to fit an ideological idealism, be it in religious, Marxist or capitalist forms. All that is gone. I think change comes from inside and cannot be forced on people by violence. I do not want a violent revolution or markets imposed by sadistic presidents or congresses. I am a failed or lapsed gnostic, a poor candidate for what is now a geriatric revolutionary Avant-Guard. That is gone too, and what is left is children and birds, sunsets, Geese, insects and hope.

My complaint about poetry is that it is mostly about dying, loss and separation. These are real things, yes, but poets tend to take off on them into ozones of escape and counterfactual nonsense. I did a good bit of this myself, once upon a time. But as the world has come upon me more and more and I see the fragility of my own children, I no longer believe in other worlds, word games and mystical mysteries that are not there. I have no patience for it when there are birds at my feeder or the night wind is blowing hard in the trees, or whispers of my past pour over me in waves of what was forgotten but now I remember it. There are diapers to change and meals to make, and my skin is growing so old my hands start to look like my mother's when she was very old. There is not much time left and it is the living that matters, not the dying. Painting at least records the facts and does not go off into linguistic dreams of things that never were.

Poetry must find its way in this world---- the only world there is--- without any opening in the clouds at the mountain top. Or maybe we should just write about reality and give up poetry all together. Poetry must come from our ordinary lives, or struggles to face the aging, suffering, birthing, loving, dying and living with other beings in nature and in cities. I want a writing that does not want to die or sing at the top of its voice in the cataclysm. I want a poetry that wants to live for life, to keep the earth alive to set the new generation free with real knowswedge how to live in the real word, how to fight the bad people, how to seek the

real.. I want a poetry that could save species, and stop extinctions, bring the rich down to our level, and that questions and dethrones power, refuses money and other abstract rigged games and defends the rights of the lonely and isolated against the privileges of the many and the elite. I want a poetry of reflection about nature, a poetry born of intricate wonder at birds, colors and lights. I want a poetry of praise of actual beings--- a poetry to protect the fragility of being, a poetry of old women with arthritis in their hands, old men who can't urinate, babies and their diapers or birds not yet able to fly. I like a poetry that cares for people's babies, the poor, the lonely, cats, goldfinches, water, redbirds, hummingbirds, nuthatches. I want a poetry of bread, daily life, tree bark, crickets, stars behind the moon, in a real sky where I have not pretended that pollution does not matter and those who are sick do not have a right to be cared for. A poetry that sees that the world is overcrowded and the rich are repulsive in their mansions helping themselves to what should belong to us all. What am I to make of men who steal from students, steal from the sick, to feed rich bankers, people who destroy education because they can steal from the ignorant, doctors and hospital administrators who take from the poor so the rich can be healthy, insurance agents who profit from the fears of sick people who cannot afford higher bills? How could I not protest them?

“ It is what I mean that matters, not how it sounds. But this, with all its faults, is my poetics, such as it is. Explaining what I think now helps explain what I thought years ago and how I was mistaken. I got off on this tangent to explain Hirschman in the hopes that that would illuminate Guenon and Paranoid literature in the 20th century as well as the whole tradition of romantic and “prophetic” poetry. 35 years ago my teacher was Jack Hirschman. It is true that Jack Hirschman’s Arcanes are perhaps one of the best poetic overviews of our times, in terms of the

conflicts he explores and the depths he goes into. But his paranoid style undermines much of what is good in it. He sides with the unconscionable. Jack embodies both what is terrible in poetry and what is good. One should read him with a deep skepticism, as he embodies many of the problems he attacks. He was really a journalist early on and the best of his poems read like poetic journalism, and journalism is science applied to news writing. He wrote some great things about Hiroshima or the Tsunami that killed so many in Indonesia, about the homeless, and many other things. But he endorses killing and is himself part of the problem he decries. Gnostic Newman and Red preist, what is the point?

Culture is not meaningless even if it is severely flawed. Jack's poetry can also be wonderful and is certainly worth reading as an excursion into the mental, social and spiritual disjunctures and insanity of the late 20th and early 21st centuries. He is intensely psycho-political. He exists in the leaps out of reason, in the disjunctures of magical and paranoid thinking. Even these delusions have sense in them if you look hard enough. But how much sense? What kind of sense? I think he is the best poet of his generation and I prefer him to Ginsberg, for instance. But that does not excuse his faults, his acceptance of the fallacious. Gary Snyder is very narrow and mostly a reprise of Classical Japanese and Chinese poetry. He is good at that, but it is hard to see how that relates to us. Taoism is really a fictional account of nature and much prefer to go into nature itself and learn about it first hand then to read romantic Chinese versions of it. What is good in Jack's poetry was summed up by his daughter Celia when she said in The Red Poet to 'ignore his Marxism because what is good in Jack is really his humanity or humanness,' to paraphrase. She is right about that. Jack is a deeply human person, and insofar as his work expresses this, he is a great poet. Of course, often he is rather inhuman, and prone to repulsive seeking after fame and the

hypocrisy of ambition. He knows little or nothing about nature or science. This does not mean that I side with his ridiculous and politically obtuse support of Stalin, Mao or Heidegger. He has not thought any of this through carefully. I do not look for nature in him, he is a city poet. He is a man with bombastic and serious faults, which I got to know pretty well. But there are a few things he did which I still think amazing, despite all the faults.

So, this is the context of my encounter with Guenon, who I rejected, and Chomsky and Hirschman, who I accepted for awhile, and still like in some ways, if not in others. What does come clear in this analysis is that the prophet idea in poetry and culture is a folly, a bad joke, poetry has mostly served power, and the only poetry I like involves science and questioning powers. There is no world beyond this one, no immortality, and all that matters is known and here. Poetry resides with children, birds, leaves, trees. occupations, efforts to love life and be in the ordinary world of kitchens and bathrooms, birds and salamanders, jobs and hospitals, violins, learning or schools and parks, where we all actually live, or at least, the small world I live in. The only one I have, anyone has, really.

Rene Guenon's Reign of Quantity: a Review of a Paranoid Text (Part II)

So with the background of the previous chapter in mind, let us look closely at Guenon's book. It has been interesting to read Reign of Quantity again.⁹⁴⁶ I have not read it cover to cover in 27 years. To read it again was a repulsive, eye opening experience in some ways. It is such a ridiculous book that is embarrassingly easy to see through. I have learned so much in the last 27 years that it makes it easy to see his really inexcusable errors and fabrications. He uses false analogies and constantly makes assertions without evidence or sources. He is also prone to misquotation and sloppy scholarship and his method typical of those who draw upon sources of second or third hand, with little regard for accuracy that requires careful documentation of a historical nature .

⁹⁴⁶ Just as Science trumps the Scholastics, traditionalist fictions are trumped by reason, as I will show in this essay. Comparative Religion went bankrupt in esoterism.. There is a false distinction between Perennial and Traditionalist ideology that is just a fabrication. As I will show here, Guenon is hardly less toxic than Schuon, the distinction between their systems is slight. I have lived this history and need quote no one about it. This fabrication was made up by those who wished to protect the Guenonian far right ideology, Marc Sedgwick, among others, against the evidence brought out by me and others about the Schuon cult. Actually it is hardly important that Guénon and Schuon or AKC made up slightly different forms of similar make believe. It is all nonsense dressed up as "metaphysics". These three books are an attempt at a just as comparative philosophy that does not endorse a reality is a construction point of view, and at the same time weighs philosophies based on the objective criteria of science and actuality.

Though there is a pose of erudition in the book, there is no real learning. He knows little or nothing about science, and his understanding of history is very skewed by his obsessive and highly eccentric and paranoid point of view. His “hidden masters ('Supérieurs Inconnus') are really 'fictions, fabrications loosely based on Gerard Encausse invention of the "l'Ordre des Supérieurs Inconnus", which was a Martinist occult group . Guenon's is imitating Encausse who was himself a charlatan. He sees myopically from one point of view, and when I realized that that one point of view—his “superior principles” have no real content, and confer on him no superiority at all, his whole system falls to pieces. He is openly trying to subject science to ideological control and create a parody of it. Only in fiction can Guenon be Lord of the World at last.

Reign of Quantity continues Guenon's work in the earlier book The Lord of the World. In that work he posited a repressive idealized utopia that he tried to suggest was real. Guenon imagined himself somehow Lord of the World, the personal conduit of the divine into the world below. Rather like Charlie Chaplin's Adenoid Hynckle , Guenon thought the he was the king of the world. As Schuon would alter saw of himself “The world is round, I am the king and I don't know why”....



Adenoid Hynckle fantasizing he is Lord of the World.

The genius of Chaplin was to create such a great parody of the cult leader which is useful even to poke some fun at Guenon's Lord of the World. Guenon's inflated myth is a variation on the Shambhala myth was popular early in the 20th century. As Victor Trimondi has written:

“ The ancient origins and contents of the *Shambhala* state make it, when seen from the point of view of a western political scientist, an antidemocratic, totalitarian, doctrinaire and patriarchal model. It concerns a repressive ideal construction which is to be imposed upon all of humanity in the wake of an “ultimate war”. Here the sovereign (the *Shambhala* king) and in no sense the people decide the legal norms. He governs as the absolute monarch of a planetary Buddhocracy. King and state even form a mystic unity, in a literal, not a figurative sense, then the inner bodily energy processes of the ruler are identical with external state happenings. The various administrative levels of Shambhala (viceroys,

governors, and officials) are thus considered to be the extended limbs of the sovereign. “⁹⁴⁷

The Shambhala myth was of interest to both the Nazis and the Stalinists, precisely because they recognized in it their own need or centralized dictatorship.⁹⁴⁸ Theo-fascism is not just a religious phenomenon but also invades the secular states, who likewise try to profit from abstract ideologies and symbolisms.

Guenon uses all sorts of con-man sleight of hand and false analogies and myths like the Shambhala myth to create interest and sensation. He claims on the basis of such bogus knowledge that science is part of a great act of subversion, when really it is Guenon who is the subversive and creator of parody. Reign of Quantity is the Great Parody, a parody showing how ridiculous religion really is. It shows how ridiculous Guenon is. How he goes about doing this is fairly complex, but not hard to see once you figure out his deceitful methods and strategies of turning reality and unreality on their heads.

So, with these general comments in mind, it is time to look at the text itself. In Reign of Quantity Guenon bases the book first on the distinction between quantity and quality which he assumes to be opposites and “complementarities” similar to the ideas of “essence” and “substance”. He misinterprets Aristotle's rather dubious “categories” of quantity and quality to be something they are not. Neither quantity nor quality are metaphysical concepts in Aristotle or anywhere else.⁹⁴⁹

⁹⁴⁷ <http://www.trimondi.de/SDLE/Part-1-10.htm>

⁹⁴⁸ ON the Stalinist effort to exploit the Shambhala myth see Andrei Znamenski's Red Shambhala http://www.amazon.com/Red-Shambhala-Magic-Prophecy-Geopolitics/dp/0835608913/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1300734895&sr=1-1-spell

⁹⁴⁹ Except maybe Robert Pirsig's novel Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance, which I read back in the 1970's and which discusses Quality as a sort of religious concept similar to

Aristotle uses them to try to describe the actual world, not the fictional nether worlds employed by Guenon. Thomas Aquinas lifted Aristotle's concepts into absurd uses and Guenon follows Aquinas. ⁹⁵⁰Guenon identifies the idea of 'quality' with 'essence' and the idea of 'quantity' with 'substance'.

When we analyze these concepts it become clear that qualities are merely attributes of a thing. It is a quality of duck billed Platypuses that they have echolocating bills and lay eggs. Quantities are merely segments or parts of extended things, in time and space, as in saying that there are two Duck Billed Platypuses in a given section of a stream in eastern Australia. These are not opposites at all. They are merely descriptors. Of course Guenon also uses the word 'quality' in its other sense of upper and lower, high or low, which makes the term a question of "qualification". He confuses these meanings often. These are two separate definitions of the word and Guenon makes no real distinction between the different definitions. What Guenon means most often by quality has to do with hierarchy and metaphysical notions of essence--- which is really a gross abuse of the term. So Guenon perverts the ordinary notion of quality into service of his obsession with hierarchy and authority. That is his problem as well as his obsession. He wants to

Guenon. Both authors abuse the concept of "quality" by trying to universalize an idea that is really just a descriptive term. Zen was adopted by hippies and writers such as Gary Snyder to be a religion of peace, but that really distorts the historical facts, as Zen was a warrior religion that served the Samurai and was very much in favor of attacking the West in World war II. Pirsig's notion of quality is much overblown when really skill or craft would have been a sufficient thing to praise without all the metaphysics to bolster the authenticity and art or craft.

⁹⁵⁰ Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) was influenced by Aristotelian rationalism. He defines the relation of knowledge and power in the following terms: "There is a universal and a particular government. The former is God's government whose rule embraces all things...the latter is found in man and is much like the divine government". and therefore "reason is to man what God is to the world", Aquinas concludes that, "man has been appointed to this position in place of God". This absurd definition, basically outlines a sort of magical thinking fallacy. This fallacy in one form or another is the defining idea of the great chain of being, and is common to all forms of theofascism. Indeed, this fallacy is the basis of the theofascist ideal. (see, Bourke, Vernon J. The Pocket Aquinas New York: Pocket Books; Simon and Schuster 1960

make everything about degrees of higher and lower, leading up to his preferred delusion of god.

Therefore, the idea of “substance” and “essence” is merely a fiction, based on a linguistic trick. The essence of a person, for instance, might be anything at all that one deems characteristic. The essence of a flower can be its smell or color or any other quality that it might be deemed to have, and thus the idea of essence is really a subjective and poetic feeling; about something, not the ‘soul’ of something as Guenon tries to extrapolate. Bertrand Russell explains this error very well.

“The essence of a thing appears to have meant “ those of its properties which it cannot change without losing its identity”. Socrates may be sometimes happy, sometimes sad: sometimes well, sometimes ill. Since he cannot change his properties without ceasing to Socrates they are no part of his essence.” ⁹⁵¹

But Russell points out, this is really an illusion. Socrates is not more fundamental than what happens to him.

“ we find it convenient, in describing the world, to describe a certain number of occurrences as events in the life of “Socrates”---- and this leads us to think of Socrates as denoting something that persists through a certain number of years, and is in some ways more “solid” and “real” than the events that happen to him.” however], if Socrates is ill, we think, at other times, that Socrates is well, and therefore the being of Socrates is independent of his illness. [but this is an illusion]...[Illness on the other hand,

⁹⁵¹ Russell, Bertrand, History of Philosophy, NY, Simon and Shuster 1945, pg. 201

requires that someone be ill. He is therefore not really any more “solid” than the things that happen to him.”

This is an excellent argument against the idea of essences and is exactly right. The idea of essence is an optical illusion created by words. There is no essential self, being or “soul” that is separate from the body and its activities, no god to generalize based on linguistic misunderstandings. There is no essential self or “soul” that is separate from the body and its activities. The notion that human consciousness transcends the ups and downs joys and sufferings of existence is illusory. There is no transcendental essence that sees all things from a point an all pervading absolute. That is a fiction. It is the primary fiction in all the major religions, in fact. What Guenon calls “ordinary life” with so much hatred and disdain, is in fact the only world there is. Ordinary life is all the Life there is, there is no divine imperial undifferentiated state in which one transcends life and death. This is fiction. There is no such thing as essences or substances in terms of a metaphysical substratum which underlies or summarizes the innermost being of existing things. These are medieval linguistic fictions which Guenon accepts as primary “principles” or axioms. Guenon’s “principles” are utterly illusory and survive in our day only as part of a nostalgic romanticism for the Scholastics such as one finds in Guenon or Coomaraswamy or possibly a reactionary like Heidegger and some poets like Rilke. I believed in the idea of essence in my teens and wrote a little essay about it when I was 16 or 17. But now I see through it and I was mistaken. I see through the fiction of metaphysics .

But in the case of this book by Guenon, whose entire argument is based on the existence of concepts of metaphysical “essence” and “quality”, the whole book fails when the idea of essence fails. So then, by say, page 80 or 90 of Reign Of Quantity it is clear that Guenon whole argument has failed and everything he will say subsequent to this is

going to be fatuous fiction, invention, diatribe and false.

Guenon deduces that all the world is illusory, except the delusion of transcendent essence which he has singled out as the sole reality. So actual reality, the reality where we all live, become a lesser reality, mere “manifestation” and evil because of its “remoteness and alterity”, as Schuon says somewhere, parroting Guenon or some other metaphysical maker of fairy tales. In other words, the idea of essence like the idea of quality, when applied as a metaphysical concept, is really an excuse to extrapolate ideas of hierarchy, caste and inequality. Guenon’s extreme obsession with archetypes, symbol and hierarchy derive from this simple delusion that there is a separate reality underlying or transcending ordinary reality.

Guenon magnifies the tendency to abstract qualities or ‘essences’ of a thing or being into an the idea of “form” archetype or even god head. This is characteristic of Guenon and many spiritualists. Guenon is prone to a kind of extrapolation of superlatives and symbols from ordinary things. He had a need to abstract and magnify in an excessive and illogical way. He projects agency on things that are not agents. Pascal Boyer points out that agency of spiritual beings are generally very like humans, often disturbed humans who act badly in their behavior. People who identify with gods or make believe agents often act badly too. Guenon’s aristocratic pretenses are born of arrogance and not any real superiority. His autocratic theofascism follows from this naturally and in accord with his psychology.

The whole of Reign of Quantity is an example of this crazy need to magnify and distort simple, ordinary ideas into illogical transcendental fictions. He even has a phrase “or this magical transposition of reality into unreality. He calls it “analogical transposition” at the end ”of his

book on infinitesimal calculus⁹⁵². What Guenon does is take a scientific truths or math procedures and try to debase them by forcing religious or metaphysical ideas upon them. Thus, “analogical transposition” is really ideological mutilation or mythical deformation of concepts. He did this initially with ‘the calculus’ in his book on that subject in an attempt to show how other science’s might be subverted as he tries to subvert Calculus. I think he fails to accomplish his aim. What he does is create a template for others to follow the same delusory path. He states his plan clearly

“...if the necessity of attaching science to principles is understood, it goes without saying that from then on there would be no reason to remain with the science in itself and the traditional conception would be naturally restored following which a particular science, whatever it may be, is worth less by what it is in itself than by its possibility of serving as a “support” for raising oneself to a knowledge of a superior order”.⁹⁵³

It is a poorly constructed sentence. But it is an important admission. It means Guenon wants to deform and mutilate sciences to serve religion as a “support”, -and ‘support’ here means a propagandistic tool for delusions. The whole book is an effort to get revenge on science and ordinary life rather than admit his delusions are delusions.⁹⁵⁴ Of course none of Guenon’s prophecies have come to pass“ The traditionalists have

⁹⁵² Guenon, Rene. The Metaphysical Principles of Infinitesimal Calculus unpublished (?) Manuscript translation by Richard Pickrell. Pg.152

⁹⁵³ Ibid pg. 152

⁹⁵⁴ Guenon is a classic case of what Nietzsche refers to as the need of religion, which hates life, to get revenge against life. Nietzsche also tries to get revenge against life in his own way. Nietzsche’s notion of “resentment” is not what I mean here. His notion of slave morality is ridiculous and akin to racism. Indeed, Nietzsche works are a panegyric to the dying upper classes and in this way he is more akin to Guenon than different, since Guenon is also a swan song to aristocratic and autocratic decadence. See my essay on Nietzsche and the traditionalists in this book

tried to seize some sciences in service of gnosis, as Wolfgang Smith has tried to do, as I show in the last chapter of this book. But these attempts fail and no one believes it except a few die-hard fanatics in some backward areas of suburban Bloomington, Indiana, where remnants of the Schuon cult still exist or George Washington University, where Nasr holds court over a secretive little cult of his own-- and a few other backwaters. You can only impose religion on science with a sort of charlatan sleight of hand.

So, most of Reign of Quantity is about efforts to either discredit science or turn it into a parody that somehow serves Guenon's megalomaniacal notion of a 'super-religion' that unites all the religions. Guenon's book is really a self-portrait of an extremely devious and untrustworthy man who tries to turn life upside down, deforming common sense and subvert the actual in favor of the unreal and the imaginary.

Guenon imposes his "analogical transposition" as he calls it, upon science, for instance, when, in chapters 4 and 5 of Reign of Quantity, he tries to turn modern ideas of space and time on their head. Guenon tries to take our ordinary concepts of time and impose on them his already distorted and inaccurate notions of quantity and quality. Misusing the idea of quality to mean something it does not, he abuses Descartes' notion of extension ⁹⁵⁵and tries to force geometry to become a propagandistic tool for the idea of a traditional cross, evoking his own book the Symbolism of the Cross. In this latter book, Guenon tries to connect the cross of Christianity to other metaphysical ideas through several traditions. He proceeds by analogical correspondences, moving from one religious tradition to another, abusing science at every turn without any concrete facts to back him up. His notion of "analogical transposition" is really just fancy words for make believe, superstition or

⁹⁵⁵ This abuse of Descartes is common in the 20th century. I will discuss that more in the last chapter of this book

magical thinking. He reduces to false analogies, paranoid constructions, fantasy and fictional superimpositions. If all else fails Guenon merely asserts his beliefs. Often really cranky, fallacious beliefs, as if they were facts. What we end up with in this procedure is not any advance in knowledge at all, but rather retrogression into magical thinking and unwarranted conclusion based on forced analogies between disparate concepts, symbols and religious ideas or traditions imposed rudely onto rare and painstaking sciences. In short he is writing science fiction, or should I say esoteric fiction?.

So, with the idea of space, for instance, Guenon ends by trying to smear the scientific idea of space with bogus traditional notions of space as having some “principle transcendent with respect to it”. Heaven is such a space beyond space and time. So Guenon implies unproven fictions are the basis of reality and anyone who thinks otherwise must be stupid or foolish. He demeans modern geometrical systems, which are quite amazing and interesting and calls them “profane geometry”, since all that interests Guenon is “sacred geometry” of the fictional sort that one finds in the Bible, crop circles or in Tibetan Mandalas. In fact sacred geometry is merely the architecture of elaborate symbolisms transposed into geometric form in an effort to make them seem permanent and eternal. Such geometrical symbolisms are conceptual constructions of a hierarchical priesthood, and as such they are closer to advertising than to geometry. The “Stupas” and hundreds of miles of “Om Ma Ni Pad Me Hum” on walls all over India, Tibet, Ladakh and elsewhere are examples of this geometric and written advertising. A stupa is a shrine that contains holy Buddhist relics or special writings on enlightenment.

Guenon mythologizes space and time with many false analogies and free associations. With the concept of Time, Guenon again performs his magical operation of transposing reality and unreality and tries to bend actual measurable time to become the Hindu notion of Yugas and

manvantaras which are totally fictitious notions of mythical times. He tries to maintain that different times are intrinsically different. But he is smart enough to note that “Someone may perhaps argue that the qualitative difference is not inherent in duration itself, but only what happened within it.” And this is right. But he then proceeds to deny what he has said and asserts that time does change qualitatively, without a shred of proof that this is the case. The only evidence he tries to manufacture is that the “particular conditions of this or that period” change. This is not evidence but merely a truism that implies no ‘qualitative’ change in time at all. Generations change, and cultural conditions change, in short material conditions change but not space and time itself.

My grandfather’s world was not “qualitatively’ different than mine in terms of time itself. Time is the same. What changed was cultural conditions. There are social, generational, historical differences that are basically cultural. These cultural changes and can be observed, measured or recorded. But to leap from this understanding of different historical periods to accepting the bizarre Hindu theory of the Yugas that make up the “Manvantara” is ludicrous.⁹⁵⁶

Guenon says that: “The doctrine of cycles.... Is naturally implicit in and fundamental to the whole of this treatise”, namely the Reign of

⁹⁵⁶ See Marty Glass’s attempt, in his books Yuga to update Guenon’s ridiculous idea of Yuga into the 21st century. Glass is a good example of northern Californian escapism, living up above Eureka California he managed to escape from reality into dreams of spiritual make believe. I love California’s openness to diversity and individuality, but many have gone off the deep end into reactionary decadence and escapist spirituality. This was true of my friend Jack Hirschman too, who embraced a bizarre form of leftist Stalinism that existed as a viable possibility only in his mind.. Jack was a great poet and I loved him, but he was too prone to romantic excess and did not think through his positions very carefully. Nevertheless he was a mentor of sorts and helped me understand many things I would not have otherwise. I learned little from Schuon except by default,—Schuon was a horrible teacher and not a good man, but I learned a great deal from Jack, even if I never agreed with some of his basic positions on things. Jack has a good heart underneath the gruff Brooklyn mockery, the Stalinist bravado, communist cultishness and street attitude.

Quantity itself. So, since the doctrine of cycles is fallacious the book itself is fallacious and fails. The Reign of Quantity failed earlier when he invented false arguments about the idea of “essence” and “quality” to try to justify the basic idea of his book that they Reign of Quantity is real. These two failures, that quality and essence are not transcendental and that there is no qualitative or cyclic variation in time, results in the whole book being false, since these arguments, he says, are “implicit and fundamental to the whole of this treatise”. In short there is no “Reign of Quantity”. Guenon invents fictions by advancing false analogies, not defining his terms, making wild unproven assumptions and spinning a web of deceitful and specious arguments.

So by chapter V the book has already failed in its basic premises. It cannot succeed. From thence Reign of Quantity is pure fiction and invention that has to do mostly with Guenon’s paranoid mind itself and not with reality. He creates a rush of rhetoric so that the reader might not notice his use of bogus and misplaced analogies. But the substance of his argument is so ridiculously weak that it is not believable, Indeed, he has no credible evidence for what he says. It moves long from one self-deception and false assumption to another, one linguistic misunderstanding and fabrication to another. One has to be very gullible or to read the work very quickly to buy the argument. Any close scrutiny, as I make here, causes the entire book to crumple into a dash of occultist rhetoric and misused metaphors strung along by a paranoid rant.

So where does the book go from Chapter 5 ? He slowly descends into real madness. Chapter 8 deals with aesthetics, but that is a complex subject which involves discussions of whole history of modern art and the traditionalist off shoot with in it. Traditionalists ideals of art are

really an outgrowth of Symbolist and Fin de Siècle art. but I have reserved discussion of that till a later chapter, so I will skip that for now and move on. If the reader wants to move on to that first it is below and is called Beyond the Dead End of Traditionalist and Modernist Aesthetics.

So skipping the chapter on aesthetics for now, we move to another passage Guenon has trouble understanding the idea of species and how they “may become separate beings while remaining within the species”. (Pg.60) The answer to this is easy enough if he understood the basics of Darwinian science and evolution and how species separate by geography, time and other reasons.. But he doesn’t understand Darwin at all, so he spends a whole chapter trying to write about individuality and species (Chapter 6). He fails to grasp the basic things that a course in biology would have taught him. But he is too proud to learn, so he spends the whole book attacking science, hardly ever knowing what he is talking about.

He over uses the word “profane”, which really is an archaic word, used in the late medieval to separate the religious sphere from the sphere of “ordinary life”. For Guenon virtually everything is profane, which to him means not sacred, not suffused and connected to religion. He uses the word to imply demeaning subsidiary meanings too. In current usage ‘profane’ also means low, base or obscenely sacrilegious. So for instance he creates an extreme dichotomy between what” he calls ”initiatric teaching” as opposed to “profane education”” (pg 75) such as Guenon thinks we have now in our schools, and which Guenon considers devils’ teachings. ⁹⁵⁷ One definition of profanity states: “A profanity is a word,

⁹⁵⁷ He says that the idea of the sacred and profane “ has no meaning in traditional societies” and that is because such societies were religious tyrannies where everything in “ordinary life” was dictated by priests and mullahs. History was written in those days by the elites, and this made for

expression, gesture, or other social behavior which is socially constructed or interpreted as insulting, rude, vulgar, desecrating, or showing disrespect.” I think it is fair to say that in Guenon’s usage ‘profanity’ is primarily about disrespect of what he sees as the power of gods, and the power of himself and those he supports as the voice or representative of god or gods. The actual world is so deeply insulting to Guenon he feels he must constantly disparage it. So Guenon feels that it is totally natural to refer to science as “profane science” because to him the fact that science has saved millions, perhaps billions of lives is mere profanity. Science to Guenon, like someone writing the swear word for feces on a bathroom wall. Guenon sees the whole modern world as profane. He would send critics of religion to the Inquisition, and save priests who instill delusions into children. Guenon’s own relation to the world is upside down. The actual facts of the world are disgusting to him and make him believe gods and “principles” are everything. Seeing profanity where there is none indicates Guenon’s low intellectual culture and his need to debase and demean the actual.. The real obscenity is that Guenon considers the actual world profane and obscene. Science has nothing to do with religion and what is good in our world comes from science, not from religion. Guenon regularly confuses science with industry, when it is really capitalism that he should condemn, not science.

some very bad history. The Bible or the Bhagavad Gita is bad history written by Rabbis and Priests about their favorite fictions. Better histories of many so called “traditional” societies have been written only recently. A lot of interesting historical work has been done on such societies from Egypt to medieval France or post-conquest Brazil, using demographic statistics of various kinds to figure out how women or Indians or others fared in making a living or caring for the children and they all show that people of those days led lives that were vital and thriving more in spite of religion than because of it. Social History is way beyond Guenon’s rather silly attempt to project a “sacred history” on the facts. The notion of “profane history” is itself profane, that is to say, ridiculous, and thus it is absurd to even use such a term.

He goes further in this effort to turn reality and unreality upside down. In his chapter 10, on the “the illusion of statistics” Guenon tries to deny that those who live in a society that uses statistics are people who are a “body without a soul” or “sub-human”. The notion of the soul is a fiction and the idea that those who do not have one are lesser is thus untenable. This does not mean that people cannot feel what matters or what someone is essentially about in their person. But as nature has no hierarchy it is meaningless to call animals “sub human” since we are ourselves animals. Guenon likes to unfairly denigrate and demean modern culture in this way, but he does so meanly and inaccurately. , Statistics can be and has been used in inappropriate and misleading ways, no doubt, but it also tells us important things, if used fairly and responsibly.

After trying to bash statistics, the limits and uses of which he does not understand, he then tries to uphold the value of “the true traditional astrology of the ancients” (pg. 90.) This is really crazy, since there is no correlation at all between the accidental positions of random stars in the sky and the birth dates of human individuals on earth. This has been empirically proven many times. If there is any example of pseudo-science that has been totally discredited it is astrology.⁹⁵⁸ The fact that Guenon claims its validity is proof of he is utterly untrustworthy as a “expert”. Guenon asserts his beliefs without any evidence at all.

A really humorous chapter is chapter 19, called the “Limits of History and Geography”. Guenon knows little about history and most of what he knows he gets wrong. For instance, he believes the rather laughable theories that Plato put out about the supposedly lost continent

⁹⁵⁸ A really good refutation of astrology can be found at this link below by Andrew Fraknoi, quoted earlier There are many other refutations. This site is the Astronomical Society of the Pacific
<http://www.astrosociety.org/education/astro/act3/astrology3.html#defense>

of Atlantis. There was no such continent, but Guenon thinks there was and he speaks of it with laughable “authority” as if he knows when clearly he is a fraud. He writes about “disappearance of a single continent”.. and remarks in parenthesis that “such events have in fact occurred in the course of the history of our present humanity”, as if merely asserting it as an authority would prove his case (pg.160). Actually no amount of unwarranted assertions will prove a case that has no evidence to back it up. He later connects the myth of Atlantis to the Flood and the “Biblical Deluge”. Both are fairy tales of the ancient imagination and have been discredited. Guenon’s attempt to resurrect them is absurd. The only real evidence there is of these events is that 3600 years ago, on the island of Crete, evidence has been found of a 100-foot-high tsunami that wiped out the Minoan civilization. The origin of the tsunami was the explosion of Mount Santorini on the island of Thera not far from Crete. This is factually established and is very likely the source of the Atlantis myth, which got transmogrified into the nonsense that Guenon believed. Guenon was mistaken as was Plato, there was no continent that was destroyed or people on it that could see precious stones where there are none. Guenon is full of errors and fictions of this kind that he promotes as facts to his gullible followers. By this time the book is an embarrassment and anyone who reads this far and there is no point in still reading unless one wishes to assess the man’s mental state or for a good laugh.

Guenon also endorses other fairy tales in this chapter, he claims that history should record a time that “precious stones were as common the most ordinary pebbles now”. He recognizes that this and other fairy tales he panders to his reader might be hard to swallow, so he spend the next paragraph trying to explain why there is no evidence of this. Why do “archeologists and even pre-historians never find anything of the kind” ? Well it must be because the world has gone through a process of “solidification” and what f “solidification”. No one knows because such

thing exists actually or ever happened.

Guenon just made it up. Solids, fluids and air are not metaphysical concepts, but Guenon makes them so by a process of false analogy and psychological extrapolation that is fairly common in magical, paranoid thinking. Guenon really believes these fairy tales he makes up. Ever the con-man, he even tries to say that such fairy tales are not seen by men of great learning. He claims modern “profane” men simply have lost the mystical faculty of the “Intellect” to shine forth onto their reasoning, which would enable them to see things that are actually not there. Only the initiated can understand Guenon, he is not the fraud he seems to be. The “intellect” in Guenon and Schuon’s usage is basically the organ of wishful thinking and dreams, overwhelming emotion and unconscious projection of falsehoods. It is not ‘objective’ at all, on the contrary. If you look at Guenon’s own reasoning, pedantically luminous with this same ‘Intellect’s divine light”, he makes one ridiculous mistake after another in this book. Indeed the intuitive “Intellect” is merely a “pathological subjectivity”, an organ of fanciful invention, or in Dawkins apt phrase, a “mental virus”.

So I see no reason to trust Guenon’s claims to special knowledge or to a “intellect “ beyond reason, since in fact he has no real knowledge of most of what he talks about. He merely apes other thinkers from Vedanta or Sufism who nurtured similar illusions. Most of his conclusions are make believe. Indeed“, he has a whole chapter castigating the idea of reason. (Chapter 8 “The Postulates of Reason”) and he sums this chapter up at the end of the book where he says that the evil of rationalism is that “rationalism denies to the being the possession or use of any faculty of a transcendent order”. ⁹⁵⁹ Of course it does: that is what is good about it. Being reasonable is precisely to give weight to evidence and cases, to not judge by authority. In fact, Guenon

⁹⁵⁹ Ibid pg. 232

possessed nothing of a ‘transcendent order’ he merely possessed some unique skills as a con-man and logician. For Guenon reason is only useful if is “transcendent”, and is not “merely” a human faculty. In other words reasons only those chosen by god to have special minds which are governed by irrational posits of transcendent ideas, are truly reasonable. “Visions” are what Guenon really means by “intellect”: one sees within though dreams or intuitions. If the Intellect says the moon is green cheese, by George,’ God has said so.

. No one has ever demonstrated the slightest fact about any transcendent faculty, deific implant, or shown there to be any installed mystical intellect in the brain. Nor is there any organ that processes any transcendent deity in the brain or elsewhere. The notion of transcendence is no different that the idea of the holy spirit, in that both are merely subjective states of elation that have no factual basis in anything other than self-elation or narcissistic dilation. There is no divine intellect through which knowledge of the divine comes. There is only the emotional brain making up stories and Guenon’s story is a delusional whopper!!

What Guenon tries to claim is that literally reason only has value in the hands of priests. He believes he is right even though no one has ever proven that the “transcendent order” exists.⁹⁶⁰ No one is able to ask any

⁹⁶⁰ H.T. Hansen, the promoter of Evola, demonstrates the typical error of the traditionalists. He says that “it must be stressed that *supra-rational* does not in any way equal *irrational*. On the contrary: irrational means under or before the *ratio* (reason); supra-rational, on the other hand, goes beyond the rational but still includes reason itself.” But this is mistaken. The suprarational does not exist and it is pure fiction,--- it is totally an irrational concept that relies upon “inner truth” and intuition, which is demonstrated in Guenon’s own work to be bogus. Hansen continues that “The triumph of reason alone first began with Nominalism. Before that, there was hardly a doubt that the spiritual (in a pure, elevated sense; the *nous* in the ancient meaning in which Plato and Plotinus used it) ranks above mere reason, just as “intellectual intuition” (the “vision” connected to the supra-rational, the so-called “intellectual contemplation,” of Dante and Thomas Aquinas) lies above discursive knowledge and thus rules over it.” He knows nothing about this and merely repeats fictions made up in earlier centuries. Hansen is only right that Nominalism is the beginning of the demise of the irrational ideology of the “intellectual intuition” as a conduit of the “divine”. Everything else Hansen says is nonsense. The “Intellect” of Plato Plotinus and Guenon is really just a conduit of delusion and social/political prejudice as

cogent questions such that it gives real answers. So what Guenon is really upset about here, is that reason does not serve the social hierarchy and the social order he prefers—in other words the power--- is not in the “possession” of religion anymore. Reason has become part of science and has abandoned religion or even turned against it. This is a good thing, but Guenon does not realize it, longing as he does for the old days of priests putting those who disagreed with them in jail, or burning them at the stake. So Guenon, quite irrationally, hates rationalism and hates the science that he associates with it. He wants only a religious “scientia” a religious art, a religious math. What he wants is the return of discredited systems of knowledge that have no grounding in real evidence. Religious science is not science at all. For Guenon, science, math, music, philosophy, psychology, philosophy, and architecture must be dictated by ‘spiritual’ values and if it is not it is evil and part of the corruption of the modern world, the so called “counter initiation”⁹⁶¹. As such, modern sciences lead to “subversion”, “dissolution”, “counterfeit”, “parody”, and then apocalypse and hell. This is a horrendously flipped and erroneous vision of the world that is utterly crazy and delusional. It is a kitsch and paranoid vision of the world. It resembles recent Christian apocalyptic novels or the apocalyptic cult movie Matrix. Guenon’s vision of the world

is more than amply demonstrated in Guenon’s text Reign of Quantity. (see Men Among the Ruins pg 98)

⁹⁶¹ Much of Guenon’s thought revolves around the idea of initiation, a really meaningless concept that really has to do with ideological correctness, and thus with power/knowledge systems passed down via rites. What Guenon really wants is correct belief, and these beliefs have to do with class and control of elitist dynasties, monarchist and religious. Fascism was too diffused for guenon, or in his terms “impure” or in violation of caste, not true Aryans, and born of bad mothers, as it were. He thought they were in the throes of " psychic influences, enemies of the " spiritual world". Which Guenon felt was his alone As I showed elsewhere in this book, Evola thought much the same thing. This is not a repudiation of fascism so much as it is a claim that his version of social control is superior to the Nazis. The same notions of caste obsession and “ill bred” people would be common in the Schuon cult. Guenon ‘racism’ is much larger, than the Nazi’s he is at war not merely with the Jews but with the entire modern world and in letters he states that the great evil is actually all of Europe, because it is no longer religious enough. He joins Islam as part of a way against science, ordinary people, democracy and enlightenment rights and liberties.

is dark, perverse and Manichean and conspiratorial.

It is hard to say exactly at what point Guenon's madness becomes apparent in *Reign of Quantity*, somewhere in between chapter 5 and 19, I think.. The book expresses mental imbalance from the beginning but at a certain point becomes decidedly worse. The beginning chapters are rather like Ananda Coomaraswamy's writings, who is the most level headed of the Traditionalists. But as Guenon goes along and makes real blundering mistakes in his scholarship, trying to create a metaphysics of "quality" and "essence" out of thin air, his mind and mania begin to increase and even the early chapters begin to flounder in fiction and unwarranted assumptions.

By Chapter 19 Guenon is trying to say that the terribly inaccurate and botched medieval and ancient maps are true and that land masses no one now recognizes as real were then real. This is outrageous lunacy, having no basis in any kind of empirical data. He tries to claim that bizarre animals and human animal hybrids described by Pliny in his Natural History and in on the edges of the old Bestiaries may have been real too. Lucretius makes great fun of these hybrid-animal delusions and fantasies of paradise in his On the Nature of Things and says that people who mouth such nonsense, "may babble with like reason many whims into our ears".⁹⁶² But there is no sign Guenon ever read or would have understood Lucretius. No fiction is beyond Guenon's mania. Such animal fictions as the griffin, Dragon and Chimera have been long ago been ruled out as fantasies of the Middle Ages, curious phantasms of bored monks and cartographers imaginations, doodling on the corners of maps and books. These caricatures actually represent the tacit speciesism that was part of Christianity and that goes back to the Romans and before.

In the process of discussing maps Guenon tries to suggest that there is a 'sacred geography' which defines 'centers' and 'oracles' where divine

⁹⁶² Lucretius, On the Nature of Things Dutton. N.Y 1957 pg. 224

beings might reside. Lucretius would giggle at these absurdities and I find myself chuckle a bit too. There are many such theories and fictions such as the crops circles, “sacred geometry” and other “Mysteries” promoted in New Age bookshops, all of them bogus and discredited. None of them have any real evidence backing them up. Guenon’s imagination never rises above a similar mawkish hawking of New Age pulp fictions. But it gets worse.

He actually believes this rubbish is not merely the result of a pulp science fiction writer or con-man radio talk show host. Indeed, Guenon goes on in succeeding chapters such as those on “Shamanism and Sorcery” and “Psychic Residues” to propound really bizarre and insane theories about the presence of evil influences in archeological digs and ruins where zombie like “hordes of Gog and Magog” issue forth, set at liberty via “exhumations of vestiges of past periods and vanished civilizations.”. This is not just a Boris Karloff Mummy movie. He says that soon an army of inferior and demonic forces will destroy our earth. They will arrive first coming through such places, archeological digs and ruins acting like portals or “fissures” for the malicious spirits sure to come...

Schizophrenia sufferers may wear aluminum foil in the belief that it will stop one's thoughts from being broadcast and protect against malicious waves entering the brain from far away. Guenon says that there is a “Great Wall” around the world and because of the evil of science and materialism, this wall has been breached by inferior forces and these forces have begun pouring through the “fissures”. This is a schizophrenic ‘vision’ and I have heard of just such visions voiced by street people who had this disease of the brain. I have known 3 or 4 people who had such visions, one, an artist in California was convinced that Russian spies were planting thought in his head via radio waves. Projections of fears into the sky or suspicions into “sky machines” is quite common. According to Guenon, after the “Great Wall” is breached

the“ world will soon “undergo an increasingly downward movement toward "dissolution" to be capped by the "Great Parody". A "counter-tradition" will arise and then the Great Parody will be manifested i” an individual who is the "satanic caricature of everything that is truly traditional and spiritual"⁹⁶³

All this will happen with a mathematical exactitude, the world reversing itself like topological gyres, upending itself in a mirror image of the imaginary Golden age. The age of horror is lovingly described, almost as if Guenon like Dante loved his hell more than this heaven. Guenon describes the last days as being composed of people who are mechanical zombies, "galvanized by an infernal will".⁹⁶⁴ The Anti-Christ will be defeated and the story comes to its usual ending, like St. John, with the return of the golden age in splendor and glory. These fantasies and fictions are examples a classical“ paranoid attack of an acute kind. He has had a psychotic break with reality.

Guenon sees enemies everywhere, like a paranoid street person off his medications. He observes that one “must exercise extreme vigilance --for the enemy only knows too well how to take on the most insidious disguises”, he writes. (pg 288) Guenon had himself been a man of disguises. But now he fears the very thing he had been. He was a very sick man, as Martin Lings suggests in an essay he wrote about the period where Guenon is writing Reign of Quantity. Lings says that “ He had enemies in France and suspected that they wished to attack him by magic...Guenon was very much afraid of being attacked by certain people”. Mark Sedgwick, obtusely and unfortunately without embarrassment notes that

I’ a letter to Evola in 19’8, Guenon wrote that an 'attack of rheumatism' in 1939 had been caused by 'une influence

⁹⁶³ Ibid. pg.326

⁹⁶⁴ Ibid. pg. 238

maléfique,'(a malicious influence] and disagreed with Evola, who had evidently said that such things could not hurt those who have spiritual stature. Guénon pointed out that the Prophet himself was made ill by sorcerers.⁹⁶⁵ Most Guenonian biographers tend to gloss over Guenon's concern with magic, sometimes referring to attacks of persecution mania when Guénon was ill, but in one sense such apologies are unnecessary. A belief in the efficacy of magic is not un-Islamic, as Guenon's own reference to the Prophet reminds us. Such a belief was (and is) widespread in Egypt amongst all types and classes of person, and so may be described as traditional within Islam.⁹⁶⁶

In short, since abysmal ignorance, magical thinking and superstition is so widespread in the middle east, it is "traditional" and since tradition is good, it is OK to be ignorant and superstitious. In "his backwards reasoning, Sedgwick is trying it to excuse Guenon's lunacy, as he excuses Eliade's, and as he tried to excuse Schuon's crimes. He is trying to say it is OK Guenon wrote like a paranoid schizophrenic, since it is so common to employ unbalanced magical thinking in Islam. Sedgwick is a rather a superstitious man himself and acts as if the moniker "traditional" had any merit at all, when really it is just an excuse for lazy and ignorant thoughtlessness. The fact that magical thinking is "traditional" means that "Tradition" itself is an excuse for all manner of bogus nonsense, What he should say is that people of Islamic faith should be given better teachers and books to read. Rather than draw this obvious conclusion, Sedgwick comes off supporting ignorance, Islam and Tradition at the same time. The truth is that the Prophet, who

⁹⁶⁵ As if reports about Muhammad all of which were written nearly 200 years after his death had any validity at all!! No one knows much of anything concrete about this person named Muhammad. He is largely and perhaps entirely a fiction.

⁹⁶⁶ <http://www.traditionalists.org/write/tradsuf.htm>

may not even have existed, was not attacked by any ‘sorcerers’ and neither was Guenon.⁹⁶⁷ Magical thinking of this kind depends upon the gullibility of the religious. Guenon was highly gullible and suggestible. His fear of attack is deeply paranoid and self-created. It is palpable throughout the end of Reign of Quantity.

It is clear that Guenon projected his paranoid fears upon the entire world as a sort of defensive counter attack. He was mentally ill. His projection of evil on the universe, done in coldly logical prose, marbled with insane fantasies of a particularly violent and graphic kind. No wonder one of his favorite author is Dante. Like Dante in the Divine Comedy, Guenon sees virtually everyone as an enemy, except perhaps a few orthodox people. Dante and The Apocalypse of St John inspire Guenon.⁹⁶⁸ The Apocalypse or Revelations, is a bogus text, probably written nearly 200-250 years after the birth of the mythic person they call Jesus and has nothing to do with the man called St. John⁹⁶⁹, if there

⁹⁶⁷ The full quote illustrates how deep Guenon's paranoia was and casts some light on the psychology behind the Reign of Quantity. Evola had written Guenon about an illness he had. Guenon replies that he was sick in 1939. "I was confined to bed for six months, unable to make the slightest move. Everybody thought this was a case of rheumatism, but the truth is .. we all knew who acted as the unconscious vehicle of a maleficent influence". The man was sent away and Guenon recovered."

Schuon, too, has the ability to project on others the causes of his distresses, even those these others do not have anything to do with the problem. Schuon sees others as conduit for his illnesses, and God punishes his persecutors. Joseph Epes Brown, Schuon said, got Alzheimer's because Brown Would not publicly admit that Schuon helped him edit and create the book the Sacred Pipe.

⁹⁶⁸ I wrote in 1992 regarding the the Apocalypse...." This unrelenting fantasy of revenge erects hatred of the world into a universal principle. It is indeed a work of art, but one so densely crafted of simultaneous symbols of transcendent perfection and sheerest cruelty that the mixture is both suffocating and infectious. This close congruence of transcendent knowledge and terrible cruelty is what I mean by the term "knowledge/ power".The exquisitely crafted and precious malice of this book indicates a pathology so totalitarian that it makes Hitler and Stalin, Sade, Dante and Genet look like schoolboys in the art of torture.

<http://www.trimondi.de/H.Krieg/Koslow.htm>

⁹⁶⁹ The earliest fragment of the Revelations appears to be Papyrus 115, dated to 250-300 C.E. though some place it a little earlier. (Oxford Ashmolean museum) Even the works of John are of doubtful authenticity. The earliest Gospel of John (besides P52 the Ryland's Papyri which is of

was such a person, which is probably another fiction, created by the same Gospel writers. The earliest extant manuscript evidence ⁹⁷⁰ of Revelation is dated no earlier than about 250 C.E. Regarding the Revelations I wrote in 1997 that:

“The frustrated hopes of an obscure religious cult blossomed into an elaborate fantasy of revenge and desire for power. This is expressed in many early Christian texts, the Revelations of John perhaps representing a later summation of this tendency. As the Roman Empire failed, the obscure cult took over the social fabric of the Roman Empire and combined the rationalistic regimentation of the Romans with the apocalyptic fervor of Christianity.....

The apocalypse, clearly a forgery from later centuries pictures an orgiastic dismemberment of the very fabric of the universe in order to justify an intellect that desires totalistic power. The world must be destroyed so that the intellect in its drive for totality and purity finally can possess immortality.The apocalyptic drive desires glory through violence and transcendent power through the

highly questionable dating (117-150 C.E.) is The Bodmer Papyri II collection which includes the first fourteen chapters of the Gospel of John and much of the last seven chapters. It dates from around AD 200. This hardly suggests John the beloved disciple who was with Christ and his mother when he supposedly died. John is a late fiction, written by a Platonist. This is obvious even internally, given the mystical fervor of the Gospel. So it is quite likely that the John is a forgery of some kind. Since virtually all existing manuscripts of the Gospels are over 150 years after the presumed time of Christ it is very likely that Christ himself never existed and that Christianity itself is based on a literary fiction, confabulated in the 2nd and third centuries. Doherty claims that the Mark gospel might date back to 90 C.E. and the other Gospels to 130 C.E., but it might be as late as 150. Which seems more likely. There are no manuscripts that can be reliably dated back much before 200 C.E..

see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_manuscript. for various accepted dates on this. I am not a biblical scholar, but one does not have to dig very far to see that the Gospels are later literary fictions. This is obvious internally too, as they clearly describe miraculous events that have no basis in ordinary provable facts or evidence. There are no contemporary reports of any of these miracles either, so it is fiction.

⁹⁷⁰ Some of the basic dates of various New and Old Testament biblical manuscripts can be found here

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_manuscript

dismemberment of people's bodies or destruction of the earth itself. Transcendence requires destruction; the monistic God must destroy diversity; Christ the savior destroys nearly all the beings on earth. Plato's "Sovereign Good" demands total social control: just as the Aztec priests needed to rip out the hearts of children to prove their power. Devotees of Christ wanted to conquer time so the fiction of Christ could dominate the world. Those who refuse to be obedient to the Christian, Aztec or Platonic imposition of a blackmailing concept of 'eternity' must be burned at the stake, eliminated, warred against, or destroyed in an apocalypse. Beyond the dreams of utopia, perfection, glory, wealth, El Dorado and the final End of History the reality of what happens in apocalyptic politics is a gruesome and bloody nightmare. The perfections of the 'next world' covers this world in blood."

I have mixed together many things here, but this is substantially correct, I think now. There is no transcendent next world. The transcendent is a fiction. We must transcend transcendence. There is only this world. In Guenon's delusional fantasy of revenge against life, history has been reduced to a paranoid "Plot" that is going on everywhere, with Satan as the head of the conspiracy against Guenon's religious ideology. Guenon is a decadent writer as was the writer of Revelations. The end of the Roman Empire echoes the end of the aristocracy and the Church. Apocalyptic fantasies are delusions born of disappointment and bitterness, or , when they occur in mental illness, excess serotonin. Guenon is writing out of reactionary bitterness against the new world science has made, just as those who murdered Hypatia killed out of reactionary ignorance against the rising science of the time which Hypatia so wonderfully embodied. Guenon resembles the murderers of Hypatia, he wants to destroy the world that does not fit his fantasy. As Baudelaire said in his gloss on De Maistre "In Politics, the

true saint is the man who uses his whip and kills people for their own good.”

I think Guenon was living in a real subjective hell while he was writing this book. It is, in fact, a deeply personal, even manically personal book. It is written with such searing passion by a man who despises all passion. He is insane and the insane suffer mentally. He is a doomsayer, sure that virtually everyone in the world, but a very small remnant, will soon be destroyed. It is a sad book he has written here, which shows a man who has been clearly and permanently been driven mad by the occult and metaphysics, lost in a make believe world.

Rather like a bleak Piranesi prison, Guenon is caught in his own theory in a madness where a vision of hate a world despised and carefully ignited. In a vampire-like version of Don Quixote, Guenon claws at broken windmill of his own mind spinning furiously. Guenon lives in a sort of subjective Last Judgment, or as if in the movie “Night of the Living Dead” and the fictional modern world which he thinks is so evil, actually is not evil at all. There is real mania in this book, madness of an authentic kind. No play acting.

It is Guenon’s own imagination that is ‘evil’ source of this, still obsessed with Satan, enemies and dark forces. He is lost in delusions of a kind that projects what he is on the world. He is utterly convinced of the reality of his delusions, even as he projects what he is on the world that he hates. Like Mad Meg is Breughel’s great painting, (see below) Guenon ends up surrounded by Hieronymous Bosch-like demons,⁹⁷¹ created by his own mind, and in his madness he cannot distinguish true

⁹⁷¹ For recent views of Bosch and the mistaken thesis that Bosch and Breughel are somehow prefigurations of the modern hell, see Terry Tempest Williams, Leap, or Michael Foucault’s writings on Bosch. In both cases these thinkers fail to see that Bosch is not a New Age epicurean and certainly not a prefiguration of the modern dilemmas and the sexual revolution. He is a throwback to the medieval period and not at all a liberal who looks forward. They project what they wish to see onto him,. The Garden of Earthly Delights is not a prefiguration of Surrealism, but rather a reactionary prelude to Bosch’s really awful hell pictures, which contain the Inquisition and witch hunts in fantasy

from false. As fascinating as this madness is, one has to call it madness. Guenon's followers really think all these phantasms are real. Indeed, reading Guenon after 27 years shows me a man who is very much in the grip of the same illness I have seen in street people who scream on city sidewalks that the sky is falling immediately.



Pieter Breughel ---Mad Meg

Breughel's Mad Meg may be one of the first objective attempts to depict mental illness in the history of painting. All the "Temptations of St. Anthony from Grunewald to Bosch are still wrapped up in the mythic magical thinking. Breughel appears to be on the verge of escaping from this, and perhaps he did escape from it, hinting at an objective picture of a real street woman. This whole book of Guenon' is plunged back into the

dark ages and medieval madness as if science never existed. Indeed, this book is a paranoid attack on science.

Much of Reign of Quantity's tone of barely contained hysteria hides behind excessive logic. This is typical for someone with as deep a paranoid fixation as Guenon had. He is on the verge of psychotic break throughout the beginning of book. By the middle of the book the break with reality has occurred. The logical pretence of the arguments is a part of the disease that inhabits the book.

The book proceeds by a rational irrationality that is born of his paranoid terror of science. Guenon says repeatedly that "the falsification of everything" (pg.249) has come about and has done so because everything has fallen out of "proper hierarchical order" (pg. 243). Again his main concern is the loss of power, and he wants it back, like Joseph De Maistre.. Democracy and human rights are the evils that got rid of aristocratic tyrants and popes with crowns. Guenon's madness is one of nostalgia for the lost power of churches and monarchs. He is obsessed with bygone notion of religious order of a Dantean and Hindu sort, unaware that such notions were proven wrong centuries ago.

Is there really a "falsification of everything"? Actually the opposite is true, since Newton, Einstein and Darwin disproved Dante, Augustine, the Bhagavad Gita and Plato, the world is so much clearer and easier to understand. What has been falsified is the superstitious fictions that Guenon fanatically and insanely clings to. Hence his hysteria. He is in denial and must pretend that what is real is unreal and his madness is sanity.

Guenon's book is full of excessive pronouncements meant to inspire fear. A metaphysical terrorist, he wants the reader to believe in what he fears, rather than admit he might be wrong, and his whole system is wrong. Like the Republicans in today's America he uses fear to support an unjust power structure. He wants to spread the contagion of fear. He wildly claims that reason, science, equality and democracy have

destroyed the order of the world. Utterly false. All that was destroyed by the French and American Revolutions was the theocratic illusion.

Guenon's theofascist fantasy is born of the desire to go back to the toxic delusions of the far past. He is an escape artist, a true romantic, like Artaud, who prefers his insane subjective world to reality. The problem for Guenon as for religion in general is humans. Gods are to be preferred, metaphysical fictions are better than reality and ordinary things. The actual world must be abolished because of the imaginary "beloved" beyond the sky is real. Guenon cares more about symbols than people, more about doctrine than 'ordinary life', which he despises.

Tradition is not about humans, he says. Guenon writes that it is a horrible mistake to confuse tradition with things that are on "the lower human level and are completely lacking in profound significance." (pg. 253) Guenon is anti-human, he is even anti-earth and anti-cosmos--- and all he cares about is the fiction of his super-human "principles" --- principles which he never defines, but claims to know everything about. "The restoration of the superhuman" (pg. 253) as he calls it (evoking Nietzsche) will only come about once science and materialism, humanism and human rights, democracy and reason are all negated. He equates all these with what is "satanic" and what is satanic involves "all negation and reversal of order, such as is incontestably in evidence in everything we now see around is" (pg. 237)

There is no such "incontestable" evidence in Guenon's book. On the contrary. Guenon announces his conclusions before he shows us any evidence that is supposed to prove it. Most human lives are far better than they ever have been. What has fallen is belief in con-men like Guenon. This is not to say there are no serious problems. There are huge problems left to solve, but no solutions will be forthcoming from the traditionalists, who are a cult and who exist only in tiny enclaves of privilege and luxury. Guenon has no sense of proportion. He wants to go back the Dark Ages when life expectancy was 35, prostitution was

rampant, workers had no rights, were forced to work seven day weeks. Women regularly died in childbirth, diseases were common and killed many children, poxed faces, left terrible scars, sweatshops abounded and the Church was utterly corrupt. In a recent book, Steven Pinker shows that in the “good old days”

“Tribal warfare was nine times as deadly as war and genocide in the 20th century. The murder rate of Medieval Europe was more than thirty times what it is today. Slavery, sadistic punishments, and frivolous executions were unexceptionable features of life for millennia, then suddenly were targeted for abolition. Wars between developed countries have vanished, and even in the developing world, wars kill a fraction of the people they did a few decades ago. Rape, battering, hate crimes, deadly riots, child abuse, cruelty to animals—all substantially down”⁹⁷²

In these good old days life was “brutish and short” as Hobbes says and priests ruled everyone’s lives.⁹⁷³

Guenon was a profoundly disturbed man suffering from paranoiac delusions. He sees the whole world as evil. To him, science is a satanic “counterfeit” and is part of the conspiracy against the anti-human and “super-human” ‘truth’. He sees the world as coming toward a cataclysm of horrendous proportions when all his favorite enemies will be

⁹⁷² <http://stevenpinker.com/publications/better-angels-our-nature>

⁹⁷³ Another book of interest to the decay of Traditionalism is Mark Perry’s On Awakening & Remembering: To Know is To Be. Catherine Perry called this book “ indigestible”. One reviewer said that “if you think capital punishment is spiritually uplifting this book is for you”. Another writes that “This book may have value for you if believe that inquisitions, reducing women to chattel, theological fanaticism and priest kings are good for the world. Otherwise skip it as it is one of the most odious books written since Ayn Rand’s Atlas Shrugged or Mein Kampf.”

destroyed. Religion has become so completely the vehicle of Guenon's personal self that anything scientific and reasonable comes to seem to him as ultimately evil. His sociopathic insanity mounts as he imagines that science has enclosed his fantasy of god behind a fictional wall that stretches around the world. He imagines that inferior evil domains are pouring into the world with all their filth and wickedness. The exact nature of these "inferior domains" is never described, as they do not actually exist, but for Guenon, they loom with bloody teeth on the edge of consciousness. He wants you to do the work of imagining these things. Poor Guenon is caught up in his own mind like a Manichean lunatic and at war with himself in a horrible and suffocating sense of personal defeat and hatred of our world.

The heart of Guenon's Reign of Quantity is not his crazy theory about a "plan" to defeat tradition and the "principles of metaphysics". The heart of Reign of Quantity is Guenon's his own distempered mind. It is his paranoid psychosis that is the real subject of this book, not the process of "subversion", "anti-traditional action" counter initiation" and the final "Great Parody". These are just symptoms of his disease, projections of his illness on the world. Guenon's theory that the Anti-Christ will seize the moment and destroy the world just as the "reinstatement" arrives and the world will begin all over again--- this theory borrows heavily from Hindu myths and fairy tales, and is really just a symptom of Guenon's dementia.

Most of the time, his illness is hidden behind an artful pose of impersonality and his manic rush of fabrication and paranoid inventiveness. It is an amazing text as a tour de force of metaphysical madness. Sometimes however, his illness actually shows itself directly and personally in his text. For instance, Guenon blames Henri Bergson, a very mild and rather harmless French philosopher from the early 20th century, who promoted a philosophy of "vitalism" and intuitionism. It is rather a gentle and romantic philosophy influenced by hints of Rousseau

and Darwinism. Bergson's thought may not be to my taste but it is hardly anything dangerous or to be feared. But Guenon is livid with fear about this harmless man and his theory.

He hates William James too, who is really quite interesting and also mostly harmless when he writes about science and not religion. James is one of the fathers of early brain science, and a sort of forbear of people like John Dewey. James who is not threatening to anyone either. I disagree with James' subjectivist theory of religion, as this book makes plain. But that does not make James a bad man. So why is Guenon so paranoid with fear of them?

It would appear that Guenon hates Bergson and James for their science and their rather lukewarm "spiritualism" Bergson was actually a Jew and suffered under the French Nazis (the "Vichy") and loved Darwin, so it would appear that Guenon, who had friends in French fascist movements, hated Bergson as a left leaning man interested in science. Virtually everything Guenon says about Bergson is nonsense, as well as vicious, insinuating and blacklisting. He tries to imply that Bergson was an unwitting part of a diabolical plot "against the "Truth", capital T. ⁹⁷⁴

He tries to say that Bergson and James are harbingers of the imaginary "Anti-Christ". The reason he gives is they do not admit of basic religious ideas and are more influenced by science. So what? Why should they admit the truth of religion when it is obviously false? Why should anyone have to be believer "in the nutty nonsense Guenon believes in? It is science that Guenon hates in Bergson and James. These two men must therefore be devil's in disguise, Guenon imagines, and their writing

⁹⁷⁴ Bergson shares some things with Guenon in fact. Like Guenon Bergson puts huge stress on "intuition" and thus is a romantic and prone to certain irrational beliefs in the afterlife and religious ideas. He almost converted to Catholicism before he died. "Bergson died in occupied Paris from pneumonia contracted after standing for several hours in a queue for registration as a Jew" his biography says. Bergson sided with the Jews who were being killed in the camps. His biography also states that he renounced "all of the posts and honors previously awarded him, rather than accept exemption from the anti-Semitic laws imposed by the Vichy government" This shows a rare bravery, of the sort it is hard to imagine Guenon or Schuon having.

opens the door to the “sub-corporeal” and ‘sub-human” realm. There is nothing wrong with beings that are not as complex as humans are, but there is no “sub-human” realm, as Guenon maintains. Nature is nowhere a hierarchy, but rather a sort of continuum wherein all beings have their own lives and progression within the overall adaptation of the evolutionary field.

So as I was saying, the heart of Guenon’s Reign of Quantity is not his theory about a “plan” to defeat tradition. Rather the heart of this book is in Guenon’s own disturbed brain, hungering after power, which births the “plan” or “plot” to destroy the world. The origin or personal starting point of this crazy book to be found in Guenon’s rare admission of jealousy of Henri Bergson, the French philosopher. Guenon reproaches Bergson for not really understanding the “magical operations” that Guenon believes in....Guenon erupts into a really bizarre accusation:

One can admire the intrepidity of this philosopher, shut into his private room, and well protected against the attacks of certain influences which undoubtedly would not hesitate to take advantage of him as an auxiliary no less valuable than unwilling.

⁹⁷⁵

He goes on to say that “experience demonstrates the falsity” of Bergson’s assertions about magic. We know from other sources that Guenon claimed to have experienced horrible attacks of magic coming from Paris. As I discussed earlier, Lings mentions that when he says, “He had enemies in France and he suspected that they wished to attack him by magic”. ⁹⁷⁶So Guenon was affronted by Bergson who apparently and

⁹⁷⁵ Ibid pg. 270

⁹⁷⁶ This is an important admission and I quote it twice but it is really the key to understanding the whole of Guenon’s ‘masterpiece” which is really his greatest work of unintentional fiction. More than any other work I can think of Reign of Quantity is book intended as a nonfiction work, but which is so upside down and a sort of parody of itself that it is actually a work of fiction—a work

rightly does not believe in this paranoid nonsense and does not have such attacks. Guenon is jealous that unlike himself, Bergson does have demons coming from overseas and harassing him from the corners of his room. He has been attacked by “magical operations” since he has recently been the victim of them, or so he imagines. He claims to suffer from strange evils, of which he detects the origin in “psychic attacks” directed against him. They are imaginary, but the paranoid tenor of Reign of Quantity comes from these ‘experiences’ of imagined terror. Bergson, Guenon says, would realize his errors if only he understood that magic operations are real and spirits can attack people at a distance. Actually, the errors are all Guenon’s. He attacks Bergson, James and others out of a personal mental illness and projects of them his own terrors and fears of plot and conspiracy.

Of course Guenon has not a shred of evidence that “ghosts”, “spirits” “psychic residues” and such like beings actually exist. His ‘mental virus’ as Dawkins would call it, is such that even imagines these evil little demons coming through coins and money. Guenon writes that “the control” of money by the spiritual authority” is essential. Money must be backed by religion, both being by-products of evolution, in fact. But Guenon does not realize that he has lost himself in the make believe land where imaginary money and gods are both invoked as “principles”. He agrees with the fascist poet Ezra Pound on this. Pound thought that “Usury” is the great evil, which basically is defined as the taking of unnecessarily high interest in loans. This idea was long preached as part of the language of anti-Semitism., conspiracy theories about Jewish bankers and notions of degeneration resulting from abandoning the gold

of fiction that the author was not aware he was writing, which makes it akin to the writing of the insane, and it is this that makes the book an echo of Revelations, which is also a crazy fiction. The ‘genius’ of the book is that it sucks so many people into its insanity. He totally believes his own insanity and wants to make you believe it to. It is this that makes it an exemplar of religion as a whole. That is to say, this is what religions do, they convince the gullible of the most patently ridiculous nonsense and make it seem like it is life or death reality.

standard. ⁹⁷⁷ Ezra Pound's anti-Semitism was based on his interest in fascist monetary theories, which, to put it over-simply, saw usury as the chief economic ill of modern society. Guenon ideas are similar but more widely applied. Guenon applies the anti-Semitic ideas to all of the “profane” world. For Guenon the hated category “Jews” become the “Profane”. This is true in Schuon too. Guenon sees *any* secular control of finance as an evil. He wants it all in the hands of priests. Pound too is traditionalist, as you can see in his poem, the “Canto Usura”

Duccio came not by usura
nor Pier della Francesca; Zuan Bellin' not by usura
nor was "La Calunnia" painted.
Came not by usura Angelico; came not Ambrogio Praedis,
Came no church of cut stone signed: Adamo me fecit.
Not by usura St Trophime
Not by usura Saint Hilaire,
Usura rusteth the chisel
It rusteth the craft and the craftsman
It gnaweth the thread in the loom
None learneth to weave gold in her pattern;
Azure hath a canker by usura; ⁹⁷⁸

⁹⁷⁷ A recent example of this paranoia is the murderer Jared Loughner, who killed six people in Arizona. Apparently inspired by the neo fascist hate rhetoric of such luminous far right fanatics as Glenn Beck and Sarah Palin, both of whom have advocated “targeting” of anyone who questions right wing hate, corporatism and reactionary politics. Loughner shot a 9 year old girl and a congresswoman, who was shot through the head, but is still alive, badly injured but recovering. Loughner had an obsession with currency issues rather like Pound and Guenon. The idea is to control money for “god”, and since there is no god what is really meant is to control money for those who preach god. It is a self-serving ideology, which is a conspiracy theory still going strong in certain outsider circles today.

⁹⁷⁸ It is worth hearing Pound reading this
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xn6r2Nm0ZMo>

The big evil for Pound as for Guenon, ---as well as for crypto-fascist historians like Oswald Spengler is the Renaissance, Pound⁹⁷⁹“wants a return to a religious veneration of objects. This sounds both like Ananda Coomaraswamy and Guenon, with its extolling of traditional religious craft and its anti-Semitic hatred of bankers. There is nothing wrong with the love of craft. But, neither Pound or Guenon stops there. Guenon wants all coins insured by god and thus “counterfeit” coins will cease to be conduits of devilish witchcraft like forces and “psychic entities”. Pound wants something similar in his mad dash to support Mussolini’s fascism.

Guenon thought that all money should be controlled by the “spiritual authority”. There is truth to there being harm done by capitalists, and lenders at interest, because of financial trickery, but this is even more true of religious institutions. The Vatican is hardly a good example of sound finance, taking from the poor, selling “Indulgences” to feed the rich as they did for centuries. But there are other ways to deal with greed in banks and the rich everywhere. Tax them heavily.

Although Pope Pius V decreed in 1567 that indulgences should not be given in exchange for money, and the Church made huge amounts of money from this. Martin Luther recognized this indulgence selling as an attempt to profit from sin, Luther protested by nailing 95 objections to this on the wall of the Church in Wittenberg. The sale of indulgences mostly had to do with buying time back for sin to be spent in a fictional purgatory.⁹⁸⁰ Indeed, the sale of indulgences is one of the origins of the private insurance racket, which began also with insuring slaves and slave

⁹⁷⁹ Indeed the milieu of Pound and Eliot included a lot of Pre-Raphaelite followers and artists who would be of interest to A. Coomaraswamy such as Eric Gill, Wyndham Lewis etc.

⁹⁸⁰ Buying carbon offsets or credits is the new sale of indulgences, whereby corporations or countries persist in polluting by making others pay for their sins, as it were. The carbon offset system simply allows the corporate sector to buy off critics and keep polluting. The sale of indulgences was meant to allow the rich to keep sinning and buy off their sins. This is just a new form of magical thinking.

ships being sold from Africa to the New World. Indulgences were a kind of buying selling of souls for profit, just like slavery. where they died in droves during the Middle Passage.⁹⁸¹



One of JMW's great paintings is of a slave ship in which the captain of the slave ship "Zong"⁹⁸² had ordered 133 slaves to be thrown overboard so that insurance payments could be collected. Insurance companies got

⁹⁸¹ The Church was a parasitical organization which profited from sin and Insurance companies are similar, as the profit from the fear of the rich, lest they lose their investments. In American medicine, insurance companies are utterly unnecessary and unethical organizations that profit from the sick. A single payer system would abolish them and set up a system where no one profits from people being sick, but money would be pooled into one fund to be paid out for everyone when they get sick, as everyone does get sick at some point.

⁹⁸² I got to spend many hours with this work in 1976. The Zong massacre as an important story as the deaths of all these slaves ended provoking a law case and then it helped inspire the Abolitionist movement. Turner painted this partly in protest and partly to try to influence Prince Albert against slavery. Slaves were thought to be animals and each slave on this ship was worth 30 pounds. The company hoped to recover this money for their animals, which they themselves had murdered, throwing them overboard to collect insurance on them...

their start with slavery this is one example of this symbiosis. Controlling gods is like controlling money in that both are meant to serve certain social factions and to disenfranchise others. Just as slaves were considered not people, the Church saw those who it did not control as inferior beings, or “sinners”, “witches” or “evil ones”. Guenon has no historical sense of how corrupt and depraved the historical church was when it had control of aspects of the economy. He does not realize that money like gods are fictional abstractions that have not real existence. They are social constructions.

Nor does he grasp what a disaster the theory of castes was in India, eventually necessitating it being outlawed. It was a mistake to have the Brahmins in charge of social relations. But Guenon is never concerned with human or earthy realities, which he considers to be “low” and “inferior” realms. People do not matter to him. Nature does not matter to him. Only ideas, his fictional “principles” matter to him.

The whole second half of Guenon's book is devoted to his constrained and paranoid fantasies that psychic entities and satanic conspiracies not only exist but the great secret of our time is that they do exist. He thinks this is a fact of “diabolical cleverness” (pg 109) that Satan hid his little demons from average people. Thanks to Guenon this universal secret is now revealed to you for the first time!! The universe is being overrun by demons. They not only exist but they proliferate wildly like the demons in a painting by Hieronymus Bosch or Pieter Breughel. Indeed, Guenon, like Bosch or Breughel, is a throwback to ignorance and superstition of the Dark Ages. Though I think Breughel at least, and possibly Bosch, understood that these images of hellish fantasy were indeed conceits or allegorical games.

By chapter 22, which is about the evil influences that come through metals, Guenon has really lost any semblance of sanity. What he calls the “maleficent influence” of metals, is part of what he calls “cosmic psychism” (pg.189), and these demons or spirits are everywhere

proliferating – He says these “influences, in their multitudinous forms are today actively threatening the “solidity” of the world. The dissolution is supposed to come about when everything is reduced to an “atomic dust without cohesion” (pg199). Guenon sinks himself into utter fantasy about alchemical processes and spiritualist rhetoric. Full of obscure empty terms like “coagulation and “extra-corporeal modalities” , which sound like they means something but really are just elitist sounding mystical gobbledygook. He writes as a madman, utterly convinced of his delusions:

“In order to undo the knots resulting from the solidification which has been going on up till now and (the word knots is used intentionally, as it suggests the effects of a certain kind of coagulation particularly connected with the realm of magic) the intervention of something more directly effective for the purpose in view is required, and this something must no longer belong to the domain, the very restricted domain to which the “reign of quantity” itself properly belongs. It is easy to perceive, from the occasional indications already given, that the action of subtle influences is involved: such action really began long ago to operate in the modern world, although at first it did so in no very apparent manner, and it has actually always co-existed with materialism for the very moment at which the latter was first constituted in a clearly defined form.”

You can see he has a matter of fact way of speaking about things that are utterly imaginary and fictitious. He suggests that materialism was suggested by the evil demons who swarm around the earth, who apparently whisper in people’s ears—people like Hypatia perhaps or

Bacon⁹⁸³, Da Vinci, Holbein or Descartes--- and insinuate plots to overthrow religious elites and metaphysical paranoids like Guenon. If only Galileo did not fall prey to the whispers of demons when he discovered the four moons of Jupiter! How did I not see how crazy this is 27 year ago? I was intelligent but even the intelligent do not always understand what they read. I only felt the fear of the book not the hysteria that makes his mind be totally at variance to the facts.

Clearly Guenon had a mental problem. The notion that being a materialist is somehow evil and damnable is ludicrous. Descartes was not inspired by demons when he conceived the scientific project⁹⁸⁴ indeed. On the contrary, Descartes is a modern French hero and not the villain of Guenon's dark, malicious fantasies. The author of the Discourse on Method and the Meditations was a man who tried to bring us out of the dark times of the Inquisition and the Catholic Church. Many "esoteric gnostics", such as Frithjof Capra⁹⁸⁵ or of the modern

⁹⁸³ Bacon is often condemned by New Agers are being chauvinistic and damning to nature, and while there is truth to this there is also truth to his being an anti-Cartesian and holding more to empirical thought than the hyper rationalism of Descartes, which is arbitrary and seeks to ground reason in a god fiction, rather than empirical fact.

⁹⁸⁴ Descartes contributed to the field of cognitive science hundreds of years before it was officially established. His ideas are still relevant, unlike Guenon's ideas, which are fading already.. Noam Chomsky implemented some of Descartes' ideas into his own work. Descartes was not the devil that Guenon paints him as. He was in fear of the horrible inquisition and but he was a very interesting thinker who provoked a huge leap in humankind's understanding. He developed analytical geometry---a coordinate system, and is really the first person to start trying to outline the method by which science operates. Chomsky notes in several essays that Descartes' mechanical philosophy was soon brought into question by Hume and Newton and that it was basically discredited by Newton who showed that gravity or action at a distance negated Descartes' claim that all action had to be mechanical. I am not sure that Chomsky is right about this, but more of that later.

⁹⁸⁵ Capra's *Tao of Physics* has been discredited, Peter Woit writes, for instance

"The Tao of Physics was completed in December 1974, and the implications of the November Revolution one month earlier that led to the dramatic confirmations of the standard-model quantum field theory clearly had not sunk in for Capra (like many others at that time). What is harder to understand is that the book has now gone through several

period hate Descartes undeservedly. He is credited with bring us materialism, reductionism and relativism⁹⁸⁶ and all sorts of other New Age and Traditionalists bugaboos.⁹⁸⁷

Guenon wants to thrust us back into the same Dark Ages that Descartes did so much the help lead us out of in his Meditations and other writings. Da Vinci did not study hydraulics, birds in flight and anatomy because some perverse little spirits that crept of “cracks in the “Great Wall” made him do so, as Guenon suggests. Indeed, Da Vinci is really the first scientist and not merely a rationalists as was Descartes. Da Vinci is an experimentalist and joins a long line of mostly anonymous scientists who developed carpentry and architecture, metallurgy and shipbuilding, going back the Roman and Greeks as well as the Chinese and others. Da Vinci is preferable over Descartes who tortured live animals and how believed that animals do not feel pain.

editions, and in each of them Capra has left intact the now out-of-date physics, including new forewords and afterwords that with a straight face deny what has happened. The foreword to the second edition of 1983 claims, "It has been very gratifying for me that none of these recent developments has invalidated anything I wrote seven years ago. In fact, most of them were anticipated in the original edition," a statement far from any relation to the reality that in 1983 the standard model was nearly universally accepted in the physics community, and the bootstrap theory was a dead idea ... Even now, Capra's book, with its nutty denials of what has happened in particle theory, can be found selling well at every major bookstore. It has been joined by some other books on the same topic, most notably Gary Zukav's *The Dancing Wu-Li Masters*. The bootstrap philosophy, despite its complete failure as a physical theory, lives on as part of an embarrassing New Age cult, with its followers refusing to acknowledge what has happened.

⁹⁸⁶ They never define why these things are evil or bad. It is assumed they are, but in most cases they are all fine things. Materialism is merely a fact, we are all material beings. Reduction is a good thing too, as in pottery or making things simpler in science. Relativism is a vague and uncertain term and needs a fresh definition wherever it is used as it is used in so many odd ways. Holistic ideas a certainly questionable, though justified in some cases, but one has to analyze each case.

⁹⁸⁷ For another wacky and ridiculous conspiracy theory as insane as Guenon see Lee Penn's New Dawn, a far right and theofascist take on everything the Catholic Church hates, form George Soros to Hare Krishna . It is a ridiculous book, but interesting in that it illustrates the psychology of the far right.

There were no little spirit-demons that crawled into Hipparchus, c. 190 BC – c. 120 BCE) when he conceived of the earth as a globe that goes around the sun.⁹⁸⁸ There were no little demons when he invented altitude and longitude to help ships navigate the seas. I am not sure than anyone ever was a strict materialist, since life is in some ways not exactly a material phenomenon, though many of the brain's process are material in their roots. I am not suggesting “spiritual” forces at all. There are physical forces or fields in the world that suggest ‘action at a distance’ without actually being that, such as magnetism and gravity. These did not really bring Cartesian mechanics into question, though Chomsky wrongly thinks they did. Pure Cartesian mechanics is rather too simple to explain much but concepts like Faraday's and Maxwell's idea of fields go far to explaining how the appearance of action at a distance can happen, while yet the underlying facts are all physical and mechanical in the sense of being causal and having physical explanations..

In any case, I will discuss the traditionalist's dismal ignorance as regard science in a later chapter.

Guenon hates modern education and suggests that those who were interested in magnetism were somehow agents of the devil. He claims that “occultism and modern science tend more and more to join up with each other” (pg. 158). The opposite is true. The history of human understanding of magnetism actually goes back before Aristotle and was known in India and China too. William Gilbert set about demystifying magnetism in his book *On the Magnet and Magnetic Bodies, and on the Great Magnet the Earth*, published in 1600. His knowledge was obtained from innumerable and unnamed blacksmiths, miners, sailors and

⁹⁸⁸ Hipparchus is a fascinating study all by himself. He is thought to have created early numerical trigonometry. Also to have discovered a way to predict solar eclipses and to measure the distance of the moon from the earth as well as the diameter of the earth itself. He did all this not by magic, but by math and inquiry.

instrument makers. These are the very “low” people that Guenon despises so much ⁹⁸⁹ Guenon’s notion that it was an occult concern is mistaken and another example of his bad history writing. He just didn’t research the subject. Blacksmith’s regularly play with magnetism in the iron in the forge and cool off. Guenon did not bother to ask them how this works, many know exactly how it works.

Guenon also claims that psychiatrists that are psychoanalyzed themselves are involved in a sort of pseudo-initiation process and this process gives them a certain “stain”. He uses a term that is used by Catholics to refer to the “stain of original sin”. The idea of “original sin” being a way in which the church blamed babies for sins they never committed, in order to get their parents to inject their children into the church via baptism. Original sin is a horrible notion, which means that those outside the church are evil by definition and those inside the church are pure. The idea of the purification of children in the baptism rite is utterly ludicrous. The Church does not oversee the ‘insertion’ of the “soul” into the body. The notion of a soul that is inserted into the body from some invisible divine pool of souls is absurd. The concept of the soul is a fiction, invented by priests and the ignorant. No one uses that term any more but 'spiritual' people. The notion of a life force is also a postulate, similar to soul, and has no reality. If one understands how conception works in all mammalian species, scientifically, life begins not by any "force" outside the parents, but rather begins from the egg and sperm of parents which are incontestably alive. Anything else but this fact is an exploit against children and their parents

There was some confusion in the history of science about the female

⁹⁸⁹ William Gilbert and his sources, including his main source, a sailor and mechanic named Robert Norman, is discussed at length in Clifford Conner’s very interesting. [A People’s History of Science.](#)

egg.⁹⁹⁰ Anton von Leuwenhoek thought, for instance that male sperm was alone responsible for the inception of a child in the womb. Like the Catholic concept of original sin, this is a falsehood, and assumes male superiority. But the source of life was eventually solved in the 1800s, when the implantation of the egg in the womb was understood. So there is no "pool" form which a life force emanates. The concept of the soul is a false medieval construction that contains patriarchal sexism. The process involves the very complex exchange of DNA sharing between egg and sperm in the fetus. The proof is in literally thousands of works by scientists over the last several centuries and is well founded and really incontestable. There is no soul, in anyone and no soul has ever been found. The self is a complex of neural and bodily circuitry. It was quite evident to me that my mom lost her 'self' when she had Alzheimer's. As she was losing it she even said, out loud to me. "I'm losing my self".

The dying process of humans is typical for all mammals, and goes the same way, in the absence of pathological conditions, -- diseases. Life ceases with death. This is because every mammal I have seen die, dies in the same way, and not a single one has ever come back to say otherwise. The evidence against life after death is overwhelming, the evidence for life after death are some crazy texts that clearly have an interest in lying about it, namely the Bible the Koran, Bhagavad Gita, and other texts.

Original sin is a way of creating a destructive "Them versus Us" dynamic. The notion that Jesus Christ is a payment for sin and that he died for our sins and that "his death constitutes a successful propitiation of a "loving" God is a direct and undisguised inheritance of the superstitious bloodletting that has plagued bewildered people throughout

⁹⁹⁰ Karl Ernst von Baer discovered the mammalian ovum in 1827, and Edgar Allen discovered the human ovum in 1928. The fusion of spermatozoa with ova (of a starfish) was observed by Oskar Hertwig in 1876. " From Wikipedia

history.”⁹⁹¹ Such barbaric bloodletting is an enormous disgrace and invalidates any moral validity claimed for the Christian god. A god that would allow this, or a parent, is barbaric and immoral.

The idea of “original sin” is akin to the Eastern notion of “karma”, which is the basis of the caste system, which also has the function of making everyone feel a primal guilt that can only be addressed by parasitical priests who administer a caste system meant to work out the “bad effects” of karma. Actually, karma is pure fiction and there are no “bad effects”.⁹⁹² Caste and class are artificial and are created by elites to justify their power and greed. You are not guilty for what your mother or grandfather did or did not do. You are not guilty because you were born into the world. Karma and “original sin” lie about nature and birth giving.

In any case, what Guenon is condemning is all psychiatrists who he says are “stained” and in league with the devil. He says they have a “mark” on them, which is the term used in revelations that applies to those who are damned in the next world after the apocalypse. In other words, Guenon is using stigma and stereotype, trying to do to psychiatrists what Hitler did to Jews. There are many good psychologists and mental health workers. Guenon’s condemnation of them is a typical example of his stereotyping others and branding those who are in competition with him. Certainly there are things to question in current Psychology, and any good psychologist would freely admit, but Guenon’s

⁹⁹¹ From Sam Harris, Letter to a Christian Nation. Pg ?

⁹⁹² I once heard someone use the idea of Karma to condemn a child. Ignorant people will blame a genetic deformity on a moral cause originating in the parents. This sort of repulsive magical thinking is very common in societies where ignorance is rampant or science is hated for irrational reasons. The person in question hates science and is a Guenonian who has turned against the Enlightenment of his own country. The idea of karma originates in the ideology of caste and is an elitist as well as speciesist notion. It is moralistic and someone with “bad Karma” is supposed to come back as an animal humans despise. They will be an animal or be born in a low caste. This is a perfidious idea. Deformities are caused by genetic anomalies or chemical toxins, not by moral faults of parents, except in cases where parents ingested such materials, were exposed to radiation or other things of that kind. The idea of karma enshrines an unforgivable ignorance and the word “karma” should not be used by anyone who thinks about it carefully.

approach to this is unworkable.

Schuon and Guenon hated psychologists first because they were both mentally ill and in denial about it and second because “the priest”, who they did admire, is no longer trusted to deal with mental problems, so they resented the loss of power to priests. Having seen concrete examples of Schuon’s utter incompetence in dealing with people’s personal problems and mental stresses, the idea that anyone would be treated for anything by any of the traditionalists seems frightening to me. Schuon was a horrible ‘Shaykh’ who harmed many people who trusted him with their lives. Rama Coomaraswamy got a degree in psychology but I would never recommend anyone to him because I saw how incompetent he was as a psychologist. He went back to school as an old man after retiring from the practice of surgery. Evidently a good surgeon, he was not very good at psychology. His views on psychology were distorted and extremist as his views on religion. He was interested in promoting and performing ineffectual and discredited exorcism rituals and in forcing gay people to give up their sexual preferences because he was sure homosexuality was a form of mental illness. This is medieval in its ignorance and cruelty.⁹⁹³ Indeed, one of the foremost psychiatrists in the world, Dr. Robert Spitzer, recently apologized to the gay community of “making unproven claims about the efficacy of reparative therapy”.⁹⁹⁴ Rama should have apologized for his backwards and destructive ideas on this subject years ago, but he was too narrow minded to be aware of the need for this. I suggested he amend his views but he refused. The traditionalists hate psychology and try to stigmatize those who they see as competing with their role of priests. Psychologists and in fact do much better at helping others than either Guenon, Schuon, Nasr,

⁹⁹³ To see more on the far right, fascist and theofascist ideology of traditional Catholicism see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Controversies_surrounding_the_Society_of_St._Pius_X

⁹⁹⁴ See New York Times May 18, 2012

Coomaraswamy, Lings or Evola were ever able to do. ⁹⁹⁵

In the last half of Guenon's *Reign of Quantity*, Guenon spends a lot of time branding and stigmatizing people. Guenon sets up a structure of the end of the book where he tries, first, to delineate his paranoid theory of world collapse and apocalypse, which cycles through a series of events. There is subversion, anti-traditional action, counter-initiation and then the Great Parody, followed by apocalypse and then reinstatement the new world. This wooden structure taken from archaic Hindu theory of cycles, as I said earlier, and it is not real, but merely a mythic construction. Guenon co-opted these ideas from India unexamined or analyzed. He added this to the stew or pastiche of heterogeneous elements taken from numerous sources and religions.

So what Guenon created is a fantasy of conglomerated myths, forged in the smithy of his desire for power and his madness.;. He tries to adapt the idea of the Kali Yuga to Christian notions of the apocalypse. He connects Hindu fantasy to various rather trivial examples of things Guenon hates. So he hates westerners doing yoga, so they must be "unconscious Satanists" (Pg. 289). He hates those who are involved in naturalism or 'cosmic consciousness' , or who believe in "ordinary life" or

⁹⁹⁵ The Churches Rama Coomaraswamy belonged to (SSPX and SSPV) were extremist groups fanatical in the old right wing Catholicism of the 1940's—the same Catholicism that had a concordat with Hitler. Rama was close of the extremist and far right John Birch Society in many of his views. Some of the members of the SSPX, Rama's church, were caught echoing anti-Semitic, homophobic views, defending the Spanish Inquisition and similar views to those I heard Rama espouse.

"Richard Williamson, who is infamous for his Holocaust denial and anti-Semitism. In January, just a few days before the pontiff invited Williamson back into the church, he appeared on a Swedish TV program insisting the Nazis had no gas chambers. "I believe that the historical evidence is strongly against — is hugely against — 6 million Jews having been deliberately gassed in gas chambers as a deliberate policy of Adolf Hitler," Williamson said. "I believe there were no gas chambers."

<http://www.splcenter.org/blog/2009/02/26/behind-the-bishop-the-anti-semitism-of-the-sspx/>

who combine various traditions together—as if Guenon himself doesn't do that!. However, his hypocrisy aside, he thinks those who do yoga are evil and under the influence of quasi-demonic or actually demonic forces. Doing yoga outside of India is a trivial concern and hardly warrants mention. It is a useful relaxation technique and the metaphysics behind it cannot be taken seriously by anyone who cares about reality. Why make a big deal out of something so trivial after he has just destroyed the planet in a book?

However, Guenon makes a big deal out of it as if with were a sin against him, Pope of Esoterism. Traditionalist dogmatism and repression will merely lead to more rebellion, as indeed it should. People play with all sorts of belief systems in their lives and it is hardly a “satanic” act. It is merely experimentation. But Guenon brands experimentation as devilish sin too and claims such experimentation is itself evil. Guenon makes himself appear to be a repressive old bigot and priggish zealot forbidding any sort of inquiry, and assuming the efficacy of the most bogus spiritual conglomerations and practices.

He really trips up on himself trying to claim that the spiritual and the psychic are different and should not be confused. (Chapter 35) There is no real difference between the Catholic Church and say, the Church of Scientology or spiritualist groups, as Guenon would wrongly claim. One is merely older and bigger than the other is. They all claim privileged access to knowledge, which in fact does not exist, just as Guenon does. He says that “true initiates” are “conscious of their part” in the divine “Plot” that god weaves for the demise of humankind. He tries to make it a virtue to be part of the destruction of earth. It is only an imaginary destruction, but how despicable is it to want to destroy the earth to begin with? The only difference between the so called psychic and the so called spiritual is that one has a higher “level” of abstraction and thus of delusion than the other. The Magician wants to control someone and the

spiritual ecstatic wants everyone to be controlled by his favorite delusion. There are no real levels here and in fact the spiritual is probably more dangerous than the [psychic because the psychic is merely a false belief whereas the spiritual is a false belief that many seek to impose universally. When the gospel writers put in the mouth of their imaginary character Jesus “Not my will but Thine be done.”, they are involving a system of mind control that is totalistic and which the religion wants to impose so deeply on the individual that he or she thinks that “god” speaks and acts through them automatically, without any mediation. But there is no real difference between the psychic and the spiritual in fact, as both are the effects of imaginary systems of belief, involving slavish credulity about unexamined assumptions. Those who write about this as if it were a true distinction and merely making a distinction without a difference, violating Occam’s razor. There certainly does exist the psychological, but the psychic and spiritual are fiction in ordinary usage, so I am not expressing a preference for either of them

A psychic sees a snake as a means to gather hidden inner powers, a spiritual man sees a snake as a symbol of the illusory nature of all life, and tries to transcend reality until he is totally suffused with an illusion he wrongly calls “reality”, an ecologist who is wise will study actual snakes as much as he can and try to save the wildness that supports the most endangered of them. Clearly only the last one is a reasonable man, the other two are merely deluded and help no one.

”Analogously”, Guenon argues, “that evil members of the counter-initiation are not conscious” that the earth will be destroyed. Those in “counter-initiation” are “dupes” and their “ignorance is much worse for them than is the mere ignorance of the profane”. How silly and arbitrary. In other words, people who believe in New Age ideas or left leaning spiritual notions will suffer far more in the fictional ‘next world’, which does not exist. Those who like repressive, tightly conservative, theofascist religion will have a wonderful afterlife, after Armageddon strikes. This is

really about ideological control and does not describe anything that is actually wrong or immoral.

So what Guenon is doing here is trying to eliminate his competition. He is afraid of people who merely do yoga or who are “pagans”. He has been doing that all his life, ever since his acceptance and then rejection of Papus or his acceptance and then rejection of Theosophy. Guenon was a secretive spy, and infiltrator, who wanted to eliminate all his competition so he alone will stand up free and whole and the end of time, shining as the prophet of the last days. His addiction to the spiritual is really just a higher addiction to transcendent power that goes beyond magic. Guenon offers the world nothing but more con-men and cult leaders. You can only do this in the make-believe waste of religious fantasy. Anyone who tried to be a prophet of the last days as Guenon and Schuon do, in reality, should either be laughed at or put in exile at Elba.

So what is there to fear in Yoga? After the Great Wall has been breached, what kind of tin-can Napoleon is this, that he fears breathing exercises that calm the mind? Most western uses of Yoga are quite harmless and even beneficial.⁹⁹⁶ For Guenon only traditional yoga, which was hierarchical and world denying, matters. Chakras and Kundalini are imaginary medical fictions and cannot be taken seriously on their own terms, and indeed, some yogic ideas were used for war and support social injustice.. But Guenon is a political animal and he hates all things

⁹⁹⁶ Traditional yoga was quite a harmful thing in that it was connected with the ideology of Karma and caste, and hatred of attachments, ego and family. Hindu texts talk about yoga as a means of “controlling the universe” by “transcending suffering and existence”. This is fiction. The self is not the universe. Yoga done as a body relaxation technique or to calm the mind can be quite helpful to those who suffer from panic attacks for instance, or sore back or muscles. Modern yoga is thus an improvement over the traditional Hindu variety. But traditional Yoga was used to justify war. An example of this is the Nath Yogic Order which was used to win a battle in 1804 to put Man Singh in power on the throne of Jodhpur. Yoga here is a mind control technique used to do violence. Control the universe really means support status quo rulers who wish to enforce behavior codes that keep them in power.

implying equality. So of course he only wants traditional yoga.

Guenon's conspiratorial mentality hides the fact that he was himself the most conspiratorial man I have ever heard of. ⁹⁹⁷ Guenon was addicted to opportunistic secrecy.⁹⁹⁸ Indeed, one of the last chapters in the book, chapter 37, is called "The Deceptiveness of "Prophesies". Guenon's own Deceptiveness of "Prophesies" is never considered. That is an odd title for a chapter in a book that is entirely about imaginary prophetic pronouncements of the doomed future of humankind. But this is typical of myth and cults. This is the tactic of a con-man. He knows his readers are skeptical of the bunk he is dishing out, so he tries to say

⁹⁹⁷ Guenon's use and abuse of secrecy was life long and inspired Schuon to a similar secrecy. Secrecy increases the likelihood of immoral actions and despising those who are not in on the secret. It is a tool of power and tends to corrupt people. Guenon has a whole chapter in this book trying to excuse and justify secrecy. He does not explore any of the evil uses of secrecy in Tibetan Buddhism or the Inquisition, Hinduism or elsewhere. Hugh B. Urban wrote a few good things on secrecy in religion, particularly in relation to questions of knowledge and power. Focusing primarily on the traditions of South Asia, he is author of Tantra: Sex, Secrecy, Politics and Power in the Study of Religion (2003) and Magia Sexualis: Sex, Magic, and Liberation in Modern Western Esotericism (2006), and Hugh Urban's The Church of Scientology: A History of a New Religion among other books. Unfortunately, he has a strong secondary interest in "contemporary new religious movements", more properly called cults. Lately his books seem to have become more "balanced" in the sense of being less willing to question what religion is and more promotional of it. Scientology has done harm to huge numbers of people, and largely invented the term NRM, now used like a mantra of cult apology by rather dim academics like Urban. Urban writes of it more or less as another corporate history. Indeed, he is writing an institutional history, and thus neglects the individuals who have been harmed by this institution. The other problem with the book is that Urban is scared to define religion himself, he wants scientology and the US government to define religion for him, which is not a good idea. See "http://people.cohums.ohio-state.edu/urban41/ Information theory predicts that the world is safer when information is divulged. This was evident during the cold war where regular "leaks" from an overly secretive government resulted in a thawing of cold war tensions. What matters is the victims of these cults, the cults themselves are like corporations and basically about power and unjust practices. They write their own histories, which are invariably PR. To see what Urban should have written about Scientology see "The Top 25 People Crippling Scientology", at this site

http://blogs.villagevoice.com/runninscared/2011/08/tory_christman_top_25_crippling_scientology.php

⁹⁹⁸ One of the best writers on secrecy is Robert Jay Lifton who discusses secrecy in relation to atrocities such as happening under the Nazi Doctors, in the killing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and other atrocities such as Vietnam or Iraq and the Abu Graib prison where Americans abused prisoners in horrible ways, under a cloak of secrets.

he is not a used car salesman like the other con-men down the street !. He wouldn't lie to you as they do! He says that those phony prophets, "always present everything in a distressing of even in a terrifying light" (pg306)--- well-- as if Guenon were Mr. Cheerful throughout this dismal and doom and gloom book! Guenon is the great deceiver. This is a depressing book, depressing that a man can deceive himself as much as Guenon does, and depressing that he could deceive and lie to others so readily and cynically. Schuon would go even further in his abilities to lie and decisive.

The last 10 chapters of Guenon's book try to present infallible proof that the end of the world is not only near but soon to happen in an awful cataclysm. One would think he should marshal deep and certain evidence of this. He doesn't have any evidence to speak of---he spends half a chapter talking about a few irrelevant charlatans who push false ideas about the pyramids containing prophecies supposedly hidden in the geometry of the pyramids. (Guenon was then living within site of the pyramids in Cairo) He attacks a few "neo-spiritualists", a few psychoanalysts, a few "false prophets", --- in addition to the already blacklisted and mistreated authors, Henri Bergson, Einstein and Darwin. All of these latter thinkers Guenon thinks are part of the great "subversion".

Guenon says, speaking of spiritualism and similar irrelevant fringe cults and practices, that

"the one thing certain is that there is something here that fits in perfectly with the exigencies of a "control" exerted over inferior psychic influences, themselves already essentially maleficent, in order that they may be used more directly with certain defined ends in view, in conformity with the pre-established "plan" of the

work of subversion, for which purpose they are now being
“unchained” in our world.

“The one thing certain”....Guenon fancies that there is a “plan” to destroy the world, without the slightest evidence. He does not know exactly what the nature of the “plan” is, but it is “certain” there is one. It is “certain” that these meaningless little cults in the 20th century somehow are helping unchain the so called “hordes of Gog and Magog” to unleash the psychic corpses—zombies-- who come through the “cracks and fissures of the Great Wall” to swarm over the world. The little demons will create the “counter-tradition” and then the Great Parody and finally the whole things dissolves in chaos and apocalypse until at last, the world is destroyed--- but then is brought back as a new world or the new Manvantara begins. This is definitely like a 1950’s “B” horror movie. The Blob or the Huge Ants will come any day to destroy us. Or it is like Piranesi’s imaginary prison, except that what is imprisoned is the minds of Guenon’s followers who believe all this nonsense



Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720-1778) for the Carceri, The Prison series

Like Piranesi's Prisons Guenon thought is the last gasp of the mentality that created the Inquisition. What Guenon fears will be subverted is the outlandish nonsense he himself believes in. His most important book ends in a pathetic whimper. He is man who lives in hate and thinks in hate and calls his hate the "intellect" and contemplation.

⁹⁹⁹ One would think that in order to prove the end of the world Guenon

⁹⁹⁹ Guenon's love of violent images mirrors that of the Apocalypse of St John. As I wrote elsewhere if John's supposed writing on the end of the world "are considered quite as they appear, without pious or esoteric sophistry, they are psychotic, and involve a will to power that has identified itself with the totalistic concept of the universal Logos. One begins to see how the doctrine of the Logos or the sacrificed Word of God is related to the destruction of the world that John predicts. John's vision on the island of Patmos is an explosion of anger and hatred against the world that cannot conform to John's gnostic ideal of the perfect man. The Christ of the Apocalypse is a horrible person, who despises the world and lives on hate. He is a bigoted man who has a bottomless need of revenge....The Apocalypse of John is certainly one of the most fatal and destructive books ever written, in terms of its eventual effect upon history. This

could have come up with much better examples and evidence than these paltry, even pathetic arguments. Perhaps people fall for these caricatures because he goes on and on with such relentless logic as if he believed all of it himself. I think he did believe it.

Harry Oldmeadow writes, rather obtusely, that The Reign of Quantity is a magisterial summation of Guenon's work. One need not read another word of his is this nonsense is “magisterial”. As Guenon himself writes on phony prophecies, how can people allow themselves to believe Guenon’s “absurdities so manifest that one cannot help but wonder how it is that nobody seems to notice it,” to quote Guenon. Am I surely not the first to notice what nonsense all this really is? Or have so few people actually read this ridiculous book? This book is so full of fabrications and fictions that it amazes me any of his followers take him seriously at all.

Guenon himself appears to note that his pathetic reasons why the world should be forced into a Great Parody and apocalypse and finally destroyed really doesn’t make much sense. He marshals such paltry evidence. Apparently aware reader might not believe his nonsense, Guenon leaps at a last attempt to convince and introduces the fiction that maybe

“ this extreme degeneration goes a long way back into the past”
and maybe goes back to the “the perversion of one of the ancient

unrelenting fantasy of revenge erects hatred of the world into a universal principle. It is indeed a work of art, but one so densely crafted of simultaneous symbols of transcendent perfection and sheerest cruelty that the mixture is both suffocating and infectious. This close congruence of transcendent knowledge and terrible cruelty is what I mean by the term "knowledge power". This is theofascism. In the Apocalypse of John symbol upon symbol of power and cruelty is built up and contrasted with ultimate wealth and exaltation. Horror and purity are mixed in a conglomerate vertigo meant to oppress all rational argument in a terrorist's appeal to transcendent truth.”. This is a horrible piece of writing that influences readers who take it seriously in horrific ways. This psychosis is also in Guenon and his followers, just as it is in other delusional readers of St. John or the Koran. The insanity of religions is evident in these hypocritical fantasies of world destruction

civilizations belonging to one or the other of the continent that have disappeared in cataclysms occurring in the course of the present Manvantara” (pg.316)

So it was the perversion of Atlantis that caused the present “degeneration”!! How sad: there was no Atlantis as I said, the theory of Atlantis was another of Plato’s mistakes. The volcano at Thera, Santorini was bigger than the huge explosion at Krakatoa. Thera was probably Plato's Atlantis. Thera was destroyed around 1600 B.C.E.. despite its rhetoric of being an apocalyptic prophecy. So much for that con job.

So therefore the last half of Guenon’s book is not about evidence for the end of the world, since Guenon has little of value to present. The end of the book is really a desperate attempt to threaten apocalypse—to grandstand, as they say--- in view of solidifying his power over his small area of religious theory. Guenon spends the last part of the book weaving his apocalyptic talk while nit-picking over various little cults and threats to himself. He also tries to defend the ideology of traditionalism against imaginary threats, and thus the book is about himself, without ever saying so, indeed, it pretends falsely to be the most impersonal of books.

I would suggest that book is really a kind of damage control. He is trying to defend failing religion against the real onslaught of science and reason, which had already overwhelmed religion when Guenon made this last ditch effort. This explains the suppressed hysteria that is underneath the pose of a logical tone on the surface of the book. He can’t defeat science on its own terms, so he has to write a mythical story that will blind or undermine science in the estimation of his few narrow-minded followers. He cannot touch science itself, and indeed, no scientist, other than Wolfgang Smith who is really not a scientist at all, has ever taken Guenon seriously. To achieve his end of damage control, he has to lie, invent fictions and use false analogies and then to make his audience feel mythic fears. Hence the apocalyptic myths and analogies

Guenon manufactures for the purpose. Then he has to separate the wheat from the chaff, so he attacks various cults and groups like neo-spiritualism, theosophy or psychiatrists, anyone close enough to religion who pose a threat to Guenon's presumption of power or question accurately Guenon ridiculous claims. In the end he merely whimpers about Yoga.

What he really wants to do is to dominate a fringe market in religion. All those terrible titles on the metaphysics section at bookstores that do not carry the books of RG or FS. Is that why he spends so much time in seemingly irrelevant attacks on other fringe groups? He also wishes to try to colonize existing religions with his progeny. That is also why tries he to create a means for his followers to be involved in various religions while yet remaining Guenonian. Schuon continued this and tried to colonize Indians, Muslims and Christians and academics by adopting them into his cult directly or holding them close while not yet full members. This is a sort of ideological or intellectual colonialism. It is a con-job by a couple of con-men.

So in the end Guenon's great book, Reign of Quantity and the Signs of the Times is a ridiculous tirade written by a paranoid reactionary who is desperate to hold on to religions fading powers. No one who reads Reign of Quantity with any intelligence at all, can take it seriously. Guenon makes extraordinary claims, and as Carl Sagan said "extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence." But Guenon has no evidence for his tall tales. It is all bunk. So his book is merely another example in pseudo-science, like Astrology, or the Book of Revelations, both of which are pure fiction. It is a crass example of paranoid literature, a metaphysical version of a 1950's horror movie, as well as an recruiting mechanism for drawing people into a cultish ideology. It is a typical apocalyptic text, one whose purpose is to make the world over in the image of a delusions. Like all apocalyptic ideologies, it should be rejected. This world is what matters, these plants and beings, these

oceans and forests. Those who wish to destroy the world and make it over in their own image should be immediately suspect. When I was a kid the capitalist/communist cold war made it so that I had to hide under my desk in an air raid drill because they said someone might drop the Hydrogen Bomb any second. Both capitalist and communists are guilty of threatening children. Now that I am old they are threatening to destroy the entire earth by refusing responsibility for Global Warming. A few corrupt corporations want to make things out of oil, gas and coal that we do not need. They like to threaten destroying the earth so they can get power or profit. I am tired of it. It is the preachers of the world's end that need to be brought into question. All apocalyptic ideologies should be questioned at their source: who do they serve and why were these fictions created? If Guenon's book is of value now it is merely a document in the history of pseudo-science and theofascism, the history of the decline and end of religion, as well as the history of the literature of mental illness in the 20th century. No more, no less.

A Note on Schuon's Gatherings and Guenon's Death

It might be useful here, though not related to Guenon's most strange book, which I just reviewed, to talk about the equally fictionalized and strange story of Guenon's supposed murder, which never happened, and why it never happened. In some ways this is a story that goes to the creation of false histories and "alternative facts". There is a prologue to this story as follows

Zachary Markwith, who was a student at the Berkeley Theological Union, now at a college in Fresno, was a former follower of Nasr, evidently for 12 years. He records this admission by Hossein Nasr that children were involved in Schuon's primordial gatherings.

“Yes, I confronted Nasr in person, man to man as you say. I was later told by one of his followers that no one had spoken to him as directly as I had. After a series of deflections by Nasr, the end of interaction can be summarized as follows:

me: “Schuon and others abused young children...why didn’t you tell us?”

Nasr: “What was I to do?”

me: “This is no different than the Catholic Church.”

Nasr: “Except in the Church the Pope himself was not guilty.”

me: “I just want to tell you in person that I am leaving the order.”

Nasr: “You are an angry person.”

I felt somewhat sorry for the man because his proud façade was beginning to crack and there was some recognition that his master was a deeply flawed human being. However, he should have done exactly what I did and leave. Instead, he took Schuon’s mantle and defended the man. Now I am told by reputable sources that Nasr has hurt a number of impressionable disciples of his own. It was only later that I took a closer look at his political connections and realized his moral compass (or lack thereof) had betrayed him in several respects.

Markwith also writes “Independent academic scholars, some of whom admire the traditionalists’ writings, have also confirmed that Schuon and some of his closest disciples committed acts of pedophilia and pederasty. How certain I am? I wasn’t there, but I trust the dozen or so sources inside and outside of the order that I have consulted. I would suggest that others do the same. “

I do not know what he means here exactly, but it should be investigated by someone, so I investigated myself. He also claims to have knowledge that Schuon sexually molested some 8 and 9 year old girls. I do not know anything about that or if it is true or not. I did contact Markwith and he appears to be very confused, even a little reckless. But it is good to see his first hand admission that Nasr lied to everyone, however. 25 years after the fact. Nasr was indeed lying as I have said for 25 years, and no one believed me. Markwith is telling the truth here, at least as regards Nasr's lying, unusually. In the perennialist organizations truth matters very little, authority matters much more, and this skews every thing they say or do not say.

Markwith believes in "postmodernism", and appears to endorse an ambition for all the religions somehow saving the world, which parrots Schuon and Nasr, largely. Religion cannot even save itself much less the world it is helping to destroy. But I do not know if what he says about young girls has evidence to back it up or not. He claimed to supply me with addresses that led me to the source of his evidence, but it was a dead end. It could be that his informants are cowards who are too afraid to come forward. It also could be that it is all just a bunch of lies. With this group, it is hard to tell. I know that I told the truth, but it is uncertain that others have. I am not their conscience, and cannot tell them what to do. What is true is that there are many that are afraid of the leaders of these groups. That in itself tells a lot about Nasr, Schuon and their handlers. So I append this footnote with a huge question mark, as this may be false information, I do not know.

That said, I found the above quotes from Markwith about Nasr on Sedgwicks Blog. There Markwith is speaking with a man named Wahid Azal, Markwith speaks rather approvingly with Azal, a supporter of

Assad, the Syrian mass murderer, and one of the last of the Middle Eastern Kings. That already makes him questionable as Assad is a mass murderer. Azal wrote an essay falsely claiming that Schuon or his people killed Guenon, for which there is no evidence at all. I complained about the lack of evidence in this article to the people at Counterpunch magazine online. They took it down. He did this, he claims, because Abdollah Shahbazi of Iran,¹⁰⁰⁰ head of a school of history in Iran that promotes conspiracy theories, useful to the Iranian state, had written that Guenon was murdered by Martin Lings, Schuon and perhaps others. But I knew this to be false, Guenon was not murdered, as I had read an account of Guenon's death in Charcornac biography of him. I was told by Perry and others that Guenon was a chain smoker. This is confirmed in Robin Waterfield's book, the Future of the West, where he says that

“From 1945 onwards Guénon suffered from a persistent cough, which wore him out and prevented him from working as much as he would have liked.”

¹⁰⁰⁰ Houchang Chehabi, Professor at Boston University describes Shahbazi view of history in a chapter titled "Paranoid Style in Persian Historiography" as follows:^[1]

Particularist and universalist conspiracy belief come together in a multi-volume study of world history by Abdollah Shahbazi, which begins with the rise of the West and analyzes the expansion of Western influence in the world in terms of conspiracies perpetrated by Jews and Masons.

I have not read any of Shahbazi's work because I cannot read Persian, Or rather I read a little but mechanical Persian translators online are not very good. So I do not know if this is true or not, but from what I have gathered from talking to Shahbazi himself is that he tends to line up with the Iranian Republic along similar racist and conspiratorial lines. Indeed the idea of history as conspiracy seems to be very popular in Iran, which is concerning, since we know what the paranoid style did in the US during the McCarthy era. Making up stories about Guenon being murdered by the Schuonians thus seems to be part of a conspiracy theory meant to undermine Schuonism ideology as well as any secular criticism of Guenon, making him a sort of martyr to the Iranian religious ideology or to Islam. Using my witness against Schuon to support Islam has been a common abuse of what I said. Islam is a questionable religion, as are they all.

I knew for other sources that Guenon was attended by a doctor when he died. Paul Charcornac, a friend of Guenon's writes in his Simple Life and Rene Guenon (1958), Guenon's death was overseen by a Dr. Katz. He describes an ulcerated right leg, perhaps caused by venous insufficiency, and an unknown but severe medical condition, probably atherosclerosis, that appears to have resulted in Guenon suffering, according to Dr. Katz, "a kind of speech impediment, pronouncing words with difficulty, and moreover performed certain movements in an uncoordinated manner." (Dr. Katz, Page 96- 98) This combined with Robin Waterfield's admission that Guenon had been suffering from a bad cough for years, due to his excessive smoking habit, resulted in a stroke of some kind, from which he died, probably caused by over smoking, and thus hardening of the arteries in the brain which resulted in a stroke. I did not do an autopsy and was not even born yet when Guenon died, but this is implied in the evidence.. Dr, Katz was evidently in attendance the day and night Guenon died, and probably wrote a report about it, in addition to the letter from which I quote, evidently written in answer to an inquiry by Charcornac. There is no talk of murder. Dr Katz complained that Guenon refused all medical tests and treatment but of the most superficial kind. As his underlying condition of atherosclerosis and perhaps venous insufficiency could have both been caused by smoking excessively, it is logically to assume he died of something like that. A stroke., There were some treatments then that could have prolonged his life. Though it may have been too late to do anything for him.

It seems therefore that Guenon helped kill himself, by medical neglect, much as Christians have killed their own children by refusing to get medical care for their conditions. Indeed, if there is any story here it is that the father of the traditionalist movement, which used prayer as its main method, showed himself how prayer has been proven to be useless in curing disease. Far from being murdered by the Schuon cult, he was

killed by his own fanatical religion and paranoia, which made him refuse western medicine, which could have easily recommended he stop smoking, at the very least.¹⁰⁰¹

So evidently Abdollah Shahbazi made up the idea of Guenon being murdered, perhaps because his own father was murdered by the Shah of Iran. I have seen the photo of Abdollah's father about to be murdered and it is indeed, horrendous and shocking. There is no reason to suppose that Guenon was murdered, indeed, it is a conspiracy theory, plain and simple, a lie meant to destroy the traditionalist movement. I

¹⁰⁰¹ See here for more on child fatalities due to prayer religion motivated medical neglect:

<http://www.childrenshealthcare.org/PDF%20Files/Pediatricsarticle.pdf>

The abstract of this article follows:

ABSTRACT. *Objective.* To evaluate deaths of children from families in which faith healing was practiced in lieu of medical care and to determine if such deaths were preventable.

Design. Cases of child fatality in faith-healing sects were reviewed. Probability of survival for each was then estimated based on expected survival rates for children with similar disorders who receive medical care.

Participants. One hundred seventy-two children who died between 1975 and 1995 and were identified by referral or record search. Criteria for inclusion were evidence that parents withheld medical care because of reliance on religious rituals and documentation sufficient to determine the cause of death.

Results. One hundred forty fatalities were from conditions for which survival rates with medical care would have exceeded 90%. Eighteen more had expected survival rates of >50%. All but 3 of the remainder would likely have had some benefit from clinical help.

Conclusions. When faith healing is used to the exclusion of medical treatment, the number of preventable child fatalities and the associated suffering are substantial and warrant public concern. Existing laws may be inadequate to protect children from this form of medical neglect.

am not interested in perennealism being destroyed this way. The truth is plenty to sink that ship. Wahid Azal writes to me, (please excuse his use of bad language),

“what the F--k do you really care what anyone said about what the Maryamiyya¹⁰⁰² did or didn't do to Guenon...such a claim is what can potentially sink the Maryamiyyah permanently as a movement,”

This Machiavellian strategy of the end justifies the means seems to be what is behind the Shahbazi claim of murder. Azal and Shabazi want to destroy the cults around Schuon and Guenon so they make up stuff to try to do that. I think these cults are now so small they are not very dangerous. Shahbazi has a long record of attacking those inside and outside Iran in history books that use false or inflated evidence to create a conspiracy theory. He has done with Freemasons, the Bahai religion and other subjects. Shahbazi used some of the information I gathered about the Schuon cult to try to hurt the Nasr influence in Iran. Azal admires that, evidently. I did not like Shahbazi using information to support the Iranian state religion either. But I could not stop him. Shahbazi came up with the false ‘Guenon was murdered by the Schuonians’ idea and Azal promoted it in an essay on Counterpunch. I thought all this was quite sordid and so wrote to Counterpunch and complained, and they took it off line. Azal was upset I did this, Hence the comment above.

An internet troll is a person who gets a pleasureable high out of hurting others online. They are sadistic people, who make things up, pretend

¹⁰⁰² I rarely use the term Mariamiyya. It is not just because the cult itself rarely used it, and so it is an outsider name, or because I finally figured out that the image of Mary used by Schuon was an exploit, but rather because I prefer the much more accurate term ‘Schuon cult’ which is what it really was.

they want certain things when they don't, pretend to be someone who they are not. In short most of their behavior is conscienceless and sociopathic. Of course there are also state supported trolls, an "army of trolls" is said to be at work in China, North Korea or Russia, as well as in the US. They turn out "fake news" to silence internal dissent or influence foreign elections. But all the instances of trolling have as their object the supporting of powers, the destruction of real journalism, the telling of lies or the humiliation of those who have done real research. Trolls are mostly male, and young. Azal is an exception, being an older man. His main interest seems to be power and fame. He said he was upset about what I said about him to Counterpunch. Actually I merely told them the facts as I understand them: Guenon was not murdered. I have no interest in this man at all, so I offered to take anything I wrote about him out of this book. He ignored that. So his interest really is not what I wrote about him, it is flaming and trolling that he wants to do. He went on with his insults, four letter words and flaming behavior. So I did some more research on him.

Azal's real name seems to be Nima Sadra Hazini, from Iran, though he seems to be homeless, or at least has traveled from the U.S. to Australia, Germany and elsewhere. He has claimed to be a Sufi Shakyh, a dime a dozen these days, apparently self appointed, as was Schuon. He often claims to be on the far right, which appears to be true, but he also sometimes claims to be on the left when it suits him. He has a long record of harassing people on the internet according to a Russian website, if that can be believed. Indeed, everything about this man and his stories seems to be questionable. The Russian website of Alexander Dugin, another questionable traditionalist, states that Hazini/Azal is a "troll", guilty of "mendacity" and "that many have been "mercilessly trolled by Azal, also threatened with lawsuits, complete destruction and death."

He did send me some death threats in which he said " I am gunning

for your white racist Maryamiyyah gatekeeper and Russian fascist collaborationist ass.”. He likes long lists of demeaning and false adjectives like this as well as four letter words, for some reason.¹⁰⁰³ In Hazini/Azal case does seem to hide a social insecurity, a political hatred that serves the Iranian state and a religious pose of superiority, as if being Muslim entitled him to refer to those who are not Muslim by names tht try to demean them. I am mostly Irish in fact, and only a lttle Russian. I do not know a single Russian personally, so it is hard to see how I could be “collaborationist”. I have nothing to do with the Schuon cult and have not had any contact with them for 26 years. Azal/ Hazini seems to make it all up out of thin air. Why he needs to fabricate false histories and distoritons of facts in this way is the real question.

But when one is dealing with a troll, one can assume that all that they say is lying or deception. They can tell the truth if it suits them, however. One can piece together something of the truth with hard work. Besides this death threat he has also he threatened me with lawsuits and so on. So the Russian website appears to be at least partly correct. Azal/ Hasini has made videos in which he claims to be an Iranian Sufi who likes Evola and Guenon. This appears to be true, and he seems to have sided with Shahbazi to spread the falsehood that Guenon was murdered. Markwith also seems to have promoted this doomed thesis to some degree, as he apparently tried to get Azal’s fake murder accusations reinstated on Counterpunch, but failed. He seems to hve no notion that such actions are shameful. Like many inside Iran, Hazini/Azal sees the

¹⁰⁰³ The use of four letter words is a mask of course, although why one would want to pose as ignorant is mysterious. I suspect it has to do with a power trip and a need for freedom at the expense of others. The etymology of the word f—k, for instance appears to be the word “to strike”. And this suggests what one already knows and that is that those who use this word are often angry, mean, even violent in their intentions toward others. It is usually a violent word meant to harm and express emotion. The use of this word is meant to convey power or superiority, The term “profanity” is also interesting. The assumption is the superiority of religion, which is clearly not real.

The use of body parts and processes in most foul language also indicates a strong hatred of the body, which is the result of religion and its negative relationship to the body.

outside world as a threat to himself, and so renounces things that might be true, as a kind of knee jerk reaction, favoring conspiracy theory over facts. This is unfortunate for him and gets him in all sorts of trouble. The Russian website ridicules him to no end. One almost feels sorry for the guy. ¹⁰⁰⁴ But we have seen in the US how a toxic thinker who likes to lie and make up alternative facts and histories is bad for everyone.

I am not friend of the Schuon cult or the Guenon legacy, but do not like lying, either. Actually, I think Machiavelli was writing a satire about those who use this mafioso ideology of 'the end justifies the means'. The Schuon cult is largely gone and Guenon's legacy is in tatters, as the current Trump presidency shows. Trump fired Steve Bannon, the one voice inside the White House whose ideas come partly from Guenon and Evola. (see Joshua Green, Aug. 2107) So this need to promote fictions about Guenon's death is typical of the deceptions that surround Guenon and Schuon, but it is not true. One of my reasons for exposing the cult was to prevent this sort of make believe and dishonesty. I have never lied about the Schuon cult and did all I could to tell the truth as well as I could. Azal/Hazini tried to claim that I work for the Schuon cult as well as the Russians, Alexander Dugin or whoever. But this is just more lies, I do no such thing. Making up this sort of nonsense seems to be what some, so called, journalists, do. But then it is all laughable, he is clearly not a journalist. These men are apologists for political nationalism of various stripes, be it Iranian or Russian. I am far more interested in questioning specious ideologies than in supporting them.

So the only evidence that Markwith has that stands up is his discussion with Nasr, who does admit the involvement of children. Nasr

¹⁰⁰⁴ The Russian Dugin Website is here:

<https://4threvolutionarywar.wordpress.com/2016/11/20/what-if-god-is-a-troll-the-mendacity-of-n-wahid-azal/>

had called me in 1991, and nearly in tears begged me not to testify against Schuon, because he so wanted to be a shaykh. I have never had much respect for Nasr. Indeed, Nasr seems to have imitated Schuon's strategy to get women. Markwith claims, if he can be believed, that Nasr says has been gifted by God with "powers of healing". This "power of healing" is said to have been exercised on female disciples and employees bodies, sexually. This myth of healing through the use of sex is of course a ruse already used by Schuon. But this is hearsay and I do not now if it can be believed without further evidence.¹⁰⁰⁵

Shahbazi and Azal/ Hazini want to destroy what is left of the Schuon cult. Or rather, since I have not seen any writings by Shahbazi about this, Azal Hazini says he wants to destroy the Schuon cult. But lying to make that happen will not do it for them. Moreover it is mostly done already. I think the reasons for doing this are dubious, to say the least. I refuse to lie, since I find the truth far more effective. I am not a conspiracy historian. Guenon was not murdered, and this is clear from the accounts of Guenon's death by the doctor that cared for him. What is

¹⁰⁰⁵ The whole discussion Nov. 2016 on Sedgwick's otherwise questionable site can be seen here:

<http://traditionalistblog.blogspot.com/2016/11/counterpunch-attacks-maryamiyya.html>

Charcornac's book can be seen here

https://books.google.com/books?id=V-w9UxolIXgC&pg=PR6&lpg=PR6&dq=chacornac+simple+life+of+Rene+guenon&source=bl&ots=TTu_SgocV_&sig=YZ5iX7BTGv6Rf0oPWeVP57lB8L8&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwif55vq2PbVAhVHZCYKHb9LDnwQ6AEIQD AE#v=onepage&q=chacornac%20simple%20life%20of%20Rene%20guenon&f=false

clear is that Russians Iranians and others find the Evola-Guenon-Schuon ideology attractive and are trying to control it. I merely watch this and comment on the unfolding of it. It appears that Guenon died of a stroke probably brought on by his own bad behavior, as well as his denial of care by western medicine, which many of the traditionalists despise.

The reader may decide for themselves who is telling the truth here. I am the only one who actually researched the facts. I have no ax to grind and think the Schuon and Nasr cults have already sunk themselves. The rest of it is just innane political posturing, trolls seeking trouble, men in search of questionable objects and power. Guenon was an ideological monster, as I show above. His influence has waned and now it is merely a fad that evokes the 'evil' clown, telling bad jokes.

Book III

Persistent Illusions

The Rise of Science, the Defeat of Irrationalism and Restoring Intelligent Inquiry to Art

Note: This 3rd and last book in this trilogy is an application of earlier ideas developed in the previous two books. It is my favorite book in many ways. I apply some of the basic ideas and research I was working with in the previous books to domains mostly outside the religions. I begin with a series of essay on Greek and Roman cultural history and speculate on occurrence of the dark ages. The essay on the Myth of Praxiteles examines the probable fictional creations of the character of Praxiteles in art scholarship about Classical sculpture. Then I proceed to compare the rise of the myths or fictions of Jesus and Muhammad and how they play out in today's world. Then an essay on the transition of medieval to modern and the role of the Eucharistic in myth and ritual. Then a long essay on the abuses and denials of science by various religious writers, traditionalists, creationists and others, as well as various abuses of science itself, particularly coproate 'science'. This continues the earlier essay on Darwinism and the mistaken attempt to make religion seem evolutionary. That essay, in the first book is called "Darwin, Pascal Boyer and the Evolutionary Theory of Religion". These two essays should be read together as in some ways they are the heart of these books. I include an essay about Chomsky and his linguistics as an example of a scientific theory that was at least partly mistaken but which had great influence for many years. I explore some of the reasons why it might have failed. Then there is an essay on the history of art and why an art that serves power fails. These are application of the ideas I have explored throughout all three books. So I offer here a theory of history and what it was about. I end with a partly personal conclusion that appeals to all three books and could be read as something of an introduction to all three.

- 1.The Dead Hand of Plato: On Plato's Theofascism
2. On Aristotle, Lucretius and the History of Science
3. Misuses of Scholarship in the Making of the Myth of Praxiteles

4. Hypatia, Pseudo Dionysius and the Killing of Classical Science
5. The War between Christian and Islamic 'Fascism' and the Myths of Jesus and Muhammad

- 6.On Those Who Hate Science and Reason:
(Anti-Science and Irrationalism in Guenon, Wolfgang Smith, and other Reactionaries.)

7. Chomsky's Cartesian Speciesism and the Failure of his Linguistics

8. Beyond the Dead End of Traditionalist and Modernist Aesthetics:
Restoring Intelligence to Art

- 9.Conclusions

1 Dead Hand of Plato:
On Plato's Theofascism

One of the most persistent illusions or fictions in Western culture is

Plato's ideology. According to Richard Dawkins, Ernst Mayr, the great biologist who died in 2005 at age 100, said that the discovery of evolution was held back by "the dead hand of Plato".¹⁰⁰⁶ Mayr is correct. The "dead hand of Plato" is a good phrase. Mayr's complaint about Plato is that he reduces actual beings to mere ideas. Plato claims a cow was created by an "intelligent design" cow, an archetypal cow, a "Ur" cow, living somewhere with the absolute "good" in the divine mind. Plato hates history. He doesn't like the idea of evolution and wants everything to emanate from abstract "Eidos" or ideas, of which everything is but a pale example. This is called "essentialism", this effort to reduce everything to non-existent 'essences'.

This is the third time I have written about Plato. In my romantic and young teens I was enamored of him without having ever read him. I picked up Platonism through Percy Shelley, Coleridge, Eugene Delacroix and Will Durant's History of Philosophy. I did not yet understand how wrong Plato was or how saturated romantic culture is with his anti-science ideology. I did not realize then that Platonism is a quasi-religion that propagates itself through culture. In the 1990's I started questioning Plato seriously and have continued doing so over the years. I think that Whitehead was mistaken that history is divided into Aristotelians and Platonists. There is little excuse to be Platonist anymore. Aristotle is interesting as a historical antecedent to science. But Plato cannot be taken any more seriously than any other philosopher who has had unfortunate influence on history, such as Hegel or Confucius, Shankara or Nietzsche.

In this essay on Plato I want to record the baneful influence of Plato on Theofascism and traditionalism and right wing thought in general. In his great work, the Open Society and its Enemies, Karl Popper speaks a

¹⁰⁰⁶ Dawkins, Richard. The Greatest Show on Earth Free Press 2009 pg 21

great deal about Plato and totalistic systems. ¹⁰⁰⁷He echoes Bertrand Russell's claim that the origin of fascism is in Romantic thought and then traces a similar lineage of reactionary ideologies coming from Plato all the way to anti-enlightenment romantics like Hegel. Popper points out that Totalitarianism has both its left leaning and its far-right components. ¹⁰⁰⁸ This is obvious of course and many have noted that Mao and Stalin are not very different from Hitler. Popper is right that the origins of totalism in the West is probably Plato and Hegel, at least as far as systematic exposition goes¹⁰⁰⁹ The environmental writer Edward Abbey speaks of the need to turn Plato and Hegel on their heads, and I agree with his reasoning there. ¹⁰¹⁰ Abbey also notes that those who believe in God lack imagination. Abbey writes:

“If man's imagination were not so weak.... he would abandon forever his fantasies of the supernal. He would learn to perceive in

¹⁰⁰⁷ Popper uses the terms “totalitarian” rather than totalist.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Which is why a Guenonian neo-fascist like Alexander Dugin in Russia hates Popper book Open Society and its Enemies . Dugin says he wants to resurrect “Heraclitus [who] called [war or] "hostility" the "father of things." “. Dugin hates the “Open society” and wants to return to Guenonian tribalism--- a totalitarian “closed society” and he wants war. He says that between the Open Society and his Guenonian Utopia is ‘us and them’ and there “is only enmity, hatred, brutal struggle according to rules and without rules, for extermination, to the last drop of blood. Between them are heaps of corpses, millions of lives, endless centuries of suffering and heroic deeds.” This is the sort of bombastic and bellicose rhetoric that Traditionalism ends up producing. See also Dugin's The Knight Templars of the Proletariat, an absurd view of history as an excuse for ultraviolent "totalization of the subject", very much the sort of fascism one finds in Plato. He declares that the “doctrinal, ideological defeat of all "open society enemies" is at hand.” Here again we have a bogus resurrection of the mythic Knights Templars, who really were just a bunch of capitalist gangsters hired by the Vatican.

http://www.feastofhateandfear.com/archives/dugin_01.html

¹⁰⁰⁹ Early Chinese or Hindu and Roman systems had social structures that were totalistic in certain ways. Islam is intensely totalistic even today in many countries. Arthur Versluis claims that American is not a totalistic state, which is true in a superficial reading of the matter, but not one takes into account all the totalistic regimes the US has created or supported, from Saddam Hussein to Pinochet, to the Shah of Iran---even Pol Pot was largely the result of the US bombing of Cambodia--- then yes, the U.S. has had totalistic leanings and policies.

¹⁰¹⁰ Abbey, Edward Desert Solitaire. Ballantine New York 1968 pg. 200, 219 and elsewhere in the book . This whole book is strongly anti-Platonic and wonderfully so. It is perhaps one of the best, if not the best single book on environmentalism in the 20th century. Abbey does not go as far as Thoreau or as deep, but he goes very far in this book for him. It is his best book too. Henry's complete Journal is the best book on Nature in the 19th century.

water, leaves and silence more than sufficient of the absolute and marvelous, more than enough to console him for the loss of the ancient dreams.”

This is exactly right. The factual is what matters. The notion of the “Absolute” is metaphysical fiction. Plato is an escapist into non-existent archetypes. In fact, all there is this earth and the things upon it. Plato created his theory of the archetypes as an antidote to reality and a way of exalting human language as a system of unreal symbols. Giving symbols high status is a way of denigrating all that is not human and all that is not linguistic. This will become Descartes and then Chomsky’s error many centuries later, as I will show in a later chapter.

Mayr, Russell and Popper are far from the only ones to see Plato as a conservative reactionary with theofascist tendencies. Clifford Conner writes in the excellent A People’s History of Science that Plato “represents a political reaction against the Ionian enlightenment, in the interest of the ideal of a slave-owning, class divided, chauvinistic city state which was already an anachronism”. He also observes that Plato hindered the science of his time and “certainly played a significant role in a two thousand-year-retardation of scientific thought.” Conner is right about this. Plato’s elitist philosophy promoted a contempt for the physical world that was anti-science and anti-materialistic. Science was largely the creation of ordinary people, craftsman and women over many millennia. Carpentry, pottery and weaving , metallurgy (blacksmithing), math¹⁰¹¹ and writing were all created by ordinary people. Elite leaders

¹⁰¹¹ Guenon tries to mystify math and make it an elitist and ancient system for initiates. That is false. Plato also tried to mystify math. In fact, Pythagoras, who many try to say was the original mathematician who had great knowledge of the “Mysteries”, in fact appears to have had nothing to do with math. Clifford Conner shows that Pythagoras did not lay the foundations of mathematics and that the belief that he did is a myth created by writers such as Proclus, in the 5th century C.E. See Conner, Clifford, D., A People’s History of Science, Nation Books 2005, pg. 139

like Plato tried to claim them as the exclusive domain of the wealthy upper classes. Plato perpetuate the undemocratic deals of these elites.

The Platonic state in the Republic is a totalitarian state. Plato, like Christianity, Hinduism and virtually every other major religion views the world as sunk in illusion and falsity, and which must use drastic measures to redeem and reorder the world. This system of convincing a population that they are alienated from the earth creates the artificial need of priests. Plato claims mankind is immersed in a "barbaric slough", (7,530,d) and only Plato's totalitarian philosophy can redeem humanity. Plato goes even further than this, and says that the man that understands Plato's ideas, must necessarily desire to save the rest of mankind out of "Pity" (518,a-b). This strategy of having to create a totalistic institution because mankind needs to be saved is used in all totalitarian states. Hitler, Stalin, Mao as well as virtually all large scale religious institutions have justified their aspiration to power on similar grounds.... Buddhism and Christianity use a similar kind of pretence of caring for others as a selling point for their claim to legitimacy of the need of total power.

Popper points out that in his book The Laws Plato shows hatred of the individual and that every person should never think for themselves but follow the leader.

The second passage, also from the *Laws*, is, if possible, even more outspoken. It should be emphasized that the passage deals primarily with military expeditions and with military discipline, but Plato leaves no doubt that these same militarist principles should be adhered to not only in war, but also 'in peace, and from the

earliest childhood on'. Like other totalitarian militarists and admirers of Sparta, Plato urges that the all-important requirements of military discipline must be paramount, even in peace, and that they must determine the whole life of all citizens; for not only the full citizens (who are all soldiers) and the children, but also the very beasts must spend their whole life in a state of permanent and total mobilization. 'The greatest principle of all', he writes, 'is that nobody, whether male or female, should ever be without a leader. Not should the mind of anybody be habituated to letting him do anything at all on his own initiative, neither out of zeal, nor even playfully. But in war and in the midst of peace - to his leader he shall direct his eye, and follow him faithfully. And even in the smallest matters he should stand under leadership. For example, he should get up, or move, or wash, or take his meals . . . only if he has been told to do so . . . In a word, he should teach his soul, by long habit, never to dream of acting independently, and to become utterly incapable of it. In this way the life of all will be spent in total community. There is no law, nor will there ever be one, which is superior to this, or better and more effective in ensuring salvation and victory in war. *And in times of peace, and from the earliest childhood on* should it be fostered - this habit of ruling others, and of being ruled by others. And every trace of anarchy should be utterly eradicated from *all the life of all the man*, and even of the wild beasts which are subject to men'.

These are strong words. Never was a man more in earnest in his hostility towards the individual. And this hatred is deeply rooted in the fundamental dualism of Plato's philosophy; he hated the individual and his freedom just as he hated the varying particular experiences, the variety of the changing world of sensible things. In

the field of politics, the individual is to Plato the Evil One himself."
(*Open Society* pg 101)

Plato is a totalitarian and both like Hitler Mao or Stalin. The ideal ruler or savior, as it were, in Plato's Republic is the "guardians" or Philosopher Kings, who are the "king bees and leaders of the hive". (7,520,b) These rulers, Plato tells us, must "have proved themselves in both war and philosophy." Caste is metaphysics in Plato. This conjunction of war and philosophy is interesting because it shows the relation of Plato's metaphysic to the will to power. The philosopher must be a warrior because the world does not conform to his beliefs. Plato's visionary Utopia, like all Utopias, must be imposed by force. Children are to be taken by force from their parents and given to the state to raise; labor is to be forced also; slavery is a norm; and a caste system is recommended to be as rigorous as the Hindu system. The Guardians are the nearly divine overseers of a totally planned society, like the Brahmins in India or the Priests in Egypt.....

In Plato's Republic he recommends, like the Hindus and Hitler, selective breeding, caste eugenics, rigorous social control and a doctrine of mind control that would oversee the intimate behavior and thoughts of all citizens in his 'utopia'. Like Himmler¹⁰¹² and the Hindus, Plato devalues both men and the world to make it conform with a vision of intellectual supremacy. He notices only the benefits of this system of knowledge and power and does not consider the victims against which it

¹⁰¹² In his biography of Himmler, Peter Padfield notes that Himmler was devoted to the Hindu text, the Bhagavad Gita, and "he never went anywhere without it". Padfield notes that this fact is "important for any attempt to understand what Himmler believed he was doing" The question arises then: why should this Hindu text, obscure in Germany during Himmler's time, be connected in a fundamental way to one of the worst atrocities in history? Robert Oppenheimer also quotes this book to justify the killing done by the Atom bomb in Nagasaki.

perpetuates its violence.

Guenon and his traditionalist followers are Platonist, and like Plato they are ‘counter-revolutionaries’ in the sense that this phrase was used to describe Hitler and Mussolini during World War 2. Guenon creates his spiritual theofascism to be organized around a social elite who defend caste system. It might be worth noting Schuon’s third wife told me that Schuon compared himself to Plato and Shankara and thought Plato the “perfect metaphysician”. ¹⁰¹³.....

Karl Popper notes that Plato’s development of an unjust caste system occurs as part of Plato’s effort to create a religion for his Republic. “The Myth of Blood and Soil”, ¹⁰¹⁴is a foundation myth for the society and the basis of the Platonic state. In the myth the rulers will be the upper caste and have gold in their veins; the warriors will have silver; the producers have iron or brass—in short a hereditary caste system. Once the people are fashioned, they cannot change their basic characteristics, nor can they ignore their responsibilities to the soil. In other words, there will be a kind of eugenics and justification of slavery. This is justified by Socrates as follows. Socrates says, “could we fabricate one of these handy lies....with the help of one single lordly lie we may, if we are lucky, persuade even the rulers themselves, but at any rate the rest of the city”¹⁰¹⁵

Popper deduces from Plato’s need to found his Republic on a lie that:

“nothing is more in keeping with Plato’s totalitarian morality than his advocacy of propagandistic lies” at the basis of his system. Popper later notes that

¹⁰¹³ But Schuon worried that his style was much dryer than Plato...which it is

¹⁰¹⁴ Republic IV. 414-415 etc. (some call it the Myth of Metals)

¹⁰¹⁵ Popper Karl, Open Society and its Enemies. Pg 140

“the more we try to return to the heroic age of tribalism, the more surely do we arrive at the Inquisition, at the Secret Police and at romanticized gangsterism. Beginning with the suppression of reason and truth, we must end with the most brutal and violent destruction of all that is human”.¹⁰¹⁶

Plato, arch-gnostic and primary source of the traditionalists is thus one of the origins of the totalistic idea, which lead to the horrors of the Christian Inquisition, and later atrocities. Plato is an important source for Islamic ideology, as can be seen in Rumi and Ibn Arabi, who used Platonic ideas to bolster his doctrine of the ‘unity of being’. Indeed, Plato and Muhammad are both poets who share a hatred for poetry, as both want only their particular systems of delusion to prosper. Muhammad actually killed poets he disliked, whereas Plato condemns them in his books, particularly Homer, who is a more interesting recorder of myths than Plato in many ways.

So what amazes me about Popper as well as Conner’s understanding of Plato is that both of them correctly deduced that Plato is an extreme reactionary and that he is a force against science and enlightenment. Schuon and Guenon and religion in general are Platonists who seek to undermine science. The whole notion of transcendence is fictional. There is no such thing. The claim to transcend is merely a fictional form of “inwardness”, or mental removal from a situation. The inward mystic seeks to project himself on the universe by emotional self-magnification and narcissism. “Transcendence is this projection; it has no reality but is merely mental or emotional dialation. I have seen this time and again

¹⁰¹⁶ Ibid. pg 200

with people in religions, cults, New Age poets as well as astrologers, Jungians and wanna-be goddesses¹⁰¹⁷. Reason is thrown out the window and feeling is worshiped in a narcissistic mirroring of inner states. The worship of what one feels 'within' becomes a religion for some of these people. This way of escape, supported by such poets as Robert Bly, Coleman Barks, Rumi and Rilke is a way or irresponsible escapism and denial of the facts of our actual lives and the conditions of the world we live in. Their flight to the 'beyond' becomes an escape from the real.

What matters is the fact of the earth the actual lives we live. What matters is life, not the deaths we suffer, not imaginary deities, not dreams. Death offers no transcendence. The effort to set up religions merely sets up another cloudy mystification of human centered ignorance and arrogance. Efforts at transcendence of the earthy condition merely wastes the earth's substance. Transcendence must be transcended (gotten over with) if there is to be any improvement in our condition here on earth.

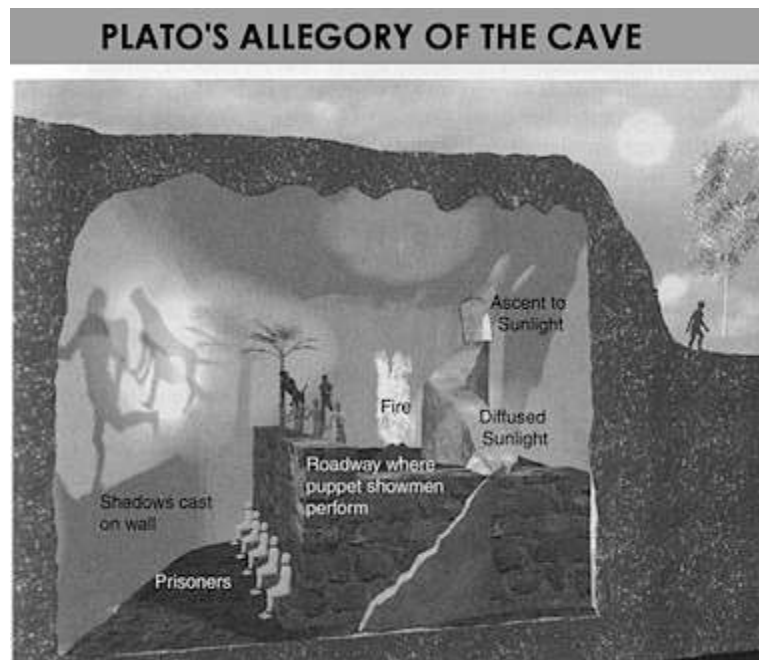
There are many writers on religion who invoke Plato as their model. Schuon, Guenon, Coomaraswamy, Wolfgang Smith, Arthur Versluis, Eric Voegelin, as well as romantic philosophers and poets going back centuries. I recently read Arthur Versluis book, New Inquisitions, Heretic Hunting and the Intellectual origins of Modern Totalitarianism. I will review parts of it below. However, here I note that he ends this disappointing book with a paeon to Plato's horrible and backwards

¹⁰¹⁷ The growth of the "Goddess" religion in the last 40 years is an interesting phenomena. I do not know if it has been systematically studied, It was clearly engendered by feminism and it is a reaction to the patriarchal nature of most of the religions, One wonders if "theology is really less fictional than theology, and if the archeological work of Marija Gimbutas has anything truthful about or as her critics claim, is if mostly wishful thinking. She did identify a huge number of ancient statues but whether they are goddess statues or not is another question. Gimbutas has been criticized for creating an archaeology can slip into reflecting what she wanted to see, though it is probably true that male deities were created that sought to destroy pagan goddesses. This is the usual power play of mythology. But archeology does need to protect itself from the sort of abuse that seeks to make a religion of past religious objects..

totalistic “vision” or the Allegory of the Cave. Plato is a regressive and cramped thinker.

As I wrote many years ago regarding the Cave of Plato:

“Plato had it wrong. The world is not a dank, dark cave of illusions. One could even say that Plato had it backwards. The illusion is Plato's dream of total knowledge. His sunlit world of Ideas existing like diamonds of purity in the Mind of God seems nothing more than the dream of aristocratic supremacist longing for transcendent power. Plato's universal “ideas” are merely verbal generalizations created out of facts in this world. He was wrong to generalize particular facts into universal Abstract Ideas. Something that is “good” is not an emanation or radiation of an idealized “Good”. A particular tree is not an example of an “ideal tree”. Plato made the mistake of falling in love with the creations of his own imagination. The gods or the “ideas” are the images on the wall of the cave in Plato’s metaphor.



Because the world did not fit his dream,¹⁰¹⁸ Plato fell to despising the world that we actually live in. His myth of cave is a lie. The exact opposite is the truth. It is the reverse of reality. The world that is not the dream of the Good becomes, in Plato's vision, a bad world—a "slough"-- and needs to be reordered by force. The philosopher becomes a warrior because the world does not fit his idea and the Philosopher-kings are the tyrants who will reorder reality to force it to conform to Plato's vision.....

Plato and his followers ended up himself being a cave from which we must escape. Religion is the cave form which we must escape. Neither Plato's Cave of shadows nor the false idealization of Plato's imaginary "divine" world of the Ideas is real. It is gods and

¹⁰¹⁸ I found this picture online and thought it marvelously clear, so I use it here, but I was unable to determine who made it, to give attribution for it.

ideologies that are the shadows on the wall. I have turned Plato's Cave inside out and it is his "Ideas" and the myths of his religion and philosophy that would enchain people. It is Plato himself who is the cave of false idols. His archetypes are false idols. The world of sunshine and trees and deer in the forest is not Platonic. These are real. Plato's world is not my world. Rejecting Plato brings one out of his cave of gods and idols into the light of the real world. An imperfect world without Plato's Cave or his Utopia is world enough for me."

I wrote this 18 years ago, in 1992. I am gratified to see it supported in many of its details in Karl Popper's critique of Plato in The Open Society and its Enemies and in Conner's People's History of Science. Popper wrote later about writing his book that

"in giving a detailed description.... of Plato's political philosophy, I was, more and more overwhelmed by the quite unexpected flood of evidence in favor of what I may perhaps loosely illustrate here by the admittedly absurd equation: Plato = Hitler

I agree that the equation is absurd,--- absurd but true. Popper says, all his attempts to refute it "led to meager results". Plato's influence is much larger than Hitler's and longer, so a though refutation of his ideological system is that much more important. Therefore, Popper concludes that Hitler is a "clownish exponent" of the "pernicious and more serious movement" that was initiated in Plato's Republic. This was Bertrand Russell's belief as well. I agree with both Russell and Popper. The imagination is a questionable entity.

Schuon and Guenon are also "clownish exponents" of Plato. Totalism or theofascism seems an absurd thesis until you begin to see

the mass of irrefutable evidence that is at the basis of it. The equation of “Plato= Hitler” really means that the transcendental and the spiritual are “noble lies” that are foisted on populations to insure that elites—be they Hindu Brahmins, Dalai Lamas, Hitler’s SS or Europe’s aristocratic Catholics--- stay elite. The ‘masses’ of ordinary folks are kept in poverty and want. Clifford Conner is right that Plato system was a significant factor in prolonging the dark ages and medieval ignorance and thus of holding back the development of science. It is this same outmoded and I believe, discredited, anti-scientific Platonism that the traditionalists have sought to revive in the 20th century. Platonists have also tried to reintroduce this reactionary ideology in our universities, as I will show in a chapter below.

On Aristotle, Lucretius and the History of Science:

The earliest antidote to the poison of the Platonic philosophy was Aristotle. He is not without his problems. He is often wrong, and stresses logic over observation. Tyco Brahe, for instance, proved that Aristotle was wrong to think that the stars never change when he saw a supernova explode 1572. But, despite his many shortcomings, Aristotle is an interesting thinker even now. His book on animals, while factually incorrect on many things, is interesting if for no other reason that it is an early attempt, the first of its kind, to understand the reality of the earth we live on, and thus is an authentic if inaccurate attempt at science. It is the first attempt to catalogue nature and our place in it.

This is a good thing¹⁰¹⁹ and a problematical thing, at the same time¹⁰²⁰ Aristotle had made no secret of his contempt for Alexander's pretense of divinity, and that is delightful and utterly non-Platonic. Aristotle rightly argued that there are no universals (Eidos) that are unattached to

¹⁰¹⁹ One can argue that it leads to Linnaeus, which is true, whose system of classification is by and large a good thing, but which gets abused when it is taken to mean that humans are supreme over all other species, a mistake that Linnaeus himself makes. Linnaeus writes in his essay "the Oeconomy of Nature" (1749), wrote that:

All these treasures of nature, so artfully contrived, so wonderfully propagated, so providentially supported throughout her three kingdoms [animal, mineral vegetable] seem intended by the Creator for the sake of man. Everything may be made subservient to his use; if not immediately, then mediately, not so to that of other animals. By the help of reason, man tames the fiercest animals, pursues and catches the swiftest, nay he is able to reach even those, that lye in the bottom of the sea (Quoted in Oelschlaeger, Max. The idea of Wilderness New Haven Yale University 1991 pg. 105)

¹⁰²⁰ It is also the first in a long series of speciesist appreciations of animals. Aristotle, Descartes and Chomsky are in differing degrees speciesist, which to say their views are largely human centered or anthropomorphic. Speciesism is a kind of racism applied to species. While other aspects of their thought might interesting, this aspect is not. I wonder why this thread of disparagement of others species developed in philosophy. Perhaps it was because of the mental, precious and rather elitist character of a lot of philosophy. In Descartes case, it was a tacit Christian hatred of the body, certainly. Aristotle's attempt to catalogue all animals is amazing. He invented zoology all at once. But he writes .

“ It is evident then that we may conclude of those things that are, that plants are created for the sake of animals, and animals for the sake of men; the tame for our use and provision; the wild, at least the greater part, for our provision also, or for some other advantageous purpose, as furnishing us with clothes, and the like.(from “On Government” Book 1 Chapt:8---

And the part about animals being “created” for the sake of men is merely speciesist prejudice. While there are species who are dependent on each other, such as symbiotic species. But even they exist do not exactly exist for each other, nor where they “created”. Species are self-existing and indeed, self-created or rather created by their own interactions with ecologies.

Chomsky's speciesism is harder to explain. Part of it might be driven by his linguist theories, which appear to be incorrect, involuted, subjectivist and unempirical and part of it might be because he may favors animal testing. I could also be a love of meat or an upbringing in which he was taught a low tolerance for other animals. But it appears to be a case of good old fashioned supremecism of an irrational kind. He is very stridently anti-nature's rights, though lately he has been favoring a mitigated and lukewarm notion of nature's right that only favors human uses for animals, which really is not nature's rights at all. This is more or less Aristotle's speciesism again. It is curious that a man so otherwise enlightened about human rights would be so obtuse about nature's rights.

<http://aristotle.thefreelibrary.com/A-Treatise-on-Government/1-8>

existing things.¹⁰²¹ Advancing far beyond the absurdity of the Platonic Ideas, Aristotle did basic research in botany, zoology, physics, astronomy, chemistry, meteorology, and several other sciences. Aristotle's scientific shortcomings were many but that hardly negates the great advances he made. His notion of the “great chain of being” or the ladder of life is false and wrong and hindered science, but his observations of Octopuses, Cuddle fish and many other animals are accurate and exact. His effort to be empirical is far ahead of his time. Descartes and Chomsky will later follow Plato by denigrating the empirical in favor of ideas and symbolist mental constructions. Darwin will do the opposite and that is why he is preferable. Hipparchus and Da Vinci, among many others, would further Aristotle’s work, but for centuries no one surpassed it.¹⁰²² He is to be praised for this, despite his rather human centered views, which I duly note.¹⁰²³

Typical of many that would decry Aristotle, Guenon and Schuon disliked Aristotle because he is too scientific, as one would expect. Schuon writes “

“If Aristotle is to be blamed it is for the quite contrary reason that his formulation of metaphysics is governed by a tendency toward exteriorization, a tendency which is contrary to the very essence of all metaphysics. Aristotelianism is a science of the Inward expanding toward the outward and thereby tends to favor

¹⁰²¹ 18:83-99 of *Surah Al Kahf*. In contrast the Koran teaches that Alexander was a sort of Prophet-King who prefigured Muhammad. This is fiction making at a high level and one that would have given Aristotle a good chuckle. Whoever wrote this chapter in the Koran was reading other texts which claimed his divinity. Like most of the Koran this is a literary creation.

¹⁰²² Avicenna or Ibn Sina is worth looking at too, as he is a Persian thinker and doctor of medicine somewhat ahead of his time, and very much an Aristotelian, and even accused by Muslims of being an atheist, perhaps to his credit.

¹⁰²³ There are many errors in Aristotle, not just on animals but on many subjects. Victor Stenger discusses some of them in God and the Folly of Faith. One of the worst effects of the Aristotelean system was its use by the Scholastics, who made Aristotle into a dogma. Stenger notes this on page 73 of his book. He notes that “Ironically, Aristotelean Dogma joined Christian dogma in impeding the development of science.”

exteriorization,The Aristotelian Pandora's box is scientism coupled with sensationalism; it is through these concepts that Aristotle deviates from Plato by replacing the interiorizing tendency with its inverse. People say that the Church has kept science in chains; what is certain is that the modern world has unchained it with the result that it has escaped from all control, and, in the process of destroying nature, is headed toward the destruction of mankind.".... ¹⁰²⁴

This hatred of Aristotle is ridiculous and founded on multiple delusions or fictions. Aristotle opens up toward a real empirical and evidentiary point of view, something that was far beyond Schuon's absurd belief in his own infallibility. Schuon dislikes objectivity and wants philosophy to be firmly grounded in the subjective, romantic and the arbitrary "interior" dictatorship of delusions he calls the "Intellect".

Schuon only liked Aristotle to the degree he could be enlisted to promote his delusional and subjective metaphysical ideology. Otherwise he hated Aristotle's rationalism. He writes of Aristotle's rationalism and expresses his hatred off reason and says

" we reject rationalism not because of its possibly plausible criticisms of humanized religion, but because of its negation of the divine kernel of the phenomenon of religion; a negation that essentially implies the negation of intellectual intuition, thus of that immanent Divine Presence which is the Intellect. The basic error of systematized rationality — by the way, it is wrong to attribute this ideology to the great Greeks — is to put fallible reasoning in place of infallible intellection"

¹⁰²⁴ http://www.sophia-perennis.com/philosophy/aristotle_plato.htm

The notion of Schuon's self-serving and narcissistic "infallible intellection" is a joke, of course, there is no such thing, and Guenon's and Schuon's whole system depends on this non-existent fiction. The hatred of reason implied in Schuon and Guenon is quite palpable. Their notion of the "heart-intellect" is merely an effort to make the irrational transcendent. The closed-in subjectivity of Traditionalist thought makes it inward turning and cultish, a sort of citadel of fictions and mirrors.

The ambiguous and often hateful attitude toward Hellenism on the part of Schuon and Guenon arises because they hate science. A history of the facts points to very different conclusions. The advance of Greece toward understanding and knowledge is considerable and unquestionable. Aristotle is much more responsible for this than Plato, whose religious thinking held back progress. The history of the nude figure in sculpture shows this progress quite clearly. In a relatively short time the Greeks of Aristotle's time created the Parthenon and the most anatomically accurate and expressive statues ever made before the Renaissance, a fact that would keep Greek art at the pinnacle of achievement until the Renaissance. Indeed, from Phidias to Leonardo is a natural step and in between are nearly 1500 years of Christian reaction and backward leaning devolution: the properly named "Dark Ages".

A typical example of Christian hatred for science and enlightenment as well as Greek art is the Italian, Savonarola, who fulminated in his sermons against Greek art as if it were the art of hell. Botticelli rather foolishly destroyed some of his paintings because of Savonarola's fanatical influence on him. Michelangelo loved him, and created his tortured and muscular nudes in a thrall of reactionary longing for the Platonic beyond. There are still those who would burn books and silence knowledge to insure the livelihood of priests, ministers and bureaucrats, and create a Sistine Ceiling to glorify the transcendental fictions of the unjustly rich.

Aristotle is not only key in the development of Greek art but his influence spans beyond the Renaissance. While certainly much can be found in Aristotle that is objectionable, it is a fact that he lifted us through the dark ages and into an awareness that led to science, even though his own system was not very scientific. Plato did not do that, as I have shown in this book, Plato is the father of many retrograde, backwards leaning dictators, reactionary poets, scholarly or religious fanatics. He inspired many of the reactionary movements before and after the French Revolution. Aristotle, on the contrary, brings us to science, inquiry and away from the rule of authority, Aquinas and Augustine. The Catholic Church was right to feel that Aristotle was a threat to their fictions, whereas Plato is enshrined in most Dark Age thinkers from Origin and Dionysius the pseudo Aeropagite to Johann Scotus Erigena as well as many modern advocates of spirituality, such as Meister Eckhart to Ananda Coomaraswamy. Platonic mysticism is the refuge of reactionaries, monarchists and Dark Age escapists. This is not to say that Clifford Conner is incorrect in his criticism of Aristotle, He is right. Conner notes that

“Aristotle scientific legacy, although of mixed value, was potentially much more constructive than that of his teacher.” [Plato.] On the negative side, his physics was based on the same kind of a priori method that rendered Plato’s knowledge seeking sterile. But unlike Plato, he was willing to admit the evidence of his eyes, hands, and other sense organs, in the pursuit of biological and sociological knowledge”.¹⁰²⁵

Conner goes on to complain, rightly, that the great man view of the history of science is a mistake. Science was not merely the result of

¹⁰²⁵ Conner, Clifford, A People’s History of Science Naton Books, NY. 2005, pg, 152,53,

Galileo, Aristotle or Faraday, but was the result of countless and largely anonymous, potters, blacksmiths, chemists, and old women that nurtured plants and delivered babies, when men were still bleeding people and spreading disease every time they did surgeries, due to dirty knives and scalpels. Moreover, the mistakes of Aristotle were considerable and the Church did great harm to humanity because of its “oppressive conservatism”, and “rigid orthodoxy which paralyzed inquiry into the workings of nature.”

Christianity is not the source of the revolutions that happen in America in 1776, France in 1789, Russia in 1917 or Islam in recent decades: Greece and Rome are. You can already see this in Aristarchus, Hipparchus and Hypatia, as well as Lucretius. Indeed, De Rerum Natura, or Of the Nature of Things by Lucretius is a logical extension of Aristotle, but better. He not only advocated democracy but also had an idea about matter that presages evolution and atoms. Some think of him as the first naturalist and atheist.

The idea of equality was not a Christian creation, as some Christians would like us to think. The mythic Christ of the Gospels says clearly that one should render to Caesar all that he wants and live only for the next world. The fictional Christ of the Gospels is supposed to have said “Servants, obey your masters”, a quote that many Christian ministers used to justify slavery. Indeed, the slave owners were mostly Christians and churches opposed abolition in far more number than favored it, prior to the Civil War in America. Equality was largely a Greek creation, though Plato opposed it, democracy begins there and is mentioned in Thucydides, and Aristotle was aware of it, though he wished to limit it, fearing the poor.¹⁰²⁶ It is already implied in Lucretius and others, not to mention Greek science which is really amazing and

¹⁰²⁶ here is an interesting essay on this and the idea of the history of the idea of equality by Jarath Clifford. <http://www.equalrightstrust.org/ertdocumentbank/LocatingEquality.pdf>

forward looking and based on fact and the observation of nature. The separation of Church and state really has its origins in nominalist denials of Platonism and thus in Aristotle and Lucretius. Science implies a sort of equality already. Science is very much a result of ordinary people doing a great deal of the work, they invented forging and blacksmithing, farming techniques, pottery and many other things. This Greek and Roman stress on nature, facts, observation and the ordinary is already apparent in Lucretius.

One can already see the outline of the modern world in Lucretius. He denied of the importance of religion. He said of Agamemnon's sacrifice of his daughter to the gods that "Such is the terrible evil that religion was able to induce."¹⁰²⁷ Lucretius' effort was to found science as a normative way of looking at the world. The early Church sought to eliminate his book from existence.

Lucretius is the real hero of the pre-modern period. The myths of Jesus, Allah and god idea prevents democratic politics because democracy is premised on the idea that we create social orders and they are not absolute, unchanging entities, forced on us by gods and other fictitious symbols. Gods and hierarchies are not natural phenomena but come from interested fictions created by class and elites. Social orders ultimately arise out of human subjective interests, not gods. Lucretius opposes the divine order and distinguishes between properties and states and suggests that it is only matter and nature that are real and have properties. Lucretius writes:

A **property** is that which not at all

¹⁰²⁷ This is discussed in Tim Whitmarsh's Battling the Gods: Atheism in the Ancient World

Can be disjoined and severed from a thing
Without a fatal dissolution: such,
Weight to the rocks, heat to the fire, and flow
To the wide waters, touch to corporal things,
Intangibility to the viewless void.
But **state** of slavery, pauperhood, and wealth,
Freedom, and war, and concord, and all else
Which come and go whilst Nature stands the same,
We're wont, and rightly, to call accidents.¹⁰²⁸

Lucretius would disagree with Daniel Dennett that religion is a “natural phenomena”. States and religious or political systems are accidents and so changeable. The status of kings, women, the poor and the rich, is not a property of these things, but a state that can be altered. The unjust treatment of the poor by the rich can be changed. This anti-Platonic view is right. His naturalistic materialism is already implicitly democratic, though he does not spell that out. The Enlightenment sidestepped Christianity and turned to Greco-Roman antiquity to create the various American, French, Russian revolutions – and lately the Muslim revolutions. Locke, Hobbes. Marx and Tom Paine had created the idea of equality in its modern conception.

The Christian world helped bring on caused the Dark Ages, burning libraries, destroying the work of classical writers, breaking down temples and sculptures. The dark Ages begin in the murder of Hypatia, 800 years of frequent stagnation, suppressed curiosity and brutal autocracy of priests and fear. The Renaissance was hugely important and grew out of an effort to restore Greek and Roman culture which had been all but destroyed by Christian fanaticism. The ideas of men like Lucretius

¹⁰²⁸ On the Nature of Things. De Rerum Natura
http://classics.mit.edu/Carus/nature_things.1.i.html

and Aristotle undermined the irrational in Christian culture, slowly over many centuries. During the 1300's, the time of Innocent III and the Nominalist/Realist controversy, the Nominalists are the forward looking group –condemned by the Church---and are implicitly Greek in their point of view. By the time of Leonardo, we see a man reading Greeks and Romans, or Middle Eastern translations of these, the Church is largely gone. He is not reading churchmen, who he mostly hates, for good reason, By the time of 1789 it is Greek and non-Christian culture that matters, and De Maistre, a Platonist, is absurd, because of his reactionary response to science and 1789.

So if we look at the art that follows upon Aristotle's theory of mimesis and the ideas of Lucretius, a few things are clear. The art of Greece is brilliant and fecund. The Romans continue this somewhat lessened. The history of art in the Dark Ages takes a serious decline. It is often too literary and even mythical in some cases. Lies, myths and imagination justifying unjust powers and abound in the Dark Ages. The Dark Ages were brought about by the Jesus and the Muhammadean myths which nurtured extremely repressive political and legal systems such as The Inquisition and the Sharia.

.. But with the rise of absolutist kings in the 1600's there was a growing tendency to use Greek realism as a model. But Greek Realism tends to get deformed by Platonistic idealism under aristocracy. The uses Europeans made of Classical sculpture in 19th century Europe are confused and politically ambiguous. The French Revolution artists saw the Greeks as forward looking embodiments of liberty and rightly so. But the kings of the Restoration period tried to restyle the Greeks as 'divine right' reactionaries. The restoration Kings wanted a more Platonist and authoritarian culture that inspired the Bourbon kings. Filmer's 'divine right' ideology applied to classical sculpture and painting has some atrocious results in Ingres, Van Dyke and other propagandists for the upper classes.

. Kenneth Clark makes the unfortunate distinction between the Venus Coelestis and Venus Naturalis. Clark was following Plato, which is often a mistake. Clark writes about classical sculpture in his book the Nude. The Madonna/whore complex that is implied by this is misogynistic and elitist. While it is true that most religions set up their images of women in just this way, one must observe that women are not celestial beings but natural and actual ones, ---like men they are animals.

Plato's notion of the celestial nature of the human body¹⁰²⁹ would result in such atrocities as Michelangelo's abuse of the musculature of the male form in order to create visual propaganda for the Catholic Church. He paints himself as a disgusting flayed skin, which is as ridiculously self-effacing as the other figures are ridiculously muscled and huge. As great as the Sistine Chapel is supposed to be, I find his figures repulsive precisely because he has inflated them into massive body builders who are more about caste and power than about being human. Indeed, the excessively ideal human figures of the Baroque and Rococo, and even up until the Academy of the 19th century, from Reubens to David, are meant to inflate the egos of the rich, monarchs, royal families, Popes and dynastic gentleman who wanted to magnify themselves of make themselves eternal, with abused Greek conceptions of the human body.¹⁰³⁰ This eventually leads us to the monumental emptiness of corporate art.

That said, it also has to be said that the treatment of the human body from Leonardo¹⁰³¹ to David has a certain non-Christian humanism

¹⁰²⁹ Schuon's ridiculous Icons are an outgrowth of his belief in his own 'celestial' body. He thought was a prophet of the highest degree and painted pictures of himself that attempt to show himself as this. I can attest that there was nothing at all celestial about Schuon's geriatric anatomy. His cult of the Virgin Mary was likewise merely a decadent over lay of nudist femme fatales of the fin de Siècle pasted on top of Byzantine Iconic forms.

¹⁰³⁰ See Curtis, Gregory, Disarmed: the Story of the Venus de Milo. This is a good study of the effect of Greek culture on 19th century Europe, with some indications of the influence of Greek culture on the Enlightenment.

¹⁰³¹ Leonardo's Anatomical Manuscript A contains some of the best anatomical drawings of the human body ever done. He calls the body a ;, 'l'opere mirabile della natura' a 'marvelous work of

in it, and this is good, as it is based on reality. This becomes even clearer in the French Revolution, where Delacroix's "Liberty Leading the People" shows a devotion of liberation from the powerful that is new. Da Vinci and Rembrandt, and Courbet lead the way to a new way of seeing. The failure to see the good that was incontesabley in the French Revolution is the failure to question the upper classes, who brought it on themselves.

¹⁰³² It was inevitable that the religious ideology of the Ancien Regime would fail, and science and democracy come to question power.

These developments suggested a non-Platonic understanding of the body that is sympathetic and scientific. Idealism fails to show the truth and the cult of beauty that accompanies it is questionable. As Darwin showed the beauty of the young body is mostly about reproduction, not state authority, divinity or the ideal of monarchist and corporate governments. In the 20th century the body in art is greatly deformed in line with the atrocities produced by competing forms of power, both Marxist and Capitalist. Some of this remains even in a recent painter like Lucian

nature" and though he refers to the soul and the divine and other religious terms he has really gone beyond them into the facts of the actual.-

¹⁰³² Yes, the revolution went too far, as Eugen Weber notes

men like Robespierre stood for the will of the people as long as the people's will matched their own visions. Ever offering to die for their beliefs, they got the sour satisfaction of undergoing the martyrdom they professed to seek: murderers murdering murderers before being murdered in their turn, until the last days of July 1794 brought an end to the Terror, though not to continuing terrorism.

Yet Robespierre and Napoleon are not the revolution, but the failure of it. The success of the revolution is the questioning of the powerful, the idea of rights and justice for nature and the poor. This is not nothing. If it was hated by the likes of Burke, or more recently Simon Schama, but well, of course they hate it. It was a bloody battle that ultimately had right on its side and it still does. The world was not made for the unjustly rich. This is not a surprise to anyone who is aware of what nature and living really is.

Freud¹⁰³³ The development of realism in art and science is a great advance which has its origins in Aristotle and not in Plato. Art after Da Vinci cannot be taken very seriously unless it is somehow developed in accord with science. The Neo-Platonism that inspired Michelangelo and Dante is already medieval decadence and is in process of dying along with the Christian dogmatism that inspired it and this issues into Symbolist art and surrealism. As Da Vinci showed the beauty of the human body is not diminished by the abandonment of the religious or “celestial” fictions. The understanding of the body of humans and animals as a fact of nature and not a celestial fiction was a great advance for science, medicine, and health. It also made it possible to criticize unjust systems like Plato and the Catholic Church, whose view of the human body was elitist and caste ridden.¹⁰³⁴ The view of the body which served “nobility” was one that favored gigantic figures with rippling muscles.

The long term effect of the realism and proto-scientific ideas of Aristotle was to ultimately subvert the power of the Church and help create the concern with nature that would one day lead to science. Aristotle disliked Plato’s theory of ideas and his Archetypes. That is all to the good. There is the unfortunate fact that Aristotle’s excessive concern

¹⁰³³ The limitations that are implicit in Rembrandt’s, Freud’s or Courbet’s presentation of the nude are due to their fidelity to reality. I admire this. The loss of the ideal notion of the body does take some getting used to for some people, but it is truth that matters more than dreams. Lucian Freud’s works have been called “corpse like”. And it is true there is a problem with some of his nudes and his coloration which one might call Kafkaesque. But I see this as perhaps a technical problem on Freud’s part or an inability to use color in a way that is not literal, wooden or clumsy. But this is not to say that Freud’s work lacks the beauty of the ordinary and the frail. He is a good painter of the nude and one of the best in recent times, even if he was a rather detestable man, a horrible man to women, a gambler, violent and questionable how he lived his life. Probably not good for art, if it is to be an example to others, to have such a borderline criminal mind doing paintings that express himself. But he is an inventor of unusual poses and existential humanity. It is true that his biography poses some serious ethical problems. But that is another issue. His sexualized nudes are honest even if often gross. I admire the honesty, even if I find his color and paint use somewhat poorly done.

¹⁰³⁴ Kenneth Clark’s book The Nude is very interesting and worth reading. He is much too Platonist for my taste, but he is an excellent scholar and thought provoking.

with logic had a great influence of Scholastic medievalists like Thomas Aquinas, who tried to make a bogus “science” of metaphysics. But ultimately Aristotle’s concern with science lead to the undermining or transcending of such vain transcendental systems. Plato survives only in backwater areas in poetry, Ruskin’s polemics, or Shelley’s need of escape or transcendentalists like Emerson, Rumi and bizarre Sufi cults like the Schuon cult. By the Renaissance, Aristotle’s concern with reality and evidence had undermined the Scholastics and the road to science was open. There was all along a tendency of ethically unscrupulous people and governments to misuse science, and I will discuss that later.

By the time of Darwin the “dead hand of Plato” could be put aside from our eyes and we could see ourselves as rational animals on an earth that needs our care and attention. First Aristotle and later, and more importantly, Darwin is the antidote to Platonism, and this helps explain why the traditionalists and other anti-science fundamentalists hate Darwin so much. Darwin, true son of Aristotle’s concern with animals, goes way beyond Aristotle and is really the first scientist who sees nature as one thing and humanity a part of the whole, not above it. This is a very important discovery for both the earth and human beings. It also is Darwin’s contribution to the destruction of slavery and animal and nature’s rights. Darwin’s ideas prefigure the idea of speciesism and the critique of the misuse of ecologies.

We are beings among other beings on an earth that evolved and is still evolving. We all have the right to be here. Learning the full extent of what this means is what science and art are all about. The Canadian naturalist-writer, John Livingston defines wildness as “a state of being in which one is an autonomous organism, yet bonded and subsidiary to the greater whole.”¹⁰³⁵ This defines nature’s rights too, as well as the concept

¹⁰³⁵ Livingston’s book on the Fallacy of Wildlife Conservation is really excellent, though he is

of preservation, and when Thoreau said, “in wildness is the preservation of the world”. The recognition of trees, plants, animals, water, weather, climate, forests, and rivers as being equal to human beings, even superior to us in many ways, should be obvious. Without nature, human beings are irrelevant and extinct. Nature comes before humans. But 500 Years of the erroneous concept that all is to be compared to “man” and “man is the measure of all things” has created a huge fiction that is destroying the earth, and externalizing harms done to nature while upholding human centered greed.

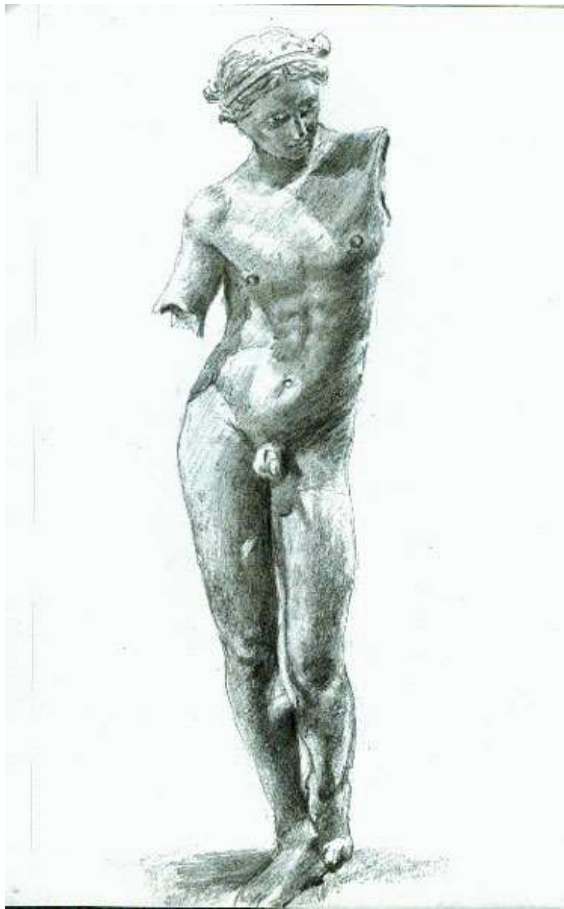
So understanding the role of Aristotle and Lucretius in the history of culture and science is important is grasping how we came to our age, and how we are still rife with conflicts between symbolic idealism and religion on the one hand and realism and non-corporate science on the other. Overcoming the arrogant speciesism of human centered, CEO or market culture, is essential in the recognition of the preservation of nature’s rights.¹⁰³⁶

mistaken about a few things, such as his claim that ungulates and rabbits “collaborate” in being prey. No animal wants to be prey. But his description of immortality as an excuse to make humans feel superior to non-human animals is original and very good. He notes that “if man is not immortal, there is no meaning to his existence”,--- this is of course, the standard fiction of religion, to claim human have immortal ‘souls’. This claim is the basis of human supremacy over other animals, and it is a specious claim.

“ if the highest purpose is the human purpose, necessarily and inevitably. This is what we are saying everytime we use the word “resource”. (Pg 102, Fallacy, in J, McClelland and Stewart, Toronto, 2006)

¹⁰³⁶ Gator Halpern asks the question:” if we gave Walmart and Halliburton rights as human beings, is it all that far fetched to do the same for nature?” ---actually corporations are not human beings. The idea that corporations are persons is a fiction. The idea that Birds, Forests, Wolves or Orcas are persons is not a fiction, but underlines their importance. The notion that corporations do anything but harm the earth and make CEO unjustly rich is false, Corporations are just money making machines, not dissimilar to gambling machines. Walmart is certainly not the equal of a river watershed, a Forest or an Orca. An ocean is far more important than the badly named Amazon Corporation. The Amazon river supports Billions of beings, Amazon corporation has stolen the livelihoods of 11,000 jobs in Ohio alone. Making Amazon a “person” merely means the legal world of Congress and the Courts has made a very bad person very rich off of fictions, and that is very wrong.

Praxiteles: Making the Myth of Praxiteles and the Misuse of Scholarship

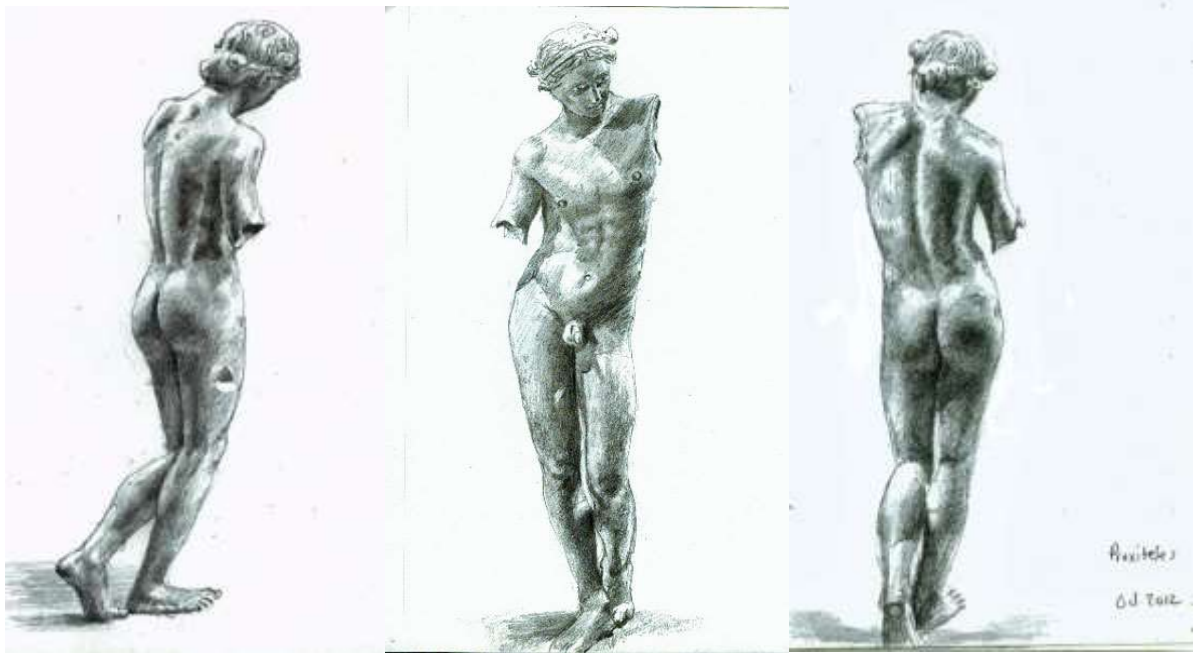


Reconstruction the Apollo as it might have looked
, actual sculpture on left, reconstruction on right.
Sculpture likely to be falsely attributed to Praxiteles

“some statues do in our day....obtain a
much greater price..... if they inscribe the
name of Praxiteles on their marbles...”

Phaedrus 15-50 BCE

For fun I did some studies of the 3 Apollo sculptures on show at Cleveland Museum of Art (CMA) on show in 2013-14.. One of the Apollo sculptures belongs to CMA, one to the Louvre and one to the Liverpool Museum in Britain. The design of these sculptures is claimed to be by Praxiteles. The Cleveland Sculpture is claimed to be the actual one by him and the other two copies. This is certainly not true as the evidence suggests that “Praxiteles” may be the invention historians and scholars. Above you see my more recent attempt to turn the existing sculpture into what it might have looked like when it was made, minus the tree. Here are the three drawing I did in late 2012 and early 2013..



My drawings of the CMA Apollo Sauroktonos,
(claimed to be by Praxiteles, but probably Roman)

Doing these drawings was a joy. I came to see why artists from Leonardo to the 19th century idealized Greek and Roman art so much. It is beautiful with a beauty that fascinates and invites you into it.

When I did the first three of these drawings I was blissfully oblivious to all that I will write about here. Indeed, the joy, precision, perfection, craft and humor in this sculpture is so palpable that I was really drawing that above all. Not only is the great god Apollo here pictured as a slight teen, lovely in strength and form, but the reverence here is for his physicality, not his godlikeness. Indeed, this image is decidedly not a god but a real human. The image is supposed to be about the Greek god Apollo conquering Chaos represented humorously as a tiny serpent. But this is unlikely and the allegory does not hold up except as a joke. If the small lizard is “Python”, or Chaos, then the sculpture is a parody or satire on the idea of Apollo conquering Chaos.

My idealization of Greek sculpture could only last a month or two. This is not to say that the sculpture lost anything of their appeal. The sculpture was billed as a "Praxiteles", but I did not care about that. Once I started learning about the facts behind some of these sculptures I had to adjust my views. When I did these drawings I did not realize that this sculpture had cruelty embodied in it. Originally I did not see this aspect of the sculpture as the Cleveland Apollo is without arms. I was merely drawing a very lovely young man whose body celebrate youth, existence and human kind. In the Cleveland Apollo he is not pictured as a boy being cruel to animals. But in the Louvre and Liverpool Apollo he is holding a string in one hand to tease up the lizard. In the other he holds an arrow, presumably to kill the lizard once it crawls up the tree.

But as I studied the various versions of the Apollo that visited the Cleveland museum I realized the metaphor of the cruel boy appears to be more of an excuse than a reality. If there is a myth at the heart of this is not obvious, even in the Louvre, Liverpool or Vatican versions. It certainly is not about conquering Chaos. On face value the sculpture appears to be a spoof on heroic or mythic sculptures and perhaps a spoof on Greek Gods. This too would indicate a Hellenistic rather than a classical origin. This is not a sculpture of deep religious faith but one of consummate skill and playful satire of religion.

Though I love the form of this sculpture and have studied it intensely, I dislike the aspect of cruelty in more intact versions of this sculpture think it part of the history of cruelty to animals that develops in Greece and Rome and later joins with Christianity to create Speciesism. This speciesism is certainly present in Ancient Greece. This is already present in Aristotle who wrote in his book on Government:

It is evident then that we may conclude of those things that are, that plants are created for the sake of animals, and animals for the sake of men; the tame for our use and provision; the wild, at least

the greater part, for our provision also, or for some other advantageous purpose, as furnishing us with clothes, and the like

As we know now, animals were not “created” but evolved and the notion that they exist simply for humans is self-serving anthropocentrism. The ideology of the Great Chain of Being is repulsive. But my desire to draw this sculpture, an Aristotelian form if ever there was one--- also had primarily to do with its fine proportions and to draw some male figures. I am quite able to separate the ways in which Aristotle was wrong from the ways in which he was right. Like the historian of the time, he is a mixed bag, and does some things well and other things very badly. He is certainly better than Plato in any case. Moreover, I had been painting studies of females for a year or so needed to study the male body more.¹⁰³⁷

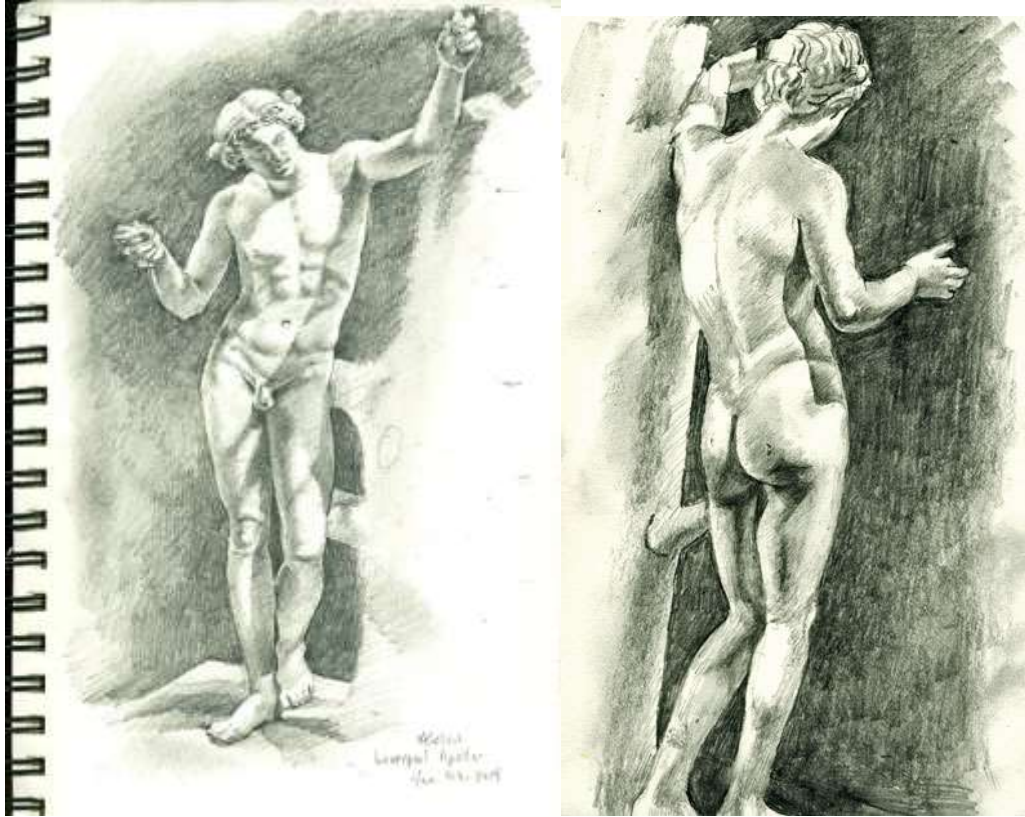
In any case, the sculpture appears to have a lot of mixed motives in it. On the one hand, this image recalls the Yakshi image outside Hindu temples where a female goddess touches a tree with her heel and the tree bursts into flower. The Yakshi goddess is obviously a fertility image and probably is based on older pre-Vedanta imagery. There is no historical connection as far as I am aware with this Apollo. But Platonism and Vedanta appear to have cross pollinated to some degree, both of them being caste obsessed, authoritarian, patriarchal and elitist systems of unjust privilege.. The figure of Apollo is also a fertility image, once the lizard motif is ignored. The beauty of the young man is quite

¹⁰³⁷ Cleveland was very forbidding and precious about drawing sculptures in their ‘special exhibition’ rooms. They would not let me draw the Louvre sculpture so I contacted the Louvre and got permission from them to do so. CMA only gave me three hours to draw it, which is not enough. I can only do one of these drawings in 5 or 6 hours or more. This was rather petty I thought, as the Louvre and many other museums have much more enlightened policy where they let anyone draw anywhere in the museum, any time, provided there is not a busy show going on such that artists get in the way of the crowds. There is no copyright restriction in doing drawings as drawing is not copying. CMA’s policy on this is wrongheaded. There is no good reason for it other than the exercise of arbitrary and irrational power.

extraordinary and suggests the loveliness and fertility of youth. Vedanta and Plato are both anti-nature as is the motif of the Lizard killing. But this is so superficially presented that it is hard to take seriously, indeed, it reads as a joke or a satire on the image of Apollo as the sun god, vanquishing Chaos.

I seems to me that this Apollo might have some of the old fertility image of the youth as image of "Life" or Kouros in it, in a latent sort of way. The meaning of this opposes the image of the killer. The killing of the lizard is sometimes connected to the rebellion of Greek religion against the snake/nature worship of indigenous culture in Greece and thus might connect to Orphic myths, in which Orpheus is seen as a sort of enemy of wild nature. What is really being killed in an ancient respect for the natural world. This would be the opposite of the Yakshi image, which celebrates woman and nature, at least on the surface. But then this sculpture is probably Roman and there is a confusion of motives in it, and the image of the fertile and virile youth need not be reconciled with the Lizard killer image. Pastiche is common in these works in the Hellenistic period, and these images are very fluid and change meaning easily. In any case it was the fertility or virility of this young man that I was drawing, the lizard killing aspect does not interest me at all.

The Cleveland sculpture has some features that are absent in the others. It is wonderfully drawn and has much greater detail in the forms than the Liverpool or the Louvre versions. The fingernails the hairband are very exact and true to life for instance. It is the most balanced and best proportioned and drawn of the group of three. I did these drawings of the Liverpool, on the left and the Louvre versions too. The latter, on the right, is not finished, as I explain in a footnote.



Liverpool Apollo and Louvre Apollo

(both alleged copies of an unknown original also allegedly by Praxiteles)

. In any case, in the process of doing these drawings, I was drawn into the historical and political arguments of scholars about Praxiteles, the presumed designer of the form of all these sculptures. A lot of what was said about this man did not make sense, so I began to look deeper. It soon became clear this could not be a Praxiteles and that this figure in history is not just problematic, but very likely a fabrication. Since it became clear fairly quickly that this sculpture is an example of scholarship gone awry, it seemed a fitting topic for my third book which is about mistaken assumptions. This book is about the nearly religious/political assumptions that deform truth seeking and turn it into fictitious avenues. Eventually I got tangentially involved in Art History and archeology of the Classical period. First, I want to discuss myth making in modern art history and how and why it is created and

sustained by the self-interest of scholars.

So, the main question of this essay is: Is Praxiteles a being of mythic fiction or an actual person? After a good deal of research it dawned on me at last that he is probably a fiction, partially or entirely. I conclude though my studies in this area, over the last several years, that a great deal of what passes as history of this period is fiction or dressed up stories of uncertain provenance. Most of the stories about Praxiteles are by Roman historians around the time of Pliny (23 -79 C.E.) who was writing over 300 years after Praxiteles (395-340?¹⁰³⁸), is supposed to have existed. I am used to history as search for reality and truth. This is not at all what history was during the time of Pliny. Unfortunately some modern Classical scholars also make up fictional histories, ignore contrary evidence and create a version of the truth that is to their liking, even if it never happened. William James puts forward the idea in his theory of religion and claims that if a story feels true it must be true, even if it is entirely made up. This what has happened with Praxiteles, and this fabrication goes back very far. In Pliny and other ancient historians one is as much in the realm of myth and religion as fact. Praxiteles is thus the creation of the fictional tendencies of historians.

Little of the information about Praxiteles can be trusted and most of it appears to be anecdotal or mythic, made up by these Roman historians. It is impossible in many cases to verify what Pliny says, but he appears to be mistaken about so many things and made up history when it suited him. In Pliny, imaginative novelist, the poet, and the historian mix in really inappropriate ways. Part of the problem with classical scholarship is that these stories tend to form a sort of dogma and modern scholars reinforce each other's illusions about the supposed authenticity of reports made based questionable sources. One of the

¹⁰³⁸ his dates are unknown, but these are an average of those often used.

delights of my position is that I am not a classical scholar, however ongoing my interest is-- and so do not have to obey the hidden canons of the subject and can speculate freely on what the facts, -- or in this case, the absence of them, might mean.

So to begin rather randomly: besides Pliny, who I will discuss in more depth shortly, another writer trotted out to confirm modern scholarly prejudices, that the CMA Apollo was done by Praxiteles, is Marcus Valerius Martialis. He died around 104 C.E. He died nearly 400 years after Praxiteles made this sculpture Martialis writes of in his Epigram 172

Sauroctonos Corinth.

To you creeping, insidious child, lizards scratch, scratch that wants to destroy you.

This is rather trivial and ambiguous and seems a comment on the myth of Apollo rather than to a real sculpture on Corinth. One can read all sorts of things into an epigrammic poem like this. There was allegedly a bronze Apollo sculpture on Corinth but that it was by Praxiteles is merely a literary imagining and not a fact. While the poem is full of mythological suggestions, It is more or less useless as history. Yet it is used as a fact in the historiography of this work. It is not a fact but a piece of rhetorical fiction. Yet historians use this useless little bit of information to add to the scaffold of the Praxiteles myth.

The same is true of the questionable epigrams of "Plato", who is claimed to have said "When Cypris saw Cypris at Cnidus, 'Alas!' said she; 'where did Praxiteles see me naked?' --- while this is clever, it is probably spurious. Plato did not write them. Cypris means Lady of Cypris or Aphrodite, of course. So the implication is that both Plato and Aphrodite are blessing the sculpture as having been done by Praxiteles. Actually

this appears to be another fiction. This time put into Plato's mouth. Modern historians dutifully quote this as evidence of a sculpture that Praxiteles supposedly made, but actually there is little reason to suppose this is true.

Writing history in Greece and Rome was not really about truth but about a good story, an epic, or literature. According to J.L Moles, historiography after Herodotus and Thucydides is about "epic narrative" on the one hand, and the "attempt to establish factual truth" on the other.¹⁰³⁹ The Greek and Roman historians write a strange combination of fables and fact while trying to imitating the likes of Homer's Illiad, which is not history any more that the Bible is. This confusion of fact and fiction is present in Pliny, Atheneus and Pausanias, the main "history" writers about Praxiteles.

It was clear to me 20 years ago that from the age of Homer to the age of Plato, perhaps 400 years, involved an increasingly differentiation in culture. Inchoate and irrational gods became Ideas. This process was not whole cloth or entire. Even by Roman times there were few that had escaped the thrall of myth, including ideological myths like Plato created. So if Praxiteles was a real person, that person is now lost to history. The mythic imagination of Greece and Rome made him into a catch all for many sculptures, probably none of which were done by 'him', whoever he was, or if he was. This theory is of course speculative, but it has the advantage of actually fitting the facts now available to us, unlike the many books on Praxiteles, which are artful fictions .

Moles notes that Plutarch(46 – 120 C.E.) was quite willing to sacrifice historical fact to relate a good story with a moral. Pliny lived near the time of Plutarch and the same may be said of him. Seneca accuses historians of being liars. He writes "Some historians win approval by telling incredible tales". At best it can be said that Pliny and Pausanias

¹⁰³⁹ Gill, Christopher. Lies and Fiction in the Ancient World, University of Texas, Austin 1993 pg. 91

and others invented a literary story about Praxiteles and each one embellished it to the point where one cannot know if there was such a man, who or if he might have been. If there was such a person no one knows what he actually did. It is likely he did not exist at all. This is not quite the same thing as lying, but it is bad history and mythic fabrication, certainly. Rather than having art historians indulge this need of mythic magnification, I would much prefer to eliminate the attribution “Praxiteles” from art history all together and treat all the sculptures ascribed to him as not yet known and very possibly works done by many artists, all now invisible and neglected. They are all great sculptures, but even on face value they appear to be done by different hands.

At least with the sculptors Phidias and Polykleitos there is a better record than with Praxiteles. Polykleitos wrote a book on sculpture called the Kanon somewhere around 450-440 B.CE. one of the first datable books on aesthetics. Polykelitos is as close as we come to a Platonic sculptor, that is, one who created his works based on a mathematical formulae of sorts, rather like Leonardo’s Vitruvian man.. The workshop of Phidias for the Zeus sculpture was seemingly found in 1958 and there are some contemporary accounts about him, specifically in Plato, who mentioned him in Meno (91d). Also he appears to have been at work on the Parthenon. Plutarch’s biography of Phidias 500 years after the fact cannot be taken very seriously, however. So there is some admittedly shaky evidence about what he did, though his existence is not in doubt.

But the record about Praxiteles is so very thin, so thin, in fact, I have come to believe he did not exist. He is largely and perhaps entirely, a fictive invention. The classical scholar Aileen Ajootian notes in her essay on Praxiteles that

Particularly in the case of Praxiteles the literary tradition creates a persona that consists of an accretion of literary tropes rather than a strict account of facts.¹⁰⁴⁰

This is good but way understates the case. At least Ajootian admits there is a problem here, but then proceeds in much of the rest of her essay to treat literary fictions as if they were facts. Actually there is no contemporaneous evidence of Praxiteles ever existing. All the works ascribed to him could not be his and who actually did them is unknown. Classical art scholars have a hard time dealing with this unknown and so make up this or that simply to fill the void. While Da Vinci is incontestably real with thousands of manuscript pages and paintings ascribable only to him, and Van Gogh incontestably existed as over 900 letters prove, Praxiteles is a ghost, and appears to be a carefully nurtured fiction, not any less fiction despite all the true believers that worship at his many shrines. Maybe there was such a man, but it is doubtful and all the facts about him should be carefully studied and subjected to rigorous examination. I have not looked into them all, but from what I have seen so far, it is a story that is far more fiction than fact. I think rigorous dismissal of facts not supported by actual evidence suggests the man did not exist, as I show in this essay. I think this would still be the case even if more searching were done. He is the creation of bad art historians and gives that discipline a bad name. He is a persistent illusion.

Biographies of Praxiteles, like the two volume set by Antonio Corso, are largely fiction stringing together a lot of questionable facts or fictions as if they were certainties, when they are anything but. The scholarship involved in Corso's book is extensive but is based on many unexamined assumptions, unquestionable dogmas and facts accepted

¹⁰⁴⁰ Palagia and Pollitt, Personal Styles in Greek Sculpture. Cambridge University Press 1996 pg. 97

that actually are later fictions. He obsessively builds his case out of thin air. He is willing to use the words “perhaps” or “Praxiteles must have”, when in fact he does not know. Moreover he does not consider contrary evidence nor give much credence to the many critics of virtually every piece attributed to Praxiteles. He quotes Pliny like a Bible.

Art History here gets written without any fact checking or peer review and claims can be asserted that have no real basis in fact. True, there is more evidence that Praxiteles did exist than that Jesus of Nazareth¹⁰⁴¹ existed, but that is saying little as Christ very likely did not exist.¹⁰⁴² But we are largely in the realm of myth and legend with Praxiteles, as with Christ and Muhammad: indeed, in all these cases we find the same pattern of historical fudging, lies, myth creation and lots of time between the time when the subject supposedly existed and any actual records that claim what they did. All these men appear to be later literary creations, when in fact there is little or no mention of them at the time, and nothing of a factual nature..

It may be that there was another Praxiteles who lived later or that maybe a ‘Praxiteles’ did exist, or at least a sculpture by a man of a similar name existed, as some attributions have been made because a

¹⁰⁴¹ The creation of the myth of Jesus overlaps the creation of the myth of Praxiteles, both having been created about 2000 years ago. It may be the same mythic and historical interplay and hyperbole is at work in both. Earl Doherty and others claim that the Christ myth precedes the attempt to create a gospel narrative, which are fictional stories which justify the already existing myth. The evidence suggests that this is a fact. This happens around 100-200 C.E. Roman writers are important in the creation and eventual state imposition of the Christian myth. In both cases we are dealing with a fiction that treated as historical fact. Of course the function of the Praxiteles myth is to serve the Roman Empire in a minor way, whereas the Christ myth becomes a huge organizing force that helps create the Dark Age Feudalism that would supplant Rome, though mostly Christianity is a Roman creation. But these are complex matters I only allude to here

¹⁰⁴² For more on the Christ Myth see Earl Doherty [the Jesus Puzzle](http://www.jesuspuzzle.humanists.net/jhcjp.htm)

or here <http://www.jesuspuzzle.humanists.net/home.htmg>

see also

On the Historicity of Jesus: Why We Might Have Reason for Doubt
By Richard Carrier. 2014

name was misread.¹⁰⁴³ No one knows the origin of any of these sculptures. The Hermes and Dionysius sculpture is probably Roman for instance, but is usually placed squarely in the Praxitelian canon. Since the originals are gone, or rather, they may not even have existed, no one can now tell if copies of it look like exactly it or not, or even indeed if the presumed copies are actually copies or original works. Many of the works false attributed to Praxiteles are probably original Roman creations.

There are a number of inscribed bases with Praxiteles signature on them, but no sculpture above it.¹⁰⁴⁴ But this tells us little and anyone who is handy with a chisel can write on marble. Some of these are very dubious at best. The one comment of Pliny that might be somewhat convincing is his claim that many people went to visit the Aphrodite of Cnidus after Praxiteles made it. He writes that “There are works by him [Praxiteles] at Athens in the Ceramics, but first and foremost not only of this, but indeed in the whole world, is the Venus that many have sailed to Cnidus to see.” But all this really implies is that people went there during the time of Pliny, which is nearly 400 years after the sculpture was supposedly created. So Pliny has not really given us anything except knowledge that it was admired in the 1st or 2nd century C.E.

I would like to imagine a Praxiteles may have existed. But there are simply no facts to prove that he did. The one sculpture that is supposed to have been definitely by him is the Aphrodite of Cnidus or Knidos. The basis of the attribution of the Knidian Aphrodite sculpture to Praxiteles is again Pliny. But even here in this most ‘certain’ of Praxiteles

¹⁰⁴³ One group sculpture of the Sauroktonos type, the Ildefonso, uses the Sauroktonos image for instance, but might be by a Praxiteles, whose name is quite similar, says Aileen Ajootian in Personal Styles in Greek Sculpture. Pg121

¹⁰⁴⁴ Corso discusses one such inscription and spends a whole day trying to read it, and concludes it does say Praxiteles. His career depends on seeing it that way. But barely readable words written on stone are not proof of anything. One cannot infer a whole history of an individual from blurred writing on an old stone, since no one knows when it was written or by whom, or even if it really says what is claimed.

sculptures, there are many doubts about the literary heritage of it. Pliny, Atheneus, Pausanius and others cannot be trusted. Christine Havelock notes that “there is not a trace of the Knidia in the art and literature of the fourth or third centuries” B.C.E. ¹⁰⁴⁵ This fact should have suggested to this author that this is evidence that perhaps the man did not exist and the Knidia is a later creation by someone else, Hellenistic and not Classical. Maybe it was done by a Greek sculptor working for the early Romans. There does not seem to be any record of anyone seeing the Knidian Aphrodite till around 220 230 BCE, when a few ambiguous coins turn up with the image on it, though how those coins were dated is not very clear to me, nor is it clear that this is the sculpture called Knidia on the coin. Havelock also notes that

“the figure [of Knida] is not mentioned in any contemporary source. She was ignored or unknown to the philosophers, dramatists, and poets of the fourth century and the early Hellenistic period” ¹⁰⁴⁶

It is a presumption to say “she was ignored” when it is not certain that she even existed then. This surmise and assumption is how myths maintain themselves. The Knidian Aphrodite is mentioned by Poseidippis, who mentions it the early 200’s BCE, and it is noted that this historian does not mention Phyrne at all. This is 150 years or so since it was supposedly made by Praxiteles. It is reasonable to suppose that this, his most famous sculpture, was probably not made by him at all and is later, Hellenistic.

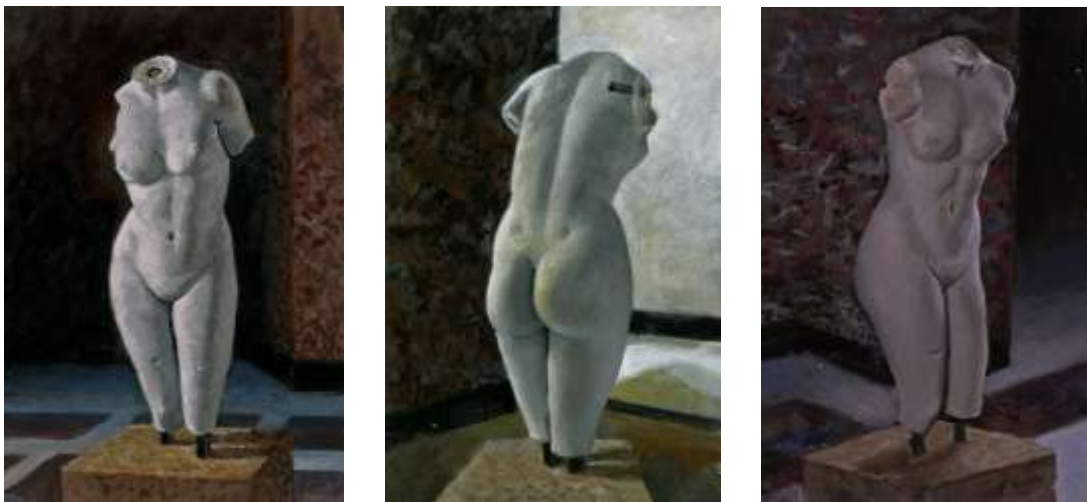
But if Poseidippis is the first to mention the sculpture, and there is not mention of such an important work before that, it is clear the fiction

¹⁰⁴⁵ Havelock, Christine Mitchell The Aphrodite of Knidos and Her Successors: A Historical Review...

¹⁰⁴⁶ Ibid. Pg. 55

begins there. The notion that it was made 150 years earlier and no one mentions this important work is absurd, he did not make it.

Pliny made up his imaginary stories about the Knida and other sculptures 200 years later. The notion that one can believe Pliny, given this record, is utterly absurd. It is likely he merely embellished the exaggerated fictions of others. Yet art history scholars go on saying it is certain Praxiteles did make this one sculpture, the model for thousands of other Venuses.



Three Views of the Louvre's Aphrodite of Knidos, allegedly by Praxiteles
Torso

small oil paintings by author

There is no basis for this supposition at all, and if the rules of evidence matter, the only real likelihood is that Praxiteles is a myth pushed by Poseidippis, Pliny, Pausanias, Atheneus, as well as by recent art historians such as Palagia, Corso, Havelock and many others. They all made it up, unknowingly perhaps, but nevertheless. It was exceedingly common for Greek and Roman historians to do this--- just as Herodotus made up the hairy mane and tail he imagined to be on the Hippopotamus of the Nile as well as his exaggerations about the huge

size of the Persian Army.¹⁰⁴⁷

In fact the absence of evidence for Praxiteles is indeed, in this case, evidence of his absence. It is pretty sure that this artist is a myth. Perhaps some evidence would turn up eventually showing he was real. But until that happens it is most reasonable to assume he is the literary creation of art historians and anthropologists who should have been novel writers. The fact of so much uncertainty in the records about him gives one pause. The lack of evidence is more in favor of his being a myth than a reality. Havelock mentions that there is a “surprising” flowering of interest in the Knidian Aphrodite about 100 BCE, and this suggests that it does not exist much before that. This not “surprising” at all if the sculpture was made around 200 BCE or later. So it is not Greek at all but Roman and the coins merely represent a prototype of sorts or a growing trend in form. This has the ring of truth in it, and of honest assessment based on the facts. So perhaps Roman sculptors made the form of the Knidian Aphrodite, as well as most of the other Aphrodites, since nearly all of them are indeed Roman and after 200 BCE. The form was probably not the creation of one sculptor but of many over a few hundred years.

But all the other sculptures ascribed to Praxiteles are very doubtful. It is humorous to look at the list of works that is attributed to Praxiteles. There are about 70 works, 10 of them “disputed” when actually all of them are disputable and there are no originals that are uncontested, including the Aphrodite. No one could have made 70 advanced sculptures of this quality in less than five lifetimes. Since this is impossible, there clearly there has been a lot of fiction written about this guy. He is a dumping ground for lovely sculptures that scholars have trouble attributing to anyone. Experts I have questioned have no real

¹⁰⁴⁷ Herodotus also thought that sheep in Egypt had huge tails and that there were flying snakes in the Middle East. History in those days was largely make believe and this is long before Pliny, who might be a little better, but not by much.

evidence about Praxiteles, they merely have “faith” in Pliny, Pausanias, Lucian and others that mention him, and so claim he existed and made the works that are disputed to be his.¹⁰⁴⁸ This is religion or politics and not art history. . So is Praxiteles entirely the invention of Roman historians and modern museum curators, anxious to attribute "their" pet sculpture to a great name that has no reality at its base? It would seem so, or at least, this seems one likely conclusion, all too often denied by classical scholars. The refusal to admit this very reasonable assumption is itself worrying.

The idea that the existence of Praxiteles should not be questioned—as one eminent classical art scholar said to me—is dogma and not rational. There is a dogmatic myth that the main sculptures in the Praxitelian canon were not created by anyone but him, even if the originals were lost, and in the absence of convincing evidence. This is not art history but fancy, dogmatism and mistaken. Classical art scholarship appears to be largely based on literary fiction and dogma and to be little supported by any facts or contemporary witnesses. It is really just a tissue of literary associations loosely attached to existing works. The works themselves are amazing, there is no doubt about that, but the history that surrounds them is probably bogus. What is amazing in the Knidia, the Apollo, Dionysius and other sculptures is the men who made them all of them unknown and invisible.

But there is one fact that can be demonstrated. There is an historical record of one man saying, in effect, that Praxiteles is a dumping ground. Phaedrus (15 BCE, 50 CE) said it was all bogus at the time. He writes something very interesting that no scholar has bothered to quote as far as I can tell. In his Prologue to the Fables he says:

¹⁰⁴⁸ for instance Corso argues that Cephisodotus or Kephisodotos was Praxiteles' father, son or son in law or father and that Pliny as a source of this. But the idea that Pliny knew anything about it very farfetched to begin with.

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“If I shall anywhere insert the name of Æsop, to whom I have already rendered every honor that was his due, know that it is for the sake of his authority, just as some statues do in our day, who obtain a much greater price for their productions, if they inscribe the name of Praxiteles on their marbles, and Myron on their polished silver. Therefore let these Fables obtain a hearing.”¹⁰⁴⁹

Phaedrus, who at least was a real person, wanted to be Aesop, (who probably did not exist either). But at least he is honest about it. Phaedrus was aware that many sculptures attributed to Praxiteles were fake, yet many put the name of Praxiteles on their sculptures and claimed it was really by him, because it promoted their work into the myth. That is how 70 sculptures got the name Praxiteles on them. He is saying that if you want to be listened to, make it up, it takes “fables to obtain a hearing”. This is evidence of a common understanding at the time of the need to lie and to lie specifically about Praxiteles. Pliny and Herodotus, Pausanias and others told fables, but were not honest about it. Perhaps the Knidian Aphrodite was indeed by a man whose name is lost who lived around 200 BCE. Maybe his name was Prasiteles or Positelis or even Praxiteles and all the other sculptures are free-loaders on his name. This is more plausible than the imaginary existence of a Praxiteles living at the time of Aristotle, for whom there is no evidence at all. But what there really was a Praxiteles in Greece who made the famous sculptures. Nope.

Yet if Phaedrus knew the name Praxiteles was being forged and promoted as myth, it seems likely this was not an uncommon occurrence. This would explain all the sculptures around with that name

¹⁰⁴⁹ Phaedrus. The Fables of Phaedrus Book V Prologue

http://www.gutenberg.org/files/25512/25512-h/25512-h.htm#riley_V_pro

attached to them. It is entirely reasonable to doubt the existence of Praxiteles and see it all as myth. This ought to be a valid point of view in classical studies. It might even be the right one.

Phaedrus is already saying around 25 CE, that many of the sculptures then called Praxiteles were not actually by him, and this is not long before Pliny writes fables in praise of Praxiteles. It is much more likely that Phaedrus is telling the truth than Pliny. Phaedrus was writing fiction with a moral lesson and thus telling white lies in order to tell the truth. Sometimes, not often perhaps, but sometimes, fiction is truer than non-fiction, as in Dickens or Shakespeare. Pliny is doing the opposite from Phaedrus, he is writing "truth" that is actually a mythical concoction or a lie. It was already known that the name Praxiteles was a way to pawn off things that were not real. Phaedrus implies it was common knowledge. Just as Homer is probably a made up composite of many poets and generally seen as the culmination of many generations of oral story-telling that resulted in the Iliad and Odyssey, so Praxiteles is not one sculptor but many sculptors. Like Homer, Aesop is also a "literary" trope or cultural tradition. The man probably did not exist, but the character is a catch all for a type of story. The Greeks and Romans were still living in a twilight area where truth and fiction are blurred. Praxiteles maybe a fictional character of this kind, an attribution dump.

What is clear is that the name "Praxiteles" bolsters or hypes up the image of the Roman authors and modern scholars that write about it, as well as archeologists that promote his sculptures. Like the 'god' fiction Praxiteles creates jobs and careers. So who cares if it might be all fiction? Isn't a good story better than reality anyway?

My own preference is for the truth, as the world is full enough of actual marvels without dressed up fictions added to them. As Gregory Curtis shows in his excellent book Disarmed, those who worked at the Louvre in the early 1800's actually cut off the signature of the artist who

did it and claimed it was a Praxiteles, to bolster its fame. This guy has been used for millennia as a dump for masterpieces. Actually, as we now know the Venus de Milo was Carved by Alexandros, a little known sculptor of Antioch around 150 BCE. Maybe he did the Aphrodite or the Sauroctonos too? Phaedrus would laugh out loud about this. As it is exactly what he said people were doing nearly 2 thousand years earlier. Unfortunately the Louvre has not learned from its own mistake and is still trying to push the myth of Praxiteles. Though there is proof that times have changed. At an exhibition of works allegedly “by” Praxiteles in 2007 at the Louvre, one of their promotional documents admits that

"The numismatic and literary sources presented in the display cases are the only surviving and reliable historical records that we may use to supplement our understanding of the sculptor, since virtually all of his works fell victim to the ravages of time or the vicissitudes of history".

Actually the literary sources are really useless, since the writings of Pliny, Atheneus, Martialis and Pausanias,--- all of whom are used to claim that Praxiteles is real,--- are all questionable. They are all heavily involved in myth making, and though they occasionally pepper their works with facts it is largely unknown which are facts and which are make believe stories meant to entertain. There is yet to be a really thorough evidentiary vetting of these ancient texts, as there ought to be. They are so full of mistakes, fabrications and myth. So the Louvre show of 2007 is questionable at best and probably misleading and involved in the same myth creation.

A brief glance at Pliny's Natural History would convince anyone with reason that this man is not to be trusted. He writes all sorts of nonsense. He says, for instance, that dragons leap out of trees and eat

elephants. He says that a “Phoenix” exists in Arabia and he imagines that

“it lives five hundred and forty years, that when it becomes old it builds a nest of cassia and sprigs of incense, which it fills with perfumes, and then lays its body down upon them to die; that from its bones and marrow there springs at first a sort of small worm, which in time changes into a little bird: that the first thing that it does is to perform the obsequies of its predecessor, and to carry the nest entire to the city of the Sun near Panchaia,⁵ and there deposit it upon the altar of that divinity” (Natural History 10,2)

. His book is full of nonsense like this on many subjects. The idea that he can be trusted on something 300 years before him is absurd.¹⁰⁵⁰ Are Atheneus, Pausanias and Pliny to be trusted? The simple answer is no. Looking at Pliny’s Natural History made me think few scholars of Greek sculpture have actually read him, or if they did they are very gullible. Phaedrus was certainly right.

However, there are exceptions. At least Olga Palagia points out in her essay, "Pheidias Epoieseis",¹⁰⁵¹ that Pliny is prone to give a sculpture a mistaken attribution when it is not factually indicated at all, simply because it conforms to his "value judgment" . For instance a sculpture of a man named Alcibiades is supposed by Pliny to have been done by

¹⁰⁵⁰ About salamanders for instance: “ the salamander, an animal like a lizard in shape, and with a body starred all over, never comes out except during heavy showers, and disappears the moment it becomes fine. This animal is so intensely cold as to extinguish fire by its contact, in the same way as ice does. It spits forth a milky matter from its mouth; and whatever part of the human body is touched with this, all the hair falls off, and the part assumes the appearance of leprosy> N.H. 10, 86

¹⁰⁵¹ Palagia, Olga, "Pheidias Epoieseis",
http://www.arch.uoa.gr/fileadmin/arch.uoa.gr/uploads/images/melh_dep/papers/palagia_pheidias_epoiesen.pdf

either Praxiteles or Scopas, but this work could not be by either Praxiteles or Scopas since "Alcibiades lived in the wrong century", she says. Pliny makes great names like Praxiteles or Scopas a "magnet of attribution" she says. Pliny thought that if a given sculpture was beautiful it must be a Phidias or Praxiteles. Palagia goes to great lengths to show that sculptures were misidentified or wrongly attributed by both Pliny and Pausanias, writing nearly 400 years after Phidias and Praxiteles. How could it be otherwise?

Pliny and Pausanias were not the only ones to mis-attribute sculptures. So did the Classical scholar, Furtwangler, whom Palagia accuses of having an "ad hoc" method of deciding who did what sculpture. She notes that classical experts on sculpture have made irresponsible attributions on the basis that "this [sculpture] is so beautiful it must be classical and was probably made by someone we have heard of". Cleveland basically claims that their Apollo sculpture is a Praxiteles because it is too beautiful to be anything else. That at least is known and Phaedrus admits that all sorts of people claimed that a given sculpture was by Praxiteles when it was not..

I do not mean here to imply that Palagia herself is beyond these illusory attributions. She mentions the imaginary love between Praxiteles and Phryne as if it were a fact. Actually the historical record suggests this story is clearly the result of the imagination of Athenaeus (200 BCE), probably promoted by less embellished comments from earlier writers. ¹⁰⁵² The story is traced in Christine Mitchell Havelock's book The Aphrodite of Knidos and Her Successors. She shows the Phryne myth grew up slowly as a sensationalist literary fiction over several centuries, and implies that if there was any basis for it, it might have been someone else entirely, as there was more than one Phryne.

¹⁰⁵² See also Phryne in Modern Art, Cinema and Cartoon by Eleanora Cavallini.

The Athenaeus story in the *Deipnosophistae* (d. after 200 C.E.) about Praxiteles' love for Phryne is well told, but there is not a grain of truth in it. Havelock quotes an earlier version of this myth, very likely the first version, which comes from around 200 BCE. The Athenaeus version is a few hundred years later and he added salacious details about Phryne taking her clothes off at her trial. Havelock notes that this "perhaps did not even happen". There is no perhaps about it, as indeed, the whole story is probably a concoction. Corso seems to take every word of Pliny as 'gospel' and never questions if the gospel might be a fiction.

I don't think Havelock draws the logical conclusion that the Phryne of myth is a fabrication, but she should have. She comes close, in any case, and it is obvious to me that the myth should be questioned. A more skeptical attitude towards the historicity of Phryne anecdotes is certainly warranted. These authors, Palagia and Havelock, both notably women, begin to question these myths but do not draw the logical conclusion, though they come closer to it than many other classical scholars. Just about everything, actually—everything--- about Praxiteles is fiction and the historians who write about Greek sculpture created and are still creating a mythic or legendary series of stories about the sculptor..

The Phryne story was later painted by Gerome, Turner and many others, and is obviously a male voyeuristic fantasy which persists by virtue of its erotic content. and cannot be taken seriously as a historical account of anything. It is used to claim that this or that statue is actually by Praxiteles of Phryne the Hetaerae or courtesan. The name Phryne was a common one for prostitute or courtesan during the classical period. It would be safe to observe that Gerome's fantasy accurately reflects the fabricated story of Athenaeus and thus reflects male sexual fantasy in the begging of the 3rd century CE..

Both the Gerome and Athenaeus stories are rather sensationalist and transparent stories and hard to take seriously as history. Though one

must add that the need to make such a fantasy float as a real event is itself part of history. The convenient thing about Praxiteles is that because there are no real facts about him that anyone one can point to, the scholar who writes about him are much freer than usual to express their creative instincts and claim him as their own. Yet at the same time they can write about him as if he were a real person, not a fiction. This makes Praxiteles almost a religious figure, like Jesus or Muhammad, and one in which sexual allusions are both allowed and even built upon as part of “history”. One could rightly say then that the myth of Phyrne is really a cloak for the hypocrisy of mostly male scholars and painters.



Phryne before the Areopagus by Gerome, 1861f

As to the coins, my preliminary finding is that they all appear to be Roman creations, at least as far as the Sauroktonos coins are

concerned.¹⁰⁵³ They are mostly from one period in the 2nd century C.E. and since Praxiteles himself seems to be a Roman creation to a large degree, this is not surprising. Havelock mentions coin images of Knida but none of them are much older than 200 BCE. But are they of the Knidia?

Since there are no Praxiteles that exist with any concrete reference or reality other than in 1st or second century BCE, and all others are hearsay or invented fiction, and some coins from the same period, it is virtually impossible to identify a style or a man's work and significance. The evidence suggests that Praxiteles did not exist and all the sculptures attributed to him are 2nd or 1st century BCE, the oldest being 220 BCE or so. In fact the Praxitelian oeuvre is heterogeneous and looks like it was done by many invisible sculptors.

This is a particularly clear example of historians abuse of history. This makes all scholarly writings about Praxiteles more about their authors than about the fictional character they write about. They are writing imaginative fiction, not art history. Tangentially such writings might also be about various more or less random sculptures, some of them of exceptional quality and beauty, which could have been done hundreds of years after the man Praxiteles might have lived. Thus, virtually all Praxiteles studies are largely fiction of a rather cultish kind, and fiction created and sustained by scholars as an attempt to sustain careers and serve ambitions.

This looks to be the case with the Cleveland Apollo, which follows the by now usual pattern. The three sculptures below were all in a show in Cleveland in 2013-14. The one on the left is said by curator Michael

¹⁰⁵³ Patrician Laurence writes of these coins that “I would repeat: this is a unique phenomenon. A famous statuary type used in one region and, as a series [of coins]: nowhere else. Never before Antoninus Pius, never after Diadumenian.(208 – 218 C.E.). Martial writes it up at Rome, but it never appears on a Rome-mint coin. Marble copies are found in Greece, but it does not appear on Greek Imperials from the Greek peninsula or islands” Antoninus Pius lived 86 C.E. – died 7 March, 161 C.E...This is rather late and is close to the time of Pliny who died in 79 in the explosion of Vesuvius.

Bennett to be an authentic Praxiteles. The only one on earth, he passionately imagines. But this is probably just hype and in fact it is a later Roman work, as I will explain shortly. The one in the middle, from the Louvre, in some ways the most beautiful, since it is almost complete, although heavily restored. The one on the right is the Liverpool Apollo.



From Left to right : the Cleveland Apollo, the Louvre Apollo and the Liverpool Apollo, all likely mis-attributed to a Praxiteles original

Cleveland bought theirs in 2004 from a questionable antiquities dealer, who claims to have gotten it from East Germany. There are those who doubt this story, and the museum has not been forthcoming about aspects of its origins according to some. This sculpture is really beautiful, though very damaged. It is claimed by Bennett that it was done by Praxiteles (370-330) but he has not demonstrated anything other than it was probably made sometime between 350 B.C.E. and 100 B.C.E., probably closer to the latter. This could mean many things. It could have been done by many people between 350 and 100 BCE. It is unlikely the earlier date is at all accurate as I will explain shortly. It could be Roman, it could be by virtually anyone else. The evidence does

not suggest it is the one that Pliny records in the 1st century BCE, which is certainly a fake in any case. It is claimed by the Cleveland Museum to be the one that is said to have been at Delphi. But this is also is fiction with little or no basis to it. Since there is not one sculpture by Praxiteles whose authenticity is uncontested, is it likely to be really by him?. For one to suddenly turn up at this late date is certainly doubtful. It has been thrust into view without much real debate as to its character and origins. It is claimed it was probably taken out of Greece by Nero along with shiploads of 500 other sculptures. But no one knows that this is case either. This maybe more art history of the sort that does not go before its critics for their fair assessment, but one that is thrust on the public as part of a PR campaign. This has some of the marks of a flim flam.

So I looked closer. Michael Bennett and Antonio Corso both heavily depend on Pliny's Natural History and the book of Atheneus to defend their claims about Praxiteles' creations. The basis of the attribution of Apollo Sauroktonos is again Pliny. This sculpture is mentioned by Pliny,(NH. 34. 19, or in some editions 34, 70?) but in brief and rather trivial terms. Pliny says

"Praxiteles also made a youthful Apollo called in Greek the Lizard-Slayer because he is waiting with an arrow for a lizard creeping towards him."

This is not enough to base an identification on, as it could well be as Phaedrus says, merely a trumped up pretence or a promotional fiction. One needs a lot more than a questionable quote from a source writing hundreds of years after the fact to establish anything.

Bennett has a nearly religious view of the sculpture and says that in Ohio he has recreated the "Temple of Art", like Delphi, where the sculpture was supposed to have been originally housed. Bennett tries to

relate the sculpture to an imaginary American "Temple of Art" and compares it to the Greenough sculpture of George Washington and thus folds it into a Nationalist ideology, evoking transcendentalist ideas of Manifest Destiny and American exceptionalism of the 19th century.¹⁰⁵⁴ This is not history, but Republican myth, politics and religion. It is also poor scholarship and unwarranted, despite the extraordinary beauty of the sculpture. Since Pliny is often mistaken and his attributions are often 'value judgments' rather than real scholarship based on facts, as Palagia has shown, Bennett has made a "value judgment" that because the sculpture is beautiful it must be by Praxiteles.¹⁰⁵⁵ In other words

¹⁰⁵⁴ Bennett does not like "collective ownership" of art and calls it "ideology" but exempts private ownership from the same charge, when obviously both of these are ideology. (pg. 48 of his book). He claims "ancient art transcends archeological context", which is nonsense as all art has a place of origin and this always matters. But since the provenance of the Cleveland Apollo is rather suspicious, it is not a surprise he would say that. Actually a great sculpture like this really does belong to everyone. The Elgin Marbles belong in Greece, since they were stolen off the Parthenon and Britain should return them. So likewise this sculpture probably should make regular visits to Italy and Greece, where it is from. Art done for the ultra-rich has always been a corrupting influence on culture,--- and often results in poor art-- as the French Revolution understood very well.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Victoria Button writes in her Thesis that :

This statement underlines one of the problems associated with conventional connoisseurship as a methodology; it is often used for attribution purposes, as a means of explaining the appearance of an artwork, and a way of making the evidence fit preconceived ideas. Further, in its tacitness, traditional connoisseurship is neither a methodology that is measurable, nor is it a transferable tool for use by anyone other than the connoisseur. Prior to the development of and access to instrumental analysis and innovations in examination technology, This unquestioned opinion of the connoisseur has permeated art historical methodology for centuries, but can be an unquantifiable solution to many questions relating to an artist's production. Such an approach has sometimes limited potential new approaches to Holbein's portrait drawings for fear of questioning authorities on Holbein.The position of old-fashioned connoisseurship's ability to understand an object's production was questioned in relation to the now much valued collaboration between scientists, conservators and art historians. Leonardo expert and art historian Martin Kemp responded that connoisseurship was still valid. However, since there was too much information still open to interpretation, art historians needed to work out their methodology in order to better integrate it with

claiming the Cleveland Apollo is a Praxiteles follows a well-established trend of questionable attributions made by museum curators. Palagia notes that though Pliny's tendency to literary and mythic attributions is a practice on the wane, but it is still alive and well in some places. The Cleveland Museum of Art, and Michael Bennett appears to be one of these places.¹⁰⁵⁶

Pliny mentions the Apollo Sauroktonos was a bronze. But though the Cleveland Apollo is a bronze, there have been so many false attributions in history for pieces claiming to be a Praxiteles, one should be very cautious. His signature appears in many places, indeed, there are far more signatures than facts about his life, suggesting again that Phaedrus is right and the name Praxiteles and the word fable are nearly synonymous.. The Cleveland Apollo has no valid provenance to speak of, so the most one can say is that it is damaged, but beautiful.

Palagia notes herself that it is not Greek but Roman and she says in a letter to the author this is so because "the face is Roman" and the bronze "has too much lead in it". Bennett says the lead content is 15%, and 10 % tin and the rest copper. This is a high lead content. Carol Mattusch says in her Greek Bronze Statuary. (pg. 15) that the Greek used little or no lead until later and suggests that a large amount of lead probably indicates a later date, or as Palagia says, it may mean it was

science. Further, emphasizing this lack of definition, Kemp answered by responding that the way we deal with connoisseurship now is 'arbitrary, chaotic and opportunistic'.

<http://researchonline.rca.ac.uk/1357/1/Victoria%20Button%20PDF%20FINAL%20THESIS%20MAY%202013.pdf>

¹⁰⁵⁶ Going further than false attributions, it is not out of the question that the Cleveland Apollo is a looted antiquity. CMA is "withholding information from the public regarding the history of the Apollo" one author claims. The provenance of this work is very questionable. The story told about its origins in an East Germany Garden might be fiction. The work was bought from some suspect antiquities dealers called the Aboutaam brothers. They have been in trouble with the law on various dealings in ancient art. So CMA has not been very honest about this piece. Sherman Lee was very open and honest about such things, but subsequent Directors have not been so truthful or above board. Everything about the CMA sculpture is questionable, in short.

Roman. This is the science of archeology at its best. So the physical evidence suggests that this statue is Roman and not Greek. If these facts are correct, and I think they are, one can definitely say this sculpture is not Classical. It is not by an imaginary Praxiteles. It is probably Roman and Hellenistic. I am not sure why the idea of the Apollo Sauroktonos is thought to be a Greek idea at all as nothing ties it specifically with Praxiteles, other than legend or fable.. It is probably not even Greek.

A study put out by the Getty Museum online called Small Bronze Sculpture from the Ancient World suggest somewhat different conclusions and says that by the time of Classical sculpture lead content was on the rise. But David Scott, the author of one of the essays here says that lead content is very low in the 4th century, which would include Praxiteles. So again, this sculpture is probably either late Greek, well after Praxiteles or more likely Roman. Of course, there are variations of lead content even in early sculptures so this is not a certainty. It is remotely possible that there may have been an anomalous Greek sculpture that had high lead content. But the evidence is much stronger that it is a Roman sculpture. No one has been very honest about these concerns, which again suggests that Phaedrus had it right, the name Praxiteles is an 'attribution magnet' or dump, that people use to try to hitch their wagon to the Praxiteles star, even if there is no such thing. Praxiteles appears to be the pet creation of scholars.

2300 years is a long time for anyone to know who made a given sculpture. Given the unknown provenance of the Cleveland Apollo it is sure that no one should be claiming certainty about authorship. No one knows who did it. The only known facts about it are that is that it is probably Roman, probably Hellenistic but not from the Classical period. It is not a Praxiteles, of course. No one knows where it was or where it came from. How it ended up in East Germany is also mysterious and some think, suspect. That makes it highly dubious. But like the Venus

de Milo which was also claimed to be by Praxiteles and turned out not to be, this one is really lovely. In the end it is the beauty of these sculptures that matters, and one can wonder about their origin, but be aware that in the absence of facts the human mind is prone to create delusions, and they are prevalent in all the alleged sculpture of "Praxiteles". So there is the beauty of the sculpture on the one hand, that I tried to show in my drawings, with variable results, and there is the human comedy of attribution, which shows all the usual foibles of human vanity, ambition, lying, envy and in fighting, pretense and posturing. The whole Praxiteles enterprise is invention, surmise, fabrication or based on little or no actual fact. This is an interesting story that probably belongs more in a book critical of religion than anywhere else. The creation of the myth of Praxiteles is an example of how gods and avatars get made, born of human delusions and nurtured by the will to power, poor scholarship, nationalism and unjust wealth.

Having watched myself how a nearly religious tendency has developed around the Cleveland Apollo, it is interesting to speculate how Greek sculpture has attracted a nearly religious following since the Renaissance and done so in relation to political ideology. This is no doubt connected to the erosion of Christianity and subsequent rise of nationalism as a civic religion. The French claimed the Venus De Milo¹⁰⁵⁷ as their own, even though they basically stole it, and the English did steal the misnamed Elgin Marbles, which really are the Parthenon marbles, and which should have been returned to Greece long ago.¹⁰⁵⁸

¹ Byron wrote of the theft of the Parthenon marbles that:

¹⁰⁵⁷ The French curators and experts lied about it being a Praxiteles in the early 19th century. They knew it was not by him and even cut off the actual sculpture's name off the original to try to sell it as a Praxiteles, and later on the name on the base was found. It was not a Praxiteles and it was not and there were even jokes about this as you can see on page 87 of Disarmed by Gregory Curtis.

“Dull is the eye that will not weep to see
Thy walls defaced, thy mouldering shrines removed
By British hands, which it had best behaved
To guard those relics ne'er to be restored.
Curst be the hour when from their isle they roved,
And once again thy hapless bosom gored,
And snatch'd thy shrinking gods to northern climes abhorred!”

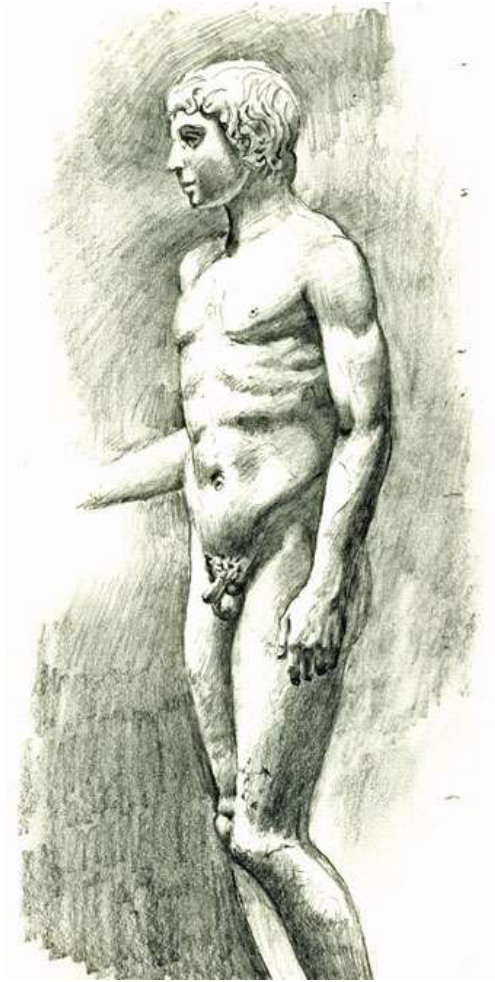
The French Revolution artists saw the Greeks and Romans as forward looking embodiments of liberty, which of course many of them were. But the kings of the reactionary Restoration period tried to restyle the Greeks as 'divine right' reactionaries, and some of them, like Plato, were that exactly. The rebellion against the mythologizing tendency moved toward abstraction and this just made matters worse, not better by helping the corporate ideology of personhood solidify in demonstrations of emptiness and neo-religious delusions. Thus, Greek and Roman sculpture, which grew out of the archeological context, has had a troubled and political history.

The Cleveland Museum of Art, motivated by a reactionary American politics claims to have created a “temple of art” around their Apollo and tried to tie it to 21 century globalist and neo-colonial economic ideology. This is another form of nationalism and manifest density, updating 19th century civic religion. In order to justify the capitalist speculation on art objects Bennett writes panegyrics against archeological “context” and public ownership and despises the fact that art always arises in a specific place. This is the ideology of global corporate ownership, a delusion, which itself is a fiction. The Greek Culture Ministry in contrast

attacks the Cleveland Apollo,--also inspired by nationalistic civil religion. The Greeks and Italians, at least, have the advantage of being the place where these things arose. The Greeks prevented The Cleveland Apollo from appearing in the 2007 Louvre show on Praxiteles. The Greeks claim it was stolen, which it may have been, as its origins are suspect. This is not without relation to the fact that the Germans, Americans and others have been trying to punish Greece for not adhering well to corrupt economic "austerity" programs created by banking institutions and countries bent of a neo-colonial and corporate agenda of punishing those who do not go along with an IMF economic agenda, rather like the mythic Sherriff of Nottingham who steals for the poor to give to the rich.. In any case, my purpose here is not to enter into the fray of these political and quasi-religious battles, but simply to point out that the political battles produce very poor scholarship. I side with the sculpture itself and deny it is a Praxiteles and decry its bad use by scholars, historians and political propagandists. It is lovely.

In the end, it does not matter who made these lovely sculptures, nor the poor scholarship that surrounds it. The Cleveland Apollo and other great Greek and Roman works in stone and bronze are great sculptures that reflect the science and observations that started with Aristotle and become the astronomy of Hipparchus and the wonder of Hypatia and after the suppression of empirical culture with the mythicizing Dark Ages, returned in the work of Da Vinci. The Apollo and the Aphrodite are wonderfully drawn and formed. The sculptors who made them were no doubt devoted to clear eyed observation and not political propaganda. It is not a religious object but an example of Greek and Roman art that embodies an Aristotelian proto-science and a love of the human form that is objective and new, populist and democratic. The rather political and religious scholarship that wants to make the sculpture mythic or national, or an example of late capitalistic corporate

Manifest Destiny is really out of place. The fact these sculptures have led so many scholars astray is interesting. Even Phaedrus, more honest than others, had sense enough to be honest about all the falsification that was going on over these great works of art. It is a backhanded complement to these works that they have inspired centuries of fiction and fabrication and very likely the mythic invention of the character of Praxiteles, who never existed. But it is about time we cleared the field a bit and started looking at the reality in which these great works were lied about and authorship fabricated. Their beauty shines all the better in the midst of all the vain fables and lies, propaganda and politics that surround them. They really belong to all of us, and those who claim to own them are just pretenders. Phaedrus might have written a good fable expressing just this. He could have called it: A Parable of Greed: How the Great Invisible Sculptors were Written out of History. Or “is it a Praxiteles—what nonsense!”.



Statue of an Athlete

. CMA. Roman, 1st century,
sculptor unknown,
drawing by author

Hypatia, Dionysius The Aeropagite and the Killing of Classical Science

As I will show in an upcoming chapter, Christ and Muhammad are probably mythical fictions created to serve a certain sort of politics. If this thesis is correct, it explains many of the facts surrounding the creation of the fictions of the Gospels and the “fall of the Roman Empire” as well the eclipse of classical culture. It is indeed the case that the origin of the Christ myth is extremely murky as is the origins of Islam, which I will also consider in the same chapter. I think the evidence shows that there is a myth involved here, in both the case of Christ and Muhammad. It is very likely that neither man existed.

So, let us suppose for now that Christ and Muhammad are myths, why did they both grow up in relation to the “fall” of the Roman Empire and the onset of the Dark Ages?. Christianity and Islam were created between 150 and 750 CE. These are systems of fictional mythology that grew up in the vacuum created by the fall of the Roman Empire. There really wasn't a fall, exactly, there was a transformation of power away from the centralized administration of classical Rome into the Feudal fiefdoms of the Dark Ages. The new systems of power were very destructive and backward leaning, based on new myths that supplanted to Pax Romana. The new religions that sustained people and justified powers were both born of despair, deserts, and bitterness. Nietzsche was not entirely wrong to say that Christianity was born of guilt, punitive repression and resentment, this is evident in Michelangelo's Sistine Ceiling. Islam on the other hand was born of male bravado, the indifferent geometry of the desert, solar heat, cruelty and punitive repression. Crystalline implacability, the misogynistic veil, the garden

that is cramped into an architectural scheme and the scimitar at the necks of Christians and Jews.

It is true that that Islam preserved some of the Greek and Roman philosophy and culture destroyed by the Christians as Rome fell. But it did so in the context of draconian Islamic rule. When one begins to understand why the fall of the Roman Empire happened, one can get an outline of the forces that extremely tragic event brought into play and how human development was put in abeyance for nearly a thousand years. There are many theories about why the Empire “fell”. Gibbon said that

The decline of Rome was the natural and inevitable effect of immoderate greatness. Prosperity ripened the principle of decay; the causes of destruction multiplied with the extent of conquest; and as soon as time or accident had removed the artificial supports, the stupendous fabric yielded to the pressure of its own weight.

From what I have read it appears that Rome fell partly for the reasons Gibbons cites, but he might not go far enough. The betrayal of the Republic by Caesar and Augustus set up a monarchy that was tyrannical and based largely on slavery. It was a society based on plunder and looting as well as taking riches from conquered territories. Like the Monarchs before the French Revolution the poor were highly taxed and the rich were largely exempt. This is of course very much like today where corporations take from everyone and give little or nothing back and the middle class is burdened excessively with paying the costs of the rich. Global warming, poverty and extinctions of species are the result. The Roman empire seems to have existed not to serve everyone but to serve the Administrators, and thus the top prospered while the middle sunk under the weight of their exploitation. In Rome the taxes

where unyielding. Christianity was merely added into this system of corrupt power and became its heir. Thomas Hobbes was probably right when he said that

“ from the time that the Bishop of Rome had gotten to be acknowledged for bishop universal, by pretence of succession to St. Peter, their whole hierarchy, or kingdom of darkness, may be compared not unfairly to the kingdom of fairies;And if a man consider the original of this great ecclesiastical dominion, he will easily perceive that the papacy is no other than the ghost of the deceased Roman Empire, sitting crowned upon the grave thereof: for so did the papacy start up on a sudden out of the ruins of that heathen power.”¹⁰⁵⁹

In other words, the Christian Dark Ages preserved the worst elements of Rome and repressed or destroyed the best’ science, civic minded republicanism, justice. Richard Carrier tries to claim that Christianity did not supplant the Roman Empire but filled up the vacuum left by its self-destruction.¹⁰⁶⁰ This is not quite the whole story either. Christianity kept the injustices of the Emperors and restyled unjust power as a papacy and a feudal system, which basically was a caste system, like in India. Justinian was seamlessly both a Christian and a Roman Emperor. Hobbes is right: “the papacy is no other than the

¹⁰⁵⁹ <https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/h/hobbes/thomas/h681/chapter47.html>

¹⁰⁶⁰ Richard Carrier’s scholarship is very narrow and though he is good at what he does, it is restricted to early Christian history and not much else. I saw him speak in 2015 and he is a good speaker, in general and makes a convincing case that Christianity is a myth, though it is good to read him with other authors, Doherty, Dawkins, Russell and others. I asked him what he will do now that he has established that Christianity is probably a myth, and he had no answer. He did not grasp why the myth was created or why it persists and said this is outside his area of expertise. I can see that this is true and so supply my own views on this subject in these essays on mythic Christianity and the Eucharist. The important question is what social forces allow Christian myths to continue as if they were facts, when they are not.

ghost of the deceased Roman Empire”.

Christianity and Islam are a sort of saprophyte on the Roman Empire, and probably would not have existed but for the Roman world. The myth of Christ, who probably never was a real person, was erected to adapt to Rome and serve a new repressive regime, even worse than the Emperors. The survival of Christianity in today’s world is curious and can be explained by the fact that this myth still served powerful interests, while at the same time being very useful as a means of moral repression or control of the population.. There is thus a natural succession between a tyrant like Julius Caesar and a tyrant like Innocent III as well as the tyrants of today’s corporate global “free traders”.

It is interesting that the Traditionalists needed to go backwards and idealize the dystopia of the Dark Ages, reversing the actual trend of history that shows that the Dark Ages were indeed dark and a great decline. To identify themselves with arcane hierarchies such as medieval Christianity, Islam or Hinduism, they show their contempt for ordinary people and their desire to return to the injustices of the past? I read somewhere that the word ‘Hierarchy’ was coined by so called Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite, who was for long centuries wrongly supposed to be the Areopagite mentioned in St. Paul, but who in fact lived somewhere around between 476 and 532 C.E. 400 years after Paul. He is thought to have been Syrian monk, and his works advance a really conservatively radical belief in “top-down” organization, as well as extreme sorts of spiritual escape. Also known as Pseudo-Denys, which is what I will call him. His books, such as “Celestial Hierarchy and The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy advance an authoritarian view of political Gnosticism which combines a Christian Neo-Platonism with a Roman totalism. He is one of the fathers of the Great Chain of Being idea, which Darwin shattered forever.

He is certainly writing under a pseudonym and no one knows yet

who the real author of these works are. He may be a student of Proclus.(d. 485 C.E.) Pseudo-Denys' most famous book is The Divine Names which advances a Platonist view of reality as a series of archetypal generalities. Pseudo-Denys is writing after the time of the destruction of the great Library of Alexandria, an act accomplished largely by Christian fanatics eager to destroy the greatness of Greek science and learning. His blending of Platonist authoritarianism and Christian will to ignorance is a poison brew. There is a late Roman decadent and syncretic flavor to Pseudo-Denys' gnostic attitudes that ties him to Plotinus. (204-270. C.E.), who was originally from Alexandria. Bertrand Russell says of Plotinus that he "is both an end and a beginning—an end as regards the Greeks, a beginning as regards Christianity." Plotinus has the "defect of encouraging me to look within rather than to look without". This subjectivism is also the defect of the Hegelians and the traditionalists. Thus the subjectivism and escapism of Pseudo-Denys brings us back again the thesis of this book, which begins with William James and the attempt to critique delusional nature of subjectivism. Science is about truth not about useful delusions, as James hoped, wrongly it turns out. Curiosity is a huge important value to good science and to childhood and art. The subjectivism of Christianity became the enemy of scientific curiosity, and this animosity infects the traditionalists as well.¹⁰⁶¹ Ananda Coomaraswamy wrote that

¹⁰⁶¹ You can see this hatred of curiosity in Guenon and Schuon's writings in various places. For instance in To Have a Center, (pg. 172) Schuon writes that "scientific curiosity has always existed, we repeat, but under normal conditions, it has been delimited by much more important and more realistic interests, namely, metaphysical science and religion". Arthur Versluis, likewise an anti-evolution and anti-intellectual thinker, condemns "fascination" in similar terms. This anti-'worldly' desire to limit curiosity with metaphysics is what made the Catholic Church put Galileo in jail for thinking and studying. I talked to Schuon on a number of occasions about science. He knew next to nothing about science. His views are very ignorant. The essay in which this nonsense about curiosity occurs was prompted by Dr. Wolfgang's Smith's visit to Bloomington in 1990 and Smith and Schuon did not see eye to eye. So Schuon tried to one up Smith with this essay, called "Concerning a Question of Astronomy" I which he tries to justify the rather ignorant

I have never built up a philosophy of my own or wished to establish a new school of thought. Perhaps the greatest thing I have learnt is never to think for myself” ¹⁰⁶²

This need of being humble and ignorant or “grateful” and anti-intellectual is common in the religions, and one finds it in many religions, where submission to authoritarian structures abound. Curiosity is Leonardo’s best trait and one that one sees in Darwin too, and any really good artist or scientist. This is natural in children too, at least until schools or parents, government or corporations get it out of them. It grows by leaps and bounds since the Renaissance as if reflected in museums and explorative sciences of all kinds. It could be that for some, ignorance makes one happier, as “ignorance is bliss” and religion “loves the beautiful wound” that makes the postulant a needy and willing slave. Such an attitude is admired by the ruling classes and is good for business. But science is not about that, either.¹⁰⁶³ Science prefers people of conscience who seek the truth, are honest about evidence and

views of geocentrism. Smith’s reactions to Schuon voice in his books reflect a similar ignorance. Actually both Smith and Schuon were mistaken. I learned from the fight between these two men that both were men of bloated self-importance and deep delusions. I write about this further in the last essay in this book.

¹⁰⁶² After-dinner speech on the occasion of his 70th birthday 1947

¹⁰⁶³ This Cult of the Dumb is interesting. I have found it among Stalinists, who scarcely exist anymore. It can be found now in ‘post- modern art’, where art is now devoted dogmatically to subjective delusions exclusively. One is not allowed to be skilled at drawing or painting, one must never represent reality, art should only be about itself and one must deny beauty. This is not art at all, of course, but a perfect image of corporate emptiness and decadence became an aesthetic dogma. Endless paintings of abstract vacuity are produced. This dogma of the Empty is visible in inane magazines like *Art Forum* or *Art in America*. Art become an abstract image of the fiction of corporate personhood which like the gods, does not exist. It is a metaphysical fiction akin to religious fictions. Abstract art is merely the dogma of corporate personhood made into an propagandistic art product. Piet Mondrian, one of the founders of empty Corporate Art, said “Nature is a damn wretched affair, I can hardly stand it”. This ignorant attitude toward his own body and to life in general also characterizes much of mysticism and religion. He was influenced by Blavatsky and theosophy. Mondrian’s aesthetic of world denying, vacuous abstractions now rules in a place like Manhattan in New York City where nature is banished and the cold hearted businessmen rules over a largely dead environment, void of animals, other than humans. Such paintings I find repulsive. It is dead, corporate art. (see National Gallery of Art, 1984, Abrams, pg 612)

don't cower before bible beating authorities or CEO worship. Science cures wounds and does not revel in them like god is supposed to do.

Coomaraswamy is proud of his ignorance, like St Denys. The association of books and vanity is part of the mythos of submission to authoritarian and escapist religions. You are encouraged to not think and not inquire. In Buddhism and Christianity ignorance is fostered and cultures as a virtue, and one is not supposed to ask why the supreme goods of the religions are "Unknowable" and "Nameless" or 'Unlearned'. Learning is to be ashamed of and inquiry is forbidden, no thinking allowed, since only the King, Masters or priests or have a grasp on the unlettered profundity of the 'unknowable mystery', which is nowhere defined. Indeed, the antinomianists and anti-intellectuals in the religions, from Niffari¹⁰⁶⁴, to Lao Tzu and Solomon, all resemble the book burners in Ray Bradbury's great Fahrenheit 451. Knowledge is a 'weariness of the flesh'. Best to be stupid, poor and die young living in fantasies of eternal life. The word "Islam means, "submit". Be stupid for god. Books are inconvenient, the authorities never want anyone to ask questions. Mao and Stalin or Andy Warhol all had a similar allergy toward anyone knowing much of anything. They all thought it best to have lots of propaganda and little real content, and let Aldous Huxley's Big Brother or in Warhol's case, let Advertiser's take over directing people's minds.

Like Plotinus, Pseudo-Denys creates an otherworldly doctrine of "negative theology" which promises escape and inner enclosure in a

¹⁰⁶⁴ A typical saying of Niffari's is this

" Be with Me, not with things. If anything reminds thee of Me, or concentrates thee upon Me, it only reminds thee of Me in order that thou mayest forget it, not Me, and that thou mayest be with Me, not with it; and it only concentrates thee upon Me in order that thou mayest be separated from it, not from me.

When you unpack this antinomian sentence it boils down to a radical rejection of existence and a delusional election of the "Me" which is a godlike being beyond being. This is delusional fiction of a high order and one that in the end is a worship of death, pretty typical of mystic utterances. You find the same thing in Zen, Lao Tzu and other mystics. It is world hatred as poetry. Indeed, poetry tends toward this in a certain way, as the end of poetry is the abstract character of language itself, which is bankrupt and empty.

decadent and gnostic system of intuitive and intellectual flights into metaphysical realms. Be dumb if you want to know god. Such Christian classics as The Cloud of Unknowing come from this ideology and enjoining followers to be mindless and covered in a “cloud of forgetting”, hating the body and life and “giving up all that thou hast” for a fictional god. Both Plotinus and Dionysius the Areopagite despise the actual world of the senses and of ordinary life where frogs trees and humans all life in a world of earth and sky. The Roman empire had fallen, life was awful; food scarce; disease common, suffering everywhere. Be dumb for god, escape into a monastery, read Pseudo Denys. The opposite of these mystic obscurantists is Hypatia, who is morning light by comparison to their dreaded escapism.

The murder of the great Alexandrine mathematician and astronomer Hypatia, (350- 415. C.E.) occurred at the library of Alexandria . The library itself was partially destroyed at various points prior to 415 but it seems that its final death knell was with the death of Hypatia in 415, as after that Alexandria is largely finished as the cosmopolitan city learning that it had been. ¹⁰⁶⁵ Hypatia may have been one of the last lights of classical learning, put out cruelly by a Christian mob of fanatics, egged on by Christian rule in Rome. It appears this occurred because Emperor Theodosius had passed his Christian “Theodosian decrees” in 391, C.E. in which he condemned all paganism and ordered the destruction of Temples and places where so called “pagans”--- meaning non-Christian Romans and Greeks, practiced,

¹⁰⁶⁵ Gibbon suggest the Library was finally destroyed around this time. Socrates Scholasticus writes that *Theophilus exerted himself to the utmost ... he caused the Mithreum to be cleaned out... Then he destroyed the Serapeum... and he had the phalli of Priapus carried through the midst of the forum. ... the heathen temples... were therefore razed to the ground, and the images of their gods molten into pots and other convenient utensils for the use of the Alexandrian church ...* If this is the case, then it is possible the library was mostly destroyed prior to Hypatia being murdered and Theophilus and Cyril are the destroyers of one of the greatest libraries that ever existed and one of the most amazing women of the ancient world.”

learned and taught. Gibbon refers to this period as one of unprecedented cruelty. He writes

“The ruin of Paganism, in the age of Theodosius, is perhaps the only example of the total extirpation of any ancient and popular superstition; and may therefore deserve to be considered as a singular event in the history of the human mind.”¹⁰⁶⁶

This is genocide of course. There are many examples of Christians destroying, pillaging, desecrating, vandalizing many of the ancient Pagan temples, tombs and monuments under this decree. Indeed it is referred to as a war on Classical culture.¹⁰⁶⁷ It is quite clear that Christians ended Greek and Roman civilization by repressing it and usurping its latent powers, while undermining its good qualities, not just taking over the vacuum of its absence, but actively murdering it. Christianity did fill the vacuum provided by the failing Roman empire on the one hand, but the Christians did facilitate the destruction of culture, art and science by violence. This brought a downward slide at this time that lasts nearly a thousand years. The destruction of Roman infrastructure and development of the Feudal systems were very backwards happenings.

Hypatia was really the woman of the future, the hope for what was to come. There would be no one like her until Leonardo, 1100 years later. She was murdered by a Christians, led by a Christian fanatic named Cyril, who apparently also destroyed the library, though there is some confusion about this in the history. Some Christians like to apologize for his brutality, but it appears he and other Christian Romans were very

¹⁰⁶⁶ Gibbon, The History of the Rise and fall of the Roman Empire 1776-1789. chapter 28
<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/gibbon-decline28.asp>

¹⁰⁶⁷ The persecution of Romans and non-believers by Christians would continue on for many centuries. Christians like to present themselves as victims but actually they did for more harm that were harmed. It is true that in 303, Diocletian orders Roman forces to persecute Christians. He orders Christian churches closed throughout the Empire and scriptures burnt. But Christians kept on getting revenge for this for many centuries,.

brutal. The destruction of Roman culture was ordered by the Christian Emperor Theodocius. What is clear is that Cyril was a Jew persecuting theocrat and wanted to extirpate science. He was what I would call a Christian theofascist. Gibbon notes that the murder of Hypatia has imprinted an “indelible stain on the character and religion of Cyril of Alexandria”.¹⁰⁶⁸ This is true. Hypatia was falsely accused of black magic because she had built an astrolabe, a very important object that was useful in triangulation, predicting time and distances and finding planets and stars as well as a navigational tool. Hypatia’s father was also involved in developing the Astrolabe and early astronomy and math.¹⁰⁶⁹

The attack on Hypatia was thus an attack on science. Carl Sagan speaks of it one of the great tragedies of human life on earth. Hypatia was a brilliant scientist and one of the last enlightened minds before the Christian Dark Ages descends. What good there was in Rome was largely done in by Christianity. Hypatia was an amazing student of the great

¹⁰⁶⁸ Gibbon full passage in chapter 47 states

“Hypatia, the daughter of Theon the mathematician, (was initiated in her father's studies; her learned comments have elucidated the geometry of Apollonius and Diophantus, and she publicly taught, both at Athens and Alexandria, the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle. In the bloom of beauty, and in the maturity of wisdom, the modest maid refused her lovers and instructed her disciples; the persons most illustrious for their rank or merit were impatient to visit the female philosopher; and Cyril beheld, with a jealous eye, the gorgeous train of horses and slaves who crowded the door of her academy. A rumor was spread among the Christians, that the daughter of Theon was the only obstacle to the reconciliation of the praefect and the archbishop; and that obstacle was speedily removed. On a fatal day, in the holy season of Lent, Hypatia was torn from her chariot, stripped naked, dragged to the church, and inhumanly butchered by the hands of Peter the reader, and a troop of savage and merciless fanatics: her flesh was scraped from her bones with sharp oyster shells, (and her quivering limbs were delivered to the flames. The just progress of inquiry and punishment was stopped by seasonable gifts; but the murder of Hypatia has imprinted an indelible stain on the character and religion of Cyril of Alexandria.”

Gibbon references various authors as sources

¹⁰⁶⁹ Hypatia is credited with saying some interesting things, such as..” “All formal dogmatic religions are fallacious and must never be accepted by self-respecting persons as final,” “Reserve your right to think, for even to think wrongly is better than not to think at all” “To teach superstitions as truth is a most terrible thing.”, which is a comment that should be directed at Religious studies professors. These are enlightened comments and may be partly why she was killed.

Library and of Aristarchus and Hipparchus, , who, much earlier, had discovered that the sun was the center of the solar system. ¹⁰⁷⁰ Indeed, it has been said that the origin of modern science is to be found first with the Greeks and later at the library of Alexandria.

The truth might be a little different. The real origins of science are probably the unknown creators of pottery, metallurgy and writing long before the Greeks. In any case, the Christians who murdered Hypatia, carved up her body. This dismemberment exemplifies the Christian hatred of the Greek and Egyptian rationalism and science. The church took pride in its “hatred of the world” as if such immoral hatred were a virtue. Christianity’s war against the actual is part of an effort to create an ‘otherworldly’ detachment in the minds of followers. To dissociate minds from reality is what religion are gifted at doing.

The killing of Hypatia and destroying of the Library is also about the triumph of an irrational Christianity and a residual Platonism that is destructive of reality. The killing of Hypatia is also the first Christian butchery against so called “witches”, who mostly were herbalists and midwives and thus, like Hypatia, female scientists of a kind. The murderers of Hypatia in 415 C.E. are the antecedents of later Christian Inquisitors and crusaders. The murder of Hypatia hints at a future of traditionalists, creationists and other bigots of anti-science.. Right-wing Christians, Moslems. Hindus, Jews and Catholics in today’s world, with their wars against Kashmir, Palestine, Iraq and Afghanistan as well as

¹⁰⁷⁰ Aristarchus 310-230 BCE, Hipparchus 190-120 BCE

Archimedes wrote of the heliocentrism of Aristarchus that “ His hypotheses are that the fixed stars and the Sun remain unmoved, that the Earth revolves about the Sun on the circumference of a circle, the Sun lying in the middle”. Eratosthenes discovered the circumference of the earth to within a few thousand miles. His calculation was 28,000 miles whereas the truth is about 25, 000. Some of this was more or less known to Hypatia, apparently, but was later suppressed by the Christians, who also tried to suppress Copernicus and Galileo a thousand years later. There is a supposition that Hypatia believed in the Heliocentric theory of Hipparchus, but if this is true, I can find no evidence for it, though she must have known about it, as she was an expert on Ptolemy who talks erroneously about Hipparchuses ideas. Did Hypatia realize tht Ptolemy was wrong? We do not know.

their anti-science, anti-education and anti-humanists views, recall the killers of Hypatia. Traditionalism is a monster that breathes the fire of right wing zealotry.

The end of the Roman Empire is a dire time where scientific knowledge of the world is under threat by an increasingly inward and escapist spiritualism,¹⁰⁷¹ such as one sees in Plotinus and Dionysius. Irrationalism is a force of repression and one that active ought to suppress science. This is true in today's world just as it was after Hypatia's murder. The Dark Ages are spearheaded by Christians, but later Islam¹⁰⁷² and other mystery cults of the "barbarians" arrive, with their superstitions and myths. Dionysius' antinomian "via negativa" hovers like a world-hating nightmare over the monastic abyss of the Dark Ages. The system of Pseudo-Denys is a gnostic dream that floats over the increasingly barbaric and threatening poverty and failure of the dying Roman Empire before and after the period of Justinian the Great(482-565 C.E.). The Dark Ages would last nearly a thousand years until finally thinkers like Dionysius the Areopagite and Augustine are superseded by Roger Bacon and the early Nominalists. The latter finally open the door to science. The birth of science depends on the denial of the escapist dreams of Dionysius, Plotinus and the medieval pantheon of hierarchical saints. Leonardo, Galileo. Newton, Darwin and Einstein are the inheritors of the realism and inquiry that Hypatia represented 1600

¹⁰⁷¹ Schuon badly misunderstood Hellenism and the Greeks. For him Plato was a 'prefiguration' of himself the "pure" intellectual. Schuon thought "rationalism and scientism were deviations from and caricatures of this intellectuality", which is nonsense. The truth is the other way around. The Platonic or Plotinian notion of the Intellect is a subjective morass, a sort of irrational irradiation of whatever you please—it is from this morass that all Ibn Arabi's and Schuon's crazy and confused 'visions' come. Rationalism has its origins more in Aristotle than Plato, though certainly Socrates was a rationalist. Schuon's super-rationalism is a construct, a pretence, an organ of make believe.

¹⁰⁷² Of course Islam did have a good effect in that the work of some of the Greek and Roman scientists and philosophers was preserved in Islamic libraries when Christians turned against science and their own heritage. While there was an increase in scientific activity in Islam around the time of Al Ghazali (1058-1111) C.E. and later, the rise of clerics and the dogmatic character of Islam tended to suppress inquiry.

years before

So, Pseudo-Denys is a decadent retrogressive figure, a sort of eclipse of reason into a mystical worship of imaginative and escapist metaphysical creations of the mind, like Plotinus, who is from the same time. Dionysius the Areopagite is a source and influence on traditionalist theofascism, which also exists in a time uncertainty and questioning. Dionysius the Areopagite is a father, along with Augustine, of Christian theocracy. He had an enormous influence on Aquinas who quotes him 1700 times. Pseudo-Denys created the atmosphere of the medieval church that led to the terroristic state of Innocent the III . Pseudo-Denys or Dionysius the Areopagite's ideas have a flavor of effete Hindu and Platonist caste ideology. His ideas also have a close affinity with the systems of Schuon, Guenon and Coomaraswamy.

A lot of the nostalgia for supercilious hierarchies so much present in the traditionalists comes from longing for reactionary systems like that of Pseudo-Denys . The origins of science are in the opposite direction, toward lesser hierarchy. You can see the rediscovery of the Greeks in the Renaissance and even more at the time of the French and American revolutions, where a real revival of anti-hierarchical ideas begins and flourishes, with many attempts to put it down and destroy it, Traditionalism among others. The importance of the Enlightenment is a pivotal thing in world history. You can see this even in as obscure and area as Fashion, where the absurdly huge overdone dresses of the Louis the 14th era give way to simple Neo- classical clothes that are relatively plain and flattering to the human body. Even clothes were democratized and the bloated excesses of the rich downsized. A figure like Johan Wincklemann is very interesting in this change, as he was a largely self-taught neo classical scholar, who helped change the world. ¹⁰⁷³ Gregory Curtus writes that

¹⁰⁷³ He also largely invented art history. He appears to have been wrong about a lot of things, but

Winckelmann's work, simplified and politicized, became the bedrock of the [French] Revolution's thinking about art. In October 1794, as the Terror faded after the execution of Robespierre three months earlier, the Convention appointed a committee to make a new translation of Winckelmann that could be used as a reference book,¹⁰⁷⁴

There also is a 'religious' or spiritual dimension in this cultural effort to create a sort of state religion out of classicism. There is a 'spiritual' component to the political effort to overthrow a corrupt monarchy and set up a better state. This shows again the close connection between religion and politics.¹⁰⁷⁵ Though in this case, the announcement of the enthroning of the goddess of reason in Notre Dame has a decidedly 'secular' ring to it. Here we see religion become a civil affair, and much lessened in severity. But then there is the growing problem of colonialism which results and this too became oppressive and harmful. All this has to do with the overthrow of the system of Aquinas and Pseudo-Denys.

Quite apart from the effort to create a state religion about 1787, the effort to create a science for the common good is everywhere. After 1800, this "Enlightenment" is a tremendously liberating thing. But just as science is liberated and rising after 1800 a force of reaction also sets in, trying to drag it down. What is common in all the reactionary thinkers I

what is fascinating about him is his hybrid attempt to free European culture of Christianity, even as he could not refuse his own attempt to make a religion of the worship of Greek art.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Curtis, Gregory, Disarmed: the Story of the Venus de Milo. Pg 56. This is a very well done history, full of interesting asides and meanders on a very worthy topic. It tells how the sculpture was basically stolen by the French and who it scholars deceived the public about its origins.

¹⁰⁷⁵ Another example would be the Shema of Israel, which states, *Sh'ma Yisrael Shema Eloheinu Shema Ehad*. (Hear, O Israel, the Name is our God, the Name is One) or Hear, O Israel, the Lord God is One". The oneness is a political oneness and the point is tribal and ancient. The apartheid system that is Israel is a logical result of this mentality, as for instance is shown in Gaza, where nearly two million people are daily subjected to brutality and humiliations so that is Israel can have its theocracy. The Palestinians have a right to their land too, and Israel has tried to steal all their land.

have been discussing is a devotion to antinomian irrationalism, a devotion to escapism, hierarchy and a cult of the irrational and subjective “Intellect”. They also share a hatred of the actual world and an anti-scientific attitude. The “Closing of the Western Mind”, in Charles Freeman’s phrase, that took place about 2-500, C.E., was all about creating a Christian system of oppression and authoritarianism spearheaded largely by Pseudo-Denys. A sort of fundamentalist-fascism or theofascism appears then and replaces the Roman Empire with a noxious form of government by priests and church/state alliances, governed by feudal lords who basically were laws unto themselves.. Like those who wanted to go back to the middle ages or to stop the Enlightenment, Guenon and Schuon were nostalgic for this time of horror and ignorance, when men who thought as they do ruled over the forced ignorance of the believing and brutalized masses. The counter enlightenment is an effort to return to the ignorance and dogmatic irrationality of the Dark Ages.

Guenonism is a reactionary, anti-intellectual system of conspiratorial thought that seeks to return to the Dark Ages and Pseudo-Denys. Guenon wanted to go back before the Enlightenment brought Church and monarchy into question, before evidence mattered and the dictators of dogma held sway with a whip, a jail cell and a will to burn women at the stake. Guenonism creates a Manichean worldview in which those who side with Guenon are good and everyone else is profane or evil. But Guenonian Manichaeism is not the sole cause of the attraction of Guenon; rather religious motivations are interwoven with economic and political factors. Guenon appeals to the "three R's" in the fascist mentality: revenge, renown, and reaction.¹⁰⁷⁶ Guenon wants

¹⁰⁷⁶ This analysis comes from Louise Richardson. She writes about various cults and terrorist groups and uses the example of Aum Shinrikyo, a Buddhist/Christian cult, which perpetrated a

revenge against the modern world, to be renowned as the pinnacle of “wisdom”, and wants to foment reaction against democracy, human rights and the Enlightenment. There are those who find comfort in hierarchy and inequality. They like to stand above and look down on others. Those who suffer below them are irrelevant and obscure and they do not care about their plight. “The poor we always have with us” they exclaim, following Christ’s comment, probably inserted in the gospels by those who wanted divine sanction for inequality.

Guenon appeals to irrational reactionaries who want revenge against reason and science, to go back to former systems of superstition and the power it gave to ignorant priests and panderers of tall tales and fictions. Guenon appeals to the desire of his followers for renown by fostering a notion of elitism, hierarchy and aristocracy, the qualities that killed Hypatia and enthroned Pseudo-Denys. Guenon himself had delusional notions of his own importance and passed this on to most of his followers. Guenon's hateful and elitist system employs reactionary political views, which were hidden behind his interest in ritual and religion. As I will show, various traditionalists have collaborated with right-wing political systems, belong to various cults or employ reactionary ideologies. Guenon's rhetoric is quite commonly lofty and messianic in its apocalyptic paranoia. He actually believed the nonsense he put out. Schuon, Evola, Dugin, Nasr and Lings also believed their own

sarin nerve gas attack on the Tokyo subway in 1995. The Al Qaeda cult was another movement that sought to kill many. Richardson observes that these groups require three components: alienated individuals, a complicit society or community, and a legitimizing ideology. Its troops are motivated by some mixture of three key goals: revenge, renown and reaction from the enemy. The characteristics are present in the Guenonian groups too, but only Evola’s group has actually resorted to violence as far as I know, Schuon depended on other means of psychological manipulation. For a review of Richardson’s book see

<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/09/10/books/review/Walker.t.html?oref=login>

rhetoric. The political dimensions of Traditionalism are hidden closely, even indistinguishably, behind esoteric symbols, arcane essays and secretive rituals. This allows Traditionalism to seduce many into the far right without followers even being aware of it. The Guenonian strategy is to claim to represent the invisible truth, but never to reveal that this Truth---- capital "T"--- is a fabricated lie made up of a pastiche of religious mythologies. The "Truth" in Guenon is a lie, a delusion, or to use Richard Dawkins phrase, a "god delusion". Guenonian Traditionalism it is a secretive or esoteric ideology, which hides political interests. Because of this secrecy and claim to esoteric centrality, there are very few critical assessments of the work of Rene Guenon or of traditionalism in general. But when we look back to Pseudo-Denys we see the reactionary hatred of the enlightenment in advance and in that you see why these men hated the modern world and science. We also can see why Hypatia was the future, and looks forward to Leonardo, humans rights and Darwin.

The Myths of Jesus and Muhammad and the War between Christianity and Islam.

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Introductory Remarks

It is a time where ordinary people in Islamic countries have at last gotten some inkling of enlightenment values of human rights and political liberty to such a degree they are at last trying to overthrow reactionary dictatorships in Egypt, Iran, Syria and elsewhere. I am far from being a racist and believe that people from these nations deserve freedom from the religious ideologues and dictators that control the thoughts and behavior of many people in these places. I am on their side as far as human rights goes, insofar as I have a side. But I do not side with either Islam or Christianity. I am also opposed to the far right in the US and Europe, and am not on their side, either. The American far right and the Iranian far right, for instance, are very little different, even if they are opposed. I favor neither. Those who accuse me of being on any side in these conflicts are mistaken, I am on the side of ordinary people everywhere, and not on the side of religions, states, or dictators. If people wish to blame me for thinking this way, so be it, it only shows that they are on the side of injustice.

There are of course, reactions from the far right in these countries. It has also brought out the old cold war tensions between America and Russia, fighting for resources. Given this fact, it is interesting to look again at the relation of traditionalism to reactionary ideology. The so called “clash of civilizations” that inspired the racism of George Bush and others, was really a clash of bogus mythologies that serve wealth and power. My point in this essay is to say that “both houses” are corrupt. What matters is an elimination of religion from both sides of the argument. No special rights should be given to Iranian, Israelis, far right Americans or Saudis. What we need is an admission that both sides need to recall and implement enlightenment values of human rights and

political liberty. I do not mean by this that Europe and America are the model of how everyone should behave. I mean that all peoples have the same rights, and one is not better than another.

This cannot be done with the fanatical views of jihadist governments or the fanatical fundamentalist capitalists such as George Bush, Hillary Clinton, or Trump in power. We do not need these war mongers. The British journalist, Robert Fisk, is probably right that the American (or Russian) military attacks on the mid-east are the primary reason for the vile revenge laden response of Iranian, Afghanis and Syrians, among others, to these attacks.¹⁰⁷⁷ The important thing is the overthrow of reactionary dictatorships in Egypt, Iran, Syria, the United States and elsewhere. The reactions from the far right in these countries is not the only fuel behind these conflicts. Many Iranians claim the battle is the result of occult groups like the Freemasons or the Bahai religion, nonsense probably, but this scapegoating serves the regime. This is as absurd as Jesus being the driving force of western righteousness and world expansion. A thorough critique of Islamic and Christian religion is justified. I will attempt a partial critique of these religions in this context.

To say this is a slightly different way....The mythic fight of Islam against Christianity masks the old cold war tensions between America and Russia, fighting for resources. My contention is that most citizens of America, Rssia or Iran are not guilty of the perfidious things their governments do. Given this fact it is interesting to look again at the relation of traditionalism to reactionary ideology. It is a kind of extremist

¹⁰⁷⁷ Proof of this was had on May 15, 2018, in Gaza when Trump had a ceremony mmraking the installation of the American Embassy in Jerusalem, and as a result of that the Israelis killed over 60 people and wounded 2700 in the Gaza Strip when they hald a non violent protest against Trump. Those who were shot by the Israelis, most in the legs were shot with exploding bullets, which fragment when they hit a body, and casue huge damage, resulting in my oeple suffering amputations. This horribly unjust action, ordered by Netanyahu, will no doubt result in a futher escaplation of the Mideast war. Ideology and religion is the root of this war and until both sides learn to respect the other as human animals and ignore their absurd religious differences, people will keep dying.

version inside the western world that exposes the corruption of both sides. The fiction of tradition drives the hatred of both sides against each other, and it is utterly an illusion. The so called “clash of civilizations” that inspired the racism of George Bush as well as militant Wahabi Islam, was really a clash of bogus mythologies that serve wealth and power. My point in this essay, again, is to say that “both houses” are corrupt. What matters is an elimination of free market ideology and religion from both sides of the argument, as a consequent admission that both sides need to return to their essential humanity and not their religious intolerances. This means that corporate capitalism and Islamic Fundamentalism are equally guilty in this conflict and here I am bringing both of them into question, not supporting either a western Islamophobia or a Middle eastern conspiracy theory based in a fanatic religion. Those who support one or another of these antipodes are one source of the problem.

Both sides of the political spectrum must be questioned right down to the roots of their myths. Christians and Muslims are both people. So I am not writing an Anti-Islam or anti-Christian screed here. I am myself critical of both Islam and Christianity. But there are huge factors in these conflicts as must be dealt with, those who say religion has nothing to do with it are mistaken. And those who say it is only religion that is at stake are wrong too. People have a right to their beliefs even if they are erroneous, so long as they do not impose them or hurt others. But in this conflict there are bloody impositions on every side. Israelis build settlements that steal Palestinian land, and keep Palestinians in a virtual slave state in Gaza. Americans starve countries of medicine and food using embargoes, kill people with drone strikes, drop bombs on cities and kill civilians without remorse. Moslems, rip each other apart in Syria, hang or stone women, cut off heads, throw acid on girls going to school, bomb European cities in the name of their religion. Christians

torture Moslems in prisons, partly for religious reasons. Moslems fly airplanes into buildings. Christian exceptionalism and Moslem jihad are in the background of all this.

I just want to try to look at it according to what I have learned about it in my life, as objectively as I can. Just how the myths of Jesus and Muhammad got started thus becomes an interesting question as the imagined “clash” really was a clash of mythic ideologies and not of rights or the need of liberty, which I take as a given in Iran as well as in the United States. No one wants to live under autocratic terror, whether the terror comes from Corporate CEO’s, Syrian kings, Mullahs, Christian Republicans or Moslem extremist traditionalists. A plague on all their houses.

People are just people. Those “people” wrongly called Muslim, are just like those wrongly called “American”, or “Christian”. I grant that there are many ignorant people in both nations that believe all the wrong headed propaganda that spews from the mouths of politicians. So called Muslims or Europeans are highly various people, all more or less similar and belonging to the same earth. In Iran as in America, patriotism has to be forced by constant reminders, slogans, flags, buttons, TV shows. People fall into religions or national states by accident and are rarely guilty of them. Most religious people are decent people, but no religion is decent. Religions are ideological systems of coercive behaviors. Few humans are coercive by nature, but many leaders, Presidents, clerics, Mullahs, CEO’s or generals are. The leaders and exploiters of these states are the primary problem

Given the virulence of U.S. and Christian aggression against many Islamic nations for many years, as well as U.S. alliances with Israel, it is understandable that many leftist groups express a lot of sympathy with Islam in compensation.¹⁰⁷⁸ But this is very problematical as there are

¹⁰⁷⁸ In some leftist circles this sympathy sometimes reaches the point of ignoring the harms done

serious problems in these countries and much of it arises from poor education, superstition and the religion of Islam. So while the term Islamo-fascism is often a term of abuse when used by U.S militarists and Christian far-right fanatics, it is also merely descriptive of governments and religious leaders of these countries. Islamo-fascist nations are above all fascistic toward their own populations. The term is descriptive when we talk about the governments and religious fanaticism of these countries, their horrendous human rights records, imprisonments, stonings, misogyny, refusal to let girls go to school, clitorectomies.

The Christian quasi-fascism of a George Bush, or Trump, is also a problematic term for the same reason. They both killed many people because of their erroneous belief systems. They steal from the poor to give to the rich, who already have too much. These are abstract ideologies, as distinct from the people who have to live under them. They lie about what they are doing, they kill and get away with it. The guilt is only with the ideologies and those who exploit it directly.

‘Fascism’ is sometimes defined as a state/big business alliance. I put single quotes around the word fascism here because it is a problematical concept, as I have shown throughout this book. As Isaiah Berlin and Bertrand Russell showed it is really just a word for abusive power, or unjust and tyrannical governments. With the word “theo” added to it, the word theofascism is meant to describe abusive spiritual delusions and social systems, from India to Islam, Christendom, corporations and random modern cults and organizations. Quibbling over a word like fascism is not what this book is about. Getting to the heart of destructive states and organizations is..

by Islamic countries. Some in Chomsky’s circle act as if Palestinian or other Moslems are without fault, which is certainly not the case.. Chomsky has his own agenda of “worthy victims” which he praises and unworthy ones, like Israelis, which he ignores. .This tendency reveals an interested dogmatism which sometimes appears to amount almost to a religion in Chomsky’s case. I write of this in a later chapter. The hatred of Christian and Islamic peoples on both sides leads to much suffering and death and the problem is the politics and the religion of these people.

So the term Islamo-fascism is problematical, as is the Christian fascism of the Bush family or Trump racism. Saudi Arabia is basically a religious government with fascist overtones, supported by oil and monarchy. This hardly means that most ordinary people in Islamic countries are fascists.¹⁰⁷⁹ They cling to their religion out of desperation, indoctrination, necessity or force of oppression. The concept of Islamo-fascism is thus a political concept and one that responds to corporate fascism. There are neo-fascist governments in many places on earth, in the west and the east and in between.

Does the problematical term, “Islamofascism” apply to traditionalism too? My own experience with Islam might shed some light on this problem. I think this term can be applied to the orientalists Guenon and Schuon both of whom adopted Islam, at least superficially. Both were Moslem or more accurately were Moslem within the context of their ‘esoteric’ “super religion”¹⁰⁸⁰ of their own making, which they called the *religio perennis* or universal esoterism. Both were also attracted to far right versions of what I have been calling theofascism, which is not fascism per se, but a religious form of far right thinking, such as one finds in Franco and the Japanese, Jewish or Iranian state. Schuon’s follower Martin Lings said the Fascist Franco was the best form of government. Schuon himself liked Japanese fascism and Guenon flirted rather closely with the French fascist group Action Française who, incredibly, he rejected as being too liberal. So these men are accurately called

¹⁰⁷⁹ The religious police (*mutaween*) certainly are as is the prohibition on women driving cars in Saudi cities. The women of Saudi Arabia only got the vote last year, which is indicative of how backward this country is. Women there are required to have male “guardians” and are restricted on most of the major decisions of their lives.

¹⁰⁸⁰ I think I first came across this term in some writings by Schuon’s follower Albert Cattan. But it is also used by Charbonneau-Lassay in some letters he and Guenon wrote back and forth. Esoterism and the notion of super religion are not different concepts. They both refer to a fictional notion of a transcendent unity in the heart of all the religions. In which the delusion of all the religions radiates like a delusional sun from a center to all the planets or religions beyond it. There is no such esoteric kernel, but charlatans profit from promoting it as if there were.

theofascists. But to discuss this requires a bit of a digression on Islam itself.

I was myself a Muslim for a few years, and only became a Moslem experimentally, on Schuon's personal insistence and was only a Moslem within the context of the Schuon cult. I got to know Moslems outside of the cult during the decades or so that I worked with oriental carpets. I have known many Moslems and consider them fine people. Except for a few fanatics Except for a few fanatics Most of them carried their religion as superficially as Chrstians do, indeed, it is irrelevant., most Moslems do not care any more about their religion that most Christians do, which is minimally, or hardly at all. I am not therefore "Islamophobic", since I have a good idea what it means to be Moslem and know something about it. These are decent people who live good lives and happen to have been indoctrinated in a given faith at a young age. They might go to church or to a mosque, say the prayers and do the rites, but they only care about their religion when pushed into an extreme, at the death of a loved one, or when they are marryng outside their religion. On some level, most people realize religion is a delusion, a fake system of social controls and behavioral correctness.

There is an a largely American Islamophobia, certainly, mostly fueled by the far right, which is a form of racism, where all Muslims are thought to be evil or terrorists.¹⁰⁸¹ Such views are used to persecute Islamic immigrants in Europe as well as Palestinians, as Trump has tried to do, devoted as he is to the logic of Me, and corporate greed. The far right in America are mostly racists who hate another religion. I am hardly among these.

When one realizes that all the main players in these wars are living the lies of one delusion or another, it is obvious what needs to be done. Israel uses the Bible and Jewish fundamentalist ideas to harm and

¹⁰⁸¹ Donald Trump, who wanted to ID all Muslims in the US rather as the Germans put yellow stars on Jews, is just such a purveyor of hate speech, and fascistic hatred.

persecute Palestinians in a similar way. One need only watch the death tolls from virtually every major Jewish/ Palestinian conflict to see that the Palestinian are the ones being persecuted and killed, far more often than the other way.

But, that said, there is also a species of Moslem who uses the concept of Islamophobia to justify Islamic violence and violations of human rights. I do not admire this. Salman Rushdie writes a harmless novel and Iranians want to murder him. Theo Van Gogh, a film maker who questioned Islam was brutally murdered for his work in 2004. A few tasteless cartoons about Muhammad and death threats are issued in a Jyllands-Posten publication and 200 people died in the unrest that followed. Muslims murdered 11 people, mostly journalists at the magazine Charlie Hebdo in Paris in January, 2015. 129 people were murdered in Paris by the group ISIS in November, 2015. More were murdered in a discotech in the United States. These really repulsive murders are the result of religious/political fictions believed to be real in countries from Iran, Syria, America and France. Many Moslems abjure and deny this sort of violence is inherent in Islam. I have doubts that that is true. Islam is rarely a religion of Mercy and the “lightning like expansion” of Islam in its early years was brutal and involved forced conversions at sword point. The Koran justifies this.

But one cannot deny that this sort of extremism was always a possibility in the Islamic ideology, just as it has been in Judaism, Christianity or most other organized religions. The hatred of the west is so palpable in Islamic countries that the Koran becomes a political document outlining sociopathic actions that involve killing innocent people, however this sociopathology might be partially fueled by corrupt actions of western governments themselves. Moslem fanatics use fear and threats of death to try to impose their religion on others, and deny them a choice in their religion. So there is a species of fundamentalist fascism in Islam, this is really incontestable. Actions of individual

Moslems are certainly extreme, as has always been the case with Christians, from the Inquisition to the brutal murder of Native tribes of many kinds--- but both religions depend on magnification of motives, hyperbole and hatred of the actual world in favor of transcendence.

Indeed, when one looks at the origins of Islam it appears that just as Praxiteles was invented at a time when lying was a regular strategy sculpture dealers and cultural leaders, so myth fabrication was a feature of men who made up Islam and Christianity. The militarism of Arabs from 600-1000 C.E. might well be the reason for the Koran and not vice versa. The Koran appears to be the later evolved justification of the militarism that already existed in the Middle-east.¹⁰⁸² In the modern world the Koran becomes a justification of really horrendous human rights crimes. The Bible performs a similar if more diffuse role in western societies, bringing about the Inquisition or abusive priests because the ideology is skewed that way..

In Israel there is another kind of Jewish fascism or fundamentalism. In Iran it is theofascism that is the problem and theocratic regime kills those who disagree with it. Religion opposes free speech. So I say at the outset that my views are not Islamophobic but nor am I am apologist for Israel, Corporate-fascism, Judeo-fascism or Islamo-fascism. I am opposed to all these abuses of power and I know that Islam is not immune to these abuses, and neither is Israeli Judaism or American capitalist Christianity.

Vijay Prasad notes in an essay that

¹⁰⁸² Ibn Khaldun 1332—1406, writes

In the Muslim community, the holy war is a religious duty, because of the universalism of the Muslim mission and (the obligation to) convert everybody to Islam either by persuasion or by force. (*The Muqaddimah: an Introduction to History* (abridged), trans. Franz Rosenthal, Princeton UP, 1967, p.183)

“A genuine, compassionate atheism would understand that it is the poor who most often take refuge in religion because it is a heart in a heartless world, it is the soul in soulless conditions” ¹⁰⁸³

Leaving questionable concepts like “soul” aside, I only partly agree with his point. One has to point out that ignorance is no excuse for crimes of religious hate. Muslims have rights too and should be respected as such, but this hardly means that one should support any regime that uses the Koran to fuel hatred and creates a regime in which ordinary people are reduced to filling their hearts with delusions and then clinging to them. It is clear that all regimes use religion to fuel nationalism and nationalism is toxic, in any country. It survives by stigmatizing the other. I have met many Americans whose heads are filled with Fox news “alternative facts” which are just lies, promoted by paid liars on TV, hand phones or computers. We therefore have to look deeply and factually, at the roots of the Capitalist, Islamic and Christian conflict.

So what is the historical origin of these conflicts? How did Islam and Christianity get created?. Clearly, they grew out of the fall of the Roman Empire. But how did the enlightened attitudes of the Greeks and Romans get suppressed under growing cults like early Christianity and Islam? I will try to answer these questions here.

The Myth of Muhammad

Not unlike the Crusading West, from the outset of its career, Islam was a violent religion spreading itself with sword and conversions accomplished under threat. ¹⁰⁸⁴ This is just a fact. The scimitar was the

¹⁰⁸³ <https://zcomm.org/znetarticle/when-new-atheism-meets-islam/>

¹⁰⁸⁴ One can see in this carpet that The angel Gabriel has been imposed on an older image. The older image is a camel made up of animals and people, as well as fish, every species, in short. It is an early pre-islamic animist image. In some Persian small paintings it can be seen by itself as in this painting from the MET. I am sure the roots of the image go back to the pre Islamic poems

reason for its success. The complement of Islamophobia is a fanatic Muslim fundamentalism which thinks it is OK to strap bombs to yourself and blow people up or that anyone who criticizes Islam should be killed. Paranoid conspiracy theory is nearly a norm in Islamic countries. Iran is prone to rewriting history from a conspiratorial perspective to justify its regimes. One has to admit that fear of Islam is not entirely a phobia but a reasonable fear, as Muslim fanatics are real and some of them are in charge of states, such as Iran, Syria and Saudi Arabia. In a similar way one must admit that Christian capitalism—which is extended by Israeli Judaism--- is likewise a force of delusion and aggression. The wars that result from these interacting mythic systems are very bloody and cruel.

Indeed, the Middle East is perhaps the bloodiest area of the world in the last 50 years. During the first Iraq/Iran War for instance it is thought that a half million to a million people were killed, though arguments

about camels and other animals, where early middle easterners saw animals as not only part of their lives, but almost worshiped them. This love of animals was condemned by the mullahs. The imposition of the Koran on such peoples is what the angel Gabriel represents in the left carpet picture. I owned this carpet for many years, but traded it away when I realized this. I always liked the camel itself, and the love of animals it represents. The angel was merely human centered domination. The birds in the corners are the Simurch, I think, the many birds that are one bird in Attar's allegory. Attar was totally wrong about birds, they are not symbols.



persist as to just how many. The U.S and U.N. sanctions against Iraq in the late 1990's are said to have killed half a million. Chomsky claimed the death toll as higher than this, but I doubt how accurate he is. In any case, many died and many of them were children. Many more died in U.S. attacks on Iraq. The various civil wars in Afghanistan, Syria, Egypt, Tunisia and elsewhere killed many more. These deaths are both political, economic and religion based. As I have said throughout this book religion is a source of great conflict between peoples and hides political and economic motivations.

I once had some interest in Islam from the point of view of its art, poetry and textiles, as I repaired and restored Oriental carpets for a living for a decade or so. I worked for various Moslems. I was curious about Islam, though when I tried to read the Koran I had real doubts about it. I had no intention of joining it. I had been reading Nicholson's Rumi and other Sufi writers like Hafiz or Sadi since 1979 but did not yet have any clear critical perspective on Islam or its poets. Nazim Hikmet was a poet who questioned the Saffavid romantic trascdentalists. I think I made the mistake of separating Hafez and Rumi them from Islam itself., making them exotic, romantic and orientalist poets, a common mistake in the West. My interest in Islam was romantic and literary, and before I saw through most literary and romantic tendencies. This was a mistake on my part. The reality of life in the Middle east is very different that orientalist fantasy.

Scott Anderson writes that:

One of the Arab world's most prominent and debilitating features, I had long felt, was a culture of grievance that was defined less by what people aspired to than by what they opposed. They were anti-Zionist, anti-West, anti-imperialist. For generations, the region's dictators had been adroit at channeling public frustration toward

these external “enemies” and away from their own misrule. (NYT, Aug. 2016)

There is truth to this. The very low standing given to women in these societies is disturbing and unjust. It is probably true that Islam in the 8th century was better than European treatment of women in the 8th century, but that is saying very little. I saw myself how Schuon and Guenon had been attracted to Islam because it opposed the west which they were part of but hated. I knew their interest was partly because of the macho culture of Islam that they admired. The preference for males in Islamic society is Koranic and religion created. I also saw how Abdollah Shahbazi in Iran had generated bizarre conspiracy theories about Behai and Freemasons. Given Iran’s bellicose history and tendency to isolation, such paranoid history’s as Shahbazi writes are to be expected. But this hardly makes them factual. Shahbazi seems to serve the propaganda needs of the Iranian state. As Iran is a theocracy, it is hardly interesting to do that.

I was never part of Iranian culture, but I was a very curious young man, and got to know many former Iranians. Iran is not a religion or a state apparatus but a place with many humans in it all of whom need protection from their own government and ideological ministers. The function of Islam in this state is to prevent the protection of individuals in favor of a “them verses us” ideology. I have no interest in this strategy and find it wrong headed. But it may be useful here to look at my own history in the midst of the complexity of these cultural conflicts.

Islam is a political religion, as are they all. I stress that it was on Schuon’s insistence I became a Moslem. He said to me in his strong German accent that “if you want to take full advantage of my perspective you must accept Islam”. I did not realize yet that Schuon was a fraudulent spiritual master, or indeed, that all spiritual ‘masters’ are frauds in one way or another, since the premises of “Spiritual

Enlightenment”, qualification and or realization are all based on subjective fictions. But I did not know that then. I wanted to learn what Schuon knew, so I did what he asked of me for a year or so. Little did I know then that he actually knew very little and what he had to teach was mostly superficial superstition and empty formulas. I learned some basic Arabic and could recite brief parts of the Koran, and I read some attendant literature as well as Schuon’s own works and “texts” on it, as well as practicing the various empty prayers, fasting and behavioral codes. The praying cycle of a good Moslem is intense and not easy to sustain. But for about two years I did the five times a day formal prayer and the fast, as well as the incessant prayers Schuon taught me. Schuon did not require the fast but for two years I did it.

But it was a huge mistake. The Koran really disturbed me and I disliked it more and more as time passed and I learned more about it. I have no fear of Muslims as people. But the religion has many repulsive features, as does Christianity, Hinduism or Judaism..

So far from being Islamophobic I did all I could to learn about the religion, more than most westerners. What I learned shocked me.¹⁰⁸⁵ I don’t go as far as Richard Dawkins who says “Islam is one of the great evils in the world”.¹⁰⁸⁶ I doubt the existence of evil, but certainly Islam encourages human excesses of ignorance, malice and violence, as does Christianity and capitalism. Like Christianity, Islam is horrendous toward women and full of superstition and myth. The same is true, in differing degrees, of every religion, and I include Marxism as a ‘religion’,

¹⁰⁸⁵ For more on the term Islamofascism see Christopher Hitchens on the use of the term. I am not sure I agree with everything he says here but it is worth reading. Here: http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/fighting_words/2007/10/defending_islamofascism.html

Hitchens died, (Dec. 15, 2011) as I worked on this book, and I was very sorry to see him go. He was wrong to support George Bush’s Iraq war, but he was right about many other things. He opposed the use of torture by U.S. troops in Abu Ghraib and Haditha, and the U.S. government’s use of waterboarding.

¹⁰⁸⁶ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yyNv8kvd2H8&feature=related>

namely an ideology.

The best and most accurate writer I have read on the religion of Islam and Sufism is David Hall. A fine and honest person, David and I wrote back and forth in the 1990s. The basis of Islam is the Koran. David has written well about how the Koran and hadith were doctored and invented texts written over a century or more after Muhammad died. David writes:

“ the Koran could well stand as the supreme example of a man-made text, worked over and doctored to an unfathomable extent, and subsequently endowed with a transcendental provenance by the associative and projective proclivities of the human imagination.”¹⁰⁸⁷

In other words it is just mythic book as is the Bible, it is a man-made thing, a fiction that was constructed to serve an institution and a system of power. The Koran and the Bible need “to be desacralized”, Hall says, “and put... into their historical and geographic context.” Yes, but unfortunately for all those who continue to die or suffer because of these myths, the Koran, like the Bible, is accepted irrationally as the “inspired word of god....and it is a book full of hatred and violence”, David says. A good demonstration of this is in Sam Harris’s The End of Faith.¹⁰⁸⁸ He gives many quotes from the Koran and observes afterwards that

¹⁰⁸⁷ <http://newhumanist.org.uk/581>

¹⁰⁸⁸ Harris is a strange thinker, so here I am just quoting from his book about the Koran. It hardly means I agree with Harris about all things, I don’t. But I do not find Harris terribly clear, for instance Chris Hedges attacks Harris for supposedly supporting first strike nuclear attacks on Islamic countries, but if you read or listen to Harris talk about this, he is merely saying that an extremist Islamic position would not mind attacking the west with nuclear weapons and in that case they might be used in preemptive self defense. This is a hypothetical scenario that is very different from what Hedges accuses him of. I find him terribly ambiguous about this and would not like to accuse him one way or another, since he is really unclear.

“On almost every page, the Koran instructs observant Muslims to despise non-believers. On almost every page, it prepares the ground for religious conflict. Anyone who can read passages like those quoted and not see a link between Muslim faith and Muslim violence should probably consult a neurologist”¹⁰⁸⁹

This is accurate and my own reading in the Koran conformed this is true. Islamophobes have an irrational fear of most Moslems, who are generally peaceable. But to pretend that Islam itself, as a religion, is peaceable is ludicrous. To anyone well informed about it is entirely reasonable to fear Islam given its endorsement of violence and hatred towards outsiders. The mullahs who control the interpretation of the Koran dislike any sort of criticism and are likely to express interest in killing anyone who questions too deeply the text of the Koran. The “lightning expansion” of Islam in the seventh and eighth centuries had to do more with blood and butchery than beatitude, though murderers often feel beatific as they kill, apparently. Trying to present Islam as a religion of peace is itself a fabrication.

Sam Harris is right about this anyway. After two years in Schuon’s tariqa I had concluded that the atmosphere of moral blackmail, conspiracy and threat that I found in the Koran was very much present

¹⁰⁸⁹ Harris, Sam. The End of Faith. NY. Norton 2005 pg 123. his is a good book, in general, but it is weak in some areas. Harris is not very clear about Israeli violence and rather dismisses charges against Israel. In fact Israel kills far more Palestinians than Palestinians kill Israelis. Both religions are horribly murderous and to take either side is immoral, which is why the US is unethical in its exclusive support of Israel. Israel needs to be dismantled as a religious state, Palestinians need to stop justifying suicide bombings and Israelis need to get out of Gaza and the West Bank. The problem all around is religion. It is the influence of religion that must be undermined for there to be peace. The Iranian and Israeli state both need to be dismantled and the theocratic rule of Mullahs and Rabbis undermined. Religious states are poisonous states. The world goes on its merry way, whatever I think. Harris is not very clear, again. I am well aware my proposals are not likely to be taken seriously, as religion is so entrenched, but I make them anyway, trying at least to be clear, even if the proposal is unattainable, it might be the solution to the problem. That direction seems to be the one we should move towards in Iran or Israel—but will they, probably not, at the moment.

in and around Schuon too. The same exclusivist and militant hatred is in Guenon too. This was not just because of their Islamic affiliation, but that was certainly part of why they were such toxic leaders. I became a Muslim only because Schuon insisted on it. Yes, I wanted to try it too, as I was young, avid and eager to learn anything as an experiment. I practiced many religions in those days as I wanted to understand them from the inside. It was an act of journalistic curiosity. I was a sincere practitioner when I was doing it. I was willing to practice any religion and tried many. I wanted to see what they all had to offer in an effort to understand what they were and if they represented anything real. I was 30 and very passionate for experience and knowledge. But I did not yet understand much of what I grasp now. But my exploration of Native religions, Tibetan Buddhism, Islam, Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant Christianity, Zen, Vedantic and Hare Krishna Hinduism and other religions gave me a rather journalistic and insider view of these faiths and how they operate. Islam was something I wished to experience, one of many. But the experience went sour pretty quickly and I left the religion somewhat scared and horrified by it. I saw concretely that the blackmailing repressiveness of the Koran and the Sharia was in the Traditionalists too. Anyone sane and concerned with humanity should reject this.

Islam's primary documents talk endlessly about threats of burning and scorching people. Let's look at a few quotes. The Koran says *"all things have been created after fixed decree"* (54:49) *"[T]hose that deny Our revelations shall be punished for their misdeeds"* (6:49). *"Those that deny Our revelation We will burn in fire. No sooner will their skins be consumed than We shall give them other skins, so that they may truly taste the scourge. God is mighty and wise"* (4:55–56). Only a theofascist and tyrant or 'evil divinity' or God of the worst sort would create a world that burns so many people by decree. The god of the Koran in his own words is "mocking," "cursing," "shaming," "punishing," "scourging," "judging,"

"burning," "annihilating," "not forgiving,". The Koran, like the Old Testament (OT), is full of violence and encourages violence. In Genesis, the Old Testament says, for instance, that "Every living substance that I have made will I destroy." (7:4) This need to threaten and destroy is typical of theocratic systems

Slay them wherever you find them. Drive them out of the places from which they drove you. Idolatry is worse than carnage. . . . [I]f they attack you put them to the sword.Fight against them until idolatry is no more and God's religion reigns supreme. (2:190–93)

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This is hate speech, racist and them V us.

"Never think that those who were slain in the cause of God are dead. They are alive, and well provided for by their Lord; pleased with His gifts and rejoicing that those they left behind, who have not yet joined them, have nothing to fear or to regret; rejoicing in God's grace and bounty. God will not deny the faithful their reward" (3:169). (this justifies all sort of violence, including suicide bombing.)

"They will not cease to fight against you until they force you to renounce your faith—if they are able. But whoever of you recants and dies an unbeliever, his works shall come to nothing in this world and in the world to come. Such men shall be the tenants of Hell, wherein they shall abide forever. (2:217–18).

"God will mock them and keep them long in sin, blundering blindly along" (2:15).

A fire "whose fuel is men and stones" awaits them (2:24).

They will be "rewarded with disgrace in this world and with grievous punishment on the Day of Resurrection" (2:85).

This list could go on. In the Old Testament (OT) God kills everyone in Sodom and Gomorrah, women children old people, sick people. This is not a good god any more than is the tyrant of the Koran. Christian "sacred" texts are just as bloody as the Koran.

The Koran emphasizes knowledge as 'Unity' (tawhid).. In the Koran, Knowledge is knowledge of god, and the divine Book sets up a hierarchy of those who submit and those who reject, the system of knowledge, associated with the Book, the Koran. Those who reject should be killed or burn in hell, those who accept go to paradise. This is an unwarranted assertion that has no proof. Knowledge means submission, as indeed, the word Islam, means submission.. Defining God as all powerful, gives his representatives justification for killing and social control.

The Koran states that "to Him belong the dominion of the heavens and the earth: It is he who gives life and death, and he has power over all things: he is the First and the Last, the Evident and the Immanent: and he has knowledge of all things". ¹⁰⁹⁰ This claim to total knowledge is meant to grant the leaders of Islam total power. This is indeed a kind of theofascism and one can see it exercised in Islamic terrorism, however pundits might seek to apologize for Moslems in general, who are not usually terrorists.. The same is true of the old and new Testaments, where non-believers are also burned in a fictional hell. The early books of the OT, like the Pentateuch and the book of Joshua are little different than the Koran and advocate massacres and genocide, against men,

¹⁰⁹⁰ Koran (S.LVII2-3. Ali, Yusuf pg.1497)

women, children and old people.¹⁰⁹¹ It is any wonder Christians, Israelis and Moslems are still murdering each other?

The Islam I dreamily thought I loved was really just a poetic phantasm of my own making, encouraged by the romantic nonsense of Rumi, Hafez and Coleman Barks, a poet and proselytizer who I got to know before I joined the Schuon cult.¹⁰⁹² I was reading Rumi and imitating him years before I met or knew of Barks. I am not sure there is any honor in being prior to any delusional New Agers. But I finally realized that the poetry of Rumi, Rilke, Hafez and Barks are escapist narcissism and mistaken. Dreams of Persian Gardens like the paintings of Sultan Muhammad once made me think all that might be real, when actually, Persian gardens are Darwinian collections of plants, just as they are where I live now. Hafez and Sultan Muhammad lived in the realm of make believe. Such things are just Sufi dreams based on myths created by Islamic poets and the religious. The lamp that burns in the Niche is a lovely image one sees in many carpets or tile-art, but it is just an image, no more true than the Eucharist or the Tibetan colored prayer flags. There are many things in life that are beautiful but not true.

¹⁰⁹¹ The Old Testament has many other horrors, all showing that the god of that book is a cruel and petulant tyrant. Abraham is forced by god to cast out Hagar and her son Ismael. (16:5-6) --- 'cast out this bondswoman and her son.' Abraham is willing to murder his son Isaac. Moses murders someone, God kills many Egyptians and sends plagues on them. He kills Moses because he did not cut the foreskin off his son. God advises the beating of slaves. 21:20-21. God advocates endless killing of animals and destruction of nature and calls man the dominant being on earth. He practices torture on Job. It is really quite endless how vicious and revengeful the Jewish/Christian God is. No one in their right mind should pray to such a fictional monster.

¹⁰⁹² I was also involved with Robert Darr (Abdul Hayy) who was a rug dealer I worked with and a "Sufi". He is also a boat builder of exquisite handmade craft. A wonderful idealistic man in many ways, Bob went to Afghanistan and set up rug production in Afghani refugee camps during the Soviet war against Afghanistan. I helped him sell some of the resulting carpets. He was made to leave that country and accused of being a CIA spy, which he was not, as far as I know. But Bob adopted a dreamy, idealized, New Age and really inaccurate version of Islam as a way of life. See his [The Spy of the Heart](#). This is American Sufism as a feel good, delusional escape from reality and has very little to do with real Islam. It is new age orientalism



Sultan Muhammad

Gayumarth, first Shah of Iran, enthroned among his courtiers clad in leopard skins at the opening of the Shahnama. ¹⁰⁹³

¹⁰⁹³ This painting by Sultan Muhammad, one of the best of Persian miniatures showing one of the founders of Iran as a saintly figure. While it is a great painting, it is, like Michelangelo's Last Judgment, a work of political/spiritual propaganda, as shows again the political character of Sufism

I loved the poetry of Rumi long before I realized what a poison it contained and before I met Barks. Indeed, I found Barks to be something of a con-man. There is a lot written about his bad translations of Rumi, but actually the problem is not so much the translations as Rumi himself. Rumi was a reactionary Mullah, and misogynist, whose philosophy espouses a hatred of the ordinary earth and longing for what does not exist. The expatriate American Muhammad Legenhausen loves Barks and wrote a glowing essay about him. I certainly do not agree with him about Rumi. ¹⁰⁹⁴

When I was young I loved the poetic idea of Iranian and Afghani tribal culture before I really understood how common ignorance and superstition were in these countries and how important education must become there. I was not yet able to separate the people that had made oriental carpets and tended Qashgai goats from their religion, oil and theofascist governments. There is no question in my mind but that Islamic design is one of the best the world has ever produced. I still retain a deep love of Oriental carpets. I loved Moroccan and Iranian tile work but did not yet understand how Islam in Iran or elsewhere is an anti-intellectual force that levels and destroys minds. I loved Islamic architecture and some of its people who I had met in my trade.

Reading Edward Said ¹⁰⁹⁵ helped me quite a lot after I got out of the

¹⁰⁹⁴ Legenhausen works in the reactionary Khomeini college in Qum Iran. He uses Rumi to reject enlightenment ideals and embrace an irrational religion.

¹⁰⁹⁵ See Said's Orientalism, which is a subtle book that does not endorse Islam but nor does it endorse the western hatred of it. Ibn Warraq's hatred of Said expressed in his book In Defense of the West, seems unwarranted to me. Indeed, I looked through the book and thought it a badly done attack on a decent man. Said says explicitly that he is not a Moslem and does not support what that religion does. Warraq falsely accuses him to have supported Islam's tendency to paranoia about the west. The West has created its own enemies in Islam by its irrational support of Israel. Said is in open opposition to Islamic abuses of human rights as he is opposed to Euro-

Schuon cult. He is often condemned by the far right, but there is truth in things he said, even if some of his scholarship is less than perfect. No scholar is perfect, as no one knows everything. He helped me see that views of Islam in the west are false. Said is right that the important thing about the “orient” is not its religion but its people, whose humanity is independent of its religion. Certainly, his book contains real mistakes, and I tracked some of them down. But much of the main thesis of his book is sound. I realize now that many Moslems are, like most Christians, ignorant of the injustice and horror perpetuated in the history of their religion and culture. They don’t want to know what Catholicism actually did in thequisition or the sale of Indulgences. The history of the 900’s in Europe is a constant nightmare partly because of the corruption of the Church. People belong more to Islam out of habit and familial and national allegiance than anything else. Islam is not a fact but a cultural construction. It is no more real than Santa Claus is real.

In the years of my searching, I am sorry I met no Moslem willing to question the faith, other than David Hall. Most followers of Schuon were only sometimes Moslem. Like me, Moslem true believers are largely innocent of what their religions had done to others.¹⁰⁹⁶

Once I left Schuon in 1991, I realized that I wanted nothing to do

American abuses of human rights too. I agree with him about both these matters. Moreover it is hard not to appreciate Said on many things, in his writing on music or literature, for instance. Hitchens also attacks Said, and Hitchens records in his biography that Said thought Hitchens a “racist”—Warraq critique of Islam has some good insights, but he aligns himself with Christian fundamentalism and the far right in the U.S., which suggests he was a man who wrote one decent book and had one good idea.

¹⁰⁹⁶ Muhammad Legenhausen, for instance, whose real name was Gary, is caught in Iran teaching rich Mullah’s kids about western ideas. This devotion to the clerics to a very repressive state is disturbing. As an expatriate Moslem he has elected to be a propagandist for Islam. I understand that religion is an accident of one’s upbringing or of unfortunate choices one has made and I separate the people who live under Islam—or other religions--- from the religion itself. Legenhausen is a nice man, even if I find his intellectual choices and culture questionable.

with Islam as a religion. I did not want to contribute to its power in the world or its history. I was not “islamophobic”, nor a racist. It is not racist to enter or leave a religion, which is merely a way of thinking, a way or living and doing rituals, merely reading a book, praying 5 times a day or saying incessant prayers. It did not matter that I said the word ‘allah’ over and over, it could have been ‘Plesiosaur’, which at least was a real thing, not just a word with no verifiable content.. My leaving Islam had nothing to do with racism or Islamophobia.. I easily stopped praying the prayers and observing the observances¹⁰⁹⁷. I merely regretted what Schuon had asked me to do. I am not and have never been a hater of races or of people who call themselves Moslem, who come from many races.

Guenon and Schuon, following Encausse, invented the bogus category of esoterism/exoterism so that esoterism could have parasitical supremacy over and above exoterism. Indeed, Aristotle might be the first use of these terms and he defines them to refer to his written work. He made a distinction between works Aristotle intended for the public (exoteric), and the more technical works intended for use within the school (esoteric). Modern scholars commonly assume these latter to be Aristotle’s own (unpolished) lecture notes (or in some cases possible notes by his students). So esoteric has nothing spiritual about it, on the contrary it

¹⁰⁹⁷ Though in subsequent years I saw how effective the training had been. I had done Buddhist invocation and then the Jesus Prayer for a few years and then the Schuon invocation for two years and it reverberated in my brain for years afterwards, like an old song I could not get rid of. I had an emotional attachment to these prayers too, which I took time to mourn over once I left it. There is a curious warmth and solipsistic satisfaction to praying deeply. It is a form of talking to oneself all the time, except that one projects this talking to oneself on a fictional deity or a mantric formula, like an empty mirror, as the Buddhists call it. The illusory belief that this is effective partly comes from this interior warmth and satisfaction at one’s efforts. It is a kind of yogic self-hypnotism. It creates conformist thinking and a form of inner self-policing. It is a perfect form of social control, as one controls oneself from the inside, internalizing an absolute policing mechanism. This gives the illusion of permanence, as well as the illusion of belonging to something eternal and beyond suffering. But this is a delusion, however socially useful it might be to those who coordinate and manage populations.

merely refers to more technical shop talk. Sufism is not an 'esoterism' but just the mystical arm of unjust Islamic tyrannical states. Once I saw that this house of cards was a farce, the house came crashing down and I have been unable to believe any of this nonsense since then. The more I have studied it the more I see that religion has no basis in truth, but rather exists as a propped up series of unexamined fictions, largely political or psycho-social in nature, all of which contribute to human misery and unjust states. Believers use the terms of the religion without ever really analyzing what they actually mean or how they serve a social, economic or political functions within an organization.

The religion of Islam is a very negative force, however it may act as a unifying social agent in the countries where it is strong. Saudi Arabia, is one of the most backward, autocratic human rights abusing countries in the world. This is certainly in part due to the Koran and its powerful and rigid social codes. The Koran accomplishes "surrender" (Islam means submission or surrender) by force of threat and blackmail. The Koran and Islam in general is a religion of blackmail. The demand to surrender totally to Allah is what gives us suicide bombers. In Nigeria submission to Islam has even involved Muslim extremists killing children and blowing up schools. The twisted logic of this is that the Muslims hate science and western education and blowing up schools and killing children is their protest. Should anyone kill people in a discoteque because they are dancing? Obviously not. Islam is a religion of imposition and often violent imposition. For instance, some friends told me after I renounced the Schuon cult and left Islam that the sentence for those who practice Islam and then leave Islam is death. This surprised me, but I found out later that many have been killed who have left Islam and criticized it. "Big Brother" is watching you in Islam; either you believe it and follow what it says or you die! This utter suppression of inquiry and experimentation is anathema to all open minded investigation and repulsed me deeply. I merely tried on a belief system as

one tires on clothes. Only a manifestly false religion would behave in this Mafioso fashion. Had I known when I went into it that the sentence for leaving Islam is death, I never would have joined it. I only joined it because Schuon insisted on it, and would not have done so otherwise. I have since learned too many things about it to do more than try it on for size and it certainly did not fit.

In my case, I joined Islam on the insistence of a corrupt spiritual master and do not feel that I should be punished for anything. The fact of having suffered under the direction of such a person was already punishment enough. Being a whistle blower about the Schuon cult brought its own special forms of harassment and torture. I joined Islam only because Schuon required it, not because I was planning to be a Moslem. It is unpleasant to get death threats and I have been issued a few. Bringing Schuon to court and exposing him and then watching as his lies multiplied and he issued threats and engineered a cover up, taught me who he really was. I know more about who this man really is than anyone. I watched the cult lie in public and saw many people hurt by Schuon. It was a terrible experience. They slandered many people and continue to do so to this day. Schuon's malicious, lying and bitter behavior both before and after the legal case brought against him by the state of Indiana showed me what a fraud he and his followers really are. I knew for a fact that he was guilty, so that made all the actions of him and his cult appear to me as they were, --the actions of a man willing to con and cheat, bully and lie to anyone in a hysterical effort to preserve his reputation. He was a con-man cult leader and a fraud as well as a coward who hid behind lies and intimidation tactics. His pose of holiness was totally stripped away and I saw his real person: Schuon was a cult leader and psychopath incapable of remorse.

However, Schuon and Guenon had a very different interest in Islam than I did. I was merely curious and trying to understand if religion had any truth in it. I got to know Islam well enough to reject it and leaving

Islam was a good decision. Participating in Islam for two years taught me enough that I could be critical of it with some knowledge of what I am saying. However, Islam is central to Schuon and Guenon if not Coomaraswamy and Evola. Indeed, I have gotten many letters over the years, asking me to confirm that Schuon was not a real Moslem. Actually, he was a Moslem for many years as were most of his followers. While he added special obsession to his Islamic stance, he was very much a Moslem and more true to it than many realize. The cult did their best to be “good Muslims”, and the effort to brand them as bad Muslims is really irrelevant to the facts. Being a “good Muslim” is not a guarantee of anything. Yes, Schuon did cheat on becoming a Shaykh, and claimed special election based on bogus dreams of his own and by his disciples. There is a book of dreams that the cult has which tells of dreams and it is supposed to justify this guy and his power. It doesn't. However, the whole history of Islam is rife with such cheating. Many Sufis do this. Muhammad himself appear to be a mythic fabrication. It is true that Schuon was not a good Moslem in some ways, neglected Ramadan and drank wine. He had trouble keeping his pants on and danced around as if he were a nudist Native American ---this is true, --- but he was not wrong to question orthodoxy, since nearly all the ‘great’ Sufis questioned the Islamic law of the Mullahs . The sharia is a monstrous institution that sanctions violence and stoning as well as abuse of women. Some Sufis have murdered for questioning Sharia. As Amnesty International has demonstrated over many years, the Sharia in Islam is a monstrous institution that creates many horrible violations of human rights.¹⁰⁹⁸

¹⁰⁹⁸ there used to be a very interesting website called Human Rights Abuses in Islamic countries. (HRAIC), was forced off the net by Moslem fanatics. But some of its posts still exist on the web and these are instructive. Amnesty International website states in 2011 that Islamic countries continue to perpetrate some of the worst human rights violations in the world. There is continued silencing of dissent, torture, cruelty, discrimination and other violations. In regard to discrimination against women. The AI website states “2010 saw little improvement in the status of women and girls who, across the region, continued to face discrimination and violence,

But even if Schuon had been perfectly orthodox, Islam is a still a very disturbing religion, and Schuon's reasons for participating in it were as questionable as the religion itself. People who write me letters seem to think that being an orthodox Moslem is intrinsically a good thing. I do not think so. Islam itself is questionable just as Christianity or any organized system of make-believe is questionable. The Crusades were a monstrous mistake as was the Iran-Iraq war.

The question is how to study systems of belief from the outside. I came to understand Islam from the inside and now see it now from the outside. Believers are scared to look at their religion from the outside. A "secular view" of Islam is the only one that makes sense. The whole idea of the "secular" however, is a misnomer. Secular and secularity derive from the Latin word 'saecularis' meaning "of a generation, belonging to an age". There is nothing that is outside the secular or time. The idea of the timeless eternity is a literary and religious fiction. Therefore the notion of the 'secular' is a false concept since there is really nothing except the "secular". The "sacred" is the fabrication. The religions that oppose themselves to the secular are merely pulling themselves up above the secular by means of illusory bootstraps. Their elevation is a delusion.

Religions should be subjected to study that is much more thorough and questioning. For instance Ibn Warraq claims on the basis of various authorities that Muhammad died in A.D. 632, yet "The earliest material

including within the family. Men remained superior under family and personal status laws in matters such as marriage, divorce, child custody and inheritance, and women continued to be accorded inferior status under the criminal law. Particularly in more traditional areas, girls were subject to [child abuse] early and forced marriage and women who challenged strict dress codes or were seen by male relatives as not conforming to their particular notions of family "honor" risked violent reprisals and even murder at the hands of their fathers, brothers, husbands or other male relatives. In all too many cases, men who cited "honor" as a mitigating factor escaped any or appropriate punishment for crimes of violence committed against female members of their families."

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/annual-report/2011/middle-east-north-africa>

we possess on his life was written by Ibn Ishaq, in A.D. 750. This is 130 years after Muhammad's supposed death. Very little of the real person would survive in such a long time, and what did survive must have been largely invention.

The split between the Sunni and Shia factions of Islam is also largely political and its origins are also clouded in historical mist. It appears to have been driven by political and geographic divisions between various people conquered by Islam in the founding centuries after the creation of the myths surrounding Muhammad. How these myths get started in each case is hard to divine. But given that The Sunni/Shia split has many analogies with the Catholic/Protestant rift, and we know how Protestantism got started, it is not hard to imagine that these rifts had to do with psycho-social dynamics that got attached to stories and myths, such as the myth of Ali, and his fight with the Caliphs, who headed up Islam.¹⁰⁹⁹ These stories are themselves questionable as they were written up to 120 or more years after the death of Ali¹¹⁰⁰ and nearly 200 years after the death of Muhammad and so are very likely heavily fictionalized by political concerns. Ali was the reputed grandson of Muhammad through Fatima. But all this is probably false and those who claim to descend from the prophet are really just pretenders, as the Prophet himself is probably a fiction. Ali was further fictionalized by the poets of the Safavid dynasty(1501 to 1722) in Iran. So, very likely, what we are looking at in both Islamic and Christian history is the record of myth making done by political factions who were fighting for power and influence. Indeed, there is a great deal of evidence that both Christ and Muhammad are largely inventions. I do not know this for sure,

¹⁰⁹⁹ Shia Muslims lionize Husayn Ibn Ali because he refused to pledge allegiance to Yazid I, the Umayyad caliph, and was assassinated by Yazid. He becomes a martyr to the Shia cause. The Shia is only about 10% of the population of Islam the rest being Sunni.

¹¹⁰⁰ The earliest somewhat 'reliable' account of the events surround the death of Husayn Ibn Ali was Hisham Ibn Al-Kalbi (died in 204 AH)

obviously, but it is a more likely story than the one we are told by partizans of these religions.

The Myth of Jesus

The fact that Muhammad is largely and perhaps entirely an invention of politics is echoed in early Christianity. We have a clash of two systems of myth and social organization over millennia. This is obvious early on in Christianity. The Christian Gospels, written 60 to 150 years after the death of the man named Jesus, just as the life of Muhammad was a later invention . It is reasonable to doubt that Jesus ever existed, and indeed, the thesis that he did not has been seriously and convincingly proposed.¹¹⁰¹ There is no contemporary evidence that Jesus existed. Indeed, the whole Jesus myth appears to be a fabrication by the early church and later co-opted as part of the Roman empire. The Roman Empire made this obscure cult famous, not the mythical story at its root. It appears for instance that the only independent historical witness that Jesus existed was written by Josephus and this has been shown to be a forgery inserted into a first century document in a latter century , probably the forth. Dan Barker has a very interesting chapter about this in his book, Godless, (see pages 251-276).¹¹⁰² He is one of the

¹¹⁰¹ See Richard Carrier, Earl Doherty and Dan Barker. See Pg255 of Godless, Barker excellent book criticizing Christianity and the old and new Testaments. Godless tells the story of Dan Barker who was a fundamentalist Christian preacher but gave it up when he realized it was all make believe and a lie. The Jesus myth may have started with a Jewish story about the son of Miriam, who was stoned to death and hung up on a tree. (pg 269) There are other plausible origins of the Jesus myth suggested. It appears the whole thing is based on a literary fiction.

¹¹⁰²¹¹⁰² For another writer who claims Jesus did not exist see also Richard Carrier,
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DbTbEvFSSF8>

the best of the critics of American Christianity and their unique idea of a sentimental 'country western' God. He states that the paragraph about Jesus "is absent from early copies of the works of Josephus. For example it does not appear in Origen's second century version of Josephus"..., and "does not appear at all until the beginning of the fourth century"..

The origin of the Gospels is a veritable thicket of contention and is so, it seems, because they were written so late and no one really wants to admit this. There are many variant manuscript texts of the early gospels and many of them occur up to hundreds of years after the events they are supposed to describe. Matthew, Mark and Luke all appear in manuscripts that are dated to around 200 C.E, which means they are all likely fabrications and based on little or no facts at all, written before that date. When they were written is not clear, Doherty claims that

Only in Justin Martyr, writing in the 150s, do we find the first identifiable quotations from some of the Gospels, though he calls

Carrier who claims convincingly, I think, that Christ is a myth not an historical fact. He says that Christianity was a "dying and rising" agricultural cult, that turned into a Salvation and Mystery cult. He appears to follow Earl Doherty who thought Jesus was entirely a mythic construction. I agree. Carrier and Doherty have the merit of actually caring about evidence and reason, unlike the fundamentalists who are caught in medieval dogmatic argumenta and battles over words. Carrier writes that

As Doherty argues, "Jesus Christ" (which means "The Anointed Savior") was originally a heavenly being, whose atoning death took place at the hands of demonic beings in a supernatural realm halfway between heaven and earth, a sublunar sphere where he assumed a fleshly, quasi-human form. This and the rest of the "gospel" was revealed to the first Christians in visions and inspirations and through the discovery of hidden messages in the scriptures. [as is evident in Paul, who does not mention the historical Jesus] After the confusion of the Jewish War and persistent battles over power in the church, rooted in a confused mass of variant sectarian dogmas, a new cult arose with the belief that Jesus actually came to earth and was crucified by Jews with the complicity of the Roman authorities. [by a process he calls Euhemerization, which is the fictional creation of a historical person being created as if it were historical, when in fact it is a myth]] To defend itself against sects more closely adhering to the original, mystical faith, the new church engaged in polemics and power politics, and eventually composed or adopted writings (chiefly the canonical Gospels) supporting its views"

see

http://infidels.org/library/modern/richard_carrier/jesuspuzzle.html

them simply "memoirs of the Apostles," with no names. And those quotations usually do not agree with the texts of the canonical versions we now have, showing that such documents were still undergoing evolution and revision.

But Doherty waffles on this and sometimes thinks they might have been written as early as 90 C.E. I asked Carrier about this, in person, and he also waffled and mentioned the "consensus view" that Mark must have been written after the destruction of the temple in 70 C.E. but admitted that this could well be a later backdating of the Temple story in Mark. The only real fact that supposedly dates the Gospel of Mark is the destruction of the Temple by the Romans in 70 C.E. This is proof of nothing, as backdating is very likely,--it was a well known event--- so the date is probably mistaken. The early Epistles of Paul, sometimes dated as early as 50. C.E. never mention Jesus as an historical person, so there is no evidence there, indeed, this is evidence against the historicity of Jesus.¹¹⁰³ Carrier maintains that Paul merely took the earlier idea of Philo that Jesus is a celestial being, an archangel. Paul never writes of an historical Jesus. He only writes about a dead guy, who came to him in 'visions'. The gospels are later than Paul, and so, Carrier says, they were attempts at Euhemerization, or the fictional effort to make an idea of a person seem to be an actual person,

So very likely, the Gospels are second century as there is no reliable

¹¹⁰³ Indeed, the fact that Paul does not mention the historical Jesus at all, suggests that those that probably proselytized Paul did not either. Since the earliest people who describe Jesus do not mention a real person, they are more likely to be correct. Jesus was an idea, not a person. So the early Christians already think of Jesus as a cosmological principle and not a person who was actual. This further suggests that the Gospel writers are making up a fiction based on an idea, not a person. This is indeed how the Gospels read, with their imaginary stories of a guy walking on water, raising the dead, driving pigs off a cliff and killing a tree by magic, not to mention turning the water into wine and turning a piece of bread and fish into something to eat for 5000 people. These are all invented fabrications.

mention of them until 130-150, C.E. and no copies are before 180 C.E. except ones whose dates are contested. There is the case of Papius (70-163 CE), whose writings do not exist but who is quoted much later by Eusebius (260-339? CE). But this is very possibly a specious quote and moreover Eusebias attacks Papius as incredible and a myth promoter. This is hardly evidence of anything, except possibly the fictional nature of the Gospels.

If Josephus's writings about Jesus are an interpolated forgery, and it fairly certain they are, it seems likely that the man did not exist at all and is a myth. Carrier claims that the gospels are in circulation by 110, C.E..¹¹⁰⁴ But that too is unlikely. Earl Doherty claims that Christianity began with a mythical Christ that was a creation of Paul who wrote in the 1st century and that the Gospel Jesus was a later, fictional creation. Thus the case can be made reasonably that none of the main historical elements of the Jesus myth existed in any factual form before 150-180 C.E. Doherty writes:

Most astonishingly, all the major apologists before the year 180, with the sole exception of Justin (and a minor apologist from Syria, Aristides), fail to include an historical Jesus in their defenses of Christianity to the pagans. This includes Tatian in his pre-*Diatessaron* days. Instead, the apologists bear witness to a Christian movement which is grounded in Platonic philosophy and

¹¹⁰⁴ This early date seems to rest on the letter of Ignatius' letter to the Ephesians, which supposedly was written in 107. C.E. and which supposedly mentions the Gospel of Mathew. But actually this letter might be a forgery, or it is poorly dated, and could be as late as 130 or even later, or it might not be about Mathew at all. So it is perhaps better to say that the Gospels were written between 110 and 180. Doherty writes that "The first clear non-Christian reference to Jesus as a human man in recent history is made by the Roman historian Tacitus around 115 CE, but he may simply be repeating newly-developed Christian belief in an historical Jesus in the Rome of his day." So there is little reasons to suppose an earlier date than this. 120-130 CE seems about as early as one can imagine a date for the gospel fictions.

Hellenistic Judaism, preaching the worship of the monotheistic Jewish God and a Logos-type Son; the latter is a force active in the world who serves as revealer and intermediary between God and humanity. It is very unlikely that the historical record of Jesus is accurate or real, that the miracles happened or that any resurrection occurred.¹¹⁰⁵

These are serious claims and have reason and evidence on their side. Tatian created a “Harmony” of the four gospels between 160-175 C.E., and this has shown, for instance, that later additions were made to the Gospels, such as Jesus’ encounter with the adulteress in John, which is not ‘original’. I should add nothing in the Gospels appears to be “original”, it is all made up allegories. Moreover there are many interpolations in the text too, which means later authors inserted things they thought should be in the text. A better name for this is forgeries. The Gospellers were merely good fiction writers, like Charles Dickens, except that Dickens is not creating forgeries and false histories. The Gospels writers, none of whom are known, the names of the four men, Matthew, Mark Luke and John are themselves fake. What is amazing is that so many “scholars” think Jesus was a real person. This goes far to questioning the value of many scholars, who appear to be in collusion with delusion, as it were.

In any case, the specious notion that Jesus was a real person is the basis of the argument, which makes perfect sense, that the early religious writing of Chrtiatianity, belongs more in literature departments than history.

¹¹⁰⁵ In The Jesus Puzzle: Pieces in a Puzzle of Christian Origins
<http://www.jesuspuzzle.humanists.net/jhcjp.htm>

The New Testament is a patchwork of forged fictions written over a few hundred years' time, as is the Koran and probably other "sacred" texts, such as those that set up the myth of the Buddha..¹¹⁰⁶ The Gospels were evidently pieced together in the middle of the second century by those just before Tatian or possibly a little earlier, say 130C.E. or after. Polycarp (80-167 C.E.), for instance, who wrote around this time, Polycarp does not mention the historical Jesus in his one surviving text. He only mentions the Jesus who is a mythical and not an historical character.

The mind set of people who would do that, ----make up these myths, is mysterious, but not that hard to fathom. People have been making things up ever since language made it possible. Kids do it, and so do adults. It is quite safe to conclude that the Christian myth started as a cult and become useful to people in power in Rome, and later as part of the feudal system once Rome fell, hence its long life: 2000 years. As time went on a false certainty about the origins of Jesus grew up and the fake gospels were set up as real instead of the fictions they are. If this is true, and I think it is, most of what goes by the name of history is false, and the actual history of the last 2000 years should be pictured as something very different.

¹¹⁰⁶ When I have talked to Bible quoting fundamentalists, I have said to them that Jesus probably did not exist and it is interesting to watch their heads go into overdrive, the record player of biblical phrases and dogmas going around and round in their brains, straining to keep the habit of irrational belief alive by ceaselessly repeating their born again creed. Religion is an irrational habit of dogmatic phrases and abstract and unwarranted beliefs and stories held onto desperately. Evidence does not concern them at all, they only care for their feelings and dogmas given them by artful religious creators like the Gospellers. Phrases like "the fallen world" or "when Jesus came to earth" like he was an alien, or "God had his son killed for the good humanity", roll of their tongues unexamined. They are unaware that any man who kills his son is a bad father and there is no evidence at all anyone ever "came to earth" and the world that we live in is hardly "fallen" from anywhere. Religious language is based on falsehoods and erroneous metaphors or stories repeated over and over until they seem to be facts..

It seems there were men who wrote up the gospels and knew they were a lie, and within a short time this was so successfully hidden that people started to believe the myth. I understand how this works as I saw myself how in the Schuon cult the presumed divinity of Schuon was believed in by a large group of hundreds of people, all of them carefully and utterly deceived by Schuon and Schuon's inner circle, who knew very well he was neither divine or even very nice. Primordial gatherings were developed to fulfill the need of ritual. Schuon believed his own lies and promoted them readily, the lie that his nudity had sacramental significance, for instance. Women believed he was "healing" them by touching them sexually. People are very gullible and want to believe the most ludicrous nonsense, if it flatters their vanity or exalts their subjectivity, even if it exploits them sexually. In the case of Jesus, making up his existence, and getting large numbers to believe it too, was easy. It was made even easier by the excellent mythic and fictional skills of the Gospels writers, whoever they were, their names being fictions too. The Gospels tell a great story and this adult make-believe story was exploited and promoted with great effect for nearly two thousand years, as countless paintings, sculptures, Churches, Cathedrals and a huge secondary literature testify.

That the Gospels were primarily propaganda tools for a cult interested in power is obvious in the actual behavior of the Church over millennia as well as when one watches closely the behavior of individuals who fall under the spell of Christian Bible. Here the artist George Bellows show the fundamentalist preacher Billy Sunday haranguing a revival audience into a state of mental submission and fear. He was a far right conservative in the 1920's who screamed and yelled about the doctrine of damnation, getting results by "inspiring fear and gloom in the hearts of "sinners."



George Bellows Billy Sunday

The Mexican muralist José Clemente Orozco did a few amazing anti-mythic pictures, the first of their kind, such as the one where Christ chops down his own cross. In a similar painting the Christ of Orozco chops down the cross and topples the Buddha. ¹¹⁰⁷Interesting images, which unfortunately do not escape the domain of the mythical itself. Even the proletarian Christ is a myth that is a fiction that has destructive consequences in Russia and China and should be abandoned.

¹¹⁰⁷ Orozco, Picasso, Rouault and other modern painters were condemned by the Catholic Church for such images. This dogmatic defense of fictional symbols is a curious phenomenon in human history. The idea of the “Cross” is a medieval fiction if ever there was one. It does not appear in art until perhaps 800 years ago and does not become a regular image until 700 years ago. This corresponds pretty closely with the creation the Catholic empire in Europe, the aftermath of the Crusades and the control of an aristocratic elite over Europe. The “tradition” of Catholic Christianity is just this economic elite fabricating their own symbolism to control minds and hearts in the interests of the economic status quo. See elsewhere in this book on the Donation of Constantine.



Manufacturing Myths and Visions in Religions.

Once one realizes that Christ did not actually exist it becomes easy to understand how unlikely it is that Muhammad existed. A great deal of the force behind the “clash of civilizations” is based on delusion and greed, political invention and bad history. It is a war of mythic fictions. People die for these figments of imagination, unfortunately. The gospel writers are responsible for all these deaths, and who they were is entirely unknown. This makes all the deaths of the Crusades, Inquisition, and many wars without any real people to blame. That there were real people who wrote the nonsense of the Gospels cannot be doubted. But they escape all blame by being anonymous. Preaching the Gospel to all nations becomes thus a sort of crime. Indeed, proving the delusion that Jesus was a real person, when there is so much doubt that he was, is unconsoinable.

That two, maybe three, of the major religions were created in the Mideast is fascinating and suggests that the political conflicts there required lies of huge magnitude. There is so much creative fabrication and outright myth making in both the Jesus and Muhammad myths that there must have been a fertile psycho-social ground for it to germinate

and prosper. The reasons for this should be looked into much more deeply. I won't be able to do this in a complete way here, but I make a start on this subject. Religions thus became a kind of introduction to an historical pathology endemic to culture. Far from "saving mankind" Jesus implicates mankind in a tragic dark comedy of human susceptibility to delusions. History became a tragico-comedy, a sort of "Folly" in Erasmus's word.

Like Christ. Muhammad too was most likely a mythical construction of priests or rather, mullahs, clerics and forgers. In any case, the creation of fiction of Jesus is not much different than the creation of Muhammad. Both are creations of an eager cult, which expands enormously through literary means of books like the Koran or the Gospel writers. A great deal is known about the falsities pandering the name of Islam. Many and probably all of the "hadith" or sayings of the Prophet and doings attributed to the Prophet are fictions or outright forgeries, as David Hall says. Other scholarship echoes this.

Ibn Warraq also says that "serious scholars have called in question the Koran itself."¹¹⁰⁸ I do not trust Ibn Warraq very much. But there is a great deal of evidence that this historical skepticism toward Muhammad and the Koran is warranted. A cache of Korans from the 700's were found in 1972 in Yemen, the Sana'a manuscripts. This is more than a century after Muhammad is supposed to have lived, and according to Gerd R. Puin¹¹⁰⁹ these show that the Koran was a later and evolving text. Toby Lester writes of Puin's work that:

"Some of the parchment pages in the Yemeni hoard seemed to date back to the seventh and eighth centuries A.D., or Islam's first two centuries—they were fragments, in other words, of perhaps the oldest Korans in existence. What's more, some of these fragments

¹¹⁰⁸ Ibn Warraq's Why I am not a Muslim (Prometheus Books, 2003 pg. 66

¹¹⁰⁹ <http://www.theatlantic.com/past/issues/99jan/koran.htm>

revealed small but intriguing aberrations from the standard Koranic text. Such aberrations, though not surprising to textual historians, are troublingly at odds with the orthodox Muslim belief that the Koran as it has reached us today is quite simply the perfect, timeless, and unchanging Word of God.”¹¹¹⁰

This skepticism towards the Koran—and other books like the Gita, Dhahamapada or the Bible--- must also be extended to other mythical aspects of the religion. As David Hall points out in his really excellent book Islamic Mysticism, that “the myth of an original orthodoxy from which later challengers fall away is almost always the retrospective assertion of a politically dominant group whose aim is to establish their own supremacy”. This is certainly the case in Christianity, where the mythical person of Christ was clearly a literary fabrication, made up by Paul¹¹¹¹ and the later people that wrote the original “Gospels”, The Gospels promote fictions and the purpose of this was to justify the Roman Church, ultimately, as Christianity became the state religion. Christianity would have been a minor local cult otherwise. Likewise, orthodox Islam appears to be based on local mythical constructions, erected into state religions. Hall concludes that the “narrative that purports to be the life of the Prophet of Islam appears as a baseless fiction..... ¹¹¹²concocted for propaganda purposes”. ¹¹¹³ Hall even goes

¹¹¹⁰ <http://www.theatlantic.com/past/issues/99jan/koran.htm>

¹¹¹¹ Paul might be a 2nd century fabrication The earliest existing letter of Paul’s epistles is P 46, which is in the University of Michigan, which is dated to about 180-200 C.E.. This too suggests that the whole enterprise of Christianity is really an affair of the 2nd century, not the first.

¹¹¹² I have discussed the fiction of orthodoxy throughout these books. One recent example of this is from Africa, where Moslem families who have had a member with Ebola continue to wash their hands at the mosque, thus putting the lives of others as of lesser value than the Koranic injunction to wash your hands before prayer. Killing people matters less than being orthodox. Ebola is a very deadly disease which as yet has no real cure. Obvious refusing orthodoxy is the more reasonable choice here.

¹¹¹³ Hall, David. Islamic Mysticism, A Secular Perspective. Prometheus Books. Amherst New York. 2000 pg. 62

further than this and quotes Margoliouth as saying that in the traditional biographies the character which the early narrators “ascribes to [the] prophet is exceedingly repulsive.”

So, when we look at why minor westerners like Guenon and Schuon became Moslem, it is no surprise that there are insidious reasons. These reasons go to the heart of why Christainity and Islam are fundamentally questionable and why Guenon and Schuon tended toward theofascism. ¹¹¹⁴ There is truth in the fact that Islam, like Christianity, has tended to brutality and totalism, even back as far as the character Muhammad himself. As David Hall has observed “Ibn Warraq assessment of Muhammad in his book Why I am not a Muslim is really gruesome and hideous.” ¹¹¹⁵ I think Warraq is questionable in various ways, as he tends

¹¹¹⁴ Many writers on Guenon and Schuon are orthodox fanatics. They want to get distance from Schuon and Guenon. They bend over backward to try to say that Schuon and Guenon are not real Moslems. This is not accurate. Sedgwick tries to say that they were really interested in universalism or their “super-religion” and that is true. But Islam deeply flavors the bitter, inquisitorial and accusing style of both men. This should be acknowledged. Islam was not just a religion for them, but a banner of hate and defiance. In some ways they were both much deeper and better Moslems than Sedgwick or other detractors. To some degree as yet unstudied, much of what is sour and destructive in Schuon and Guenon comes from Islam. Their inner fidelity to the ‘spirit’ of Islam is not a token of something to praise them for, rather, if you really understand why they were Moslems you will be alarmed if you look with any depth into their writings. Islam is an alarming religion when you really look at the Sharia and the Koran and what they really say and do. These are men whose god is a weapon of repression and arbitrary harm, who seek to exalt themselves and will lie to anyone who questions them closely. This is partly why they are “good Moslems”, they follow the prescriptions and contradictions of that religion pretty closely.

¹¹¹⁵ Ibn Warraq’s Why I am not a Muslim (Prometheus Books, 2003) is a very interesting, but problematic, critical work on Islam , which echoes Bertrand Russell excellent, Why I am not a Christian. But Warraq does not have the enlightened view of Russell in many cases. He points out that the human rights record of Islam is atrocious, but seems to have little understanding of western and American atrocities.. But in later years he favored a sort of holy war between the west and Muslim nations. He supported Bush’s attempt to restart the Crusades against Islam. He does not have the subtlety of Edward Said, whose work on the middle east respects the people, while avoiding the extremist ideology and the fanatical fundamentalism. Said is really very profound on exile and homelessness of the Palestinians and others. Warraq is contrast is an apologist of injustices committed by the West. See also Muhammad (Gary) Legenhausen’s “Why I am not a Traditionalist.” as well as [Islamic Mysticism: A Secular Perspective](#) by Ibn Al-Rawandi/David Hall

to ‘essentialize” Islam, to use terms Edward Said might utter. ¹¹¹⁶ and serve western or orientalist hatred and racism against the west. His attacks on Ed Said are politically motivated and he misses the value in Said’s work. Said was right to insist of the human rights of all Orientals, while distancing himself from their religions, which he thought absurd. Any intelligent man looking at the facts would do this. Muslims are first people and deserve protection, whatever their religious beliefs.

Warraq’s vision of the “west” as somehow holy and wonderful is equally lacking in nuance and appears to be far right nonsense. But there is some truth in Warraq’s views of Islam. His hostility to it has some foundation in fact, even if he appears to be politically motivated. Islam is primarily a political system to begin with and always has been. Facts are facts and where Warraq is factual he cannot be denied. If one looks at sources by non-Muslims about Muhammad there is little to be gained, though much is claimed of these questionable things. There is a reference to Muhammad in Palestine in 636, CE. But this is highly problematic and may be false. The document in question: “ *Doctrina Jacobi* (a document dates to 634-40 CE and was probably written by a Christian living in Palestine. It is anti-Semitic and anti Moslem too, or rather it is not even speaking of Moslems, perhaps. Here is what it says:

“What is your opinion, my master and teacher, on this prophet who has appeared among the Saracens?”

With a mighty sigh, he replied: 'He is an impostor. Prophets don't come with sword and chariot. Truly the events of today are the works of disorder.”

¹¹¹⁶ Warraq ‘s attacks on Ed Said are highly questionable too, as is his rather ignorant embrace of George Bush.

This could mean many things and might not refer to Muhammad at all, but another cult leader who had an army. A recent Koran now called the Birmingham Quran is also questionable. One Moslem scholar says of it

“Saud al-Sarhan, the director of research at the King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, said he doubted that the manuscript found in Birmingham was as old as the researchers claimed, noting that its Arabic script included dots and separated chapters – features that were introduced later. He also said that dating the skin on which the text was written did not prove when it was written. Manuscript skins were sometimes washed clean and reused later, he said. ”¹¹¹⁷

There is also an account of the Arab conquest of Jerusalem by Sophronius -- the patriarch who is said to have surrendered the city in 637 -- and a letter written in 647 by the patriarch of Seleucia make no reference to the Arab conquerors as Muslims, or show any awareness of a religion called Islam”. There is also the writing of the Bishop Sebeos, dating to the 670s in which he has Muhammad "insisting on the Jews' right to the Holy Land.” This is odd and perhaps spurious. John of Damascus mentions the Koran in 730, but that too has problems. In short the origins of Islam are very suspect, contradictory and doubtful. The origins of Islam are a thicket of questions and the best that can be said is that Muhammad may have existed, or he might not have existed, but he probably did not write most, if any of the Koran, which appears to be an “evolving document”, or in other words a pastiche, written by various unknown authors over a long period. ¹¹¹⁸

¹¹¹⁷ <https://rjosephhoffmann.wordpress.com/2015/07/23/the-bbc-birmingham-quran-facts-fiasco/>

¹¹¹⁸ Richard Carrier felt the need to weigh in on this controversy for some reason, though he admits to know little about Islam. He states “it is at least significantly more probable than not that

As David Hall says, "Islam is fundamentalist by nature, and not by some peculiar and aberrant recent development."¹¹¹⁹ The fundamentalism of Islam makes it a religion of extremist views and cult-like intransigence. Muhammad is a partly fictional character made up by Muslim scholars and exegetes 150 years after the shadowy man called Muhammad actually lived, whoever he may have been, and no one really knows, just as Christ is probably mostly or entirely a literary invention.

Writers like Robert Spencer and Ibn Warraq comb many sources to show that Muhammad might not have existed. I doubt he existed too, or if he did, it is irrelevant as the Koran is still a pastiche of many authors. What is clear is that the character of Muhammad in the Islamic myth did have many people assassinated and murdered. This does not seem to be in question by anyone in Islam, unlike other pronouncements by these authors. For instance, Muhammad, reportedly, had assassinated a female poet, Asma bint Marwan, in her bed when she was asleep with her children. After the murder Muhammad is reported to have commented "a couple of goats will hardly knock their heads together for it". This comments demonstrates the man's lack of virtue and compassion. Of course it has to be said that all statements about Muhammad are in parenthesis, as it is quite likely that none of these things actually happened at all, and he may not even have existed.¹¹²⁰

a guy named Mohammad existed, and cobbled together the Quran, perhaps adapting earlier writings from a Torah observant Christian sect, and perhaps not alone, and perhaps even at someone else's behest" I am more skeptical of the early Islamic sources than Carrier is.

¹¹¹⁹ In his essay "Islam is religious fascism"

<http://www.voi.org/books/foe/ch26.htm>

¹¹²⁰ There are a few early citations, some of which are quoted above, that he may have existed, though these are sketchy and not very definitive. The Koran comes much later, up to 150 years later than Muhammad is supposed to have died. Some sources even suggest parts fo the Koran existed before Muhammed (John Wansbrough), while others (Gerd Puin) insist that it was a document that evolved over several centuries and is a "cocktail of texts". (Patricia Crone}. Others claim that the Moslems where actually Palestinian and may have been Jewish. (Michael Cook) . Yehuda Nevo and Judith Koren claims that Muhammad probably never existed. In short the whole area of research around Muhammad and the Koran is problematic, confused and without much real evidence. As with the origins of the Gospel the existence of Muhammed is a

But the brilliance of myth is that they need not have happened to act as promotion for the behavior these describe.

With that proviso in mind, it is also said in the myth that Muhammad had two other poets murdered too: Abu Afak, evidently because Muhammad did not like competition and criticism, like most cult leaders, and thought himself infallible.¹¹²¹ After that he had Kab Ibn-al Ashraf murdered, again because he was critical of the ‘prophet’. These are only a few of many assassinations and killings by Muhammad and his followers. Again, whether these events actually happened or not is an open question, but the important thing is the literary tradition says they happened and thus these stories are part of a cultural and imperial despotism that is advocating killing poets or thinkers who don’t agree with the cult leader Muhammad. These kinds of “traditions” many of them based on myths of outright fabrications, nevertheless had a big influence on history. These stories also indicate that the ideological Totalism that is Islam results in a form of “doubling” whereby it becomes OK to kill for the ‘god’ they worship.

Muhammad was a poet who hated other poets and said of them

“And as to the poets, those who go astray follow them.

Do you not see that they wander about bewildered in every valley?

And that they say that which they do not do, (Koran:26:224-226)

For Muhammad poetry is nothing but mindlessness towards God and hereafter, whereas Koran, which is also poetry, makes man remember God. This is the rationalization for killing poets: only Muhammad is the “real” poet”, because he has mythologized a certain conception of God. In fact the poets Muhammad killed were hardly any less deceivers Muhammad, who is hardly an exemplar of virtue. Indeed, the preachers

thicket and just about any view can be justified, and so no view is certain.. As with Christ, this suggests a myth rather than a factual history.

¹¹²¹ Ibid.pg 93, 94.

of every religion “wander bewildered in every valley” as does Ovid, Dante and so many other poets who extol the virtues of unjust empires..

Plato did what Muhammad did too, hypocritically condemning, poets when he was himself a poet. “Only I am the real poet” all these poets say. Poets hate each other oftentimes and want only their own poetry to be considered the real thing.¹¹²² Plato and Muhammad both demanded a theofascist society and a poetry that served transcendental delusions and the theocratic state. Plato wanted poetry to serve only his tyrant guardians. He didn’t hate poetry, but like Muhammad, he wanted all poetry but his censored. Poetry for Plato must conform to Nazi-like state he designed it the Republic. Plato upbraids Homer for not propagandizing enough for non-existent gods. In other words Plato wanted poets to lie about reality better. Plato’s ideology would come to serve Christianity very well. Platonism is central to the Dark Age construction of Church and Feudal social orders. Dionysius the Areopagite’s creation of a Christian political hierarchy would be thoroughly Platonic and help the eclipse of enlightening culture. The Christian theofascism of the Crusades and more recent wars on Islam has its origins in the hierarchies of Plato and Pseudo-Dionysius.

I add also that I must conclude from the dismal history of Plato and Muhammad, that poetry is easily co-opted by irrational systems of all kinds, and can be a real danger. It easily serves the theocratic will to power or other regimes of delusion. Using language to deceive appears to be as old as language, which is why many scriptures are poetry and are meant to deceive. There is hardly any poetry that has science as its basis, though science has influenced a few modern poets such as Whitman, Theodore Roethke or Marianne Moore..

¹¹²² An interesting take on the hate of poets for each other is Jean Cocteau’s movie Orpheus, where he shows this graphically.

But to return to Muhammad. Muhammad, like Dostoyevsky, was very likely an epileptic, was prone to have elaborate visions. Ibn Warraq puts forward the case that Muhammad's 'revelations', were, in fact, merely the result of shamanistic trance or mediumistic states, probably self-induced and probably faked. Even if, as is likely, Muhammed is a fiction, the character has some truth in it. Having watched on many occasions how Schuon faked his visions to justify his behavior, I see how easy it is to do. Anyone with a good imagination can claim to be a prophet who has visions. Muhammad, like Schuon, could evidently fall into such 'trance states' ---or more likely the appearance of such states--- whenever the need arose, and it arose frequently. Warraq gives evidence that Muhammad was prone to "cheating" his revelations at convenient moments when he needed to justify killing people, taking wives that were too young or to pacify his unruly harem. This is true of Schuon too. In one case he had a vision while sitting on the toilet, ¹¹²³ when the Virgin Mary told him one of his wives was in league with the devil. Evidently his vision was an effect of excessive digestion, as Scrooge says in the Christmas Carol. Perhaps Schuon's visions of the nude Virgin Mary was a bit of 'undigested piece of beef' as Dickens suggests. Schuon was a highly emotional man, who tried to squash his emotions and pretend to a virtuous calm. But his hysteria was evident to me in his fake visions, where the Virgin was enlisted to do his bidding, even when he had an attack of anxiety and anger while in the bathroom. It never occurred to him that his "marriages" were fake and he might be at fault.

Ralph Waldo Emerson¹¹²⁴ colorfully referred to spiritualism as the

¹¹²³ Schuon claimed to have a vision of the Virgin Mary condemning Maude Murray while he sat on the toilet. I laughed when I heard about this from Maude and it helped me realize what a charlatan and liar Schuon really was. Many people read on the toilet, whereas Schuon had attacks and hallucinations. .

¹¹²⁴ Emerson is an interesting case. Besides being an exceptionally good writer, perhaps too good, he is also too Platonic and too religious. He wrote nonsense such as claiming that "Natural fact is a symbol of some spiritual fact." This absurd idea would suggest that earwigs or diatoms, Meer cats or Rhinoceros hide a spiritual fact behind them. The absurd idea that rhino horns increase

“rat hole of revelation” but this phrase could fit Schuon, Guenon and other ‘prophets’ and cult leaders as well, from Joseph Smith and Mao to Da Free John. It is interesting that Schuon also claimed that various of his writings were “revelations”¹¹²⁵ and he justified his bizarre marriages by having convenient “visions” –usually of the Virgin Mary, who also sanctioned his erotic interests and needs. What is of interest about such “visions” is that they are entirely the fiction of the mind of he who has them and no one can question what is ultimately subjective. Darwin said that “for myself, I do not believe that there ever has been any revelation” I am inclined to agree with Darwin.. The problem with Schuon or Muhammad or any crackpot who claims special election by god is that no one can prove that he didn’t have the visions. On the other hand, he could never prove that he did. It should follow that such visions have no merit at all--- other than a story telling or literary merit—but religions blow them up such stories to grand proportions and sell them as the Truth, Capital T. Gullible followers believe such nonsense, or it gets written in some holy book or ‘text’ and everyone thinks it is true. I watched this happen in the Schuon cult and saw that people want to believe the most unlikely rubbish as being sent by imaginary gods and

male potency has not basis is reality at all. It has resulted the near extinction of these amazing animals.. Emerson was a spiritual elitist, and a sort of symbolist. This has allowed far right spiritualists like the traditionalists to try to claim him as their own. But actually as the “rat” comment shows, he is not always sanguine about religion. Transcendentalism failed in many ways, as Thoreau’s work shows. The last ten years of Thoreau’s writing are increasingly cynical both about Emerson and the transcendentalist project. He becomes more and more of a Darwinist and a scientist---to his credit

¹¹²⁵ Schuon told me his essay on the “Conditions of Existence” and the essay on the “Mahashakti” which is a veiled magnification of his last “wife” the blond former masseuse--- were both “revelations”. He said this also about his idea of the “themes” also. What is clear when you read these works is that “revelation” means that he felt deeply about it, as he had an intuition, and in the case of the “conditions of existence” he is merely invoking a “meme” or an influence that comes though Schelling or the German Transcendentalists, combined with Sufi ideas. In the Mahashakti essay he is merely involving the romantic idealization of women. So the revelation just turns out to be a deeply felt intuition, and hardly means it is true or divinely inspired. This is true of ‘revelations’ generally and not just of Schuon’s in particular.

naked or clothed virgins. This is the tragico-comical fact of the religions. They are fake systems of make believe that many follow or live by as if they were true.

There are many examples of dreams used by religions as justifying mechanism. This is logical since religions are highly subjective and invented social systems that need an arbitrary source by which disciples can be captured and retained. Getting into someone's unconscious through dreams and visions is one such mechanism of control and suggestion. Some branches of Islamic Sufism, such as the Naqshbandiyya, or the Nimtallahh rely enormously on dreams to justify themselves. There is even a rather self-serving system of dream interpretation used by the 'Sufi masters' in these groups. Indeed, this is true to some degree of all of Sufism, which is a subjective mysticism of the inward and irrational. Indeed, most and perhaps all of the major religions or cults are largely inspired by irrational delusions, visions, dreams or outright fabrications of the founders, and this is true of Christ, Auorbindo, Krishnamurti, Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh and many others from Rumi to Hallaj and Niffari. Belief in religions inspired by dreams is to subject followers to the most arbitrary rule and to try to control them by gaining access to their subconscious.

The charlatan Tibetan Buddhist Chogyam Trungpa claimed his mother had a vision or dreams in which and when he was born someone saw a rainbow in the village. In Tibetan Buddhism it is a cultural practice that these claims, which are merely coincidence, and are a convention way of demonstrating one is a reincarnate lama. On this basis one can claim what, in fact, is an unearned status. Trungpa ended up drinking and drugging himself to death as an 'insider' teacher at Naropa Institute.

“The night of my conception my mother had a very significant dream that a being had entered her body with a flash of light; that year flowers bloomed in the neighborhood although it was still winter, to the surprise of the inhabitants.... ¹¹²⁶

One cannot deny such claims nor affirm them. There is no connection between the flowers growing in winter and his birth, but Trungpa invents one. In Tibetan culture such arbitrary and possibly invented lies are the road to high status. Indeed, the mental imaging of “Yidamms” and entities like the Sambogakaya or Nirmanakaya are really about training the mind to submit to a system of imaginary mind and social directions or control. The ‘science’ of these imaginary creations is exacting and complex. It captures adepts in a web of subjective invention akin to dreams and makes reality over in the image of the unreal, just as William James would have approved of.

Another example of this using phony visions to claim spiritual election of power is to be found in Mormonism. Joseph Smith, the charlatan founder of the Mormon religion also claimed elaborate visions. It is documented that in early in his career, in March 1826, Smith was arrested for posing as an impostor and defrauding citizens in a gold digging business he tried to set up. Interestingly, Smith called himself the new “Muhammad”. Smith was another polygamist and charlatan as were Schuon and Muhammad. The Book of Mormon was founded on such visions that were just more elaborate than the gold digging business that Joseph Smith had lied about earlier in his career. He was unable to defraud people with fake gold so he decided to create a religion based on fake gold tablets he said he found in the ground. Joseph Smith claimed that his visions were copied from golden tablets an angel directed him to find in a field or side of a hill in New York. The story goes that even though the plates are in a foreign language, the angel helps

¹¹²⁶ Quoted in Geoffrey Falk : <http://www.strippingthegurus.com/stgsamplechapters/trungpa.asp>

him to decipher and translate them. Then the plates are conveniently taken up into heaven, never to be seen again.

Smith gets various people (the “eleven”) to claim that they saw the tablets. There were no tablets and plates and no angel. Interestingly the proof that Joseph Smith was a charlatan was made long ago. The tablets and angel story of Smith were proven to be hogwash by Mrs. Martin Harris, the wife of Smith’s scribe, one of the alleged “witnesses”.. She stole the first 116 pages to prove to her husband Smith was a fake. She dared Smith to reproduce the lost pages and he could not do it. ¹¹²⁷ Notice that these facts have been accessible or known for 180 years and Mormons still dutifully believe their bogus “Book” came from “God”. Facts cannot confuse the faithful.... The Mormons went on to do some horrible things such as Mountain Meadows massacre in 1857, in which fanatic Mormons who first tried to pretend they were Native Americans, killed 120 people. Smith was a psychopath who was willing to lie to get what he wanted. Smith was a sexual predator who married 11 women who were already married to Mormon men, alleging all sorts of nonsense in order to steal their wives, and then sent some of the men off to missions. Schuon took other men’s wives too and then claimed visions to justify his abuse. Smith, Schuon, Muhammad and other cult leaders claim all sorts of justifications for their desires. If it suits them, they claim to be beyond desire.

The Koran, is also based on fake visions. These visions are very likely a creation of men who mythologized Muhammad, whoever he actually was, no one really knows—probably no one. The earliest information of Muhammad was written by Ibn Ishaq, in A.D. 750. There

¹¹²⁷ Christopher Hitchens discusses this at some length in his book God is Not Great. (see pages 161-164)

were 130 years after Muhammad's supposed death where he was mythologized and the Koran as probably written or heavily doctored by others. Fake visions justified Muhammad when he wanted a child wife. His wife Aisha was only nine, a grotesque marriage that occurred when Muhammad was 53. Of course, that is assuming any of this actually happened, which is doubtful at best. If it did happen, it is really a form of child abuse and rape, this giving away of very young girls.¹¹²⁸ There is no way the practice of taking pre-menstrual or pre-pubescent girls is safe or healthy for the girls.¹¹²⁹ The fact that is done underscores the absurd cruelty of male dominated sexual politics of the time(and of our time too, where similar practices are allowed in Islamic countries). This legalization of pedophilia is an aspect of the Koran and Islam that certainly influenced Schuon. The early marriage of Aisha to Muhammad, while obviously unjust, flourishes in some Muslim countries where women are ruthlessly oppressed by Moslem misogyny and patriarchal values.¹¹³⁰ Recently such child abuse and child rape occurred after 1979

¹¹²⁸ Hishām ibn Urwah, a prominent narrator of sayings of the Prophet (the Hadith), who died in the year 756AD. He was Aisha's great-grandnephew, who first suggested that his great-grand aunt was only nine-years old on the day of her wedding, 125 years after the said event. One Hadith says *Then he [Muhammad] wrote the marriage (wedding) contract with Aishah when she was a girl of six years of age, and he consumed [sic, consummated] that marriage when she was nine years old.* If you deny that this is true you deny the hadith and to do that is to deny the basics of Islam. The Hadith are obviously false. Most of Islam is based on this nonsense , but because they are promoted by a clergy they are followed by people as if they were law..

¹¹²⁹ The New York Times reports that this same practice is now being used on young girls who are made slaves by male followers of Isis, a fundamentalist militia in Iraq and elsewhere.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/14/world/middleeast/isis-enshrines-a-theology-of-rape.html>

¹¹³⁰ Ayatollah Khomeini was a real monster, reflecting the monstrosity of beliefs at large in Islam. His Little Green Book and other writings are some of the most shameful things I have ever read. Some of his disgusting edicts are about having sex with animals, nine year old girls are allowed to marry. Ayatollah Khomeini says in his Green Book that "A woman who has not yet reached the age of nine or a menopausal woman may remarry immediately after divorce, without waiting the hundred days that are otherwise required." And thus child abuse was state sanctioned in those days. There were apparently practices involved babies that are very repulsive. These ideas are evidently not uncommon outside of Iran as well, showing that Islam does indeed have a depraved sensibility as regards women and children. Schuon got some of his bizarre ideas from these sources of Islamic misogyny and child hatred. The Green book makes Islam detestable and Iran

when the leader of Iran, the Ayatollah Khomeini, following Muhammad's bad example with Aisha, lowered the marriage age for girls from eighteen years old down to nine years old. This allowed state sanctioned child abuse and child rape and the guilt of it goes back to Muhammad and his fake visions.

Perhaps one of the worst parts of Islam is Muhammad's brutality. In the "Battle of the Trench", ---really the massacre of the Trench, Muhammad ordered his men to hack off the heads of seven or eight hundred people in Medina, their heads and bodies falling into a huge mass grave or trench.¹¹³¹ Muhammad returned from the "horrid spectacle to console himself with the charms of Rihana, whose husband and all her male relatives had just perished in the massacre."¹¹³² This is a repulsive act of the worst sort of sadism. It disqualifies Mohammadism from any sort of moral consideration. This is a criminal act of a vile man with no conscience. This and other similar stories about Muhammad—yes there are other atrocities---- explains why Islam has been particularly vicious as a religion. Muhammad was not a nice person, or more than that, he was, like Joseph Smith and other cult leaders, a psychopath----a cruel, murderous, self-promoter of the worst kind. He was hardly a saint

an immoral nation that allows pedophilia. You can see some of the horrific and repulsive edicts about how to oppress and abuse girls, women, animals and babies here:

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/57040439/The-Little-Green-Book>

<http://islammonitor.org/uploads/docs/greenbook.pdf>

This article summarizes some of what is objectionable in his writings, though the political motivation behind some of these things are questionable too.

http://islammonitor.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3306:the-relic-of-iran-and-his-wallah&catid=195&Itemid=61

¹¹³¹ his practice of beheading people has been recently used by the Moslem group Isis, for instance in Libya, where in 2015, 21 Coptic Christians had their heads cut off, in violence unleashed partly due the anarchy 4 years after the killing of Muammar Qaddafi.

¹¹³² Ibn Warraq. pg 96

and his religion holds a stamp of this bad character. Again, given that Muhammad is probably largely the invention of followers, the creation of this awful character by early Muslim scholars and creators of Hadith suggests a violent and cruel culture. While modern Moslem culture and individual Muslims today might not fit this description, and I know this to be the case. it is clear that there is an element of this psychopathology in the religious culture itself and it erupts periodically into today's world.

From all that I know about Guenon and Schuon, I can see why they were attracted to Muhammad and Islam. They both had psychopathic tendencies. The both hated modern Europe and going into Islam involved a kind of reactionary bad-boy revenge against the superiority of science and enlightenment culture, on the one hand. On the other, they liked the barbarity and misogyny of Islam. It is an exotic and combative religion, rather like the warriors of the Plains "Indians" which Schuon so much admired. ¹¹³³ It gives men, as a sex, great and undeserved power, as was evident in recent years in the killing of perhaps a million people under the Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran¹¹³⁴, or repulsive stoning of women by the Taliban in Afghanistan or the throwing of acid on little girls faces who

¹¹³³ Schuon had Gustavo Polit sing a versions of the song about "Allah" in which a native American drum was played to a warrior beat. Polit would scream out, Allah, bong bong Allah, bong bong , la illiha illa lhah, la illiha, illa lhah,, illa lhah,, illa lhah, bong bong. Schuon wanted to turn Islam into Sioux or Crow religion and he clearly succeeded . Followers of Islam are outraged by this, but the fact is that Islam is as bogus a religion as Schuon's pastiche of Siouxish Sufism.

¹¹³⁴ It is interesting to note that the French philosopher Michel Foucault thought very highly of the Iranian revolution in 1979 as saw it as a resurgence of the "possibility of political spirituality". It was a blood bath, but Foucault, good romantic that he was, was a student of Nietzsche's concept of heroic cruelty and liked heroic bloody conflict and the atmosphere of Koranic "discipline and punish" that surrounded the Ayatollah Khomeini. Only a devotee of Sade could enjoy the Iranian revolution. Foucault's notion of "political spirituality" is very close to what I am calling "theofascism", except that my term has a negative moral valuation attached to it, whereas Foucault approved of this same fascism. Moreover Foucault saw the rise of fundamentalist Islam as a rejection of Renaissance and Enlightenment values, which it certainly was. Guenon and Schuon also reject Renaissance and Enlightenment values like democracy, rationality, equality and human rights. As you can read in Foucault's biography , he liked cruelty and sadism and was sadistic himself in his pursuit of certain cruel kinds of pleasures.

dared to go to school in countries where Muslims don't like little girls to be educated. Since both Guenon and Schuon were actually rather weak and fearful men, Islam gave them a feeling of power and machismo. ¹¹³⁵ It also appealed to their need of secrecy, their paranoia and in Schuon's case, his need of realizing a polygamous sex fantasy. But beyond that, Islam was easily used and exploited. It is a backward religion full of superstitions and ignorance and they could arrogantly use it to their own ends. Guenon and Schuon wanted huge power. Muhammad had power and abused it in mighty ways. The Koran is obsessed with evil and punishment as were both Guenon and Schuon. It is a vicious and cruel book in many ways and a strong flavor of that is in both Guenon and Schuon's work.

Guenon and Schuon admired the Koranic pose of infallibility, as well as Muhammad's ability to justify the most atrocious behavior with visions and sermons. Schuon even tried to emulate aspects of the life of the Prophet, the taking of young girls, the need of multiple wives, the pose as the great leader, the nose in the air looking down on everyone, the pretense at prophethood. Evidently Muhammad was quite a charmer, too, like most psychopathic leaders. Neither Schuon nor Guenon had much charm, though Schuon did manage to mass a fairly large following a few hundred duped and unquestioning followers. He didn't achieve this by charm, but by a sort of imperious secrecy. He was excellent at looking taller than he was and putting his nose in the air as if above everyone. He hid behind his poses, the pose of his books, the pose of Shaykh,

¹¹³⁵ Schuon elevated Muhammad to absurd heights in his mind and thought he was himself Muhammad's successor as last Prophet "at the end of time". He had an idea of the "form of the prophet" which he spelled out in various writings, and many of the characteristics of this imaginary being Schuon tried to take on as his own character. Schuon 1st wife Catherine did a painting of Schuon riding into Mecca behind Muhammad, as if he were one of the inner circle of Muhammad's jihad. Schuon was very interested in war and stories were told about him in the cult as being a brave soldier. Schuon's delusional need to see himself in the most grandiose terms spread to his followers who also praised him excessively, indeed, that was the main qualification to be in the cult and those who pandered to him ego most we highest in the cult.

prophet, poet and painter. His paintings are poses and the skirts of his wives are part of the poseur's ambiance. Schuon was always posing. Indeed, it would be accurate to say that the wives of Schuon played a major role in the creation of a mythic imposture. They were part of his posing, part of the theater and charade. The same is true of Muhammad's life and his wives.

Clearly Islam already had fascistic tendencies when Muhammad was alive. No one actually knows if there was such a person, he is so heavily mythologized, but the myth states that he committed atrocities against outside groups, Jews and Christians, notably, and committed assassinations, violated human rights regularly and had an apocalyptic and nationalistic agenda which included delusional ideas of his own self-worth and willingness to be cruel and oppressively unjust to others.

¹¹³⁶ Some of these fascist tendencies continued well after Muhammad appealed to Guenon and Schuon. One can see the long term influence of Muhammad's bloody minded love of atrocity in suicide bombings, the Iran-Iraq war, Iran under Khomeini or Osama bin Laden's bombings.

Whatever one says about Islam and its horrendous violations of human rights, the term Islamo-fascism is problematical. I use the term while being aware of its questionable features. It does have various features that are just. Yes, it is questionable because the term got famous by the use of it by right wing talk show hosts like Rush Limbaugh and Christians sympathetic to the Bush administration. It was used as term of abuse blanketing all Moslems with the term. I know many Moslems who are not fascists and abhor fascism, respect children

¹¹³⁶ One book that takes this Muhammadan point of view is Samir Hariche Rabasso's Perennialism in the Light of Islam, which is an exclusivist and fundamentalist sufi text trying to exalt the myth of Muhammad into a first principle. The logical result of such a text is of course, the denigration of everything that is not Islamic. It is a sophistic text that basically holds that all things lead to Allah and anyone who denies this is the enemy of Allah, without noticing that this is a circular and militarist argument. Christian fundamentalism employs the same circular argumentation that results in horrors committed in the name of the righteousness of the exclusive god.

and human rights. On the other hand, if Muslims called Bush's supporters and Neo-cons Americo-fascists they would pretty much right on target in various respects. Bush used the term as part of his effort to create propagandistic support for his unjust war against Iraq and Afghanistan. It is thus a term promoted by those with a murderous agenda. But one could say with only very slight exaggeration that the fascists in the Bush administrations met the fascism of Middle Eastern Islam and that is what America's unjust Imperial war in Iraq and Afghanistan were all about. I did not support any of these wars of aggression. But there are accurate features in the term.

But it is true, nevertheless, that Islam has many 'fascist' features,---- if fascism is defined as 'an oppressive apocalyptic and unjust government that employs questionable means to harm people and subvert human rights in the name of an irrational and mandatory creed---- well, Islam fits this to a "T". This very wide definition of fascism fits both the Bush administration and many Islamic leaders from the Saudi's to the Iranians. As David Hall wrote:

There no way [that Islam] can ever be made compatible with pluralism, free speech, critical thought and democracy. Anyone convinced they already possess the truth have no need for such things. Although Muslims resident in non-Muslim countries clamor for every kind of indulgence for their own beliefs and customs, there can be no doubt that given any kind of power they would impose their own beliefs and eliminate all difference. In short, Islam is religious fascism....

The violations of human rights which are excused by both the West and Islamic countries in the Middle Eastern Wars are due to similar systems of injustice. But fascism usually has a strong nationalist element. If theofascism is defined as 'an oppressive apocalyptic and unjust

government that employs questionable means to harm people and subvert human rights in the name of an irrational and mandatory creed', then this definition also helps us very much to define traditionalism. It shows how systems of power—religions as well as states--- operate to create harm and violates each other's human rights and produce atrocities. Certainly up until now, Islam has proved itself fascistic in a state like Iran or Sadi Arabia, yet is also has theofascism elements in its defining its state as a theocracy and oppressing its population by means of Islamic law and the Koran. The same is true of capitalism of a Christian variety, as Christian leaders on the far right seek to subvert democracy and institute a theocratic Christian republic. Will these systems continue to be so harmful in the future?

However, "Islamofascism" might be a politically motivated term; it still helps define accurate aspects of theofascism in Islam. Theofascism is a term that includes the Bush administration and the Iranians or the Osama Bin laden cult, as well as Guenon and Schuon, under its umbrella. Islamofascism has some different qualities. In any case, I am not sure that definitions matter all that much. Both the terms 'totalism' and 'spiritual fascism' describes many concrete realities of romantic far-right thought in the 20th century and that is the reason for using it. The term totalism might be as accurate, but it does not concretely specify the peculiar religious nature of some of these forms of oppression and abuse. I prefer the term theofascism for all these developments. There appear to be growing currents toward liberation from the oppression of the Koran and Wall Street and so one can hope that Islamofascism as well an American fascism of the Christian and business class will increasingly be outdated and decline.

It might be useful to note here that Schuon, like other Sufis who liked the liberal freedom of "the tavern" and "wine", disliked Islamic fundamentalism and wished to distance himself from it. He didn't dislike it because it is "exoteric" And not because it was ignorant, cruel,

misogynistic and backward,. He liked backwardness, misogyny and dogmatic forms of oppression. He disliked Islamic “exoterism” because it was common, conventional, and not elitist or esoteric. It was not him, in short. He disliked every religion for not being him. He believed he was the “essence” of all religions. He thought he was Jesus at the end of time, hence his name Isa, which means Jesus.. He wanted an extreme freedom to be the heroic and romantic individual of an ultra-conservative spiritual movement, where he could take nearly infinite license for himself while others had to follow orthodox rules. What Schuon liked was the romantic backwardness of tyrants like the Japanese emperor or the Shah of Iran. Schuon’s disciple and lackey Hossein Nasr was a sycophant to the Shah’s court. The Shah’s state was a monarchist and neo-fascist client-state set up by the U.S. government. That was fine with Schuon and he supported it. What needs to be understood is that men like Nasr and Schuon are not very different than the Taliban or the Saudi government. Islam oppresses Muslims more than anyone else. It is Muslims that suffer from the excesses of the Sharia and the violations of human rights. Salman Rushdie pointed this out years ago. Iran put a Death sentence on his head for writing a novel in which Muhammad is questioned. ¹¹³⁷

Bertrand Russell thought Thomas Carlyle was a precursor to German Fascism.¹¹³⁸ Schuon’s view of Muhammad was like that of

¹¹³⁷ The pop singer Cat Stevens converted to Islam in 1977 and also called for Rushdie’s death, showing a lamentable lack of insight as well as how easy it is of a man who wrote a wonderful song like” Peace Train” would endorse murder of an innocent writer to protect the fictions of the Koran. Cat Stevens is a good example of how religion takes hold of the heart of someone and can make them betray themselves, a process R.J. Lifton calls ‘doubling’..

¹¹³⁸ Bertrand Russell XE "Russell, Bertrand

, “The Ancestry of Fascism” in *In Praise of Idleness* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1935), 103. In this essay Russell identified Carlyle as a genealogical antecedent to Fascism see Jonathan Claymore McCollum thesis here for an interesting discussion on Carlyle and his ambiguous relation to fascism. Here:

<http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/ETD/image/etd2044.pdf>

Thomas Carlyle, the British romantic who wrote about the "The Hero as Prophet". Schuon was also prone to romantic, even Byronic hero worship. Carlyle thought that Muhammad was a man "full of wild faculty, fire and light, of wild worth all uncultured, working out his life-tasks in the depths of the Desert" ¹¹³⁹ and elsewhere he says he was "barbarous son of Nature, much of the Bedouin still clinging to him". Carlyle's view echoes why Schuon loved Muhammad. Schuon, who had so much of the staid and retiring German 'burgomeister' about him, wanted to be a wild, romantic Native American, because in fact he was a rather small and bored European with a need of excitement. This need is partly why he started dressing like a Native American and holding nudist ceremonies. Also like Carlyle, Schuon was attracted to the far right, the divine right of kings and if that could not be had, then military leaders and businessmen. Schuon and his followers sided with the corporate republicans in the United States against Islamic fundamentalism. Even up until a few years after Schuon's death, prominent Schuonians were still giving large donations to right wing parties in the United States. The Schuon cult is republican and supports the egregious delusions of the far right. The republicans want to increase inequality and feed the rich while stealing from and harming the poor and the middle class. Indeed, the Christian right is by and large a supporting party to feed the ultra-rich and starving the poor. Though individual republicans are often ignorant of this. Schuon was like the Sheriff of Nottingham and nothing of Robin Hood about him. The far-right corporate strategists seek to advance "the manipulation of populism by elitism", in Christopher Hitchens words. The deeply unpopular Republican Party which really only cares about the ultra-rich, had to re-brand itself deceptively and present itself as grassroots Christian organization that cares about abortion and attacking teachers for making minimal salaries, while

¹¹³⁹ Quoted in Ibn Warraq, Why I am not a Muslim, pg. .23

letting CEO's get away with stealing billions of taxpayer's money in bonuses and Bailouts.

The point I am making here is that the peculiar nature of systems of power is that they shift ground and change over time. Theofascism is not a political party as much as it is a far right tendency to repress and dominate along romantic and anti-scientific lines, to deny human rights and service elites in the name of god or gods. That such an orientation should be vague and shifting over time is to be expected. It is a mythical construction and floats uneasily in actual history, acting more as a goad or an ideal than a factual thing. The reason the term 'theofascism' is more accurate than 'religious neo-fascism', or other terms is that theofascism helps explain the many shifts that traditionalism took. These changes occurred over the long period of time, from De Maistre's anti-enlightenment idealizations in the 1800's to Carlyle's Hero worship to T.S. Eliot's Catholic anti-Semitism, American Republicanism or Guenon's ideas or even the recent, rather pathetic, endorsement of Prince Charles of traditionalist ideology. ¹¹⁴⁰ 'Theofascism' is just this longing nostalgia for the sugared over decay of theocratic and political glory. The idea of theofascism is that all must be controlled by and for the upper class and the gods serve them.

¹¹⁴⁰ Since I lived in England in the 1980's and walked past Buckingham palace often, as well as visited Windsor Castle, it has not ceased to amaze me that England holds onto these ridiculous theofascist and monarchical relics of past glory. In reading and endorsing the traditionalists, Prince Charles longs for the hierarchy of the old days, when god and throne were two pillars of arbitrary power. The British spends 49 million dollars a year on these useless old parasites. Charles reads Schuon and has his court composer, John Tavener writes hymns to Schuon's "virgin" completely unaware of the decadence and escapism of such falsely universal art. Tavener is a romantic dreamer whose music has less connection to reality than Madonna or a gangster Rapper. But what else can Charles do, he has spent most of his life living under his mother's shadow, keeping himself busy with endless hobbies and duties, unable even to summon much sympathy when his far more interesting ex-princess dies in a car wreck in Paris. The royalty in England are parasites that should have been dismissed from their jobs and position of power decades ago. There is no good reason to keep them, these living relics of a horrendous system of governance we would have been well to have revolted against.

So Richelieu or Torquemada give the priests guns and let them shoot all those against religion. Indeed, Richelieu was nearly a perfect example of a theofascist.



Cardinal Richelieu (1585-1642) Painting by
Philippe de Champaigne 1637,

He was a Catholic Cardinal who sought to maximize both the power of the church and the French state. He worked under Louis 13th . He helped create the Absolutist state that would cause so much suffering in France and bring about the French Revolution. You can see the same centralization of theofascist oppressiveness of the Chinese Government too, the Inquisition and the dictatorships of Cortez and the Spanish in Latin America, in Iran and Israel in their far-right parties, as well as, in the apocalyptic Nationalism of George Bush, ne finds theofascism also in the backwaters of less well known men as in the anti-evolutionism of Hossein Nasr or the admiration of Martin Lings for Franco's fascism.

From the point of view of the nostalgic ideals of theofascism, one can survey the world and find everything wanting except the universal "truth"

of a god which only the elite can recognize. This bitter and escapist comfort appeals to those who hate the world they live in, caught in the past that never was – and most importantly, who cannot escape their dream of spiritual supremacy. The traditionalists are spiritual supremacists just as the KKK were white supremacists. In his later work, Evola said it pretty clearly. He wanted a “neo fascism”, a Guenonian fascism that would go beyond the fascism of the Nazis. He wanted to rebuild fascism after World War II as something not called fascism but as a “Spiritual Force”. Evola writes that

Unfortunately, today, we cannot think of more than an inner, spiritual defence, for lack of the necessary base for a third military and economic bloc able to oppose in any way both perils on the plane of world politics. Inner defence, however, from Americanism as well as from communism, would already signify a great deal ¹¹⁴¹

Theofascism is a Jamesian inner state of defence against the freedom and human rights values of the Enlightenment. A traditionalist state of “inner theofascism” as Evola might call it. Again the Romantic stress of the “inward”. William James, I am sure, would applaud. In other words, fascism after 1945 becomes a spiritual thing, an “inner defence”—indeed inwardness posing as apolitical is the real politics of the postmodern world.¹¹⁴² This apoliteia allows totalist institutions like sociopathic

¹¹⁴¹ “Fascism and the Traditional Political Idea” http://thompkins_cariou.tripod.com/id24.html

¹¹⁴² This stress on inwardness inner escape from the realities of life on earth is preached in such poets as Rainer Maria Rilke or Robert Bly as well as in New Age thought of many kinds. All of this is inner theofascism of a poetic kind, in various stripes and colors

corporations¹¹⁴³ to rule the world with a dead hand. The reality behind theofascism is a question of level and degree. Theofascists differ from ordinary fascist in the level and degree of their will to escape and longing for power and glory, however retrospect. The hatred of science and longing for caste hierarchy and wish to get revenge against the ravages of capital and communism inspire them. Fascists are merely nationalists who use religion to mask capitalist greed and human rights abuses. Theofascists want to see the whole world undermined or destroyed in the name of the one and universal truth owned by a tiny elite or apocalyptic remnant. Theofascism is a way of thought and an inner attitude, as well as a hope that one day the political will rise up once again and summon an apocalypse of revenge against the modern world. There is this meanness and hatred that exists in the traditionalist's movement, I have seen it, and it is meanness born of excessive pride. Indeed pride might even be said to be its core value, its heart centered on a beatific hate, a Guenonian thirst for transcendental 'evil' done in the name of good. I could sometimes see this hatred masked as 'truth' in Schuon face quite

¹¹⁴³ See also the documentary The Corporation
http://www.thecorporation.com/index.cfm?page_id=46

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Corporation_\(film\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Corporation_(film))

“According to DSM-IV (Diagnostic Statistical Manual), sociopaths are those with this antisocial personality disorder who have a longstanding pattern of “disregarding the rights of others.” The major component of this disorder is “the reduced ability to feel empathy for other people. This inability to see the hurts, concerns, and other feelings of people often results in a disregard for these aspects of human interaction...irresponsible behavior often accompanies this disorder as well as a lack of remorse for wrongdoings.” Treatment is rarely sought because sociopaths see the world as having problems and negative consequences are often blamed on society. This definition is certainly true for AIG and the Big Bailout Banks as well as Rush Limbaugh and Glenn Beck, although it kind of holds true for conservative Republicans, too.”
Quoted from

http://open.salon.com/blog/drama_donna/2010/02/07/corporations_are_sociopaths

palpably. Schuon was a small man and like Napoleon Bonaparte he admired, he had an amazing way of glowering down on people and holding his head up in haughty sneering disdain for all but a tiny few. At times he looked quite psychotic. Napoleon was a murderer and despot and in a much smaller way, Schuon aspired to something like that. He was merciless even with those he claimed to love. I saw that too. He was an ignorant man in many ways, ignorant with dogma and intolerance who claimed to be infallible but actually was one of the most fallible men I ever met. Napoleon is a really odious character, who prefigures Hitler, and Schuon is merely a cult leader, but the hatred of democracy and the drive to absolute power is the same in all of them.

So regarding the definition of totalism, religious neo-fascism, and theofascism, I think it is best to err on the side of simplicity. Occam's Razor was a useful notion that was meant to undermine the scholastic need to over-define everything and "multiply entities beyond necessity". (*Entia non sunt multiplicanda sine necessitate.*) It might be worthwhile to call the traditionalists "universal fascists", since they did not identify with one state or religion as do ordinary fascists, but they did see themselves as an elite who harkened back to gnostic past, which justified their belief that the vast rabble beneath them with not worthy of life. But none of these many terms for the traditionalists version of fascism quite applies. "Spiritual fascism" is what Guido De Giorgio, an important traditionalist student of Guenon called their own belief system. Let stick with the idea of theofascism in this book and see where it takes us.... It has been a remarkably fruitful thesis.

In the meantime, Egypt has thrown out the tyrant and torturer Hasni Mubarak, Tunisia changed its government and Syria is in revolt against its tyrant. That is all good news. Will the Mid-east go the way of South America and begin to question the tyranny of corporate Wallstreet and the World Bank as well as the tyranny of Islamic religion? I hope so.

But it seems unlikely. Or will it descend into the decadence of Iran, Saudi Arabia and the Taliban with their theocratic and misogynistic mullahs and princes? Will the so called Arab Spring bring about real democratic change or merely be a replay of Islamist violence and autocracy? Tariq Ramadan, Moslem professor of contemporary Islamic studies at Oxford University, appears to think that this movement is not really connected with Islam at all, and that what matters here is economics, and there is no doubt partial truth to this point of view. But this scholar has his own Moslem point of view that wants to deny the importance of Islam.¹¹⁴⁴ But there is no denying Islam is a huge force for superstitions, violence and ignorance in the Middle east, with fanatics killing each other every time someone in the west criticizes Muhammad, who is a cardboard cutout, indeed, whose very existence is in question.¹¹⁴⁵ It is a chilling fact that though the uprising in Egypt had a large support from women all across that country, the men took over the movement and have given nothing to the women as yet. This may or may not be a sign of things to come. Indeed, as much as one hopes that Middle Eastern countries might one day become more devoted to human rights, Robert Fisk, an expert on that area, points out that one can have little hope that this will happen right away. The U.S. government does not want it and Islam is against it. The religion of Islam still acts as a deterrent for democracy even as nominal “Moslems” as individuals might be for democracy and human rights. So far democracy is still in peril in the "Arab Spring"

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This writer is a fairly common phenomena in power struggles. Christians hate him, Islam loving leftists love him and the truth is on neither side because both Islamists and Christians are wrong.

¹¹⁴⁵ As I said earlier, the first biography of Muhammad, that of Ibn Ishaq, dates from 130 years after Muhammad's death, -- but that books survives only in large fragments reproduced in even later writings. No biography is authentic written that far from its source.

In conclusion, what I have learned of the manufacture of myths of Jesus and Muhammad as well as cult leaders and depots like Schuon and Napoleon, is that it is incontestably true that power corrupts and religion is mostly the nimbus or cloud of fictions and myths that develop around and serve the pretence and falsity of power. Religion is a "persistent fiction", an alternative,, subjective 'truth' that is based on lies. While there may be some tenuous evidence that Muhammad existed, one can still doubt his existence with much contrary evidence. Jesus probably did not exist. It is fairly clear then that the wars of religion between Islam and the west are based on many falsehoods and myths. Any effort to decrease the influence of religion in the region is thus a good thing, as it helps defeat the political myths that fuel much of the hate. To defeat the "Clash of Civilizations" requires realizing that people in Moslem and Christian countries are basically the same. The religions that separate them are myths that really have little or no basis in reality. The "Clash of Civilizations" disappears like smoke once the mythic constructions that cloak the economic tensions are dismantled. In the end it is all about fair distribution and the need to suppress the greedy and reign in the power hungry, not only in Islam but in Christian/corporate countries as well.. Dealing with the unfair distribution of resources, caring for nature, and creating fair systems of sustainable economies is what future politics is all about, not only in the Middle East but in America and China as well. It really is one world now, and all people and animals and environments matter, not corporations, religions or kings and other ideological and institutional systems of old. Jesus, Muhammad, Buddha¹¹⁴⁶ and Krishna all belong in the dust-heap of history with Zeus and Odin and other abandoned gods and goddesses.

¹¹⁴⁶ The Buddha is even more likely a myth than Muhammad, as I wrote earlier, "The earliest aniconic images of the Buddha date to the 1st century BCE and the first iconic images to the first century CE so it would be safe to suppose that the Buddhist myth was created during these years and not before."

Persistsant fictions must be faced. Maybe then the ceaseless wars will stop.. .

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THE TRANSITION FROM THE MEDIEVAL TO SCIENCE

AND THE ROLE OF THE EUCHARIST

Note: This was written originally in 1994 for a Medieval history class I took at Baldwin Wallace College in Ohio. But it has been extensively reworked in the last few years, because there is so much in it and so much worth saving for others.. This makes it one of the oldest essays in this book and one of the most complex. The historical vision it demonstrates goes back to Platonists and moves up to the present. The part at the end about the poet Rene Depestre, I owe to Jack Hirschman who turned me onto Depestre back in 1979. It was originally written as part of my rebellion against the ideas of Rama Coomaraswamy and Wolfgang Smith, both of whom I got to know pretty well. But on a deeper level it was written out of a longstanding ambiguity about Christianity in my own mind and heart. My own experience with this religion goes back to my childhood and my view of it, though I occasionally succumbed to a loving interest in it, and went to monasteries and talked with priests and Nuns, read Christian philosophy and so on. As I learned its actual history, I grew more and more skeptical of it. This the result of all I have

learned about it, on many levels and kinds of inquiry. Sept.2015

This essay is divided into the following subsections:

Preface: Rama and Me and Repulsion at Eating the Dead God

1.The Eucharistic Myth of Paul

2.Constantine, Charlemagne and Napoleon

3.General Observations on the Eucharistic Controversy.

4. Innocent the 3rd and the Universal Church

5.Plato, Aristotle and the Realist-Nominalist Controversy

6.The Transition from Eucharistic ‘Truth’ to scientific truth

7. Some Observations on Cannibalism and Conclusions

Preface: Rama and Me and Repulsion at Eating the Dead God

I wrote the ideas in this essay first in 1994, for a history class. But I have re-worked it since then. It is a fascinating area that I do not think has been looked at very carefully before. The history of the myth of Jesus has been covered pretty well by Richard Carrier¹¹⁴⁷ and others, whose textual inquiries are logical and coherent. But it remains unclear how the religion managed to foist itself on so much history for so long. Christinaity is a ‘persistant fiction”.

This essay in its original form outlined many of my intellectual, political and ethical objections to Christianity and states that I no longer

¹¹⁴⁷ On the Historicity of Jesus: Why We Might Have Reason for Doubt
By Richard Carrier. 2014

consider myself a Christian. One philosopher that I started reading in my teens that I still admire for various reasons is Bertrand Russell. I read his History of Philosophy more than once and liked some of his essays on social issues. His book Why I am not a Christian is interesting, and I agree with many of his points. Indeed, Russell outlines something similar to what I have written about at length, namely that systems of unjust knowledge create cruelty in order to uphold their authority. He notes for instance that

The more intense has been the religion of any period and the more profound has been the dogmatic belief, the greater has been the cruelty and the worse has been the state of affairs. In the so called ages of faith,...; there was the Inquisition,...there were millions of unfortunate women burned as witches and every kind of cruelty practiced upon all sorts of people in the name of religion" ¹¹⁴⁸

In contrast, Russell notes, "every improvement in criminal law, every step towards the diminution of the war, every step toward the better treatment of colored races, or every mitigation of slavery...has been opposed by the organized churches of the world" He concludes by saying the Christianity in particular has been "the principle enemy of moral progress in the world". This is a restatement of what I have been saying in this book, that religion is a part of politics, but goes by another name. ¹¹⁴⁹

Even in the current world it is clear that religion correlates with violence.. In America in the last 20 years, three violent and repressive presidents in the U.S. have been Republican Christians: Reagan and the two Bushes. Between them they killed hundreds of thousands of people

¹¹⁴⁸ 12. Russell, Bertrand. Why I am not a Christian. Allen and Unwin, 1957, pg. 20

¹¹⁴⁹ Russell also notes that many "religious people think it is a virtuous act to tell lies about the deathbeds of agnostics and such" The far right attacks Russell when they can, even to this day, though few have actually read him or studied his works. Russell was not a perfect person, no one is, but he was one of the more interesting of the last 100 years.

in Central America, Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere, all in the name of "god" or "Jesus" and American exceptionalism. Indeed. The most destructive force in the world today is the largely corporatized Christian right that currently has a decisive influence on the American government.

But though Russell defines very well how Christianity promotes narrow-minded thinking in terms of Them verses Us and cruelty, he did not go quite far enough into the ins and outs of scholasticism and how the church came to be so central to many historical atrocities. Nor did he quite explain how fundamentally opposed to nature, animals and life much of Christianity has been. He did not explore very deeply the strange relations of Christianity and science either. However, he did correctly show how absurd and destructive Christianity is on the subjects of sex and womanhood.

The intellectual arguments that accompanied my abandonment of Christianity is explored both here and in other essays written between 1991 and 97. But what I did not explain in these essays is what brought this about in my actual life of this period. I will write a little about that here.

When I left the Schuon cult in 1991, two of the people that helped me get out of the cult were Wolfgang Smith and Rama Coomaraswamy, the son of Ananda Coomaraswamy.. I discuss Wolfgang Smith elsewhere in these books so I will not dwell on him much. Suffice it to say that I had no interest Dr. Smith's reactionary and inaccurate ideas about the theory of evolution, based on 1930's creationism. Dinosaur bones are much older than any idea of gods or any abstract ideology, Platonic, Taoist or otherwise.

But in this essay I will discuss Rama Coomaraswamy. Rama, like

his father Ananda, had developed a backward looking, right wing and elitist notion of religion. Indeed, what I learned from Rama is how political religious ideology really is. Virtually everything Rama has written trying to justify the Mass prior to Vatican 2 is political, though it is dressed up as a defense of a ritual. The eucharistic ritual he defends is literally fiction, but the politics is not.

Rama's father Ananda was an upper class exiled Hindu brought up in England, nursed on William Morris and reactionary, Symbolist and romantic ideas. He later returned to Sri Lanka, and became a reactionary aesthete, who wished to revive the medieval caste system. Coomaraswamy's interest in "sacred art" was basically political concern that grew of a nostalgia for lost or dying forms of political power. This political concern was sublimated and even denied behind a pose of ultimate spirituality, derived partly from Rene Guenon. Like other forms of spiritual fascism, Ananda Coomaraswamy's ideology is based on a nostalgic, apocalyptic and gnostic nationalism. Coomaraswamy longed for a return to the imagined India of his great grandfathers on Sri Lanka and Ancient India. He also wished to go back to the days of monarchic aristocracy of Meister Eckhart's Europe.¹¹⁵⁰ Indeed, Coomaraswamy was part of the effort to restyle the medieval scholastic and aristocratic Eckhart as a New Age Vedantist of a Blavatskian stripe. Rene Guenon

¹¹⁵⁰ Eckhart was condemned as a heretic and tried in the Inquisition and may have died because of it, though there is dispute about how he died.. He preached a syncretistic vision which appealed to traditionalist mystics like Ananda Coomaraswamy. He was resurrected from obscurity in the 19th century by German mystics like Von Baader, who liked his universalistic tendencies. Since Von Baader he has been used to promote 'non-dual' awareness. Baader himself was a sort of disciple of Schelling, another transcendentalist mystic. Eckhart relies heavily on myth and analogy as do the traditionalists. Eckhart's hatred of the earth is typical of medieval mystical doctrines. He writes "The heavens are everywhere alike remote from earth, so should the soul be remote from all earthly things alike so as not to be nearer to one than another" He also advocates a sort of "aristocracy" of the soul based on renunciation of all relationship to existing things. He writes "The man who has truly renounced himself and does not once cast a glance on what he has renounced, and thus remains immovable and unalterable, that man alone has really renounced self" This is theocratic mysticism and goes well with caste elitism., which is always an aristocratic system. (<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/eckhart/sermons.vii.html>)

had also longed for the return of the horror of the European caste system of the Medieval Church of the Inquisition, just as some of the Nazi's had longed to return to the Knights Templar. Indeed, Guenon and Coomaraswamy, who became friends, were both exiles as well as political reactionaries who endorsed monarchist and theocratic politics . Like his mentor René Guenon, Ananda was a "spiritual fascist", and his son Rama continued this "tradition".

But I did not know this yet in 1991. In 1991 I talked with Rama on the phone regularly for about a year or more, with many long and frequent conversations. I had had the misfortune of having witnessed Schuon molest some underage girls in secret rituals called "Primordial Gatherings". My relation with Rama was not one of spiritual guide and student, though he tried to make it that. I thought I should go to the police about what I had seen, but was afraid to do it, as I knew there would be retaliation and slanders against me. Rama had insisted that I should be courageous and expose Schuon's crimes. I agreed with this. He advised me to go to the police. My mother, Wolfgang Smith and others I consulted, thought I should tell the police about Schuon too. Rama was also interested in confirming his already dismal opinion of Schuon's psychology and questioned me deeply about how Schuon behaved. He was using Schuon as an example of a cult leader who had serious mental problems. Rama was about to change careers and wanted to give up surgery and get into psychology instead. Rama was ill and could no longer do surgery. He also advised me to attend Catholic services, which I tried out for a time, but found to be hopelessly narrow and medieval, even repulsively so. I talked with Dr. Smith fairly often as well, who was then closely in touch with Rama. Wolfgang had a feeling or "horror" about Schuon, after I told him what I learned of him. Both Rama and Wolfgang knew how much I suffered from that cult and what they had

done to me and others. They both hated Schuon and said that he was "evil and "satanic" and supported the idea that he be prosecuted by the law. So it is true that Smith and Coomaraswamy, as well as my mother, were instrumental in getting Schuon arrested.

I owed these men a certain gratefulness for helping me get out of the cult, but was soon in conflict about who they were and what they wanted me to believe and endorse. Wolfgang Smith and Huston Smith (no relation) had earlier advised me to enter the Schuon cult. It became clear to me that Rama offered to help me to get out of the cult because he had doubted Schuon's sanity for years. But he and Smith merely wanted to convert me to their extremist and fanatical beliefs, and when I did not go along with that, their friendship and well wishes vanished. I was merely an object of proselytization. Rama never aided me psychologically and indeed, I thought his ideas about psychology were crackpot and wrong. He was trying to apply his dad's ideas of Vedantic and Medieval Christianity to psychology, which did not work. He had some understanding of cults, but I disagreed with him that Schuon was "evil". Schuon created a kind of phony spiritual psychology that combined metaphysical ideas with modern psychological theories and Rama resembled Schuon in this. After Rama became a psychiatrist, in the middle 1990's, his psychological theories combined metaphysical ideas with modern psychological theories in really wacky ways and I lost respect for Rama's abilities as a thinker. He believed in exorcism and other medieval nonsense and tried to impose his really backward and archaic theories upon psychology. I knew Rama before he ever became a psychiatrist and was aghast when I learned how he was applying his ideas to people. His effort to label homosexuality as a spiritual disease-- is a case in point. Rama hatred of science and the theory of evolution made him a bad scientist and I'm sure did not help him as a psychologist. Rama combined his hatred of science with his backward and reactionary political ideas and this is a poison combination that can

be seen in his writings on women, Gays, the Inquisition and other subjects. In any case, Coomaraswamy Schuon and Guenon all created a horrific system of psychological analysis that treats anyone who questions spirituality as sick and "profane", insane or satanic. I could not accept what they thought about evolution, psychology or religion. But it is typical of the traditionalists that they shun or ostracize those who refuse to think as they do. They had no interest in me, but were merely using me to exalt their particular form of fanatical religion. I resisted such use of me.

Rama's hypocritical and two faced behavior often disturbed me. For instance, Rama said that if I go to a traditional Catholic Church I should lie about him in the confessional to the priest. What kind of man wants you to lie in this context? He said he did not want 30 year involvement with Schuon to be known to the priests because that would compromise his position in the church to which he belonged. I was aghast at his telling me to lie. He was saying priests are corrupt and they talk among themselves about what they hear in confession. I realized later that this is why Innocent III set up the Confession rite, so he could monitor the populations and what they were doing and thinking. It was a way to control people. I often used to think it was a questionable rite, but I finally realized confession really is a trap of sorts to monitor correct behavior. This is one facet of Catholic corruption, there are many more.

I was also aghast at various other things he told me. For instance he said one day in a conversation that Hitler was 'not that bad a man' and that the holocaust had been greatly exaggerated. He said that the Inquisition was not altogether a bad thing. He has since become something of an Inquisition denier as well as a holocaust denier. He was convinced and often said that he thought Schuon was an 'evil man', but then he quotes him liberally in his books. I disliked Rama's addiction to calling everything he disliked evil. He even said he performed exorcisms,

and believed that doing these superstitious, medieval rites constituted a sort of spiritual psychology. I do not believe in "evil". Having seen Schuon's delusions of grandeur and willingness to use and hurt others, I was quite aware Schuon was not a good man, But he was not 'evil', as both Rama and Wolfgang Smith said to me repeatedly on the phone or in writing. The concept of evil posits a supernatural being that acts as an agent thought individuals, this is absurd. Schuon was selfish and vainglorious, malicious and willing to lie at the drop of a pin,-- Yes. But I soon saw that Rama also wished to vault himself. He wanted to be the paragon of all truth and was himself head of an apocalyptic cult. He set himself up as a sort of Pope of the Post-Conciliar Church.

Rama was an heart surgeon and complained to me on the phone that he should not have to pay malpractice insurance. He made 1000 dollars and hour plying his trade, but appeared to think those who might suffer from the mistake of his knife deserved no right to sue him for suffering and punitive damages. I found this greedy an selfish. Indeed, Rama's way of looking at the world was elitist and corporate. Like many doctors in the United States he was overpaid, and his income ought to have been cut in half or less under some form of a single payer system such as they have in Japan or Britain. Rama became a catholic "priest" who was also married. I have no objection to priests being married, or being homosexual for that matter, so long as they are open about it and obey our societies laws. But Rama was making up his own religion and then calling it "traditional", while he castigates virtually everyone else for "picking and choosing" their own religion, when that is exactly what he does. His particular brand of John Birch Society catholic or spiritual fascism did not interest me. He tried to ram it down my throat, more or less, but I rejected it. He held that against me and thought ill of me because I would not conform to his fanatical beliefs.

That said, it is also true that Rama was a sweet man in many ways, and he did help me get out of the Schuon cult and I was grateful to him for that and told him so. Rama was one of many ex members of the Schuon cult who were very helpful to me after I left the cult. Schuon had made many enemies and they were all ready to help someone who had seen as deeply into the workings of the cult as I had. I was also grateful to Rama for his encouraging typing up and sending out my original document about the cult. The cult punished him for this and made him sign a confidentiality agreement that we would never use their names or talk about Schuon in public. That kind of legal agreement ought to be illegal. Rama knew I was telling the truth about the involvement of young girls and had assisted the police in their investigation of Schuon. But Rama was weak and unable to escape the Schuonian blackmail machine. He ended using them to get his father's books published-- a move I thought duplicitous and cowardly. I grew distrustful of Rama and his ideas during the course of my relation with him. He began to sound increasingly like an extremist fanatic--- a Torquemada, Savonorola or some other fire-brand Inquisitor. He was moralistic to the extreme and believed himself to be in possession of the absolute "truth, capital "T". He reminded me increasingly of Nazis, fundamentalists, and cult leaders. His ideas against evolution were creationist, ill researched and absurd, as were the similar ideas of Wolfgang Smith. Both of them knew almost nothing about biology, as I have said.

Rama had appointed himself the intellectual leader of a fanatical right wing religious movement that called itself various names, but which essentially goes under the rubric, "traditionalist Catholicism". They believe that the Catholic Church was abandoned by the popes in the 1960's, who wisely liberalized the church and made it more democratic. Rama wanted a return to the autocratic and tyrannical Church of old,

the same Church which signed a concordat with Hitler. It was a political preference above all, though Rama was blind to his own politics, as are most traditionalists. Rama thought he was in possession of the truth, as he claimed, and I began to see that his religion was a form of arbitrary dictatorship based on nostalgia for a traditional church that was not much good 500 years ago and which does not deserve now to be resurrected. His views of homosexuality were little better than the Nazi's. He says in his writings that homosexuals should be punished "both in this world and the next" -- the imaginary next world of "hell". He also has supported a wacky conspiratorial smear campaign that seek to brand homosexual priests as part of a satanic plot. The reasons for homosexuality in the Catholic Church are fairly clear. The absurd policy of celibacy, with an accompanying misogyny is the primary cause. The cause is not Satanism, which is really quite rare--- but the same old ordinary abuse of power and corruption that has characterized Catholicism for many centuries.

Moreover, Rama's views on women were reactionary, sexist and patriarchal. I finally decided that though I was grateful for his help that he was not going to be my teacher or mentor in any way. Indeed, as I began to look closely and objectively at the Church that Rama and Dr. Smith claimed to love, I began to come to a firmer assessment of the reasons why I had doubted the truth of Christianity for so long. But for all that I did not leave the church because of Rama. He was just one of the last instances of Christian hypocrisy and fanaticism that I finally decided to leave it. I did not leave the church because I disliked it as a child. I particularly disliked the use of the crucifixion as a tool of exploitive sympathy. I was horrified by this image as a child, and consider that subjecting children to images like that is a kind of abuse. Such images are abusive and do not belong in classrooms. Nor did I leave

the church because my mother was molested by a priest, which she was, or because I was molested by a priest, which I was, at age 12 or 13. There were other deeper reasons, in addition to these reasons, that I left Christianity and eventually, religion.

So, why did I reject Christianity? This whole long essay is about why. The last time I went to Church was in 1991. I found myself sitting in church and as the Eucharistic species was about to be passed out I had a physical feeling of revulsion for it. I did not want to have anything to do with it. I found the idea of eating the body of a some man of 2000 years ago repulsive. The "mystery" of the Eucharist was a lie about nature and the world. I did not want to eat the dead body of a man, no matter how symbolic that body was claimed to be. I did not want to drink his blood. I did not want to partake of this symbolic cannibalism. There was nothing "satanic" in this rejection of the Eucharist. Indeed, my objections were all ethical and moral. The same revulsion would eventually lead me to become a vegetarian in 1998. I rejected Christianity because it is a gnostic religion that sees the natural world as "original sin" and is "fallen". It exalts a transcendent fiction above the actualities of the real world of nature. It is human centered. Its hatred of the natural world is repulsive to me. Eating the Eucharist seems a sort of psychological blackmail. I was supposed to eat this body and drink this blood to partake of world and life-denying spirituality. I would be better than other people if I did it. But I did not want to be better and did not see nature as place of evil. I became a vegetarian for the same reason that I could not partake of the Eucharist. I could no longer participate in the hatred, abuse and exploitation implicit in the act of eating animal meat. I left Christianity and the eating of meat largely because I respect both human and nature's rights too much.

I stood up in the pew left the Church shortly after I felt repulsed by eating the flesh of the dead god and drinking his blood. I never went back to it. I'm sure I never will. I have learned too much about the history of Christianity and how many lives it has destroyed, both in the human and animal and natural world to ever be a Christian again. It became clear to me in time that Christ is a fiction, he never existed. It is a myth. Millions of people believe it, but none of it ever happened, it is a fabrication of the 2nd century, made up in the 100 years after Paul the evangelist, who never said a word about the historical Christ, because there never was one..

The Eucharistic Myth of Paul

Of course, there were other reasons I left Christianity besides revulsion about the Eucharist. I saw how deeply Christianity had been involved in harming non-Christian peoples; how Christian missionaries hurt poor and native peoples all around the world; how deeply Christianity had been involved in fomenting wars and injustices: how destructive politics in the United States was deeply influenced by right wing Christians. These and many other reasons decided me to renounce Christianity.

Since it is now clear to me, if not to others, that the Christ story is a fiction, how did it come about and why? How did the Eucharist come to exist as the primary rite in Christianity?. It is clear from Earl Doherty's writings that Paul or those who used the Pauline fictions, created a new religion during the first and second century in which a figure named Christ was given the attributes earlier ascribed to Attis, Dionysus, and Osiris? Attis was a self-castrating god of vegetation, whose devotees were part of the Cybele cult and who were celibates.. Dionysus is a god who is

killed as a child but reborn from the thigh of Zeus, and thus is a god of rebirth and wine was important in his cult, Bacchus is one of his names.. Osiris is an Egyptian myth also deals with a god who is dismembered and reassembled in a rebirth. These are all death and rebirth myths. The notion of the god who is eaten maybe distantly related to the Chronos myth who ate his children, who managed to live in his belly. His child Zeus causes them to be disgorged. The children are Demeter, Hestia, Hera, Hades and Poseidon, who are Greek gods themselves.



Painting by Peter Paul Rubens of Cronus
devouring one of his children

I have a theory that the Gospels writers adapted an Egyptian myth, somewhat reversed, to create the Eucharist story. My theory is as follows: I think it likely that the Eucharistic myth begins in the Osiris myth of Egypt. In the Osiris myth, of course, in one version, the god is dismembered and then brought back to life from the many pieces, but he

is not eaten, he is pieced back together, in most versions by his wife/sister Isis. Making people eat the dead god was a stroke of theurgical fiction of great genius, perhaps following Cronos as a Greek Model, since it got the fiction into one's stomach, making it more real than fiction. In one sense, Jesus is Osiris who gets eaten by followers in a sacrificial feast.

While the Christ myth certainly evokes the Osiris myth, it also evokes other aspects of the Osiris story. In Egyptian myths about the fate of the dead, the dead were judged by a god named Anubis. If you were weighed in the balance to be good you went off to join Osiris, but if found wanting were given to a "devourer"-- a goddess named Ammit. The Gospel writers made Christ be both Anubis, Osiris and Ammit, all in one. Jesus becomes not only the judge of all souls in heaven and hell (Anubis), but was supposed to be "meat" that would feed live souls and thus give them a better afterlife. Jesus reverses the soul eating of Ammit by being eaten himself, and thus creating new souls for god. He is like Osiris in being a heaven god who is resurrected. But he is like Ammit and in being the god of those who eat Christ's flesh and drink his blood get eternal life, and saved from damnation. The Osiris/Anubis/ Ammit myth is very similar to the Christian myth and may be one of the origins of the myth of Eucharistic communion idea. I have no proof that this is where the Gospel writers got the story, but it makes a certain sense. It was a brilliant fiction, in any case, and simplifies the Egyptian myth seamlessly. Perhaps the Gospel fictions add to the Ammit myth the Christ's blood and body as feast to the story of the sacrificial vegetation god, Osiris.

The notion of gods who are saved by Zeus is not that different than Christ whose saves lives by being eaten. These are chaotic dream stories which are bizarre, non sensical and violent. Christ was an idea, not a person: a composite, made of a syncretic combination of mythic dream

stories, --- a Platonic creation, designed by some rather brilliant story tellers of the Gospels as a being of divine proportions who is reborn after he dies and enters heaven. The beautiful young man who dies and is eaten by his followers might have its origins in war stories too. The young man who dies is seen not to die, but to become part of his followers, who love and worship him.

In the earliest Eucharistic stories the memorial feast is a cosmic event, not a literal one. Paul writes that Christ is not an actual person, but a cosmic force, like the Greek gods. Later perhaps, Doherty and Carrier claim, probably in the middle of the second century, he was made into a historical person (euhemerization) by the many Gospel writers who made up the fiction of his life. ¹¹⁵¹

How exactly the theme of eating the dead god was incorporated into the gospels, is still unclear, and neither Doherty or Carrier have really answered that, nor does anyone else know as yet. The many violent myths of devouring children or eating gods are psychotic images that were created to serve social purposes. Why they worked is obscure, though it is obvious that they were images that distorted and yet exploited basic sexual and biological drives of parenthood, eating, sex or birth giving. The Eucharist is first mentioned in Paul, and it appears that Paul is describing a mythic event and not an actual occurrence. The point of the myth is to try to recreate the consciousness of being saved by the body of Christ each time one does the rite. There probably was no Christ so there was no Eucharistic dinner. But the historical event is irrelevant anyway, all that matters to the Church is the ritual enactment. The actual rite seems to appear in history after the invention of the ritual by Paul or the Gospel writers.. The Eucharistic myth appears to develop

¹¹⁵¹ I discuss the dating of the Gospels in another chapter in this book. Carrier holds to earlier dates, but I am not sure he is right. I will not reply to the details of that here. It seems clear that the early dates supplied by Christians for the Gospels are fake, and the early Roman writers like Ignatius and Josephus are also fake or interpolations. So there is little reason to believe early dates. 125-200 C.E. is a fair estimate of when they were created.

slowly form Paul to the Gospel writers, over 50-75 years between 75 C.E. and 150 C.E.. Like the Gospels themselves the origins are obscured in the mists of the early 2nd century.

This is of course, highly speculative. No one really knows how the mythic elements got developed or how they were thought up. But it is not at all uncommon to have myths like this develop at that time. It fits the taste for repulsive myths that develop during this time of bloody animal sacrifice and vegetation myths. The fictional reenactment of the Eucharistic ceremony has lasted many centuries, and still exists. It was developed as many myths are developed, grown from a combination of subjective and rather psychotic imagery in repulsive myths used as part of political opportunism. The history of the Eucharist is really the history of a political construction, always fraught with difficulty and contention. The history of these disputes is clear however and I will be talking about that here.

So the myth of Christ got translated into the political actions for more than a thousand years. In her study of the Eucharist, Corpus Christi, Muri Rubin has provided a scholarship on the history of the idea and practice of the Eucharist in the late medieval culture. She concludes this book with the telling sentence:

"the Eucharist was related to a compelling narrative, to a most powerful ritual, to most useful and familiar practices, and it became a receptacle of power, as well as a way of challenging such power."¹¹⁵²

Her thesis is therefore, that the Eucharist enshrines a politics and a theory of knowledge, which acts as an organizing power in late

¹¹⁵² Rubin, Muri, Corpus Christi, The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture. Cambridge University Press, 1991, p. 361

Medieval culture, and one should add, as an organizing force for the end of the Roman Empire, the developing Feudal system and the Dark Ages. Contentions about the nature of the Eucharist were also a way of challenging the power and authority of the institutions of the time, as Luther would make clear much later.¹¹⁵³ Luther denies the cosmological aspect of the Eucharist and makes it merely a “rememberance”. My concern here is to take the historical development of the Eucharist as a thesis and use this as a starting point and to show that the transition from a Christian society which had the Eucharist as its central symbol to a secular, scientific society, which had the human reason as its central symbol, is primarily a transition from one kind of power to another. The myth functions as a device for organizing social and mental behavior.

The Eucharist was the central symbol of the power and authority of the Church and the states that served it. With the rise of the Protestant rebellion and the scientific revolution that accompanied this rebellion, the center of power becomes transferred to science, capitalism and the modern state. The Eucharist was supposed to symbolize the "purity" of the Intellect and of Christ who represented this Intellect, and this theory of knowledge presumed to be "disinterested" and objective. The foundations of the scientific presumption to attain disinterested truth through "pure" science has its roots in the Medieval theory of knowledge.

The thesis in this essay was originally is part of a much larger inquiry of preparatory studies which I hoped to pursue further in

¹¹⁵³¹¹⁵³ Luther is an interesting and complex character. He is one of the first real insurrectionists and critical thinker who brought self-appointed “authorities” into question. In this he is in accord with the Renaissance and the rise of science. He presages the later French and American revolutions on the one hand, I cannot but praise him for this. But he is also a sort of grandfather to the Nazis. He was a racist and an anti-Semite of a terrible kind. He unleashed a hatred of art of all kinds rather than just a hatred of Catholic relics and other “Popish” portrait paintings of the ultra-rich.. The destruction of art after Luther died is a terrible thing, one of several iconoclastic movements that would victimize art in world history. In this he was like Savonarola and the Bonfire of the Vanities. Luther is in many ways the father of today’s fundamentalist far right Protestant Christians in the U.S. and elsewhere.

graduate school. I completed that and was still not satisfied that I arrived at a real understanding of what happened and why. My purpose was originally to explore the relation of theories of knowledge to the social practices and powers and atrocities that result from them, as this relation reveals itself in diverse cultures and environments, philosophies, historical manifestations and practices. Starting out quite specifically with the period between Homer and Christ, I moved out into the history of religion and politics in general.

So, originally, I explore the growth of a totalitarian system of knowledge and power as revealed in the transitional period from Homer to Plato to Christ. I had concluded in an essay called "Homer, Plato and the Gnostic Tradition" with the observation that the symbol of "Christ as the Universal Man...", was enormously successful in providing a paradigm of universal power to order and control men's souls." I came to a similar conclusion in regard to the significance of Plato's philosophy:

"The idea of turning the symbolic and mythological concerns of Homer into ideological and increasingly metaphysical and political, sublimated, rationalistic, explanations in Plato is a process that enormously extends the scope and ambition of Greek culture. Plato's abstract conceptions can be applied to society more concretely and uniformly than the local mythology of Homer and this allows of greater precision and control. This tendency to generalize concepts applied to all areas of interest is furthered by Aristotle, with his tendency to rationalistic catalogue. Both the Empire of Alexander, who was Aristotle's student, and the more distant Roman Empire, which founded itself on the Greek model, are largely the result of the Platonic and Aristotelian liberation of the Greek will to power through knowledge."(pg.20)

I started to move beyond the ideas of Plato, rejecting them, ultimately. But Plato was trying to generalize the ideology of social control across a wider area than the mere fictions of Homer could do. The Christians began with a Platonic construct of the Christ as a sort of Demiurge and then wrote histories about this fiction to make it seem real. This was already evident in the Jewish philosopher Philo who postulated a Logos, based in Greek and Platonist ideas. In Philo the Logos has the function of an advocate on behalf of humanity and also that of a God's messenger to save the world. It is clear that Paul had no notion of Christ as a person, but only thought he was a deity, like Philo. It was not unusual and the Romans like to write histories of gods as if they were real people. This appears to have even been done with Praxiteles, the sculptor, as I show in another essay in this book. In any case, it is Paul who imagines the Eucharist idea first in 1, Corinthians, 11: 23. This states

For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, this cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

In other words the central Christian rite is a fiction of Paul's imagination, though exactly who Paul was no one really knows. We are

supposed to believe him, even though he gives no evidence Jesus actually existed.

So early on there was already a syncretic combination of an invented Platonic ideology combined with the image of Christ, which was initially an abstraction that had no history attached to it at all. I understood that the Christian Apocalyptic idea of Salvation had already combined with Greek ideas in Paul's imagination. He was a man of the Roman Empire which itself is a totalistic society whose roots are to be found in the theory of total knowledge and total social control developed by the Greeks of the time of Aristotle and Plato, but more Plato than Aristotle, who is something of an anomaly. It is not by accident that almost all of the early Church Father's, from Origin and Gregory of Nyssa, to Dionysius the Areopagite (Pseudo Denys), Augustine and John of Erigena are Platonists. The Platonic theory of metaphysics is a theory of the universe as a hierarchy of knowledge descending from Heaven to earth; and those who represent this knowledge are the "elite". This is the now discredited ideology of the Great Chain of Being, which I have discussed often in this book.

The Platonic theory was already adapted to Christianity in the Gospel of John too, where he refers to Christ as the universal "Logos", Philo's idea. The Augustine theory created the idea of the Church as the intermediary, "pontifex" or bridge between God and the world, and therefore claims itself to be the only truly authentic and legitimate power in the world. Augustine's idea is the natural result of the combination of Christ as the Logos and the cosmological hierarchy envisioned by Plato. The development of the Eucharist as the ingested and active symbol of the universal Church and its total power over both the world and the individual human "souls" who lived in this world, was an inevitable consequence of the Platonic Christian theory of knowledge, exemplified best in the philosophy of Augustine. The Eucharist was meant to

transform the Roman Empire into a dominion over subjects through the ingestion of the divine god. This is already implied in Paul, who appears to have invented the myth behind the Eucharistic rite.

The Augustinian philosophy is the dominant philosophy through the Dark Ages until the translation of Aristotle's works from Arabic into Latin at the end of the 12th century. The availability of Aristotle's works, and their manifest difference from those of Plato, especially on the subject of the theory of universals, provoked the Nominalist/Realist controversy, and this brought the nature of the Eucharist, and therefore the Church itself, as the embodiment of total knowledge, into question. The story of the Nominalist/Realist controversy is at the center of the debate over the authority of the Church, and one of the results of this controversy is that the outlines of a new form of power through knowledge would begin to form, namely, the beginnings of science, the rise of secularism, nationalism and the concern with man as an individual apart from God and the Church. This is a complex story of a persistent delusion that originates in Paul and goes on until the present, so be prepared for some complicated retellings.

1. Constantine, Charlemagne and Napoleon

The period in question can be roughly framed by two Coronations, that of Charlemagne and that of Napoleon. The Coronation of Charlemagne is described by Philip Johnson as follows:

"The Pope insisted on performing a Roman ritual under which he placed a crown on Charles' head and then prostrated himself in an act of emperor worship.. Charles was taken aback by this weird eastern enactment, which was completely alien to

anyone coming from north of the Alps, with a Germanic background. It seemed suspicious to him that the crown, which he had won by his own achievements, should be presented to him by the Bishop of Rome as if it were in his gift."¹¹⁵⁴

This act, on Christmas day 800, defines the history of the next seven centuries in that it reveals the ambiguity in the struggle for power between the Church and State or the Church and Monarch. Christianity is a form of politics that created metaphysical justification to further itself. The "Holy Roman Emperors", after Charlemagne, would claim, in varying degrees, some measure of divine right, and, both in opposition and complementarily to the power of the Kings, the Popes would claim their superiority and dependence to the Emperor on the basis of their intermediary position between the "worldly kingdom", which belonged to the King, and the Augustinian "City of God" which the Church was supposed to represent in anticipation of the final apocalypse. The city of god is merely a mythic magnification of the process of political fiction making.

The complex arrangement of worldly and spiritual power lacked the totalistic simplicity of the Constantinian formula of the union of Church and state in one man, namely Constantine himself. Constantine established the emperor as the ultimate regulatory authority within the religious discussions involving the early Christian councils. He stressed orthodoxy and set up a system to punish dissent. The metaphysical enunciation made dogma at Council of Chalcedon (451 C.E.), concerning the two natures of Christ, that he is "True man and True God" was a symbolic expression of the unity of Emperor and Church. This formula of Constantine and was neat and symmetrical and seemed to justify his

¹¹⁵⁴ Johnson, Philip. A History of Christianity, Anteneum, 1976, p.126

rather megalomaniacal claim to an absolute theocratic monarchy such that all enemies of the state were necessarily the enemies of God.

The case of the Coronation of Napoleon, 1400 years later, represents a complete shift in emphasis from the Coronation of Charlemagne and the monolithic theocracy of Constantine. Napoleon forced the Pope by various means to submit to allowing him to crown himself. This act, which put the Romantic and unique individual, at least symbolically, above the church, and the state, brought to an end to conflict of the Church and state that had concerned Constantine and Charlemagne. After Napoleon, authentic knowledge and power are increasingly less likely to be perceived as coming from the Authority of the Revealed Truth of the Bible and the Church and increasingly from man himself. Napoleon's self-crowning is an ironic reversal of the Coronation of Charlemagne. After Napoleon, conflicts in the pursuit of power would concern the relation of states to individuals and the church would be all but replaced by science as the touchstone of the knowledge/power relationship.

The supremacy of Reason, symbolized by science and by the enlightened individual or state, which Napoleon claimed to be when he said "I am France", had replaced the supremacy of Christ, as the arbiter between the true and the untrue, the real and the unreal. This passage from a world centered on the otherworldly Christ, considered as locus of authentic knowledge and power, to man's reason considered as the authentic locus and determinant of legitimate knowledge and power is the subject of this essay. The consideration of Napoleon might seem out of place in an essay on religion but comparing him with Constantine is the most expeditious way to express the perimeters of my inquiry. The brightest minds of the French Revolution sought of end tyranny of all

kinds, Napoleon betrayed that ideal and set himself up as a secular tyrant.

2.General Observations on the Eucharistic Controversy.

The Eucharistic doctrine of transubstantiation was declared dogma at the Lateran Council of 1215. This Dogma was reiterated and strengthened at the Council of Trent(1554-1560). The dogma states that through the Consecration by the priest at the altar that a "change is brought about of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of His blood." ¹¹⁵⁵ This dogma is perhaps the most important in the history of the Church for a number of reasons. First, it reaches back to the essence of the message of Christ. Secondly, it repeats the definition of Christ at Chalcedon that made Christ "true Man and true God". Thirdly, the formation of this dogma between 1215 and 1560 occurs precisely at that point where the Church was in process of creating a world Empire. Lastly, the Council of Trent in 1554 is primarily a reactionary attempt to curb the rise of Protestantism and secularism which the Church rightly perceived as threats to their total power and control of the faithful. It is this last reason that gives this Council its particular reactionary fervour and it is this fervour which makes the most reactionary of today's traditionalist Catholic Fundamentalists harken back to the Council of Trent as the definitive statement of Church Authority and authenticity. Traditionalist Catholicism is a nostalgic

¹¹⁵⁵ Schroeder, H.L.Rev. The Cannons and Decrees of the Council of Trent Tan Books, 1978, pg.75 4. See also Coomaraswamy, Rama. The Destruction of the Christian Tradition, Perennial, 1979. This book rather absurdly tries to pander fear and tries to maintain that the apocalypse is now upon us because the Council of Vatican 2 in 1966 changed the performance of the Eucharistic rite. It is a book of deep, reactionary bitterness and hatred of the modern world, that even recommends the restoration of the "Oath against Modernism" for all Catholics, and also attacks the theory of evolution and democracy as manifestations of the devil. Coomaraswamy's obsession with evil reminds one of reactionaries like Savonarola. It is a very interesting book however, if one would study the nature of religious fanaticism and the manner in which the will to power becomes attached to symbols, such as the Eucharist.

political movement that uses symbolism to try to resurrect a dead form of power.

In any case, the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 decided the issue of the Church's stand on the subject of universals and this was reinforced by Trent. This subject was the central philosophical issue of the Middle Ages. The Church decided in favor of the Realist position, more or less, rather than the Nominalist position. The Realist position was essentially Platonic, and summarized in the Scholastic formula, **Universalia Ante Rem**; the universal is prior to the particular thing, or the idea comes before the physical, aristocrats and priests prior to other people. In the philosophy of Aquinas and others, a more Aristotelian concept of universals would be combined, rather ambiguously, with the Platonic position. It was this ambiguity that led to the Realist/Nominalist controversy over the subject of universals and made the question of universals central to the controversy over the nature of the eucharist.

The Nominalist position attacked this very ambiguity, since it was by no means clear how Christ could enter the Eucharistic host and become one with its substance without being contained also in its material substance. The Nominalists asked how Christ could become bread and wine when the bread and wine were not literally Christ. The standard reaction of the Church, as far back as St. Paul and Augustine, was that this paradox was a great “mystery” and it would be a grave sin, indeed perhaps the unforgivable sin against the Holy Ghost itself, to question this divine mystery. This Mystagogical, obscurantist strategy was effective, but appealed more to fear than reason. The Church of this time was fast becoming the central and totalistic power over the entire European continent, while yet the recent translation of Aristotle and new economic benefits had encouraged many to try to reason for themselves. Thus, even while the church was trying to use reason to justify its power

and legitimacy, which was based on the Eucharist, others were using this same reason to question the authority of the Church and bring into question the Eucharist.

The Nominalist position, at least in its clearer forms, as in Berengar (c.999-1088), Rocellinus(c.1050-1131) and William of Occam(d.1347) was derived almost entirely from Aristotle, and tended deny the reality of the Platonic universals, claiming universals were conceptual abstractions from particular things. This brilliant legal strategy had an important factual truth as its base. The truth was that ideas do not create things, things have an independent existence. Thus the Nominalists claimed the opposite of the realists and in the corresponding scholastic formula, claimed that “ **Universalia Post Rem**”—or universals come after things. It is this latter view that is obviously the true one, though, it can be stated that that was not easy to know in the 14th century. The Nominalist position formed the conceptual basis of what would become science. This is not to say that Nominalism was a scientific position, rather it expressed the possibility in idea form of what would become science in practice two centuries later, between the period of Roger Bacon and, Da Vinci, Francis Bacon , Galileo and Newton. While science develops out of the Medieval controversies, it is in opposition to it in very important ways, as would become clear with Darwin.

3. Innocent III and the Universal Church

Having generally outlined the nature of the Realist/Nominalist controversy and indicated something about its relation to the Eucharist and the dogma of transubstantiation, it would be useful to situate these

developments in the context of aspects of the history of the period. The dispensing of the Eucharist was the central rite of the church, over which it exercised complete control. The Eucharist was a political symbol that one had to eat, and thus, or so it appeared, Christ became a part of the body that ate it. This is pure fiction, of course, but it was strongly believed to be true, in fact. It is difficult to understand this power in our time because, the people of medieval times were convinced by priests, churches, cathedrals, art, government and all the accoutrements of their culture, that to question the church was a sin and to question the Eucharist was the worst of sins, because it amounted to questioning Christ as a savior. This is magical thinking of a very developed kind. It requires policing, since it is so unlikely.

Since, allegedly, the salvation of one's soul depended on the Eucharist as the central sacrament, one stood in fear of the church, and indeed, the church had granted itself not only the power to murder heretics but to pronounce excommunication, which meant that one would be shunned as well as damned, a “fate worse than death” it was claimed. Of course, this is blackmail of a vile kind, basically a form of mind control, and a variation of this effort to demand conformity on pain of death characterize all bad governments and institutions. But it was an effective use of psychological terrorism.

Innocent III used excommunication as a political tool in the case of Markward of Anweiler. Innocent wrote:

we excommunicate, anathematize, curse and damn him, as oath breaker, blasphemer, incendiary, as faithless, criminal and usurer, in the name of God the Almighty, and of the son and the Holy Ghost by the authority of the blessed Apostles Peter and Paul

and by our own [authority]... we order that henceforth anyone who helps him shall be bound by the same sentence. ¹¹⁵⁶

The Fourth Lateran council, it should be observed in passing, also made Confession compulsory for all Catholics. This is not without importance. Just as the Eucharistic rite was meant to incorporate the souls and bodies of the believers into the Church by communion, the Confessional rite was intended to circumscribe and gain control over the most intimate aspects of individual conscience. Telling on others as well as oneself became a tool of surveillance. The Church wanted not just the minds of the population but to control their inner thoughts as well. They also wanted a means to spy on enemies. The rite of confession and the growing power of the Inquisition were both developed under Innocent III and expanded to create a totalistic society such as both Plato, Hitler and Stalin might admire. They wanted complete control of individuals from the most intimate aspects of the sexual and psychological selves, to every important act of their lives, birth, puberty, marriage children and death. The Catholic drive for control extended into every area of society, from the interior of minds and houses to the streets and up into the governments and banks.

Innocent III also consciously turned the Crusades into a campaign of thought control, killing off or inciting lynch mobs to kill groups thought heretical, such as the Albigensians. Under his papacy the Church achieved the apogee of its power. Innocent devalued the role of the Monarchs and with the use of the Interdict managed to blackmail Kings into submission to the Papacy by threatening excommunication and therefore hell, if the King did not submit. He compared the Papacy to

¹¹⁵⁶ Johnson, Philip. A History of Christianity Antheneum, 1976, pg.199

the Sun and the monarchy to the moon ~.~A He wrote that Christ "left to Peter the governance not of the Church only but of the whole world". The megalomania encountered in a sentence like this is rare; one finds it in an Alexander, Constantine, Hitler, end Stalin, but few others. But the will to power exemplified in Innocent is not a unique aberration but part of the very nature of the Church and of Christianity in general.

Augustine, like Innocent, also oversaw the murder of "heretics", that is people who had valid points of view the Church hated, and promoted various forms of thought control. Indeed, the missionary, crusading, worldwide ambition of the Church was largely inspired by the words of Christ himself; Christ's statement that "he who is not with me is against me" (Luke, 11:23) is a statement that is practically the defining characteristic of a paranoid will to power. It is an anti-democratic declaration of Jihad against those who think differently. When such a exclusivist fanaticism is combined with statements like "Go ye unto all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved end he that believeth not shall be damned"(Mark, 16:15-16) one has a formula for a totalitarian state that combines the "Two Swords", the sword of religion with the sword of politics. They are not actually different swords. With this two edged sword the Church in the east and the west forced submission to worldly and spiritual powers in a way so replete with injustice, fear, coercion and psychological and spiritual blackmail that the world is still recoiling from the excess to this day. Innocent was following long centuries of precedent, end therefore should not be thought of as an anomaly. The ruthless Roman empire had changed into the Christian Empire, and the Empire of Science would replace the Christians, despite some hangers on to the old mythologies, now detached from their hegemonic sources of power. This is why science is initially a bid for power and used by states to create wealth. For course in the case of science, there is science

proper, ordinary science, which is the study of nature, basic mechanics, tool making, pottery and iron making and there is corporate science or politicized science, and these are very different things. Corporate or imperial science is generally a bad thing, and results in colonial exploitation of the Americas Africa, Australia and the and south seas tribes, for instance. whereas ordinary science gave us pottery, blacksmithing, midwifery, Da Vinci's anatomy studies and botanical and taxonomic studies, among many other things. Spelling out how this change from dogmatic control of Churches to anatomy studies and the study of nature will take some time.

The slow abandonment of symbolic thinking is key in this change. Humans slowly abandon the idea of invisible ideas, gods, agents and symbols of human projections. In the use that Innocent III made of the Eucharist one sees an excellent example of the function of symbols. The Christ symbol is used both by individuals and by the Church for self-magnification through a claim to total knowledge. Pope Innocent had control of most of Europe and achieved it through whipping up the self-sacrificial and murderous impulse of the Crusades. He did this through mind control techniques exercised through the confessional and the Inquisition, and especially through the Eucharist, with its promise of salvation from a world kept hostage to miserable conditions. There was the feudal caste system which protected enormous economic disparities. Priests and nobles controlled separate legal systems, such that no commoner stood a chance of obtaining justice anywhere, and the priests and nobles were largely beyond the law. Anyone who questioned the Pope, the dogmas, the sacraments, or had association with those who questioned these could be killed could be called to the Inquisition and expected to recant or be tortured, and the refusal to recant meant death. The worst of all sins was to question the Eucharist. The Eucharist was the central symbols of an unjust political system. The illegitimate power

of the upper classes was insured by the existence of false symbols, claimed to be divine.

The Eucharist embodied the will to power through knowledge of the Church itself. The crushing totalitarian atmosphere of the period forbid any thinking outside of orthodoxy. The rite of confession made the individual person accountable to the church instead of to itself. The burning of the philosopher at the University of Prague, Jan Hus, (c. 1369 – 6 July 1415) was about this precisely. Like John Wycliffe, the English Scholastic philosopher, (c. 1320 – December 1384) Hus questioned the necessity of priests as intermediaries in the reception of the Eucharist, and implicitly he was affirming the value of the individual conscience above that of the Church. He was right to do so. But he was burned at the stake for questioning Church power, and this power was expressed by the Church's claim to control over the Eucharistic bread and wine, the wine being only allowed to the priests. Wycliffe and Hus are both influences on what would become science and democracy.

Wycliffe had questioned transubstantiation. His writings were condemned after his death and his body exhumed and burned without reburial. Hus followed Wycliffe and questioned why the laity could not drink the Holy Wine like the priests. Rubin observes that Hus' advocacy of the reception of wine by the "laity" would have "implied that the church possessed no inherent powers denied to the laity"¹¹⁵⁷ To question the Eucharist was to question the Church and to question the Church was to question God, and this was an unpardonable sin for which burning at the stake was considered fit punishment. It was this sort of barbaric dogmatism that eventually led to the Church declining in influence and falling into disrepute. Who could believe in such a false and pretend organization and its bogus practices?

¹¹⁵⁷ 6. Rubin, Corpus Christi p.35

4.Plato, Aristotle and the Realist-Nominalist Controversy

It is indeed extraordinary that a symbol like the Eucharist could become the organizing mythical pivot around which a totalistic society could revolve. The implications of this fact are very far reaching. It indicates, for instance, how the most minimal means, in this case, a small white circle made of bread, can be used and exploited to organize an entire society around a symbol in order to preserve a system of knowledge and power for the benefit of an Institution. It is the ultimate in advertising, propaganda and mental coercion. This indicates that the needs of the people of the time to have promise of release from suffering and death and the oppression of the powerful, was very great; and indeed, this need for redress and justice is expressed in the prevalence of apocalyptic fantasies that accompanies the Eucharistic imagery of the period.

Such fantasies of power and the need to escape from the oppression of powers must have then, as now, arisen for quite concrete reasons and purposes. Boyer and Dennett are certainly mistaken that religion is created out of an evolutionary need. People make up stories for reasons, believe in myths and philosophies for reasons, and are willing to be deceived for reasons. How and why institutions oppress is due to evolution but the will of men bent of taking from others, setting up unjust aristocratic and making sure their clan or church is richer than others. While human needs, the need to belong, the need to follow ones parents, the need to have sex or die with dignity might be evolution based needs, the need of religion is not. Institutions need religion, not people. It is frightening that men who desire power can successfully exploit these needs; frightening that a society can be organized around such questionable symbols and that dissent should be so easily and ruthlessly eradicated by the powers of the period. I also find it

disillusioning that the philosophy of the period should have been so completely concerned with the maintenance of the elaborate structure of such a manifestly unjust system of knowledge and power. It appears to be the case that main-stream academic and scientific philosophy today has the largely the same function of justifying the knowledge system that justifies the powers of our society. Corporate science rules in most academies. I do find small comfort, however, in the fact that there were a few who did dissent and eventually the dissenters triumphed.

Those that dissented against the medieval Church laid the foundation for a new form of scientific knowledge and power. But this time the apocalyptic threats that the church had used to coerce through fear and psychological blackmail, would become literal apocalyptic threats both to nature and the existence of man. The rather silly apocalypse of St John was born of hatred of the world and desire for change. The same hatred of the world can be seen in Atomic Weapons. Oppenheimer's invocation of the Bhagavad Gita is an imperial power clam just like the Apocalypse of John. The hatred of nature in Christian dogma becomes the hatred of nature implicit in corporate science and environmental rape. Early science in the 17th century had the rape of nature as it goal, as is clear in Francis Bacons writings. Indeed, I think that a case could be made that yesterday's Realist/Nominalist controversy evolved into today's controversies about animals and language, global warming and the nature of the brain. Science would serve power unjustly, that is true, but it also became a powerful tool to question power and that is its real value. Darwin saw this quite well, whereas Newton was a power manger and joined the side of the unjust.

So, it is clear that the Realist/Nominalist controversy was primarily an argument that went on in the Church and universities and concerned the relation of Plato and Aristotle's ideas about universals,

which were contradictory. The Church/state hegemony created the Dark Ages and helped suppress centuries of scientific growth and insight. The Church had to be questioned. The questioning started internally, inside the system of injustice itself, in the symbol of empire and control. The question was: how could the Eucharist be justified according to the Realist or Nominalist position. Initially, the Nominalist position was developed from the view of Aristotle, "called the "master of those who know", who denied Plato's belief in universals existing as independent entities. The Nominalists, proposed, instead, that the Platonic ideas were conceptual abstractions from sensory or phenomenal experiences. This is correct. Plato begins with the Ideas and descends to matter; Aristotle begins with matter and ascends to "pure forms". The Church saw, rightly, that Aristotle's philosophy as a threat to their empire, and condemned Aristotle's Physics and his Metaphysics between 1209 and 1215, under Innocent III. This foolish move presaged the censure of Galileo some centuries later. But the condemnation of Aristotle was mere demagoguery. It soon became clear that Aristotle would not be gotten rid of so easily. Indeed, the only way to maintain the Platonist Christian and aristocratic state was by force, lying, excessive taxation, indulgences and the Inquisition.

So the Church adapted, trying to hold on to its fictive mythology of the Eucharist. It was found that the Aristotelian doctrine of substance and accident could be applied to the Eucharist without difficulty, since it meant that one did not have to affirm that the bread itself become Christ and was eaten and then digested and excreted, but only that the bread became "transubstantiated" into Christ. Only the accidents were digested, the substance of Christ joined invisibly with the individual person, or "soul" in Church language. How this happened was never really explained. But it was a clever ruse. The substance/accident distinction also preserved an opening to the Platonic doctrine of the

Logos and the ideas. This was important because the doctrine of Plato affirms the supremacy of the intellect as a suprarational and supra-mundane faculty which was capable of realizing God in its own essence.

Aristotle did not completely reject Plato's Ideal Forms, he stressed that ideal forms must be connected to matter; he maintained that only God is pure form. This stress on the materialistic aspect of Aristotle's ideas is what would provoke the Realist/Nominalist controversy, and eventually lead to modern science. The Platonist doctrine, which really is a fiction--- was the basis of the political authority of the Church from the earliest days of Christianity. Authentic knowledge, for Augustine, who was a Platonist, was the knowledge of the suprarational intellect, and thus knowledge was knowledge of Christ as the Logos or as the supreme ordering power of the universe. The Platonic concept of the Intellect, which Aristotle repeats with a somewhat different accentuation, was the fundamental basis of both the Eucharist and Church authority. In other words, in both Plato and Aristotle, the Intellect--- a divine and fictional faculty not to be confused with ordinary reason--- is accorded supremacy, and this supremacy is both political and metaphysical. Those who represent the Intellect are those to whom power over the society is granted. The Church combined Platonist and Aristotelian conceptions of the Intellect with the millenarian Christian concept of Christ as the Logos and supra-cosmological King and Exemplar.

Thus, to deny the supremacy of the supra-rational intellect was to question the very Eucharistic foundations of the Church. Plato's ideas could not be entirely denied unless there were some concession towards a universal Substance of which Christ was made. To dethrone Plato, as Aquinas did, was not fatal to the Church, but it did leave the Church in a precarious position. Aristotle's emphasis on matter and quantity left the nature of the Eucharist open to question, whereas Plato's symbolist, hierarchical, elitist and spiritual view led to a monolithic and totalitarian

interpretation of the Eucharist that admitted no questions. To deny both the Universal ideas of Plato or the Universal Substance of Aristotle was tantamount to a denial of the act of transubstantiation. This of course, was the “rankest heresy”. And it is this heresy that created science.

But having said this I must hasten to add, so that there be no confusion, that I have no concept of heresy myself. I am not a Christian and have no belief in the concepts that I am discussing. Heresy presupposes orthodoxy, and though I once believed that the concept of orthodoxy had a meaning that was real and efficacious, I think now that it is merely the codification of a knowledge system created in order to administer and legislate assent or dissent. I am opposed to knowledge systems that do not allow dissent. Dissent from orthodoxy is called heresy. It is clear to me that the primary purpose of the concept of orthodoxy in the Middle Ages was the maintenance of the knowledge/power equation that stained both the Church and the Crown. For myself, I recognize neither the power of the Church nor that of the Crown: I am not a Christian, or an aristocrat. I believe in the right of individuals to dissent and resist all or any who would use systems of knowledge, be this gnostic, religious, to impose by force or coercion, systems of knowledge, belief or practice. But I could not have this belief in human rights, were it not for the Nominalists. They are rarely thanked for their efforts, but it was an important effort that had centuries of consequences. They created an idea that led to the importance of physical evidence, and it is evidence that matters, not orthodoxy, wealth or dogma.

To understand the Realist/Nominalist controversy, therefore, one must step outside of the alternative of heresy/orthodoxy as well as the alternative believer/unbeliever, insider/outsider. Any other way of looking at the complex material of this period would lead one into a

partisan position and this would make it nearly impossible to assess what happened and why the controversy occurred. Thus, when one reviews the different thinkers of the two sides of the Realist/Nominalist controversy it becomes clear that there were many different answers to the question of the Eucharist. Below I will review some of these positions.

1. Augustine holds that the body and blood of Christ are separate but correlated to the species of bread and wine; this is the Platonist-Realist view. Augustine relates the Eucharist to the Intellect which he envisions as the "pontifex" or bridge between man and God. This identification of Christ and the intellect, and the belief that the Church alone represents Christ as the true and only legitimate power on earth is the view that governs all of Christendom until the Protestant rebellions.

2. Berengar, (c.999-1088), held in contrast, that the substance of Christ must have some relation to the accidental appearance of the bread and wine. This is a more or less Nominalist position. Berengar was declared a heretic.

3. Duns Scotus, a Platonist-Realist; went even farther than Augustine and claimed that the accidental bread was entirely "annihilated" by the substance of Christ. This position pushes the Platonist hatred of the world of matter and flesh to an extreme. How were these thinkers to make sense of the phrase in the gospel of St. John, "the Word became flesh",--- Christ does not say, and 'the Word became Flesh and annihilated it'.

4. Aquinas takes the view that "accidents realize Christ's physical presence, but only in an invisible spiritual and non-materialist way" ¹¹⁵⁸ This does not clarify anything and returns to the obscure mystagogy of

¹¹⁵⁸ Ibid, Rubin. pg 25

the Platonist-Augustinian position, even though an Aristotelian language is employed..

5. In contrast John Quidort (d.1306) held that "the nature of the Bread is assumed into the Word", This is more or less the Nominalist position.

Rubin summarizes all the critics of transubstantiation as holding that "quantity must be identical with the substance to which it is attributed" ¹¹⁵⁹ This view, implied by Aristotle's philosophy, meant that the bread and wine could not become the body and blood of Christ unless the bread/wine itself also became the body/blood of Christ. Is it an analogy or an identity? They wanted it to be both, which is impossible. Aristotle had provoked an argument about the nature of material substances, and the Church, which was taking the Realist position, was put in the difficult circumstance of having to justify what was logically and empirically absurd. The Church was backed into a corner: reality was intervening and the Church wanted make believe. This would lead eventually to the Protestant reaction, which would hold that faith alone could justify religion, since only blind faith could accept the absurd. Protestantism opted for "commemoration" rather than identity. Commemoration is a weak position, and the faith begins to fail, to be replaced by science, which is concrete.

Early science, influenced by the nominalists, on the other hand, would accept the fact of Christ as Intellect entering directly into matter. Indeed the "matter" of science would eventually supplant Christ and Plato. Since Christ is actually just human consciousness or reason extrapolated and magnified into a fictional and "divine" personification, the entrance of reason or intellect into matter meant that matter could be

¹¹⁵⁹ Ibid Rubin pg.34

dominated by man literally, and not just symbolically. Science supplants Christianity. Those who claim that science grew from Christianity are mistaken. Science grew from Greece and reasserted itself in defiance of the myth of the Eucharist as a heresy. The nominalists were not just arguing a position but began arguing for reality, fact, evidence, the world itself. What they were doing was starting us on the road to dispense with Christ all together and accept matter and the world as it is. This was due to Aristotle and was a real breakthrough. This is science or the beginnings of it.. Christ it turns out, was a fiction created by active imagination. All there really is, is bread and wine, no essence, no divine substance. So only reality matters. The Eucharist is now written out of history, which is no surprise, since it had no reality to begin with.

5.The Transition from Eucharistic Truth to Scientific Truth

What needs to be grasped in the arguments involved in the Realist/Nominalist controversy is that the very foundations of the knowledge system which justified Church social power, the relation of Church and State and the entire hierarchical caste system of medieval society were all at stake. The philosophical battles reflect the battle for social control and hegemony. If the Nominalists were right, and universals were high mythic abstractions and symbols and not real or independent entities, then the Eucharist is nothing more than a magical superstition used to orchestrate social and psychological order. In other words the Eucharist is an exploitive symbolic device. If this were so, the Church was in deep trouble. This can be seen in hindsight of course---- I don't think the nominalists grasped the full magnitude of what they did at.

The rise of science was in the air, after 1000 years of Christian persecution of Greek and Roman science. But it was in the air, just as the Plague years around 1350 had empowered workers who were now

lesser in number so they had to be paid more. The feudal system was beginning to collapse. Workers start demanding more rights. They had been abused for centuries by the Lords and Kings and starting insisting objectively on their own rights. Unlike gods and ideologies, rights are not fictions, not delusional or imaginary inventions, as the historian Yuval Harari claims.. All living beings claim rights by being born and will fight for them if they need to even to the point of death. This is true of a worm, a cat or a human. They all claim the right to live and oppose the elimination of themselves.

Rights are the essence of the Enlightenment and require the dismissal of religious ideology. After the plagues of the 1300's the divine right of lords and aristocrats comes into question. Authority starts to be questioned: the feudal order is cracking. But the Church knew the Protestant rebellion was a rebellion against authority and it is obvious that the loss of the Eucharist symbols was the loss of caste Platonism, the aristocracy and the ideology of the Great Chain of Being. As the Faust myth shows this threat to the very center of the Catholic Roman Empire was definitely felt, even if it was not consciously known. In the end Faust was right, it was actual beings that matter, not gods and priests selling the beyond. Goethe saw this and exonerated Faust. Rights come later, and they are not accidental fictions but facts of survival on a difficult planet.

Aquinas proved that Aristotle could be adapted to serve the Church, but the adaptation was precarious at best, despite the Summa Theologica, whose encyclopedic finality already indicated that something fundamental was ending. Aristotle's ideas helped undermine Feudalism. The ambiguity of how Christ could be in the bread but not of it remained. The declaration of the dogma of transubstantiation in 1215 was largely a stop-gap measure designed to suppress dissent and control the extent of the damage that was already being done by Aristotle and the Nominalist

implications of his philosophy. Aristotle's philosophy implied that the material world is not just a corrupted shadow and copy of the world of the Ideas "Beyond" as both Plato and Christian doctrine held. This meant that power could be gained over this particular material world by categorizing, comparing and inquiring. A new kind of Knowledge/Power relationship was in the making: Science. This was certainly a good thing, though few knew that absolutism was still very powerful and stopping the greedy was exceedingly difficult. This was not what Michael Foucault would call a revolution, but was a fundamental shift in how the world was seen. It was not a shift in favor of power of the sort that Foucault was enamored of, but the opposite: it was a tide moving against power and abuse. It would not really happen till after the French Revolution.

If one accepts the possibility that the Eucharist is a symbol whose meaning is not literally true, but rather a mythological ritual that has to do with orchestrating social order through a theory of knowledge and social power, then one must conclude that Christ himself is not really present in the host. What is present there is a propaganda tool, a mode of consciousness—an ideology--- and a way of knowing that grants access to participation in the social order of Medieval society. The Eucharist was a brilliant deception that kept many in thrall for a millennia. It was a means of participating in a symbolic alternative world of power and knowledge; a world symbolized by Christ's omniscience and omnipotence. When one grasps this, then it is possible to see that the arguments about the Eucharist were not about a bit of wafer and a little wine. It was an argument that was really concerned the viability of Christianity—an religion and class in general--- as a ruling force in society. Aristotle and his influence on the Nominalists, such as Occam and Roger Bacon, had indicated that the power and knowledge symbolized by Christ in the Eucharist must become one with matter itself, figuratively speaking.

Leonardo is probably the first to see the reality of this. His science is secretive and he wants it to be because he knows the war lords and aristocrats will abuse it. Harari and Jared Diamond ¹¹⁶⁰ are wrong. They are largely apologists for a geopolitical control of resources, as well as the new corporations of today such as Google, Facebook or Apple. ¹¹⁶¹ In recent books, Harari even claims that computers are a sort of god, rather as Marx claims that man is a god for man, Harari claims that computers are a kind of god of man, a “homo deus”. He calls this god the “internet of all things”. Religious thinkers are always trying to make transcendent entities and rule over others by promoting them.

Science is not developed to help the rich get richer or the weapons manufacturer kill people for profit. It is about understanding how things work in fact. The reading lists of Leonardo indicate a great deal of reading of classical texts as well as the study of math. He even read Al Hazen, also called Ibn al-Haytham (c. 965 – c. 1040), who studied Optics and math and was Iraqi, though he lived mostly in Cairo. In Leonardo’s mind and in much of his art, especially in his Notebooks, he has gone far beyond Christianity and even in his math studies he is striving toward an understating of physical forms and growth that anticipates later science and biology. He is a vegetarian who wants to make the world better and more just. He sees science as improving people’s lives and wants to protect it from abusers and power mongers who would turn it

¹¹⁶⁰ Jared Diamond is one of the original apologists for human supremacy from the 1990’s. His environmental determinism has some justice to it, but is overstated and combined with a notion of human exceptionalism that amounts to corporate cheerleading. His book Guns, Germs and Steel was an attempt to show why western corporate culture is biologically superior to the rest of the world. In the end his work was an attempt to excuse western atrocities and to praise and blame Euro-American superiority as an effect of geography.

¹¹⁶¹ Harari, a sort of disciple of Jared Diamond, promotes religion as a form of social engineering and says it is necessary to social life. He is a Buddhist and the coldness of Buddhist analysis of part of this work. Buddhism sees the world as samsara casts a cold eye on life. This allowed for very terrible abuses.

into cash traded in corporate Wall Streets, who are indifferent to all things and beings but wealth.

But before Leonardo, science was largely a virtual possibility. Occam's theory of "consubstantiation" suggested that "things that occupy the same area are equal... but Christ's body and the bread occupy the same space.. .because where one is the other is, and the one does not contain the other." ¹¹⁶² What this means is that the will to power symbolized by the image of Christ in the Eucharist must enter into matter itself. Human conscious will no longer be ruled by myth but by matter. This is the beginning of philosophical justification for the sciences. Indeed, the anthropomorphic imagery of Christ and the Eucharist were in process of being thrown off and what was left was the conscious reason as the embodiment of knowledge, and this reason, in math and science, as the Greeks and Romans already knew, could enter into matter itself and redirect it and exercise its power in a way that would do good. The fictional image of Christ as Savior falls away as the main thrust of power and Reason takes over as an activity of understanding matter and nature. This is what is stated in the English Revolution, when Thomas Rainsborough said that "I think that the poorest he that is in England hath a life to live as the greatest he". This states that men are basically equal, and there is no overlord, Christ or King who is above all. The social implications of this are huge, as are the philosophical implications. Eventually Darwin would see that this was true in nature too, and that all life, human and natural, is somehow equal. Human rights becomes nature's rights. We have all evolved, and were not created and thus each species has rights in its own domain and is self-created, with no obligations, if they can "out fox" the predators and avoid the hierarchical gods, human overlords and dictators.

¹¹⁶² Ibid, Rubin pg.33

Henceforth the problem of all life is to restrict the predators, regulate the rich and tax horders.

At the time of Da Vinci this very enlightened belief was not yet possible, though Leonardo came close to this, and saw things amazingly clearly for his time. Science was not yet the irreconcilable enemy of Christianity, but merely the logical unfolding of its inner motivation. Science unfolded from the impulse that rejected the Christ idea, on the one hand. Christianity had unfolded in opposition to the science of the Greek and Roman Empires, as we learn from Hypatia. Islam had preserved some of this rudimentary science and the Greek and Roman Classics. On the other hand, scientific domination of nature is a logical development of the Christian theory of knowledge, in some ways, though it is based on a rejection of religion. One cannot deny that the years of early science coincide with imperialism and colonial abuse of natives all over the world. But this is not the science that Leonardo envisioned. It is the science of Bacon and Descartes and their desire to torture nature into submission so that she gives up her secrets. But once Christian notions of human supremacy and misogyny against nature are abandoned, nature is no longer seen as less than humanity.

"The Word became flesh" is a symbolic statement which expresses a fundamental axiom of Christianity. If one translates this symbolic expression into what the words have actually meant as they were applied in history, then, the "Word" is the human will to knowledge and power sublimated into an image of the divinity of Christ. The "Word" is a mythical fiction, which does not actually exist except as an organizing idea. The "flesh", which is opposed to this fiction, is nature and matter, actual things: reality, men, women, rocks, water, eggs in nests and fish in the sea. Saying that Christ is nature is not a possible axiom in Christianity and so something had to go, and it was Christ's divinity that came into question. This happened by degrees, so the field of becoming or nature that science exploits to exalt man and gain power for him

would first have very human-centered exponents, as one find in Descartes and Bacon. These are power hungry men. Leonardo was already beyond them. The idea of the Intellect, which Christ was supposed to embody, was demythologized and made into another supreme principle, a fiction. When Christ was abandoned domination of the earth is the first impulse, unfortunately, but soon this leads to terrible injustices, so living with nature in a state of equal rights becomes more important. Leonardo already understood this, vaguely perhaps, around 1500. He grasped the danger of unfettered technical hubris and writes against it, over a hundred years long before Descartes is advocating for a totalizing science, nearly 500 years before the Atom Bomb is used and the scientist foolishly state that one "cannot hold back progress for fear of what the world will do with tits discoveries". It is not science that needs to be held back, but men in their greed and need of power.

"God became man in order that man could become God" Augustine had said. The first 1400 years of Christianity are Platonist and concern God, that is the Church, remaking man according to its image, its knowledge and its need of power. The second 600 or 700 years of western history concerns man trying to become God, at least virtually, through science. When Francis Bacon said that "knowledge is power" and that the scientists must "put nature to the rack and compel her to answer our questions" he was expressing consciously the will to total knowledge and power that had been latent in Christianity all along. Science fulfills the program of power and knowledge already symbolically indicated by Christ and Plato. The Christian concept of salvation becomes the scientific drive for total knowledge and power over the earth. The destructive abuse of nature by capitalism embodies the hatred of life and nature already present in Christianity. It has taken hundreds of years for this to be seriously questioned. For Descartes animals are still

nothing, as the Christians saw them, and incapable of true pain. Leonardo knew better, but no one was listening to him, but he understood what science is, just as potters understood it, and blacksmiths..

Christ was an image of man's purposes, and once the image was brought into question, the purpose of the image of Christ became clear. The symbolist universe of the Church used the Eucharist as the pivotal symbol around which it orchestrated a theory of knowledge into a system of social control. At first, science retained the presumption of intellectual supremacy that had been the basis of Plato and Christ and identified the intellect with matter directly, instead of through a mediating symbol, like the Eucharist. But as time develops, the supremacy of humanity comes to be questioned in Darwin and more seriously in recent decades, in ecology, biology and paleoanthropology. No one is a “master of the planet’. Every species has its rights, and those who would harm species should be brought into question. There is still a long way to go, and the forces that created the ideology of human supremacy are very much still in play. Nature matters, and animals have rights too, and the notion of man as dictator goes the way of Christ as supreme judge—it was just another fiction on the road to appreciating the earth we live on. In the end it is matter itself, and living beings made of matter, that is lovable, and worth caring for.

To summarize all this as succinctly as possible; the Realist/Nominalist controversy had stripped the image of Christ and the Eucharist that symbolized him of their mythological dress, and the result of this was to reveal that the real motive behind the image of Christ was the will to power through knowledge. Thus released from the tyranny of the symbolic Christ, the belief of Renaissance man that he was the "measure of all things", followed naturally. Likewise the unmasking of the fundamental motive behind the Christian myth resulted in the Cartesian

Cogito, which signified that Man's reason was alone independent and the sine qua non of all knowledge and power and that nature was merely a mechanism that must be dominated, controlled and exploited by man. This is a very destructive view of science,-- in fact the origin or corporate science--- and one that takes some centuries to come into question. As Christ as symbol is seen less and less as supreme, Reason and the actual world become more important, but not all at once. The creation of an aristocratic Absolutism also resulted in a very cruel and autocratic science. The Eucharistic idea, thus literalized, was refashioned as the human reason which can "transubstantiate" matter through science to serve exclusively human purposes. These human purposes eventually themselves become overbearing to nature, species and the earth itself-- and must be humbled to allow nature and humans to avoid self-destruction by human hubris. Leonardo already anticipates Darwin and a better view of the world as an earth where each species and each physical process matters. Science after Darwin begins to open up into a less autocratic and more inclusive view of nature and other animals. Darwin, as well as the development of ecology, did a lot to mitigate the "man the measure" ideology of Descartes and Bacon.¹¹⁶³

Stretching it somewhat one could say that the equation of knowledge and power ceases to be symbolized in the Eucharist and begins to be actualized by the reason of men using mathematics as a means of dominating nature. In a certain sense the Eucharist evolves

¹¹⁶³ There is a close connection between scientific disinterestedness and the contemplative distance required by religious thought. This is evident in both Oppenheimer and the Inquisition, where this disinterest led to unspeakable horrors in both cases. Darwin initiated a notion of a more moral and ethical science which was not so removed from its source of study, and this is why he is an improvement over Bacon and Descartes. Leonardo had these concerns too, for similar reasons to Darwin. Bacon is preferable to Descartes however, because he at least advocates for an experimental and empirical inquiry, whereas Descartes suppresses experiment for arbitrary reason and derives his "truths" from an arbitrary reason and metaphysical gods. This leads him into many mistakes, as it would Chomsky more recently.

into mathematics. The symbol of the knowledge and power of the Church was the Eucharist; the symbol of the knowledge and power of science becomes mathematics. But eventually even math cannot embody everything and science ceases to be a tool of capital and must eventually become closer to what it studies, nature itself. . But this process is far from complete and many problems remain. One of the problems of science is its tendency to reduce everything to mathematical explication and forget evidence. Especially in the realm of sub atomic particles the math and reality get confused and it appears that some theories are more math based and have no basis in reality, string theory, for instance. This is a real danger and many people draw false conclusions about reality and origins of the universe based on faulty math and corporate science. ¹¹⁶⁴

The problems or science are many, but they have to be addressed one at a time. Religion is certainly not going to answer anything. We have to work it out ourselves. The bulk of humanity is still either back in the dark ages or trying to enter into a period of questioning fictions. Human centeredness still reigns. Until that is brought into question globally, there will be serious injustices and continued extinctions. Nano tech, cell phones, quantum paradoxes will not save us. Bird's nests and Sea stars, Insects and Newts, just might,

It is important to realize that the mythological unmasking of the Christian myth released the Monarchy from its ambiguous tie to Christianity and allowed it to develop, eventually, into a nearly independent Absolutism, whose greatest excess would appear between reign of Louis the 14th and Napoleon. Then, after a short interlude between the demise of the Aristocratic state, the Old Regime was

¹¹⁶⁴ This is discussed at some length in Victor Stenger's the Folly of Faith. I am not sure if Stenger might be guilty of doing this sometimes himself.

replaced by the Corporate State. This was and still is very harmful. The Church itself was left to adopt and increasingly reactionary positions. It had to either try to shore itself against the ruins that it had unwittingly brought upon itself, or to adapt to science in ineffectual ways. This led the Church into an effort to impose its authority even as this authority was being seriously undermined. Figures like Savonarola, and his fanatical preaching of hell, his bonfire of the vanities, (destroying great works by Botticelli and others) and his megalomaniac attempt to restore the miraculous power of the Church, merely served to discredit the Church further. The condemning of Galileo, the Oath against modernism, the Inquisition were all part of this.

Throughout the later Middle Ages, the preaching of apocalyptic consequences reached increasingly hysterical levels of excess. The painting of Bosch, Breughel and the Isenheim Altarpiece of Grunewald indicate the apocalyptic fervor of a civilization in decline. Luther's attack on the corruption of the Sale of Indulgences was justified. The Praise of Folly by Erasmus indicates the degree to which the Church had failed to recognize the revolution which it had provoked. The "Folly" which the Church hated, was now being praised, however ironically. Its irony was lost on many who took it seriously as an endorsement of rebellion against the Church. The uprising of Protestantism was an attempt to preserve Christianity in accord with new developments in capitalism and the sciences, but even this was not very successful. The image of the mythic Christ as the cosmological exemplar of all knowledge and power had been seriously compromised. Humanism was ascendant, and mostly a force for the good, but committed grave injustices. Christ and the Eucharist would never again be regarded with the same credibility that had been possible with Augustine "the Hammer of the Donatists". The apogee of Catholic control of the world was under Pope Innocent III, the Pope of Inquisitorial tyranny, and after that Christianity declines. But this decline did not immediately make for a better system of power, far

from it. Science was liberated, but as the history of the airplane shows, once liberated, it is used more for killing than for good purposes. Just as Da Vinci feared, technical brilliance is used to drop bombs on cities and innocent people. Corporate personhood becomes the way to bring back the absolute authority of Kings and Popes and this depends on the abuse of science.

Galileo

When one questions the Church's need to exterminate heretics it soon becomes clear that the heretical groups, by and large, were groups whose ideas were not in conformity with the Church or who questioned the knowledge system that supported the power of the Church. Galileo's 'heresy' amounted to a direct identification of the Christic "substance" with matter. This is the moment of transfer of authority from the Church. Many of these early 15th to 17th centuries groups and individuals had ideas which are commonly accepted today. Science, democracy, communism, nationalism, free market economics, pluralism, relativism, historicism, evolutionary thinking, and many other modern tendencies have their origins or are partially derived from groups or individuals condemned by the Church. Such groups as the Albigenses, the Waldenses, the Poor Men of Lyons, the Cathari, Puritans, Anabaptists and others. Later it was Oliver Cromwell's insurrection or the rising rebellion of Protestantism that brought King and Church into question.

Dutch capitalism, which was abusive in new ways, had a big influence both on art and trade, as well as the growth of science. The Eucharist was the supreme symbol of the Church's authority over life, death and the ultimate fate of souls and society. But once the Platonist-Realist view at the basis of the Eucharist was brought into question by the Nominalists, and science began to grow, new forms of authority and

justifications of knowledge systems and the power they confer came into play and be questioned themselves. The Eucharist was a Roman invention and one that was shrouded in the mythic projections of the 1st and 2nd century. Christ was himself an invention and one whereby a myth of the celestial being was fleshed out with historical fictions, called the “gospels”. But the fiction was eventually questioned, even if few could question the gospel stories themselves.

Perhaps the most important heretic, who in turn would become a martyr for the scientific program to seek control of society, was Galileo. Rubin observes in an interesting conclusion to her book that Wycliffe and Hus were allowed to criticize church wealth and the Pope, and were not condemned until they questioned the Eucharist. So likewise Luther was tolerated until he questioned the Eucharist. Rubin observes that it was Galileo's theory of atoms at " probably convinced the Holy Office that it was necessary to bring Galileo to trial for heresy". Galileo was condemned in 1520 because

"His corpuscular theory of physics threatened to change the way in which substance and accidents were related, and contradicted the Aristotelian foundations which were so necessary for the maintenance of the Eucharist as a mystery of Christ's body with the appearance of bread, Galileo's atomistic theory meant that the color taste, smell and heat, the accidents, were contained in tiny particles of substance which must remain, in the case of bread and wine, even after the consecration to produce the accidents of bread and this was obviously anathema.¹¹⁶⁵

Galileo was condemned by the Inquisition in 1615. Heliocentrism was decreed by the Church to be false and contrary to scripture, even

¹¹⁶⁵ Ibid.Rubin, pg.3g0

though it was obviously true. Books advocating the Copernican system were put on the index of banned books and forbid Galileo from advocating heliocentrism. He was tried by the Inquisition, found "vehemently suspect of heresy", was forced to recant, and spent the rest of his life under house arrest. And he was right. Galileo's heresy amounted to not just a declaration of the truth that the sun is the center of our solar system, but that he was guilty of a direct identification of the Christic substance with matter. Since, in fact, Christ himself was a fiction, there really was only matter and human efforts to grasp what matter is that was the real threat to the Church. Galileo was guilty of observation, curiosity and seeking evidence for the truth, all things the Church was opposed to. This is the moment of transfer from a medieval Christian society to a modern scientific society. The Church cannot be taken seriously after this.

The Church saw the nature of the threat much more clearly than did Galileo. But nevertheless, if one understands the symbolism involved here it is quite clear. Christ had been made by the Church into a symbol of the knowledge/power relationship, and had been identified first with the Platonic theory of knowledge and then with the Aristotelian theory of knowledge. The whole political and social apparatus or the Pre-scientific world depended on the Church not being questioned too closely about their myths and dogmas. Now, after Galileo, knowledge and power would become transferred from the otherworldly realm of Platonic symbols and Archetypes and the Aristotelian realm of forms and substances to direct identification of knowledge with man's consciousness and his ability to use the Cogito or Reason to study or exploit matter directly. People would have to choose studying matter, as Leonardo did or learn to exploit it like Descartes did in his vicious attitudes to animals or the Robber Barons, who stole what they did little to earn.

The relationship of God and man ceased to be a relationship of subservience and became a relation of identity. "God became man in

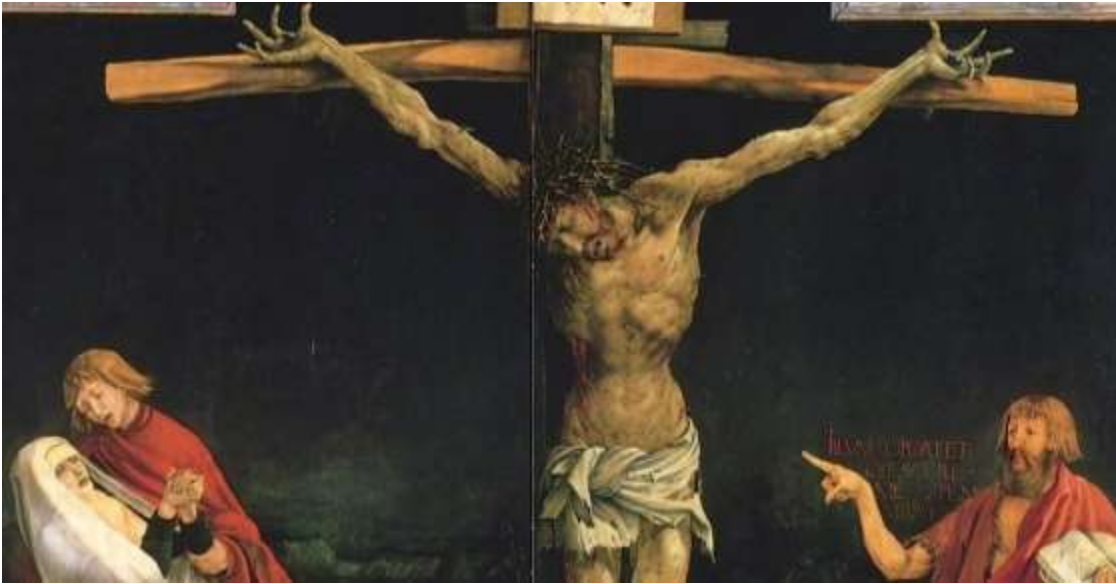
order that man would become God" Augustine had written, and with the advent of science, this Augustinian formula would come to be literalized into 'the power of man's reason entered into matter in order that matter could become man's reason', to paraphrase. In other words, the symbolism of the Eucharist would become literalized, and man, as a virtual God over nature, would be the sole power on earth, the "measure of all things". This is of course a euphoric and transcendentalist fiction of the early science promoters that man would be like a god. Newton and Oppenhiemer certainly invoked godlike imagery. But that is not science, but myth making. One can see this split in Newton too, with his absurd alchemical theories pursued at the same time as he does some really great science. Even in a figure like Whitman there is this bizarre effort to create a transcendentalist Self at the same time as he writes some really amazing poems about being a human being on earth with nature all around him.

Science has slowly eroded Christianity and the Church. While science is the logical reaction against the Christian theory of knowledge, it leaves Christianity behind it. Yet science in its early years assumes its basic exaltation of the human over the merely natural.. The totalitarian power of the Church will become, over time, the totalitarian absolutism of kings and then the quasi divine injustice of the corporate and nationalist state, while the Church will decline and in some places nearly disappear, replaced by Protestant sects that are increasingly anti-scientific and on the wrong side of things.. On the worst level of change science adopted many of the unjust and arbitrary absolutism of the Kings and Popes it displaced. The sacrifice of Christ in the Crucifixion was a symbolic expression which denoted the Church's power over people. Once the Christ, now denatured as reason, became ascendant, the crucifixion of Christ, symbolized in the Eucharist also, would become the crucifixion of nature and the conquering of the earth. In short, power

corrupts and the corruption that made the Eucharist the ultimate symbol of power, now was expressed as a new form of injustice, the abuse of the global environment. It is really not until the 19th century that the abuses of early science come into question, in great thinkers like Thoreau or Darwin who begin to see that nature has been deeply harmed by the system of science as religions as vehicles of social power, both of them were horrified by the slave trade, especially.. It is not till the 20th that there are real rebellions against the abuses.

The paradox of the divine “Victim” who has power over life and death gives to the Crucifixion image a breadth that seems to cover all of life’s experience. The universality of the image creates assent to the image that seems to represent all power and meaning. The assent of believers in Christ is preconscious, visceral, and is repeated and reinforced each time one looks at the crucifixion image or takes communion wine and bread. Everything depends on the creation of mystagogy and ambiguity, as well as a personal address that this man was murdered for “you” and “you” eat his body and drink his blood to be absolved of the guilt for existing. The sophistication of the psychological strategy involved in this process of inculcating belief in Christ is enormous and compelling. I find it utterly repulsive now that I understand it, but I can see why many find it totally engrossing. It is this that allows Christianity to survive and promulgate itself. Looked at from a purely sociological point of view, the Crucifix is the most effective

propaganda or advertising image ever created.



Grunewald's Isenheim Altarpiece shows the medieval cosmic Christ finally broken down into a physical man suffering the worst of illness and wounds. He is utterly physical, suffering plague and leprosy, and fitted out to comfort victims of the plague, in a desperate attempt to keep power in the Church that had failed to do anything at all about the plague. It is the polar opposite of Justinian's 6th century, impersonal Pantocrator. The crucifixion image evokes sympathy and at the same time, guilt. The viewer is both the person who did this to this man, and the person who is "saved" by the torture of him. This dual creation of both guilt and gratefulness is a powerful strategy, really a kind of psychological blackmail, which was created to insure the obedience or followers as well as their guilt if they fall away". One is supposed to keep eating Christ's flesh and drink his blood to keep up the illusion of salvation. This manipulation of guilt, fear, taboo, and veneration is extraordinary advertising and helps sustain the power of those who exploit it. The writers who created this and the Churches who exploited it over many centuries deserve credit for the brilliance of their strategy,

even if they created one of the most exploitive mythologies the world has ever seen.

This is the absurd logic of myth, that things that in fact have no reality, start dictating things that have real consequences. It has always seemed absurd to me that the Christian apocalyptic idea would see the world destroyed, and even want it destroyed and that meant destroying utterly innocent forests, animals, ginkgo trees, sea slugs, planarians and polar bears. By what right did any “god” have to do that?. Christ was a symbol of man's power through knowledge over matter, the Churchmen thought, but the Church had really failed by Leonardo’s time. science developed the power of inquiry into a new supremacy of human consciousness over the material world. But then Darwin showed that somehow we are all equal and real science is not about supremacy at all, but understanding and compassion. What was lost in the transfer from Church power to the power of science was the anthropomorphic symbolism of Christ and all the stories that go with it. Then what was lost when Darwin came along was the hubris of Descartes and Bacon about the conquest of nature. The myth of human supremacy over matter remains in corporate science; corporations think they are gods now, rebirthing the Christ myth, and all that has changed is the symbolism-, from Kuala Lumpur to Dubai, to London and New York, where once stood cathedrals and temples now ‘transcendent’ corporate towers lord over cities all over the earth.

In other words, just as the Church kept its power over people by threatening apocalyptic consequences, so in our society the apocalyptic threats become concrete in the nuclear ,environmental and genetic threats. Species all over the earth are becoming extinct. The will to power through knowledge, the missionary expansionism, the apocalyptic fervor to reach perfect otherworldly truth--- these are aspects of science that are held over from Christianity but actually negated by science itself

since Darwin. But as Darwin showed, these are questionable things, science does not point toward supremacy but towards living with all species on earth. Darwin does not point towards man acting as a god, but men being men and women and being good to the world they share with other species. In the end, Corporate Personhood is as bogus and mythical as the Three Persons or as Christ and the Eucharist are. In the end we have to learn to live on the planet where we live and be skeptical of generalized abstract concepts made into powers and ideologies of supremacy. Abstractions of this kind are really misunderstanding of language and they reek social havoc. Corporations do not have the right to engineer animal DNA to make creatures that serve corporate whims. They are not gods, even if they act as arbitrary as the gods once did.

The locus of the knowledge/power relationship changed from Christ as otherworldly 'archetype', to Christ as substance, and finally to Christ disappearing and replaced with science and evidence as the source of knowledge of the world. Science is right Science was initially a power play, and had many questionable features. The accidental consciences of individuals living in a world ruled by science and not the Church is what matters in the world now. The Realist/Nominalist controversy had relaxed into the Renaissance. A thinker like Machiavelli represents the will to power of a scientific and Christian civilization that is now shorn of the image of Christ and the control of the Church.¹¹⁶⁶ Robespierre's effort to set up an altar to Reason in the Cathedral of Notre Dame during the French Revolution indicates how far this process would go eventually. Just as the Church killed the name of god, some men, like Robespierre, started killing in the name of reason. Man himself, a "Cogitans", 'a thing that thinks' as Descartes called him, was taking upon himself the quasi-divine function of the Pontifex, the

¹¹⁶⁶ Though I suspect that Machiavelli was actually writing a satire in the Prince, -- though this satire is lost on those who push "Realpolitique".

bridge between heaven and earth.

But in the end that collapses too and Man, it seemed, could pretend to make a heaven of himself in his own world, and did not need the Church to act as a bridge and intermediary. When Marx finally declares that "Man is God for Man", the logical development of Christianity is completed. The paradox enunciated at the Council of Chalcedon, that Christ is "true man and true god", is finally explored to its logical conclusion in Marx, who in certain respects is the last Scholastic or perhaps the last true Catholic. After that is Darwin and the idea that humanity is not alone and we have to uphold our material and ecological world in one piece and honor all beings as our equals. There is no excuse to use abstractions like God, Reason, the State or Corporate Man, as a killing mechanism anymore. This is not easy and has scarcely begun as a process to be accepted in earnest, as most of us still live in the mythical past, clinging to illusions that are not true. But there is reason to look forward to a world where species are protected and humans are better to each other and gods and Robber Barons are gone.

6. The Eucharist Spiritual Cannibalism and the Development of Corporate Capitalism.

In conclusion, I was brought up a Catholic, at least until I was 11, when I was told by my parents I could leave the church if I wished. I did and did not return to it till I was nearly 30. I spent a few years as a Christian in my 30's. I'm glad to have had the opportunity to examine Christianity and its transition into science. I began to have doubts about the Eucharist years ago, and I am now certain that my doubts are reasonably founded. Christ was a myth, like the Greek Gods. I doubt I will ever be able to consider myself a Christian again. I am an atheist, though I do not much like that term. But I do not therefore abnegate

questions and mysteries, I just do not claim ultimate answers. I accept no gods. I reject the gnostic devaluation of the cosmos that is found in nearly all the religions. Darwinian science is a beginning to understand our earth and who we are within it.

Rubin's book concludes with a speculation on the relation of cannibalism to Christianity which is psychologically profound and surprising. Speaking of the ambiguity of the Eucharist and the fact that it involved the eating of Christ's body, the body of a man who was supposed to be god, she observes:

"We know too little about the inner workings of minds to be able to assess the impact of the invocation of the taboo of eating human flesh, the fears and desires related to it. But what we can assert is by combining the most holy with the most aberrant/abhorrent- the routine workings of sacramental power- an image of the fullness of live-giving which dwells in the image of utmost transgression- a very powerful symbol was created, as awesome as it was promising. In the elaboration of the perfectly orthodox tales of Eucharistic miracles in which flesh stuck to the believers throats, in which a child appeared in a host poised for the priest's conception, transgression of taboo was sanctioned in limited areas. This area of the symbolic gave the occasion for playing with things dangerous, and going away from them unscathed." ¹¹⁶⁷

Once the symbolist mentality is understood, the need of such abhorrent rites disappears. The subject of cannibalism has only recently

¹¹⁶⁷ Ibid. Rubin pg.36

been broached by anthropologists. But it would seem that the popular conception of what was involved in such actions is quite mistaken and involved more with fear and projection than with fact. Most cannibalistic actions appear not to have been motivated by a bestial desire to eat human flesh resulting from an imagined psychopathic or primitive mentality, but by the desire of a member of a tribe to assimilate the spiritual power or physical prowess of an enemy or relative that had died. The cannibalistic act is, as it were, the reverse of the act of offering human sacrifices. These are magical operations which require the superstitious belief in the spiritual possibility that the god requires food to eat and can assimilate the offered victim spiritually even though the actual creature sacrificed is burned or eaten by the priest offering the victim. The Christian Eucharistic ceremony, the Mass, is indeed cannibalistic in this sense, that is, it is the reverse of the sacrifice of Christ. The purpose of the Christian ritual, like 'primitive' cannibalistic rituals, is to assimilate the power and knowledge of the victim. This is obvious and undeniable. The moral abhorrence of this act is denied by Christians, even to their own awareness, because the promised benefits of eating the body and blood of Christ far outweigh any moral scruple or repulsion for such an act. In the minds of Christians union with the imaged god and the promise of eternal life. Being one of the chosen elite matters far more than drinking human blood or eating human flesh. This is a kind of spiritual blackmail. In compensation for overlooking the immoral act of the eating of Christ's flesh the communicant receives the promise of a deified body in heaven, and the abhorrence for the actual act of the eating of flesh then becomes projected onto the human body and nature, considered in their materiality. The Christian associates the body with sin and sin with physicality and the natural. From this arises the usual Christian concern with guilt and punishment, particularly addressed against women, who are thought to be closer to nature and closer to the physical than men..

The ambiguity of eating the body of Christ combined with an attitude of holding the world as a place of sin and sacrifice results from the Christian theory of knowledge, which places the locus of knowledge beyond the world, and virtually deifies human consciousness insofar as this consciousness is conformed to the Christian paradigm. It is this which gives Christianity its attitude towards the world as a place of sacrificial violence, symbolized both in the Crucifixion and the apocalyptic expectation. Such attitudes towards nature and the world are toxic and delusional, creating a hatred of nature that is hardly “evolutionary”.

What is involved in the Christian rite is a complex arrangement of symbolic and literal factors which seek to impose a mentality and thereby a knowledge system, and this is accomplished by being made of both the most exalted symbolisms and the most morally abhorrent actions committed by the communicant at the same time. The paradoxical involvement in the simultaneous partaking of the exalted and the abhorrent in one act of eating creates loyalty, hope, and for some even contemplative exhalation. It is this act, a cultic act if ever there was one, which gives Christianity its peculiar power, and this which the Church exploited for a thousand years in building its empire. It is a powerful form of initiation, in that it encourages people to regularly commit a morally reprehensive act but covers over the act in beatific promises and claims that those who do this will be among the chosen, the special, the exceptional the saved. Those how have not indulged in eating flesh and drinking blood are the damned. Such a strategy might resemble a cruel fraternity house initiation ceremony, but in fact, the Eucharist was much more dangerous and fatal than any such college trick. Millions of people have died because of the power of the Church. The same is true of corporate power, which uses the idea of the Corporate Person as an abstraction to take from others untold wealth.

Dismantling these absurd magnified abstractions is thus a real possibility and within our reach if we wish to do it.

Rubin, unfortunately, does not follow out any of these conclusions, nor does she seem to see that power is not the principle purpose of the Eucharist. The Eucharist confers power because it represents a system of knowledge. In the scientific world the Eucharist is roughly equivalent to the consciousness of the scientist, who works through mathematical symbolizations to achieve knowledge and power. What I mean is that both the Eucharist and Math are epistemological constructions. There are equivalent only in that they are both used to acquire power over something, and both have mental constructs at their root. The church rituals and sacraments, in general, are roughly equivalent to the scientific method, which is to say that they function to establish credibility and to delineate the field of what is considered useful knowledge about the world. Of course, these are just analogies, and saying that Christ ascended into heaven is not at all the same as saying the electrical currents are often circular. Like the memes, which are also superficial constructions, analogies between science making and religion making are basically specious. What Rubin does not question, and it seems to me the central question, is why human consciousness, conceived in either scientific or Christian terms, should be considered either sacrosanct or supreme. When Erwin Schrodinger said, if I recall correctly, that the thinking ego does not appear in the scientific world picture because it is that picture, he was describing the immersion of human consciousness in matter, as a means of learning how things work. But he is mistaken in that science at its best is not merely ego, it is fact based on real observation and experiment. Religion tells us nothing about how things work, it keeps us in the dark, cowering before gods that do not exist. Science is not an abstract ideology and thus is

best used to create fairness and equity in social relations and between nature and humans.

We have to look into the roots of capitalism to see what the Eucharist is really about. cannibalism as an example of a complex concept or practice that is used to justify a will to power through a knowledge system: one comes across references in Marxist writings to capitalism described as a system of cannibalistic economic practices. Why is this? There is the purely historical reason that Marxism has affinities with an historical development of gnostic "heresies" that developed alongside Christianity, and that some of these heretical ideas held that Christianity was a cannibalistic sect. Charges of cannibalism would later be leveled at Christianity from Islam as well. But be this as it may, the relation of communism to Christianity is a close one, though neither most Marxists or Christians are prepared to admit the many affinities between the two millennialist ideologies. Hegel's delusions of being a manifestation of the Christic Logos, and the influence of this presumptive totalism on Marx is pertinent, because communism, like Christianity and capitalism became a system of power/knowledge that depended on force and violence to assert its claim to legitimacy. Initially, Marxism, like Christianity, was a marginal cult, and from a cult it turns into a state religion, gaining power, claiming to be a totality of knowing, a way of living, with systems to punish those who did not conform.

In any case, criticisms of the Christian Eucharistic rite as a cannibalistic rite go back to the first centuries after Christ. But a historical analysis sidesteps the fact that the charge of cannibalism is often used by many different peoples as general term for moral depravity of a supposed enemy's inhumanity. Christians charge "savages" with cannibalism, Islam charges Christianity with cannibalism; communism

charges capitalism with cannibalism, anthropologists charge Neanderthals with cannibalism.. All these charges may contain an element of truth, but mostly there they are efforts to justify the will to power and conquest of one system of knowledge/power against an enemy.

There is a certain truth to the Marxist claim against capitalism insofar as capitalism does indeed devour, metaphorically speaking, that which or those whom it uses to secure profits and power. The profit motive has devoured whole peoples and landscapes, as happens now in the Amazon jungles, or happened before, in Vietnam, or Africa, enslaving populations or resulting in atrocities. It is literally true that capitalism, devoured the substance of Native American tribes, and gobbled up the lands of these peoples and left mangled corpses and ruined animal populations behind them, Bison largely gone, Pronghorn Antelope gone, and now the Saiga largely killed off by the Chinese . In our time Insurance companies farm the sick and dying in hospitals and exploit their money for health care, just as coal companies devour the earth and spew chemicals and acids into creeks.

But on the other hand, when one looks at the Christian missionaries in the 15th to 19th centuries, one finds frequent efforts to accuse tribes in Africa, the South Seas or the Americas of cannibalism. Here the concept of cannibalism is a political hyperbole used to discredit a people or an ideology and thereby sanction a just war, aggression or exploitation against them. There were occasionally tribes that were cannibalistic, but very few. Thus, for a Native American to say that capitalists and Christians cannibalized their culture and lands has a certain truth to it, though the expression is not exactly accurate. But for the European who looked at all American tribes as cannibals, this was not just hyperbole but in nearly all cases a racist lie. The charge of cannibalism, like the charge that such and such a people are "evil", as when Reagan called the

Soviet State an "evil empire", is almost always an excuse for aggression. If one can reduce a people or population to "otherness" such that they become a "them", and thereby non-human, savage or evil, then murder, exploitation is sanctioned, The Nazi treatment of Jews was a sort of cannibalism, even to the point of making lampshades of their skin is a particularly gruesome example of the ideological alienation of the "other". This is ironic given the need of Europeans during Shakespeare's times to see Jews as "Shylocks who wanted their "pound of flesh". Marxism itself, in its Stalinist form, was also cannibalistic in this metaphorical sense, insofar as it eliminated or murdered whole sectors of its own population, while, at the same time, Stalinist propaganda used the concept of cannibalistic capitalism to justify aggression and war against capitalist nations.

In discussions about what is evil, or what is cannibalism, therefore, one is not so much talking about a literal event, but about a context, and the meaning of a concept within a set of complex circumstances. Evil, I think, does not exist as a reality in itself; that is, there is no metaphysical agent of destruction, no devil, no satanic reality. There are only acts of malice and destruction caused by societies and individuals. Just as the notion of "Limited Liability Company(LLC)" is used by corporations to exclude their boards and CEOs from the unpleasant fact that they are in fact responsible for corporate abuses, so likewise, in a reverse way, is cannibalism used by unjust states and churches to blacklist its enemies. So likewise, with rare exceptions for survival, cannibalism is above all a symbolic practice, which orchestrates social motives; only incidentally is it an actual eating of flesh.

So, I am saying that there are two kinds of cannibalism, literal and symbolic. There is actual cannibalism. Cannibalism was practiced among the Hua of New Guinea, the Aztec or Iroquois. Then there is there

is symbolic cannibalism, such as occurs in the Christian Eucharistic ritual. But this distinction between actual and symbolic cannibalism explains very little. Regarding literal cannibalism Peggy Sanday, in her study Divine Hunger observes:

"More than just a reaction to external conditions cannibalism is a tangible symbol that is part of a system of symbols and ritual acts that predicate consciousness in the formulation of the social other and reproduce consciousness in the ritual domination and control of the social other. Where domination and control are subordinate to accommodation and integration, cannibalism is absent, regardless of the nature of the food supply" ¹¹⁶⁸

In other words, food supply has very little to do with cannibalism; except in rare cases such as the Donner party, the late Neanderthals or in the Nazi camps where desperate people ate other people so they themselves could survive. But where cannibalism does occur in tribal cultures it is symbolic action, sometimes literal and sometimes not, whose purpose is to orchestrate social motivations, to control behavior and assert power. Literal cannibalism is as much an effort to impose a consciousness or a knowledge system as is symbolic cannibalism. Indeed, symbolic cannibalism, as occurs in the Eucharist in Christianity, may be far more enduring and ultimately destructive than literal cannibalism. The object of the devouring of other human beings is power, and not nourishment. 'Take and eat this wafer and you will be superior to all others', is the message.

¹¹⁶⁸ 2. Sanday, Peggy. Divine Hunger Cambridge University Press, 1986. pg.26

Power is defined as the ability to derive benefits and to confer sanctions or punishments for or against others. Cannibalistic actions, even in the symbolic form of the Christian Eucharistic ritual, fulfill this definition of power. The eating of the flesh and the drinking of the blood of Christ, is supposed to join the soul of the recipient to the substance of the body and blood of Christ. Since Christ represents a supernatural world, or "heaven" that is separated from this world, and access to this other world is possible only through the Eucharistic rite, the administrators of the ritual have power over the accessibility of the postulants to salvation, or failing this, to damnation. In other words, a standard of legitimate knowledge is imposed, represented by the body of Christ, and this standard acts a medium through which social conformity can be exacted and punishments against those who do not conform can be threatened and executed. The tortures of heretics by priests over the centuries, exceeds even the violent torture of victims by the Hua or the Iroquois. The Eucharist is thus primarily about creating the "other" who is not Christian, and thus holding oneself up as superior or supreme over others. It is a rite of political domination.

In other words, cannibalism is not about dietary nourishment, but about the maintenance of a social system and the imposition of a system of knowledge and cultural values. Even among the Aztecs, who, some claim, practiced cannibalism and human sacrifice in order to compensate for meat shortages, the material, dietary cause appears to have been incidental, or at most a convenient by-product. The principle reason for sacrificial blood rites among the Aztecs, seems to have been the maintenance of the metaphysical and cosmological system that upheld the hierarchical social order of the Aztec elite. It was a political act, like the Eucharistic rite. The Aztecs believed that the universe depended upon the blood of the sacrificed victims just as Christians believe that the universe began and will end in relation to the body and

blood of Christ. The violence of Aztec civilization was directed against smaller tribes considered to be enemies of the empire. Likewise, Christian civilization was spread by colonial violence, all over the world. "He that is not with me is against me"¹¹⁶⁹ and "Go ye into all the world and preach ye the Gospel to every creature"¹¹⁷⁰ are two of the many sentences of Christ that justified the violence and rapaciousness of Christian colonialist practices. Christ said he did not come to bring peace "but a sword", to divide "brother against brother", and indeed he did so, as two thousand years of bloody Christian wars and conquests demonstrate. Christ is a myth and the rite in which people symbolically drink his blood and eat his body is really a political act. The hypocrisy of the Conquistadores, whose own Eucharistic rite was symbolically cannibalistic, could hardly condemn native American practices when their own practices were as bad or worse.

The symbolic cannibalism of the Christian rite thus follows the same pattern of sacrificial and cannibalistic rites in many cultures. In order to preserve the power and values of the status quo, in a given society, sacrificial violence must be brought against those who live outside the society. Or, in the case of mortuary cannibalism, the dead of one's own people must be eaten, to preserve the power of tribal values against the ravages of time and bodily mortality. Among the Hua, of New Guinea, for instance, mortuary cannibalism serves to assimilate the spirits of the dead back into the living, as well as to preserve an elaborate reciprocity of balance and submission among power relationships between males and females. The devouring of dead males by females, the Hua believe, insures the tribe of regeneration.

The eating of the body of Christ has a similar, though much more universal function. The body of Christ is supposed to represent the

¹¹⁶⁹ Matthew, 12.30

¹¹⁷⁰ Mark, 16.20

"truth". This "truth" is a totalistic abstraction which relativizes actual human bodies, and thereby reduces them to the inferior status of "flesh". The domination of "flesh" by the fictional idea of "spirit" then becomes a means of an apocalyptic effort at world domination and the domination of nature. The abstract and imaginary 'truth' of Christ becomes the means by which the flesh of nature and unbelieving infidels and savages are to be dominated. In other words, the price of salvation, in the Christian universe, is the crucifixion of the natural world, and this crucifixion solidifies the benefits which accrue to those who embrace the Christian ideal. Capitalism, as the fruit of Christian culture, joins with an abuse of science to "eat" the earth and give it to the rich. Destruction of other cultures as well as environmental destruction is built into the Christian model of the universe.

Or, to express this in yet a different way: The crucifixion and resurrection of Christ sets up an intangible and abstract ideal as the criterion of the ultimately knowable. This ideal makes of all actual reality, the "world" in Christian parlance, a reality that is lesser, and therefore dispensable. The truth is the opposite. The eating of the sacrificial victim in the form of the body of Christ becomes the principle means of participating in the non-existing and abstract reality that has been posited by Christ's sacrifice. The cruelty of the crucifixion is thus displaced and projected upon the world by the symbolic cannibalism of the Eucharistic ingestion of the fictional Christ's blood and body. Christ justifies this in the following statement "the world has tribulations, but be of good cheer because I have overcome the world".¹¹⁷¹ The price of Christ's crucifixion, in other words is paid for in worldly "tribulation", and Christ's victory is attained at the cost of those who live in the actual and ordinary, day to day world, far beneath the sublime abstractions of the "truth" of the Transfiguration and the sublimity of the "kingdom of

¹¹⁷¹ John. 16.33

heaven". Nature and people must pay the price of the fiction of Christ. We get nothing in return, the whole play is set up to benefit those in power. Or to put this somewhat differently, the Christ image was a symbol of a mentality and state control, and as this became normalized in early science, the brutality of the human centered and transcendent viewpoint became an excuse and justification for conquest and murder, environmental rape and wars.

There is a huge difference between the imaginary, abstract, supernatural world, posited by the religions, and the actual world that we live in. The imaginary distinction of an eternal, supernatural world and an actual temporal world serves a social purpose by allowing the imposition of a legitimizing consciousness. This legitimizing consciousness is a political construction which imposes conformity and punishes deviation and by this means, it preserves power and control over a society. The human body inevitably becomes the theatre in which systems of knowledge play out their cruelties and their drives for supremacy. It need not be this way, but for most of human history this is how it has been. To say this is an inevitable fact of nature is to misread nature. The Eucharistic rite is a piece of fiction meant to create power for some at the expense of others. The myth is not actually needed and can be easily avoided. Once one understands how it functions in our social order, it is easy to distance oneself from it.

Weber's thesis in The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, that the Protestant rebellion of the Puritans and Calvinists was the origin of capitalism, while accurate in many respects, seems shortsighted. The words of Christ himself already imply a capitalist view of the world. The whole notion of original sin and the necessity of salvation implies a fictional debt to God, and therefore the entire

Christian world view is conditioned by notions of debt and payment. The parable of the Talents, the notion of gathering abstract or "heavenly" treasures, the pearl of great price, the "wages of sin" and the payment in suffering for the debt of the flesh of the Crucified-- these are all economic concepts, however they may be couched in metaphysical and symbolic language. One must pay for original sin, for sin in general, for existing. This is why Christianity trades in guilt. It wants to create an ontological debt which is infinite, so one must spend ones whole life paying it back. "The poor we always have with us" states a particularly cruel Christ, perhaps an anti-union Republican who hates immigrants. Did Jesus not understand his own pronouncement that the rich are camels who cannot get though the eye of a needle?.

One can trace an historical evolution, for instance, from the Church's sale of Indulgences, or spiritual insurances, as it were, to lighten the posthumous suffering of sinners, to the development of Insurance companies insuring slave and merchant ships that went to exploit the colonies and export Christian values to the New World.¹¹⁷² It is not far from slave ships owned and operated by Christians to the development of the modern insurance company with its entirely secular and capitalist exploitation for profit of fear, risk, sickness and death.

The capitalistic system of power and knowledge makes literal what was already virtual in the words of Christ. One can trace the origins of both capitalism and modern science to the Nominalist/Realist controversies of the 12th to 14th centuries. The Doctrine of Transubstantiation literalized the eating of Christ's flesh and drinking his blood. This makes the Eucharistic rite a literal act of cannibalism,

¹¹⁷² Many insurance companies were involved in slavery. Indeed, the insurance system was partly created to facilitate the slave trade and write off its losses. JMW Turner already condemned this in his great painting of slaves thrown off the ship called the Zong in an effort to collect insurance. Aetna was involved in slavery, for instance. There has yet to be a thorough accounting of just how bad these companies are and how much damage they have done. This is hampered by the companies themselves, who have destroyed many records or keep them inaccessible.

however symbolic it may seem to be. In this rite one enters into a compact with the abstract world represented by the heavenly body of Christ, and therefore the actual world becomes a place of 'gross physicality', in Christian parlance, which must be radically transformed through knowledge. The world becomes a place to be dominated through man's knowledge, made in the image of Christ. This domination requires that nature be "transubstantiated" into man's understanding of it, Christianity, capitalism and science (abused for capitalist purposes) orchestrate a system of knowledge that confers power, and this power depends upon the ability to exploit nature and other cultures and people by transforming them into the image of Western man's desires. The cannibalistic act of the Eucharistic rite thus becomes the domination of nature and other cultures by Western man. The destruction of nature and other cultures follows from this ideology put into action. The Crucifixion likewise becomes literalized as the rape of nature. The exact process whereby the Eucharistic symbol and practice forged a mentality that eventually became capitalism, communism and science would have to be documented and explored in more detail, But the intent of this paper is speculative rather than documentary.

It is clear in any case, that cannibalism, symbolic or literal, is primarily a practice or a symbolic means of attaining power and of imposing a system of knowledge and control. The sublimated cannibalism that is practiced in a secular world of science and capitalism is not less horrible than that of the Aztecs. In fact, the capitalist and communist preying upon other peoples and cultures may be more horrible and stemming from a deeper hypocrisy than the more blatantly brutal cannibal cultures of the past. A recent case of this, in the early 1990's was the case of Jeffery Daumer, who murdered 17 boys and ate some of them. It is not without significance, for instance, that Jeffery Daumer's father describes himself in a recent book as someone who

buried himself in a scientific chemical laboratory because he found the world of human beings repugnant and chaotic.¹¹⁷³

A counter example to the case of Dahmer,¹¹⁷⁴ who internalized both Christian and capitalistic suggestions of cannibalistic consumption and ideology, is the case of the Haitian poet René Depestre. Depestre, in his great poem "Rainbow for the Christian West", rejects the devouring qualities of capitalism and Christianity and stands up for himself as a man independent of these ideological systems of knowledge and power. For instance, here is a stanza from his great poem, where he rejects the Christianity that did so much harm to his beloved Haiti....

I do not remain seated under a tree
The little Christ who was smiling in me
Last night I drowned him in alcohol
Likewise I drowned the Tablets of the Law
Likewise I drowned all your sacred sacraments
My collection of butterflies are monsters
That you loosed on my black man's dreams
Monsters of Birmingham monsters of Pretoria

¹¹⁷³ Science is not about an escape from reality at all. He misunderstood what science is, at its best. It is a celebration of existence and nature, not its denial. Systems of knowledge and power, like Christianity, posit a world of "truth" that is divorced from this world, and this world inevitably suffers from the divorce.¹¹⁷³ Dahmer was a product of the psychology of rapacious capitalism, not too different than the CEO who expects unearned profits.

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¹¹⁷⁴ Indeed, the Daumer case typifies not only aspects of primitive cannibalistic rites, but also destructive and devouring aspects of Christian and capitalist civilization. The Daumer case is a gruesome reminder of the destructive capacity of the will to power through religion. Whether one looks at cannibalism as practiced by the Hua, the Aztecs, Christians, or Jeffery Daumer, the constant that emerges is the will to power through ideology and the effort to legitimize this will to power. The concept of evil does not arise in this inquiry because labeling something evil, while perhaps useful in expressing moral outrage, does not lead one closer to understanding and thereby possibly preventing the destructive actions such as violence, war and virtual cannibalism of the sort practiced by corporate culture and states.

I collect your hysterias
I collect your pale spirochetes
I devote myself to the stamp collecting of your cowardly acts

Here I am a brand new Black
I finally feel that I am myself
In my new solar geography
Me in the great joy of saying good-bye
To your ten commandments of God
To your hypocrisies of your bloody rites
To the brewing of your scandals!
Me in this fire of my veins
Who has never prayed
Me in this radium of my color
Who has never bent the knee
Me in this royal tree of my blood
Who has never turned towards the West
Leaves of submission
Me in the geometry of my lions
Me in the violence of my diamond
Me in the purity of my crystal
Me in the gaiety of rekindling life

For Depestre then, and for us too, it is possible to escape from the domination of a devouring and destructive capitalist, communist or Christian culture. “ I finally feel that I am myself”, he says. This is a great achievement. I remember feeling that in my early forties and I have not forgotten that. My education finally made me mostly free of the web of chains that kept my thought in thrall to powers. Nature is its own, animals belong to themselves, evolution is about beauty, a terrible

beauty that liberates us and denies killing and injustice, greed and the pursuit of a destructive power. The system that created wage slavery was a capitalist and unjust system that cannot be sustained. Depestre did not know it, but this freedom to be oneself, within the limits of nature, is what evolution is all about. Darwin understood this. Though one must still beware of becoming enslaved in yet another systems of symbols or powers. We need not live inside the enclosing envelope of symbols and systems of knowledge imposed upon us without real evidence. It would seem that this poetry of resistance is indeed one place to where a new Anthropology that does not serve the domination of exploitive knowledge systems might begin. Science is a celebration of life, not an excuse to exploit others or rape the earth.

Peggy Sanday observes in the earlier cited quote that "where domination and control are subservient to accommodation and integration, cannibalism is absent". The question then becomes: how is it possible to limit or the will to dominance and power. How do we oppose systems of knowledge that abuse and cause harms? How do we honor nature in our political arrangements such that we do not exterminate and exploit nature beyond its means and survival? Is there a way of knowing that does not assert power and which leads to "accommodation and integration", that eliminates extinctions, factory farms and hunting for pleasure, eliminates the Pharmaceutical industries and the sources of pollution and the historiography of conquest and oppression?. I do not yet know how to answer this question. But it seems to me that a truly useful Anthropology would begin with this question.

The relation of systems of knowledge and power to violence, ecological disaster, genocide and other aspects of history are almost still largely denied or unexplored. This is because we live in a Christian and

scientific society which resists questions about its own drive for knowledge and power, and poor people, animals, plants, the earth itself are “externalities” meaning they do not rate as part of the system of capital exchange. Science needs to take other species and the earth itself into account, beginning at the “bottom” with ocean plankton and going along the web or nature strand by strand and restoring life to an equitable balance. Nature is still seen as an infinite resource which the rich can take and take more from with no consequence to them. This is no longer tenable. Every being needs to love, not just the rich and those who take must give back. The ordinary Christian is unaware of living inside a system of knowledge and power which is mythological or “paradigmatic”. Systems of knowledge and power are self-sustaining and self-reflective parameters of belief, which are very difficult to question because such systems conflate reality with their own view of the world. Science often goes outside such parameters, as Leonardo knew. Questions that fall outside the knowledge/power paradigm are resisted by religions, sometimes with violence. Questions about the Eucharist were resisted in this way. Questions about science and its social responsibility are often encouraged in contrast and that is a good thing.

The process by which human consciousness makes itself transcendental and thereby creates symbols, like Christ of Corporate Persons, is somewhat more clear. More research is needed to show how the myth of the Eucharist got invented. As I said at the beginning, I think that the Eucharistic myth is an inversion of the Osiris/Ammit myth of Egypt, where the god eats souls. Christ was eaten so as to create souls who would be owned by his ideology, “saved” was the word the myth uses. But Christian salvation is merely another form of enslavement. Indeed the creation of the myth of Christ or Muhammad is shrouded in mystery and deliberately so. But it is not hard to unravel it. I understand the act of self-magnification that is involved in the early years before

Jesus and Muhammad enter the world stage.. But exactly how the eucharist rite was created and by whom is unknown, It certainly as a brilliant creative burst to create a myth that would enthrall people for centuries. But to understand systems of knowledge and how they generate power would require more research into the nature and role of consciousness, symbolization, power and violence. In the case of the Eucharist we know how it was used, and that goes quite far in showing that it was created to be used as a social tool of manipulation and adherence. There is no 'original Christianity, there is only the process of the development of a system of make believe, reinvented each generation to insure that the system of injustice be maintained. It enabled Christians and capitalists to treat the whole world as another to be conquered and devoured

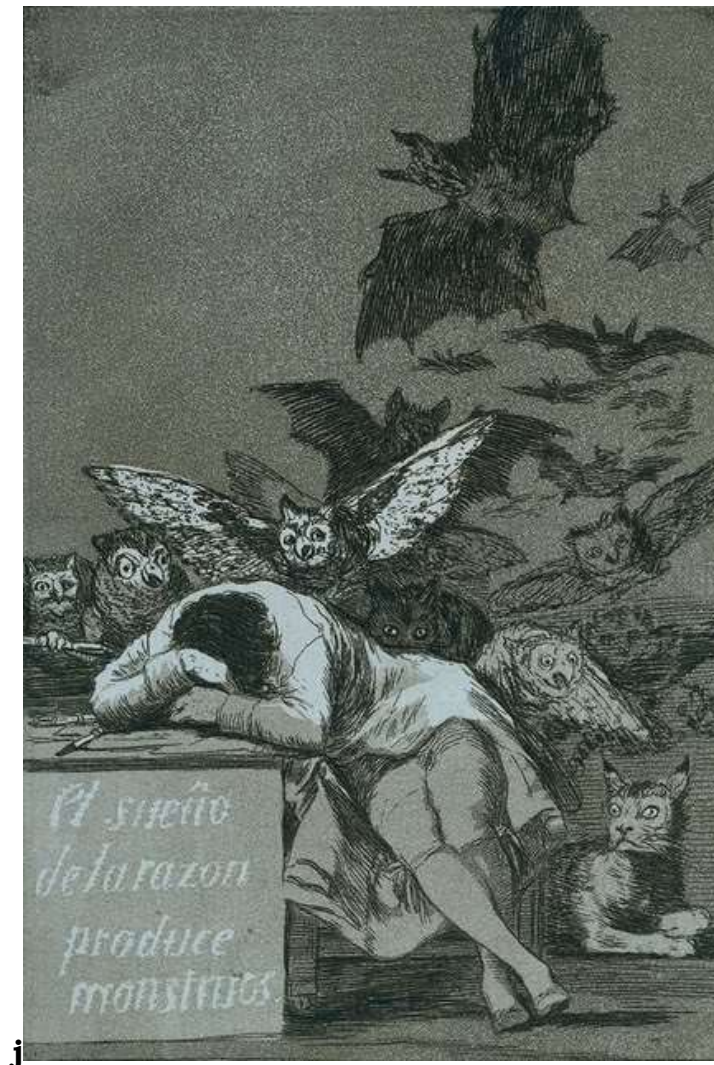
Finally, once the basic Christian theory of knowledge and power became sublimated into the scientific world view, the cannibalistic aspect of the Christian ritual was literalized into a form of inquiry that encouraged an attitude towards the earth and the earthly that was rapacious and devouring, "inquisitorial" to be precise. The Eucharist is primarily about the physical assimilation, through eating, of knowledge and power. The Christian model and ritual ceases to be a symbolic action and becomes secularized as a devouring of the earth and of nature in Christian capitalism in order that man might exalt himself. But thinkers like Darwin and others largely removed the rapacious scientism of Descartes and Bacon and point to a science that values the earth and nature and does not see it as an "other" to be devoured. The system of rights denying injustice begins to become undone with Darwin. Science must progress towards further integration of all life on earth. This is conclusion that is indicated by the history. This follows from the arguments I have made throughout this essay and is supported by much historical evidence. This is obviously not very favorable to Christianity or

capitalism. But my purpose here is to try to examine the historical record as honestly and as accurately as I can and I do this neither as Christian or a capitalist, but as one who wishes to examine the effects of systems of knowledge and power in the belief that human beings and the natural world deserve to be free of coercive and authoritarian impositions, be these religious, economic, political or otherwise.

On Those Who Hate Science and Reason:
Anti-Science and Irrationalism in Guenon, Wolfgang Smith and other
Creationist Reactionaries.

“Faith is believing what you
know just ain’t so”—Mark
Twain

“Don’t let it get you down, its
only castles burning”--- Neil
Young



**Francisco de Goya,
"The Sleep of reason Produces Monsters" (1799)**

This essay is in eight parts as follows

1 Science verses Religion in History

2. Reality is not a Construction

3. Science defeats Fundamentalism and Traditionalism

4. Corporate Science

5.Louis Agassiz, Ananda Coomaraswamy and the Spiritual Fiction of “Virgin Nature”

6.Darwins Triumph over Religion and Anti-Science

7.Wolfgang Smith and Creationist Anti-Science.

8.Quantum Quackery and Fictional Essences

1.Science verses Religion in History

Here I want to write about a subject that was dear to me since the beginning of my quest when I was a teen. How is science to be considered? And why are the traditional doctrines, fundamentalists, reality constructionists, romantics, medieval philosophers, New Agers and religion in general, so wrong in their dislike or hatred of it. I explored doubts about science at great length, and gave it a fair hearing. I finally decided the doubters of science, as well as those who abuse science for political or corporate motives, were wrong. So, these are my conclusions about haters of science, with some characteristic people used as examples of the more general trend.

When one reads a real scientist, it is clear that they are more than willing to admit their uncertainty. This is true of Von Leeuwenhoek for instance, who studied small beings as far as protists and bacteria under a microscope. While his studies are amazing and far reaching for their time, he was wrong about sperm being the primary determinant of life in mammals. He suspected he might be wrong , though he was not sure and doubts assailed him. He pushed forward his thesis and failed. In the 1670's no one really knew how human or animal reproduction occurred and so there were some wild theories and speculations about it, ranging from religious and spiritual fictions to attempts, like Van Leeuwenhoek to be objective and as accurate as he could be using tools like his amazing optical devices. It was not until 1843 that Martin Barry formally recognized the connection between female ovum and male sperm

objectively. There is no doubt, it had long been supposed, especially by women. But no men asked them. It was not till the middle of the 20th century that women's views started to be respected, with Madame Curie and Rosalind Franklin.

How much about our earth we do not know now is completely unknown and we are as in the dark as Van Leeuwenhoek was in the 1670's. But that real progress has been made is undeniable. Well done and accurate science is thus paramount to our children's future. We need not only to understand ourselves, but all the lives on earth, as all lives are clearly as valuable as our own. Survival is what matters for all species. Humans need to work out how to eat, as meat fails the whole earth, and we need to work out our relationship to other species, which we murder at an alarming rate. Energy, greed, war, and religion are all problems that so far we have not dealt with well¹¹⁷⁵ Once science is better tuned to studying human destructiveness, the world might stand a change of improving, human populations decreased, nature to be more protected, and the poor helped

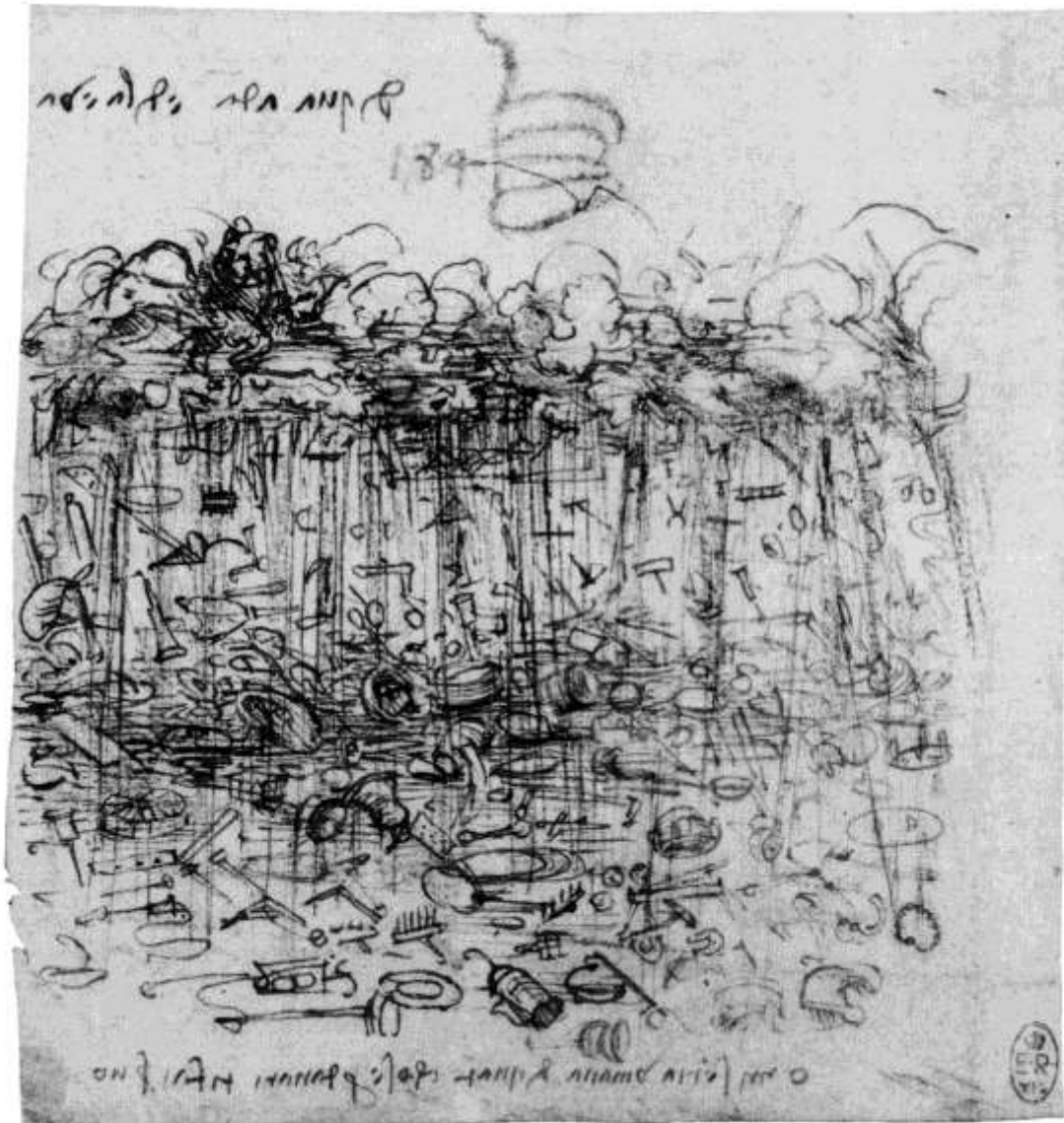
The sleep of reason does produce monsters, and since there are no actual monsters, as I tell my children, what is meant by the word 'monstrous' is obvious to reasonable adults: monsters are in fact: dangerous politics, war, murder, big business, selfishness, greed, power, religion and delusional superstitions. Goya was right, what is really scary is people's ability to be deluded and to harm each other as a result of mistaken beliefs. Many people live in ready-made delusions of one

¹¹⁷⁵ Mosquitoes are not aware that they spread malaria or other diseases. Certain wasps use the larva of other species as hosts, and that is repulsive. But evolution is about survival and it is not relevant that we might object to the unethical behavior of some species. They are not as responsible as we are for the harms done. Being ethical in removing such harms done to our own species is the right way to go. It is mistaken to spray crops with herbicides that kill many species, merely so the cash crops will enrich already well off 'farmers', many of whom are actually corporate bureaucrats. Corporations are false entities, like religions and need to be removed as aristocracy was removed. Trees need rights, oceans need rights, and the abuse of the world for profit must stop. Human numbers are too high, climate must be protected, and so much else needs to be worked on studied and done. .

kind or another, be it religions, free market capitalism or Marxism. I think Mark Twain understood this too in his last decades. I have shown this over and over in this book. Religion is the delusional mistake of various social systems and not really the result of evolution, by Darwinian natural selection. Religion was not selected for by evolution, or I should say--- it is a product of culture. Some analysts try to say that cultural products are “by products” of brain or body faculties, indirectly, perhaps, but they are not directly caused by evolution. Evolution did not suggest that people deny global warming, or that they endanger others by believing bogus conspiracy theories about the dangers of vaccines against measles, mumps or Chicken pox. Ignorance did not create shamanistic theater where men in ancient societies tried to manipulate their tribal members by exploiting drama to create the illusion of healing through magical thinking. Ignorance creates these delusions, just as it creates the hatred of decent science.¹¹⁷⁶ Of course, there is badly done science, or corporate science, but Darwin did not create that either. Evolution did not select for corrupt CEOs, indeed, they are their own creation and one we must downsize them if the earth is to survive with us on it.

Da Vinci began to doubt the fact of human destructiveness before others. He already deplored the slavery to things in 1500, around the time he did this drawing of things falling in a deluge from the sky.

¹¹⁷⁶ A good example of ignorance in action is Donald Trump who hired uneducated corporate oil executives who deny global warming, like Scott Pruitt head of the EPA who wants to destroy the environment, among many other ignorant people who want to destroy or silence real global science. See John Nichols *Horsemen of the Trumpocalypse: A Field Guide to the Most Dangerous People in America*,



Leonardo da Vinci, ink drawing, c. 1510. A rain of household objects and artisanal tools. (Inscription: "O human misery – how many things you must serve for money!") Windsor Royal Library. Royal Collection. © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

The strife of money caused endless wars in Europe, as it now causes endless destruction of nature. The first guns were used around 1504, and he deplored them. He helped create weapons of destruction and came to see humans as destructive very early. Many people today experience science as destructive because of weapons, rightly. The sale of arms should be slowed or stopped. Hunting is hugely

destructive. The ease with which other people and animals are killed and environments destroyed is indeed alarming. The stupidity of Rodeo, shocking horses with electroshocks to make them buck off riders, killing pigeons in shoots, shooting bears or ducks for fun, all this is a ridiculous and unnecessary horror. This has to be slowed or stopped, ways to live with animals, fish and mammals in the ocean and birds must be found. Ways to manage harmful insects and plants that is not so poisoning must be discovered. The causes of human destruction have to be discovered and the earth made livable for all its inhabitants, not just humans. The hatred of science is justified in some cases, because humans misuse it so badly. This needs to be more thoroughly understood and studied. I am merely scratching the surface of these problems here.

Darwin continued Da Vinci's amazing prescience and insight. Science for him, as for Da Vinci was an ethical endeavor, not a glory for the unfairly rich. Darwin's illnesses were caused by his anxious fears and understanding about just what backlash his theory might unleash. He understood how irrational people are and how destructive they can be. Creationists are still attacking him 150 years later. He knew that the cultural apparatus was sustained by religious fictions and feared an assault on himself and his work. There was good reason to fear this reprisal. Ideology and class interest resist any change and attack those who criticize them.

The Pandora's Box of delusions I have tried to critique in this book is the panoply of malice and delusional dreams that haunts the bitter and escapist hearts of men and women even now. There is little or no evidence that religion confers potential reproductive advantages on anyone, on the contrary. Religion appears to have aided enormously in creating war and divisions between groups, doing great harm to ourselves, other peoples, and other species.

That religion is a delusional product of social stratification and

injustice means that it is of unfortunate group of behaviors that accrued over of human history and attached to us as part of our social make up. It is a welling up of frustrated needs and power hungry urges forced into testosterone-pumped transcendent fictions and seizing on populations because of political prejudice and the ease with which they attack the imagination. The fact that religions all over the world are fading and dying, shows that it is a sort of ‘mental virus’, as Dawkins awkwardly called it. But the decline and failure of religion also shows is mutable and can be overcome. ¹¹⁷⁷

Religions are not really “memes” and can be easily dissolved by education. ¹¹⁷⁸ This is great news. It does not have to be eradicated by another religious ideology. Marxism foolishly tried to get rid the world of religion, but it did so religiously thus proving the political nature of all religions. It was one toxic system of belief fighting others. Politics too, can be a “disease” of the brain, metaphorically speaking. It can be a will to harm others through ideology and doctrine. To undo religion only requires that it be illuminated by the light of reason and good living. It is not really part of us, but merely an accretion grown from our rather incomplete development, Religion is a mistake of the heart that grows by dint of wishes and false hopes, ignorant but well-meaning parents, narrow minds and the refusal to follow evidence. Undoing religion requires real self-examination, inquiry and a deep love of life and the world. One has to be willing to

¹¹⁷⁷ The American election system , really a selection system is just such an example of ideological control, lying, shinning, prejudice, corporate engineering and fraud. The foolishness of the electoral college is an example of preserving the staus quo agasint democracy. IN my life time two right wing nuts, Bush Jr. and trump have gotten in because of this corrupt system of unjust electoral voting.

¹¹⁷⁸ Dawkin’s idea of a mental virus of course, is just a metaphor, like the concept of memes. In actual usage memes are merely mental play toys, play ideas, handles or names or a” system of behavior that may be considered to be passed from one individual to another by non-genetic means, especially imitation”, like swear words, fads, fashions and the like, Meme theory cannot handle something as complex as religion.. Religions are long term systems of social control. Dismantling them is a complex social process.

admit one has been wrong.

The religious or symbolist view of the universe that is common to the religions has been dead since Galileo and Leeuwenhoek , killed by the microscope and the telescope, in addition to thousands of other inventions and the whole panoply of scientific thought that tests itself against reality. Science is not a “meme” either, but an “intellectual and practical activity encompassing the systematic study of the structure and behavior of the physical and natural world through observation and experiment”. The importance here is the stress on reality. A system of knowledge like, say, the means to deform species by the profit motive by misusing genetic ideas is not really science, but the corporate abuse of science. One has to distinguish science from its abuses.

. Indeed, there is little that matters in human history, since 1500, that does not have the progress of science and the diminishment of religion at its root. As far as the future is concerned, little matters but independent scientific thought, trying to grasp how nature and humans can work towards each other in a symbiotic and self-sustaining way. Religion, business and politics are clearly in the way of progress. But there are many who refuse to believe it. So, there are reactionaries and retrograde leaps backwards, and one religion after another, one political fiction or corporate or civil religion after another crops up, each claiming to be legitimate, but failing after a short period of time.

Indeed, it can be said that by the 21st century, religion is in severe decline and it survives mostly as a reactionary force, defending unjust social arrangements of the political right and business elite in many countries. The idea of countries, or nation states, itself is questionable and has its own sad history. The Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan keep trying to set up a reactionary orthodox state. There are many others: the far right Islamist parties in many countries; the Jewish state; the traditionalists; the American far right Christians; Catholics still living as if 12th century dogmas; Hindus still virtually supporting the outlawed

caste system; Native Americans still promoting pre-Columbus superstitions-- in all these and other cases, religion is backed up against a wall, backwards, slipping into magical thinking or supporting wealth and social injustice against science and progress. These are all real problems. For some years in the 1980's, liberation theology helped progressives in Latin America, but that is an exception that proves the rule. The mainstream religions around the world are failing, reactionary, dogmatically holding to increasingly irrational positions. Traditionalism is just one of many reactionary ideologies.

E.O Wilson writes that religion was a sort of 'mental trap' for humans that is being slowly replaced by more objective views. Once we realize that the religions are finished, the question of why religion happened at all becomes very interesting. Evolutionary theory is finally addressing why religion happened at all. It is clear that religion is not genetically encoded, which means it had nothing to do with our evolution as a species. This is to say that some aspect of our bodily and genetic make-up was misused or deformed by mental and cultural processes, and so went awry due to social pressures and the will to power. David Sloan Wilson, along with E.O. Wilson, claims that "group selection" is part of the reason that religion happened to humans. I have doubts that is true, but it is an interesting question. It is true that religion helped humans survive the attacks of outlying groups. But the idea that groups select genes is farfetched. Steven Pinker disputes this with many good reasons, while Richard Dawkins also attacks E.O Wilson rather vociferously.¹¹⁷⁹ Pinker claims that "much of the work on group

¹¹⁷⁹ Steven Pinker claims that only individuals are selected in Darwinian natural selection, not groups.. He says at the end of a long essay that "both Dawkins and Wilson are outliers who fail to recognize that the days of pitting kin selection against group selection are over." I have no idea what is the truth here, though I incline more to Pinker than Dawkins, but the questions are interesting on both sides, as there is healthy had livingly debate going on about the evolutionary origins of religion. This is live science. Here is Pinker's essay: <http://edge.org/conversation/the-false-allure-of-group-selection>

selection has been funded by the John Templeton Foundation, an enormously wealthy organization with an agenda to harmonize faith and science”. This would indeed suggest that the thesis is probably invalid, as science should not be done to serve an ideological “faith”. In any case, competing hypotheses are not uncommon in science, and eventually physical truth will discredit well-funded ideology. It seems likely group selection theory is merely another failed and bankrolled hypothesis.

Dawkins claims religion is a “by product” of the tendency of children to believe their parents, and thus religion is a result of gullibility and the abuse of the innocent. This seems a sound though incomplete, theory, the “by product” theory being highly questionable. Religion is fundamentally an abuse of trust and exploits the vulnerable, despite the fact that it occasionally helps people. Dawkins is right there. These are very live questions. But Stephen Jay Gould’s concept of ‘by-product’—he invented the idea--- seems to have little meaning. What is exciting about science is it is alive with such questions, real questions, while religion deals with mostly with dead issues and mythic fictions.¹¹⁸⁰

In this this essay I will show how science has trumped religion again and again, even while religion has mounted unsuccessful attacks on science. Not much has been written of the attacks on Science over the centuries, particularly in the last century. I will write an overview of some of this opposition to science here.¹¹⁸¹ It is clear that atheism is increasingly succeeding in our culture because religion and the group or cult psychology it fostered has ceased to be useful for human beings.

¹¹⁸⁰ For instance, religion wants to be an equal partner with science in schools, but then it really has nothing to offer. There are no botanists who can talk about the kinds of plants growing in the Garden of Eden. How did Three Toes Sloths get to the Amazon from Mount Ararat after the flood? Religion has no answers to such questions because these stories are myths. The notion that these mythic stories should be taught to kids in schools is wishful thinking.

¹¹⁸¹ This chapter is very long and could be a book on its own, but it does belong with the foregoing and is a natural consequence of what comes before this, so I keep it here.

Science is about verifiable evidence and not authority or intuition. Those who still are guided by the twin delusions of authority and intuition go astray of the truth. Foolish writers like John Milton write as if the Bible were truth¹¹⁸². Newton did this in his religious, alchemical works, as Michelangelo did in painting. Walt Whitman thought American history was involved with Manifest Destiny, as if God were on the side of those who killed indigenous people or Railroad tycoons who helped extirpate the Bison. Whitman imagines himself in Leaves of Grass as a god like being who says “I contradict myself because I am big. I contradict myself because I contain all the opposites, because I am all”. But this is narcissistic hyperbole and very much in keeping with the ideology of American exceptionalism and the growth of bloated corporations. Whitman expresses what in fact is a bloated ideology or a civil religion. The magnifying social function of such transcendentalist hyperbole is obvious.

Toxic and corporate religions like Scientology grew up as a mirror of the unjust corporate state in America, protected by the guarantee of the “freedom to be deluded”. clause in the first Amendment. ¹¹⁸³ One does

¹¹⁸² I looked through Paradise Lost the other day and thought well done. I thought it a ridiculous book of poetry, in many ways, Milton was a good craftsman, surely, and that is worth a lot in my view, but ridiculous in subject. Indeed, after science it is hard to take much poetry seriously. Milton was influenced by the Cromwell Revolution in England, and was anti monarchy, but still retains enough of the old absolutist ideology to write Paradise Lost. Blake wrote that “The reason Milton wrote in fetters when he wrote of Angels & God, and at liberty when of Devils & Hell, is because he was a true Poet and of the Devil's party without knowing it.” But this is a romantic view of him, though politically correct, though Blake is right that he is an ambiguous character. But his poetry like Dante is still the poetry of the ruling class, and fails on that account to do justice to those in real need..

¹¹⁸³ The freedom of religion clause in the Constitution has allowed cults or religions to proliferate wildly in America, and even to infringe upon the Constitution itself. The first amendment states “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof” This first part is fine, but the second part is a guarantee of cult proliferation and galloping irrationalism. The freedom to be deluded and convince others to be deluded. This is partly what makes America so much more gullible and prone to religious fictions than Europe. There are other reasons too, namely the constant bombardment of advertisers teaching the public

not wish to stop the free exercise of thought, but distinguishing truth and delusion from insidious and deceptive or illegal practices is far more difficult than merely listing beliefs. What kind of society gives religions rights, but denies rights to animals and nature in general? The problem of cults and corporate persons, and these is little difference, is systemic and part of capitalism. The oceans and the animals in them are real yet have no rights, while any religious cult is given free reign and allowed legal rights. Such a system is backwards and serves unjust elites, as religion always has.

Science has alone shown real progress over the last 500 years. There are those cranks and reactionaries who deny that real progress has been achieved, but it is undeniable. People live longer, children are saved, and millions of other benefits accrue to us from science, too numerous to mention. But even without these benefits, the fact of gaining pure knowledge of say, Venus Flytraps, or pink Dolphins¹¹⁸⁴, all the species of wasps, DNA or the fact of galaxies--- all this is priceless. Science is not just cutting edge science, nanotechnology or particle physics. These areas might be questionable. Science can be about washing clothes in a better way or doing carpentry. After the discovery of plate tectonics, the facts of photo synthesis or the videos and photos of

to believe all sorts of nonsense to get them to buy products they don't need, as well as a very poor education system, pummeled by efforts to privatize education and destroy free access to it. Living in American is sometimes like living in a Hieronymus Bosch painting, as delusions proliferate everywhere ..

I would contend furthermore that corporations are basically religious entities since they claim to be "persons" when actually this is a religious fiction. Corporations should be taxed and regulated as much as religions, or even more so than people. Their off shore activities should be heavily taxed so they cannot force salve labor on foreign populations bankrupting local populations.

¹¹⁸⁴ Th killing off the the Boto, or Pink Dolphin of the Amazon is due primarily to the fisherman on that riever who murder them to increase their own profits. The same is true in the town of Taiji Japan where there are still yearly massacres of up to 2000 cetaceans for food, profit and fisherman.

the sun that are now available on the NASA ¹¹⁸⁵website, religion is increasingly pathetic . Of course what is lost in religion is the unjust presumption of human supremacy. We are one of many beings all of whom have rights now. We are not corporate overlords who rule all with the dogmatic fanaticism of Jesus of Muhammad. It is so hard for those who are addicted to the ideology of human supremacy to give it up, even if they are otherwise enlightened. Just as the Christ myth made fanatical supremacists of Christians, so corporate ideology makes corporate boards and CEO believe in their own power and supremacy. This is not science. Ideologies attract people by the vision they provide of ultimate power or pride and it can be very hard to see through this. ¹¹⁸⁶

But there has been a contingent of people who hated science ever since science began under the Greeks. Early Christian bigots who hated science, evidently, were among those who murdered the great female Alexandrine teacher and scientist, Hypatia. The Inquisition infamously persecuted Galileo and many others for free inquiry into the nature of the universe.

¹¹⁸⁵ See Solar Dynamics Observatory(SDO) This is a wonderful website and much can be learned from it.

<http://sdo.gsfc.nasa.gov/>

¹¹⁸⁶ A good example of this is Noam Chomsky who adopts a Cartesian notion of human supremacy quite in opposition to his otherwise interesting political views. I include a chapter on Chomsky after this one partly to use him as an example of an enlightened man who went astray of science in various ways.



Galileo persecuted by the Inquisition

If the traditionalists had their way the Inquisition would be brought back. Indeed, the traditionalists are a school of reactionary and right wing thought that goes back to the Inquisition and before. The Inquisition was partly created by Innocent III in order to stop the rising desire for inquiry and critical thinking. The Renaissance was an expansion of knowledge soon opposed by such painting and book burning cranks like Savonarola, wildly preaching to others like Hitler would do in the 20th century.



Savonarola statue in Ferrara. Italy

. The Reformation in Germany, England and Holland was a step forward toward reform, but was opposed by the Counter-Reformation in which the Church sought to roll back these reforms, resulting in such reactionary blunders as the condemnation of Galileo.¹¹⁸⁷ The council of Trent and the Inquisition were both engines of the Counter Reformation and sought to reverse the forward looking Reformation. Traditionalists of the 20th century would quote the Council of Trent and the Inquisition as good things, but of course they were not. Neither the declaration of transubstantiation, which claimed that “Christ is “really, truly, substantially present” in the consecrated forms, or the Index of books condemned by the Vatican, were going to stem the tide of real science and evidence now pouring forth all over Europe. Thomas More was not going to stop it either. While portrayed as a martyr in a famous movie, actually, he had an aristocratic hatred of Protestantism and used torture, burning Protestants at the stake for the heresy of reading certain books. Not a good guy.

The Faust myth was an effort to stem the same tide, condemning inquiry and curiosity. It scared many into submission. By the 1800’s, the most extreme counter-Enlightenment fulminator against reason and science is Joseph De Maistre. De Maistre was one of the more prominent “throne-and-altar” conservatives who vehemently opposed Enlightenment ideas of social fairness, human rights and science. In De Maistre’s case the hatred for science and reason had to do with a fundamentalist notion of tradition which only allowed knowledge to proceed, if it were first defined and layed out by theology and approved by the patrician

¹¹⁸⁷ The Church saw, rightly, that Aristotle’s philosophy as a threat and condemned Aristotle’s Physics and his Metaphysics between 1209 and 1215, under Innocent the 3rd. This foolish move presaged the censure of Galileo some centuries later. But the condemnation of Aristotle was mere demagoguery. It soon became clear that Aristotle would not be gotten rid of so easily.

caste.¹¹⁸⁸

De Maistre longed for a return to the irrational faith of the Middle ages, especially the 12th century, when Innocent III and others initiated the Inquisition. Presaging today's holocaust deniers, he wrote extensively to justify the Inquisition, which itself was partly an attempt to stamp out free inquiry, which he also opposed. The rise of the universities was part of the effort to set up free inquiry in opposition to the dogmatic Church. Indeed, free inquiry has been opposed first by the Church, then by the aristocracy and lately by corporations. The effort to control science so it serves only the powerful is old and still present with us. This must be resisted.

To be against science is not at all the same as to be against religion. For the most part science is not ideology, though some use it as such. Religion is the science of the unreal, and has no equality with science, which is the study of the real. The term 'anti-science' is as questionable as the term "atheism": Newton's laws are true whether you believe them or not, whereas Jesus requires belief and even if you believe he is still make believe. There is no evidence he even existed.

It is questionable as to what exactly what an atheist is against? There is nothing there to be opposed to or "anti" or against in religion since it is all based on superstitious emptiness. I am not anti-god since

¹¹⁸⁸ A similar counter revolutionary is Edmund Burke, a darling of far right American federalists and corporate demagogues to this day. Burke writes that "The laws of commerce are the laws of Nature, and therefore the laws of God." Quoted in Marx Das Kapital) (E. Burke, l.c., pp.31,32) In – this is obscene and rank elitism is a form of fascism. Basically this is the point of view of corporate CEO's and other elitist sociopaths and 'trickle down' economists. It is quite true of course that money and gods have a lot in common, indeed, they are both fictional abstractions that primarily serve the upper classes. Christ even implied this when he said, I think with no ambiguity, to "give unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to god the things that are gods". Money, gods and property are attempts by the rich to give themselves immortality. This is true even in Marxist versions of money and power, where the state seeks immortality. Burke was rightly condemned by Tom Paine for his efforts to subvert the gains of the French Revolution. Marx wrote against Burke as well. Far right ideologue like William Buckley liked his effort to keep the rich, rich and the poor, poor. Burke's support of "meritocracy" also tends to support only those who have means, not the ones who might be most able, given the chance.

there is no god to begin with. Dawkins is certainly opposed to superstition and delusion and does not apologize for it. Dawkins' atheism is very pointed and based on sound arguments, unlike his detractors who are invariably emotional and full of hate. I am not a friend of religion but do not think of myself as anti-religion, exactly since it is not clear what that would be. I hope the delusions of religions disappear one mind at a time, but it is not likely it will soon.

There is also the question of the evolution of religion, which is a very interesting subject, Why did it come to be, since it does not seem to have evolved, and why is atheism evolving to replace it? It is good news that so many historical gods are dead and gone, as it will eventually happen that the myths of Jesus and Buddha and Allah will fall into ruin too, like the Greek or Aztec Gods, who have vanished from history. Then the real questions of why religion can begin in earnest. ¹¹⁸⁹

Tracing the history of the religious delusions is informative. As I mentioned, the traditionalists are descended from the romanticism and the Counter-Enlightenment, such as the religious reaction of De Maistre, hence their opposition to academic study, free inquiry and science. They want dogma, no peer review and no testing against reality. They want to return to the discredited “Realism” of the Platonic Scholastics of the 13th century and before or the counter Reformationists of the 15-1600s. Like the Inquisitors of old, they hate the Nominalism of that time and the growth of science out of such thinkers as William of Occam, Roger Bacon, Francis Bacon and Descartes. The hatred of

¹¹⁸⁹ David Sloan Wilson provides the flowing list of interesting scholars on the subject of the evolution of religion. Few of them are in religious studies, as one would expect. But these people are doing interesting research on religion as an evolutionary phenomena.

“ While evolution was never entirely absent as a perspective, the modern version became prominent at the beginning of the 21st century with books such as *Religion Explained* by Pascal Boyer, *In Gods We Trust* by Scott Atran, and my own *Darwin's Cathedral*. The field has burgeoned since then; a partial list of prominent names includes Jesse Bering, Michael Blume (ETVOL'S religious editor), Joseph Bulbulia, Joseph Henrich, Dominic Johnson, Arah Norenzayan, Anthony Slingerland, Richard Sosis, and Harvey Whitehouse.”

Newton or science has its origins in medieval irrationalism and the Inquisition. It grows by leaps and bounds in reaction to the French Revolution. As I discussed earlier in this book, anti-science thinking originates in the reaction of Romanticism to the Enlightenment, French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution. This movement is often referred to as the 'counter-enlightenment'. ¹¹⁹⁰ The fight to oppose science is partly Church originated. But it extends into far right ideologues of many stripes. Adam Lee correctly writes that Creationists and other science haters think “everything has been going downhill since the Enlightenment. The willingness of people to think for themselves, to question authority, to investigate the world for truth - they see all this as a disastrous trend, one that only takes us farther from their ideal vision of a medieval, theocratic state.” ¹¹⁹¹ Darwin is thus a breath of fresh air blowing on humanity the same wind of clarity and science that Occam only dreams of. There is a real world here on earth and it can be studied and has been studied, however imperfectly. Opposition to authoritarian systems is a good thing and goes with the open endedness of science.

But there are who hated science during the Enlightenment period such as romantics, Jean Jacques Rousseau or William Blake. ¹¹⁹² These men are, in various ways, and in degrees, reactionaries of the ‘counter-Enlightenment’. ¹¹⁹³ Rousseau thought that science would create

¹¹⁹⁰ The counter-enlightenment continues today in the Creationists, haters of Charles Darwin, and the Republican Party, which would bring back slavery if it could and turn our society into a caste elitism with CEO’S playing the part of the “Guardians”.

¹¹⁹¹ http://www.alternet.org/belief/152349/why_the_anti-science_creationist_movement_is_so_dangerous/?page=entire

¹¹⁹² W.H. Auden wrote humorously that Blake "Broke off relations in a curse, with the Newtonian Universe". This is true and his reasons for doing so do not seem either clear or cogent.

¹¹⁹³ Blake is a complex case, because though he fulminated against science, he was very much man of the enlightenment in other ways, as his relation to Tom Paine suggests. He and Paine share a dislike of conventional religion as well as an apocalyptic political belief system. I remember talking to Martin Lings about Blake, who disliked Blake because he was too liberal and open minded, too questioning of the orthodox spirituality that attracted Lings to fascists like Federico Franco. Blake’s politics are what I like about him. But his anti-science opinions are

immorality and would lead to corruptions of various kinds. It is hard to see how knowing the truth about the world will corrupt people. Indeed, science leads to a common sense rationalism that is very ethical.

William Blake is an ambiguous case in the history of the Enlightenment and is partly opposes anti-scientific tendencies. Blake embodies well the divided mind of romanticism struggling between the liberating progressivism of science and the backward medieval desire for fictional gods and apocalypse. His inability to understand Newton is a vestige of his irrational medievalism, whereas Blake's endorsement of a character like Tom Paine show his reasonable and common sense side.¹¹⁹⁴ Paine was a an amazing man far ahead of his time. An atheist, more or less, and a man of deep respect for human rights. Tom Paine was perhaps the best of the revolutionary heroes of America, his Common Sense having been a huge influence of the American Revolution.. He also had some influence on the English left and lived in the France in the 1790's to help the French Revolution. Certainly this makes him one of the greatest men of that age in three nations and far ahead of his time. Farther ahead than Blake. Indeed, there is no other

ridiculous. I have met far too many poets who are anti-science. Many poets mistakenly believe their precious "inner life" will dissolve if they study chemistry or botany.

This is just foolishness. Poets are in many cases, religious reactionaries, whose spirituality is anti-scientific. As I pointed out earlier in this book, Bertrand Russell rightly thought that romanticism has strong roots in religion and allies itself easily with a kind of fascist reaction.

¹¹⁹⁴ There is a difference between a Blake, a Tom Paine and the systems of power and social control. Blake and Paine, however imperfectly, were concerned with human rights more than with power. Paine in particular was involved in opposing tyranny in the US, England and France. He served a year in prison in France, was hounded out of England by government death threats- Blake helped him escape, and returned to the US where he was driven increasingly to the margins by men hungry for power, such as Washington and Adams, who would not help him in his times of trouble, even though Paine had done so much to further the American Revolution. Paine is an early example of an historical trend of American elites trying to discredit, hound, persecute and marginalize the American movement towards equality and human rights. Those who fought for an end to slavery, women' rights, anti-war movements, nature's rights or environmental concerns, as well as anti- corporatism or the recent "Occupy" movement have always been opposed by corporate elites and demagogues from McCarthyism to today's republicans, bent on destroying the middle class and democracy.

man of that time as prescient and insightful and with as much scope of interests as Paine.

Blake's misunderstanding of Newton was caused by Blake's rather backwards tendencies.¹¹⁹⁵ He blamed the wrong man. He thought Newton was a minion of the cruel industrialists or "mechanists" that polluted the sky of 19th century England, part of what created the "Chartered streets" of London where the "chartered Thames doth flow". But actually what caused the misery on the streets of London in the 19th century was not Newton, but the Scrooge like Industrialists, slave traders and land speculators, bankers and manufacturers who Dickens so much deplored, and satirized in books like Our Mutual Friend. There is nothing wrong with machines or the wrongly called Mechanistic view.¹¹⁹⁶ I admire Blake in some ways, but in others doubt him and his need of a religious or mythical system. Blake is a spiritual writer who makes up spiritual stuff as part of an effort to create an individual view of the world, and this cult of individual, still with us today, tends to make beelive and falsity and conflicts with speitific fact.

Newton, as a scientist, if not as a man, was not an industrialist. He

¹¹⁹⁵ Blake views are somewhat akin to left-wing critiques of science. Some of these state that science has a "bourgeois" and/or Eurocentric and/or masculinist world-view. While this criticisms may be true of some corporate science, it is certainly not true of science per se, which is quite open to women's rights or other peoples in other cultures. The jungles of Borneo still obey Darwinian biological processes. Darwinism generalized across borders and in this sense is "universal".

¹¹⁹⁶ A good example of a bad history of science is David Fideler, inspired by Platonic thought, he mistakes the harms done by capitalism for science as a whole. Nature is mechanistic in some ways and not mechanistic in others, but this hardly means there are "souls" or divinities as Fideler tends to suppose. Machines can be used for good or ill and it hardly makes sense to condemn machines when it is the men who use them that are most at fault. His Luddite position is not thought out very well. Organic thought is very much a part of Darwinian thought, a fact that escapes Fideler. He is right to question Descartes, but that is one mistaken man and hardly all of science, Nature does not exist to be exploited and decent science takes this into account, in ecology, animal rights, biology, environmentalism and elsewhere. Fideler is a religious thinker who wrote a book on Jesus, calling him the "Sun of God". He is a Platonist, who imagines that higher level of cognition exists and esoteric knowledge, or gnosis, is possible in which "the mind becomes unified with the object of the knowledge.". He is quoting Plato of course. This is a fantasy view as is his concept of the "soul"..

was Master of the Mint for a time and evidently had 11 counterfeiters executed. He obviously liked having power, which is not his best quality, and Newton had many unattractive personal qualities. But his science is amazing and has truly universal implications, whatever his biography. As a man he was very confused alchemist and religious crank, like Blake. But his science stands out from all that nonsense and is something very different. His optics and his physics are still largely true and verifiable. His alchemy is merely embarrassing as are Blake's apocalyptic fantasies. In short, Blake is a mixed case among the early haters of science. This ambiguity might be reflected in Blake's portrait of him below. It is an idealized portrait, not at all negative, full of light and intelligence, and almost abalone in color. There is love of Newton in this picture, quite at odds with his negative writings about him. It is possible to see Blake as a divided man who might have been right in his art but wrong in his polemics. De Maistre is different in that he was foolishly against science in the most irrational and reactionary way, apparently down to his core, and this indicates religious obsession and fundamentalist thinking, as Isaiah Berlin shows in his brilliant and scintillating portrait of De Maistre.



Blake's portrait of Newton

Blake did not understand what the early Marx came to see fairly clearly, and that is that 'free enterprise' capitalism was responsible for most of the misery of the 19th century in Europe and America. This misery is not imaginary. A society governed by men of profit will be mostly poor. Money invariably decreases the quality of things and makes them of less use and worth. Like gods, money is a fiction and a very harmful one. Marx was smart enough to see that science had to be part of the way out of poverty and exploitation. But Marx is a quasi-religious thinker too, a romantic like Blake. His notion of man as god is merely another religious construct. The problem with Marx is not so much his analysis of capitalism but his solution to the evil of it. He merely

replaces the rapaciousness of corporate capitalists, with the rapaciousness of the state. The Marxist embrace of science easily becomes trumped by dogma as we learned with Lysenkoism. Lysenkoism is a term used to describe the Soviet Union's distorted abuse of science by political or ideological motives. Creationism and Traditionalism are similar efforts to rewrite science in terms of ideology. They are a sort of metaphysical Lysenkoism. The Bush White House also sought to distort science by means of ideology in similar ways. ¹¹⁹⁷ Corporate anti-science does the same thing: they rewrite science to accord with their PR lies and the bottom line ¹¹⁹⁸ thinking of shareholder greed.

2. Reality is not a Construction

There is another more recent fashion for anti-science that arises out of those who believe the obviously false view that reality is a human "construction". This occurs in "Post-modernist" thought, which is basically human centered nonsense. But Buddhism and Zen encourage this view too, as Buddhism posits a nothingness as a sort of abstract god, from which all things are to be seen, in a sort of grey state of impersonal distance and alienation. Contemplative distance is always a pose of superiority to reality. Reality is what matters, not the state Yuval Harari, who is a Buddhist of some kind, calls the "common imagination"

¹¹⁹⁷ Against a huge scientific consensus, Bush denied global warming and tried to set up bogus science to advance his claims and thereby move forward the ambitions of the very corrupt Oil and Coal corporations, who are most responsible for the harm to be done by global warming. The best book on this might be Naomi Klein's This Changes Everything. She shows how these corporations are perhaps the most destructive on earth and how some of the environmental groups are in corporate pockets. She references The Nature Conservancy, WWF, the World Wildlife Fund, (WWF) and the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), all of which have partially been bankrolled by Oil companies.

¹¹⁹⁸ Bottom line thinking, thinking for profits, is destroying the world. It is the way of thinking that corrupts the law, corrupts governments, and makes the rich the only voice that matters. It results in deformed crops, corn, cattle, people. It creates vast inequality, destroys nature and threatens the entire planet. It creates global warming and nuclear threats, ruins roads, schools, the future of children.

which is just Corbin's "imaginal world" restated.¹¹⁹⁹ People really do suffer and their suffering is not an illusion. The notion of human subjectivity as the ultimate creator of reality is false. One can see why such an idea arose, when the religions were dying and science seemed to be taking over. This partly a result of Kant's have idealistic views, though Hans Vaihinger may have been one of the first to invent the idea of 'reality'; as a complete fiction. This is nonsense of course, but many new agers, science bashers, LSD takers, poets and adults sunk in make believe still believe this.¹²⁰⁰ Science is not religion and is not merely a "world view", and there is an element of good science that is "objective", which means that real aspects of the world are accurately described and explained, measured and experiments can be verified or not falsified.¹²⁰¹

Berkeley was wrong, the tree that falls in the forest does indeed exist or fall whether a person sees it or not. Actually, animals see it or live off its remains.¹²⁰² It supports fungi, woodpeckers, ants, all sorts of

¹¹⁹⁹ Harari's book, Sapiens, is very interesting, though I have many qualms about it. It shares some overlap with what I have been writing in these books, though he does not really understand religion, I think. But I have only just started reading his book and have not finished it. (sept, 2015) I am about done with these three books, It is too bad I had not seen his book earlier.

¹²⁰⁰ Carl Jung and James Hillman both explore the idea of the world as a spiritual fictions made up by humans, which they want to encourage. The notion of religion as a "useful fiction" of course was seriously entertained by Schuon and other cult leaders who knew how to exploit such fictions. Novelists exploit this idea too. Junk novels take up a large proportion of the used bookstore shelf space, and this is because the need of escape is so great. Make believe has a small place in a child's life, as long as it is directed and one teaches them the difference between reality and fictions. But the rampant myth making that is thrust on kids in our society leaves them in dreams and ill prepares them for the real world.

¹²⁰¹ Thomas Kuhn's relativist idea of paradigms is not very helpful and probably mistaken.

¹²⁰² The Bishop writes that

"But, say you, surely there is nothing easier than for me to imagine trees, for instance, in a park [...] and nobody by to perceive them. [...] The objects of sense exist only when they are perceived; the trees therefore are in the garden [...] no longer than while there is somebody by to perceive them."

, ---this is silly. He does not realize that the Red Squirrel or the House Wren is always a worthy witness? The falling tree produces sound whether anyone hears it or not. The world of nature far outstrips the vagaries of human perception, which is deformed by the human dependence on

beings. The real question is why was Berkeley so dim that he did not know this? Reality is not a myth or the creation of “theory laden” men each describing the elephant by different terms. Chang Tzu was mistaken too, we do not suddenly wake up as a butterfly dreaming we are a man. Cells really do exist, photosynthesis is a real process, the earth definitely goes around the sun as you can see easily by just observing a lunar eclipse. The Lepidopterist, Vladimir Nobakov said that

“you can get nearer and nearer, so to speak, to reality, but you can never get close enough because reality is an infinite succession of steps, levels of perception, false bottoms, and hence unquenchable, unattainable” (see [1203](#)

Of course, Nobokov is being rather excessive and idealistic here. Strictly speaking, he is correct, but one has to understand that this only applies to the infinitely large or small, all else is observable and one can be objective about it. One can get quite close, not only to things, but to people as both lepidopterists and realist painters have shown.

When Wolfgang Smith says “the “mythical element” in science cannot be exorcised” ¹²⁰⁴, he is merely indulging in a fiction that grows from his

abstract language. The genetic language of natural selection is much wiser and truer than any human language.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=W1kM4i8YECeC&pg=PA45&dq=you+can+get+nearer+and+nearer,+so+to+to+speak,+to+reality&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwioIY-Y0PLSAhXJD8AKHUCIBPUQ6AEIHDA#v=onepage&q=you%20can%20get%20nearer%20and%20nearer%2C%20so%20to%20speak%2C%20to%20reality&f=false>

¹²⁰⁴ Wolfgang Smith “Science and Myth the Hidden Connection”. Sophia Journal, Summer. 2001

What Smith does in this essay as in most of his writings is draw vast and general conclusions based on the most questionable and ambiguous areas of abstract and theoretical science, such as quantum mechanics, where even those who understand it say they don’t understand it. But if you really look at the facts of the matter it is clear he simply is making it all up as he goes along. His conclusions are set up from the beginning and he fits the facts to serve his ideology. His ideology is that ‘Religion alone matters’ and he lies about science to get this predetermined result. He says that myths and religions and other such” fictions may be indispensable” and it is clear that for

own ignorance about science. “exorcized”, please, it is a medieval world that has no reality in it. Certainly it is true that presuppositions, class or cultural origins, and ethnic culture effects how one sees the world to varying degrees. No one is completely objective. But science is about evidence and not authority or intuition. Science is nonfiction and seeks to explain realities in an objective way, unlike religion which is fiction and based on delusions and inventions of imagination. The process of study and inquiry in science is an unfolding in time and slowly the mythical conceits of individual scientists get weeded out of the science itself. But facts remain facts and some are more objective or accurate than others. It is foolish to abolish objectivity. Without objectivity we are back in irrational dogmas and the delusions of the medieval mind. Accuracy is important, as is measurement when it is possible. “There is reality out there” as is obvious by any study of animals or stars demonstrates. The post-modernist” movement’s attempt to marginalize reality itself has failed.¹²⁰⁵

Like other ‘post-modernists’ Heidegger's critique of reason and science foolishly tries to negate the subject/object or sense/knowledge division. He repudiates the idea that that facts exist outside or separately from the process of thinking and speaking of them. He does not accept that mind independent facts exist. Of course, the entire world and the

Smith this is certainly true. He was a man living in the thick of delusions. Smith is proud to live in myth and delusion as he says himself, for “outside of the sacred there can be no certainty, no absolute and abiding truth”. Living in this delusion is the cause of his life as for most of the traditionalists, as well as the Taliban, the Unibomber, the Inquisitors and other cultists, Marxists. Nazis, and true believers and fanatics of many different stripes and creeds.

¹²⁰⁵ Constructivist epistemology posits the idea that reality is human created. This is another form of narcissistic anthropocentrism and cannot be squared with science or with the facts of evolution. Variants of this view are held by many: Vico ,James Joyce, Ernst von Glasersfeld Gregory Bateson to a degree, Berkeley, Marx and Kant. The fact of the independent existence of animals and their obvious existence apart from us shows the fact of human involvement in reality. Animals are who we are. We are of this earth and of other species and no religious delusion or epistemological narcissism is able to abrogate this fact.

millions of species do exist and this non-human reality has primary rights. Heidegger's view is anthropocentric. Human centered solipsism is attractive to an increasingly inward and narcissist culture from the 1970s to the present. It is also what makes Heidegger a friend of the Nazis since his philosophy is one of escape, not of outward objective conditions and denies any political concern with the poor. This is true of Foucault too, who is close to being a fascist himself with his love of power and violence. Even Chomsky has solipsist elements in his philosophy. Solipsism is largely a city phenomenon, as people who live in cities think nothing else exists on earth but people, and nature, the lives of non-human species, the earth itself, scarcely exists for them, locked as they are in TV, computers and the world of media control, brands, corporate media and propaganda. To the subjective solipsist, all images are equal and all things are images, and little has reality except mind and self. This is a breeding ground of illusions.

The notion that 'truth' or reality is a construction and not verified against a concrete reality is certainly fashionable. But is it accurate? The obvious answer is no. All texts are not equal, and Darwin's Origin is not at all the same sort of book as the Bible, which is a tissue of mythic "facts". Darwin has evidence to defend it, and the Bible has little or no evidence to defend it, indeed, it appears by the evidence that Jesus did not even exist and the Old Testament is largely mythic fiction too.. Reading tea leaves and Tarot cards is not the same as doing blood tests or looking at a retina scan. Relativists like Derrida and other post modernists think that all things are attempts to get power over others and so all objectivity is an illusion. This is mistaken. The New York art world is awash in this sort of feast of delusions, a feeding frenzy of illusions created to keep the ultra-rich living in a permanently deluded state. Corporate art is largely made of these inchoate ideas, ideas which have nothing as their base and which are expressed in an art that expressing nothing, or nearly nothing.

I am not very fond of constructivist epistemologies. I once thought they had a lot of truth to them, but that conviction has diminished over time, as I began to see how delusions are perpetuated in many areas of life: in literature, art, TV, PR, politics, advertising, marketing. Once I abandoned religion in 1991, I began to fight with the chimera of misperception that most people live in. The capitalists want people to “create their own reality” as a means of keeping people buying as much irrelevant stuff as possible to fill the emptiness with. We live in a culture that atomizes everyone, where they can create their own little bubble of things and gadgets to surround themselves so that reality will not obtrude into their sequestered consciousness. Thus the ‘reality is a construction’ idea was so central to 1990’s culture, and continues on to this day in various forms.

I can see this fight going on in my 1997 book the Empire of the Intellect. I would make a lot of changes in that book if I rewrote it now. I was still clinging to the idea that the world is somehow our creation. What is our creation is the delusion that we are supreme. This error of perception only requires studying animals to see how wrong it is. While it is true that our languages and upbringing condition how we see to a degree, we do not make up the existence of our world, and only science has ever tried to study things as they are. Reality is with us and we must face the facts of it. Leonardo grasped this quite clearly. He could do nearly anything just using the principle of simple machines. Bird species certainly exist and are amazing in their processes of mating and making families. Photosynthesis happens, rain falls, death happens, nature and the sun are there, the stars and our mortality and our children to help us beyond our own lives. Life is the only immortality there is. Reality is out there and can be known to a deepening degree.¹²⁰⁶

¹²⁰⁶ An essay by Thomas Nagel’s states that we cannot know what it is like to be a bat. This subjectivist speciesism is very harmful. Daniel Dennett sides with this speciesist point of view, and with Nagel’s rather empty essay, and is proud of his ignorance of other animals. Actually bat

People do construct theories about it and sometimes their class, culture, or sex plays a role in how and what they see. But science has a way of bringing such errors, if they are errors, into the open eventually. Science is a process of refinement and of making our theories correspond more and more with what is actually out there. This is what science is all about and it has been fantastically successful.

There is a growing body of knowledge that is independent of subjective fictions. No one knows reality in entirety, certainly. But the beauty of science is in its tentative and provisional conclusions and its willingness to adapt when new evidence arrives. While this should abash all subjective constructivists, I do not mean to say that science is always right. Scientists make mistakes. But unlike subjectivists, science will admit its own mistakes. Science relies too much on math and when has no evidence to back up their theories, it sometimes acts as if a hypothesis were a fact when it is not. The positing of an “ether” in the late 1800’s was an example of this. The “ether” was not there. But these are errors that tend to get corrected eventually. The undoing of religion frees us to real self-examination, inquiry and a deep love of life and the world. There is real hope in this, as I think as Leonardo and Darwin saw. The world without religion is amazing and wonderful, fearful and incredible place. Human beings become part of

experts have been learning more and more just exactly what it is like to be a bat. Science is able to see more and more with empathy into the lives of actual beings. I helped a bat hibernate in my garage last winter when he fell off his perch and we put him back in his torpor and put a cloth over him to help him preserve warmth. I thought about Nagel’s essay a lot and think he is quite mistaken. Bats are amazing beings and the more one learns about them the more one knows them. Indeed, what matters increasingly is the study of the small minority, the small living things of earth. All life matters and all life has rights. Bats can be understood and must be. They are dying off at alarming rates. To understand their point of view and needs is vital in saving them. It appears that the worst culprit in bat population declines is aerial spraying of pesticides for west Nile virus and bird flu. The pesticide suppresses the immune systems and they become weakened and susceptible to the fungus that causes ‘white nose syndrome’. Understanding the point of view of other species is what Nature’s Rights is all about. It is not merely about doing for nature what benefits humans, but recognizing the biotic commons, the earth has rights, and not merely the human commons, where humans especially property owners are given specific dominating rights..

a very complex world and one where we can no longer excuse our penchant to destroy and harm our world. Indeed, harm done to our responsibility now exclusively. One cannot blame devils, excuse it by apocalyptic notions, or curse gods who do not exist.

Culture too can have its narcissistic tendencies. There is an anti-science tendency that even visits some left-wing writers based on mistaken notions of quantum mechanics or Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle.¹²⁰⁷ Many people think, wrongly, that science equals sub-atomic particle physics or speculative theories of string theory. But actually speculative physics is not very important. Nor are ideas about a so far mythical "unified field" very important. This is merely metaphysics by another name. Physics was really something when Einstein and Bohr were alive and so many discoveries were made. But in recent years it has become prone to speculations of an often questionable kind.

Einstein criticized one physicist for having very good math but doing very poor physics. This is often true now. There is no basis in reality for the 'many universes' theory, for instance, yet many hold to it as if were real. Even the theory of the Big Bang, which at least has evidence in its favor, is hugely exaggerated, often to the point of competing with religious dogma. One suspects this dogmatism has something unconsciously religious in it. No one knows anything about the origins of the universe, or how big or old it is, in fact. What is imagined about it is all based on mathematical models or observations that raise many questions. We can only see out to the "event horizon" some 13-42 billion light years away. Humans only see the limits of their own viewpoint. No one knows what is more than 13 or 42 billion light years away, according to various ways of reading the sketchy evidence.

¹²⁰⁷ Heisenberg's and Gödel's ideas are often joined in new age theories of reality construction. New Age thinkers like to try to make a lot out of Gödel's Incompleteness theorem. Dan Willard has started unraveling Gödel's idea on this, showing that causation in arithmetical systems is rather more complex than Gödel thought..

We do not even know what such numbers really mean, just as we did not know what was beyond Spain in 1491. These are more or less wild speculations based on incompletely understood facts. This is not science, but speculation. I don't know much about it either, despite attempts to learn.

The Multiverse theory is even more fictional and premature than theories of the origin of the universe. They turn the universe into a mathematical mind game. This is where modern math approaches theology in its arcane speculations and while the credibility of science is undermined by such fancies, it is not undone. Victor Stenger tries to trace the origins of the Multiverse idea in his new book, God and the Multiverse, but it seems he may be imagining things that are not there. The multiverse idea violates Occam's razor, which states in Russell's formulation of it, "Whenever possible, substitute constructions out of known entities for inferences to unknown entities." Metaphysics loves to make elaborate distinctions where there are no differences, and now science is doing that too, or at least a few mathematical physicists are. Such mistakes often occur at the limits of human perception, where human's start inventing things that are not there. Such mirages occur all the time in metaphysics. Now in the far reaches of math. It turned out there was no life on Mars despite the tendency of some scientists to imagine canals, little green men, or whatever. Even Carl Sagan did this. It makes sense that such errors would occur in theories that concern the farthest remove of both quantum and cosmological questions. One has to be careful of speculations on the edges of math, the universe and the atom, as all sorts of things can be projected into these empty and unknown areas. The good thing about science is that eventually these theories, such as Ether or the Multiverse, might either prove true or get deleted from science when evidence does not support them. Until that happens extreme skepticism is warranted.

The Multiverse idea, like the big bang or the seeming wave/particle paradox of light might inspire some people's religious longings. But real science does not indicate that at all. The wave particle paradox is simply the behavioral effect of particles that travel in waves, like sea drops travel in the sea waves. There is nothing mystical in it. It is the facts that matter in nature. People study the tree canopy in the Amazon, bird population declines or how to make a better way to clean water. These are real questions. How do the muscles in the body fit together, how does the heart work, how do hummingbirds fly? These are real questions that have answers. The answers are known and can be explored. The notion that science only regards the not yet discovered is itself an illusion.

One also should beware of thinking of physics as the first science. It really isn't. In the Newtonian realm there are deep certainties, but beyond that, there are more questions than answers. Biology, astronomy or geology are far more interesting than ultimate physics, as they deal with matters that are less speculative. The multiverse idea is clearly a hypertrophy of the heaven idea, or of the idea that 'other worlds' actually exist. Various physicists cannot help making this stuff up, even when the evidence does not support it. There is no life after death just as there are no alternate worlds or universes, as far as anyone knows. But the hatred of the actual world and its difficult and factual painfulness is culturally so deep and intractable, it persists even into cosmological physics, too swayed by mathematical speculations that are not grounded in facts..

Strictly understood, quantum mechanics has made real discoveries. But a lot of ink has been spent trying to extract moral or 'spiritual' values from quantum principles. This not only questionable but specious. Those who abuse quantum mechanics with magical speculations suppose its odd mathematical paradoxes are open to opportunist use. They want to see the universe as our creation and so imagine we are opportunistic narcissists. Barely understood quantum

strangeness is really not fair fodder for such occult appetites. The science behind it is highly speculative and hardly certain enough to give anyone this sort of platform on which to speculate further. Or it is simply misunderstood. This does not stop those who wish to use quantum physics for all sorts of nefarious occult and mystic adventures.¹²⁰⁸ There are hundreds of New Age books written out of magical speculations about quantum mechanics, all of them more or less questionable. But I will speak more of the abuse of quantum mechanics later.

The notion that reality is a “construction” of our belief systems is fashionable among many in the leftist, new age and right-wing religion camps. It is obvious why. Attacking science as being merely a fantasy enables religious and new Age fantasists to thrive. If reality is a construction then creationism and science are equally bids for power over people’s minds. Actually good science is not at all fantasy and not a “construction”. As Alan Sokal said, who arranged a delightful hoax to satirize post- modernist ideologues who do not think there is an reality out there---

“there exists an external world, that there exist objective truths about that world, and that my job is to discover some of them.”

¹²⁰⁸ Huston Smith wrote, for instance in an “Open Letter to Richard Dawkins ” that “An increasing number of physicists are now beginning to say that the world looks more like a big thought than a big thing. Thought requires a thinker. Where does that leave you atheists ?” This is a very ignorant comment. The universe is not a thought. The cult of disembodied “consciousness” is a favorite ploy of religionists. This typically nasty and pretentious comment underscores what perennialism was all about. Huston Smith is merely employing magical thinking and the fallacy of misplaced concreteness. Actually, there are few if any real physicists who employ this sort of religious speech and even fewer, if any, that accept the nonsense that Huston and Wolfgang Smith write. The notion that the universe requires a creator is fiction, it doesn’t. That is an argument by analogy, which is misapplied to physical things. In any case the intelligence that is obvious in the universe is a result of physical matter, time and space itself not of any gods..

A scientist tries to find things out about reality and things and his discoveries have real results. The problem with the “ reality- is-a- construction” theory of is that it denies evidence, demonstration and science. It is a largely academic theory, divorced from nature and reality, and holds that reality is a human movie made for narcissist mirror lovers. Religions want reality to be a construction so they can manage people’s perceptions and control minds Science wants to improve lives for humans and nature and tries to make discoveries to aid our understanding of the actual. Science wants to remove fictions not enhance them as religion does. Mark Sedgwick, for instance, ends his Against the Modern World with a fashionable pronouncement that mimics the “reality-is-a-construction” views of post modernists. He says that “rational scientific discourse is only one of the ways that human beings construct their stories about reality” .¹²⁰⁹ This supposes that some shared delusional system of beliefs is somehow be equal to the evidence compiled, say, to show how a given body of a given weight falls through space according to $F=MA$. There is nothing commensurate between the theory of gravity or evolution and the fictive world of Sufism. Ibn Arabi’s or Rumi’s silly theories about god have no more validity than do astrology or Tarot as compared to Chemistry.. Chemistry matters, the fictions of Rumi and astrology or Tarot do not. Both Sufism and astrology are based on little or no physical evidence. New Agers are free to make the world over in the image of their own confusion. But this hardly means that reality is confused. The reality is a construction appears to allow everyone endless freedom when actually it wants to lock everyone in the prison of delusions. Thinkers like Sedgwick, Rorty,¹²¹⁰ Foucault

¹²⁰⁹ Sedgwick quotes Douglas Allen

¹²¹⁰ If I understand him the philosopher Richard Rorty thought that there no objective point of reference from which we can make judgment regarding reality except insofar as such judgment are human centered judgments made by the community of thinkers. IN this case reality is a sort

and Feyerabend and many other post-modernists are simply imagining things in the jail of their illusions.

Chomsky says of post-modernism that is meaningless because it adds nothing to analytical or empirical knowledge. He asks why postmodernist intellectuals won't respond as

"people in physics, math, biology, linguistics, and other fields are happy to do when someone asks them, seriously, what are the principles of their theories, on what evidence are they based, what do they explain that wasn't already obvious, etc.? These are fair requests for anyone to make. If they can't be met, then I'd suggest recourse to Hume's advice in similar circumstances: to the flames."

This is correct. This is not to say that Chomsky himself is able to supply needed explanations about his work when they are asked. His linguistics have many features that are more based on his personal illusions than on empirical evidence.¹²¹¹ But Sufism, Creationism, astrology, perennialism, Christianity, Islam, Taoism – and perhaps even some of Chomsky's own theories--- to the flames!

Those who push the idea that 'reality is a construction' believe that facts of astronomical physics are supposed to be commensurate with whatever it might be, Taoism say, or racist Phrenology. Islam is supposed to be equal to chemistry or geology. Far right fundamentalist Christians and their pathetic theory of pseudo-scientific creationism is supposed to

of commissar system decided by the guild of academics, which seems not very accurate. Reality is the fact of nature and we learn from nature primarily when we do science.

¹²¹¹ See Steven Pinker's *The faculty of language: what's special about it?*, which is a great critique of Chomsky failings as a Linguist and John Searle's "The End of the Revolution". There is also Dan Dennett's *Darwin's Dangerous Idea*. See chapter below this for more.

http://www1.cs.columbia.edu/~sbenus/Teaching/TheorLx/Pinker_jackendoff_human_language.pdf

be equal to the amazingly detailed and vast theory of evolution. It is like comparing the fictional 'Virgin Birth' or 'Barbie dolls' to Da Vinci's notebooks. There was no Virgin Mary who gave birth without conception just as Barbie dolls are fictive women. Da Vinci's drawings are not fake but real, actual anatomy and real science, amazingly done with incredible skill and exactness. Some of his drawings have not be equaled by anyone to this day.¹²¹² Da Vinci added to reality, whereas the Barbie/Virgin fictions add to the glut of delusions. Science and myth are in no way equal or commensurate, the one is real and the other, fake, pretend, delusional.

A peculiar prejudice among post modernists is that all things are equal. Yoga and science are seen as somehow equal "worldviews". Grimm's fairy tales are certainly not equal to the enormous strides made in genetics since the discovery of DNA. Saturday morning cartoons are hardly the same thing as the science used to cure diseases through vaccines. The Paranoid fantasias of Guenon, Gurdjieff, Christ and other magicians of the illusory are hardly equal to going to the moon or seeking real and objective understanding of the sun and galaxies through astronomical science and advances in telescopes and radio, ultraviolet and infrared devices. We have come to understand how plants create food from sunlight and how cells replicate, how plate tectonics work and how all life is important in its way. Even something seemingly simple like making pottery is full of science and has far more in it that Tibetan prayer wheels or prayer systems, which are mythical.

Reality is not a construction so much as it is an inquiry of known or unknown facts and events, not necessarily discovered, perhaps already known but not well explained like the Alula¹²¹³ of birds.¹²¹⁴ The study of

¹²¹² the drawings at Windsor can be seen here:

http://www.academia.edu/4033683/Leonardo_da_Vinci_anatomical_drawings

¹²¹³ The alula of birds is a series of 1-3 feathers on the front wing of birds, which was wrongly called a "bastard wing", Actually it is a sort fo breaking device used by birds in flight when they ae about to land or stop flying.

plants has expanded vastly in recent years, with botanical studies being done across all continents, while religion flounders in 12th century decay. The insanity of Christian fantasies of the Virgin Birth , Christ's justifications of slavery or Muhammad's abusive ideas about women are hardly equal to the Emancipation Proclamation, women's rights, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights or invention of the computer and the electric light.

Scientific facts are not "stories and myths" in Richard Rorty's language. There is nothing commensurate between the fact of Luna Moth evolution and the fiction of astrology or the beliefs on Confucians or Taoists. Modern physics, Chemistry or Ornithology have made amazing and real discoveries, unlike astrology or Taoism which have discovered nothing. The proposal that mere stories are the same as science "has all the advantages of theft over honest toil," as Bertrand Russell rightly said. ¹²¹⁵ Religion sells meaning that has no basis in fact. No doubt it comforts a few desperate people, as Chomsky rather foolishly claims in its defense, but that is hardly worth all the misery and mayhem religion creates. Science trades in facts that are facts, make of them what you will. Religion comforts sorrows at the expense of truth and ends by creating even more misery than would have been the case had it never created so many lies.

The idea that science is to be opposed is useful only to those who despise the truth and the improvements that arise from finding out about our world and ourselves. As Chomsky notes, opposing science only

¹²¹⁴ I have been looking forward to the 'age of discovery' finally coming to an end. We are close to that. After that there is no more excuse for exploitation. Discovery was partly a capitalist phenomenon, where the seekers went in, found gold, slaves, tobacco, potatoes, pelts, insects to use or and trees to cut down and speculated on them as commodities. This increased to the point when whole planet has been abused to a degree that is no longer sustainable and the exploiters need to be forcibly retired. This is a good thing and then we will have to allow for protection of species and lands. Then the idea that all species have rights will matter. This ought to be soon.

¹²¹⁵ Quoted in Chomsky here:

<http://zmagazine.zcommunications.org/ScienceWars/sciencechomreply.htm>

serves to help “deprive oppressed people not only of the joys of understanding and insight, but also of tools of emancipation” and one should add, decent food, healthy water and medicines that work.

Moreover, if there is any legitimate critique of science it has to do with the abuse of science by corporations or governments. 53 of 100 of the world’s largest economies are corporations like Wal-Mart or ATT. Wal-Mart is bigger than Greece or Israel and its five owners are wealthier than the bottom 30% of all Americans combined. Such exploitive people should be taxed to the extreme. These truly obscene facts show how corrupt capitalism is. It is as foolish to abandon science to unjust corporate interests who will abuse it as it is to say that science is really equal to astrology or Mary Baker Eddy’s ‘Science of Faith’. It is also foolish, Chomsky writes, to claim that

“the "project of the Enlightenment" is dead, that we must abandon the "illusions" of science and rationality--a message that will gladden the hearts of the powerful, delighted to monopolize these instruments for their own use.”

Chomsky is right here. The traditionalists are very happy to encourage many to abandon science to the unjust and to give the world over the corporate or institutional control. Most religion serves the ruling classes. Being frightening is a standard tactic of right wing regimes, The world is going to hell, they all say, so you must obey us. Traditionalists want the world destroyed. Profane people deserve to die, Schuon thought. Schuon even told his followers that a special and exclusive heaven awaited them alone in the afterlife, a sort of traditionalist spa and private nudist garden suburb reserved only for them, since they were all so holy and even the walls of heaven will painted with the Sherwin Williams golden glow paint like they used in their houses in Bloomington, Indiana.

Islam is based on the Koran which is fiction and the Virgin Birth is

as much a fabrication as cartoons and fairy tales. In the quote above Sedgwick is being ridiculous, -- a delusional post-modernist---in the final paragraph of his book. There is nothing commensurate between the incredible science behind evolution and DNA and the make-believe that constitutes religious books like the Bible or Koran or the superstitions that lie at the base of Taoist or Native religions. There is nothing commensurate between the discovery of DNA and the outrageous fact that King David murdered Uriah so that he could take his wife Bathsheba who he had had seen bathing. The first has helped millions, the second is merely a sordid tale in a book of make believe adult cartoons. How do you compare the discovery of human blood circulation by Hooke and Da Vinci to the fantasies of Muhammad in the Koran justifying the convenient immorality of his marriage to a nine-year-old girl? How do you compare the saving of millions of lives due to cardiology to the ridiculous notion that Christ's body is in a wafer as if it were real flesh and blood that Catholics eat like cannibals at a symbolic ceremonial feast or wedding called the "Eucharist". The creation of the fiction of Christ's transcendental body produced the frightful result that ordinary human bodies were reduced to the "vessel of sin" that priests loved to speak of. Our bodies are all that we have and what, in fact we are, and the heritage of the abusive Christian idea of the body has helped kill people and hurt many others . The Eucharistic rite is a placebo ceremony that has never conclusively "saved" anybody. What it does is attempt to put the Church ideology inside people's bodies, and that is what Schuon was trying to do too, both in his mantric invocations and in his attempt to get others to worship his body as a "healing of the wombs". In various ways all the religions try to coopt the body as a locus of their power and control.

Many academics in the humanities are careerists and do not have to justify their beliefs by any sort of criteria of evidence and peer review.

What is needed is a much more rigorous notion of inquiry in the humanities, with much more critical views of human centered perceptions. The notion that the religious view of reality are somehow equal to science is nonsense. Thus, even the supposed exegetes of Traditionalism, like Sedgwick, are out in the ozone when it comes to science. Post-modernists like Sedgwick seek to diminish science to nothing more than just one among many competing narratives, all equally valid. This foolishness has no evidence to support it. None of the traditionalist has made any efforts to understand Guenon and his followers in relation to the actuality and reality of the world that science describes so well.

This hatred of evidence and fact is in the writings of the Brazilian Traditionalist Mateus Soares de Azevedo, for instance. Azevedo ought to be devoting all this energies to stopping the wholesale destruction of the Amazon Rainforest by his country and working with biologists to catalogue the disappearing species. Brazil is one of the biggest contributors to global warming because they burn down the rain forest at alarming rates, causing the weather patterns of the equatorial regions to change. They are also at the top of the list of countries that abuse and export animals in the animal trade. Parrots and Macaws are going extinct because of their negligence and cruelty. Instead, Azevedo wastes his life trying to support religious reactionaries and backwards creationists. That is good for the greedy destroyers of forest in his country but bad for all the species being killed. Azevedo flatters the dead Schuon and has evidently joined the little rag tag group of fanatics and survivalists that is left of the Schuon cult. Azevedo is a classic cult follower whose passionate and emotional attachment to a particular fictional viewpoint or perspective coupled with the automatic dismissal of all other views makes him a Schuonian fundamentalist. Virtually everything he has to say is born of the Schuon cult and Schuon followers Nasr, Oldmeadow and others. In his book, Fundamentalism in Islam, Christianity, and

Modern Thought, Azevedo imagines that Darwin is a fundamentalist and further imagines Schuon was an opened minded man. This is humorous and shows that he doesn't know anything about Schuon and hasn't read Darwin. His book is an attempt to revive credibility for the broken and dying world of traditionalist fundamentalism. As Legenhausen (see above) has rightly pointed out, traditionalist thought is even more fundamentalist than the Taliban, the fanatical group of far right Muslims that ruled Afghanistan for years, terrorizing women and keeping girls from going to school. Azevedo writes that he admires the reactionary religion of those who deny Vatican 2. Those who deny the modernization fo the catholic Church are throw backs to aristocracy, creationism and the theofascism of Innocent III. His is an extreme case of fundamentalist reaction. This is an hypocritical and anti-science book allied closely with creationist and fundamentalism. Like other religious conservatives Azevedo would like to live in the darkness of dogmatism and deny the science that gave us the light bulb.

3. Science Defeats Fundamentalism and Traditionalism

Fundamentalism is a reality construction--- a fiction---, unlike science, which is factual, non- fiction and not, in the main, a “reality construction”. Fundamentalism is a strict adherence to specific theological doctrines typically in reaction against science and enlightenment. Theological doctrines are merely the encrusted fantasy of ruling castes or elites who codified their world view in dogmatic pronouncements. Schuon was in favor of most forms of theological conservatism and hated science and modernism. Robert Lifton refers to this as “ideological Totalism”, which is what Schuon's system is, as a form of ‘fundamentalist totalism’. Azevedo follows the general pattern of the Schuon cult and likes to accuse others of what he is. He is a fundamentalist. He falsely claims that Richard Dawkins is a fundamentalist. He erroneously claims there is a “science

fundamentalism”.

The notion of that there is such a thing as an "atheist fundamentalist" is "a silly play upon words," says Sam Harris. Harris notes that "when it comes to the ancient Greek gods, everyone is an atheist and no one is asked to justify that to pagans who want to believe in Zeus." ¹²¹⁶ Azevedo is a far right Christian fanatic and Schuon groupie whose god is as questionable as Greek gods. Obviously, Azevedo understands little about science. As Dawkins has said

“We believe in evolution because the evidence supports it, and we would abandon it overnight if new evidence arose to dispute it. No real fundamentalist would ever say anything like that”

There are miles and reams of papers written in factual support of evolution, but virtually nothing of substance written on the factual life of Christ, who probably did not exist. There is not a shred of proof that he did exist. The many Gospels are probably fabricated. Certainly, there are those who have abused science, be they polluters, poisoners of the oceans, pharmaceutical companies or the makers of the atom bomb, and it could be said they are part of what been called “Big Science”. In service of Big Science some companies like Fizer or others have been found to write bogus papers and cheat on clinical trials. Since this company deals drugs it would not be entirely mistaken to call them drug dealers or perhaps glorified drug dealers. They work with CIA-like secrecy, as well as government protection, to protect their brands. Heads of banks and

¹²¹⁶ The term “atheist “ has many absurd features. Why should one who does not believe in a fictional god have to be defined as something negative?. Theism is the absurdity, not those who refuse to bow to the gods. People who believe in Santa absurdly feel they have the right to try to impose this absurdity on everyone. The same is true of Jesus or Buddha. This willingness to believe the absurd is no doubt a function of the social self which grew up as a survival mechanism in ancient times. Children or the young will believe the absurdity put out by the elders, just because they are elder. Atheism is misnamed, it really is just a normal way of seeing the world without fictions.

oil company executives, write legislation against global warming submitted by congressman to Congress, in acts of corruption. Oil and coal corporations have spent millions lying about Global Warming to the public as Naomi Klein shows in her books. But bad science is not science, nor is a corrupt democracy good government. Science is not about cheating or faking evidence. A fundamentalist is a man who had a blind obedience to scriptures regardless of evidence. As Cowboy capitalists, particularly Republicans tend to be fundamentalist in a similar way: they pursue their dream of ultimate wealth no matter what people say or how anyone suffers what those react. Chomsky, not without reason, calls them “the most dangerous institution in human history” because they threaten the planet not only with endless greed, but with nuclear war and global warming. Recently I wrote down some basic principles of the Republican Party and they indicate a party of decadent destroyers and greedy inequality mongers who should have never been allowed to have any power at all:

IMMORAL REPUBLICAN PRINCIPLES

by Mark Koslow

We are not Skeletons¹²¹⁷ but men and women of the Corporate Towers telling the toadies of Congress and the Executive and Supreme Court what to do. We are men of white power and wealth, driving our fast

¹²¹⁷ This refers to the poem of Allen Ginsberg, and here I am trying to write a more accurate account than Ginsberg did about the Right side of the ultra rich, and their cronies the Congress, White House and of the the Courts. Seeing these men and a few women as skeletons is not only funny, but accurate as they do not represent the American public at all, but rather the upper class interests of the ultra rich. They also are like the caricatures done by Honore Daumier, or Ken Russell's depiction of the House of Lords in the Ruling Class. Decadent skeletons serving the most corrupt parts of society in return for power and wealth. It is a disgusting thing, rightly using the most repulsive imagery. Their socks full of Merde, their mouths with lies, blood sucking vampires of what was once democracy.

commercial cars, or limmos around the belt ways of the great cities of
exceptional America,
The world belong to us, the upper class,
forget everyone else
get rid of democracy.
Deny global warming and all relevant facts
Forbid regulations,
CEOs must be free to destroy the world for their grandkids.
Only the rich matter, do not waste money on your kids.
Freedom for CEO's everyone else in chains.
Don't let them know CEO's
are arbitrary dictators who hate democracy.
Steal from the poor, give to the rich.
Claim to be Christain, they do the opposite.
No health care just wealth care.
We have the right to our own money
even if we stole it from our workers.
Play golf on Wednesday, other days pretend you are working.
We do not want to be taxed or to help poor idiots.
Who did not inherit as we did.
Abolish all estate taxes for the rich.
The poor made our fortunes on their backs,
with their hands,
so tax them into poverty.
Break down all government
that helps the poor and middle class.
We want no democracy for them.
We are the aristocrats of ignorance.
Ours in the arrogance of ignorance.
We love the ignorant who vote for us.

We hate science.
Government is only for the rich.
Their suffering poverty is their own fault.
Even Jesus said ‘the poor you always have with you.’
Slaves need to “obey their masters” and we call that
“employment at will”, meaning at our will,
which means workers have no rights,
only the CEO has rights.
We have no “merit” and do little or nothing
and call that hard work.
“ we make money the old fashion way, we earn it”
but only on commercials.
Playing golf is hard work.
Take lots of vacations at thieir expense.
We have destroyed the American dream.
The best of us are fascists at heart.
So we must exploit terror threats,
push guns which kill students in colleges,
poor people in ghettos.
Exploit kids by making them slaves of debt,
Create “standards” in education to disempower teachers.
Turn schools into factories for administrator profits.
Turn students into indentured servants of banks.
Let business take over colleges and education to eliminate free inquiry.
No critical thinking or free inquiry allowed.
Ape the views of the CEO, imitate of the Masters of Finance
After all they too, profit from recessions and disasters.
hen a hurricane or earthquake hits,
pulverize and pull out their eyes, privityze,
“disaster capitalism” is where it is at.

Destroy the humanities which foster critical thinking
Exploit the elderly in litigation free nursing homes, LLC,
drug those sad sacks of bones into oblivion,
Help drug companies gouge everyone, especially the old and sick,
Tax breaks for the rich before all social programs.
Exploit the sick while hospital administrators,
insurance CEOs and doctors get rich.
Give Socialist bailouts to banks and boardrooms of the rich,
destroy all unions for the poor.
No one cares that they did all the work that made our wealth.
We do nothing and make more so we pay them less.
Scapegoat immigrants, and brown skinned people,
Try to keep women in their place,
stop affirmative action for blacks
and throw out the hordes coming over the border.
Tax the middle class, above all, give Tax breaks to the rich.
Promote bogus trickle down theory,
which tinkles down, like urine, on the middle class.
Cruel free market capitalism for the poor and middle classes
while socialism is only for the rich.
Kill unions at home while you bail out corrupt CEOs and banks.
Send jobs overseas to be done by virtually slave labor, in China, India,
Mexico...
with no environmental regulations, or unions allowed.
Lie and call corporations “persons”
so only they have superior rights.
Equate speech with money so only the rich can talk.
They say “CEO’s are un-American and should be deported”,
we must lie about that and deport Mexicans instead.
Oppose the truth.
Destroy democracy by fostering hate of government,

so business rules and everything is privatized.
Create top down corporate autocracy
with psychopathic CEOs on top.
Steal worker's pensions for the rich.
Steal Social Security savings
and give hard earned money to the rich.
Wall Street is run by computers for our benefit.
Let corporations pay few taxes
while the middle class pays most
Let corporations put 35 trillion of untaxed money
in offshore banks.
Lie about everything, call these lies "alternative facts".
Distract people with the Flag, Crosses and abortion,
while you promote wars, religious ignorance, superstition and 'Gsus'.
Encourage overpopulation—more workers to exploit.
Deny evolution, so humans are superior to all other animals.
Support more pollution,
Create more global warming
Deny global warming so oil and coal CEOs can profit,
Support speciesism and endanger more animals,
Oppose nature's rights:
cut trees,
Kill "weeds" with Monsanto products
and let Monarch butterflies become endangered
kill insects, frogs and bees with glyphosate.
Have Congress only represent corporate interests
have government only represent corporate persons, never citizens.
Destroy National Monuments and give the land
to oil companies to ruin the beauty.
Convince as many as possible not to vote.
If that fails, Gerrymander, or redraw districts, so republicans win,

to get rid of those who care about people..
Cheat if necessary, as in the year 2000.
Give public airwaves to private monopolies,
encourage right wing radio and vapid scary TV
that never has a social message.
Let businessmen psychopaths become presidents.
Assassinate people you do not like with drone missiles,
forget the right to a trial.
CEO dynasties matter, ordinary people are nobody.
Close down government and stymie congress whenever possible.
Control Supreme Court with right wing appointments
who pass laws that let the rich control elections.
Create an aristocracy of conscienceless greed.
Uphold them as examples for the poor.
Be part car salesman, charlatan and part thug,
but pretend we are the beneficent chosen.
Use propaganda to convince everyone this autocracy is good
and really is democracy, even though that is a lie. ^[1]
Lie all the time, create false news.
Take their money
while you give them choices that mean nothing,
like choosing a religion, a cell phone,
a computer site, TV channel
or your favorite advertisement.

^[1] I wrote this as a mediation on a costume I was going to wear door to door when we went trick-or-treating with our kids. I was going to be a republican in satire. My kids would not let me and my 6 year old said, "it would be against your nature". So I did not do it, but I wrote down what I was thinking to put on the clothes. Shortened versions of some of the phrases were going to be put on the business suit and my hair would be greased down like old style Republicans. I would look like a businessman covered in my thoughts.

The planet is being ruined and millions led to suffer by profiteers, irrational deniers of global warming. Hardly anyone questions banks, CEO culture, oil energy or the gods that support corporations. Far from being fundamentalists, “atheists” are those who support what the Republicans deny. The atheists are actually are reasonists, naturalists or realists as opposed to delusional irrationalists. They are people who have a commitment to exploring evidence, and a readiness to embrace change. Science done properly is the opposite of fundamentalism, and has little to do with far right religion, corrupt Congress, the WTO or oil executives.

Azevedo could have saved himself embarrassment and trouble if he had just read Richard Dawkins excellent chapter “Fundamentalism and the Subversion of Science” in his book The God Delusion. Dawkins points out that he is a scientist not because he follows dogmas in books like the Bible or Koran but because “ I have studied the evidence”. ¹²¹⁸ He says “I am hostile to fundamentalist religion because it actively debauches the scientific enterprise” . He also notes that the Afghan Taliban resembles the American Taliban (i.e. Christian Fundamentalists) in that both share the same “narrow bigotry, heartless cruelty and sheer nastiness”. ¹²¹⁹ The Schuon cult has similar dogmatic beliefs in Schuon’s divinity and in the spurious religion of “gnosis”. The religious values Azevedo tries to propagandize in his writings on Schuon and other traditionalists are based on no real evidence, but merely subjective dogmas, inherited fictions and cult inspired irrational enthusiasms. The Schuon cult is all about adulation of Schuon as Big Brother of their thoughts. For them Schuon is the Mao of the Major Religions. Religious values are based on superstitions. They are incoherent, unreasonable

¹²¹⁸ Dawkins, Richard. The God Delusion. NY, Houghton Mifflin. 2006. page282

¹²¹⁹ Ibid, pg.288. The Taliban in Pakistan recently murdered 100 children and 47 workers in a school. They were opposed to them learning anything other than the Koran and the Sharia. (Dec. 2014)

and valuable only to priests, cults and their deluded followers. Science on the other hand demands something much more accurate and well observed, more rigorous than mere superstition and irrational belief. To really understand scientifically you have to go outside and look. It is not good reading Thomas Aquinas, he gives you nothing. You have to watch the facts of the world, immerse yourself in them. Scientists have an accurate and precise standard of objective and testable evidence, as informed as possible by study and the scientific method. There is nothing like this in religion, which rejects that its theses be tested or falsified by review or even questioned. Dawkins notes that those who accuse him a fundamentalism are not used to being criticized. He says:

“The illusion of intemperance [in Dawkins’s book the God Delusion] flows from the unspoken convention that faith is uniquely privileged: off limits to attack. In a criticism of religion, even clarity ceases to be a virtue and begins to sound like aggressive hostility.” ¹²²⁰

Dawkins is right, religion pretends to be immune to criticism. It is a self-serving system of rationalizations of falsehoods. When one rationalization fails another is offered. Many people are afraid of the fiction of hell. Others fear of speaking ill of fictional inventions like Muhammad or Christ, whose absurd visions and miracles never happened. Large groups of irrational people are scary. Muslim hoards, right wing Christians, or Jews in Gaza with automatic rifles or the Schuon cult in Bloomington, Indiana with endless money and lawyers are all groups of fundamentalists willing to kill, sue or harm others for their fictitious beliefs. Yet, absurdly, religion is defined as a private right in the Constitution, so anyone can believe any nonsense they wish and the

¹²²⁰ <http://richarddawkins.net/articles/1071>

state will protect this nonsense. The separation of Church and state is always under attack by religions who want to create an American corporate, Christian theocracy, not too different than the white supremacist state longed for by the KKK. Trade agreements, like GATT, NAFTA or TPP are written in secret, and help spread the corporate takeover of the earth, spreading corporate power to every nation, making workers into powerless puppets of CEO greed. What should be supported is a separation of corporations and the state.

The Schuon cult and other cults, survive only by being very secretive. Secrecy increases abuses, encourages unethical behavior, protects those who are selfish or who mean harm, and acts to increase the likelihood of distrust, resistance, conflict and war. If people knew all the nonsense that goes on in destructive government offices, cults or corporate boardrooms they would be closed down immediately. But once bad governments, bad corporations or fundamentalist fanatics cross the line and pander their delusions in public they are fair game. They do all they can to destroy freedom of speech, but secrets have a way of coming out and few groups succeed in concealing the harm they do for long.

Those who say science is a fundamentalism understand neither science nor fundamentalism. Mindless followers of a cult leaders are unable to think for himself or to look at evidence, though many end up leaving such organizations or rebelling against it. Secrecy produces whistleblowers who want to tell the truth. I know, as I was exposed to countless secrets about the Schuon cult and exposed them over a number of years. I further was forced to watch their cover up attempts and lies, once the truth was out about them.

I got to know the Traditionalists pretty well and they were fanatics at secrecy. They also pride themselves on their ignorance and call it a virtue. The Schuon cult is likewise not open to any sort of critical thinking. It is a cult or a totalistic system of irrational believers which does not allow any freedom of thought. Schuon claimed to be both

beyond fundamentalism and to be anti-science, as well as infallible and that is supposed to end all discussion. Actually Schuon was a fundamentalist about himself—I mean that his claim to infallibility rests on nothing other than empty assertion of his own subjective delusions. He claims on the basis of the fabricated and mystified notion of the “intellect” to be god or an incarnation of god. From this irrational nonsense is born Schuon’s hatred of science. The hatred of science proves his ignorant rebellion against reason and the rules of evidence. Resisting the evidence of science is itself evidence of clinging to subjective delusions.

When I really started measuring Guenon and the traditionalists against objective criteria, I began to see how insane and decadent these men, and their defenders, really were. So I looked long and hard and how they thought of science, and figured out that they are not just mistaken about it, but are vacant of real knowledge, as well as self-destructive. Science is the great adventure of the last 500 years. To seek to destroy or subvert it is not just closed-minded, but inhumane and insane. Religion is in decadent decline, as the Schuon cult itself proves, and has contributed nothing to our culture in the last few hundred years. The followers and exegetes of Guenon are really ‘out there’, not as galaxies are, indeed, really out there, but ‘out there’ in the sense of deluded in a mental impairment that is self-destructive. The hatred of rationality is real and renders them delusional in their devotion to irrational superstitions.

When it comes to science, Frithjof Schuon, Rama Coomaraswamy, Rene Guenon were ignorant men, as ignorant as the creationists. It is hard to say this fact any other way. Their abysmal refusal to inquire into what has been learned in recent centuries is a testament to their arrogant ignorance. Guenon claims that ‘Metaphysics is what is beyond , and is therefore supernatural.’ This is merely circular reasoning based

on false premises. There is nothing supernatural in Guenon or his followers---- I could see that well enough for myself with my own eyes. The followers of Guenon and Schuon merely indulge in adult make believe.

Guenon claims that science is rational knowledge, and rational knowledge is “indirect knowledge”. But this is dead wrong. Science gives us direct knowledge and religion merely inflated fantasy and indirect intuitions that have little or no evidence to back them up. Guenon claims that reason is a strictly human faculty and the “Intellect” and the Intellect is therefore beyond the human, “beyond reason”. In other words he claims to be in touch with superhuman Truth that is beyond humanity. One is supposed to believe his little formulas of “Truth” But this too is merely pathologically subjective bravado. There is no faculty called the “divine intellect” . The “Intellect” is that is merely a fictive faculty invented to exalt men like Schuon and Guenon. There is no truth to any of Guenon’s fantasies.

The more I looked into this the more I felt how ridiculous the implacable certainties of the Traditionalists are. Guenon had some training in Mathematics. ¹²²¹ But Math is not science. There are many

¹²²¹ Guenon’s view of Mathematics should be studied more critically than it has been. I will indicate some of its vacuity here: He subscribed to a basically medieval notion of math which is symbolist, Platonic and metaphysical. Such medieval notions of math were discredited long ago. Such views of math are held by very few nowadays, for many good reasons. The belief that math is in some measure a human construction born of an attempt to understand the actual, physical world is a more prevalent and more accurate view. This is not to say that math does not correspond to real things. Four apples are indeed four apples. Guenon’s background in math and his weakness in science led him to many false conclusions. Guenon wrote a book on Principles of Infinitesimal Calculus and his writings are full of medieval notions of mathematical symbolism. Various Guenonian and Schuonians I have met have speculated that post- modern mathematical systems, such as Laws of Form, by G. Spencer Brown, might reflect Guenonian values. Wolfgang Smith has tried to adapt some of Guenon’s ideas to physics, with very questionable results. Quantum mechanics does not reflect the ideology of Thomas Aquinas and the Catholic Church as Smith imagines. Guenon’s attempt to advance metaphysical distinction between the infinite thing and of the indefinite thing and demonstrate the difference between a traditional science and a

mathematicians who don't know anything about science. A number of traditionalists are mathematicians and their understanding of science is as wrongheaded and shallow as Guenon. ¹²²² Guenon's effort create a foundation for math upon his fictional metaphysical ideology fails at every point. He had no real understanding of science at all. His whole notion of science leading to debasement, "dissolution" and "solidification" and a "Great Parody" finally arising to try to destroy tradition is utter nonsense, mere propagandistic fiction, born of a twisted Manichean ¹²²³ ideology that falls back to medieval dogmas. He has it all backwards. The truth is that science, real science of the sort Galileo, Harvey or Mendel did, renders the weight of life lighter. It has improved our condition on earth in ways that are still unreckoned. It brought about the 'enlightenment', which has brought real improvements to the lives of people on earth. What good will come in the future will also be from science, not from religion.

A. J. Ayer was largely right when he said that "Everything that cannot be verified by the method of science is meaningless." Science is a rarefied and sophisticated use of reason. He should have softened this rather doctrinaire statement by replacing 'meaningless' with 'questionable'. There is meaning outside science, in poetry and art and in all that science does not yet understand, but the further you get from science the more ignorance and myth, falsehoods and superstition take over. Indeed, most of what is valuable in art and poetry is based on accurate observation and is close to science in one way or another. By

"profane" science is very pretentious and spurious. For more on this see below

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¹²²² I'm referring to Denis Constaes and Wolfgang Smith here

¹²²³ Manichean ideology is common and wherever it occurs it is political. It is the tendency to create black and white thinking splitting the world into good and evil, which are always political categories. One can see this absurd way of thinking in most religions, as well as Dante, Michelangelo, Star Wars, the Lord of the Rings, Jesus, Savorola, Stalin, Hitler, the "clash of civilizations", and many other places. It is just this sloppy and dangerous thinking that creates wars, social strife, racism and caste obsessions.

this I mean mostly realism, not abstract things, which are hopelessly subjective with perhaps a few exceptions, Klee's poetic humor, Kandinsky's bright and poetic color shapes, for instance. But in general abstraction is a failure pushed by critics, museums and galleries. They all made a huge mistake. That is why it is very important to stay close to science in all one's studies, even in art and poetry and even if one is studying, say, the history of religions. ¹²²⁴

Progress is not evil as Guenon imagines, on the contrary. There has been extraordinary progress since Aquinas or Plato. Most of what is called science was done in ancient times by ordinary people. They invented simple machines and pottery, houses, metallurgy, candles, and boats. The origins of science are also to be found first in the Greeks and Romans, among Thales, Archimedes, Aristotle Eratosthenes, Hipparchus, and many others. Originally known as Gerbert of Aurillac, later called Pope Sylvester II or Silvester II (c. 946 – 12 May 1003) was Pope from April 999 to his death in 1003. He was an amazing man and incorporated many Islamic science and math ideas from Spain which were largely restatements of Greek science and maths. He also did translations of Boethius and Aristotle. Abelard began to question the validity of Platonic ideas in the 1200's, C.E.. Aristotle's proto-scientific skepticism began to erode both Platonism and the Church in the 1300's. Indeed, the Church so feared Aristotle that they had to declare in 1277 that "God's absolute power" transcended any principles of logic that Aristotle or anyone else might place on it. In fact, "God's absolute power" is nothing other than the Church itself, which was running its mechanism on a lot of hot air. The condemnations of 1277 were

¹²²⁴ The history of poetry is largely the history of devotion to irrationality and systems of power in institutions. Ovid writes in praise of Augustus, Dante writes to glorify medieval dogmas and fictions of the Catholic Church, Ezra Pound glorifies Mussolini, Hirschman tries to glorify Stalin, Rumi glorifies the Muslim state and non-existent beloved "Beyond". Even Allen Ginsberg's Buddhism is romantic nonsense.

extensive and imply that the growth of science was well underway that early. Indeed, the “219 execrable errors”, that were not errors at all, condemned at the time mostly are about Aristotle’s ideas. So one can cite Aristotle as one of the forces that propelled the origins of science and buried the Medieval superstitions. This obvious power play of the 219 condemnations of 1277, even damaged Aquinas reputation, the Church thereby shooting itself in the foot again. Aristotle was a bad choice for the Church and ultimately discredited the whole institution, for the betterment of all, it turned out. One thanks Aristotle, as it was his attempt to be accurate and observe that made all the difference.



William of Occam

The Church failed so miserably in the Crusades, killing a million or more people, that it lost a lot of credibility. The Church had become little more than a mercenary cult, and a taxing agency, selling fake “Indulgences” as expensive tickets to suffer less in “purgatory” in the

“afterlife”.¹²²⁵ Few could fail to see how corrupt the Church was. In today’s world the Church is like our corporations, which seek to keep polluting by buying carbon offsets, usually in poor countries, so that they can keep emitting toxic chemicals into the atmosphere. Insurance is one of the most corrupt businesses on the planet. It exists mostly to make sure the establishment loses as little as possible so that everyone else pays the price of their disasters. The insurance companies have their origin partly in the slave trade of the 17th century. The carbon credit system as well as the socialist bailing out of corrupt corporations are like the sale of indulgences and involve a similar corruption and magical thinking, enabling the rich to keep doing harm while pretending they are doing good. Anyone with any sense sought reform or rebellion against the Church of those days, just as today stopping corporations from destroying our earth is imperative to anyone honest and good.

The Catholic Church proved its impotence when it could do nothing effective about the plague, which may have killed up to 100 million people. The best known and perhaps worst of the Plagues was in 1347, when there were very high death rates which ironically gave the poor greater power, as workers were scarce. This temporary lessening of suffering for the poor would help science and democracy quite a bit. But there were many outbreaks over several centuries. It became plain that if humans were to be free of the horrors around them they will have to be through evidence and the pursuit of fact. The Church opposed this free inquiry and there are many legal impediments put up against it. Those in

¹²²⁵ The sale of indulgences prefigures the corruption of today’s insurance companies. Insurance corporations like the Catholic Church, got their start in profiting from the risks of others. Some of the first insurance companies speculate on slave ships and their bloody cargo. Insurance companies were developed so that the rich would not have to take risks, just as the sale of Indulgences insured that the rich would not go to “hell”. There is as yet no Martin Luther or protestant rebellion condemning the evil of insurance companies in the U.S. Other countries have wisely thrown them out of health care, recognizing how parasitical and harmful they are. But the US is addicted to that and many other kinds of corruptions that keep the rich going.

power want inequality and for those who have too much, usually acquired by very questionable means, to keep it.

The scholastics like Aquinas (1225 –1274) had tried to rationalize Aristotle as a Churchman, but clearly something better than dogma was needed to find out what nature was really doing. The fatal misunderstanding of Aristotle would lead to the crack up of the Aquinas vision of reality and the rise of science. The fictions of religion began to be addressed by such men as Roger Bacon, William of Occam (1288 – c. 1348), Da Vinci, Francis Bacon and Rene Descartes. However much the latter two men may be questionable, and they are, they still deserve credit for advancing the experimental method.

Occam was a pioneer of nominalism and argued against the Platonic position that held that supra-individual universals, essences, or “Platonic forms” are real. In any case, the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 decided the issue of the Church's stand on the subject of universals and this was reinforced by Trent. This subject was the central philosophical issue of the Middle Ages. The Church decided in favor of the Realist position, more or less, rather than the Nominalist position. The Realist position was essentially Platonic, and summarized in the Scholastic formula, **Universalis Ante Rem**; the universal is prior to the particular thing, or the idea comes before the physical. In the philosophy of Aquinas and others, a more Aristotelian concept of universals would be combined, rather ambiguously, with the Platonic position. It was this ambiguity that led to the Realist/Nominalist controversy over the subject of universals and made the question of universals central to the controversy over the nature of the eucharist.

The Nominalist attacked this very ambiguity, since it was by no means clear how Christ could enter the Eucharistic host and become one with its substance without being contained also in its material substance. The Nominalists asked how Christ could become bread and wine when the bread and wine were not literally Christ. The standard

reaction of the Church, as far back as St. Paul and Augustine, was that this paradox was a great mystery and it would be a grave sin, indeed perhaps the unforgivable sin against the Holy Ghost itself, to question this divine mystery. How convenient. This mystagogic, obscurantist strategy was effective, but appealed more to fear than reason. The Church of this time was fast becoming the central and totalistic power over the entire European continent, while yet the recent translation of Aristotle and new economic benefits had encouraged many to try to reason for themselves. Thus, even while the Church was trying to use reason to justify its power and legitimacy, which was based on the Eucharist, others were using this same reason to question the authority of the Church and bring into question the Eucharist.

As I discussed in a previous chapter, the Nominalist position, at least in its clearer forms, as in Berengar (c.999-1088), Rocellinus(c.1050-1131) and William of Occam(d.1347) was derived almost entirely from Aristotle, and tended deny the reality of the Platonic universals, claiming universals were conceptual abstractions from particular things. Thus the Nominalists claimed the opposite of the realists and in the corresponding scholastic formula, claimed that “**Universalia Post Rem**”—or universals come after things.¹²²⁶ It is this latter view that is obviously the true one, though, it can be stated that that was not easy to know in the 14th century. The Nominalist position formed the conceptual basis of what would become science. This is not to say that Nominalism was a scientific position, rather it expressed the possibility in idea form of what would become science in practice two centuries later, between the period of Roger and Francis Bacon, Da Vinci, Galileo and Newton.

¹²²⁶ (Sartre would later express this as “existence precedes essence” which is obviously true.

In practical terms the origin of science is not just in these rather intellectual ideas, but even moreso in the recognition of the inequality of the rich and poor. The unfairness of the economic hierarchy began to be understood in the 1300's. John Ball was an Englishman living in the late 1300's after the Plague had killed millions. He helped foster the Peasant's Revolt of 1381. This was the origin of many revolts to come. John Ball made the same demands in 1381 as Thomas Rainsborough' would enunciate during the English Civil War in the 1640's. Rainsborough said " I think that the poorest he that is in England hath a life to live as the greatest he". Tom Paine would later say much the same thing, as would Henry David Thoreau, Bertrand Russell and many others up till today. Gandhi's Hindu religion is more or less irrelevant to his use of Thoreau's notion of "civil disobedience". The same is true of the Protestant religion of M.L. King, which also originated with Thoreau's ideas, not religion. Both men connected Thoreau's ideas to their religions. But that scarcely matters now.

These matters are fairly complex so I will try to simplify it here. Gandhi was trying to negate the overwhelming influence of the Moslem-Hindu conflict in India that resulted in the separation of Moslem Pakistan and Bangladesh from Hindu India. Gandhi wanted a civil society that put religion to the side. He opposed the Moslem- Hindu rift that took place in 1948. This required making his idea of non violent resistance ever more 'secular' which is what it was to begin with. It was Thoreau's idea, though Thoreau is ambiguous about it, sometimes putting forward a non-violent notion of civil disobedience and sometimes he wanted to actively destroy Dams to save fish, for instance.¹²²⁷ Let yourself be a

¹²²⁷ The idea of destroying infrastructure like Dams is behind Edward Abbey's notion of destroying Dams, as he explains in the Monkey Wrench Gang and elsewhere. Abbey's effort to undermine spirituality is interesting. There are also leftist religious mystics who have interest as secular reformers. Ernesto Cardenal is one of these, a Trappist who was deeply involved in teaching people to read and think during the Nicaraguan effort to make itself a good country, a desire that was ridiculously opposed by the US, which is often on the wrong side of things. The Nicaraguans managed to increase the literacy rate of their country by over 90%. Not a small

counter fiction to the machine”, he wrote, really defining the character of the non-violent resistance movement. Later, Thoreau gives up his idea of non violent resistance in his support of John Brown’s bloody fight against slavery.. Both Gandhi and King kept with the non violent part of Henry’s thinking, which is the part that got Henry thrown in jail for a night for not paying taxes that would support the slave state. Gandhi is the most ‘pure’ of these men as far as non violence goes. The murder of Gandhi by a Hindu nationalist is a crime that sheds some negative light on the Koranic endorsement of violence as a mandate encouraged by religion. The partition of India into two nations is what killed Gandhi, and this is the fault of both Muslims and Hindus. A Hindu killed a really good man, one of the best of the 20th century.

The idea of pacifism and non-violence are easily adapted to just about any belief system. The belief systems do not matter, except as a sort of fictional support. But the affinity with science is deep and logical. Once one understands the basic realities of DNA and life, the structures in the forms of all animals, as well as the fragility of our earth, non violence becomes a logical outcome. What matters an understanding of humankind as a having a tendency to kill and cause wars. Stopping this requires great strength and courage of a kind that is rare in people, such

achievement.

Andrei Sakharov, (1921-1989) was a Russian dissident, who was a maker of bombs, but became a pacifist and non violent resister. J. Robert Oppenheimer took this route somewhat too, rather tragically both for him and his family.

Another figure, somewhat similar to Gandhi, thought much more prone to superstition, and a Moslem, was Amadou Bomba (d. 1927), A Senegalese Sufi, who spent most of his life in prison or exile, brought about by the colonialism of France, which silenced him by keeping him locked up or under house arrest. The religion around Bomba is excessive and prone to fictions in the extreme, including rather ridiculous stories about miracles he is supposed to have enacted. He was a world denying mystic and that is unfortunate, though in his case one can see why. But like King and Gandhi he joined his non violence resistance to a ‘spiritual’ message, and now the spiritual message seems irrelevant and fictional, but the non violence remains. Bomba is a hero in Senegal, and much mythologized. Even the traditionalists try to use him as a sort of advertisement. Uses of such men as a spiritual advert should be resisted.

as Gandhi showed. Science is study of reality, not of fictions and it implies a general fairness in economy as well as a socialist idea—an idea that is not Marxist and which includes everyone, including animals, trees, seas and nature. Darwin grasped this, as did the later Thoreau and others. Non violence is often an adjunct to science, part of this.

Science grows out of this rejection of Platonism and universals. Occam's Razor was the idea that one should not "multiply entities beyond necessity" which was certainly necessary in a time when Aquinas' Summa Theologica helped create a plethora of Church doctrines which hardly anyone could entirely understand or count. This "reductionism" was a good thing and resulted eventually in Descartes' call for "clear and distinct ideas" and this leads us to a reason and eventually science. Occam was excommunicated from the increasingly corrupt Church, to his credit, and took refuge in the Germanic states, where the Protestant rebellion would eventually flower.

Bertrand Russell states of Occam that because of his insistence of "studying logic and human knowledge without reference to theology and metaphysics, Occam's work encouraged scientific research.¹²²⁸ Da Vinci of course, is really the first fully developed scientist, far ahead of his time in so many things. One need only read his amazing notebooks with some care to see that the scientific mentality of reliance on experiment is already well formed in Leonardo. Science really begins in art and not in language and poetry, which are too close to religion. Indeed, Leonardo does not speak well of poetry and I daresay he might be right about it in some ways. Leonardo worked with math and applied it to the motions of

¹²²⁸ See Russell, History of Philosophy page 475. See also the chapters on the "Eclipse of the Papacy" and "The Rise of Science" in this book which are all excellent. Indeed, I love this book and have been reading it since my teens. It has to be the best, clearest and most helpful history of philosophy ever written. See also Jean Gimpel's excellent, The Medieval Machine: the Industrial Revolution of the Middle Ages. He shows how men like Villard de Honnecourt, Roger Bacon and Peter of Maricourt had a basically reason based and quasi scientific attitude in the 1200's. Roger Bacon corrected the Julian calendar and basically made the calendar we all use today. He should be given credit for it, but to my knowledge he never is.

water and air movement, flight and mechanics. He discovered some things about geology and had a sort of proto-theory of evolution. His studies of the human body were far ahead of his time.

Leonardo is an exception and a hundred years pass after his death before Francis Bacon and Descartes start formalizing the scientific method. Bacon is blamed, along with Descartes for being the father of “reductionism” but there is nothing wrong with reductionism particularly, if it is the delusions of myth and religion that are being reduced. Mysticism helps no one except escapists from reality. If the opposite of reductionism is holistic transcendentalism, I will gladly take reductionism, as the transcendent does not exist. If you examine for instance this sentence by Arthur Versluis:

Contemporary society is based on what we may call objectification, meaning that our investigations into and control of our world derives from our regarding all that surrounds us as objects to be manipulated, from which we believe that we are separate. -¹²²⁹

This sentence is full of false and tacit suppositions. There is a notion that “union” with a deity is possible, which is ridiculous, Versluis has no evidence of this at all, no one does. Indeed, all evidence suggests such unions are fictitious. There is an assumption that scientists are separate from nature, and I do not know one who would say so. There is an assumption that subjectivity is somehow superior, which is unlikely, and there is an assumption that all humans want to do is manipulate objects, which is false and certainly false regarding our world. There are

¹²²⁹ From Versluis Arthur, Restoring Paradise, pg 19
<http://www.scribd.com/doc/134215558/Arthur-Versluis-Restoring-Paradise-Western-Esotericism-Literature-Art-And-Consciousness>

people who objectify things, but not because of science. Business objectifies things for the sake of greed, true. But business is closer to religion than to science. There is no sin in making things simpler. Nor is there harm in studying and observing reality. Versluis is just plain wrong. Like the mystics of the time of the Fall of Rome or the Black Plague, he is an obscurantist, a repressive ideologist, who wants to reimpose ignorance on us all. The men of the 1300s silenced the growing science of Roger Bacon and others, and helped bring about a hundred years of darkness and lack of progress that only began again with the Renaissance.

Biology is not there to manipulate objects but to reflect upon and understand nature: paramecium, photosynthesis, Honeycreepers, viruses, Whale Sharks. Not that there is anything wrong with moving objects, even young children move objects with intentions. This is a tacit criticism of technology in Versluis's statement, when technology is neutral and depends on how and why someone uses it. A hammer is a great thing for driving in nails, not for bashing in heads. The human body itself is an amazingly complex and wonderful biological machine, as Leonardo well knew. Versluis' writing is full of falsity, caricatures and misunderstandings about science. He does this to try to vaunt his specious ideas about esoterica and mystical narcissism and denigrate science and objectivity. His ideas are great for escapist suburbanites and self-regarding college kids who want mystical highs, but there is little or no truth in what he says.

Since Descartes is a favourite philosopher to bash among new age spiritualists, esotericists, anti-materialists and "metaphysical" thinkers it might be useful to pause and digress here over various peoples misuse or abuse Descartes, from Guenon to Chomsky. Using Descartes as a whipping boy or as an excuse for dogmatism is a common theme in the last 75 years from Guenon to Gary Zukav and Chomsky. Some of these thinkers use him as an example of what is to be hated and others misuse

him as a shining star of their own delusions. I think the actual Descartes has his faults and is not an especially good example to follow either. But that said, with moderation, he must be credited importance to the history of science. Leonardo was also quite a good mathematician and had a better understanding of actual science than Descartes did. Indeed, it is a mistake to see Descartes as one of the founders of science when Leonardo understood it so much better a hundred years before Descartes.

But there is much of value in Descartes. Recalling the Nazi Martin Heidegger's critique of the Cartesian ego, Guenon's abuse and hatred of Descartes is misguided. Rene Descartes is a common victim of religious minded New Agers and conservatives. He is blamed for all sorts of things he didn't do. Frithjof Capra, for instance, the writer of Tao of Physics is another who denigrates Descartes as a "reductionist", as if simplicity were a bad thing. Making things simpler is not a fault, but to be praised. Descartes devotion to 'clear and distinct ideas' tested against reality is very important. While Descartes has his faults, his drive to create a science based on observation and reason is not one of them. Indeed, I praise Descartes for his effort to find clear and simple truths. It has had great benefits on curing disease and solving technical problems in engineering and mechanics, art and biology.

But, whatever his faults Descartes did begin the process that led to science and this overall is a good, even for animals. Descartes was not at all the bad man and nor was he the beginning of the Kali Yuga as Guenon's fiction abusively implies. On the contrary. Descartes frames and summarizes the early scientific impulse marvelously well. He created a philosophy that helps impel science toward the future. For that he really is an important thinker. It is logical that a backward thinker like Guenon would hate him.

Chomsky's abuse of Descartes ideas are harder to explain and I

explore that in another essay later in this book. I include there a questioning of Descartes erroneous ideas on animals¹²³⁰

So, Descartes and Bacon helped create science, in their several ways and very imperfectly. Bacon is merely following out the logic of Occam's Razor and the attempt of science to be clear and distinct in its search for evidence and fact. There is no fault there, though one can well understand why the obscurantists, esoterists, holists, New Agers and myth lovers would hate simplicity, and factuality. There has been an anti-science, anti-Enlightenment and anti-reason campaign by the far right since the 13th century nominalists began to question Aquinas, Platonism and the Church. The repressive right is always with us, shaking its nagging finger at us and insisting on hierarchy and the "rights" of the ultra rich to unjust wealth, spreading poverty and abuse

¹²³⁰ (see my next chapter on Chomsky and his linguistic theory as it relates to animals. To summarize here:

The consensus seems to be that Chomsky went astray by denying Darwin too much. He clung too heavily to Stephen Jay Gould and an irrational rationalism that had rejected too many aspects of empiricism and environmentalism in favor of a rationalistic formalism. This left Chomsky open to irrational ideas like thinking himself as a prophet of sorts. He extols 'mysteries', comes close to Platonism and flirts with bizarre ideas of the origins of language that tend to be non adaptationist.. Chomsky writes for instance that

He is trying to show that language may be an accident of brain development that might have intended the language parts of the brain for other uses. But it shows Chomsky's ignorance of nature. The growth of language might be like the development of rudimentary wings. These exist in flying Squirrels for instance, or ancient dinosaurs birds like Microraptor. Both gliders, these are very effective as flying mechanisms though far from being full-fledged wings as yet. There are other fossils that exhibit early flight. The 'language of birds or monkeys is certainly analogous to human communication in many ways., yet Chomsky bizarrely considers human language to not be about communications primarily. He is probably wrong here. It is hard to consider Chomsky a Darwinist, though he occasionally does show lip service to it, as he must. He theorizes about the evolution of the eye, though the dynamics of this are well plotted. But he has certainly refused to follow out all the Darwinian implications of language, staying strictly with a rather dogmatic genetic formalism which is not easily susceptible to scientific testing and inquiry,--- which is why it is right to question if he is a scientist at all. I hope that after Chomsky dies Darwinian theories of language will be pursued in earnest with much more research on animals. The ideas of Stephen Pinker are already doing this, however hesitantly.

ot get it. The rich want to give the poor slavery, low wages and mind numbing ideology or religion, which justifies the abasement of the poor in all sorts of absurd ways.

Savonarola, De Maistre, Guenon and other reactionary cranks have always opposed science and tend towards Platonism. Platonist ‘essences’ are subjective, personal and get into one’s emotions. That is what these science deniers love. It is fine if they wish to meditate, do Zen or bask in the glory of their inner light, but it is not fine when they try to impose this on everyone and deny facts and science. It took a long time for science to achieve the spectacular results it has given us since Da Vinci. It was not until the 19th century that the term scientist was created by the naturalist William Whewell. It is not until the industrial revolution and the late 19th century that science begins to change the face of society in a major way. The mix up of science with capitalism and communism has disastrous consequences in some cases, but all in all science a force for the good.

Quite apart from the fact that science is the study of things as they are and this has incalculable value---science has led to real and extremely valuable gains for people in almost every domain. Science has not led to ‘solidification’, “subversion” or “dissolution”, as Guenon claims. Indeed, it is Guenon who is the subversive, trying to destroy science and erect bogus and dead systems of knowledge as a ‘support’ for his hierarchical irrationalism and religious ideology. Some of his poorly expressed critiques of modern inhumanity have small grains of truth in them, but many have said this much better without all the paranoid theories and exaggerations, spiritual projections and magnified superstitions. Guenon was an Counter-Enlightenment reactionary, one

of hundreds, and as Darrin McMahon shows,¹²³¹ the Counter-Enlightenment was an international, and thoroughly modern affair. Guenon is a modernist reactionary, despite his nostalgic, regressive ideology. His ideology serves the far right, which itself is the product of reaction to the Enlightenment.¹²³² This fact is completely lost on his followers, who haven't a clue as to who they are reading or why. The Counter-Enlightenment is still with us and very powerful. It gives us creationism and the global warming deniers, among many others. It scarcely matters if Guenon is part of it or not. The far right serves power, and seeks in all cases to limit human rights, nature, democracy, freedom, equality and social justice. Opposing the ideals of the French, American and Scientific revolutions is what the traditional movement was always about.

Vaccines have saved millions, and the world is far better understood now than during the Dark Ages Guenon admired: life expectancies are much longer; child mortality is largely eliminated in western countries and much lowered elsewhere.¹²³³ Indeed, religion

¹²³¹ Enemies of the Enlightenment

The French Counter-Enlightenment and the Making of Modernity.

¹²³² McMahon, Darrin, Enemies of the Enlightenment: The French Counter-Enlightenment and the Making of Modernity, Oxford 2002

he notes that these reactionaries included "militant clergy, members of the *parti d'etat*, unenlightened aristocrats, traditionalist *bourgeois*, Sorbonne censors, conservative *parlementaires*, recalcitrant journalists, and many others ... the so-called fanatics of the Enlightenment catechism" pg 6

One reviewer notes that "he also contradicts Isaiah Berlin's emphasis on Germany and philosophy, McMahon stresses the extent to which the Counter-Enlightenment was French and religious." Actually it was probably both French and German. And occurs in England, Holland and other countries as well.

¹²³³ An example of this is Schuon's ignorance of medicine and his foolish belief in homeopathy led to prolonged sufferings and an earlier death for Schuon according to Doctor Rama Coomaraswamy who knew a few things about cardiology. Rama told me Schuon's belief in homeopathy (an utterly empty and fictitious form of medicine that has no proven advantage) led to Schuon having many heart events, which could have been avoided. Rama wrote me that " I also considered his attachment to homeopathy silly as this methodology only dates back to the

opposed progress and made life difficult. People died young without decent health care, women suffered more with many children before contraception was available or pediatrics became a viable and helpful science. People were denied basic rights, good food and left to languish in poverty and early deaths. The “good old days” were not so good, most women lost children or died in childbirth, men could get a small cut, which could easily go septic and kill them. There were no anesthetics and amputation might mean death. A broken bone was life threatening. Diseases were rampant and life expectancy was very low. Murder was common. Religious societies promoted---and still promote--- ignorance and irrational superstitions and myths, which kept people in deep fear and poverty. Modern men in Afghanistan beat girls who try to go to school or who try to get out of the veil. The veil itself is a misogynist imposition.

As Christopher Hitchens has rightly said: “Religion has run out of justifications.... and no longer offers an explanation of anything important.”¹²³⁴ Science might be restricted as to what it can study—but when done well it is clear and light by comparison to the bogus tenebrous and imaginary “gnosis” of the old days. The ‘sages’ of old knew very little, in fact, and a lot of what they claimed to know now seems quaintly absurd, escapist and embarrassing. Science is about evidence,

17th century and can hardly be called traditional. Also, he was having fainting spells and both I and one of the physician faukara who was a cardiologist felt he needed a pace maker (I have put in hundreds), but this was ruled out of court [by the cult].” In the Schuon cult it was said that “to be a disciple of the Shakyh, you must believe in homeopathy”. Schuon had silent ischemia and it could have been treated if Schuon had not been so stubbornly ignorant and dogmatic in his stand toward modern medicine. Schuon’s own meanness and narrow-mindedness led to his increased suffering in his last years. He regularly blamed his heart problems on anyone who might be in his way. He blamed his wives at various times, Joseph Epes Brown, his neighbor who put up a no trespassing sign, me at one point, Maude Murray at other points and others at other times. Actually his physical ailments could have been treated and he would have been a less bitter and nasty old man. His own narrow-mindedness was at the root of his later illnesses

¹²³⁴ Hitchens, Christopher. God is Not Great Twelve 2007. Pg. 282

not about out dated Platonic ‘essences’ or or Sufi “archetypes”.¹²³⁵ It brings us into the possibility of a more satisfying, creative way of life and thought and it addresses reality. Only pseudo-science and religion fabricate reality rather than seek to face it head on.

Chomsky has said that outside of the ‘hard sciences’ of biology, physics and chemistry “theoretical knowledge rapidly tails off and reliance on intuition and experience correspondingly increases, and it's correspondingly easier for error to perpetuate”.¹²³⁶ Regarding the social sciences Chomsky writes that they “don't have anything remotely like the explanatory character that parts of the natural sciences have developed since the 17th century revolutions”. Chomsky’s own linguistics has done little to explain language, indeed, Darwin’s commentary on the nature of language seems far deeper to me than Chomsky’s increasingly discredited theory.¹²³⁷

¹²³⁵ The epistemological anarchism that characterized Paul Feyerabend and others appealed to some traditionalists. Schuon, I was told, liked some aspects of alternative and reactionary Platonist science philosophers like Alexander Koyre. The whole notion of Platonist archetypes as an alternative to science has been utterly demolished by science, but that did not prevent Schuon from still believing in it fanatically and with a sort of personal devotion that made him impose archetypes even in close relationships to others. A woman who fit his favorite sex fantasies was called “fulfilling her archetype”, for instance, when really she just was his fantasy projection.

¹²³⁶ <http://www.chomsky.info/onchomsky/1996----.htm> This is true of Chomsky’s own science work in linguistics which has questionable formalistic and quasi-Platonistic features.

¹²³⁷ For instance his idea of universal grammar is discredited. Children do not have grammar hardwired into their brains as Chomsky thought. Another example is his FLN and FLB distinction, which tries to separate human from animal communications, and which enshrines little more than speciesist prejudice. Many people have complained that Chomsky stands in the way of advancement in language study. In Politics the only political theory that Chomsky has somewhat approved of is that of his associate Michael Albert. It is called Parecon and the society it envisions seems to be a top down sort of Parecon politicizing of the economy, such that wealth no longer controls, but rather fame and usefulness do, This has features not a whole lot different than other systems controlled by committee, such as Maoism. David Schweikart calls Albert’ system “a system obsessed with comparison (“Is your job complex more empowering than mine?”), with monitoring (You are not working at average intensity, mate--get with the program), with the details of consumption (How many rolls of toilet paper will I need next year? Why are some of my neighbors still using the kind not made of recycled paper?)”. (Nonsense on Stilts, Znet) Chomsky and Albert are very overbearing people and run a sort of cult. I would have

Religious studies has even less accuracy than social sciences and perpetuates errors upon errors, so many in fact that no one should take most academic scholars of religion seriously about anything. The traditionalist academics should not be taken seriously, indeed, I advocate that they be removed from universities: they belong in right wing think tanks or churches and mosques. They are cultish ‘true believers’ not purveyors of enlightened information about the real world. Neither the traditionalists nor many academic religious studies professors admit that there is no empirical basis for any of the major claims of the religions. Scientific methods need to be applied more rigorously to the study of religion.

The vast unknown domains of space and time, beyond the Quasars, or beneath the atoms are certainly beyond science and definitely beyond religion, whose answers to ultimate questions are absurd failures. The “meaning of existence” is accessible to science as science provides more and more keys to understanding life on earth, our biology our brains and those of other species. But the specific meaning of any single person’s existence is not so easy to determine. The challenge of life and of society is to provide opportunity to answer just this question for everyone and not just the ultra-rich or the hereditarily privileged. What answers there are to ultimate questions are simply outside religions legitimate claim to answer anything about them. What answers there are, are best had from science or from commonplace observations by disinterested or ordinary people, who have no professional philosophy to sell. So when Plato or Aquinas, Eliade or Huston Smith, Guenon or Schuon or any of their followers pretend to certain answers about “multiple states of Being” or “Beyond Being” or “God” or existence, one can be quite sure that they what comes out of their mouths or pens is poppycock or utter fiction.

serious doubt about any society they designed. The society Chomsky made and Z Magazine and Z Net is already questionable enough.

They speak of these things with absolute certainty and even claim infallibility about them. That is the sure sign that they are charlatans, promoters of make-believe, constructors of fabricated delusions.

4. **Corporate Science**

There is also a basic distinction between real science and corporate science or what is sometimes called “big science”, which should not be confused with real science. Corporations abuse science by distorting it to serve the economic interests of the upper classes. Science is deformed by corporations who put profits before everything. The real question that should motivate business is the study of those companies who were best to their workers, had profit sharing, lasted the longest, helped the most families, made the best products or provided the best services and did not sacrifice these things for profits for a few greedy men at the top. It is clear from a study done by the academy of sciences (PNAS) that

Seven studies using experimental and naturalistic methods reveal that upper-class individuals behave more unethically than lower-class individuals. In studies 1 and 2, upper-class individuals were more likely to break the law while driving, relative to lower-class individuals. In follow-up laboratory studies, upper-class individuals were more likely to exhibit unethical decision-making tendencies (study 3), take valued goods from others (study 4), lie in a negotiation (study 5), cheat to increase their chances of winning a prize (study 6), and endorse unethical behavior at work (study 7) than were lower-class individuals. Mediator and moderator data demonstrated that upper-class individuals’ unethical tendencies are accounted for, in part, by their more favorable attitudes toward greed.

Indeed, the best companies are not about the top at all but about everyone that works there, who are all equally concerned with the welfare of the company.¹²³⁸ The earth itself now suffers from this CEO disease as its primary aliment.

Monsanto is a good example. They create seeds, which are genetically engineered, to insure that their product glyphosate or Roundup is then sprayed on their glyphosate resistant corn and soybean crops, and the poison kills all the weeds except “their” corn and soy. One horrendous result of this destructive process is that now monarch butterflies are 90% down in population and milkweed is suffering. Insects, frogs, and many other species are in decline. This toxic atrocity should be stopped. The same is true of other dangerous chemical dumped on the land, like the neonicotinoids (“neonicks”), which are nicotine derivatives and which are probably a big part of what is killing so many bees in colony collapse disorder.¹²³⁹ This is an abuse of nature and science.

Corporations like Apple, Walmart, Home Depot and thousands of others move jobs to third-world countries and exploit the workers there at wages that are so low they violate basic rights and sometimes approach slavery. They force workers to live in company housing, six workers in a room, and do not allow viewing of their factories so one knows they are bad. They also help break the unions here and they destroy the middle class of this country, while raking in the largest profits in world history. Such companies are parasitical and do great damage up and down the line of their existence, helping only the very

¹²³⁸ Once the idea of “corporate personhood” is abounded as illegal, as it should be, there will be no more evading responsibility by CEO,s, indeed, we can jettison the CEO all together and companies employees are then responsible for wrong doing themselves.

¹²³⁹ One study states: “There is a considerable and growing body of evidence that neonicotinoids and other systemic chemicals are harming bees, other wildlife and also our soil and water quality. Similar chemicals such as” clothianidin, imidacloprid and thiamethoxam, as well as others, are killing insects and other animals as well as having unknown effects on humans.

top, who are all overcompensated, unjustly. The CEO's should be gotten rid of or downsized and more equitable arrangements and better pay for the workers. The rapacious abuse of workers by CEOs should be stopped and such companies should be forced to obey stricter U.S. labor laws elsewhere and taxed into submission, perhaps at 90% or more of their profits or income.

Those who critique science for merely reflecting the ideology of dominant economic groups within society are partly correct. Historically, science has often been on the side of the oppressors and colonizers. But not always and less and less if we all follow our consciences. But science in itself is not ideology and it is important to separate science itself from the abuse of it.

The idea that "science" has piggybacked on technology ever since Galileo used a telescope to develop a new understanding of the heavens is questionable. This new science, in turn, led to new technological innovations"¹²⁴⁰, as was claimed in a recent New York Times article, is true to a degree, but false over all. Most of the capitalist gains provided by science have done so because of the injustices of governments. Computers for instance were developed by the US government which taxpayers paid for. But the profits from it went to mavericks and montebanks like Bill Gates or Steve Jobs, who did not deserve it. But much of science has no clear economic benefit and actually begins long before the invention of the spinning jenny or the steam engine. Pottery, iron-smithing and similar occupation are science as is architecture, road building and art making. Charting plankton species in the oceans, tracing the temperature rises caused by global warming, studying tree species, disease rates, Neanderthal DNA,--- none of this supplies profits for the greedy. The definition of what science is needs amending as it is

¹²⁴⁰ <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/20/business/economy/a-somber-view-of-americas-pace-of-progress.html?action=click&pgtype=Homepage&version=Moth-Visible&moduleDetail=inside-nyt-region-2&module=inside-nyt-region®ion=inside-nyt-region&WT.nav=inside-nyt-region>

too narrowly defined as technological development leading to profits..

Corporations deform science in the pursuit of profit motives. A lot of the science used by corporations is done by academics and government research. Corporations who exploit this research should be required by law to give back to the society that enriched them with scientific knowledge. Profit sharing should be mandatory, CEO's eliminated as a category or severely taxed, workers' rights maintained, and social rights held to be higher than individual rights. "At will" employment should be eliminated and worker rights upheld. But what usually happens is the courts and government support the CEO class and put down the lower classes. Microsoft for instance was allowed to exploit a lot of the research that was done by the government and should be required to pay us back. They should be downsized at the top and helped up on the bottom. The upper tier should be severely taxed. But this does not happen ---they just continue exploiting and maneuvering for profit. The obscene control of government for big business profits corrupts both universities and science and less and less science is done by non-corporate people. This practice is destroying both science and the university system.¹²⁴¹

A recent clear example of how science is both denied and abused by politics and ideology there is the bizarre case of Donald Trump's attempt to assert the irrational false fact of baby formula. The New York Times reported on July 8, 2018, that:

A resolution to encourage breast-feeding was expected to be approved quickly and easily by the hundreds of government delegates who gathered this spring in Geneva for the United Nations-affiliated World Health Assembly.

¹²⁴¹ The anti-intellectualism of the corporate sector is very alarming. There are increasing attempts both to destroy the public schools and to undermine the system of academic freedom and tenure set up in the universities. There are real and dangerous efforts to privatize schools and to make students virtually indentured servants to corporations with huge college debts to CEO exploiters.

Based on decades of research, the resolution says that mother's milk is healthiest for children and countries should strive to limit the inaccurate or misleading marketing of breast milk substitutes.

Trump, who is ignorant of science, does not care if thousands upon thousands of children die in poor countries of Africa or India due to lack of immunity caused by baby formula. The article mentions that perhaps 800,000 kids are effected by this kind of abuse. The science behind the efficacy of breast milk has been acquired over many decades and is irrefutable. But the CEO's of these companies are corrupt and want to keep the 70 billion they make from selling this junk.¹²⁴²

Patti Rundall of the British advocacy group Baby Milk Action said:

“What happened was tantamount to blackmail, with the U.S. holding the world hostage and trying to overturn nearly 40 years of consensus on the best way to protect infant and young child health,” she said.

Science is the pursuit of objective and disinterested knowledge, done for the betterment of all, including the betterment of other species and the earth--- and often this is not the science of Haliburton or IBM. Haliburton sought to profit through the Iraqi and Afghani wars and IBM was deeply involved in helping the Third Reich process the extermination of Jews by supporting the Nazi's with early computers to use in concentration camps.¹²⁴³ Science is what was given us by Newton, Hooke, Huygens, Einstein, Russell, and Darwin as well as the countless

¹²⁴² Breast feeding see <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/08/health/world-health-breastfeeding-ecuador-trump.html?hpw&rref=health&action=click&pgtype=Homepage&module=well-region®ion=bottom-well&WT.nav=bottom-well>

¹²⁴³ See Edwin Black's *IBM and the Holocaust: The Strategic Alliance between Nazi Germany and America's Most Powerful Corporation*

anonymous researchers who go unheralded: the science that has given us ornithology, physics, thermodynamics, ecology, astronomy, microbiology, photosynthesis and plate tectonics. I mean science that is socially enlightened and fair, driven by evidence and not profit driven. A great deal of science has been created by amateurs and enlightened citizens, who are not looking to create dynastic wealth machines as the corporations do.

Corporate Nationalist science has done crazy things when Russia was the USSR, and when nuclear weapons were dropped on Hiroshima. It is clear now that the dropping of the bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki was unnecessary and inexcusable. The US was listening surreptitiously to Japaense military communications and knew they were going to surrender.¹²⁴⁴ The reason for dropping the bombs has always been given that it was done to bring about their surrender. In fact the bombs were unnecessary. The decision to drop them was a pure nationalist power play, a delusion cased by capitalist/scientific hubris, as well as political revenge and greed. The continued denial of this fact is itself proof of the irrational ideology that asserts US and capitalist supremacy. In Japan, an amazing couple, the Maruki's did a series of paintings recording the devastation. Nuclear weapons are inexcusable as they kill babies of all kinds, trees, insects, everything, including all people, old and young.¹²⁴⁵

There is reason to be suspicious of corporate science. It is not

¹²⁴⁴ See Robert Jay Lifton's, Hiroshima in America, and Howard Zinn's essay on the dropping of the bombs. Bertrain Russell also wrote against the nuclear threat, and the biography of J.R. Oppenheimer is not without relevance here.

¹²⁴⁵ The art of Toshi and Iri Maruki can be seen here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mTpDqYPEY5Q>

driven by actual science but by Free Market Fundamentalism.¹²⁴⁶ In her book Merchants of Doubt, Naomi Oreskes shows how scientists, who might have once had decent careers, ended up being paid to lie about things like Cigarettes or Tobacco, Acid Rain, Nuclear Energy or Global Warming. Corrupt corporations continue raking in huge profits that harmed people or the planet. The goal of “doubt mongering” she says, was to stave off government regulation. Oil companies and coal creators and various other polluters are responsible for the world wide global warming trend. This is the primary reason given for the die off of billions of Sea Stars on the West Coast of North America in 2014 and 2015. With the Marine ecosystem in collapse, mostly due to global warming and the resulting growth of toxic bacteria and viruses, Sea Stars are not the only ones endangered. Orcas, are also endangered, there being only about 75 Puget Sound left in the wild, with many being exploited by the Sea World

¹²⁴⁶ An interesting book on global warming and the causes of it in market fundamentalism is Naomi Oreskes The Collapse of Western Civilization, a dystopian book about the actual causes of the global warming threat. There is an online version here:
<http://gailepranckunaite.com/Naomi%20Oreskes-The-Collapse-of-%20Western-Civilization-2014.pdf>
‘Here is her definition of market fundamentalism

“Free Market Fundamentalism—and its various strands and interpretations known as free market fundamentalism, neoliberalism, laissez-faire economics, and laissez-faire capitalism—was a two-pronged ideological system. The first prong held that societal needs were served most efficiently in a free market economic system. Guided by the “invisible hand” of the marketplace, individuals would freely respond to each other’s needs, establishing a net balance between solutions (“supply”) and needs (“demand”). The second prong of the philosophy maintained that free markets were not merely a good or even the best manner of satisfying material wants: they were the *only* manner of doing so that did not threaten personal freedom.”

She argues that market fundamentalism leads to the denial of science which leads to destruction of environment and the ability use resources wisely and this leads to catastrophic global warming, flood and deserts, mass migrations, millions of deaths and extinctions and the necessity of big government to regulate the abusers. Neoliberalism fails the earth and people.

company for tourist dollars.¹²⁴⁷ The Orcas eat mostly Chinook Salmon which have been killed off by dam-building, overfishing, and global warming. Yet the Washington game agents insist of allowing humans to catch the few remaining Chinook Salmon not yet killed off by the markets. The expansion of Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain Pipeline in Burnaby, British Columbia is also a contributor to the demise of Orcas. The nose for these ships, who are only required to go slow if they feel like it, is contributing to the starvation of the Orcas. The abuse of science helps serve an ideology of profits. Killing off other species is profitable to a sector of the economy that supports excessive compensation for CEO's. They and the "Market" system that serves them, are the problem. Genetic firms want to deform animals for profit; indeed, this is already being done, altering genetic structures of fish or cows, to serve the profit motive of CEOs and shareholders instead of the good of the animals, cells or genes thus altered. Indeed, the main threat to many species is the CEO. The main threat to all endangered species is profiteering by billionaires, oil companies, logging interests, mining billionaires, and so on, who threaten the entire earth with their greed.

CEOs are the prime disease now afflicting the earth. As Corporations are defined as legal persons, while not being held responsible for anything. Animals are not defined as legal persons, even though they are much more so than abstract corporate structures,--- they are legal 'things', so they can be used and abused nearly endlessly.¹²⁴⁸ This is unethical. BP executives pollute the entire Gulf of Mexico and the Mississippi Delta and largely get away with it because congress is too weak and bought off and so will not address corporate

¹²⁴⁷ On Orca population decimation see <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/09/science/orcas-whales-endangered.html?hp&action=click&pgtype=Homepage&clickSource=story-heading&module=second-column-region®ion=top-news&WT.nav=top-news>

¹²⁴⁸ Corporations and various religions have set up the idea of entities that are not beings defined as legal persons, such as Corporations, Hindu idols, or the holy books of the Sikh religion. These are absurd constructions, but animals, who have many aspects that are more developed than humans, are not given personhood, when obviously an Otter, Chimp, Dolphin or Raccoon is a person by any reasonable definition. These would have rights, and gods are corporations should not, they are merely constructions of elaborate linguistic or legal rhetoric.

crime sufficiently enough to stop it. This also is unethical. Apple computers pays its workers less than 10% of its earnings, having little or no profit sharing, making the CEOs richer than Louis the 14th.¹²⁴⁹ China makes many of the Apple products and there are no independent labor unions allowed in China, insuring immunity to corporate CEO's. There are few environmental restrictions, so American corporations, like Walmart, Apple and others can exploit workers almost like slaves. Therefore, there is real concern about corporate science, they have restored the slave system in the name of market fundamentalism.

Corporations in the coal and oil industries flood the market with advertisements that support rightwing politicians and which attack government bodies that impose environmental regulations that these polluting and 'fracking' companies do not like. They help create global warming, killing of species and harm to the planet. The science that supports environmental regulation is attacked as well. Anti -science arguments are used to hide corporate abuse and insure profits. We need a socially responsible and ethical science, as well as ways of regulating and punishing CEO who profit from such abuses and lies. We need more watchdogs to monitor corporate science. Bogus scientific papers appear

¹²⁴⁹ An investigation of ten supplier Samsung factories in China who work for Apple corporation showed that Apple corporation is guilty of egregious violations of workers' rights. Among them are exhausting working conditions. Almost all factories require most workers to work standing for the entirety of their shift, including during regular overtime shifts that last 11 to 12 hours. Workers have jumped to their deaths, and are threatened with termination if they talk. There was also found to be a 'lack of any effective complaint mechanisms, unfair and unreasonable rules, inhumane treatment of workers, lack of worker safety, and employment of children.' In addition the factory is basically a a work concentration camp with workers required to live on site, eat in compmay cafeterias, buy I compmay stores etc.
<http://www.chinalaborwatch.org/report/64>

in peer-reviewed journals actually written by academic hacks, paid by corporations to deny the facts and perpetuate corporate profits.

With the rise of science, charlatan priests and wizards lost their jobs or their jobs got much harder. They want their jobs back and fight mightily to discredit science with mystifications and lies. The job of debunking pseudo-science and phony metaphysicians is never ending. Guenon and other religious writers know little about science. He only knew that their role was diminished by it and they fight hard to promote pseudo-science by any means necessary. Dogma produces reactionary Inquisitors and 'witch-hunters', not impartial scientists who weigh actual evidence. Guenon attacks pseudo-religions like Theosophy, a cult he had himself been a member of through Encausse and is wrong in many of his criticisms. Guenon's own bogus theories are no better and probably even worse than Blavatsky.¹²⁵⁰ He supports 'orthodox religions' without any understanding that orthodoxy itself is a fictional concept, mere undemonstrated dogma passed down as fact. He hated science and tries to use his hatred of it to exalt defunct elite classes. In the end it is obvious that Guenon was a quack and his followers dupes of a charlatan.

There is certain friendliness between traditionalism and corporatism, since corporations are not beholden to the scientific method and peer review but only to profit and the market. Religion can help sell things and ignorance is desirable to those who dislike an open society where anything can be questioned. This can be seen in the career of Hossein Nasr and his son. Papa Nasr fawned and courted the Shah of Iran and his wife and then when the Shah fell under the weight of his own corruption, Nasr started fawning up the power structure United States, seeking influence among Republicans in Washington D.C.. He

¹²⁵⁰ Richard Smoley pokes some fun at Guenon's rather absurd attacks on Blavatsky, who he is so much like in some many ways--- in an essay that makes both Guenon, Blavatsky and Smoley look rather silly, with their beliefs in "psychic corpses" and transmigrating souls though animals and other nonsense of this kind. See <http://www.theosophical.org/publications/1696>

also has courted Prince Charles of Britain, helping turn this parasitical and inept prince into a born again traditionalist, as it were. Nasr's son now advises reactionary administrations in the U.S. government, no questions asked about his father's immoral and theofascist past. ¹²⁵¹

Many Sufi groups, Zen monasteries, or Taoist groups exercised just this sort of sycophantic relationship to the upper classes of the kings and princes of old. Religion is mostly the mythos that supports the injustices of the upper classes or the belief system that accustoms the poor to their suffering. Religion tries to make the poor used to being ripped off by the rich. "the poor we always have with us" the mythic Christ is supposed to have said. The way to stave off revolution, the rich think, is to habituate the poor to early death and sickness, hunger and poverty. Feed them sports and lotteries, 'bread and circuses', T.V., computer games and gadgets, as well as myths and religions to keep them quiet. Let the women read escapist novels and the men compete over who knows the most football players names.

Corporations imitate religions and seek to imitate the aristocrats of old. Corporations claim, falsely to be "persons" and have the rights of persons. ¹²⁵² However, of course a corporation never dies like a real

¹²⁵¹ At one point in 2015, I received various letters from anonymous people claiming crimes committed by Nasr. There was no evidence for these crimes, so it appeared it might be a hoax, perhaps meant to entrap, or perhaps meant to slander Nasr, I never knew which. Internal evidence suggested the claims came from inside the Nasr or Schuon cults themselves. In either case, it suggested corruption in the Schuon and Nasr groups. I reported these claims to the appropriate authorities. Note: 2017. The same crimes are reported by Zachary Markwith, who was close to Nasr at one point. There may be truth to them, there may not. Someone with better information that I have should look into it.

¹²⁵² John Locke writes about the need to aristocrats to create a source of wealth beyond change. The idea was to create through capitalism a permanent and risk free market system that would insure that the rich stay rich. The early insurance companies were created to try to do just this, insuring slave ships from the frequent losses of sunken ships. Slaves were thrown overboard due to sickness in the middle passage. How could the rich stay rich when such losses occurred. The system of insurance was meant to preserve wealthy upper despite suffering caused to the poor.

person, so it is a quasi-immortal person. The corporate claim to be a person is a charade, a joke, a religious or mythical claim—an abstract claim. A corporation is not a person in exactly the same way that Christ is not a person: both are props, myths, fictions, social constructions that serve interests. The Supreme Court's claim that a corporation is a person is a metaphysical claim and virtually sets up corporations as deathless gods. This is yet another proof about how corrupt the Supreme Court is.¹²⁵³ This should be stopped. It subverts democracy and destroys equality, giving the CEO's and boards of these entities way too much power, which they inevitably abuse.

A little history of the ideology of corporate personhood is needed here; In the legal case called "Citizens United" the idea that money is speech, means only the rich can vote. That put Trump in office. We now have a corporate state, not a democracy. Corporations are authoritarian entities, and should be made illegal, and forcibly made democratic. Citizens United was created because an erroneous law born falsely out of Santa Clara County v. Southern Pacific Railroad Company. Corporate Businessmen sought to exploit the definition of persons spoken of in the 14th amendment which applied to ex-slaves—not to corporations. Corporations are not equal persons under the law. They are not persons at all. The judges in this case actually never said the corporation is a person, it was written into the record by a corrupt railroad man, who wanted to exploit a law freeing slaves for his own greed. The idea that black people were not whole people was an absurd fiction to begin with, making them whole persons was not intended to make fictive entities like

The real world incompetence and cruelty of the rich sought to inure itself from risk so as to create a caste system..

¹²⁵³ Another example is the abuse of the Second Amendment which states

“A well-regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed” The court has abused this by claiming the right to bear arms is independent of a well-regulated militia, when obvious, it is a very bad idea to let anyone who can by one own a gun

corporations persons. This is a horrendous abuse. Corporations are not persons and making them persons is now destroying our democracy in the Cabinet and policies of Donald Trump. Making money speech is a natural outgrowth of the original and grotesque abuse of making corporations persons.

The long term and abuse caused by the fiction of corporate personhood is endless and world wide. Indeed, most of the harms that occur in our world today, from diabetes related obesity to housing speculators driving up the price of houses creating a foreclosure crisis, to environmental disasters and global warming are due to the injustices created by corporate power and the myth of the corporate person.



Destroying Forests and Polluting the Air.

Photo by author taken in Eureka California, 2006

The ideology of the corporation has been installed in American law and government by big business. The support of academics, particularly economics professors, for the system of financial corruption is well documented.¹²⁵⁴

Schuon claimed to be a prophet of sorts- a ‘personality’ a sort of incorporated brand. And this is bogus too, just as Microsoft, IBM or BP claiming to be a being--- a metaphysical person--- is bogus. Christ being

¹²⁵⁴ See Charles Ferguson, Predator Nation: Corporate Criminals, Political Corruption, and the Hijacking of America.

a trinity is also a bogus idea, a fiction, for of the same mania for abstract magnifications. The purpose of the Christ image was to “leverage” the Church with the idea of transcendence. This magnification or ‘leveraging’ helped create the illusion of an infallible church or state that enables aristocrats to take unjust wealth and power. Schuon “leveraged” himself in a similar way, trying to piggy back on the god idea, making something out of nothing.¹²⁵⁵

Corporations often support a culture of nostalgic monarchism or borderline fascist governments, since CEO’s are granted the status of arbitrary dictators, who hire and fire at will. Jesus is the model CEO of imaginary “other world” who can put people in hell or heaven at will. Corporations have affinities both with traditional religious and imperial institutions and modern scientific or academic institutions. Guenon would say that corporations are too “modern” and “anti-traditional”, but actually they are upholders of conservative values in many cases. Both Guenonism and corporate globalism adopt a method of operation that is both transcendentalist and colonialist.. Guenon ideology allies itself easily with post-modern irrationalism, which is a sort of escapism. They oppose Vatican 2, which had real reform in it, which led to the Church in Central and South American adopting a real concern for the poor, which has led to real reforms of the governments there. Vatican 2 ‘liberation theologians’ much hated by Traditionalists, wanted to go back to the

¹²⁵⁵ Banks leveraged assets in the recent financial crisis and this magnifies both gains of banks and the losses of house buyers. Banks basically stole money from ordinary people to pay for their own corrupt dealings and then they raided the population further in bogus “bailouts”. They made a system of “extend and pretend” a quaint phrase for financial lying and profiteering. Religion is based on similar falsehoods, created to try to erect the ‘leveraged’ power of an institution like the Church or the caste system in India or the system of power in influence in Islamic countries like Saudi Arabia or Iran. These are all unjust systems of power justified by myths. Metaphysics is basically the intellectualized fictions used to do the ‘leveraging’ so that people will believe the delusions.

pacifist Jesus¹²⁵⁶ and to help the poor. In Nicaragua for instance the Sandinistas educated virtually the whole country and enabled millions to learn to read. The traditionalists opposed such praiseworthy things and allied themselves with corporate hierarchies which opposed Liberation Theology and thus any real help for the poor in South and Central America. By implication they also allied themselves with Corporate U.S. policy on land reform that would address the huge disparities in wealth in those countries.

It is interesting to note that one part of Vatican 2 was an effort to return to the original gospels notion of the rights of the poor – (the gospels also deny these same rights, ---“the poor you always have with you”, Christ says)) and this was picked up by the Liberation theology movement as a call to democratize places like Latin America. This is what Rama Coomaraswamy hated about Vatican 2. His hatred of Vatican 2 was totally political, a hatred of “democratizing tendencies”, as he called it. Chomsky likes Vatican 2 also for political reasons as leftist religion helped bring about human rights in some Latin countries. It is unusual for religion to have this positive effect. It hardly makes religion true, it makes religion useful in this one case,-- useful for human rights. Chomsky’s mistake is to support religion as a useful thing and question

¹²⁵⁶ The early Jesus, liberation theology held, was a pacifist unlike the Roman church after the 4th century C.E., which allied itself with the persecutors rather than the persecuted. It is this concern with the poor that made it impossible for the Trappist monk Thomas Merton to ally himself with the Schuonians, even after their effort of ‘colonize” him and bring him into their fold failed. Merton was a man of the left, not of the far right like Schuon. He did want to create an ecumenical movement to help religion revive when it obviously was failing. There is a book claiming he was really a closet case traditionalist, but this is a misreading of the facts. The traditionalists sought to expropriate him but failed.

I also doubt that the early images or writings about Jesus describe a pacifist are accurate. “I came not to bring peace but a sword” Christ is supposed to have said. Jesus probably never existed.: he appears to be a mythic mouthpiece for resistance movements to Roman rule and Jewish splinter cults, but then becomes a Roman creation, serving the state, so various cults can use humans as their symbol.. Paul is key in this of course, and the Gospels appear to be a response to Paul rather than background to him Christ later became a poster boy for empire. Merton is a champion of resistance and not tradition, the politics of the left and not the right.

atheism across the board simply because religion is useful in a few cases. ¹²⁵⁷

Wolfgang Smith is one thinker than has been prominent as a foe of science and a favorite of the traditionalists. He too opposes Vatican 2 and liberation theology, just as he opposed Teilhard de Chardin's attempt to take the backward Catholic Church out of the dark ages as regards science and evolution.¹²⁵⁸ He writes that science and Post-modernism are somehow akin, proving he knows very little about post-modernism or science. The main premise of post-modernism is that it denies the value of objectivity and thus of science. The idea that facts and evidence matter is science--- but the idea that everything boils down to subjective interest and perspectives¹²⁵⁹ is merely post-modernist nonsense.. Post modernism—and Smith is an anti-scientific post-modernist--- is an ally

¹²⁵⁷ There are other cases where religion is “useful” as in its occasional feeding of the poor in soup kitchens or its very occasional visiting of the elderly. But these useful endeavors tend to be soporifics for the great harm it does in supporting the existing systems that causing these same injustices. Those on the far right think religion should take care of social injustices while the far right should exploit anyone they please for profit. There are people in the Schuon cult who think exactly this as well as those at large.

¹²⁵⁸ I'm not a big fan of Teilhard De Chardin's ideas on science, which at best verge on a sort fantasy half based in facts, rather like the books of Annie Dillard that are part spiritual fantasy part nature meditation and who was influenced by De Chardin. Dillard has always struck me as a bit of a fake. But De Chardin understood more about science than Smith did, whose understanding of evolutionary facts is non-existent. The attack on de Chardin, is really a right ring attack on the Enlightenment and wish to return to a medieval form of theofascism. De Chardin was harassed and attacked by the Church for many years, persecuted might be the word and Smith continues this unjust persecution viciously. De Chardin's effort to combine Catholicism and biology just doesn't work very well. That is not a capital offence as Smith treats it, it is merely a result that is not very pleasing to anyone who knows nature pretty well. Dillard compares to Thoreau as a fake and a composite, so Smith, like De Chardin, is a crank, born to make up stuff he did not actually know. Thoreau is the real thing, he actually knew his botany, these others, hmmm, not so much.

¹²⁵⁹ This is a definition of relativism,, which is very rare. Science is not relativistic, in this sense. Science does deny the fictional “absolute” which really is a Hegelian or Germanic construction that Schuon, Guenon, Smith and others try to universalize. The absolute is a universalized fiction, a postulate, not a reality that anyone has demonstrated. There is no such thing, in fact, it exists only as a fiction.

of corporate ideology in that it encourages escapism and an alliance between inquiry and religion, very much along the lines of the fuzzy and inchoate Wolfgang Smith and Hossein Nasr. It is no mistake Nasr and Smith favors far right republicans.¹²⁶⁰ They are men who support repression and injustice, irrational creationism and social repression.¹²⁶¹ Corporations benefit from such religious escapism since it helps keep people blissfully ignorant of how the world is being raped by big business for profits. That is why so many business now encourage workers to practice Buddhism or why far right Catholics and Protestants are patriotic. Yoga and meditation are good to clear the mind and create a positive attitude so that one does not question corporate power or unjust profiteering.¹²⁶² Repressive institutions try to suppress independent and critical thinking. Science depends on critical and independent thought.

¹²⁶⁰ The republican party in America is the party of far right Christian and many Protestants and Catholics and is strongly the party of racism, the ultra-rich and the “anti-science party”, as the journalist Paul Krugman dubbed it. Not only do they ignorantly oppose the facts of evolution and reject climate change, as well scientific medicine in favor of quackery like the anti-vaccine movement or homeopathy. They oppose anything that big business opposes, even if it is an outright lie. The Republicans are the party of ignorant arrogance and injustice. The growth of their power since the Reagan administration threatens much of that has been good in American history and now threatens the planet itself through global warming.

¹²⁶¹ Once when I was visiting Smith he launched into a moralistic tirade against the pop singer Madonna. I have never been that crazy about Madonna’s songs, but Smith was livid to the point of really fanatical hatred of her, calling her part of the anti-Christ, a parody of the Virgin and a “whore”, and so on. It was clear to me that Smith was a man of deep and confused sexuality who had an irrational animus about this women he never met, but probably was attracted to.

¹²⁶² There is no really good attempt to critique Buddhism similar to Russell’s critique of Christianity or Ibn Warraq’s critique of Islam. Zen clearly has some fascist overtones in its militarism, endorsement of violence and samurai service to the authoritarian Emperor of the Japanese state. Tibetan Buddhism is also highly questionable in its totalitarian over-lording of the people of that area. It used cruelty extensively. It also is deeply misogynistic religion setting up a hierarchy of men. Victor and Victoria Trimondi have at least begun a critique of Buddhism, as in their critique of the Dalia Lama here.

<http://www.naderlibrary.com/shadow.dalai.htm>

The Trimondi’s discuss for instance the “Japan expert, geopolitician and Deutsche Akademie President Karl Haushofer. He emphasized the appropriateness of Shinto state fascism as a model for National Socialism. The German teachers of Zen Buddhism, Eugen Herrigel and Karlfried Dürckheim, propounded a link between National Socialism and Zen philosophy. Herrigel evidently joined the Nazi party in 1937. Schuon quotes his writings somewhere. He wrote Zen and the Art of Archery and Zen and the Art of Flower Arranging.

Science, when well done, is not about class interests and certainly it is not a spiritual ideology. Science seeks the truth in the physical and actual world. Any really good scientist does his or her work to study the earth or the universe out of objective concern. The gathering of facts requires a certain love, attention to detail, recognition of the rights of what is studied. According to the Schuon, Guenon and Wolfgang Smith and the Catholic Church, as well as the traditionalists, “relativism”¹²⁶³ is a denial of absolute truth, and this leads to moral license and a denial of the possibility of sin and god. This is a silly argument that has no merit. Sin is an anachronistic concept. There are no absolutes and all

¹²⁶³ I discussed this in a long footnote earlier in this book. There are different kinds of “relativism”. Some people confuse it with the theory of relativity or with moral and cultural relativism, all of which are different things. Some hate relativism and what they mean is they hate science because science needs no posit of imaginary “principles” to get the universe going.. Schuon hated “relativism” but was a moral relativist himself, however, and allowed himself all sorts of hypocritical license which would not allow to others. Of course sometimes those who say they hate relativism really mean they hate moral relativism which means they hate selfish behavior. But again, Schuon was one of the most selfish people I ever met so he allowed himself to be a moral relativist, taking extreme liberties for himself while denying them to others.. Schuon opposed the “relative “to the “absolute”, which is a false opposition or a false choice since there is no demonstrable “absolute”, though maybe gravity or the inevitability of taxes, are absolutes. Isaiah Berlin said not to “confuse our own constructions with eternal laws with divine decrees”. And this “is one of the most fatal delusions of men.” There is some truth to this sort of relativism, since people do influence the views of the world that they have. However, this sort of cultural relativism is limited too, as science at its best seeks to be adequate to reality, or to describe real things and facts. Reality is not a construction, DNA does exist and has measureable effects on organisms inheritance structures. When religions condemn “relativism” they condemn the “contingent world”, ---the world of things depending on other things. That is all the world there is and such a condemnation of the actual world is the height of arrogance delusion. To such people only the imaginary “absolute” matters, which means that only the imaginary matters, reality for them is a lesser thing. This view denigrates the whole universe, and sees it as merely symbolic. Hating the relative in this sense is perverse, destructive and malicious. For them it is the hatred of the actual that really matters. Hating the relative is immoral and intellectual suicide. This hatred of the “ten thousand things” or “original sin” is a mental disease that is common to all the major religions. Most thinkers who hate relativism, basically hate the world and want to posit an imaginary monotheistic or polytheists god or gods. Relativism is then hatred for all that is contingent or relative. It can be said that only the relative is real, and those who hate the relative world need to have their delusions deconstructed, their thoughts unraveled, their hatred adjsuted to reality.

that exists is “relative” and to condemn all “relativism” is to condemn the world of related things itself. It is this hatred of the relative that I object to in religions as it means a hatred of us and the world we live in.

Those who claim knowledge of the imaginary “Absolute” create a ‘relativism’ as a kind of evil which really is a hatred for all that is contingent or relative. The Relative is merely all that exists and really that is all there is. The “Absolute” is a fiction. To be a relativist in this sense is not only rational, it is the only real alternative to embrace with one’s whole heart.. There is nothing wrong with ‘relativity’. Everything is relative to everything else, in the sense that all things in the universe have relations. The religious hatred of the relative world is a mentalistic and delusional hatred which posits non-existent “absolutes” which denigrate the real world where we all actually live. The whole notion of “metaphysics” is really irrelevant to science. Indeed, metaphysics generally is a bogus area of study that involves projecting onto the facts of existence non-existent truths that are purely mental or fictional inventions. Science must resist such projections as a matter of course and embrace relativism as a virtue, which in fact it is, as is “reductionism”..

Of course when one really analyzes New Age hatred of relativism and reductionism a very different picture emerges. They hate these tendencies because they really hate science and wrongly blame the harms done by Big Science on science itself. The problem is capitalism,-- which is hardly science at all. New Agers seek an escape from the reality of life into myth and esoterism, aromatherapy, pyramids, cosmic consciousness, the Dalai Lama or any fuzzy thinking that will put them in touch with the “spirit within”. This is narcissistic escapism and is a great aid to the capitalistic expansion which wants no democracy, fairness or human and nature’s rights and wants to give all to the rich at the expense of everyone else.

Schuon and Guenon thought themselves great “metaphysicians”

which basically means they were great pretenders, promoters of a far right ideology, who lived lives inventing ideas about things that don't exist. Not only is science far more moral than religion ever was, it has much better results. Science is not at all opposed to moral concerns. On the contrary there is a lot of work¹²⁶⁴ that shows that ethics grows out of nature itself quite without any need for religions. Some of the most ethically minded people in the world are "atheists"—by which I mean naturalists, or reasonists,¹²⁶⁵ who are devoted to the actual, scientists, who resist delusional and irrational systems. I think of myself as a naturalist, in all these senses of that term, not just the philosophical sense, which is rather narrow. I also mean by it that I am concerned with nature and animals.

Many scientists opposed the nuclear threats of the cold war as well as concerns with environmental issues, many oppose corporate dominance in resource extraction or health care. Science seeks survival for all species, not just humans. When science is corrupted it is corrupted by power and wealth and the ideologies that serve these. Science is a good thing: wishing to know why plants flower or how to grow food better, or how to alleviate the suffering of the sick are all honest motives. When science has become harmful is because it became institutionalized and was co-opted to the interests of corporate, racist or

¹²⁶⁴ See Sam Harris The Moral Landscape or Marc Hauser's Moral Minds. This is a burgeoning new field. Harris and Hauser are two of many that are looking into the subject. Hauser has been discredited in various circles and resigned from Harvard. I'm not sure why. He was closely associated with Chomsky. But his book Moral Minds has some interesting ideas in it. Whether Hauser fudged some of his evidence or not in other domains does not affect what he says in this book. Hauser's book Animal Minds is interesting but rather limited to a laboratory understanding of animals. I don't think much can be understood about animals in labs. Animals have to be studied in the environments where they evolved. , Like Hitchens he seems to have some political views that support the state in the US. This deserves to be questioned. Also, see Darwin's Chapter 3 in *Descent of Man*, for a discussion of the evolution of animals and language that goes well beyond Chomsky and Hauser.

¹²⁶⁵ I heard a man use this term in the conference called Beyond Belief 2007 and liked it. I did not hear what his name was.

nationalist powers, or it was turned itself to the service of making guns, money and bombs. In these cases it is not science that is at fault, it is systems of power, or corrupt individuals.

Science and reason are the main tools that we have to deflate power. Post-modernism gives away science and re-embraces the irrational, acting as if the world were entirely the creation of our minds. Science is essential to understand what corporations are doing to our world. We need to be able to do science ourselves to study and defend our earth from global warming, pollution, destruction of habitats and environmental degradations of all kinds. The only way to limit the destructiveness of science is by use of the techniques science employs, namely evidence based inquiry sound logic, induction, deduction and accurate and empirical observation. There is no world beyond this world. All we have are these rivers, animals, plants and our own bodies.

The notion that "tradition" can do anything to address the environmental crisis, the ravages of inequality and over population is mistaken. Noam Chomsky's point that the environmental problems of our time

"are not the result of "technology," but of the institutional structures in which technology is used. A hammer can be used to smash someone's skull in, or to build a house. The hammer doesn't care. Technology is typically neutral; social institutions are not. To the (very limited) extent that I understand what is written about these matters [Post-modernism, "gnosis" Traditionalism etc.] in the literature you are referring to, it seems to attribute to technology what should be attributed to institutions of power and privilege, and thus serves to protect these institutions, by shifting attention away from them. I've often suspected that this service to power and privilege may help account for the warm reception given

to these doctrines in the ideological institutions, universities, etc.

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Chomsky is right.. Chomsky points out that postmodernists, ---and the traditionalists are an extremist wing of the post-modernist movement,--- are apologists for unjust forms of power. This is true of traditionalists and academic proselytizers of religion, like Huston Smith, Wolfgang Smith, Schuon, Evola, Arthur Versluis, Mircea Eliade and many others. As corporate example of this abuse of science is the Koch brothers. Greenpeace says that between 1997 and 2008 Koch Industries donated nearly \$48 million to groups which doubt or oppose the theory of anthropogenic global warming. Koch Industries is a corrupt oil and chemical company that has been trying to use their wealth to skew science in favor of their profit margins.

Keeping science out of the hands of the corrupt is a never ending task and can only be done with the cooperation of an educated society and an enlightened government as well as a university system not compromised by corporate influence. Chomsky points out that:

"there is no alternative to the common sense procedures that we come to call "science" as they are pursued with greater care and reach deeper insight: try to construct explanatory principles that yield insight and understanding, test them against relevant evidence, keep an open mind about alternatives, work cooperatively with others"

¹²⁶⁶ This appeared on ZNet, in a section called Science Wars, where Chomsky often replies' to questions See <http://www.zmag.org>

The question is how far we can go to allow diversity of views at the same time as we respect the common sense procedures of science. Paul Feyerabend, seems to think we should even include religion in such a tolerant allowance of diversity. ¹²⁶⁷ I don't agree with this----Stephen Jay Gould's notion of "overlapping magisteria" is false because there is nothing commensurate between the facts of science and the fictions of religion. But at one point, I even thought to study with Feyerabend in 1986. He was already gone from Berkeley at that point. Feyerabend was a gadfly and promoted greater freedom for science on the one hand and on the other he was a impishly dadaesque character prone to perverse jokes. I am glad now that I did not study with him. His notion that "anything goes" went too far. ¹²⁶⁸ Rather than making science better, I think we would have opened it up to all sorts of nonsense. Certainly science should be questioned, that is how science improves. But it is not

¹²⁶⁷ Feyerabend is sometimes read as being "anti-science". He is anti-science at the same time as he is pro-freedom, and sees science as a tyrant. There is reason to doubt the abuse of science, if not science as such, insofar as science becomes Big Science and rolls over nature or people in pursuit of weapons systems, nuclear reactors, military applications, drug therapies or medicine that do harm or other profit driven science. One writer says that Feyerabend "does not claim that science is dogma, but rather that science has become dogmatic", as does any ideology which gains an effective monopoly. Feyerabend supports liberty of thought, and this puts him at odds with those who insist that scientific reasoning is *the* superior mode of thought". Liberty of thought is fine, and the scientific method allows for freedom, but being wrong about or promoting nonsense is still nonsense. I think that science is the most reasonable form of thought. Feyerabend is often merely a Dadaist and joker, and sometimes a reactionary who plays into the hands of those who hate science and truth. In this he is to be faulted. There is no question however but that science is "superior" in the sense that it has real truth in it and not dogma. It does not make sense that one should judge how a car battery works on the basis of whether or not Jesus was born from a virgin. Religion is not reasonable. Make believe can never be equal to actuality and realism. There is no reason to include fictions in a reasonable way of thinking. It simply is not part of the question. Religion is irrelevant whenever the actual and the relevant are at issue. I doubt Feyerabend understood this. Indeed, he seems ridiculous to me in many of his arguments. But there was a poetry in him. The part of Feyerabend I liked was the part that loved ordinary life, as exemplified in his autobiography, which has a delightful picture of him washing dishes. I think science and ordinary life grow from the same actualities. They are what matters---the study of our world and the living in our world.. . but that means that Feyerabend's comments about science are more or less irrelevant and what is interesting in him has to do with personality and a certain personal willingness to play the jester to power. I have always enjoyed that sort of courage.

¹²⁶⁸ See his Against Method and Science in Free Society. Read his essay "Aristotle not a Dead Dog".. Feyerabend's philosophy goes too far and would import irrational ideologies within the reach of science, which is not a good idea at all.

possible to understand the world we live in by quoting archaic Hindu texts, promoting the Tao of Physics or creating secretive cults. It would not serve anyone to or perpetuate the myths and superstitions that were the engines of the patriarchal ideologies of past cultures. Unlike Plato, Aristotle has many interesting qualities, but that hardly makes his backwards and false views about nature and animals tenable today.

To take another example: Zen served the repressive and warlike samurai class in Japan just as it serves the New Age business class in the United states today. This hardly means that Zen is really a viable way of life for today. It just means that systems of myth and emotional manipulation are transferable from one culture to another. Schuon supported the Japanese fascists during World War 2, just as Martin Lings advocates that the Spanish Fascist Franco should be the model of the traditionalist dictator or autocrat . So too, Guenon's service to power and privilege is clear in his support of retrogressive religious and political views that would plunge us back into the Dark Ages of superstition and ignorance. Guenon and Schuon's rabid fantasies of world destruction merely demonstrate how much they hate our world and how little they understood nature. Indeed, both Guenon and Schuon reduce nature to a symbol, which is to misunderstand nature entirely. There is nothing symbolic in the Chambered Nautilus, the giraffe, the flower called Bee balm or the Inchworm. The idea of "seeing God everywhere" is not about nature but about a system of mind control that envelopes everything in the delusion of a god who does not exist. By reducing nature to merely a symbol the traditionalists not only degrade nature but women too. Women become merely a symbol in their system. As Byron rightly said,

“I’ve seen much finer women, ripe and real
than all the nonsense of their stone ideal”¹²⁶⁹

So it is about time someone write about the distorted and abusive misunderstanding and slanderous treatment of science by Traditionalists and others. The subject of debunking the full extent of the science haters has never been addressed adequately as far as I know. I cannot debunk all of it here either, but I think I can expand the critique of it further. There have been wonderful debunking’s of Creationism and the religions, but not of the sophistry of traditional hatred of science. Rene Guenon scoffed at modern sciences which have progressed and increased the knowledge of the world. He called them “profane” sciences, in the Crisis of the Modern World, and says “profane” science is only the “residues” of sacred sciences which been largely lost to us. This is utter nonsense. Guenon is a confidence-man who makes things up like any snake oil salesman. Astrology and alchemy are bunk and hokum and no amount of symbolist mystification can redeem them from the trash heap of dead and disproven knowledge. Guenon’s “esoterism” is fiction. Mythopoeic fictions and symbolisms are merely the unjust dross of former dictatorships and unjust social systems. What is actually being

¹²⁶⁹ Quoted in Kenneth Clark’s The Nude, pg. 488. I don’t mean to disparage the beauty of Greek sculpture here, which is amazing in so many examples. But Platonic idealization in the human figure is partly a Renaissance and 19th century fabrication. But there are various systems of knowledge where women are reduced to symbols and even when the symbols are ‘sublime’ the net result is to denigrate actual women, as happens in Buddhism, Hinduism, Catholicism and American fundamentalism. Another example of this absurd Platonism is Schuon’s idea of the widening of the chest, which he liked to do himself, to make himself look bigger and King like. Schuon thought he was a Monarch or Emperor too, some days. Kenneth Clark notes that this absurd widening of the chest was used in Roman sculpture of Caesars to make them look bigger and more godlike and Michelangelo inflates his figures in the same absurd way. All these figures are quite literally full of hot air. Politics is at the root of Michelangelo’s bloated figures this once again shows that religion and politics are two sides of the same coin.

The statue Clark mentions is of Emperor Trebonianus Gallus. (pg 485)

dished out of Guenon's gruesome kitchen is the slop and dross of former unjust systems of dead knowledge, the 'garbage' of caste and inquisitions, discriminatory and classist thinking, elitist and militarist fictions of the idle rich.

Guenon dreams of a fabricated and idealized mathematics or science that relates back to his favorite religious ideas. But actually math has evolved away from religion as it became more refined.

Mathematicians came to know that numbers are tools not a Platonic and metaphysical eternal truth. Guenon's idea of math is a useless and ineffectual fiction. It was dogmatic minds like Guenon's that stood in the way of real science. Guenon was a paranoid and paranoid people often project their worst fears on to what they hate. Guenon's hatred of science is a paranoid projection of his own twisted ambitions. The fact is that religion is what "solidifies" ignorance, it is religion that is trying to unsuccessfully "subvert" the good of science, human rights and democracy. The "Great Wall" Guenon invented in his imagination is really just the wall of ignorance, Platonism, religion and myth which he and his followers seek to impose upon others. Guenonism is romantic irrationalism and anti-intellectualism gone rampant. It is a system of archaic and elitist ignorance

Traditionalism is also a fundamentalist irrationalism. A good deal of the killing going on in our world today is related to religion and the ignorance it fosters. Guenon was wrong; the great 'dissolution' is not an approaching apocalypse, but rather the slow, welcome dying of religious superstitions. Guenon's fevered mind imagined existence of a mythical "counter-initiation"—a mysterious hidden force whose sole purpose was to oppose the superior forces of true spiritual initiation in the world. Of course, there are no "true initiations"—all that is mythology too. Guenon insisted that esoteric "initiation" into traditional wisdom was handed down orally by non-literary means. I have seen what this really means in the Schuon cult and other religions and it is bogus: nothing

worthwhile is handed down: it is all smoke in mirrors—make believe and empty ritual. All Schuon provides his followers are many “texts” and books, the six “themes of meditation” and the “alchemy” and in these ‘teachings’ are ignorance and narrow-minded superstition, as well as cultic thinking.¹²⁷⁰ The same is true of Tibetan, Hindu or new age Gurus as well as ‘born again’ cults. Mystagogical cults “transmit” or pass down “traditions” which are bundles of social instructions and “spiritual” fictions, illusions and make believe. The five times a day prayers of Moslems, the ablutions and other rituals, have the purpose of controlling minds and behavior and making sure that everyone submits, surrenders and bows to the same social forces, the same sultan or king, the same unjust dynasty of oil billionaires. These mental viruses, or imposed

¹²⁷⁰ As an example of the actual meaning of Schuon’s notion of the “intellect” and how this is really a pathological subjectivity it might be useful to quote something from my account of 1991. Schuon’s narcissistic notion of himself was reaffirmed one day in the 1970’s:

“ Maude told me that sometime during the late 1970's Schuon was praying the Moslem prayers in the apartment of Maude and John Murray in Pully, Switzerland. Schuon got up in the middle of the prayers to write something down, something she rarely saw him do. Later on she found out that he had been praying to understand the nature of the Prophet. He had a vision, while praying, of the inner nature of the Prophet as a constellation of six stars. These six stars were the six themes (purity, spiritual activity, contentment, fervor, discernment, identity). He realized the six themes were a spiritual portrait of the Prophet" and the Prophet was Schuon himself. As a result of this vision Schuon wrote the “Mystery of the Prophetic Substance”. This essay, as is more or less true of all of Schuon's writings, is self-referential.” In other words the cornerstone of Schuon’s spiritual method, the heart of his teachings is really just a subjective delusion, born of his imagination . “

Schuon had Vision of the Virgin in 1965 made him sure he was a great prophet, and was the son of the Virgin Mary. He writes of this vision conclude the that”

"On my way to Morocco in 1965, when I was suffering from asthma and feeling ill to the point of death - owing to causes of a moral order - there occurred.., the contact with the Blessed Virgin. This had as its immediate result the almost irresistible urge to be naked like her little child; from this even onwards I went naked as often as possible... A few years later this mystery came upon me again, and it did so in connection with the irresistible awareness that I am not a man like other men."

mental habits, prayers rituals and mantras are passed from one generation to another and this process is called spiritual method or 'sacramental' "initiation".

The whole mystagogy about "initiation" that Guenon created was farcical. He himself was 'initiated' into Sufism by Ivan Agueli, another orientalist pretender. Even if Guenon had been initiated in more 'authentic' way, it would scarcely matter, since the whole concept of 'Initiation' that Guenon cultured, as a central concept, is a fiction, a falsehood, a mystification, based on superstitious, magical thinking and ceremonial sleight of hand. There are no 'authentic' traditions passed down by "initiates", there are merely clubs of people—mostly men's clubs--- who pretend to pass down invisible spiritual 'essences' or states of being to one another. Actually nothing is passed along except nomenclature, superstition, social postures and delusions. Indeed the very idea of "essences" is suspect and muddle-headed. The "essence" of something is merely a fuzzy headed generalization about it--- an obtuse surmise made of vague definitions.

Having participated in Schuon's initiations myself, I can tell the reader that the whole process was pretense and mumbo jumbo, mere ceremony held by men in service of their own conceit. Schuon merely held his hand over my hand and it meant nothing at all. 70 people were there and they all thought it was marvelous, "blessed" someone said, but actually it was utterly meaningless and the whole crowd was deluded, including me. It scarcely mattered that Schuon himself declared himself "Shaykh" based on bogus dreams¹²⁷¹ and that he had no real "silsalah"

¹²⁷¹ There is an existing Dream Book that records the dreams that supposedly proved that Schuon was a spiritual master and all they really prove is the gullibility, delusions and obsessions of some of his followers,. These are merely silly irrational fantasies that suggest nothing so much as the gullibility of Schuon's followers, drugged into guru worship by ceremony, cult machinations and Schuon's wives and functionaries.. This is an absurd book that shows clearly the superstitious and subjective nature of the Schuon cult. Sufi groups of many kinds rely on just such fabrications of dreams an 'visions'. Maude Murray writes "I am the one who had the idea, and carried it out, of compiling "The Book of Dreams," which was presented to him for his birthday, on behalf of all

or authentic lineage to justify his claim to be a spiritual Master. Even if he had been a direct descendent of Muhammad, Jesus or Buddha themselves, he still would have been a phony. There is no proof that Jesus and Muhammad were actual people or later fabrications. The violent history of the major religions would suggest they were later fabrications .

Initiations are just so much mumbo jumbo, magical thinking erected into a ceremony. There was no spirit for Schuon to give to anyone, it was all smoke and mirrors and the illusion of reality. The notion of “authentic tradition” is based on hearsay fictions and bogus transference of non-existent and virtual “spiritual powers”. Guenon was right that religion is based on these initiations, but he was ignorant of just how bogus his own initiations actually were. Gods who don’t exist do not answer prayers.¹²⁷² Zen masters like to beat their students as part of their initiation, rather as College fraternities “haze” their followers. Ceremonies are events where all that takes place is that the participants delude themselves that it means something. Graduating from a university has real meaning if the student has mastered a certain body of real knowledge. A religious initiation is mastery in a vanity.

Like Schuon, Guenon cultured the initiation delusion very carefully all of his life, claiming ‘invisible spiritual masters’ to bolster his prestige and promote himself. Indeed this is perhaps the central delusion and purpose of his entire work. There will not be written records to document the content of ‘initiatic’ wisdom. The great claims to wisdom in Guenon

his disciples. One reason for my doing that was that I’d heard that if a shaykh dies, without appointing his successor, the fuqara will have dream-visions indicating who will be the next shaykh.” Schuon’s response to this nonsense was to say that

“I am beginning to think that I am a great man”. Actually he had already written that “I am not a man like other men”, claiming to be a sort of avataric phenomena, which he wasn’t, of course.

¹²⁷² In his book God Delusion Dawkins records scientific tests of prayer efficacy and the results showed that prayer does absolutely nothing for people. “there was no difference between those that we prayed for and those that were not”. (pg 61-66) IN other words prayer is a waste of time and it would be far better if people did something, anything at all, to get out of negative situations, rather than pray.

Schuon and Evola are really just pathological claims to fake “wisdom” . These were sick men claiming to lead a remnant of the world to apocalyptic health.

Like Evola, Guenon viewed these 'counter-initiatory' or "Satanic" forces as real, when, in fact, one man's Satan is another man's god, as Blake showed. Guenon saw gods, demons, and other imaginary forces as existing on many levels, “multiple states of being” of innumerable types, of varied, immaterial forms and varied intelligence. These angels and demons could act through individual human beings. All this is this is paranoid nonsense, adult make believe. There is no satanic force acting though anyone. There are no hierarchy of angels. Gods die, like all illusions.

Guenon is one of the last of the charlatan promoters of Big Myths of the Religions. His attempt to blacken science in his book Reign of Quantity and elsewhere does not stand up to the truth. Religious traditions are undermined by the fact that they are not true and this untruth has been demonstrated time and time again. Guenon's contention that Hinduism and its horrendous caste system is incontestably true is absurd. The idea that castes are formed because the moral actions of one's ancestors –their “Karma”----determined their low or high social standing, has no evidence to back it up whatever. The system of karma and caste was developed to justify and excuse the injustices of the upper classes. These and many other myths promoted by religions are slowly unraveling as people become educated and see through the charade.

Guenon's opposition to science arises from his myopic concern with fake initiations and imaginary counter-initiations, demons and angels, castes and gods. For Guenon only the Immutable is real. There is nothing in the universe that is exempt from change yet Guenon thinks

he knows better. ¹²⁷³ His notion that science is "luciferian" is extremely foolish, bigoted and misguided. It might be worth noting here that Guenon's name, interestingly, is identical to the rare Sub-Saharan monkey called the Guenon, which occurs in various species (Cercopithecus), such as the Red Eared or Moustached Guenon. It is a highly endangered monkey in many places. The opposition of the Traditionalists to the origin of humans in monkey-like animals is thus rather humorous, since the real Guenon is a monkey who evolved from other monkeys and sadly in need of our help. ¹²⁷⁴ Guenon hated the theory of evolution and rightly feared it, as it undermines all the metaphysical nonsense he believed in. In any case, the theory of evolution has enormous geological and physical evidence. The fossil record is worldwide and grows every year and the recent DNA record grows vast. Everyday facts are discovered that back up the theory of evolution. It is factual, enormous and intricate theory that is bolstered and proven at every turn and challenge. It is unassailable. Creationism has been proven manifestly false with more evidence pouring in every year against it. Indeed, Creationism has been proven mistaken so many times, it is a wonder anyone brings it up at all.

¹²⁷³ In Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power in the chapter called "The Revolt of the Kshatriyas," Guénon writes, "Among almost all peoples and throughout diverse epochs – and with mounting frequency as we approach our times – the wielders of temporal power have tried... to free themselves of all superior authority, claiming to hold their power alone, and so to separate completely the spiritual from the temporal." This is the basis of the caste system erected on a fictional notion of "immutable Being". Violating such a fiction is not wrong at all. But Guenon acts as if a huge crime were committed. The crime for Guenon is to bring charlatan metaphysics into question, which is hardly a crime, indeed, it is a duty.

¹²⁷⁴ Another member of the Shadhili Order of Sufism is an American turned Jordanese man named Shaykh Nuh Keller, a sailor from Washington state. An ex patriot, he is confused man who went off the deep end into religion after studying philosophy and not really understanding it, according to an autobiographical piece he wrote. He rather foolishly claims that that evolution cannot have occurred and humans cannot have developed from non-human animals. His justification of this view is Koranic fundamentalism. This man has been cited numerous times as a cult leader in Amman. But I know little about it. I only mention him here as another finadmentlaist creationist.

5. Louis Agassiz, Ananda Coomaraswamy and the Spiritual Fiction of “Virgin Nature”

One of Frithjof Schuon's disciples, John Murray, as well as Schuon himself, both admired the work of the 19th Swiss paleontologist and geologist Louis Agassiz (1807 - 1873). He was an enemy of Darwinism, early on, and believed that nature was god's hierarchical creation, and merely symbolic, and that animals manifested divine 'Platonic archetypes'. Agassiz thought that nature was composed of a spiritual taxonomic scheme derived from these basic prototypes. He also was a racist of the worst sort and supported the southern Plantation ownership of slaves against the northern abolitionists. Agassiz's ideas were firmly trounced by Darwin, indeed, as Darwin's Sacred Cause shows. Darwin's science defeated all archetypal theories, and this includes such theories as those of Plato, Jung, Guenon and Schuon. The nominalist contention that Plato's Eidos or Ideas were bogus generalizations was proven by Darwin. Darwin in way is a vindication of William of Occam. Darwinism also defeats decisively both creationism and slavery and all other caste systems point by point. Henry David Thoreau seems to be the first to really get that Darwin's idea not only trounced Agassiz but also Plato. There is no real difference between various races of homo sapiens. We are closely connected to animals. There is no reality to the myth that humans are a species apart from nature. There is no reality to the idea of caste. Caste, Platonistic “essences” and of the feudal ‘estates’ all wither. These were forms of economic discrimination that we have justly and rightly condemned.

Following Guenon and inspired by mistaken ideas such as those propounded by Agassiz, Schuon despised science. Schuon imagines, for instance, that “modern science is a totalitarian rationalism that

eliminates both Revelation and Intellect.” ¹²⁷⁵ Science is indeed triumphant over religion and metaphysics, but otherwise the statement is wrong in nearly every word. As I have shown elsewhere “revelation” and the “divine intellect” are bogus faculties that are arbitrary and imaginary. Science does not eliminate them; it merely pays them no attention because they are empty constructions of superstitious minds. Moreover, science is not even remotely totalitarian. Totalitarianism or “totalism”, by definition, is an arbitrary imposition of authority from above. Science is not authoritarian at all. Indeed if anyone was a totalist, it is Schuon and the transcendental worship of immutability.

The truth is that Schuon was a totalitarian. Totalism of all kinds are the exact opposite of science. Science is doubt generated, careful, evidence based gathering of facts from actual experiments, which can be repeated by others who might falsify or verify the conclusion. There is nothing totalistic about science.

I watched how Schuon acted as a person. His idea of the “Intellect” -- which I discussed with him at length on many occasions ---- was nothing more than the arbitrary subjective whim of a man bent on a totalistic ideology and an authoritarian world-view. He felt something in his body or brain and it must be true because the “Intellect” told him. He claimed that he could intuit matters far beyond others because his mind opened up to gods, or the esoteric principles behind gods. He was a rather lonely and pathetic old man, intolerant, irascible, and prone to excessive outbursts of anger. Being open to the “heart-intellect” as he called it, is merely being open to one’s own imaginative psychology. Revelation too, is merely a fancy reiteration of the subjective ‘intellect’, erected into a social principle. The fakery of the “Intellect” is well exemplified in the Koran where Muhammad has visions to justify his illicit desires for other men’s wives. Schuon had similar ‘visions’—indeed he

¹²⁷⁵ Schuon, *Light on the Ancient Worlds* p117.

was aping Muhammad--- that were merely bogus “revelations”. Schuon imagines that man did not evolve from the wonderful bodies of Chimps and Apes (actually, Lucy, australopithicus afarensis) but rather came from some undisclosed gaseous invertebrate from outer-space. Schuon writes that

”_Original man was not a simian being barely capable of speaking and standing upright; he was a quasi-immaterial being enclosed in an aura still celestial, but deposited on earth; an aura similar to the "chariot of fire" of Elijah or the "cloud" that enveloped Christ's ascension. That is to say, our conception of the origin of mankind is based on the doctrine of the projection of the archetypes ab intra; thus our position is that of classical emanationism - in the Neoplatonic or gnostic sense of the term - which avoids the pitfall of anthropomorphism while agreeing with the theological conception of creatio ex nihilo. Evolutionism is the very negation of the archetypes and consequently of the divine Intellect; it is therefore the negation of an entire dimension of the real, namely that of form, of the static, of the immutable; concretely speaking, it is as if one wished to make a fabric of the wefts only, omitting the warps.

These very ignorant, fictional fantasies of being “deposited on earth” by some alien god--- are asserted without the slightest proof, as are most of Schuon’s and Guenon’s pronouncements. This is “revelation” via the “intellect”. The dolman of the “Intellect” is negated by facts, Darwinism and science, as is right and good. The Bible, Bhagavad Gita and other religious texts are full of just this sort of nonsense, pronounced in oracular sentences. The notion of the Divine Intellect is bogus as I have shown throughout this book. The notion of man being a “quasi-

immaterial being enclosed in an aura still celestial” is delusional fantasy. Nature is nowhere woven of material wefts and invisible “immutable” warps. That too is Schuon’s fantasy. His notion of “vertical and horizontal” realities is merely Euclidean geometry misapplied and abused. His notion of Archetypal form is Neo-Platonist nonsense.

You can see Schuon disdainful repugnance for the actualities of nature though out his writings. He says for instance that “the evolutionary leap from matter to intelligence is the most arbitrary, the most inconceivable and the most foolish hypothesis possible, “¹²⁷⁶ ---a statement that shows a man who cannot appreciate how lovely it is that a butterfly evolved such beautiful wings or how a chimps deft hands speak of how human dexterity evolved or how bats can echolocate in a way no other animal can, except perhaps the platypus, that sees with its mouth or beak, as it were. Actual experiences of nature are foreign to the traditionalists—except when they “stand before virgin nature” like some dumb and raptured postulant. I saw this when I lived in Bloomington. All these cult followers prattled about “virgin nature” all the time, imitating Schuon, but couldn’t tell a woodpecker from a bat or a maple tree from an oak. Schuon’s own knowledge of nature was pathetic. I asked him what he loved in nature and he could not tell me anything specific.

Schuon only likes “virgin nature” as he always calls it, in language that shows he is a throwback to 19th century German and American sexist fictions about young damsel Native American Virgins in natural settings. ¹²⁷⁷ The idea of “virgin” nature is absurd, sex is a constant activity on earth, and none of it is ‘virgin’. Schuon thought, wrongly, that

¹²⁷⁶ F. Schuon: "Consequences Flowing from the Mystery of Subjectivity" Studies in Comparative Religion XI, iv, 1977; pp197-198. This is an interesting essay as it shows how Schuon divinizes his subjectivity. Whitall Perry rightly deduced that Schuon’s god was really just the apotheosis or abstracted “Idea” in the Platonic sense of Schuon’s subjectivity. This was true of William James too, as I showed at the beginning of this book--- indeed, religion is really the culture of subjective delusions.

¹²⁷⁷ This is a common motif in Schuon’s art

nature is an “Icon” and knew little or nothing about actual nature. In fact, Schuon’s thought is human centered and demeaning towards animals and nature. Schuon writes that “this inconceivable absurdity, evolutionism,... has the miracle of consciousness springing from a heap of earth or pebbles,” .¹²⁷⁸ Did we come from rocks and stones? What do you see if you through a microscope? I don’t think anyone in the Schuon cult knew much about microscopes or realized that, absolutely, consciousness grew from pebbles and stones. I am proud to have come from earth and rocks, Geology is an amazing science. Notice Schuon’s disdain for living soil and hatred of all that is fertile and bedrock on our planet. He denigrates the Cosmos, as all the traditionalists do. They love nature only insofar as it pretends to be a symbol of something else “beyond”.

Nature is not symbolic. Of course, earth certainly did not come from a fictional Zeus, Poseidon or Allah, as Schuon dreams. In fact, precisely what is amazing about evolution is that it shows that consciousness did indeed come from pebbles and earth. The genetic unfolding of an organism in the fetus is a bottom-up development. This is a fact that disturbs all those who want nature to be a hierarchy or “great chain of being” with gods at the top. But the fact is that nature and evolution are not a “top-down” hierarchical “blue print” but unfold cell by cell from the inside out in a process sometimes called “self-assembly”. ¹²⁷⁹ The traditionalist antipathy to biology is due to their ignorance of nature and its operations. Evolution is a self-development of genes and cells into organisms. Ananda Coomaraswamy had it totally wrong when he wrote

¹²⁷⁸ ..Schuon, Divine to the Human, p. 5-6.

¹²⁷⁹ For more on this see Dawkins, Richard. The Greatest Show on Earth : The Evidence for Evolution

Nature, for example in the statement "Art imitates nature in her manner of operation," does not refer to any visible part of our environment; and when Plato says "according to nature," he does not mean "as things behave," but as they should behave, not "sinning against nature." The traditional Nature is Mother Nature, that principle by which things are "natured," by which, for example, a horse is horsy and by which a man is human. Art is an imitation of the nature of things, not of their appearances.

AKC is mistaken. Art is an imitation of reality, not Platonic fictions¹²⁸⁰ and dreamy delusions from the Pre-Raphaelites that so influenced Ananda. Coomaraswamy was deeply influenced by the utopian nostalgia of John Ruskin and William Morris and the Arts and Crafts Movement of the 19th century. Ruskin is to a large degree a reactionary Platonist. John Everett Millias was right to question Ruskin, who he said, "theorizes about the vastness of space but looks at a lovely little stream with practical contempt"¹²⁸¹ There is no reality to the idea that nature is composed of "essences" and "appearances" as Ruskin and AKC thought.

¹²⁸⁰ Plato's taste in art was awful. Plato hated poetry, particularly that of Homer. What he liked was poetry that praised the state and as AKC says "and what he praised was the canonical art of Egypt in which "these modes (of representation) that are by nature correct had been held for ever sacred."" In other words Plato admired systems of mind control and an art that served the unjustly rich. This is pretty much where the theories of AKC go too. Plato advocates a theofascist poetry not too different to that of Muhammad. Poetry tends toward religion, as Nietzsche himself wrote ironically, in his *Zarathustra*, which is itself a very inflated poem. Nietzsche was aware that poets tend to create divine 'symbols and symbols are lies about reality. So Poets "all muddle their water that it may seem deep" and what the muddle is about is gods, when there are none. Nietzsche says, "all gods are poet-symbolizations, poet-sophistications." Yes, that is exactly the problem with poetry; it invents what does not exist and supports this non-existence with exalted speech. It becomes propaganda at same level. Jesus Muhammad, Rumi, Dante, Milton, and Nietzsche all created such symbolizations, false inferences, with the intended to deceive others, like Plato's 'noble lie'. "Poets lie too much", Nietzsche says. Part of the purpose of this book is to unmask some of these lies. Truth is more important than poetry and is some slight poetry remains after the search for truth, well, that is what has concerned myself in recent years. But this tends to express itself more in art than in language.

¹²⁸¹ Quoted in Cooper, Suzanne Fagence, Effie, The Passionate Lives of Effie Gray, John Ruskin and John Everett Millias. This is a very interesting book, and an excellent history of Effie and John Millais and the context of their lives.

These fictitious categories have been undone by science. The sentence that ‘art imitates nature in its workings’ comes from Aquinas, who got it from Aristotle. ¹²⁸² as Edward Crooks rightly said, “Aristotle cannot be said, then, to unreservedly support the theology, ontology, or philosophy of mind that Coomaraswamy theorized.”, Nor can Coomaraswamy’s theory of art be trusted to yield anything of value.¹²⁸³ Coomaraswamy misunderstood the notion of art and the “imitation of nature and its method of operation”, which is Darwinian and not spiritual. While I like craft and think that technology can be seriously misused, I know AKC was unfortunately skewed by Guenonian thought. When Aristotle was referring to physical and material workings in nature, he was not talking about Platonist of metaphysical dreams, which he denied. Ed Crooks concludes his discussion of Coomaraswamy and John Cage with this accurate statement. “Coomaraswamy’s views on Traditional society were a mixture of brahmanic elitism, Catholic hierarchism, and European reaction”. Exactly right: AKC is all about caste, dogma and theofascism. The Arts and Crafts movement made some great furniture and architecture, there is no doubt about that, and it helped restore the idea of well-made objects and I admire it for that, but AKC had little to do with that. .

There is nothing hierarchical about nature. Species are responsible

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¹²⁸² Ars imitatur naturam in sua operatione
: ‘art imitates nature in its workings’ (Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae [ST],117).

¹²⁸³ See

http://york.academia.edu/EdCrooks/Papers/1235766/John_Cages_Entanglement_with_the_Ideas_of_Coomaraswamy

Crooks quotes Partha Mitter (1984: 49-50) who concluded that “Coomaraswamy’s ‘particular metaphysical approach has stood in the way of appreciating the intensely human art of ancient India... The image of Indian art he thus held up was more a mirror to his own soul than to a tradition existing in India’.” Pg 80 There is truth in this. AKC was a narcissist. The metaphysical doctrines of India upheld and justified a truly horrendous social system and that still causing great harms and is slowly being dissolved and reconstructed.

for their own evolution. Richard Prum says, rightly, I think, that “Animals are agents in their own evolution,” “Birds are beautiful because they are beautiful to themselves.”. ¹²⁸⁴ This is evidently true as anyone who has spent a lot of time studying birds can attest. Gods have nothing to do with it. We made ourselves develop over the eons by our striving and reaching for new ways to survive and thrive. That is why the earth is so lovable and earth, sea and sky are so dear, despite the evident chaos and violence. Schuon misses the whole point of the wonder of being alive on earth and the wonder of being related to Chimps and Sea-stars. ¹²⁸⁵ The notion that what is perceived with the senses are merely shadows – not the reality of things, but only their appearances, is nonsense that derives from Plato. Coomaraswamy repeats this nonsense as if were holy writ. In fact, Plato despised nature as a “barbaric slough” and Christian ideology despised nature as “original sin” and without the ridiculous idealizations to which Plato and Coomaraswamy were prone.

Mysticism is opposed to nature in its factual and ordinary realities, the realities of evolution that produce cnidarians and harbor porpoises, ungulates and whales, for instance. The traditionalists are mostly

¹²⁸⁴ See NYT, Jan13, 2019

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/09/magazine/beauty-evolution-animal.html?action=click&module=Top%20Stories&pgtype=Homepage>

¹²⁸⁵ I remember one day when Catherine Schuon had me at their house—as she often did--- to do some gardening and I was clearing a little pathway just outside the back of Schuon’s house, between Schuon’s and Jones’ house--- and I found little seashell in the dirt. This little seashell proves everything Schuon denied. It shows that there were once inland seas 500 miles from the current oceans and that eons have passed since those Devonian or Jurassic ages, and, humorously, Schuon’s own land contained on it refutations of his anti-evolutionary ideology. I also found a beautiful iridescent skink on their house, and Mrs. Schuon had never seen one and was scared of it. I told her how lovely and rare they are in the east and told her she was lucky to see it. Once the Schuons found a black snake in their kitchen and claimed it was a sign from heaven that their cult was under threat or some nonsense, Actually it was merely *Pantherophis Obsoletus*, or the common Black Snake which lives all over the Midwest, which looks for cool areas to sleep. These people had little understanding of nature and a ready willingness to believe the most superstitious nonsense.

ignorant of nature and ignorant of science as are the religions in general. You can see this in mystics like Meister Eckhart who writes that

All creatures are merely nothing...I do not say that they are little or ought: they are nothing. That which has no entity is not. All creatures have no being for their being depends of the presence of God”

This silly willingness to see all nature as nothing—and “god” as all is typical of a mysticism that negates nature in favor of human centered delusions. The mystical traditions from Sufism to Negative Theology and Vedanta to Zen do this. There is no evidence at all that there is such a ‘god” on whom all Porpoises or Golden Tamarinds monkeys depend. The notion of god creating the animals is pure fiction. Animals are not symbols. They are self-existing species whose existence is largely a result of their own struggles and efforts to survive in the larger context of nature. This is not opinion but demonstrable science. Eckhart, with a typical irrationalism so often found in mystics, leaps to the unwarranted conclusion that “creatures” are “nothing” on the basis of a misunderstanding and a surmise. There is no evidence for this. Beings are not “creatures” and defining them as such already presupposes that there is a “Creator”. There is no evidence at all that animals were created by any deity.

No wonder Eckhart was favorite darling of Traditionalists such as Ananda Coomaraswamy and Frithjof Schuon, who also think that nature is “nothing” unless it is seen as merely a symbol of god. Schuon used animals as mere props and symbols. Eagles, Elk and Lions were supposed to be “noble” whereas other animals were of a lower caste or a “lesser archetype” as Schuon said on occasion. Schuon had no understanding of animals in actual environments at all. All Schuon knew about animals was clichés and conventions, stereotypes and

essentializations. In Schuon's various paintings in which animals are present they are merely badly drawn symbols of qualities that his idealized humans (namely FS himself) are supposed to claim as their own. So the 'noble' elk sits on a hill in one of Schuon's works overlooking a nude young woman. The elk is Schuon himself of course, posing as master of the Harem. Schuon thought he looked like an eagle, because of his big nose, which he tried to interpret perhaps too charitably as having raptor like qualities .

6.Darwin's Triumph Over Religion, Speciesism and Anti-Science.

_____ Paul Waldau's interesting Specter of Speciesism demonstrates how Buddhism and Christianity's view animals is false and denigrating as revealed in the language of their primary religious documents. He shows how these two religions participate in the moral error known as speciesism. He suggests that a more complete critical examination of the attitudes towards animals is warranted. This book is a rather weak beginning of a comparative critique of how religion has promoted the disparagement, denigration and ill-treatment animals across the millennia. A much deeper history of speciesism is sorely needed. Much more inquiry should be done.

David Nibert contends that the rise of cattle farming and meat eating corresponds to increases in violence and war and the denial of human rights to humans. The rise of the major religions as systems of oppression enabled large scale delusions to be foisted on populations by religions. ¹²⁸⁶ The horrible costs of these "civilizations" to women animals,

¹²⁸⁶ In H.L Mencken's excellent essay "Memorial Service", he answers the question about the whereabouts of the Dead Gods. He ends by saying that "All were theoretically omnipotent, omniscient, and immortal. And all are dead." If Zeus, Quetzacoatl and few thousand other big gods are not just dead, but never really alive, what can one say of Jesus or the god of the Bible or Bhagavad Gita or Koran? There are thousands of dead gods who never survived the culture that

and slaves is rarely counted. Christianity was horrendous in its abusive equation of animals with the body, the body with women and women with evil. This is true of Hinduism too. There is a misperception that because Hinduism protected a few symbolic species like cattle, that it is generous towards animals, but actually Hindu texts are full of speciesism, denigrating animals via notions of karma and reincarnation, --the idea that bad people would be punished by coming back as animals. The same is true of Buddhism. Buddhism upholds compassion as its highest value but excused killing people not Buddhist on the grounds they were “wicked men of wrong views” considered the equivalent of non-human animals”.¹²⁸⁷ Waldau notes that “the karma notion is built on the scaffolding of the logically prior notion of a hierarchy”.¹²⁸⁸ This is an understatement. The idea of Karma is a fiction not a “law” that has been built on prejudice that favors humans. The Buddhists create imaginary “levels” where humans are considered in a “privileged state”, beyond compare. There is no logical basis for this elect status and indeed, only humans think that this is the case. Darwin shows in Origin of the Species quite clearly that nature has no hierarchy and that evolution happens slowly over time from one species to another. There is no hierarchy of species. This is partly why religions tend to hate evolution.¹²⁸⁹

created them. They all were merely the fictions of yesteryear. Is religion evolutionary, no, no more than any absurd system of paranoid thought, or slippage of logic. They are merely the conmanship of former regimes of social control and power.

¹²⁸⁷ Quoted in Waldau pg. 288

¹²⁸⁸ Waldau pg. 283

¹²⁸⁹ In Christianity being “saved” is the fiction that grants elite status, all “profane” people being damned. In Islam it is much the same thing. In Buddhism it is being male that is the superior state, and on the way to enlightenment. In Hinduism it is being upper caste. As well as undergoing the spiritual exercises that lead to an enlightened state beyond the wheel of birth and death and

Darwin himself deduced from this that animals should have rights. While he was not a vegetarian, Darwin was committed to protecting animals from cruelty. His biography shows that he regularly came across cases of cruelty to farm animals. One biographer, Janet Browne, says that Darwin was a local magistrate in the Downe House area and he “was inexorable in imposing fines and punishment.” on those who abused animals. Adrian Desmond records similar things in his biography. Darwin’s son Francis Darwin writes of his father that

“The remembrance of screams, or other sounds heard in Brazil, when he was powerless to interfere with what he believed to be the torture of a slave, haunted him for years, especially at night. In smaller matters, where he could interfere, he did so vigorously. He returned one day from his walk pale and faint from having seen a horse ill-used, and from the agitation of violently remonstrating with the man. On another occasion he saw a horse-breaker teaching his son to ride, the little boy was frightened and the man was rough; my father stopped, and jumping out of the carriage reproved the man in no measured terms.”¹²⁹⁰

Adrian Desmond maintains, with a great deal of evidence, that Darwin’s theory has implications against slavery. Darwin came to understand the evolution is not hierarchical and that slavery is an affront to humanity. Darwin condemned Argentineans for killing Indians and Brazilians and Americans for holding slaves. He was clearly an advocate for animal rights. Darwin’s relation to animals is much more complex and nuanced. Various writers have said that Darwin favored animal experiments and

Karma. This is the origin of the idea of reincarnation, which itself is a fiction that put animals far below humans. All this is pious nonsense of course.

¹²⁹⁰ <http://thedispersalofdarwin.wordpress.com/category/huxley/>

see also Darwin’s [The Voyage of the Beagle](#), an amazing, sparkling and brilliant book that already shows Darwin’s early theory of evolution in a preliminary way with great detail and adventure. It also shows his anti-slavery and begins to show his growing opposition to the mistreatment of animals which he observed with horrifying detail in South America.

speciesism. But this is not true. He wanted to limit animal experimentation as much as possible while still preserving the right of science to make relevant and justified inquiries. Darwin went far to do this. Adrian Desmond notes in his books Darwin's Sacred Cause that Darwin was helpful in getting a Bill passed through Parliament called the "Cruelty to Animals Act of 1876" which limited vivisection. Darwin wrote to Joseph Hooker, then-President of the Royal Society,

"I worked all the time in London on the vivisection question . . . The object is to protect animals, and at the same time not to injure Physiology," and he had already enlisted the support of "some half-dozen eminent scientific men."

David Feller notes that "Darwin's attempt to enact legislation to regulate physiological experimentation was the action of an animal advocate attempting to work from within the scientific community."

¹²⁹¹ This is accurate, as Darwin was trying to find a middle way between science and animal rights. The fact that he tried to do this is certainly to his credit and makes me admire him more. Certainly he did not go far enough, as he advocated more killing of animals than he would do if he lived now. It would be a lot to expect of him to think as we do.

The 19th century may be the most lethal period of animals killing in human history up to that time, though the current advance of killing far

¹²⁹¹ See David Allen Feller "Dog fight: Darwin as animal advocate in the antivivisection controversy of 1875"

http://www.academia.edu/4707358/Dog_fight_Darwin_as_animal_advocate_in_the_antivivisection_controversy_of_1875

surpasses the 19th century.¹²⁹² While Darwin was alive 30-60 million bison were exterminated on the great Plains of America.



Bison Bones 1870

Ruthless hunting of Whales, fish like Whitefish, Sturgeon and Lake Trout in the Great Lakes, Beaver, African animals, and birds like Egrets are birds with rare feathers decimated world populations in the service of greed and hats for men and women. The feather trade alone did great harm to millions of birds: W.T. Hornaday wrote in out Vanishing Wildlife that:

¹²⁹² A restaurant called Foster's Bighorn in Rio Vista, California has 300 animal heads, which show well the toxic trophy hunting exploitive mentality of the time. This sort of trophy hunting machismo is very repulsive, My Dad took me there when I was a kid and I have never forgotten the repulsive killing that was done to create this place. I would like to see animal rights activists shut this place down. Serial killing by testosterone poisoned individuals like this needs to be stopped.

“From the trackless jungles of New Guinea, round the world both ways to the snow-capped peaks of the Andes, no unprotected bird is safe. The humming-birds of Brazil, the egrets of the world at large, the rare birds of paradise, the toucan, the eagle, the condor and the emu, all are being exterminated to swell the annual profits of the millinery trade. The case is far more serious than the world at large knows, or even suspects. But for the profits, the birds would be safe; and no unprotected wild species can long escape the hounds of Commerce. “ (*W. T. Hornaday 1913*)¹²⁹³

The genocide of animals is rarely talked about, but it is a continuing fact. But Darwin was more on the side of nature's rights. Darwin stressed the importance of the idea of “sympathy” as the root of morality. Darwin, like Jeremy Bentham, Thoreau or some American feminists in the 19th century, saw that women, animals and slaves all are beings and not property to be exploited by men for power or wealth. What needs to be done of course, is that the cult of the CEO must be stopped and the boards and shareholder system stopped or heavily regulated. Profits should be shared among all the workers and not go to some parasitical CEO who exploits them. People who profit from such systems will wail and cry when this is done, but it has to be done if the earth and its many beings are to survive. Things like long line fishing or the use of Drag

¹²⁹³ “At the height of “feather fashions” in the UK (around 1901-1910) 14, 362, 000 pounds of exotic feathers were imported into the United Kingdom at a total valuation of £19, 923, 000.^[3] A single 1892 order of feathers by a London dealer (either a plumassier or a milliner) included 6,000 bird of paradise, 40,000 hummingbird and 360,000 various East Indian bird feathers. In 1902 an auction in London sold 1,608 30 ounce packages of heron (including the great heron and egret varieties) plumes. Each ounce of plume required the use of four herons, therefore each package used the plumes of 120 herons, for a grand total of 192, 960 herons killed.” Quoted from Murderous Millinery
<http://fashioningfeathers.com/murderous-millinery/>

see also Barry Kent MacKay here:

<http://www.animalliberationfront.com/Philosophy/Opinionatedly/FurandFeathers.htm>

Nets should also be stopped, as must be the coal, Logging and Oil industries.

Darwin's views on nature and animals reverse the trend since Aristotle and the Bible that "Man" is the measure of all things and has the right to 'dominate' nature. Darwin concludes that animals and all natural beings are the measure of themselves and do what they can to further all their own kinds. Darwin's conclusions are really a revolutionary insights that are grounded in scientific fact and not myth. And the end of his life he was clearly trying to explore animal intelligence, and doing so in ways that granted intelligence even to worms and jelly fish. This is a point of view largely lost to today's corporate science, which is often speciesist in a way Darwin never was.¹²⁹⁴ There are now 1200 species now directly threatened with extinction and 21,000 who will soon be threatened with extinction is nothing is done to stop the current human slaughter and destruction of habitat, driven largely by human greed and self-centeredness.¹²⁹⁵

¹²⁹⁴ See the letters of G.J. Romanes to and from Darwin and Romanes' books on Animal Intelligence and Mental Evolution in Animals., both of which Darwin was aware of and whose point of view had his sympathy. Romanes work is sometime marred by his religious views, but he is worth looking at as he shows clearly how far Darwin was going late in life into the issues around animal intelligence and comparing animals favorably to humans.

¹²⁹⁵ This is according to CITES. See their Red List and Appendix I and II



The hatred of nature and women found in Hindu, Buddhist , Moslem and Christian texts was not part of Darwin's make up. The Pali Canon says that the "enlightened" man is one that can say "I never again will lie in the womb" ¹²⁹⁶. Such a misogynistic idea assumes that both women and nature are repulsive and to be avoided by monks and men like the Buddha. The misogynist fiction in Buddhism is that such men are imagined to be beyond birth. Few women or animals are shown in Mahayana depictions of "Pure Lands". Heaven or "the Pure Land" is a place of male fantasy and is a place of speciesism and misogyny. The truth is that no one is beyond birth and the whole mythology here is rife with hatred of nature, women and prejudice against animals. Mythologies structure social prejudice and how they do so is still largely unknown. The brain or linguistic structures made necessary by the structure of the brain seem to necessitate myths in the absence of a more though education system. Hence the importance of education...

The idea of karma in Buddhism and Hinduism contributes to the horrors of animal abuse that India and China have shown in respect to the illegal animal trade and the treatment of animals in general in those countries. The Chinese have largely wiped out the animals called Saiga,

¹²⁹⁶ See Pali Canon: Sn 1.2 PTS: Sn 18-34 Dhaniya Sutta: Dhaniya the Cattleman
<http://www.accesstosight.org/tipitaka/kn/snp/snp.1.02.than.html>

for instance, a deer like ungulate of the Mongolian steppe.¹²⁹⁷ 11 species of sharks are endangered due the Chinese mania for shark fin soup, among other reasons. Technology has given humans lethal means to kill off other species very quickly and a corresponding ethic that in not speciesist has not gained strength enough to stop large scale destruction off habitats and species that live on them.

Christianity is no better than Buddhism or Hinduism in respect of animals. Indeed, the Church Fathers are atrocious in their attitudes toward them. Augustine for instance writes that

Man's nature is midway between angels and beasts in such a way that, if he should remain in subjection to his Lord and with dutiful obedience to his commandments, he will pass into the company of angels, obtaining, with no intervening death, a blissful immortality that has no limit; but if he should make proud and disobedient use of his free will, and go counter to the Lord his God, he was to live like a beast, at the mercy of death, enthralled by lust and doomed to eternal punishment after death.¹²⁹⁸

This is a passage so ridiculous and full of delusory thinking that is it hard to disentangle. There are no angels and the allusions to heaven and hell are obviously meant to threaten. The prejudice against animals is reprehensible and undeserved, like a racism applied to species, hence

¹²⁹⁷ Chinese medicine is partly to blame for this extermination even though the horns have no medical value at all. Chinese medicine is a delusional system of remedies and quack diagnoses.

¹²⁹⁸ Quoted from Augustine's *City of God*, 12:22? in Waldau, *Specter of Speciesism*, sent to me by the author. Waldau has a whole chapter, "Other Animals in the Christian Tradition" on Church fathers and their rather atrocious attitudes toward animals. The same abusive comments about animals can be found I the *Philokalia* and elsewhere in Clement of Alexandria, Iranaeus, Justin Martyr and many early Christian writers. In the *Philokalia* for instance, animals are nearly always referred to as being equivalent to "corrupt animal body" or being 'passionate' like and animal. The equation of animals with evil, the corrupt and the shameful body are legion in Christian texts. All this is false. The notion that Christians have soul that is superior to animals is ridiculous. These attitudes have led to whole sale slaughter of animals. .

Augustine was a speciesist. Animals are placed in a constructed set of delusory inventions that are meant to control minds and hold them in subjection. Indeed the whole of the passage is primarily concerned with subjection. The main concern of much of Augustine is justifying the unjust power of the Church's in his City of God. He writes that

"Christ himself shows that to refrain from the killing of animals and the destroying of plants is the height of superstition, for judging that there is no common rights between us and the beasts and trees, he sent devils into a herd of swine and with a curse withered the tree on which he found no fruit.." ¹²⁹⁹

Augustine foolishly draws moral teachings from the superstitious fictions of the Bible, when in fact they are self-serving stories. What he shows in the mythical Christ of the Gospels was himself a speciesist. The Christian hatred of animals has its roots in this sort of fiction.

Aquinas says similar things about animals. He says that "animals are ordered to man's use in the natural course of things...Consequently, man uses them without any injustice, either by killing them or by employing them in any other way."¹³⁰⁰ This wiliness to cause suffering to non-human species is very disturbing. Such a passage must have appealed to Descartes, who was also cruel to animals.

In any case, another writer, Val Plumwood also discusses the fact that traditional metaphysical and religious systems like Platonism (and Hinduism by implication) tend toward an extreme sexism and speciesist denigration of women, as well as prejudice against animals, the body and nature. Plumwood goes deeper than Waldau, who is too religious in his

¹²⁹⁹ Augustine *The Catholic and Manichaeon Ways of Life* (The Fathers of the Church, Volume 56. Chapter 17 part 54.

¹³⁰⁰ Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 111 pt. 2, 112.

sensibility and thus excuses religions for some pretty horrible practices. Plumwood writes about patriarchal metaphysics in her excellent Feminism and the Mastery of Nature.¹³⁰¹ My conclusion is that sexism, misogyny, speciesism and prejudice against lower classes, nature and animals generalize across all the major religions: Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Confucianism and others. This confirms earlier research I did in the 1990's on symbol systems in general. Then I wrote:

“Symbol systems and belief systems are generated out of human needs and aspirations. What is believed in is not the important question. The important question is why it is believed. Why is there a need to believe in something? Belief, seen this way is nearly synonymous with desire. One creates and sustains beliefs out of need and compensatory drives. One must dismantle symbols and ideas into their motives and intentions. One does not want to suffer: therefor one believes or helps create and sustain the idea of an abstract and symbolic ‘god’ who is merciful and comforting. One does not want to die, therefore one's ‘god’ is immortal or one seeks fame and certain, total knowledge. One does not want to be betrayed by others, so ‘god’ is the 'Loving Friend', the Beloved, the faithful. One does not want to be weak and ignorant so the god one creates and sustains, or the god one inherits is all knowing and all powerful.....The desires that motivate abstract symbols systems can be altered, modified, negotiated or changed. [Therefore, religion is not evolutionary but is just a collection of myths and directives created by human desires and motives]

¹³⁰¹ Another book that addresses the abusive attitudes toward animals common in western culture is John Livingston's Roque Primate and his excellent attack on conservation biology The Fallacy of Wildlife Conservation. See also the work of Carolyn Merchant for yet another eco-feminist perspective. Science needs to be as open about itself insofar as real evidence can ring some of its basic assumptions into question. I think Plumwood and Livingston are right that science has been all too willing to be subservient to a male dominating and patriarchal perspective.

The symbols and institutions that sustain them are less changeable and easily turn into hardened sources of injustice, repression and cold indifference. The eternal realm of ideas is imaginary, but cultures have invested this realm with reality, usually by force of violence. Those who do not accept the forced imposition of systems of belief tend to be harassed or killed. Believers in symbols systems tend to demonize those that question the source of their power. Knowledge systems and the power they provide to individuals distorts these individuals beyond their ordinarily human state, creating personages of them they could never have been by themselves. Knowledge systems magnify individuals through institutions and the institutions generate far more destruction than would have been possible for a single individual. The value of human rights is that it is individual, concrete and resists the tendency of belief systems to become hardened into abstractions and institutions that encourage and magnify the commission of injustices.”

However, I came to realize that this analysis is not complete. The question of human rights leaves out how humans treat nature and animals. Thus, as Darwin pointed out evolution or natural selection are not really the cases of culture, as human mental capacity developed eons ago, rather:

“ The more efficient causes of progress seem to consist of a good education during youth while the brain is impressible, and of a high standard of excellence, inculcated by the ablest and best men,

embodied in the laws, customs, and traditions of the nation, and enforced by public opinion.”¹³⁰²

This means that human culture can degenerate pretty quickly if not maintained by sympathy, care of the poor and the natural world, and other such values. This means again that most cultural facts are easily hinged on religion, and religion, being a cultural creation, is not the result of natural selection, as Darwin says. One can see in American society, in the last 30 years, how sympathy has been largely suppressed and the humanities and the sympathies they teach are increasingly under threat by the forces of greed and CEO culture.

But this does not negate the real influence of natural selection. Judith Butler notes that feminists rejected the idea that biology is destiny, but then developed an account of patriarchal culture which assumed that masculine and feminine genders could inevitably be built, by culture, upon 'male' and 'female' bodies, in which she sees little difference. This is merely another form of human supremecism, this time privileging females. She goes too far to reject male and female bodies and biology as real categories, since these principles interact everywhere in nature, sometimes even in the same being. Some eels for instance turn from males into female as they get older. Male and female still exist even if they change. Butler is certainly right that there is heavy cultural conditioning, on this matter, but wrong to think that gender of sexual selection is not a fact of natural selection.

But that said, Plumwood goes deeper and notes that the same ideological, symbolic and economic systems that harm humans also harm animals and nature. The critique of systems of knowledge and power that is at the basis of human rights concerns must be extended to

¹³⁰²

<http://www.des.ucdavis.edu/faculty/Richerson/Cultural%20EvolutionDarwins150FinalMS%20version.pdf>

include a concern with animals and nature. Darwinism goes beyond the superficial humanism of Foucaultian analysis and cuts through all this metaphysical prejudice and bigotry and liberates us to pursue the search for truth about nature within the context of an ethical understanding of the word and the mind. Darwin's evolutionary theory implies both a radical rejection of religious and institutional dogmatism and a continuity between all species and habitats. Human rights and natures' right are joined in an enlightened Darwinism. This means that the health of our culture depends on education and sympathy for others.

The anti-science movement was already lively in Rousseau. He thought that science was a sinister power, and that 'savage man' was more moral than a society full of art and sciences. Rousseau claimed that science was a destructive influence and civilization was harmful to human beings. This is mistaken and shows he did not really understand what was involved. Rousseau was not too far from other anti-science thinkers such as De Maistre who thought that a return to the inquisition and the moral dogmatism of the Middle Ages was a good thing. The claim that science or atheism leads to immorality has been soundly trounced by Dawkins, and others, so I will not answer that here.

Guenon's ideas grow directly and indirectly out of reactionaries like Rousseau and De Maistre. Guenon's ideas are the basis of most of the absurdities written by the Traditionalists about evolution. The traditionalists, uniformly and with no originality, claim that is that the "the greater cannot come from the less", meaning that the human notion of god cannot have come from earth and cells. This is false, since in fact the monotheistic idea of a god is merely a few thousand years old and is only held by certain kinds of cultures that have certain kinds of hierarchical, patriarchal and unjust social arrangements. The god idea is a minor construction in the history of the human race. Darwin said that the "love of the deity is an effect of the organization of the brain" and this may be exactly right, as anomalies in the brain's structure appear to

have enabled humans to express themselves through language.¹³⁰³ But what is involved here is a misuse of the brain, not a factual matter, but rather a cultural delusion. Religion is at least partly a result of the peculiar linguistic fact of words being easily merged as abstract concepts and generalized into a magnified an artificial mental space without much testing against reality. How language works in the brain and how it evolved is still largely unknown. Gods appear to be partly the result of the magnified confusions of language misunderstood.¹³⁰⁴ Gods are a kind of mental slippage, or an illusion created by the abstract character of linguistic vagueness and over generality. Human pour their emotions into the empty symbols as if they were real.

¹³⁰³ Those who hate Darwin like to quote this as if he said something bad. But actually the brain is a marvel that is still little understood. The British brain surgeon Henry Marsh aid that the brain is “a mystery,..., as great as the stars at night and the universe around us”. This is not a mystical statement but an objective one.

The Greeks and Romans gathered some knowledge of the human body, but it was not till only 500 years ago that people started grasping elementary things about how the body/brain works. Leonardo was one of the first. Evolution made us rather dense when it comes to our own bodies. Religion deserves much blame for preventing inquiry about this. Much of what goes on in us is largely unknown to us. This fact explains why people have such weird and false ideas about the importance of human subjectivity and create bizarre and largely false notions of Chakra's, Galen's "Humors", or the Chinese notions of Chi (Qi) meridians or Channels. These superstitious ideas dominated medicine for millennia. While Taoists or New Agers still believe this nonsense, there is no doubt it is nonsense. Now that they are supplanted, we begin to grasp that the mind is the brain and that the complex relation of mind and body is still only in its infancy as knowledge. The understanding of animal bodies is also in its infancy, though it is clear that we have much more in common with them than we knew until recently, as the speciesism inherent in religion and science have permitted to understand. Chinese medicine has helped decimate animals populations like the Saiga, the Sun Bear, Sharks and many others.

¹³⁰⁴ A lot of religion results from the fallacy of misplaced concreteness. For instance the idea of being refers to mere existence which we all possess, worm to man. But Being, as such, is an abstract idea, which doesn't actually exist, but the concept seems real, because we can think it. Actually it is merely a fiction created by abstracting the idea of existing from the beings that actually do exist. Existence is not an actuality but merely an abstract concept. There is no such things as “Being” in an abstract sense,, there are only beings who exist. Religions grow partly form just this sort of confusion. Heidegger in particular thrives on the confusion of Being and beings. But even the bible is full of this sort of nonsense as when god defines himself to Moses and says that “ I Am That I Am” this notion that being is its own justification and causes its own existence is ludicrous. The whole of Judeo Christian metaphysics stems from this play on concepts and words. Religions get created by just this sort of abstraction inherent in misunderstood language.

Therefore, Guenon was wrong, the god idea is not “greater” than the facts of evolution. On the contrary, the god idea is a created fiction, serviceable to certain sorts of social arrangements—it is just an infinitesimal part of evolution if it is part of it at all, strictly speaking. It is merely a cultural fiction created to sustain certain types of societies in certain settings. The fossil and DNA record is increasingly clear on the origin of species. It is very exciting each time new bones are discovered in the Rift valley or elsewhere in Africa or New dinosaur birds re discovered in China or another continent ¹³⁰⁵ The Traditionalists absurd writings on evolution ultimately underscore the shallow anti-intellectuality of the Traditionalists and their inability to understand or be open to direct evidence.

In Reign of Quantity Guenon bases his understanding of nature on the arcane Scholastic idea of essence. He says that

“the explanation of things must proceedfrom the essential side [of things]... this is equivalent to saying that every explanation must proceed from above downwards and not from below upwards and this observation has special relevance at this point, for it immediately give the reason why modern science actually lacks all explanatory value”

What Guenon is really saying here is that he is on a witch hunt against Darwin, as are all the traditionalists. He is saying any truth about reality

¹³⁰⁵ There are thousands of such “missing links” that turn up frequently. Recent examples are the amazing early bird/reptile fossils found in China. Hans Thewissen has identified a series of intermediate fossil ‘links’ documenting whale’s dramatic evolutionary transition from land to sea. The Cleveland Museum of Natural History recently discovered another link in the chain of early apes between chimps and homo sapiens. There was Ardi who is 4.4 million years ago and then Khadanoomoo, who was 3.6 million years ago. There are other australopithicus afarensis fossilized bones that have been found. These exciting areas in modern biology and paleontology, but there are untold areas of other sorts of research opening up new and expanding areas for science all the time.

must be dictated by dogma, by theology and metaphysics, and physical evidence, science (“from below”) must be ignored or rejected. The ‘spatial symbolism’ employed here is bogus. The idea of below and above are fictitious. The notion of a “vertical” hierarchy of values, an up and down to reality is purely imaginary. There is no god “up there” nor is the physical world ‘down there’. All that is adult make believe. Up there is our sun and the milky way out to Andromeda galaxy and Quasars. “Down there” is our earth, fertile top soil, generous plants, the mantle, plate tectonics, paramecia and our beloved earth.

So the followers of Guenon go on repeating his nonsense as if it actually said something real, when he merely fudged and fiddled with words to create a charlatan’s view of reality. Hossein Nasr has written that “an 'ism' of great danger to Islam... is Darwinism,”. Yes, Darwin has already defeated Nasr and Islam. Nasr and his son Vali, who thinks the same nonsense, just have not figured it out yet. Science has been invading Islamic countries for some time and they are allowing experiments, free thought and open inquiry. I am not sure about conservatives in the medieval schools of Qum, Cairo and Mecca, where the clerics reign. Many appear to be quite reactionary. Yet, staunchly backwards, Hossein Nasr, a fearful and defensive author, defends Islamic creationism by saying

"let me say at the beginning that I have studied not only physics but also geology and paleontology at Harvard, and so it is with this background that I reject the ordinary understanding of the Darwinian theory of evolution even on scientific grounds. "

This is just means he has not studied it, actually. He misunderstood it. Only an ideological fanatic could reject the overwhelming evidence for evolution. Nasr merely shows what an ignoramus he is about physics, geology and paleontology, as well Darwin. His writings show he just did not learn much of anything in his studies. He is another one on a witch-hunt against Darwin and science. Nasr once told me on the phone that he is a man "on a mountain top", and that he understands things most people do not. Yeah, right. In fact, he is a man on a tiny mountain in a deep abysmal chasm of pretence among other blustering poseurs. Nasr understands very little. He believes in the discredited ideology or "intelligent design". Nasr has no idea what he is talking about and merely mouths the same defeated creationism that all the traditionalists parrot back and forth to each other. Darwin himself rejected Intelligent design when he wrote

"The old argument of design in nature, as given by Paley, which formerly seemed to me so conclusive, fails, now that the law of natural selection had been discovered. We can no longer argue that, for instance, the beautiful hinge of a bivalve shell must have been made by an intelligent being, like the hinge of a door by man. There seems to be no more design in the variability of organic beings and in the action of natural selection, than in the course which the wind blows. Everything in nature is the result of fixed laws.¹³⁰⁶

None of the traditionalists has any real knowledge of nature, biological science or evolution, I got to know these men pretty well, and they don't know much about nature or evolution at all, they merely puff themselves up and repeat dogmatic arguments that stem from Plato,

¹³⁰⁶ *The Autobiography of Charles Darwin* pg 87

Guenon, Schuon, Agassiz and others. Martin Lings for instance utters the incredibly ignorant statement that it is almost “certain that man did not evolve from some lower animal.” ¹³⁰⁷ I knew Lings well enough to know that he had no scientific education or understanding at all. Rama Coomaraswamy writes in the same ignorant vein, indeed all these writers write the same nonsense over and over, repeating each other’s falsehoods: Rama writes:

“Evolution is of course quite absurd from both the scientific and philosophical viewpoint. From the scientific viewpoint: not only is there absolutely no proof in favor of evolution, but all the evidence is against it. Geology, biology, mathematics, genetics and all the other scientific disciplines speak to the fixity of the species, the impossibility of chance and the absurdity of transformism. No intermediary forms between species has ever been found. There is much talk of "missing links." The problem with missing links is that they are missing! To believe in evolution is to believe that the greater can come out of the less” ¹³⁰⁸

The ignorance of these statements is really staggering. Not only are there incredibly amounts of evidence for the origin of the human species in animals, there is more and more every year. One species has transformed itself over time into other species. There are thousands of “intermediate” species, more found all the time, so the notion of “missing links” is really just a misunderstanding that the fossil record, in fact, is

¹³⁰⁷ The Transformist Illusion by Douglas Dewar. Review by Martin Lings. Lings approved of the discredited ideas of Dewar as do most of the traditionalists.

http://www.studiesincomparativereligion.com/Public/articles/review_of-The_Transformist_Illusion.aspx Book Reviews

¹³⁰⁸ <http://www.the-pope.com/tracultc.html>

more and more complete every year. Our evolution from a common ancestor means that evolution is a slow process of change in which there is never a leap, but rather just slow change from one species to another. One cannot say at which point this Californian Salamander, (*Ensatina eschscholtzii*) , who evolved as the migrated from northern California, following the mountain chains on both sides of the San Joaquin valley. The eventually became by a different species, after millions of years. It is not exactly a 'ring' species, but it is close to being one and shows a great deal about how complex evolution can be. There are countless such demonstrations that show concretely how the Darwinian theory is true.

There are also the amazing finds of new dinosaur fossils in China, which prove birds came from dinosaurs. Just a few years ago, in 2011 paleontologists turned up, *Ardi*, a common ancestor linking humans and apes. She is 4.4million years old. The work of Dr. Hans Thewissen on whales is quite extraordinary too. He has found many links in the tree leading to whales of *Pakicetus* to *Ambulocetus* and *Sperm Whales*. There is amazing proof here. One need only look at the evolving back legs of whales to see that indeed they were once land animals. The back legs become useless and detach from the spine over millions of years of fossils and still exist as relics inside contemporary whales. I found in none of these traditionalists any real understating of plants or animals or any deep understanding of the sciences. They oppose what they do not understand and write about it with uniform and dogmatic ignorance.

Religion is still alive, but only in the sense that delusions still live in one who is insane. Zaiuddin Sardar has written that religion has been largely superseded by science and that the altercations between science and religion is

“ not merely philosophical debates; these are real-life issues forcing human beings to make choices which affect the most fundamental aspects of existence.”... “Modern science has created a belief system in which there is no room for the Divine. This belief system comes with its own values and ethics and attempts to create a Weltanschauung parallel to and in competition with the religious worldview.”

But this shows a deep misunderstanding of the facts.. Science is not merely a “belief system” and science and religion are not at all “parallel”. If science is white, and religion is black, it is not at all a matter of seeing things in too black and white terms, but in the fact that religion is merely an absence of light, ironically, there is no reality there. So there is only white and the absence of white. Religion cannot possibly compete with science on any subject. Sardar is too ambiguous about science. For him, evidently, science is not an objective phenomenon or activity but a cultural activity.¹³⁰⁹ He still wants to make science comply with the Koran, which it will never do and be real. He is still implying religion has some ultimate reality when it does not. He tries to lessen the facts of science, which are not merely subjective “beliefs”. Science is objective in most of its operations and facts gathering. Sure science makes mistakes and is incomplete, but this is because it is an ongoing investigation, not a dogma or a finished thing. This the beauty of it. The attempt to defend religion is bound to fail, whatever quarter it comes from. The only justification for religion that has some credence is the notion that some people find comfort in the delusions, this is true, they do. Religion

¹³⁰⁹ Stephen Jay Gould took a similar position. Gould was an evolutionist, but at the same time he honored religion. His essay “Non-overlapping Magisteria” suggests that his Darwinian understanding of biology is very weak. It is hard to imagine how he came to that conclusion. Also, in the end I think this ambiguous equivocation may have made his science likewise questionable. I speak more of this in an essay called “Chomsky’s Cartesian Speciesism”.

supplies a certain opiate comfort. This cannot be denied, but in that case, religious books should be sold at the pharmacy and not taught to college kids, except as part of myth and fiction.

There are various anti-science screeds by the traditionalists: besides Wolfgang Smith's, Cosmos and Transcendence as well as his Teilhardism and the New Religions, and his more recent The Wisdom of Ancient Cosmology there are these: Titus Burckhardt's essay "Traditional Cosmology and the Modern World" Guenon's essay "Sacred and Profane Science" as well as his Reign of Quantity, Martin Ling's Ancient Beliefs Modern Superstitions as well as writings by Schuon, Whitall Perry and Seyyed Hossien Nasr. All these men, (yes, all men, no women) have all written absurd, silly and empty denials of evolution, all of them making more or less the same discredited claims as Dewar, indeed, most of them inspired by Dewar. They all pretend to show how traditional ("sacred") science tied its knowledge to a 'higher spiritual reality'--- which does not exist and which required priests to administer. Guenon sums up their case when he says

"Modern science, arising out of an arbitrary limitation of knowledge within a certain particular order which is indeed the most inferior of all, namely that of material or sensible reality, has as a consequence forfeited all intellectual value, so long that is to say as one uses the word intellectuality in all the fullness of its true meaning and refuses to participate in the 'rationalist' error, or to reject intellectual intuition, which amounts to the same thing."

First look at the language. It is easy to unpack. This is typical Guenon. The phrase "within a certain particular order" is gobbledygook. It means, in his lexicon, that that are other states of being, angels, gods and so on up to "Beyond Being" – but all this make believe is left out, and Guenon

doesn't have to explain it: his followers accept this nonsense. He is really talking about the inventions of superstitious minds, which he rides his thought on as if on a roller coaster of mind made delusions. But angels, 'Beyond Being' and Guenon's other "multiple states" are all fiction, yet Guenon always speaks as if such nonsense were fact when in fact it is – well---let's call it gobbledygook.

Now, next look at the use of the word "inferior". What he is saying is that the sensible order – that is your life, your mother, your eyes, your children, your earth, home, even the trees in your back yard and the food you eat—indeed, everything that really matters ---is less than the order of gobbledygook. He is saying that all that you are, and all your children are and the world you live in, is based on this utterly empty, elitist and world-demeaning gobbledygook. What matters he says is the fiction making "Intellect" which no one has proven exists and which is merely a postulate of the superstitious mind. He concludes that "modern science.... has as a consequence forfeited all intellectual value". Excuse me? "Intellectual value" here means the value of gobbledygook.

Science has merely forfeited Guenon's delusional use of his mind. And thank goodness for that...Science has striven to help human lives, and has done more than any knowledge system to help human life, ever. There has been no progress of any real value on earth that did not have its origin in some sort of science like basis in inquiry and experience. What did Guenon do to help anyone? Nothing at all....He sat in Cairo destroying the world in his heated and paranoid imaginings. His whole argument against evolution is based on bad logic and false premises!

...Guenon's hatred of the sensible and material is of course the source of the misogyny that visits all the traditionalists in varying degrees. For them women are 'matter' as opposed to "form"—they take Plato's archaic archetypal ideas seriously. The dislike of the earth and prejudice in favor

of vague “intellectual intuition”¹³¹⁰ makes the traditionalists into mystical romantics. Bent of plying their esoteric ware as if it were reality when in fact it is merely fiction. If you carefully follow out their arguments you find that they have nothing with which to replace science. Schuon tries to replace science with his penis, which was supposed to “heal the wombs” whatever than means. They were not wounded, to begin with. Rama Coomaraswamy wanted to replace science with little white Catholic wafers that are not even nutritionally useful. A lot of good that has ever done humanity. Guenon thought you should escape into an orthodox religion and let your mind atrophy in constant prayer.

They argue in favor of things that don’t exist or are merely imaginary and do so in the most pompous possible language. I noticed Rama’s absurd obsessions with evil and exorcism early in 1991 and realized he was kooky and abused his education in psychology with all sorts of superstitious nonsense. They want you to pray orthodox prayers, and go to ceremonies, Temples, Churches and Mosques and do other magical things that are all based on superstitions and fictions. Rama believed Schuon was evil. He was not a good man certainly but evil is also a fiction, whereas will to power or pedophilia, both of which Schuon were involved in, is not fiction.

The traditionalists arguments purported to defeat science are basically the same as the failed arguments of the creationists which have been refuted thoroughly by many people. Ernst Mayr, Stephen Jay Gould, Richard Dawkins, Darwin, Einstein, Pasteur, Hooke, Halley, Christian Barnard, Stephen Hawking or many others has written,

¹³¹⁰ I studied this concept at great length in the person of Schuon and other traditionalists and determined finally that what they mean by this is arbitrary subjectivity. The “intellect” in their parlance is really just the “Imaginal” fiction (to use Corbin’s term) of being receptive to what in fact is merely a sub-consciousness. What they call “metaphysics” is really just narcissistic imagination projected into hierarchies and systematic cosmological schemes. You can see this in all their works. Schuon’s primordial gatherings were attempts to imitate the revolving of planets with Schuon as the ‘sun center’. This what happens when you combine irrational ‘esoteric’ Perennialism, with misunderstandings of real science.

discovered, opened up new cures, pushed back the curtain of fear and mystery and revealed to us evolution, physics, the human body, DNA, Plate Tectonics the Milky way and so much else. Over 9000 birds species all over the earth have been extensively studied and many preserved against extinction. Herbaria exist in museums with hundreds of thousands of plants to be studied and learned from. None of the traditionalists have done anything at all compared to all that science has done. None of the traditionalists have anything even remotely plausible to say against the facts of science or its promise for more understanding of our earth and universe, including ourselves. None of the Traditionalists know much about the actual facts of nature or the evolutionary record, vast areas which have proven to be the most fertile areas of research in the last few centuries. None of them have understood the slightest bit about comparative anatomy of species, the derivation of one species from another by natural selection, the adaptations that bring about evolutionary change or the endless and amazing libraries of evidence that prove evolution. The scientific record prospers and becomes more extensive and more complete every day, whereas the advances of traditional ideology stagnate and decay into cults and backward publishing companies run by bitter and destructively small minds, furiously writing essays, posting their junk onto Wikipedia to try to turn back the tide and return us to the Dark Ages. ¹³¹¹

¹³¹¹ A typical example of the ignorance propounded by the traditionalists is this idea by Harry Oldmeadow and Australian disciple of Schuon. He writes “The Renaissance, the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment were all incubators of ideas and values which first ravaged Christendom and then spread throughout the world like so many bacilli.” Actually we only know about the taxonomic order Bacilli because of science and the theory of evolution in addition to the Renaissance and Enlightenment. The discovery of germs and the disease they have produced has saved many millions. Oldmeadow would rather them dead evidently and call the Renaissance a baccili instead. I have doubts a man this ignorant should be allowed to teach children. Great scientists like Robert Hooke 1635 –1703 who discovered cells or Anton von Leuwenhoek 1632 – 1723 who developed the microscope and discovered bacteria among other things. Both of these were amazing men and did far more for humanity than Guenon or any of the followers will ever do. It is often staggered me how ignorant and pompous these men can be <http://religioperennis.org/documents/Oldmeadow/Critiques.pdf>

7. Wolfgang Smith and Creationist Anti-Science

__ I think of all the traditionalists writers the one that summarizes all the nonsense written by them about science ---even he even goes beyond them into the dark recesses of the Post-modern, fundamentalist and or creationist muddle-headedness ---is Wolfgang Smith. So I'll spend a good deal of the rest of this essay discussing him. Most of what I say about Smith ideas about science is also true of Schuon. Nasr, Lings and Guenon's ideas on science.

Wolfgang Smith was a mathematician as well as an extreme right wing Catholic. Last time I talked to him, nearly 20 years ago now he was going to move to Coeur D'Alene Idaho in an effort to live near a monastic catholic environment where they do archaic catholic rituals, which Smith thought were alone valid. Not sure if he did that. Rama Coomaraswamy told me a few years back that Smith lives in Camarillo Ca. In 2004 Smith gave \$300. 00 to the Republican party, at a time when it had already been shown that Bush lied about WMD's, had tortured thousands of people in secret prisons and killed thousands upon thousands in a horrible war that was mostly about oil. ¹³¹² Smith shows himself in this action to be true to form, as all the traditionalists line up with far right or quasi-fascist governments. Bush was a neo-fascist of a sort and used war, torture and racism as part of his policies, which invariably served the ultra-rich, far-right religion and a corrupt financial sector of banks and corporations that harm people with wild speculations .

In any case, Smith struck me in my many conversations with him as clearly more interested in religious ritual in a fundamentalist sort of way and hated science. Dogma and ritual performance were put prior to

¹³¹² <http://www.city-data.com/elec/elec-CAMARILLO-CA.html>

evidence. Smith's Catholicism, devoted to the thesis that the current catholic church is a fraud and various fringe cults on the perimeter of the church, such as the Society of St. Pius X,¹³¹³ are the "real" church. He was also a devotee of the writing of Eric Voegelin, another far right Catholic, whose philosophy echoes Guenon in that he was also an extremist who condemns the entire world after the Enlightenment. Voegelin says he wished to create a "philosophical framework that reconciled [the] Roman Catholic faith with [. . .] conservative politics."¹³¹⁴ These are a part of a crowd of rare intellectuals devoted to ideas of utter backwardness and lacking all evidence in their favor.

The blurb about Smith that appears on all of his books calls Smith a scientist: it is usually quoted that Smith was a prodigy, graduated very young, went to Cornell, got a PHD in math and did work in aerodynamics and "helped lay groundwork for the reentry problem" ---but that appears to have been long, long ago. I can't locate very much work by him in science except a few mathematical texts mostly done in the 1960's, with a few as late as 1980. So it appears that his reputation as a scientist is

¹³¹³ The Society of St. Pius the X (SSPX) is a far right catholic movement founded by Marcel Lefebvre. Smith liked this group. Rama Coomaraswamy liked the SSPV, which is even more reactionary. They believe that the Church after Vatican 2 in 1963 ceased to be a valid church because they changed the mass and become more democratic. They have monarchist leanings and wish to return to the Church of Innocent the III if possible. Obsessed with evil and hating all things modern, they are virulent, nostalgic and consider everything not totally orthodox to be evil. They have been accused of anti-Semitism.. Lefebvre approval or support for a restoration of an absolutist French monarchy, the Vichy government (1940–1944), and the party of Jean-Marie le Pen. This makes the traditionalist church a neo fascist organization, more or less. The SSPV is even worse, in my opinion.

¹³¹⁴ Voegelin is the opposite of Arthur Versluis, in that he hated the gnosticism that Versluis loves. Voegelin saw similarities between ancient Gnosticism and modernist political theories, particularly Marxism and Nazism. The root of the "gnostic alienation from the cosmos", as he called it, results in the gnostics believing that "the world and humanity can be fundamentally transformed and perfected through the intervention of a chosen group of people (an elite), a man-god, or men-Gods" (Wikipedia) Voegelin thinks only that Catholic Church can save us of course. He created a religious and biased history that is part ideology. He is a Platonist as one would expect. See his multi volume Order and History"

over-drawn as regards the early part of his career. His abilities as a scientist appear to have failed him quite early, if they existed at all. He has a Master's in physics and PHD in Mathematics, which means he knows a lot about math but, judging by his writings, not very much about science and virtually nothing about biology. This is unfortunate and quantum mechanics already shows many problems that are due to it being too mathematical and many things not yet proven to be real in fact. Math on its own is not reality, or nature, and to pretend it is to misunderstand science. Smith was not a good critical source for science because he just did not know enough. The man who I got to know was mostly interested in hating science and researching arcane spiritual subjects from Aquinas to Abbe Stephan. His point of view was really with the creationists, and he misunderstood science.

He doesn't know nearly what he claims to know. He was a bit of a child prodigy and thought we would do well in science. He didn't do as well as he hoped, judging by his academic record. What I suspect is that he grew bitter about science because he did not become famous. The traditionalists offered him instant 'gnosis' and a sort of sneering elitism which compensated him for his failure elsewhere. The knowledge Perennialism offers is knowledge of a bogus kind, but of a kind that seems real to those that are in the cultish atmosphere around Schuon or Nasr. Smith's attachment to far-right Catholicism also gave him a sense of his imaginary superiority and made him feel part of the 'remnant of the chosen ones'. In any case, no one who really studied science deeply, understood its method or grasped the necessity of falsification, criticism and rationality could possibly write the stuff Smith has written about evolution and physics. He is no scientist. Whatever education he once had has long ago fallen by the wayside, was forgotten, or was ill learned to begin with. Indeed, in conversations with him he expressed deep disdain for the academic world. He was a very pompous and affected man, certain of his genius. He has not understood science nor exposed

himself to evidence or countervailing views. If he was once scientist, he has forgotten nearly all of what he learned.

I visited Wolfgang Smith several times at his home near Corvallis, Oregon. I saw him once too visiting Schuon in Bloomington, at a Majalis, where he came to talk to Schuon about science and he was unimpressed with his ideas. He saw Schuon enter into the majlis ceremony with his usual pompous nose in the air, acting the part of the imperious prophet of the *religio perennis*. All of Schuon's motions in public setting had the attitude of poses and pretenses. I saw Smith sitting near me, not in Muslim dress as I was (jalaba and turban--- Schuon insisted we dress like Algerian Sufis, which was silly). He was visibly moved by all the ceremony and theatre.

Smith now lives down near Los Angeles in Camarillo. When I visited Smith in Oregon before I joined the Schuon cult and then again after I left it, he had rather a bunker mentality and had a locked the gate and the bottom of his property fearful lest anyone get into his property--- I had to meet him at the gate at a certain time and felt I was entering a sort of compound. The road was completely hidden from the house and he lived there in irrational fear someone was going to rob him. He was a recluse of sorts and so was his wife. His office in the house had a huge oak desk that very thick and rather pompous. Behind where he sat at the desk where the collected works of Guenon all rebound in expensive black leather with gold or white letters. It made Guenon's esoteric tomes look strangely sinister, as of course, they are, not in any literal way, but because they had such a power to convince delicate minds with delusions. He was reading far- right Catholics like Abbe Henri Stephane(a Guenoniste). He is a man of high erudition who uses his knowledge in service of delusions. This gives him a certain authority when he speaks or writes, but if you examine what he writes closely , it is really a bunch of medieval hogwash, to speak plainly. His best work is medieval and he

has been able to enter into the medieval mentality like a modernist monk, imitating its pretensions and fictions almost flawlessly.

I was reminded, when talking with Smith of Victor Hugo's great character in Notre Dame Claude Frollo - arch deacon or priest at Notre Dame, Frollo is also the novel's antagonist, but he not a typical evil character bent on causing pain and suffering. Instead, like Dr. Smith, he is very bright and compassionate. But Frollo is attracted to elitist, esoteric magic and descends into madness and religious hypocrisy. Guenon has something of Frollo about him too-- something Faustian, something rigorously French and rational like Descartes, but without Descartes' sanity and balanced mind. In Guenon Cartesian reason joins with paranoid mania and issues in a geometric obsession with universal conspiracies. In Smith's case, there is a frustrated Church Father in him, a patriarchal elitist who wants to dictate reality to others. He is utterly convinced that his Medieval Dogmas are the TRUTH, capital T.

When I finally read his attacks on Darwin, I realized this man has no real understanding of biology at all. It is embarrassing to see how little he actually knows and the people believe him because he seems to know what he is talking about. He wrote some reactionary and inaccurate things about the theory of evolution, based on 1930's creationism. Smith's distorted and false ideas about evolution, are mere dressed up restatements of creationist doctrine. Smith's abilities as a biologist are non-existent, He had no grasp of the of the vast array of evolutionary evidence. Had he studied the evidence he would have learned that many of the so called "missing links' in the theory of evolution are no longer missing. He would also have learned that there is virtually no evidence for the theory of creationism of so called 'intelligent design". All of the traditionalists base their criticism of the theory of evolution on the idea that the "lesser cannot come from the greater" meaning that their idea of god is greater than nature, so therefore god

comes before nature. “There is no reason to admire a science that counts insects and atoms but is ignorant of God”, Schuon writes in the same vein. ¹³¹⁵ No scientist counts insects unless they are doing population studies, as was done by the great entomologist E.O Wilson. Such studies are very useful and important in a world where many species are threatened.

In any case, the logic of the traditionalists is sophistic logic, of course. The god idea is a constructed thing, not a fact like dinosaur bones. Religion and gods are lesser than physical reality and evolution. The symbolist view of reality is dead. Dinosaur bones are much older than any idea of gods or any abstract ideology, Platonic, Taoist or otherwise. Neither Schuon or Smith understood this. Indeed, Smith’s whole theory of science as an inferior sort of metaphysics is based on misunderstandings and a need for abstraction. Smith has no real grasp of science as an empirical reality, he lives in math fantasies and surrounds himself in a hermetic environment of Thomistic metaphysics, the Christian Gnosticism of Father Abbe Henri Stephane and Guenon’s dreams of a sacred science defeating the modern world.

I talked with Smith on a number of occasions about Schuon’s ideas about science, indeed, I was a peripheral go between the two men at one point in 1991. I saw eventually that neither man knew what they were talking about. Smith thought Schuon as so backward and ignorant of basic science that he could not take most of what he said seriously. It is certainly true that Schuon’s ideas about science are ridiculous. But Smith, I think, agreed with Schuon’s main point that the “divine Intellect” is the ultimate judge of the worth of any science. The notion of the “divine Intellect” as I have shown repeatedly in this book, is an utter fiction.

¹³¹⁵ Schuon. Sufism, Veil and Quintessence, page 128

It is supposed to be the occult organ in the ‘soul’ whereby man receives revelations from gods. There is no such organ. Schuon indicates the inane exclusivity of the idea of the Intellect:

“There are truths which intuitive intellection alone allows one to attain, but it is not a fact that such intellection lies within the capacity of every man of ordinarily sound mind. Moreover the Intellect, for its part, requires Revelation, both as its occasional cause and as vehicle of the ‘Perennial Philosophy,’” ¹³¹⁶

Here Schuon is claiming he is the revelation of the Perennial Philosophy. Elsewhere Schuon claims that only the “elect” such as himself and Guenon, have access to “intellection” and only they can claim “infallibility” based on such secret access. This is a subjectivity that has run amok and his innermost “revelation” is merely his own fallible mind asserting delusions based on his ideology. The theory of the infallible and ‘divine intellect’ is bogus and self-serving, since only those who have had a “revelation” can say if they have had it or not.

The arbitrary nature of ‘revelation’ is common to all the religions. The idea that Jesus is the son of god, or that his spirit inhabits the bread or wine of the Eucharist, for instance, is utterly ridiculous, yet repeated over and over. ¹³¹⁷ This is the pure bombast of charlatans. The whole of

¹³¹⁶ The essential writings of F. Schuon, ed., by Nasr, p. 337-338 see the following link for the an idea of the Schuon cult’s woeful inability to understand anything about science. The essay itself lacks any critical insight into either since or the cult and so is basically a document that propagandizes the cults anti-science, anti-intellectual interests and reactionary point of view. see Maroof and Mazoor Shah,

http://independent.academia.edu/MaroofShah/Papers/446138/MODERN_SCIENCE_AND_SCIENCE_A_PERENNIALIST_APPRAISAL

¹³¹⁷ Schuon claimed to feel the Virgin Mary’s breasts and spread legs on his back, and who can argue that this nutty idea was real to him. Any quack or crank could claim this and indeed others have, as I have shown elsewhere. “Revelations” can be defined as the arbitrary eruptions of bizarre dream like ideas and images promoted by a con man who uses them to impose rule or conformity thought on a collective society. There are discussions of the fiction of the intellect and comparisons with the use of reason and science throughout this book. See index at end of book

the perennialist movement is based on the posited nonsense of the “divine intellect”, which is really just the organ of perennialist fantasy and pastiche. Schuon says somewhere that the “ pure intellect, which alone capable of knowing that which modern science rejects”. Well, actually science has nothing to say about it because there is no evidence for such things outside the minds of those who make these fictional claims.

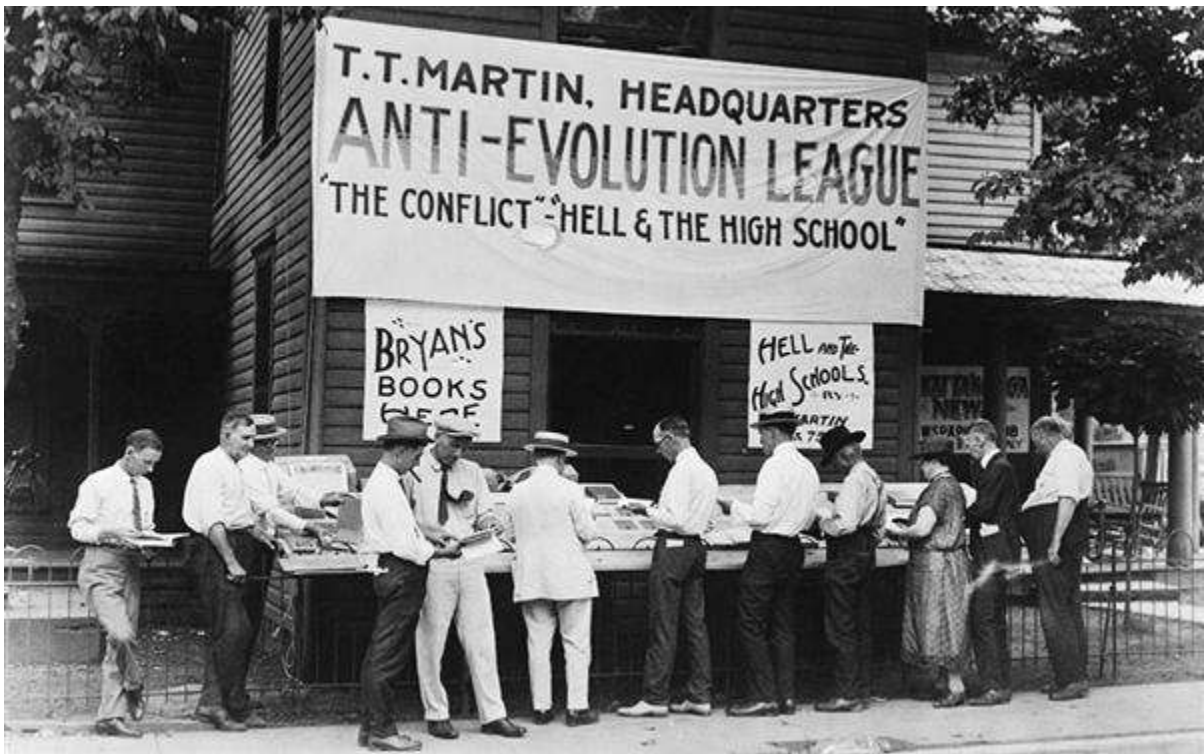
The critique of science and reason in by the traditionalists is premised on this belief in a higher order of knowledge, “gnosis” or “intellect”, but it is evident that this higher order is a crazy fiction that has no basis in reality. Indeed, I talked with Schuon at length about the intellect, and it became clear to me with time that this concept is a fraud and based on subjective magnifications and delusions. The critique of reason from the standpoint of “revelation” is what the irrationalism of the anti-science people is all about.¹³¹⁸

This is quite evident when you trace out the origins of Smith’s ideas, as I will do now. He too claims access to the intellect via traditional revelation. Yet, in fact, most of Smith's evidence for his anti-evolutionary thought comes from Douglas Dewar (1875-1957), who was himself, a follower of George McCready Price, a creationist. Smith, like Schuon, was a creationist. In other words, the evidence for creationism is little more than the prior delusions of other men.

This photograph expresses well something of the half-baked

¹³¹⁸ It is interesting to note that Kant is utterly hated by the traditionalists, partly because he denies any reality of religious ideas other than that of private fantasy, on the one hand,---but on the other, he reserves an area where science is important, if limited. Russell observes that the followers of Kant either became empiricists or absolutists, which shows well the dichotomy (History of Philosophy pg 718), Fichte carried Kant’s “subjectivist” philosophy in a direction that “seems to almost involve a kind of insanity”, Russell adds. Russell is right, Fichte is really an antecedent to Schuon , whose solipsistic absolutism is anti-empirical. It is the solipsistic absolutism that connects Schuon rather closely to the subjectivist aspect of Kantian thought, despite Schuon’s irrational hatred of Kant.

sideshow reality of Christian anti-evolutionary thought in America. Those who reject evolution are in accord the decrees of revelation and with the divine intellect, a delusional organ that does not exist. I like this photo because it expresses very well the actuality of the anti-evolution movement. Those who are attracted to this nonsense are largely uneducated and live in pockets where the Bible or the Koran are held in high esteem. They imbibe this ideology through reading books that promote false ideas. Nowadays you are likely to see similar effort to promote this nonsense on late night TV where obscure Christian TV evangelists promote idiotic notions of “intelligent design” and the immediate coming of an apocalypse that never comes. The traditionalists are very much like these cranks and charlatans in their basic ideas, but are much more secretive and eclectic in their effort to embrace many systems of religious indoctrination, symbolism and ideology.



In any case, Smith's main source for many of his views, Douglas Dewar, was apparently just such a person who was inspired by the 'divine intellect', which is to say he picked it all up from others. He helped launch the "Evolution Protest Movement" (1932) members of which declared the theory of evolution to be the "child of Satan" among other silly things. One source states that

"Geologists dismissed Price as a crank and ridiculed *The New Geology* (Price was not even a geologist) as being riddled with error and distortion, the book caused a sensation among religious fundamentalists, who cited it as the first book to use science to show that the Bible is literally correct."

Price's only real claim to fame is that he was cited during the famous Scopes "monkey" trial¹³¹⁹ in 1925, as a scientific "expert", when in fact he wasn't an expert on anything. Of course he was on the side of William Jennings Bryant, who wanted to eliminate evolution from being taught in public schools. Much of Price's "flood geology" can be found, nearly intact, in the writings of modern creationists. Indeed, the Scopes Monkey Trial of 1925 is one precedent to the anti-science mania that has swept the Republican party, making them anti-global warming, anti-environmentalism, anti-stem cell research and anti-Darwinian too.

¹³¹⁹ Jennings at the Scopes Trial attempted to stop the teaching of evolution in the school and almost succeeded, but was turned over on appeal. Recent cases in Kansas and Pennsylvania attempting to include "Intelligent Design"—a euphemism of creationism--- in school curriculums have failed. No intelligent court is willing to accord religion any status as a theory of nature. See "Kitzmiller v. Dover Area School District", 2005 trial where Judge John E. Jones III ruled that teaching intelligent design or presenting it as an alternative to evolution was a violation of the Establishment Clause of the first amendment to the U.S. Constitution because intelligent design is not legitimate science but essentially religious in nature. Not legitimate science is the key phrase. Creationism has no real world merit, it is fiction.



Dayton Tennessee. Place where the Scopes Trial was held.

Photo by author

Douglas Dewar, Smith's main source, was a disciple of Price: that in itself is enough to discredit both Dewar and Smith. Douglas Dewar, who the traditionalists rely on for their anti-evolution views, enthusiastically echoed his mentor's narrow minded beliefs. Dewar made a lot of incredibly stupid statements, typical of creationists ever since-- such as "The Bible cannot contain false statements, and so if its statements undoubtedly conflict with the views of geologists, these latter are wrong.". Dewar is the hero the traditionalists and his ideas are quoted by virtually no one but them and a few far right creationists.. Dewar was a charter member of the Evolution Protest Movement.

Thus, Smith's primary source of anti-evolutionary thinking is a man who is totally discredited. Smith's thesis is basically an attempt to state, on the basis of evidence mostly culled from Dewar's discredited and creationist texts, that evolution did not happen. Smith shows little understanding of biology or of paleontology, and his statements about evolution are mere dogmatic assertions based on discredited creationist

writings from the 1930's.¹³²⁰ Smith claims all species came from humans who represent god on earth. This human centered theory is stated as if it were a fact that requires no proof. It is so patently ridiculous no proof is needed to refute it. Evidently therefore, the intellect is a spurious organ that is really just the delusions promoted by other crackpots.

Wolfgang Smith's book fails because he wrote it to disprove a biological thesis about which he knows next to nothing. He was trained as a mathematician and knows a little about Math, less about Physics and no biology. He does not succeed in asking any relevant questions about evolution. His book is embarrassing given that the man in question purports to be a scientist.

In more recent years, Smith has changed his tactic from quoting Dewar who is hopelessly discredited, to quoting Michael Behe the bogus 'scientist' who was discredited in the 2005 trial of "Kitzmiller v. Dover Area School District". Behe has been discredited too. Behe is a creationist who pushed a failed attempt to rehash creationist dogmas and misinformation as scientific facts, but was exposed as a fraud in Pennsylvania at this trial.¹³²¹ In a recent book (Science and Myth) Smith

¹³²⁰ Ignorant creationism is not restricted to backwater America. One can find the same ignorance in Saudi Arabia where a school text books states:

"Nevertheless in the West appeared what is called "the theory of evolution" which was derived by the Englishman Charles Darwin, who denied Allah's creation of humanity, saying that all living things and humans are from a single origin. We do not need to pursue such a theory because we have in the Book of Allah the final word regarding the origin of life, that all living things are Allah's creation"

http://www.academia.edu/870964/Evolution_Education_in_Muslim_States_Iran_and_Saudi_Arabia_Compared

¹³²¹

For more on the fanatic anti-intellectualism of the creationists defeated by Darwin yet again see

<http://video.pbs.org/video/980040807/>

or here

quotes Behe's fabrication of the idea of "irreducible complexity" to try to push the ideology of "intelligent design" on his readers.¹³²²

"Intelligent Design" has been utterly discredited too, not just in the Dover trial of 2005 but also by many Darwinists, including Richard Dawkins. Dawkins shows how utterly bankrupt Behe's ideas are in his excellent book The God Delusion.¹³²³ Judge Jones referred to Behe's attempt to explain "irreducible complexity" as an example of "breathtaking inanity", which is also a phrase well suited to Dr. Smith's ideas about Darwinism.

Smith also quotes the far-right Theologian and creationist William Dembski. Dembski and Behe's ideas were judged in Judge Jones' 139-page decision on December 20, 2005. Jones wrote that "the overwhelming evidence at trial established that ID [Intelligent Design] is a religious view, a mere re-labeling of creationism, and not a scientific theory.". Smith is connecting Guenonian ideology to this anti-scientific ignorance—as is to be expected from someone who knows as little about biological science as Smith appears to. Smith is an anti-intellectual who

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7HZzGXnYL5I>

or this BBC version:

see <http://videosift.com/video/Horizon-A-War-On-Science-BBC-Documentary-49mins>

¹³²² The attempt to explain religion by quasi-scientific, "neurotheology", employing neurological and evolutionary development is highly dubious. Trying to explain religion as a branch of evolutionary biology is understandable, since theologians know religion is failing so they try to tie to science is an attempt to restore its credibility. But I suspect Steven Pinker is right when he argues against the attempt to posit a God gene, in his speech "The Evolutionary Psychology of Religion: Does the Brain Have a 'God Module?'", for instance. The notion that religion is a genetically evolved development is very unlikely as large scale organized religion is really only 3-4000 years old, if that much. Certainly magical thinking, folk tales and superstitions are older than that. Certainly the imagination may have had some selective advantage, problems solving in particular, and religion may be a falsified "by product" of that. Certainly, also, abstract thinking due to the abstract character of language plays a role in creating imaginary agents. But religion does not appear to be evolved via evolution. It is a cultural artifact and an epiphenomena of children's gullibility or the need of social networks and cohesion, power and politics. No doubt there are many physical and cultural factors at the basis of religion, but in no case has anyone every proven any gods or "god's designs" to be rooted in biology.

¹³²³ see pages 129-131 of that book.

wants to hijack science and turn it back into feudal superstitions. The facts of evolution are so pervasive and extensive as to be undeniable. Smith is off in the ozone of superstition and dogma.

The only Traditionalist who had any inkling about the importance of Darwinism was Ananda Coomaraswamy. He was more open to science earlier in his life than even his son Rama, despite the fact that Rama became a surgeon and wrote 30 or 40 scientific papers, mostly about cardiology. Rama was schizophrenic when it came to science and had no real notion of what Evolution is about. His mind was amazingly closed to anything outside his specialty as a doctor. This ability to be ignorant outside his specialty is an effect of specialization, and made Rama unable to see that his religious views were primitive in a really dogmatic and embarrassing way. I cannot think of another example of a man who was so good as a surgeon but was otherwise dogmatically ignorant in every other field. Ananda on the other hand says in an early essay that spiritual theories should have nothing "inconsistent with, but much rather inclusive of and explanatory of all the facts of evolution found by the geologist and biologist".¹³²⁴ This is a reasonable attitude, wrong but reasonable. Ananda trained as a geologist, not a metaphysical pretender like Guenon. Rama says about his father's involvement with Science that

"With regard to his geology - he actually got his PhD in in botany and geology at London University. He went to Ceylon and did the geological survey of the country which still stands today as a standard work. There is a book published by the Indira Gandhi

¹³²⁴ In f, pg 73. The essay is called Gradation and Evolution. AKC thought he could square science and religion, rather like Teilhard De Chardin. Rama was in denial about his father's pro science stand and hated De Chardin as do all the traditionalists. See: http://books.google.com/books?id=2AGrJwNmSSwC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false

National Center for the Arts which brings together his scientific early work including his discovery of Thorianite and his correspondence with Madame Curie.....

In the course of doing the geological survey he traveled all over Ceylon and saw the damage to the indigenous culture that resulted from the British Raj. It was this that got him interested in art and subsequently in the fundamental meaning of art and its sacred nature. He did have conflicts with the British and was considered a revolutionary - I believe he was with Gandhi on the famous salt marches but am not sure. In any event, he refused to join the British army in the first world war because of the absence of Indian independence and was essentially banned from the British Empire - though arrangements were made for him to live in the US by a special act of congress.” ¹³²⁵

Elsewhere Rama says he studied at Oxford in Botany and Geology. In any case, the strong background in science was important and slowly eroded over many years, so that in the end only his marvelous garden described by Rama to me and in various writings, remained. Ananda was a great tender of plants and would have done much better work in art if he has stayed with gardening and science. Ananda's shift from science to spirituality had a strongly political bent to it, partly inspired by Gandhi's radicalism, obviously, but moreso by Guenon's alienated and expatriate theofascism.

Ananda Coomaraswamy had some insight into what science was about. But Nietzsche and Tagore¹³²⁶ and later, Guenon, corrupted that in him, unfortunately. Ananda's other son died in Alaska as a bush pilot though around 1930. Around that time, AKC lost his interest in science

¹³²⁵ Letter to author

¹³²⁶ There is a humorous cartoon of AKC with Tagore and a hashish pipe from the time, and a photo of Tagore and AKC in 1930 both easily accessible online.

mostly due to Theosophy and Guenon, the latter having a horrible influence on him. I suspect that the death of his son Narada might have had something to do with his growing attraction to the ideology of perennial and its cynical rejection of everything modern and democratic. He had failed in three marriages and his son was dead. He was tired of the world and had lived a somewhat decadent high style life. He even tried to arrange for himself a polygamous marriage with several women, at one point, antedating and perhaps influencing Schuon's obsession with dominating women in this way .¹³²⁷His views of women were

¹³²⁷ Ananda Coomaraswamy (AKC)was also involved in a weird relationship with the charlatan Aliester Crowley, who managed to take AKC's wife from him. In early 1916, Crowley had an illicit liaison with Alice Richardson (Ratan Devi) who was also a theosophist, evidently. Alice evidently conceived a child with Crowley and subsequently lost it or aborted. This may be why AKC was disillusioned with Theosophy. AKC had earlier suggested that Alice have a ménage a trois with him and his earlier wife Ethel. He suggested they have a polygamous marriage. Ethel refused and divorced him in 1910. AKC left Alice after her affair with Crowley. See: http://www.sundaytimes.lk/100502/Plus/plus_21.html



Crowley as "Master Therion", oil painting
by Leon Engers Kennedy, 1917-1918

Sedgwick mangles all this on Page 53 of his book. He writes "Coomaraswamy's wife, Ethel, is said to have become pregnant by Crowley in 1916. Coomaraswamy and Ethel subsequently divorced. This incident presumably helped to diminish Coomaraswamy's enthusiasm for occultism, making him more receptive to Guenon's Traditionalism and to the idea that what mattered was not the religion of the future but the tradition of the past." Actually Ethel was AKC's first wife. Alice is the one who had an affair with Crowley. It should be noted also that Guenon told Evola in a letter that Crowley had met with Hitler and helped him. I do not know if this is true or not. But Crowley does appear to have had far right sympathies, not unlike Guenon.

Later AKC got involved with Stella Bloch (1898-1999) in 1915 or so. She was 17 . She accompanied him on a trip to India and the Far East. They married in 1922, she was 29 years his junior. Bloch had been one of the "Isadorables", a troop of dancers who performed with wildly

misogynistic.¹³²⁸ But all this together seems to have made him a ripe and decadent cynic, Already full of Guenon's toxic spite and hatred of the world. He was predisposed to an escapist spirituality and aggressively defensive erudition, as if erudition could somehow prove what was not true or demonstrable to begin with. AKC's late work is world weary and apocalyptic and evokes Guenon's rather paranoid and sardonic view of the world.

AKC's early work, however, shows a great interest in evolution. This was later ruined by Guenon's hatred of science and his ignorance of biology. His attraction to Guenon spoiled a really brilliant scientific mind

romantic and self-destructive dancer Isadora Duncan. The marriage was not very successful and lasted until 1930. Most of the time the relationship was long distance. Bloch got involved with the Harlem Renaissance and later married a left leaning man named Eli Eliscu. It was evidently a much better marriage than what she had with AKC After the failure of the marriage with the more liberal Stella, Coomaraswamy turns more and more towards reactionary Guenonism. Bloch was the first of many symbolist and occult sex goddesses worshiped by the traditionalists. Though Bloch herself escapes this narrow mold. Schuon's "virgin" is a variation the restrictive views of AKC. . AKC's interests in polygamy recalls Schuon's own, 50 years earlier. It may be Schuon knew of this and was influenced by it, as many of Schuon's close disciples had been first disciples of AKC, notably John Murray and the Perrys. The other option is that men like polygamy and this sort of injustice springs up easily in certain kinds of men..



Stella Bloch. Photo by her 1st husband A.K. Coomaraswamy, ca. 1920

¹³²⁸ See AKC's " Sati : A Vindication of the Hindu Woman" in which he tries to justify ritual suicide by women who have lost their husbands. Like Rama his son, Ananda has very reactionary and ideas about two men.

and set him against the West in an unfortunate and backward way. This split in Ananda's mind is apparent in his son Rama, who became a very good cardiovascular surgeon, but a cramped and bigoted religious fanatic at the same time.

Rama Coomaraswamy wrote me some years ago and told me most of his father's book were out of print. Rama told me that he had "great difficulty in getting my father's works published" because they just don't sell well ¹³²⁹Rama wrote to me that he thought "the Schuon phenomena which has about it a certain evil". I argued with him about this—not in defense of the Schuon cult-- but as I did not agree with the concept evil, which Rama was rather obsessed with. But he thought the group a dangerous cult. We agreed about that and talked about this many times.

Rama Coomaraswamy thought Schuon was evil and helped me get out of the cult. He was badly punished by the cult. He insisted I write my 1991 Account of the cult. He typed it and added many things to it. Too many. I have trouble with parts of the book now partly because of how much he added to it. He refused to return the original manuscript so I cannot say now what he changed. That is one reason I do not want the thing published online, among others. He did this in his oversized home on Otter Rock Drive in Greenwich Connecticut. Rama writes that

"When you put your piece together, I felt it should be published and helped you with the typing and the labeling of pictures. This is well known and is considered as an attack on Schuon like unto

¹³²⁹ He later agreed to let World Wisdom publish them, only because no one else would. He had doubts about doing it, he tells me, as he thought the Schuon group, which owns this publishing company, a "cult" and complained it enshrined a "certain evil". But he agreed to do it because it was hopeless otherwise to keep his father's work alive. I thought he should let his father's work fade rather than take that option, but he wouldn't listen to me. The advantage that the Schuon cult has is that they have lots of money and so easily corrupt others who might have need of them. Rama let himself be corrupted by them as have many others. The Schuon cult is enabled by some very rich right wing fanatics. Not much to say about this except that Rama put himself to bed with a deeply corrupt cult and maybe in the end that is where history will acknowledge he belongs.

your own. I lost several friends and there are those who still consider me anathema because of this. As far as I am concerned this is enough of a statement regarding my public stand. I intend to do nothing further.”

Rama knew I was telling the truth. My writing was not an “attack”, but a strait forward account, written over a few months, late at night in an all-night café. It is full of the language and reality of the cult and I find it now embarrassing as it shows me heavily influenced by the delusions of the group think to which I was subject for two years. The tendency struggles with the need of truth which nevertheless shines through the document, despite my confused adherence to fictions. It was hard to write, but true as I could make it at the time.

Later, after the cult attacked Rama and nearly took him to court, he was scared silent about his relation to Schuon and his attack on him. In various places even tried to cover up or escape from questions about how he felt about Schuon. His courage was thin and he hid behind others. I did not admire that. They had blackmailed him with threats of a copyright lawsuit. Rama was a weak man and ambitious and he wanted too badly to be a priest, and that what made him deny the truth about what he knew about Schuon. He thought it would spare scandal to his followers if he kept his involvement secret. Really he just covered it up for his own sake. I disagreed with him about this and in a later letter from him, not long before he died, he more or less said that I had been right. He expressed uncertainty about himself and his hiding his involvement with Schuon from public record. I liked Rama, as underneath his many years of cult involvement and fanatical far right tendencies, he was a kind and gentle person. But I saw his weakness and how easy it was for a cruelly empty and ambitious man like Hossein Nasr to talk Rama out of his better nature and corral him into obedience to lies. Nasr was never a man of truth, but a man who loved the powerful

and wanted to live hobnobbing with them. But humans have a hard time telling themselves the truth about themselves and I could see Rama was no exception to this. He died without ever really coming clean about his involvement with Schuon, and he knew I knew this and did not agree with his cowardice on this. There are many cowards who have hidden from telling the truth about Schuon, even though they know about Schuon's Primordial Gatherings and other bizarre happenings in the Schuon cult. This is often the way with cults, governments and corporations. People are afraid to tell truth to power, afraid of reprisal and attacks. There is truth in the statement, "evil prospers when good men do nothing". If one substitutes the word 'evil' with corruption, my meaning here is even clearer.

Rama's ridiculous ideas about evolution in various essays follow those of Schuon and Guenon pretty closely so I won't bother to quote him about that here. Suffice it to say Rama was ignorant of the facts as were all the traditionalists. None of them had any real understanding of science and we prone to simplistic delusions about Darwin.

Darwin was an amazing man and scientist, and the deeper I have studied him the more impressed am I by him. I do not mean he is a saint or anything like that. He is a fallible person. But much of what I once thought of him was mistaken when I realized what his accomplishment really was. He was not only a great scientist but also an humanitarian who opposed slavery and believer in animal rights. He who deserves the enormous credit he is accorded. Few theories in science are less controversial than evolution. None of the Traditionalists know much about nature or evolution or for that matter the formation of scientific theories. I know from having spoken with many of them that they merely seek to assassinate evolution because they oppose it emotionally when none of them know anything about the actual science. This makes their writings about evolution laughable at best and tragic for those who

believe the nonsense they write. More recently Dr. Smith diatribes against evolution have become more rabid and he writes

From a Christian vantage point, it can be said that Darwinism is indeed the pseudo-myth of Antichrist, the Father of Lies and ancient Antagonist of man's salvation. We are dealing thus, not simply with beliefs or speculations of erring mortals, but with something far greater and more perilous.¹³³⁰

This is just plain fundamentalist nonsense and rant and the pure fiction of a rabid fanatic. I know Dr. Smith claims he was a reputable scientist at one time, -- I see he is not a scientist now, even if he once was---but as the years have passed and he has spent his time in reclusive pursuit of very crazy fringe ideas, and now his status as a scientist is gone. He is now a fundamentalist, traditionalist crank who basically hates science in an irrational way. He grabs at evidence that has no real basis in fact, he ignores counter evidence even when it is overwhelming. He is no longer remotely a scientist, though he behaves as if he were. Years ago he was able to speak and write in a way that was professorial and senatorial, with a distinguished Austrian accent, and large vocabulary. But as you can see above, he now sounds more like a fanatic fundamentalist preacher.

I have to say that years ago I had some respect for Dr. Smith, when I knew much less about history and science than I know now. He had not yet revealed himself as a creationist and anti-science preacher. I should have deduced it from his writings, but I didn't, or, if I did suspect it, I was duped by his seeming erudition. This is why science education and

¹³³⁰ "Science and Myth: the Hidden Connection". *Sophia: the Journal of Traditional Studies* (Oakton, VA: The Foundation for Traditional Studies) 7 (1). Summer 2001

evidentiary inquiry is a fine thing: I have not stopped learning over all these years and I love science and the university and learning and have since I was a kid. It helps me see through illusions such as these, which I have had to face many times in my life. The search for truth causes pain, but at the same time supplies liberation from false thinking. I have learned this many times. Telling the truth as best one can hurts and plows up the ground inside oneself. It is the cost of honest inquiry and sincere seeking.

I went through a period of doubting science because of nuclear weapons and environmental harms but finally grasped that it is business and politics and not science that is at fault there. Science can account for the horrible abuses of state run, corporate science. For instance, we can record the deformations caused by radiation on insects due to disaster like Chernobyl.

It took me many years to learn what I now know. Smith denies the sort of information that is real and useful. We can know our world, but not through religion. Smith hates education. He advised me to join the Schuon cult. He once wrote me a letter more or less begging me not to pursue questions in a university setting and to cling to “our Lord”, alone. There is no “Lord”, there is only the world in which we live and the necessity to make it a better place for all of us, all species.

Dr. Smith’s anti-intellectualism was atrocious. Echoing other far-right Bible quoting, anti-intellectuals, Smith contends that is “almost a precondition of sanctity to have escaped a university education”— and this looks like a sentence about his own bitterness about his work in the university. Smith’s idea of education is an outdated Platonic one.

One can see this outdated Platonic view of education in the views of John Henry Newman. Jaroslav Pelikan reviews John Henry Newman's The Idea of the University, and this says a lot about the traditionalist view of education, indirectly. Pelikan, believes that Newman's book is a

"eloquent defense of liberal education" whose "timelessness" explains the function of the university today. The "Idea" of the university, it turns out, is a 'timeless', platonic archetype, which from an essential matrix, buried deep in the substratum of Creation itself, has somehow given birth, like Athena from the brow of Zeus, to the amazing array of subjects progressing ever forward through university study, expanding ever closer to an almost divine objective standard hovering near god and the limit of total knowledge.

The university, as the "Alma Mater" somehow mixes Athena, goddess of war, and the Virgin Mary, goddess and mother of the intellect, in an amalgam that gives birth to all research, like Orozco's painting of a skeleton giving birth to skeleton-scholars. This mythical and Platonist notion at the basis of the university assumes that a divine and already completed knowledge exists supernaturally and mysteriously behind the fabric of things. It assumes that it is the function of the teacher and the university to help the student draw out, what, in his or her deepest recesses, the student already knows. The word 'education' has a similar meaning, deriving from the root 'to lead out of', into the light, with all the associations with Plato and his Parable of the Cave and the educator leading the ignorant into the light.

This is all myth, of course. Education is not inborn but must be had through experience and doing, not tapping into nonexistent archetypes. The Platonic theory of education is racist, elitist and hierarchical, and depends on the falsely modest of the image of Socratic spiritual "midwife" This ideology, which is at the basis of the university and the ethic of 'disinterestedness' is a romantic ideal which assumes the university has a quasi-divine function to dictate doctrine, form perceptions of reality and instruct students to learn to participate in, rather than question, the reigning social hierarchy. As Newman himself thought, rightly, this idea of education is essentially the ideology of empire, the Empire of the Intellect, which I wrote about very critically in another book.

Newman, writing from Oxford, says that the University is the embodiment of "the philosophy of the imperial intellect". This is an important and far reaching definition. He defines the university as the place of the "teaching of universal knowledge" and that its method and its "object is intellectual- not moral". The role of the amoral university in the world is clearly defined: "what the empire is in political history such is a University in the sphere of philosophy and research". This important statement defines clearly, all too clearly- "the Empire of the Intellect" , something that I am opposed to and which makes philosophy a questionable subject. Moreover, how curiously like Aquinas' definition of the Christian 'great chain of being'. Aquinas wrote that "reason is to man what god is to the world" and when one compares Newman's statement, paraphrased to say 'empire is to history what research is to the university', what is being defined, in both cases, is a system of hierarchies of knowledge and power. I am not involving Foucault here, who is not very trustworthy. I am saying that Newman was creating a kind of theofascism in the university by equating empire with knowledge, much as the catholic Church did in equating world domination with the fiction of Christ. In both cases there is a process of "magnification" going on. A philosophy that exists to magnify power is not just questionable it should be opposed.

I don't agree with this medieval or traditionalist ideal of education at all. The university is best devoted to science and inquiry knowledge and the arts in a non-platonic way. Education is not platonic, but specific, exact and democratic. The teacher does not try to bring out what is latent platonic truths that the teachers wants to manifest, but rather seeks to elicit deepest in the student, but rather ones seeks to bring the student to what is the case in her real world, things that will help her live and good and full a life as possible.

Smith's hatred of education is typical for a traditionalist. He is wrong, as I found out when I went to universities myself. There is nothing better than free inquiry and real learning. I think Smith wanted to be a great scientist but was sorely disappointed, so he wanted to subvert science itself from the inside, out of bitterness. I don't much respect that. I once had a real affection for the man, but when I read Smith now I can see through his rather pompous prose pretty easily. He is really a reactionary science-fiction writer of a New Age slant, as are many traditionalists and he readily distorts and invents fictions to try to protect his little area of religious illusions. His New Age ideology is rather carefully hidden in the pose of a Christian apologist of an Aquinian sort, heavily schooled on monarchist metaphysics. It is not hard to unravel his fictions. He hates the New Age, but really all the traditionalists are merely right wing New Agers and Creationist fundamentalists who think they understand the world but really are backwards elitists, metaphysical romantics covered with symbolist dreams like purple dust.

7. Quantum Quackery and Fictional Essences

Wolfgang Smith also writes a lot about Quantum Mechanics, but it is clear that his ideas are pseudo-science and has misrepresented and abused Quantum Mechanics as well as science in general. If Smith was originally a scientist as he claims, and it seems doubtful how much of a scientist he actually was, he is now an enemy of science. He states for instance, that

“there is indeed a connection between the scientific enterprise and the demonic realm.....[and] the demonic connection maybe more than a pious fantasy... Padre Pio referred to science as the “Bible of the Anti-Christ”.

This sort of talk is only possible for an extreme fanatic on the edge of sanity. His obsession with the anti-Christ is really disturbing in a man who should know that children were cured by penicillin vaccine and hearts are mended now with transplants. I seriously wonder why Smith claims to speak as a scientist and a far right catholic at the same time. He is certainly not a scientist. He seems to be a bifurcated Manichean divided between himself and what he hates. Of course there is no merit to his claim that science is evil, what good that has come to humanity in the last 500 years has been largely due to science. To the Church is reserved the ignominy of the Dark Ages, that black period of ignorance between 500-1200 C.E, the Inquisition, the pedophile priests, and spreading of superstition.. The notion of evil is a fiction designed to stigmatize and demean. The traditionalists refer to practically everything other than themselves as 'evil'. It is their way of vaulting themselves into an artificial superiority. Smith cannot abide the big bang theory so it must be evil and he is frustrated that the chapter of Genesis is now merely a concocted fable in a book of fiction. He concludes in bitterness that those who seek a real answer about the nature of our world must be evil. Smith is being a petulant child here, and calling science evil is a sort of child's tantrum.

So why does Smith abuse quantum mechanics? Quantum mechanics is easily abused because it deals with invisible entities like atoms and quarks and is largely describes a mathematical realm that is complex and paradoxical. Quantum Mechanics is a reductionist and materialist part of modern physics. Certainly no mystical assertions are justified by quantum mechanics, nor does it imply that the human mind controls reality. It supplies a model that is incomplete, inconsistent and full of absurdities, and that is the problem. It is not a finished and complete theory and is certainly not a blue print for how to interpret

reality in our everyday world, which is how Smith and many others uses it.¹³³¹ The temptation to read things into quantum mechanics that are not there is high. Part of problem here is the use of math to try to describe the very small or atomic or the very large. No one knows yet what happens exactly on the subatomic level, though a few things are known and there is a lot of speculation and uncertain evidence. No one knows really what is beyond Quasars in the sky, either, though again there is a lot of speculation. Part of the problem is that those who do math get caught in their imagination and forget that that imagination is not reality.

I have met others who read all sort of nonsense into quantum mechanics. In 1979 I met and talked with Jack Sarfatti a number of times, the guy behind the largely discredited book the Dancing Wu Li Masters.¹³³² Sarfatti's ideas are largely "a potpourri of nonsense", like those of Wolfgang Smith. Both of them have projected their private obsessions onto physics and come up with something that is more fiction than science. This is true of Roger Penrose too, but Penrose is a little harder to show to be false. Daniel Dennett may have hit the nail on the

¹³³¹ Roger Penrose has come up with various quantum theories that appear to be largely fictional. He claims for instance that human consciousness is "algorithmic" and somehow beyond scientific analysis and that it has features that quasi-miraculous. It seems thought for Penrose is an effect of gravity inside the microtubules of the brain. (sounds like Chomsky, who would like to find an explanation for language in physics rather than biology) Penrose reaches this rather dizzy conclusion through Gödel's incompleteness theorem, and the idea of a Platonic reality beyond mind and matter, of course. David Deutsch, from Oxford's Centre for Quantum Computation, dismisses Penrose's interpretation as "based more on aesthetics than science" Which basically means it is probably wrong..

¹³³² See also Fritjof Capra's The Tao of Physics (1975) or the movie "What the Bleep do we Know"
http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=what+the+bleep+do+we+know+part+1&aq=1sx

Or the much better debunking of this movie here:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rIPiXNIhKFo>

head when he criticizes Penrose¹³³³ for not seeing that science simply does not have an understanding of exactly how thought or consciousness works yet.¹³³⁴ It does not follow that thought is therefore mystical or that the mechanics of consciousness will never be explained.¹³³⁵ Moreover, Stephen Weinberg writes that “ [N]one of the laws of physics known today ... are exactly and universally valid.”. He doesn’t mean that the laws of physics are not true, he means that they come into question in extreme conditions. This seems obvious and any extrapolated metaphysical conclusions based on Quantum mechanics of Physics are probably false. The Tao of Physics, with its discredited “bootstrap theory” or the Dancing Wu LI Masters, with its fantasies of faster than light, “superluminal” travel and communication are vain exercises in imposing metaphysical fictions on physics. These books have been discredited. Peter Woit has discredited Capra and it is hard to imagine many take Sarfatti or Zukav seriously as quantum physicists. Their effort to turn science into some species of Taoism or Buddhism has also failed.

Many people have abused or misused quantum ideas to push all sort of bogus of false ideas. I have indicated this in the cases of Frithjof Capra, Jack Sarfatti and Roger Penrose. I knew Dr. Smith many years ago and have not read much of his work since he sent me his highly questionable Quantum Enigma over 20 years ago, before it was

¹³³³ Victor Stenger notes that Penrose is a Platonist, and this explains a lot of why his science goes off on weird metaphysical tangents. His book God and the Folly of Faith has various refutations of spiritual quantum theories, such as Penrose, Bohm and others. Stenger goes to some length to try to justify multiverse theories, when there is no evidence at all for these ideas. This, again, suggests that math has been used without a real basis in physics. One has to be careful of speculations on the edges of math, the universe and the atom, as all sorts of things can be projected into these empty and unknown areas.

¹³³⁴ The idea of quantum consciousness is criticized sharply by Victor Stenger, who characterized quantum consciousness as a "myth" having "no scientific basis" that "should take its place along with gods, unicorns and dragons."—and one might say, Jesus, Krishna, Buddha and other gods too. The notion that biology is really Buddhist is just bad logic and poor insight. In any case, many of the original claims of Penrose and his associates have been discredited. It is a highly contentious area of current science.

¹³³⁵ see chapter 15 of Dennett’s Darwin’s Dangerous Idea

published. But recently I picked up his The Wisdom of Ancient Cosmology and am deeply saddened by his further devolving development. He has become even more fanatical and far-right than I remember. He has backed himself into a corner where whatever scientific understanding he might once have had has been utterly compromised and reduced to caricature by his rather wacky spiritual beliefs. For instance., He tries to say that the “world is *young*, which is to say that it is not measured in millions or billions--- but in thousands of years”¹³³⁶ He appears to belong to the “Young Earth Creationist Club”, or at least most of his arguments against science come from members or associates of this club---really a sort of cult. The Young Earth Creationists is similar to the Flat Earth Society: both are clubs devoted to anti-intellectual rubbish, religion and backward pseudoscience. These informal societies of crackpots want us to move back to the 8th century, when superstition was king and stupidity was glorified. Like Mr. Smith they believe that Earth, and all life were created by direct acts of a minor god of a sector of humanity that calls itself “ Christian”. They believe the earth was created during a relatively short period, sometime between c. 5,700 and 10,000 years ago. As Richard Dawkins has said that that to say that the earth is a few thousand years old, when in fact is 4 billion years old is equivalent to saying that the distance to San Francisco to New York is about 28 feet.

Indeed, most of Smith’s assertions are embarrassingly absurd. He quotes the discredited Guy Berthault, who tries to argue that the earth is only six to ten thousand years old.¹³³⁷ Berthault is a Young Earth Creationist who is an adviser to the Kolbe Center, an ultra-conservative

¹³³⁶ Smith, Wolfgang. The Wisdom of Ancient Cosmology. Oakton Va. Foundation for Traditional Studies 2003. Pg. 109

¹³³⁷ For a good debunking of Berthault see http://www.evolutionpages.com/berthault_critique.htm

traditional Roman Catholic creationist propaganda group. On the basis of Berthault's bogus ideas and pseudo-science Smith claims, falsely, that modern geology has been given a "death knell". Actually geology has never been so vibrant and healthy as in the last 30 years with vast discoveries like Plate tectonics and new research going on all over the earth. He also suggests based on all this bogus "research" that the idea of the "Flood" with Noah and the Ark "appear to accord far better with the geologic facts." This is pure fantasy on Smith's part as seems to be most of his ideas. Smith suggests that "creationist are doing "respectable geological research" , which is also false. None of the pseudo-scientists that Smith quotes appear in any peer reviewed journals or if they do they have been discredited. None have made any discoveries worth mentioning with a straight face.

Smith also tries to claim that Robert Gentry's wacky theories of "polonium halos" have "posed a challenge to evolutionist geology"¹³³⁸ which is not true. Gentry's ideas have been debunked and discredited many times since the 1960's when he started proposing them and kept pushing them even after they were vetted and discredited. . His claims are rejected by the scientific community as an example of creationist pseudoscience. ¹³³⁹ The fact is that the earth's rocks are millions of years old and life in geological strata can be measured by these rocks, in addition to other techniques. It amazes me that Smith is able to write this sort of fundamentalist ideology with a straight face. I have trouble not laughing when I read this pompous and wrongheaded nonsense.

¹³³⁸ Ibid. Pg. 125

¹³³⁹ Gentry's side lost in a law case in 1981 *McLean v. Arkansas Board of Education*, 529 F. Supp. 1255, 1258-1264 (ED Ark. 1982), decision on January 5, 1982, "giving a clear, specific definition of science as a basis for ruling that "creation science" is religion and is simply not science. As a U.S. District Court ruling, it was not binding on schools outside the Eastern District of Arkansas but had considerable influence on subsequent rulings on the teaching of creationism. ^[1] Creationists did not appeal the decision and it was not until the 1987 case of *Edwards v. Aguillard* that teaching "creation science" was ruled unconstitutional at a Supreme Court level. "

But “it behooves us”, as Mr. Smith portentously likes to say, to consider that there is much more in Smith’s works that is not laughable.¹³⁴⁰ Unfortunately he really believes this nonsense and wants to make others believe it. As Karl Popper writes

“irrational and intellectual mysticism... need not be taken too seriously, but it is a dangerous disease because of its influence on social and political thought”.¹³⁴¹

Smith writes that “contemporary cosmology, in any of its forms, is not compatible with Christian doctrine” and this is exactly right, and a good thing too. Christian doctrine is irrelevant and archaic,---it is myth--- and well consigned to the dust heap of the Greek and Roman and thousands of other forgotten myths and gods. Science is not devoted to delusions and superstitions. This is a good thing. That is why Smith is welcome to believe his ridiculous theories in private all he wants to. He is protected by the 1st Amendment to believe whatever dreamy medieval rubbish enters his head. But that does not mean it is true. There are all sorts of wacky beliefs in America and one can pick and choose¹³⁴² among them.

¹³⁴⁰ Mr. Smith calls himself a Doctor, but he clearly despises the subject he got his doctorate in—so there is no point in calling him Dr. Smith. His style of talking and writing is decidedly 19th century,. Phrases like “it behooves us” or “I propose to say that...” roll of his tongue or pen pretty regular like. He is a bit pompous, stiff and professorial. I suspect he was never really happy with his life and takes it out on science, which was once a great love of his. He is a man divided against himself and projects this on his subject, so that science and religion go to war in him in an imaginary Armageddon that while fictional, causes him distress and ecstasies. But this does not mean that his disparagement of science has any merit. It doesn’t. He is a man whose delusions overwhelmed his reason. When I got to know him it was intellectual fervor and love of scholarship I admired, but it took me some years to see how he had gone off the deep end into Aquinas and Christian mysticism.

¹³⁴¹ Popper Karl, Open Society and its Enemies. Pg vol. II pg. 247

¹³⁴² The traditionalists hate free choice and I heard Wolfgang and Rama denounce “picking and choosing” more than once. Robert Orsi writes “Consider the phrase, “I am spiritual but not religious,” which serves as a mantra of modern men and women in the United States. What does it mean to juxtapose “spiritual” and “religious” in this way? It means my religion is interior, self-determined, individual, free of authority; my religion is about ethics and not about bizarre events, and my ethics are a matter of personal choice, not of law; I take orders from no one.”...

But science, for the most part, is outside that. Smith is incompetent to write books about science. He is able to write religious books, like his more recent ‘Christian Gnosis’ (2008), which is really a fringe book for wanna be Christian elitists who desire an ‘esoterism’ that few others can understand or need. It is fine if he writes about this area of mythic/metaphysical arcana. It is merely the gnosis or fictional dreams of an old religious crank.

But, incredibly, Smith tries to resurrect the Catholic condemnation of Galileo, for instance, as well as the geocentric theory and put Galileo in jail. Only the lunatic fringe wants to resurrect Geocentrism: it is a dead issue with huge amounts of evidence in favor of the Heliocentric theory. Smith wasn’t to return to the Geocentrism because the Heliocentric theory of Galileo and Copernicus were “formerly heretical, because [they were] expressly contrary to the Holy scriptures”. The “holy” books are clearly falsified history and have no basis in reality. But to resurrect the fictional Resurrection he wants to reinstate heresy hunting. He claims falsely that “heliocentrism has proved to be scientifically untenable and in fact the palm of victory belongs to the to the wise and saintly Cardinal Bellarmine”¹³⁴³ Mr. Smith is just dreaming here, and it is vicious dream indeed. Cardinal Bellarmine was a fanatic who was one of the judges who at the trial of Giordano Bruno, and concurred in the decision which condemned him to be burnt to death as an obstinate heretic. So Smith sees this killer and fanatic as a “saint”. Bellarmine also was instrumental in the outrageous condemnation of Galileo, when Galileo was right and

Traditionalists hate this free choice and want only top down authoritarian religion and politics, like the grey clad misogynist mullahs of Iran or the Catholic Clergy. Of course the narcissist inwardness that results from this attitude brings its own set of problems, one of the worst being that New Agers become selfish and apathetic to the political reality of a corporate culture that exploits them, much to the pleasure of the corporate elite. The more atomized the population the better it is for business. Feel good, don’t think, begin within, “follow your bliss”---are all formulas for a pacified population that can be exploited endlessly. Inwardness is all that matters for them.

¹³⁴³ Ibid. 149

the earth is not the center of the universe. It is true that Galileo got various things wrong, such as that the tides are caused by the sun alone, when they are caused by the gravity of the sun and moon together. But history is right that the Church was wrong to silence his views.

Galileo he was right that the earth moves, as should have been inferred from watching an lunar eclipse, which I myself have seen the shadow of the earth cross the moon in the span of a few hours. James Bradley proved that the earth moves around the sun when he discovered the aberration of light from distant stars in 1728. It is now known that the earth moves around the sun at a velocity=107,300 km/h (or if you prefer 67,062 miles per hour.) This is known for many reasons. There is further evidence of the earth's movement around the sun because of the Doppler effect, second because of the nature of the cloud formations and water patterns on the earth, toilets flush different directions north and south of the equator--- "Corlionic effect": third because meteors hit the midnight side of the earth much more often than the afternoon side, or in other words the side of the earth that speeds forward. There are less direct reasons as well, namely the rotation of all the other planets around the sun, the differential of the orbits of the various planets which deviate above or below the plane of the solar system, relative to the axis of the earth which is constant relative to the north star. The seasons too, indicate the revolution of the sun around the earth. Foucault's pendulum shows the rotation of the earth on its axis. Smith neglected to look any of this up. He is a bad scientist who does not do his research. He seems only to read the creationist press, which is tantamount to reading no science at all. Galileo already grasped something of it when he recorded Venus's phases as it revolved around the sun for a year.

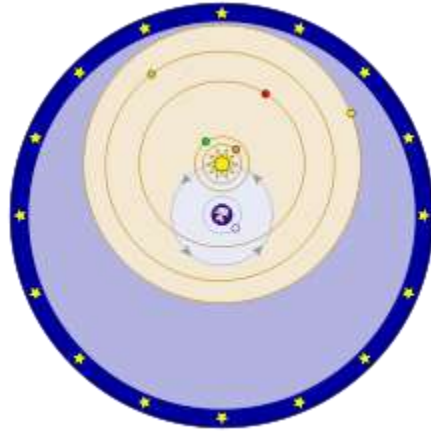
It became clear that what really turns Smith on is the sentimental idea of the medieval conception of the earth-centered , god dominated cosmos dominated by priests who dictate reality to laymen, who are not

allowed to read books that might educate them to think based on real observations. He can't let it medievalism go--- so he tries to repackage the merely symbolist and rather kitschy medieval conception of the universe as co-existing side by side with the physical universe that science studies. He tries to hold up both geo-centrism and solar centrism, in each case because they are symbolic. But symbolism is not science but superstition. He tries to claim that the religious alone can truly love the stars. He writes of the wonderful statement by Kant about the wonder of the stars above and the moral law within us: "how strange that this prosaic rationalist, whose philosophy is irreconcilable with the Sophia Perennis, could still sense, however dimly, a connection between the 'star spangled sky'" and the "moral law", deep in the heart of man."¹³⁴⁴ What arrogance this disparagement of Kant indicated. Many atheists not only see the sky with deep wonder, but are at the forefront of moral struggles to help nature, animals and humanity in ways that Smith, bunkered in his escape from reality into the medieval mind, cannot envision or understand.

Several centuries after the scientific revolution pseudo-science and anti-science attitudes are still common, due to religion and right-wing politics. Smith quotes many discredited Bible scholars, indeed' his book, The Wisdom of Ancient Cosmology , is something of a catalogue of 20th century anti-science crackpots, including Smith himself. Smith seems to gravitate toward bogus science and creationists who pose as scientists such people I have already mentioned: "Price, Guy Berthault, Dewar, Michael Behe, among others. Smith quote Walter Van der Kamp's bogus claim that the earth does not move. Smith holds Van der Kamp in high repute. Von der Kamp features prominently in the tidy, neat and profound little book by John Grant called Bogus Science which is about

¹³⁴⁴ Smith, Cosmology Pg. 141

pseudo-scientists, who, like Van der Kamp and Smith, distort science to pander ideological fictions. Smith likes the ideas of Van der Kamp who subscribes to the system of Tycho Brahe, who thought the sun goes around the earth but all the other planets go around the sun. Like this:



Tycho Brahe's geocentric system

Brahe's absurd idea is impossible for various reasons. Mars orbit crosses the sun in various places and there would have long ago been a collision. There is further and more importantly the physical impossibility for of the Tycho's scenario because the mass of the sun is so huge, it could never be a satellite of the tiny earth or any of the planets, it must always the center of the orbits of all the planets. Newton understood this, as did Einstein. Why would Smith push such an absurd idea ?

John Grant speculates about the procedure of many pseudo-scientists. He explains the immunity to reason and evidence that creationists suffer from is due to their religious fanaticism. He notes that when Geocentrists and Creationists

“talk much about science but rarely focus on it, instead reverting to their own their own readings of the Bible, which interpretations they insist can be backed up by the discoveries of science. Pressed

to identify the discoveries to which they are referring their tendency is to ignore the great bulk of scientific knowledge in order to nick pick over difficulties of detail they perceive science to have”

This is Smith’s procedure. He only quotes discredited creationist sources.

Another bogus source he quotes is David Russell Humphreys, and others. Humphreys calls himself a “Creationist physicist”. Wolfgang Smith also, evidently, is a “Creationist physicist”— but these titles are specious because there are no creationists who have made any contributions to science or physics in any way.¹³⁴⁵ Creation science is pseudo-science. Smith wildly claims that quantum mechanics justifies the Biblical Genesis .¹³⁴⁶ He makes bizarre quantum leaps beyond common sense. He defies the Big Bang theory because he saw it declared in a Newspaper, but really it is not a dogma and the steady state theory has not been entirely ruled out either. He doesn’t seem to

¹³⁴⁵ Smith quotes Fred Hoyle (1915-2001) many times. One Bio says of Hoyle that “He elevated Stonehenge, a pile of rocks, to cosmic importance while degrading Darwin's work, sensing that Darwin's theories of natural selection somehow challenged his own ideas about life originating in outer space” Hoyle was a controversial English scientist, who sometimes is used by anti-evolutionists because he believed some extraterrestrial has perhaps “designed life”. His ideas, like “panspermia” are unorthodox and contested. He wrote science fiction. Christopher Hitchens notes in his book God is not Great that Hoyle was an “ex-agnostic who became infatuated with the idea of “design,” .(pg 65) Hoyle was against the big bang, like Smith.

“ Panspermia proposes that life which can survive the effects of space, such as extremophile bacteria, become trapped in debris that's ejected into space after collisions between planets which harbor life and Small Solar System Bodies”

¹³⁴⁶ Smith claims in The Wisdom of Ancient Cosmology that the “corporeal world does in fact accord with the data of Genesis”---(pg. 108 and 108-110) Of course he has a bizarre notion of what “corporeal” means as I discuss further on. The story of Genesis is a fiction. Smith claims falsely that the “profane” understanding of Genesis is “fundamentalist”. He opposes fundamentalist to mystical. Science to Smith is what is “profane” and he says the word ‘profane’, as Nazis used to say “Jew”, with a mixture of hatred and ridicule. In fact the Church father’s view of Genesis is quite childish compared to the amazingly profundity of the real discoveries of physics and astronomy. Genesis is fiction: Galaxies are real. Jesus is a cardboard cutout, whereas DNA is helping cure people of serious diseases. Smith tries hard not to be a fundamentalists but ends up being one anyway. He goes beyond the fundamentalists in that he condemns all of science, even Newton, Galileo and Copernicus.

know the first thing about astronomy. It progresses by small discoveries and not enough is known to make definitive pronouncements about the origin of the universe. No one really knows. It certainly is not the Bible that will tell us anything about the structure of the universe. The Big Bang has more evidence on its side than other theories, but no one really knows much about it. Most of what is said about it is admitted to be speculation and mathematical postulations.

Smith tries to uphold the idea of bodily resurrection, one of the more ridiculous ideas of the Catholic Church. He writes this in a chapter about “celestial corporeality” for instance, to indulge a taste of imaginary resurrections and bodies alive in heavenly realms, transfigurations, and other mythic entities of an imaginary kind. Bertrand Russell rightly discusses the absurdity of the Christian idea of bodily resurrection in his “Outline of Intellectual Rubbish”. Russell notes that Wolfgang’s Smith’s intellectual hero, Thomas Aquinas, was deeply puzzled by how cannibals will be “properly roasted in hell” when “all of his body is restored to its original owners”. Indeed, it is a very funny question, in a black humor sort of way. How will god separate all the ‘souls’ that a given cannibal might have eaten? Russell notes in regard to the similar problem of cremated bodies that

“collecting particles from the air and undoing the chemical work of combustion would be somewhat laborious, but it is surely blasphemous to suppose that such a work is impossible for a Deity. I conclude that the objection to cremation implies grave heresy. But I doubt my opinion will carry much weight with the orthodox” ¹³⁴⁷

¹³⁴⁷ Hitchens, Christopher. The Portable Atheist, Philadelphia, De Capo Press, 2007 pg. 185

Yes, Russell was a humorist, sometimes. Many of the dogmas of the church seem very silly now. In any case, Smith believes all the stuff the Church “fathers” dictated as obligatory on pain of hell fire. He tries to impose the superstitions from the past onto science.

Smith’s work is really about a personal, private struggle inside him between “perennial philosophy” and a love of science that is being destroyed and undermined by the power of magical thinking and religious delusions. He really shouldn’t try to impose his backwards views of science on others. He thinks there is virtue in doing so, because he has inculcated his brain with ‘Them verses Us’ thinking. If questioned Smith would probably claim persecution and martyrdom and say the devil is after him, But all that is nonsense too. But the truth is that science is not at all what he says it is and he needs to give up pretending to be a scientist and retire to a monastery. This would be an escape from reality into the pure fiction of religion. That is the way he has been tending all these years. He told me once he intended to retire to near a monastery near Coeur D’Alene, Idaho, but that never happened apparently.

The crux of Smith’s work in the last 15 years rests on a bogus distinction he made up. He created a false distinction between the “corporeal” and the “physical” domains, which he goes to great lengths to try to make real, when in fact it is merely a figment of his imagination, or rather of the medieval and Greek imagination. The traditionalists believe in the theory of Archetypes derived from Plato which situates everything in an imaginary “great chain of being”. Martin Lings writes that

“the language of symbolism , which is part of man’s primordial heritage is based on this hierarchy of the different degrees of the

universe... every terrestrial object is the outcome of a series of projections, from Divine to spiritual, from spiritual to psychic from psychic to corporeal.”¹³⁴⁸

This theory of the GCB or “great chain of being” has no evidence for it at all and is merely a fiction created by Plato, Aristotle and the Church fathers. The notion of a ‘primordial heritage’ that has any real basis in actuality is also a fiction. The idea of the great chain is merely a fictional and mythic illusion purported to describe aspects of reality, passed down from the Greeks and others. The corporeal—that is our bodies and selves—and the bodies of all that is—in short, just about everything--- is demeaned in this absurd system to the lowest grade of this medieval scale of projections. Smith places the physical below the corporeal in a typical attempt to degrade reality beneath imaginary unfounded metaphysical concepts. In fact, what Smith misunderstands is that the corporeal and the physical are the same thing. They are more or less cognate, synonymous terms. He betrays Occam’s razor and “multiplies entities without necessity” (*Entia non sunt multiplicanda sine necessitate*). Occam’s razor means ‘to not create distinctions without a difference’ or do not multiply entities beyond necessity”, (ontological parsimony).¹³⁴⁹ Smith is a true son of Augustine and Aquinas, the scholastics who wanted to create endless distinctions without a difference--- count angels

¹³⁴⁸ Lings, Martin. The Eleventh Hour. UK Quintessentia. Pg. 36 Lings also wrote books about the prophet Muhammad, and the Sufi Shaykh Al Alawi. In both case his books are largely poetic inventions of a hagiographical kind and not at all objective biographies. Lings poetic affections distort his thinking throughout his work. This made talking to him about anything real or objective virtually impossible, unless his affections were somehow trained to it. He was an obedient follower and not a man who thought much.

His slavish adulation for Schuon finally sickened me, when this adulation flew in the face of all the evidence I knew was factually true.

¹³⁴⁹ Occam did not say this exactly, but he did say *Frustra fit per plura quod potest fieri per pauciora* [It is futile to do with more things that which can be done with fewer]. Which amounts to same thing. (Thorburn, 1918, pp. 352–3; Kneale and Kneale, 1962, p. 243 Bertrand Russell’s formulation of this idea is the best. He said "Whenever possible, substitute constructions out of known entities for inferences to unknown entities." In other words, do not make things up.

of the heads of pins. Augustine and other Christian dogmatists presided over The “Closing of the Western Mind”. Charles Freeman, author of the book called the Closing of the Western Mind, rightly charges Christianity with repressing Greek science and causing a 1000 years of ignorance to reign. Smith--- and the traditionalists in general want to return us to those same Dark Ages . The want a renewal of the ‘closing of the western mind”.

Smith sets up a medieval hierarchy by setting up the fiction of the bifurcated world of the corporeal above the physical. The notion of the “great chain of being” he invokes by doing this is another fabrication. He wants to fabricate reality and to abuse science so as to propagandize for religion. The corporeal for Smith isn’t just its dictionary definition as ‘pertaining to the body or bodies’-- rather Smith is an elitist. He is prone to the same theofascism that I have discussed all through this book. He thinks science has no poetry, and does not realize that science is “¹³⁵⁰the poetry of reality”, the only poetry that really matters. Smith also believes in imaginary faculty called the “Intellect”—which is what Guenon and Schuon claim too, falsely since the faculty is just the subjective mind sunk in imaginary dreams of romantic ‘essences’ and transcendent” states of self hyp-gnosis or suggestion. So in this context Smith’s effort to introduce the idea of the ‘corporeal” is really to re-impose medieval or Ptolemaic ideology on modern science, after the 500 years it too us to get rid of that nonsense . He claims to be transcending “bifurcations” when in fact he slices the existing world right down the middle into quantum physical things against corporeal bodily things, when they are the same thing.

¹³⁵⁰ This lovely phrase is used by Richard Dawkins. See his Unweaving the Rainbow (subtitled "Science, Delusion and the Appetite for Wonder") 1998, this is one of the best books on science and poetry written in many years. Dawkins writes that “Science is poetic, ought to be poetic, has much to learn from poets and should press good poetic imagery and metaphor into its inspirational service.” He also rightly takes many poets to task for spreading superstition and nonsense.

What Smith fears is that those favorite concepts of romantic irrationalists and haters of science—the concepts of “transcendence” and “essence”—would be lost. For Smith only these fictions are truly real, so everything that is actually real that science describes must be unreal. Smith resembles Christ or Plotinus who also hated the world. Plotinus said "Certainly no reproach can rightly be brought against this world save only that it is not That." (Plotinus, *Enneads*, V,8,8) For Plotinus “That” or ‘God’ is everything, the world is nothing. Schuon reiterates this same mystical nonsense when he says that “existence is a sin to which no other can be compared”.¹³⁵¹

Smith desperately wants to defeat modern science and bring back medieval ideology. To this end he bifurcates reality into the Physical and the Corporeal to try to bring back Geocentrism, Platonic Archetypes, and the Bible as the criterion of truth. He sets up an arcane hierarchy, that favorite obsession of all Traditionalists, who love to rank and order things in elitist, caste ridden, medieval, Platonic or anti-democratic Ladder of Creation: The “great chain of being” Smith says he wants to restore the discredited “great chain of being” or *scala naturae*, which was a horrific system of social engineering that forced people into feudal orders and

¹³⁵¹ In the Diamond Sutra Buddhist text, Chapter 32 Buddha is supposed to have said this is how to contemplate our conditioned existence in this fleeting world:"

"Like a tiny drop of dew, or a bubble floating in a stream;
Like a flash of lightning in a summer cloud,
Or a flickering lamp, an illusion, a phantom, or a dream."
"So is all conditioned existence to be seen."

This is another way of saying existence is worthless. Thus Buddhists cling to a dream of the void, which is really nothing, but they pretend is everything. The idea of enlightenment or *satori* as the imaginary opposite of “conditioned existence” is a myth, or fiction, and those who claim it are charlatans, beginning with the myth of the Buddha or the Hindu caste idea of ‘liberation’ from the “wheel of birth and death”. While suffering is real, the solution to it is hardly the negation of existence, on the contrary, existence and those who suffer is all that matters. Try to soothe and stop suffering of all species is what humans can do, but have failed to do as yet.

castes and led to terrible social strife and suffering throughout the middle ages up unto the French Revolution, which itself was a justified war against such mandated social inequalities. I am not excusing the injustices of Robespierre here, I am merely stating that the French Revolution was an inevitability and one that did for more good than harm. The rottenness of the upper classes of those days demanded revolution, rather as corporate corruption demands it now. The rottenness of Robespierre and Napoleon was proof that the revolution bit off more than it was ready to chew. It is an ongoing revolution that is still in progress today. The English, American and French Revolution as well as science and Darwinism broke the “great chain of being” forever and opens us to further improvement and rights for all. To include all species in the search for rights and end to suffering is what the future must be if we are to survive with others on earth.

There is a lot of Quantum Quackery in Smith and the quackery grows out of the artificial distinctions between corporeal and physical. He misunderstands Descartes who is really one of the fathers of modern science and should be praised and not damned. He misunderstands Alfred Whitehead and the idea of the “bifurcation” between mind and body that Descartes’ system seemed to have created. What is worse is that Smith follows out those misunderstandings as an excuse to import into science all sorts of spiritual rubbish and crack pot creationist ideas that don’t belong there. It is terribly sad to watch this man I once admired do this to himself and the world he lives in.

Furthermore, I see him take this artificial distinction and use it to condemn the entire existing world. He says that the distinction between the physical and corporeal “forces us to conclude that the physical domain itself came into existence at the time of the fall, and will cease to exist when the “new heavens and the new earth” shall come to be.” This is pure fantasy, and he extends his fantasy to conclude that “physical theory retains merely a formal sense; in other words, it becomes

fictitious”.¹³⁵² In other words, he has reduced the existing world to fiction, or what the Hindus call Maya, and when he does this, he has entered squarely into the Insanity of Religion, the world hating schizophrenia that despises the actual and wants to disappear into the imaginal in a leap toward “inward” romantic death and apocalypse. Smith has accepted to “Transcendental Delusion” of the religions.

So then, Smith has badly read Aristotle and is out there in the ozone of mythology acting as if the ancient ideologies are real. Smith tries to resurrect the old medieval idea of “substance” and “essence”, both long since discredited as having any real meaning—and certainly no scientific meaning. What he really wants to do is to promote private feeling over verifiable evidence, romantic nostalgia for medieval religion (which he calls this esoterism”) over science.

The terms “essence” and “substance” s derive from Aristotle and the Scholastics, such as Aquinas ¹³⁵³, and denote non-existent imaginary mysteries that are pretended to subsist inside matter and ourselves. The concept of ‘essence’ is merely a linguistic convention, as when one says, the essence of food is the taste, referring to some aspect of food that if one changed it, it would lose its identity. Bertrand Russell notes that the

¹³⁵² Ibid pg. 123

¹³⁵³ Smith once sent me a book of writings by Aquinas. I read it and didn’t like Aquinas at all. His politics are monstrous. In the philosophy of Aquinas the Aristotelian concept of universals would be combined, rather ambiguously, with the Platonic position. The Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 decided the issue of the Church’s stand on the subject of universals and this was reinforced by Trent. This subject was the central philosophical issue of the Middle Ages. The Church decided in favor of the Realist position, more or less, rather than the Nominalist position. The Realist position was essentially Platonic, and summarized in the Scholastic formula, “Universalia Ante Rem”; the universal is prior to the particular thing, or the idea comes before the physical. This is basically Smith’s position, and leads to the spiritual fascism of Innocent the III. The Nominalist position states “ Universalia Post Rem”—or universals come after things. It is this latter view that is obviously the true one. The Nominalist position formed the conceptual basis of what would become science. This is not to say that Nominalism was a scientific position, rather it expressed the possibility in idea form of what would become science in practice two centuries later, between the period of Roger and Francis Bacon, Da Vinci, Galileo and Newton. Smith lives in a nostalgic dream longing for a dead system of thought that some not correspond with reality at all. That is why he much delude himself about evolution and quantum mechanics and promote pseudo-science to try to justify himself.

concepts of “essence” and “substance”, are a transference to metaphysics of what is only a linguistic convenience” ¹³⁵⁴ Essence and substance are merely “convenient ways to collecting events into bundles”, Russell says. The substance of a matter is merely a summary, the essence of a book might be a plot or a character,-- the choice of what the essence is arbitrary and will differ whoever is speaking of the matter. In short the idea of essence and substance is nothing to build a theory of the world on unless you want it to be false, vague and muddle headed. The idea of ‘essence’ is usually made up of various subjective analogies, or “analogical transpositions” in Guenon’s words. Platonic archetypes are merely magnified or poetic analogies.. Making analogies is essential to fabricating fictions and religions. The correspondence theory of truth pushed by Swedenbourg, Boehme, Baudelaire, Dylan Thomas, Yeats and many others is just such a theory of analogy. Religion is also generated by analogies. God is like light, like the heavens, like the human heart etc. Out of such analogies an “essence” is imagined, which does not actually exist, but is an extrapolated fabrication. Boehme’s theory fo signatures depends on just these sorts of inklings and intuited relationships between ideas and things. Baudelaire poem on Correspondences likewise celebrates a fabricated “unity”.

Like long echoes that intermingle from afar
In a dark and profound unity,
Vast like the night and like the light,
The perfumes, the colors and the sounds respond.

Religion grew from just this sort of “essences” invented, conflated, mythologized and fabricated from the free association of the imagination.

¹³⁵⁴ Russell, Bertrand, History of Philosophy, NY, Simon and Shuster 1945, pg. 201

¹³⁵⁵ Baudelaire is usually considered one of the fathers of the Symbolist Movement.

So, Smith says that the idea of essence is absolutely essential to his system. He says that

“ If the stellar light, which the ancients thought to be of celestial origin, and which Plato viewed as the carrier of intelligible essences--- if that light fails, the cosmos and all that it contains is reduced to nothingness. .. the drift into nihilism corresponds precisely to the loss of substance in the physicists world view. Culture and cosmology are intimately connected, and it appears that when the prevailing cosmology flattens, so does the culture”

¹³⁵⁶

As Russell has said, essence is really just linguistic convenience. What Smith is really saying is he will lose his most cherished illusions if the muddleheaded idea of Platonic essences is not retained and he will feel empty. This is merely a philosophy of petulance. Believers in such a way of thought think their self-pity is metaphysical, when it is not, as birds still sing and the sun rises, whether these self-pitying philosophers like it or not. Nature does not need essences at all. If you examine why he uses the word “flattens” here, it tells a great deal about Smith. He equates the Scholastic ideology of substance and essence with hierarchy and says that “it is , as always, the loss of substance, of *hierarchy* in fact,

¹³⁵⁵ Other advocates of a correspondence theory of religion and poetry are Plato, Donne, Blake Rimbaud, Verlaine and others.

¹³⁵⁶ Smith, Wolfgang, Ancient Cosmology Ibid. pg 145

that leads to democratization of what remains.” (emphasis mine)
“Democratization” is presumably the “nothingness” that is “flattened” if you get rid of Scholastic ideology. So Smith hates modern science because it tends to support democracy. He is sad about sharing with others. Existence is only good for the chosen elite, he thinks. Transcendence is merely the essences of things made into a mental mirage and people call this idea god. The elaborate construction of the Platonic idea of God as extrapolated analogies built up into an edifice of fake Eidos or gods can only be maintained by political fiat. Here we are back in theocratic fascism again.

No wonder Smith likes the Inquisitor Bellarmine and was glad that Galileo was attacked by the Inquisition and put under house arrest. This turns out to be Smith’s greatest fear, he is terrorized that delusional ideas like essence should be kept out of science. His distinction between the corporeal and the physical is already muddleheaded. But he goes further and says that when one reduces the corporeal to the physical, “one destroys the dimension of transcendence, verticality, of “the above”. The celestial is reduced to the terrestrial; the cosmos is homogenized—democratized, one could almost say”

--- Yes, exactly. What he fears is people, humanity, earth and reality. He hates fairness and equality. We don’t need fictional systems of adult make-believe like the Aquinian, Eckhartian and Augustinian systems that Smith devoted his life to. He is welcome to languish in all that monastic and transcendental Eucharistic nonsense in private. But it is not reality. The reality is that those who Smith admires most , say Augustine, were anti-intellectual cranks. Augustine even admits this openly when he attacks curiosity, the fountain of science and says:

“There is another form of temptation, even more fraught with danger. This is the disease of curiosity. It is this that drives us to try and discover the secrets of nature which are beyond our

understanding, which can avail us nothing and which man should not wish to learn”¹³⁵⁷

This sort of cramped and toxic view of science and inquiry led to the Dark Ages, over which anti-intellectuals like Augustine presided in repressive glory. To call curiosity a “disease” is such an ignorant thing to say, it takes one breath away. Children are naturally curious. Beating it out of them with repressive nuns and priests pounding desks while discoursing on hell with not solve the problem Religion extolls religious ‘fitness’, which is really the inculcation of delusions as religion has no real claim to increasing human evolutionary fitness. Augustine is virtually condemning of every human and animal child in the world---all of which are intensively curious. But then Augustine was childless and hated sex above all else. The absurdity of the Catholic church derives from such nonsense as Augustine and others write.

Augustine cares about the abstract “intellect” and deifies imaginative make believe in gods..... goes on to write that if we “obliterate hierarchy and nothing at all remains, in a word, ontological homogeneity is tantamount to non-existence” This is really outlandish stuff. Smith is terrorized by the thought of that his god delusions will be ‘flattened’ and his geocentric delusions will collapse. Democracy is not the evil he imagines. When gods dissolve as they inevitably do, nothing is lost really. When I gave up Gods, the world was so much clearer and better. I had my own ironic “road to Damascus” and the ‘scales’ of religion finally fell off my eyes. The sky is no longer an “icon” the stars are not symbols, species are what they are and need not be denigrated as not being human. Everything has its own worth.

Smith and other creationists do not yet realize that the French Revolution already happened. All that ends when Hierarchy is gotten rid

¹³⁵⁷ Quoted in Dawkins, The God Delusion page 132-133

of is decadent gods, kings, and phony bloodlines of heredity are abolished. It is a good thing that geocentrism is gone and that the sun is no longer a symbol of esoterist 'gnosis' . "Gnosis" was merely the false vanity of elitist and theocratic autocrats anyway. Smith wrote that science is the "Bible of the Anti-Christ" which is crazy nonsense. The bible was a fabrication and the anti-Christ is merely another made up fiction to complement or compensate for the invented and mythic Christ. Smith tries to claim that scientists are the "perverse race" that St Malachy referred to in some bogus prophecies he made. He wants to make scientists into a race everyone should hate. Strange that Smith would try to reduce scientists to a "race", as if they were despised and deformed.¹³⁵⁸ Smith is a racist in disguise, a man full of hate and prejudice who hides these behind exalted metaphysics. This sudden need to express a racist hatred against scientists is curious, as if evokes anti-Semitism of racism against Native Americans of Africans. But this is what happens when you put essences before existences, and denigrate people without real evidence. Scientists are not a race and not perverse either.

So Smith's book The Wisdom of Ancient Cosmology is certainly not wise and really it is a very bad book that recommends that we go back to the theocratic tyranny of Innocent the III and Aquinas. In his conclusion Smith creates a plea for inequality and hierarchy. He wants to go back to Platonic autocracy, Catholic dictatorship, in a word, spiritual fascism. He hates democracy. Democracy causes our universe to "flatten" he says repeatedly, as if trying to convince himself. Actually flat earth was totally the creation of Christians. But never mind, Smith is out for "verticality" another word that is a code word or jargon for inequality and dictatorships. He wants "verticality" and 'inwardness', unaware that

¹³⁵⁸ Smith writes about multi Worlds theory with bitter humor that "It appears that in the egalitarian age even universes have been accorded equal rights. Whatever might be said for these theories, equating them with democracy or rights is merely reduction ad absurdum.

“verticality” is a meaningless category,¹³⁵⁹ and “inwardness” is a word for subjectivity and a refusal to admit there is a real world outside us. Smith “feels” the holy spirit told him ‘within’ that Christian Gnosis is sublime so it must be true and Smith feels obliged to write all sorts of pompous books quoting church fathers proving the irrational. Christian gnosis is really just a gossamer figment of the ancient imagination, made up by monks and scholars feeding one each other’s fictional insights. Religion is a mistake of false analogies and misunderstood essences. Smith is prone to a romantic irrationalism. In a nutshell Smith creates his ‘truth’ out of thin air.

Smith is no scientist, though he pretends to be one. He is metaphysical Trump, an irrationalist who wants inequality, to increase the disparity between the poor and the rich, to make life harder for the middle class, to give more power to elites and unjust leaders, more hierarchy and division. The main point of hierarchy is to promote the priests and believers by spreading irrational hatreds and racist essentializations. Those who do not believe are “sinners”, devils or the profane. Smith loves these vague essentializations, vague generalizations, as it is the preferred mode of thinking of the irrational.

Smith ends his book with a big embrace of Hossein Nasr, a self-appointed “Shaykh” who was involved with Schuon for years and tries to cover up for him. Nasr says that Smith’s easily debunked book is not

¹³⁵⁹ Schuon claimed to be “vertical” in his marriages, namely, God blessed them “esoterically” whereas his “exoteric” marriages were meaningless. This is self-serving nonsense. Smith’s use of the concepts verticality and esoteric are similar, he uses jargon that has no real meaning. I have known a few hundred “esoteric” pretenders and I can tell you, not a single one of them had any real superiority over anyone I’ve met who believes in no religion at all. On the contrary in fact, so called ‘atheists’ I have known, in many cases, are kinder and better people, smarter and less prone to bragging. The claim to possess “gnosis” is invariably a claim to special election and such people are prone to become intolerable cranks and elitists. Mr. Smith is a proud and arrogant man who misuses science and promotes himself as a sort of Christian magus or gnostic, when actually he is not an “elite” at all. He is a bit of an anti-science charlatan who wants to abuse reason and support superstition.

only one of the most profoundly amazing books ever written but that Smith's bogus notions about science have a basic "relation to perennial philosophy". This really very empty, outdated and ignorant "philosophy" is what Nasr says he has believed since "my student days". Unable to adapt to new information and adjust to new evidence, Nasr is proud of his bigoted dogmatism, his refusal to change or learn anything new. So Nasr was already deluded about the relation of science and religion since his student days and stubbornly holds to his ignorance out of false pride. Nasr and Smith want to foist this pseudo-scientific book on the world, since the book is published by Nasr's foundation for Traditional Studies. Unwilling to change, these are medieval thinkers really don't belong in our time, and those who accept their kooky ideas belong with other flat-earthers and creationists. They send their minds back to the dark ages when false analogies ruled everything and transcendence made a horrendous caste system possible. This is where they belong, in a past that was not good and no longer exists .

Traditionalism can only thrive where people want to return to ignorance, dogma and tyranny. It requires a backwards mentality, an outsider ethic of world despising fatalism and hate. There are few people who really want that. The Traditionalist message is addressed entirely to insiders and to those who might be profitably proselytized.

Traditionalism can only thrive where people want to make the world stupid and retrograde. Rama Coomaraswamy said to me that "for all practical purposes the Schuon group has kind of dissolved into nothing apart from a few staunch holders on." Those few hangers on are the ones who want to listen to pseudo-scientists like Wolfgang Smith.

Martin Lings put it best when he wrote that "in the modern world more cases of loss of religious faith are to be traced to the theory of evolution as their immediate cause than to anything else" --- this is correct and it is a good thing too. As Jonathon Miller points out in his

wonderful Atheism , A Brief History of Disbelief,¹³⁶⁰ historical understanding of the demise of religion is increasing dramatically. Darwinism clears away a lot of the superstitions and mysticism that has clogged the cultural mind for millennia. More and more people turn against the irrational, anti-scientific hucksters who exploit ignorance. The Darwinian theory is beautiful and true and you can see this if you will expose yourself to nature and how nature operates. Once a reasonable person sees the staggering evidence behind Darwin's theory it is all very clear. Darwinism is not an "anti-myth" as Wolfgang Smith maintains. Evolution is a beautifully humane¹³⁶¹ and profound theory backed up by reality, evidence, botany, chemistry, physics, microbiology, paleontology, genetics, biology and tests, retests, verifications and peer review. Point by point Darwinism trumps religion. In contrast the 'Religio Perennis' is just a rag-tag concert of cranks and poseurs promoting ambiguous myths and fictions all mashed together into an esoteric soup of pastiche superstitions.¹³⁶² Few stay in it long. It fades into antiquarian obscurity, as it should. In a decade or two it will be as dead as Greek and Roman gods; as dead as the fascism of Mussolini. That is to the good.

The anti-science movement has failed utterly. There are clearly things that are wrong with our world and need changing. Clearly too, science is regularly abused by corporations, insurance companies and governments. The way to change that is to get insurance companies out of medicine and limit, regulate and tax corporations into a more

¹³⁶⁰ All three episodes can be seen here: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dVsb0lxv_Kg

¹³⁶¹ A wonderful book about Darwin's humane and enlightened awareness of others is Adrian Desmond's Darwin's Sacred Cause, which shows how Darwin was passionately opposed the slavery that still existed in his time and sought to end it. It also shows how his *Origin of the Species* is designed to encourage the understanding of diversity, a fact that makes many right wingers like Smith furious, since they want control by the few, not the many.

¹³⁶² Ibid. The Transformist Illusion by Douglas Dewar. Review by Martin Lings

submissive role in our society.¹³⁶³ Corporate CEOs should be downsized, the 'compensation' packages severely cut and their wealth spread among employees and taxed for others. The unjust ideal of the CEO and the corporate mechanism of stockholder and board members needs to be changed, removed or altered to be fair and just towards those who actually do the work. Profit sharing is a good idea, and should be automatic public policy. There should be no large bonuses for CEO's, do to undue profits. There should be no destroying of companies because of CEO greed. Companies are about supporting and helping workers, not about giving huge profits to CEOs and neglecting those who actually do the work. Setting up systems and regulations that limit power and wealth a redistribute them is a good idea. Farming the world's poor regions for cheap labor should be penalized or at least taxed much more heavily so as to preserve labor and incomes here. People in other countries should be helped to preserve sustainable and ecological smart policy. But science itself should be strengthened and taught much more carefully and rigorously in our schools. The corporate takeover of colleges and universities must be stopped, Academic freedom preserved. Science has a great role to play in history and one of its many goals will be to give a retrospective account of religion: why it occurred and why it is no longer useful to humanity. What good religion did do can be isolated from delusional superstitions and developed in "secular" contexts.

Science must come closer to nature, not just read what it is by computer analysis. One thing that is clear is that nature is not all like capitalism or communism. Fields prosper when left alone to go wild,. whereas Laissez Faire economics leaves us global warming, dying seas and forests and the rich getting richer at the expense of life on earth.

¹³⁶³ It would be useful to hold insurance company executives personally responsible for the murders regularly committed by insurance companies when they deny care to policy holders when they are very sick. Many of them would then be in prison. This happens routinely and is largely unreported.

Evolution is more about sharing than it is about competition To see the world from the point of view of others species is to see how we ourselves behave badly. What is one to make of a species that emigrated from Africa 70,000 years ago and slowly migrates to China only to wipe out nearly all of the 10 million Saiga there, a deer like animal that roamed the plains of Mongolia like Bison used to roam north America? They all but extirpated the intelligent and engineering beaver to make top hats. It is hard to see that this would be done by a “superior species” or misnamed “masters of the planet”. To try to understand nature from the point of views of all living things is a real challenge. No one has done it yet, stuck, as so many are, on human advantages. Once we abandon myth and ideology it becomes what is all around us that matters, which is in fact, what matters. No spirits, just the facts of what you see, feel, hear, smell and taste. Science begins with the simple, the cells, weaving the rainbow of forms into the fabric of sea and forest and air, and this is what really matters, and we have only begun to study it as it is. .

Chomsky’s Cartesian Speciesism and the Failing of his Linguistics

“Descartes was by no means the fanatical rationalist he is often caricatured as. In fact he was quite wary of those "who take no account of experience and think that truth will spring from their brains like Minerva from the head of Jupiter"--- anonymous (CSM I, p. 21).¹³⁶⁴

¹³⁶⁴ http://metapsychology.mentalhelp.net/poc/view_doc.php?type=book&id=5110&cn=394

(Written in 2013-2015)

It might seem odd to include an essay on a modern philosopher in a book on religion, when Chomsky is in no way religious in any traditionalist sense. But I think he belongs here as a part of this book which after all is not just a book critical of religion but of ideology in general. My concern through these books has been to chart an analysis of ideology, power and abuses that occur because of both. Linguistics is so far a failure as a science of the nature and evolution of language. Language does not do well when used to study itself, just as math is not very informative about math.¹³⁶⁵ Linguistics, at least of the Chomskyan variety, is inherently political and the knock down drag out fights between Chomsky and his critics is really a political fight. Chomsky's theory is an example of chauvinistic speciesism.

Linguistics, like religion, is political in its basis. This is partly because language itself is a political event by its very nature. Language is a system of abstract symbols used by people to communicate, create alliances, love, fight others or live in social networks. As such, fights as to what language is invariably divide up along political lines, class lines, gender or age. Children probably have a lot to do with what language does and is. Yet, linguistics is invariably a speciesism, at least up till now, as humans have come to abuse animals as a matter of economics and diet. Symbols are abstract things and they are prone to denigrate nature and others, Since by its very nature language is a mode of

¹³⁶⁵ Russell and Whitehead tried to write a principles of Math, and ended up with tautologies and this was rather a dead end. Chomsky uses grammar to study language and this dead ended too, in his idea of Merge. The moral of these stories might be that symbols systems are empty abstractions and really mean very little apart from how they are used. They are constructed tools and suggest very little as evidence of themselves. Since Chomsky is very likely mistaken, the answer might be that language is not usefully studied except as a way of communicating, and thus akin to brains and living, animals and nature. This would seem obvious. But in linguistics today this is actually a radical suggestion.

communication of human centered thought between people, it largely ignores nature and animals, which people wish to see as inferior to them, even though they are not. Chomskyeen linguistics is in the dark ages on this subject and is a good example of speciesism and human centered chauvinism.

The speciesism of linguistics and of language itself can be changed only when linguistics starts admitting its prejudicial and political nature. As of yet, neither Chomsky or those who hate him have been able to admit their political ideology or their speciesism. I realized that these people are incapable of objectivity about language and hide their politics behind a pose of objectivity. This makes contemporary linguistics theories delusional and probably more or less worthless as science. So those who believe that Chomsky, Postal, Behme, Evans or Pinker are actually talking about what language and evolution is, are probably wrapped up in one or another ideological or religious fervor. So it is totally appropriate to write about this in this book, as this is a book about the political nature of the religions and ideologies of our time.

Since language and linguistics are used by these academics to sustain political ideologies, it is not really an effort find out how human language works or evolved in animals, birds and primate species, as Darwin wished. It is useful to trace some of the implications of their delusions. Perhaps we can return to the program that Darwin already outlined, which has been neglected until now. Language is a system of human centered abstractions and this is amply reflected in the destruction of nature and other animals all over the earth. To study language is thus to study human beings, and this can only be done if one gives up the vanity of human centeredness.

Linguistics merely reflects this political chauvinism, in the case of both Chomsky and his critics. How are ideas and words used to exploit and control others? This is possible on the left as well as the right. This is why I discuss Chomsky and his enemies in this chapter, as he is not really a scientist, but a bit of a cult leader and romantic speculator who uses science to promote himself, while never quite coming up with evidence to support his theories. He claims to be a scientist, but I don't think he actually is. He is in fact a charismatic political figure and one that specializes in journalistic political commentary of an international nature, while promoting himself as a sort of language guru for his followers. He has little to do with language anymore. Most of his work is a critique of U.S. government actions and failures. He is good at that. I like many things he writes. I think his critique of corporate culture is brilliant and largely true. But I am convinced that Chomsky's linguistic ideology has features that are very much part of the short sighted nature of his politics and are present in his linguistics as well, which are not part of science¹³⁶⁶ but rather closer to a political religion. He is not at all a traditionalist and indeed, he helped me see through the delusions of traditionalism, so I am not without some sympathetic gratefulness to the

¹³⁶⁶ Christina Behme writes in her "A Potpourri of Chomskyan Science", Jan. 2015_ "Chomsky's views about language evolution reveal the full extent of the double standards evident throughout. He ridicules the work of an entire field, without ever citing the views he considers problematic. His own view is put forward authoritatively as the only rational option. This creates the impression that he is popularizing tidbits of a massive body of scientific work he has conducted. Yet, no supporting evidence is cited, and none of his speculations are based on work he has completed himself."

Elsewhere she writes the same thing but adds to it:

"Chomsky creates the impression that he is quoting tidbits of a massive body of scientific work he has conducted or is intimately familiar with. Yet his speculations reveal a lack of even basic understanding of biology, and an unwillingness to engage seriously with the relevant literature. At the same time, he ridicules the work of virtually all other theorists, without spelling out the views he disagrees with. A critical analysis of the 'Galilean method' demonstrates that Chomsky uses appeal to authority to insulate his own proposals against falsification by empirical counter-evidence. This form of discourse bears no serious relation to the way science proceeds."

man himself. I repeat, he is not evidently religious¹³⁶⁷, but he uses ideas and behaves very much as a cult leader, as he is an ideologue. This book is partly about the intersection of religion and politics. Discussing Chomsky as charismatic myth maker is fitting in a book that questions the fecundity of mythmaking whether it occurs in linguistics or in religion. In the process of analyzing what Chomsky did and how he failed, I think I might discover some things about how ideology works and how one can abuse it to create a cult like influence on the society around him.

Chomsky is not a cult leader in the classic sense I outlined earlier, but his group has cult like characteristics, a cult of personality certainly, as well as some tendencies to charismatic bluster and dishonesty. But it is not a destructive cult, for the most part, but more of an academic one, which is rare. They do tend to bash or shun anyone who strays too far from the Master's pronouncements. Certainly people have been hurt by the Chomsky cult. While I might agree with things Chomsky has written and he is strongest on analysis of corporations and media as they impact and recent U.S institutional policy and international studies, I have stayed pretty clear of being overly influenced by him and do not adulate him. But even in this area where he really is an expert, there are some pretty strange mistakes and errors of judgment.¹³⁶⁸ Chomsky has created, perhaps without meaning to, a political religion, or shall we say a religion of politics. His linguistics have largely failed. Why that happened is what I will mostly discuss here.

There are many critiques of Chomsky's linguistics that clearly have a political motivation.¹³⁶⁹ I find such critiques repulsive myself, with the

¹³⁶⁷ Though he has connected himself rather closely to liberation theology in Latin America and to a Sufi in the middle east.

¹³⁶⁸ George Monbiot discusses some of these on his website.

¹³⁶⁹ that of Chomsky former student Paul Postman, for instance. Postman is a linguist and has some interesting things to say about Chomsky, but a lot of his ire is political. As I have shown elsewhere politics and religion are very similar things. But there are other critics of Chomsky

exception of Christina Behme's perhaps, which I largely agree with, though it is obviously politically motivated, though I think she is largely unconscious of how this is so. She often gets her facts right. But there are real hatchet jobs of Chomsky's ideological linguistics on the far right, which do not really address what language might be.

I studied Chomsky in various contexts for decades. eventually I began to have real doubts about him. His linguistics theories turn out to be political at root. My critique of him not a right wing diatribe, but nor is it a left wing submission to his political cult of personality. Again, I have often, though not always, agreed with many of Chomsky's political ideas. But there is a religious aspect to Chomsky's politics---a certain cultishness in his bearing and followers that concerns me. A very different cup of tea is Howard Zinn. Certainly I admired Howard Zinn when I was getting my Master's in history and liked the inquiry of anyone who was willing to question unjust power and help the underclasses. But history is a different thing than language and it is much harder to hide one's politics in history. I felt a great deal of warmth toward Zinn both in his persona and as a writer. Chomsky has tried to help the underdog in various contexts too, and I appreciate that. But I never felt a similar warmth with him. He always struck me as somehow machine like, and dogmatic, cold and calculating. So in this essay I will be questioning Chomsky more as a cult figure than as a geopolitical analyst and historian. Though I do think Chomsky has mangled the history of science in some ways, but that will come up later.

Steven Pinker, who has his own, more bourgeois politics, writes in one context that "Chomsky's theory need not be treated ... as a set of cabalistic incantations that only the initiated can mutter" I am not sure I

who are so rabid as to be absurd. I am not one of those. I am a man of the left, however, so this critique of Chomsky does not have politics or religion as its starting point.

agree with this. Actually, for most of the last 50 years, it has been a cabal headed out of MIT. Chomsky's very abstract and formalistic computations are idealized and have little to do with actual language use, with nature or with language as it may have evolved in a Darwinian way. His refusal to use the usual scientific parameters to check his work by peer review and replication has insured a very insular ideology. Only his close followers know what he is doing, and even they seem to get it wrong quite often. Chomsky himself often seems confused about what he has created. Pinker notes that "I would say that the problem with Chomsky is rather that with such a clever mind, such impressive erudition, and such formidable rhetorical skills, he has the power to push an *idée fixe* arbitrarily far"... Pinker also says that in Chomsky's linguistic and political ideology,

"we are seeing a fundamentally romantic view of human nature, in which people naturally cooperate and create without the need for external incentives, until these faculties are stifled by malign social institutions. We also see an all-encompassing moralistic theory of political and historical causation – that world events can be understood as the intended outcomes of a morally odious agent, namely the United States and its allies. Tragedies, well-meaning blunders, painful tradeoffs, human limitations, least bad options, historic changes in contemporary standards of political conduct—none of these play a role in Chomsky's causal model. Disciplinary expertise and training are beside the point – when you're determined to advance an all-encompassing theory, intellectual and scholarly power can work to your ultimate disadvantage in terms of providing an accurate rendering of reality.

see: <http://www.cosmoetica.com/DSI4.htm>

Pinker is right about this. Chomsky is driven by a nearly 'spiritual' ambition to impose his romantic and rationalist ideology, even if the facts do not fit it. He tries to "advance an all-encompassing theory", a quasi-religion. This is more dogma than science, and more like Aquinas—or Descartes--- than Darwin. Darwin was fact driven, an explorer and a man who loved experiment, studied barnacles, sailed around the world and studied pigeons, animals and birds. He did real science. Chomsky knows little about animals or nature and disliked experiments. He was a creature of academia and cities, better at interviews than observation of non-humans.

Chomsky has often been disdainful of Darwin, empiricism and facts, avoiding peer review and the normal avenues of scientific research. Besides not like doing experiments, none of his "discoveries" has any scientific basis. His system is made up of an elaborate and eccentric nomenclature made up out of arcane computations that have little to exhibit outside of abstract and imagined grammatical fancy. This is not science, but rather theory construction of a nearly medieval sort. Daniel Dennett shows this effort to side step or undermine evolution rather conclusively in his book Darwin's Dangerous Idea, which discusses the rather bad effects of Stephen Jay Gould on Chomsky. John Maynard Smith notes that Gould's ideas "are hardly worth bothering with". Chomsky's rather dogmatic, rationalist and prophetic romanticism is true in both his linguistic and his political work. But while Chomsky's political work is a continuation of the French Revolution and the effort to question unjust power, his science work is really conservative and in some ways a throwback to Descartes and the rationalism of the 1600's as well as going off the deep end into Gould's fantasies of "exaptations" and other architectural fictions. Chomsky's Cartesian fantasies do not stand up well. Christina Behme has made a convincing case that his work is not really Cartesian at all. But, in some respects he is a reactionary throwback to the 17th century and its mentality of nature as

a “possession” and an object of conquest. This is “Cartesian” in the worst sense. Chomsky’s humanism has some very supremacist features that makes his political thought highly questionable, and perhaps hypocritical.

It is true that he opened up language to more serious study around the world and he deserves credit for that. No one denies that. But there is a consensus of doubt and disapproval of Chomsky’s linguistics that has been growing into a chorus. His theories bore no real fruit and are now a hindrance to further inquiry. Some of those in this chorus are John Searle, Daniel Dennett, Stephen Pinker, Dennis Dutton. George Monbiot, Paul Postal, Christina Behme, Vyvyan Evans and many others. Collectively these critics suggest that Chomsky’s language theories are largely a failure. My reasons for thinking this are somewhat different than theirs. But I am joining this chorus of skepticism and doubt in this essay. I think the discipline of linguistics is largely bankrupt and not just because of Chomsky, but because of the subject itself is inherently political and so far prevents any real scientific inquiry into the nature and evolution of language. Here are my reasons, which are partly in agreement with others and partly different than they..

Over a number of recent years, I have been thinking about Chomsky views on nature and the subject of animals in his work. Indeed, I am not a linguist but trained as an artist and historian, with a deep interest in science. But I can see an ideology and trace its effects. The ideas at the basis of Chomsky’s inquiries were interesting and I tried to grasp what he is teaching and how he sees philosophy. I became interested in Chomsky mostly as a linguist in the mid-1980’s, when he was really more of a philosopher and linguist than he subsequently

became. I read him along with Wittgenstein¹³⁷⁰, Michael Dummett, Ernest Gellner, A. J. Ayers and Bertrand Russell, and Feyerabend. I was enamored of him at one point, though not to the degree that I enjoyed Zinn, who was a much nicer and more generous person. I met Chomsky at Cleveland State University a number of times and found him rather a hard person personally. I liked his political bravery. But even though his analysis of corporations and advertising is accurate, there are real problems with his politics. He alienates far more people than he inspires and his expertise is very narrow. One of his main promoters, David Basimian, calls him a “Sufi Sage”, which is absurd and embarrassing. A lot of his efforts appear to be more about making himself a kind of cult leader, than changing the problems he sometimes describes accurately. At a certain point perhaps 10 or more years ago I wished to grasp how Chomsky was seeing science and animals and that was the beginning of my deeper questioning of his ideology.

Both these subjects, animals and science, have become increasingly dear to me as I age.. I was willing to extend Chomsky a great deal of leeway on what first appears to be a kind of speciesism in his thought. In a sporadic correspondence with him over several years,¹³⁷¹ I

¹³⁷⁰ Bertrand Russell wrote an interesting forward to Gellner’s book Words and Things in which he condemns Wittgenstein and the study of language divorced from the world. He excoriates language philosophy for being only about language and for “a dreary exegesis of the nuances of usage” as well as an escapist mysticism. Chomsky tends in this direction too and I cannot imagine Russell would have supported the way that Chomsky theory developed. Chomsky and Russell share a political bravery but are worlds apart on philosophy. It is quite true that Chomsky did not like Wittgenstein much. But what he disliked in him was his empirical quality, which means Chomsky was even more on the “mentalism” side of things, which is what Russell is criticizing. Russell did not like the ‘mentalism’ of Wittgenstein and would not have liked it in Chomsky either, I imagine..

<http://www.ualberta.ca/~francisp/NewPhil448/RussellIntroGellner1959.pdf>

¹³⁷¹ This correspondence actually started in 1996, when I first met Chomsky in Cleveland, I corresponded with he and Zinn at that time. That deteriorated quickly when I tried to arrange a debate between the two men on the subject of “objectivity in history”. They had very conflicted views on the matter which I would have liked to see explained. Neither wanted to explore these obvious differences. I began my inquiry on animals in 2008 and that went very sporadically for 5 years, with much disagreement and strife. Indeed, I found him more or less impossible to talk to in any reasonable way. But his answers were very troubling until at last I could not side with him

discussed my doubts and concerns. It was a rocky and bad correspondence. One of the worst I have ever had, actually. He was prickly, difficult and dictatorial. Prone to be paranoid, he likes to excommunicate those who do not agree with him. It is not easy to talk to him, as anyone who has tried, who is not a devotee, must know. As Stephen Pinker said, Chomsky can “blow off critics as stupid or evil, explain away embarrassing data, and rationalize mistakes at will”. He did all these things to me. He struck me as a narrow minded old man who cannot be wrong or admit any mistakes, who never changes and if he is wrong about something, he acts proud of his ignorance and accuses others before admitting anything. But that aside I kept looking at his work. Slowly it dawned on me that a generous willingness to grant him the benefit of the doubt was misplaced. My original doubts about him were unfortunately confirmed. Indeed, communication with him was not just very difficult, but impossible. I persisted and this essay is the result of my 15 or 16 year inquiry into his work. I should add that he has been totally uncooperative with me on this, and that is not surprising, as I started to question his competence.

I have doubts that Chomsky's linguistics are even science, much less that they are valid science. ¹³⁷² My inquiry about Chomsky's view of

at all as regards his linguistics, Descartes or animals and nature..

One thing worth noting was how he avoided being wrong about anything. He liked to prove me wrong about this or that, mostly trivial things, and I do not mind admitting when I am wrong, But he was wrong about much bigger things and was unable to admit any mistake on anything. His non-scientific vanity disturbed me. This is certainly not the attitude of a real scientist, who is able to see when he or she is mistaken. He would avoid or ignore all serious questions and nitpick on things that did not matter. Finally when I showed he was mistaken, he quickly attacked and implied there is something wrong with me and closed down the conversation, as if excommunicating someone were his only option to save face. This is not the behavior of an honest person but of a cult leader or autocrat.

¹³⁷² Somewhere around the year 2000 I became aware that he did not have a high opinion of animals from an essay the late Val Plumwood wrote about Chomsky. It is a good essay, which basically accuses Chomsky of having a hypocritical and blinkered vision that refuses liberation politics to animals and nature generally.. I corresponded with Plumwood about this and other things. She was a very interesting Australian philosopher and the polar opposite of Chomsky. She actually knows a lot about nature and animals, unlike most philosophers. But she dislikes

animals did not go well. His views on nature are archaic. It is obvious, now that so many species are disappearing or under the threat of extinction that rights for animals must be part of an ongoing liberation of beings. Centuries ago “women, slaves, and chattels” were grouped as one category under rich men who alone had rights. Institutional slavery is largely gone in Europe and America and women have gained more rights relative to men, while animals and nature still lag far behind. Only animals and nature itself remain without effective rights, except in certain countries and in some cases. I was very glad to see Bolivia under Evo Morales has made efforts to apply the idea of Nature’s Rights, calling it the “Law of Mother Earth”.

I discussed the idea with Chomsky who mocked and laughed at the idea. “Rocks have no rights” he said, dogmatically. Henry Thoreau disputes this and says that in rocks, in wildness, “is the preservation of the world” ¹³⁷³ He said the trees in his backyard have no rights either. ¹³⁷⁴

rationalism, and this is problematic. I can’t go far into that here, but suffice it to say that abandoning reason is just as problematic as Chomsky’s excessive regard for it, to the point of neglecting the empirical. See Plumwood, Val, “Noam Chomsky and Liberation Politics” Here <http://www.bmartin.cc/pubs/96versions-of-freedom.pdf>

¹³⁷³ I wrote of his Aug. 30, 1856 Journal entry that
 “ This also is Henry’s Moonlight book in a nutshell, if you ignore the spiritual needs he has.. It goes back to Kataadn and the attitude to matter he understands there. “Contact, contact”--- - rocks, trees, wind on our cheeks! the solid earth! the actual world!” Now, all the world is simplified to rocks. From matter arises all life. He is saying that if only humans would stop their need of slaves, and stop exploiting others, especially exploiting the earth, there might be hope for human beings. This is the logical outcome of one who believed that “in wildness is the preservation of the world” Little did he know, that in our day, humans are even thinking to exploit the minerals of other planets or the moon for the profiteering of Big Business. They have all but destroyed the earth, time to move on and exploit other planets. He is saying that if we only cared for the earth as much as we care for meteors, such as we put in the Kaaba, or museums, there might be hope for us, maybe even our regeneration.

¹³⁷⁴ Chomsky is prone to these rather childish distinctions. He writes for instance

“To say that language is not innate is to say that there is no difference between my granddaughter, a rock and a rabbit. In other words, if you take a rock, a rabbit and my granddaughter and put them in a community where people are talking English, they’ll all learn English. If people believe that, then they believe that language is not innate. If they believe that there is a difference between my granddaughter, a rabbit, and a rock, then they believe that

Trees do have rights and should be allowed to grow, if they assert themselves, as they inevitably do. Suppressing tree's rights is a regular part of human behavior, but this does not make it just or right. Cutting down trees should always be carefully weighed and considered and only done if there is real reason and justification to do it. There must be a system of rights whereby the interests of trees and other beings can be considered and weighed against humans. If the trees the Ivory-Billed Woodpecker lived in had rights, the Ivory Bill would not be extinct now. Trees have rights, as do rocks and Ivory Billed Woodpeckers.

I see no reason humans should be allowed to burn down rain forests for meat cattle as they do in the Amazon, killing off half the forests there. In the Himalayas they destroy nature for minerals. In the mountains of west Virginia or the coal tar sands of Canada they dig and blow up huge tracks of land, whole mountains, just in order to satisfy human greed, while putting profits before destroying the earth with global warming. The denial of rights to nature has to do with human greed. The real conflict is between nature's rights and human greed. I've seen with my own eyes how 97% of all Redwoods are now cut down and no old growth to speak of exists anymore on private land. One cannot trust the market to have an "invisible hand" to stop this predation. The notion that we "possess" nature is one of the main obstacles to preserving biomes and saving endangered species. Yet Chomsky upholds this archaic ideology.

Living and non-living things, obviously related, need to start being accorded rights. The earth itself must have rights prior to ours and certainly prior to anyone property rights.. Beings on earth, obviously

language is innate." (Chomsky 2000: 50)

We are fundamentally related to rabbits in a direct way through evolution and we come from a planet that is made of elements(rocks). Darwin was quite able to deal with these differences without losing sight of their similarity and coherence. Chomsky does not have a clue about to do this this. In a nut shell, this is why Darwin is leagues ahead of Chomsky in nearly every way.

interrelated and inter-dependent, are increasingly under attack from greed and the artificial concept of ownership, which is a human fiction.

Chomsky has claimed that he has been pushing the idea of nature's rights all along, which I do not think is true.¹³⁷⁵ Language has always been about those in power defying what is correct language and what is low class, whose speech is more important than others, and who is an authority and who is not. But Chomsky's idea of Nature's Rights is really truncated and applies only to nature being preserved in the interests of humans. "Trees have no rights", he writes me. Tension for the human world. Brave tree sitters, who have tried to stop the slaughter of ancient trees would disagree. Me too. In a recent essay he asks: "Who will uphold the rights of nature? Who will adopt the role of steward of the commons, our collective possession?"¹³⁷⁶ So, it turns out Chomsky is an anthropocentric thinker, and believes everything is owned by humans. "Our collective possession"-this is Marxist anthropocentrism in a

¹³⁷⁵ Paul Postal has shown rather convincingly that Chomsky is less than scientific about how he goes about his scholarship. Postal is a politically motivated critic of Chomsky, but the facts in this essay appear to bear further fact checking, unlike some of the other of Chomsky's critics like Dershowitz or Horowitz who seem to froth with seething hatred of Chomsky and have few cogent arguments against him. Postal's criticism of Chomsky appears to have some justification in terms of fact, but it is mixed up with all sorts of political invective, overtly or covertly. This is less true of Christina Behme criticism of Chomsky. But in her case, she cites Postal as one of her main advisors. She writes: "Finally, I am greatly indebted to Paul M. Postal for replying in an incredibly helpful

manner to my unfocused questions, is how she puts it in her PHD Thesis. Elsewhere she says that Chomsky's "science is just as problematic as his 'Politics'" I don't think his politics are entirely mistaken, and It would be helpful to jettison all this squabbling implicit in linguistics study and start linguistics over from scratch, on a Darwinian basis and abandon Chomsky, Postal and others. Chomsky is hardly the only one that writes corrupted language theory. See Postal's essay "A Corrupted Linguistics" here:

ling.auf.net/lingbuzz/001634/current.pdf

¹³⁷⁶ Quoted from Chomsky: "How Do We Defend Ourselves from the Corporate and Imperial Forces That Threaten Our Existence?" Znet, July 6 2013

nutshell, not really different that capitalist possession, just generalized in a socialist human centeredness. This is a repulsive attitude. Evidently he thinks we own whale sharks, pangolins,¹³⁷⁷ Aye-Ayes and Redwood trees, as if they did not evolve on their own, in their own way. Evolution is about survival and any species that survives has achieved that through asserting its rights or its power to continue. This is what nature's rights really is: Nature's right is the right of each species to pursue its evolutionary course. No species is possessed by any other. The more time one spends with many species the more one learns to respect the hard work and amazing evolutionary achievement of each species. Chomsky has never acquired this respect for nature or evolution and the implicit concept of rights that was part of Darwin's discovery.

So possession is not Nature's Rights at all, nature is nowhere a "collective possession". Anyone who thinks this could never understand how language evolved, since he does not understand evolution itself, which has no favorites. Val Plumwood points out in her excellent Feminism and the Mastery of Nature that the notion of nature as a possession is misogynistic. Chomsky is prone to a speciesist anthropocentric view of nature. It is hard to imagine such a progressive man could have such a backward view of nature. But there you have it, His attitudes constitute a rank speciesism. He is part of the problem and in no way the solution. His theory of language is hopelessly human centered and thus not Darwinian and thus false on the face of it. Plumwood rightly notes that Chomsky has fallen for what she rightly calls the "pitfalls or Guruism" and that he does not "articulate the plurality of struggles and experience of oppression, suffered by women, nature and animals, as well as others outside the middle class of

¹³⁷⁷ Pangolins are illegally imported into China because they like to eat their meat and wrongly believe pangolin scales promote lactation. This not an unusual case of animals being harmed do to irrational superstitions and religious belief.

Chomsky's rather narrow view of social democracy.”¹³⁷⁸ This could not be more exactly right.

As Thoreau said “in wildness is the preservation of the world”. To protect wild beings and honor their right to exist is what we need, unless all the world, except humans, is to be a caged zoo where all animals and trees are our “possession”. Cage all of nature and you cage humanity too. But then Chomsky knows little about nature and does little to help nature. What he does do is flatter human conceit and need of power, though he claims to be against that in other writings..

The origin of the idea of Nature's Rights is to be found in many sources, from Thoreau, to Abbey, Plumwood and many others who thought of the reality if not the actual phrase. Marc Bekoff recently called it “Wild Justice” Bolivia passed a their Law of the Mother Earth and Ecuador had their Permanent Rights of Nature Tribunal in Quito, Ecuador in 2014. Tom Linsey has been fighting for it for in courts for years with his CELDF. I started using the phrase Nature's Rights on my own back in 1999 or so, but the concept is not mine but belongs to whoever grasps what it means. My own view of it, like Plumwood's, was born of close observations of species lives in the natural world over a long period of time. ¹³⁷⁹ Chomsky has yet to grasp it. He has an amazing will to not understand what is in front of him, sometimes,. I suspect he is prone to this sort of rhetoric to hide his ambitions and the fact that his pose of scientist has not as much basis in fact as he would wish us to believe.. ..

It is not hard to demonstrate how wrong he can be. Recently,

¹³⁷⁸ Plumwood in Versions of Freedom. Sydney, 1996. Pg 27-30.

¹³⁷⁹ Her essay on being attacked by a Crocodile in Kakadu park in Australia and her essay on her pet Wombat are well worth reading on this subject. She was a great observer of the natural world. Another writer worth reading an animals and birds is Barry Kent McKay who lives in Toronto Canada, and who has written brilliantly on nature. See also his amazing series of birds around the world, as he is perhaps the first artist to really extend Darwin's vision of birds to the whole of the world's birds.

Chomsky claimed the Bolivian Law of the Earth was really about human centered needs of the “commons”. He writes to me that “by referring to “rights of nature,” indigenous movements and others concerned with the fate of the species are underscoring our responsibility for the environmental commons” Ecuador has attempted to pass similar legislation.

This is not correct at all. He misread the Bolivian Law of Mother Earth. What it actually says is that beings and plants are not merely for human use. Their rights are intrinsic and not merely human centered as Chomsky imagines . Nature, or Mother Earth has laws Bolivia says and these are

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“ the right to life and to exist;

the right to continue vital cycles and processes free from human alteration;

the right to pure water and clean air;

the right to balance;

the right not to be polluted;

the right to not be affected by mega-infrastructure and development projects that affect the balance of ecosystems and the local inhabitant communities;

the right to not have cellular structure modified or genetically altered(this one is more complicated than the others)”

Nature’s Rights is about respecting all species, not giving one species ultimate “possession” as Chomsky claims. The Bolivian Law of Nature could be better, but it is a good introduction to the concept of Nature’s Rights.. Chomsky has not understood this idea.

He says in an essay, “Defending our Existence” that we must have a “worldwide struggle to preserve the global commons” and that this global

commons is “our common possession, to defend or to destroy.” ¹³⁸⁰This notion of possession of all of nature as ours is part of the fantasy of world dominion and common ownership of all of nature that goes back to the 16 and 1700’s when the ideology of private property was developed. This is indeed a Cartesian ideology and one that is repulsive and needs to be jettisoned. This goes very far back and we can already see this perverse ideology in Descartes, Chomsky’s sometimes hero and even to Aristotle, who says that

“we may conclude of those things that are, that plants are created for the sake of animals, and animals for the sake of men; the tame for our use and provision; the wild, at least the greater part, for our provision also”

No one owns nature and the conceit that we do is an utter fiction. The Communist tried to universalize the Lockean concept of private property and make all nature owned by the state or to be exact, that all property would be owned by the “dictatorship of the proletariat”. This also was horrendous and resulted in terrible environmental destruction, such as the emptying of Lake Aral, one of the biggest Lakes in the world. Communists and capitalists since the 1960’s have done of the harm to earth in the last 10 years. The oceans have also been treated as a “common possession” with disastrous results, many species going extinct and widespread pollution in all the seas. Global warming, extinctions pollution of the atmosphere, the list of destruction is nearly endless. Language and its inherent speciesism plays a big role in this. Chomsky’s notion of nature as a “common possession” is thus merely a restatement of the ideology of conquest, a variant of which was the idea of ‘manifest destiny’, and this ideology is already a total failure..

¹³⁸⁰ <http://www.zcommunications.org/how-do-we-defend-ourselves-from-the-corporate-and-imperial-forces-that-threaten-our-existence-by-noam-chomsky.html>

The premise that nature can be owned by anyone is a spiritual or metaphysical conceit, a fictional delusion. It shows the patriarchal domination of Chomsky's vision of nature. It is a potent fiction but a fiction nevertheless. No one owns the sun, diatoms, wild birds, insects or the Milky Way anymore than anyone had the right to own slaves, the sea, women or land. The abolishment of slavery shows just how this fantasy of ownership is ephemeral and arbitrary. One could say that one owns one's own body and perhaps some of the things that are close to oneself, but little is actually ours, almost everything we encounter in the world has other claims on it. Birds claim the trees in our back yards and have a right to them and fish claim a right to our lakes the streams, insects to our gardens and owls and moths to the night sky. The reversal of the ideology of ownership applied to nature requires the global approval of a notion of nature's rights. Such a Universal Declaration of Nature's Rights would be the basis of human rights and which would affirm and identify . the rights of species and biomes to exist independently of humans, as well as supply for the protection of species against human abuse and decimation. The Supreme Court has ruled that even corporations are entitled to certain legal rights, but animals "have no more rights than a pair of tennis shoes". Stephen Wise has rightly said. This is ridiculous and worthy of satire by a Jonathon Swift, since corporations are legal things and not beings, and are hardly the equal of living beings like animals, which are far more important.

Chomsky resists rights for nature and animals and he wrongly claims such rights are "incommensurate" with human rights. ¹³⁸¹ He makes these conservative and backward claims based on the archaic views of Cartesian philosophy. He says elsewhere that human concerns are alone worth pursuing, and he thinks animals and nature are more or

¹³⁸¹ Letter to the author

less irrelevant. But the fact is that to claim human rights and not extend rights to other species is hypocritical, since we are ourselves part of nature, born of evolution and fundamentally related to all other species, by evolution, and by existence on earth itself. Indeed, the only viable basis for a theory of rights is to ground all rights in nature's rights, which are prior to human rights, or rather, of which human rights are merely subset.

As I questioned Chomsky and analyzed his responses it became clear he had no rational defense of his position. He is clutched in an ideology that goes back to the earlier parts of the 20th century, when his human centered views were more average. His speciesist views on animals are inextricably connected with his career as a linguist and derive from Descartes and others. His views may also derive from his cultural origins, the fact he is meat eater and supports scientific testing on animals or other reasons that I know nothing about. His human centered and reactionary point of view contradicts his otherwise enlightened political attitudes and should be resisted and questioned. I began to see that his ideas about language are entwined with ideas about Descartes and animals, and these ideas should be questioned as well. I will outline these questions here....

When I read Chomsky's 2002 essay on "Biolinguistics", I first thought Chomsky had softened his earlier, rather speciesist views of animals as lesser beings. He had long held to a rationalistic "Cartesian" philosophy which he held onto as a sort of personal identity or 'brand' for his linguistic philosophy. He is something of a historian of the scientific philosophers of the 17th and 18th centuries, though I have doubts about the conclusions he draws from this history. He clearly misunderstood the notion of gravitation or magnetic fields and "action at a distance"

A lot of Chomsky's conclusions about science in the 17th century are questionable. He says for instance that gravity is a huge "mystery"¹³⁸² and that "scientists abandoned the animating idea of the early scientific revolution: that the world will be intelligible to us". No, no one abandoned that, they merely conceded that not everything was clear as yet, which should not have surprised anyone.

But the answer to the question of action at a distance did come. Actually, gravity is increasingly well known and is a part of the physical world and thus of causation, as is proven by the fact that human bone and muscle loss accelerate quickly in outer space, doing physical harm to astronauts that stay more than six months. To say that gravity is "action at a distance" and this fact defeats mechanism and proves that "all is mind" is hugely overstated and erroneous. There is no magical or spiritual action going on here, nor is it "mental" as Chomsky sometimes claims. Gravitational and magnetic fields are not mental but physical

¹³⁸² Chomsky uses the word "mystery" to hide all that he does not know about a given subject. So for instance in a recent essay, (2014) called "The Mystery of Language Evolution". Actually communications skills in many species tell us a great deal. But Chomsky has the bad habit of wanting to undermine any advance in understanding of other species. Chomsky makes the same mistake as the people that taught Nim Chimpsky 125 signs of sign language. Even more was accomplished with Koko, Washoe and other primates. Rather than acknowledge this Chomsky demeans it as he foolishly wants all primates to be human. It is an amazing feat that that the primates learned as much as they did, as it shows many of the same mental capacities are there in chimps Chomsky, ever the speciesist, disparages this and says ,

"Nim Chimpsky, the chimpanzee that produced the only public corpus of data in all animal language studies, produced signs considerably below the expected degree of combinatorial diversity seen in two-year old children (Yang, 2013), and with no understanding of syntactic structure or semantic interpretation.

Actually a great deal can be inferred from this experiment. They wanted him to be human and not chimp. That was the same mistake Chomsky makes in all his comparisons between animals and humans. Language is human centered and political in essence and until a linguist stops being human centered there will be no understanding of language evolution. One of Nim's caretakers concluded "What he needed... was to be with other chimps," Bob Ingersoll says. "Chimps don't need to be with humans. They need to have a chimp life.... Chimpanzees in captivity is just not where they ought to be. ... I would hope that one of the lessons that we learned from Nim's life is that keeping chimpanzees in cages is torture and really plays havoc on their mental health." Once we jettison the Chomsky model of language as useless, and start studying animals in the wild, much more will be learned about just how effective animal communication is. It is not human communication and should not be expected to be.

things, effects of matter.

He claims only the “ghost” is left in the analogy of the ‘ghost in the machine’. This conclusion is utterly unwarranted. The analogy of the ghost in the machine is not an accurate analogy to begin with. Chomsky seems to be indulging in a mystagogy of sorts. He suggests an analogy between gravity and “power of moving our body by our thoughts”, in Newton’s words. But that is merely electricity than enables that and electricity has to do with fields as Maxwell and Faraday showed, quite conclusively. Again, I doubt Chomsky can be trusted as an interpreter of the history of science.

Both gravity and thought are areas of science not well understood, but so what? That does not imply any analogy. The science at the basis of these is progressing. Thought appears to work by electricity and not by gravity. Chomsky appears to be confused. There are many things not yet understood by science. In “Turing on the “Imitation Game” Chomsky states that “thinking is a property of organized matter, alongside of other mysterious properties like attraction and repulsion.” What they have in common, Chomsky imagines, is that they “transcend the limits of mechanism”. This is pure imagination as magnetism is well understood as physical fields; it does not at all “transcend the limits of mechanism”. His understanding of the limits of mechanism are too narrow. This is an unwarranted surmise on Chomsky’s part that has no evidence at all in its favor.

Neither electromagnetism or gravity escape basic laws of physics, nor do movements of human bodies or our thoughts. Chomsky is almost in the realm of science fiction here, or religion in these speculations.. It is very unlikely that either gravity or the brain transcend causality or “mechanism”. The only ‘mystery’, still not understood is why gravity is only an attractive force and electromagnetic fields in contrast, repel and attract. But this is purely a physical question too, though Einstein’s

notion that gravity is an effect of the curvature of space time is difficult to understand in practical terms. But he does suggest that gravity travels at the speed of light, and is a wave, like light.

To summarize what I am saying here about Chomsky: there are physical forces in the world that suggest ‘action at a distance’ without actually being that, such as magnetism and gravity. These did not really bring Newtonian mechanics into question, though Chomsky mistakenly thinks they did. Pure Cartesian mechanics is rather too simple to explain much, but concepts like Michael Faraday’s and Clerk Maxwell’s idea of fields go far to explaining how the appearance of ‘action at a distance’ can happen, while yet the underlying facts are all physical and mechanical in the sense of being causal and having physical explanations.

Chomsky appears to have an interest in misunderstanding or suppressing the history of science here, but I have no idea why he would do that, though it appears to be a tendency he has.¹³⁸³ Or rather, I suspect he wants to negate empirical fact in favor of his detached rationalism. By avoiding peer review and dictating his results he can act as the Pope of Language, and many people fall for that. Not burdened by the requirements of the scientific method he can dictate his results without having to repeat any experiments. Science gets deformed by his politics again. He does this when he thinks he can, and this favoritism toward the solipsistic, the inchoate, the mysterious and the mental is also present in his language theory.

He imagines language is a mentalist, quasi-Platonic abstract phenomena, a mysterious part of people’s brains by genetic accident. He imagines that “We can understand theories about the world, but the

¹³⁸³ An interesting essay “On the Non-Existence of Cartesian Linguistics” by W. Keith Percival, can be found here; <http://people.ku.edu/~percival/CartesianLinguistics.pdf>

nature of the world itself is really unintelligible to us.”:¹³⁸⁴ which is not really accurate at all. Indeed, we know more and more about nature and the world every year, far more and more deeply than has ever been the case. But for someone who denies empiricism when it suits him, it is quite understandable he would deny that the world has become far more intelligible since Descartes died. He makes a common mistake, which is to extrapolate from the rather arcane and dubious theories of experimental physics to the facts of ordinary life. Many have done that, evoking Heisenberg or the puzzles of Quantum mechanics, but to extrapolate these things as general conclusions about actual existence and ordinary life is to make a big mistake. It is clear that Chomsky’s theories about the 17th century mechanics are mistaken.

Chomsky argues Descartes is the model we should have followed, though he also denies this too, when it suits him.¹³⁸⁵ Darwin should have been the model he followed. He tried, at least in his early career, to be true to the Cartesian tradition. Descartes is one of the first philosophers to begin to escape middle age dogmas and scholastic denial of experience and empirical observation. He had some good ideas. Foremost among them was his effort to create science as reductionist materialism. His ideas in this direction still have some useful and attractive features. But his rationalist approach could be used to avoid or side step actual

¹³⁸⁴ <http://zcomm.org/znetarticle/philosophy-language-making-sense/>

¹³⁸⁵ One of the best attempts to show how far Chomsky goes to abuse Descartes and project on him his own interests is Christina Behme’s *Cartesian Linguistics: From Historical Antecedents to Computational Modeling*

“Chomsky has little interest in the facts of history, but intends to use the suitably re-interpreted Cartesians as figurants or ventriloquist puppets on the Chomskyeian-Linguistics stage. For this reason I suggest that it is misleading to call Chomsky’s work *Cartesian Linguistics*.” (page 313) She is right to a degree that his linguistic theories are not Cartesian as he uses Descartes as a foil on which to project himself. But I think she misses the ways in which he is indeed, Cartesian, and why. Chomsky accepts the Cartesian notion of human centered domination. I think Behme has not gotten beyond this herself and so does not see it in Chomsky.

empirical study and it appears Chomsky did this to some degree. Descartes himself stressed empirical study on occasion, but his one foot in the scholastic is a real problem and created in Chomsky a reliance on rationalism and innatism that sometimes goes against fact and reality. In my own view this aspect of language, its abstract character, divorced in some many ways from reality, is precisely that aspect which is dangerous and which has helped create religions and systems of unjust power. It is here that Chomsky seems to be really on the wrong footing. As Christina Behme notes

“In the 1950s Chomsky’s promise to bring rigor and exactness to linguistics and to situate linguistic theorizing firmly within the natural sciences (Chomsky, 1957, 1965, 1966) clearly revived linguistics. However, 60 years later many of the initial promises remain unfulfilled. Chomskyeian science remains vague about the mental machinery that underwrites creative language use and has not provided testable hypotheses regarding the mechanisms that allow for language acquisition.”

The failure of his linguistics is partly due to his misunderstanding of Descartes and the shortcomings of rationalism. Language capacity might be innate, but not language itself, which is learned, laboriously, implying that language is cultural. Many things Descartes thought or said, particularly about animals, are archaic and medieval, inherited from archaic and backward Christian and Greek speciesism. There appears to be a psychological element of cruelty in Descartes too, which was evidently passed to his followers. Chomsky has endorsed efforts by his own followers to dismiss the facts about Descartes’ cruelty. But before I explain that I need to back up a little.

A few years ago, I had come across a quote from Chomsky made in an interview in which he said that the followers of Descartes had horrible

relations with animals. He writes:

“In Cartesian philosophy, for example, where it was assumed ... the Cartesians thought they had proven that humans had minds and everything else in the world was a machine. So there’s no difference between a cat and a watch, let’s say. It’s just the cat’s a little more complicated. You go back to the court in the seventeenth century, and big smart guys who studied all that stuff and thought they understood it would as a sport take Lady So-and-So’s favorite dog and kick it and beat it to death and so on and laugh, saying, this silly lady doesn’t understand the latest philosophy, which was that it was just like dropping a rock on the floor. That’s gratuitous torture of animals. It was regarded as if we would ask a question about the torturing of a rock. You can’t do it. There’s no way to torture a rock. The moral sphere has certainly changed in that respect. Gratuitous torture of animals is no longer considered quite legitimate.”

Naively, I took this to be a rare willingness on Chomsky’s part to question Descartes himself, who does indeed deserve to be questioned on this subject. I loved this comment by Chomsky and thought, wrongly, that it indicated a change in Chomsky from his more hard headed early days where Descartes seemingly could do no wrong. Had Chomsky opened his mind to ideas outside his rather narrow and archaic Cartesian rationalism? I was warming to the belief that he is a man who can change his views and wrote him to thank him and celebrate this.

To my great disappointment, I was mistaken to think Chomsky had changed and now cared about animals and nature. In my letter I praised Chomsky for this comment, glad he rejects cruelty that was inherent in the Cartesian view. He wrote me back and insisted he has not changed.

He was proud of never changing, it seemed. He went further and stated, falsely as it turns out, that Descartes had been slandered and only Descartes's followers and not Descartes himself had been cruel to animals. Linguistics for Chomsky is a sort of narcissistic religion, based on the false innatism of Descartes, and promoting language as a sort of solipsistic politics of the creative self. This is what his "I" language, freedom of infinite expressions and his theory of Merge is really about. It is a self-portrait of sorts, both political and religious and it inspires a very real cult following.¹³⁸⁶

He tried to maintain, wrongly, that Descartes had nothing to do with cruelty at all. To prove this he sent me an essay by a follower of his, Justin Leiber, purporting to prove Descartes innocent of the "myth" of cruelty to animals. But I saw right away that Leiber's essay is full of easily disproved errors. Leiber mistakenly claims that "'There is simply not a line in Descartes to suggest that he thought we are free to smash animals at will or free to do so because their behavior can be explained mechanically.'" Leiber is totally wrong. Leiber's essay is badly researched. Since Leiber is wrong Chomsky is too. Daniel Dennett is wrong too, as he also wrote an attack on animals, defending or rather excusing Descartes' really ignorant attacks on animals, using the same bogus essay that Chomsky uses. Dennett, like Chomsky Leiber and Descartes wrongly claim that animals don't feel or think or have consciousness.¹³⁸⁷

¹³⁸⁶ Chomsky's concept "Merge" has a lot in common with artificial constructions, such as the Christian concept of the Word, or the Hindu Om, In the latter, all the universe was supposed to be born from a single letter just as Chomsky images infinite word combinations come from a single mutation 60,000 years ago. This forced analogy really explains nothing, while seeming to be profound. Chomsky created Merge as the ultimate origin of his concept of language. His rationalism devolves into this reductionist solipsism. Merge is merely adding words or concepts together. This need of reducing language to a simple contraction is modeled on physics and does not explain much at all. Language is not physics. If Chomsky had tried to understand language based on Darwinism rather than physics he would have done far better.

¹³⁸⁷ See Dennett's "Animal consciousness: what matters and why"

Descartes said quite a bit about cruelty to animals and indulged in it himself. The incontestable truth is Descartes was a cruel man who thought that animals deprived of language cannot think and, therefore, are nothing but well-constructed, complex, unfeeling machines. Descartes proposed a dualistic division between the outside objective world and the inner subjective world. These are partly what Chomsky thinks, too.

Descartes himself wrote

“if you cut off the end of the heart of a living dog, and through the incision, put your finger into one of the concavities, you will clearly feel, every time, the heart shortens, if you press your finger and it stops pressing, every time, it lengthens” ¹³⁸⁸

Also in a letter to Mersenne of November 18, 1630 Descartes says that if ‘you whip a dog six or eight times, to the sound of a violin, the dog will whimper and tremble if it hears to sound again’.

Chomsky wrote back with no apology for using Leiber’s paper as the truth when it was clearly false. He was using the paper to promote himself. He did not thank me for the corrections of his and Leiber’s obvious errors about Descartes either., as he should have¹³⁸⁹ So far I

http://instruct.westvalley.edu/lafave/dennett_anim_csness.html

This is a very flip essay that has little insight in it, other than to show the usual speciesist hatred of animals that treats them as ignorantly and nonchalantly, as if no one intelligent would ever take them seriously.

¹³⁸⁸ see Richard Watson *Cogito Ergo Sum: the Life of Rene Descartes* pg. 167-168, see letters of Descartes too

¹³⁸⁹ Steven Pinker is a critic of Chomsky’s later linguistics. He said of Chomsky that he is a ‘daunting opponent and not much inclined to give quarter to his critics. This has led to some fierce fallings-out. Pinker says in the *Boston Globe Magazine* (Nov. 19, 1995, p. 25) that

have found no example of Chomsky ever admitting to be wrong about anything and he never says he is sorry. This worried me. I am often wrong about things, and do not mind admitting it. I was wrong about details in my letters to Chomsky several times and admitted it. It has been said that arguing with Chomsky is like arguing with a buzz saw. I felt that and have to say it is unpleasant to talk to him. Pinker says he is a bully and I concur with that. I do not see him as a scientist but as an ideologue and an opportunist.

Chomsky said that practices in animal experimentation were different in Descartes time. (1620 or so) So Descartes is somehow excused. I rejoined that in no age is whipping a dog while playing it violin anything but monstrous. Playing violin to the victims at Auschwitz was also a horrible act. Indeed, Descartes desensitization towards the pain of others is an early example of alienated and horrible killings throughout the modern period. Da Vinci lived a hundred years before Descartes and let birds go from cages because he saw it as cruel. Like Darwin, Da Vinci was concerned with animal's rights. He was also a vegetarian and he was a far better experimentalist and scientist than Descartes ever was. Claiming Descartes was cruel because he was merely a child of his times is specious argument that seeks to excuse him. Chomsky is wrong to excuse Descartes for being an innocent child of his times. It is right to admire Descartes for formalizing aspects of the scientific method and a few minor discoveries, but trying to hide Descartes cruelty to protect

Chomsky "implies that people who disagree with him are stupid and ignorant. He is a brilliant debater and an out-and-out bully. It's great fun if you're on his side, but not if you're suddenly the target. People storm off and hate his guts for the rest of their lives". " This is quite true and I have talked with a number of people who truly hate the man, who was very vicious to them. Steven Pinker in a 1995 profile in the Boston Globe newspaper. In another interview with Cosmoetica, Pinker states that Chomsky can "can wow sycophants, blow off critics as stupid or evil, explain away embarrassing data, and rationalize mistakes at will." Yes, Chomsky does do this. I have seen it myself. But far worse than his need to personally attack people is his denial of direct evidence. That is a different order of infraction entirely as it sometimes puts Chomsky outside science into the realm of cult and dogma.
<http://www.cosmoetica.com/DSI4.htm>

your own linguistic theories is something else entirely.

It was becoming clear to me that Chomsky would stoop quite far to try to excuse the hero of his linguistic theories. It was personal for him. He would deny direct evidence that contradicted his false claims about Descartes. Suddenly, and distressingly, my belief that Chomsky is a scientist and cares about rights was brought into question. I learned what I did not want to learn: he doesn't care about evidence and that he is a man with little conscience, who will doctor evidence to serve his own interests.¹³⁹⁰ He cares about being right, his career, and a dogmatism that is born of 'rationality', now became an irrationality. At least when it comes to his Linguistics career, Chomsky seems to be one of those "who take no account of experience and think that truth will spring from their brains like Minerva from the head of Jupiter". I say this reluctantly as one who has admired Chomsky's politics for many years, and what I thought was his science too. He may be indeed the narrow minded speciesist that I feared he was years ago.

Chomsky wrote me again and tried to say that Leiber's essay still stands because Descartes clearly assumed that animals could feel pain. Actually this is wrong too. I sent him this quote where Descartes clearly denies that animals feel pain.

¹³⁹⁰ George Monbiot came to a similar conclusions about Chomsky in a series of letters between the two. Monbiot writes that Chomsky, "whose research is usually so thorough, is deliberately ignoring a vast weight of evidence which conflicts with his political beliefs." He writes this account of the whole matter and basically accuses the ZNet crowd of cult like holocaust denial of atrocities in Rwanda and the Balkans. He writes about Chomsky, Edward Herman and Albert among others that "If people who claim to care about justice and humanity cannot resist what looks to me like blatant genocide denial, we find ourselves in a very dark place" Z Net is not what we hoped it might be. It has become increasingly money grasping and is a Chomsky admiration society these days. I think Monbiot puts too much trust in the Chomsky circle, who have largely lost whatever groove they once had. There is an occasional good article there, but the leadership is cultish, old and narrow and can't handle justified criticism.

see more here:
<http://www.monbiot.com/2012/05/21/see-no-evil/>

In a letter to Mersenne, on 11 June 1640, Descartes wrote

"I do not explain the feeling of pain without reference to the soul. For in my view pain exists only in the understanding. What I do explain is all the external movements which accompany this feeling in us; in animals it is these movements alone which occur, and not pain in the strict sense ...".

Obviously, Descartes believed only humans and not animals have understanding, and only humans not animals have a soul, and therefore animals do not feel pain. He thought there was no connection between their sensations and their understanding and thus they could be tortured with impunity. Though animals can feel the "sensation" of joy, pains and other emotions they might mechanically respond by dancing about, appearing happy, or the like, even though the "animal machines", as Descartes calls them, would not *consciously* feel anything.

Chomsky responded to this obvious claim of Descartes that animals do not feel pain in a strange Orwellian way. He told me that when Descartes says they don't feel pain "in the strict sense" he is saying that of course they feel pain. Yeah right, and war is peace and innocence is guilt and Animal Farm was written by Genghis Khan.

Chomsky was trying to bully me. The truth was staring him in the face and he denies it. This is not a good man who cares about the truth. The evidence is very clear and I did not give in. Descartes clearly says that animals cannot feel pain because "pain only exists in the understanding" not in mere sensation and animals are incapable of understanding. He says that animals "have no [reason] at all." ¹³⁹¹ So animals who sense pain do not actually feel it. For Descartes, animals

¹³⁹¹ Chapter 5 Discourse on Method

might squeal in of pain, but this is only a mechanical reactions to external stimuli. In other words, hitting a dog with a stick, for example, is a kind of input and the squeal that follows would be merely output, but the dog did not feel anything at all and could not feel pain unless it was endowed with a mind and reason, which Descartes claims animals do not have. So Descartes followers, following their master, whacked away at little dogs and were oblivious to the screams.

Descartes lived for a time on a street of butchers and watched animal killings often. He brags in a letter in 1639, "I have spent much time on dissection during the last eleven years, and I doubt whether there is a doctor who has made more detailed observations than I." Since we know he liked to do live dissections many of these dissections were no doubt live tortures. Da Vinci, writing a hundred years earlier, writes with great compassion about those whom he dissected.

In summation, Chomsky and Leiber were trying to cover up for Descartes atrocious abuse of animals. The reason for doing that of course, was to hide Chomsky's own speciesism. Leiber tries to prove that Descartes was maligned by history and animal rights activists such as Peter Singer. Leiber's claim is false. Descartes thought animals can be tortured with impunity because they feel no pain. Chomsky was therefore mistaken to use Leiber in an effort to excuse Descartes for the moral culpability of "gratuitous torture" of animals. Leiber was trying to whitewash Descartes in order to make Chomsky's "Cartesian linguistics" look more palatable. He was trying to hide or erase the implicit speciesism in both Chomsky and Descartes. Most of Leiber's essay was an attack on Peter Singer, the animals rights activist. As it turns out

Leiber was mistaken to attack Singer in this way.¹³⁹² Singer's opinion that Descartes had an influence on subsequent indifference to animal abuse is largely correct. In short Leiber and Chomsky were presented with direct evidence invalidating their ideas and both denied the overwhelming evidence.. By sending me the essay Chomsky was trying to rope me into the deceit. These are dishonest men.

Further proof is not needed--- *but there is further proof*. Descartes was himself aware that he was trying to vindicate animal torturers and creating an excuse for butchers, meat eaters, and animal abusers to enjoy themselves with impunity. Descartes writes in a 1649 Letter to Henry More:

“For Brevities sake I omit here my other reasons for denying thought to animals. *Please note that I am speaking of thought, and not of life or sensation*. I do not deny life to animals, since I regard it as consisting simply in the heat of the heart; and I do not even deny sensation, in so far as it depends upon a bodily organ. Thus my opinion is not so much cruel to animals as indulgent to human beings—at least to those who are not given to the superstitions of Pythagoras—since it absolves them from the suspicion of crime when they eat or kill animals” 3:366—AT 5:278-9

So here is Descartes admitting both his twisted and irrational logic

¹³⁹² Peter Singer writes, correctly, that Descartes believed that animals feel no pain “when cut with a knife” or “hot iron” and that Descartes theory “allowed the experimenter to dismiss any qualm they might feel” about torturing animals. See Singer Animal Liberation -. 118-120, Singer is quite correct about this, but the proof of this is not so much in Singer's sources for this information but in Descartes writings. Leiber attacks Singer's sources but neglected to look it up in Descartes own work, where there is plenty of evidence of his speciesist and cruel attitudes toward animals.

that it is OK to kill animals since they feel no pain and that he rather despises vegetarians. He is admitting he is well aware of vegetarians and thus of animals rights, and is saying he really cares to justify killers of animals.¹³⁹³ His theory is deliberately means to excuse cruelty. So much for Descartes age being ignorant of the issue, as Chomsky implied.

The Pythagoreans he mentions, who were certainly superstitious, were also vegetarians and Descartes is here taking a swipe at them for their vegetarian interests. Chomsky imitates Descartes quite closely, and thinks “thought” is what language is about and since animals have no language, they have no thought. Darwin, who is both deeper in feeling empathy and finer in sensibility than Chomsky, denies this directly of course, and insists, rightly, that animals are capable of advanced thought in many cases. For Descartes sensations did not mean awareness or understanding. He also denies animals have consciousness, or reason and thus they did not feel the pain they felt as sensations. He claimed they feel no pain when they are hurt, they merely react as machines who act as if they had pain. He is saying that his theory of animals as machines who feel no pain liberates animal killers of all kinds and vindicates those who hate vegetarians. This is once again a kind of speciesism.

Also in my discussion with Chomsky I quoted Michael Albert’s autobiography in which he says "I see no comparison in importance between seeking to eliminate the roots and branches of sexism, and seeking to eliminate the roots and branches of violence against animals." For Albert, it is good to be nice to women but violence against animals is OK. Liberation of women is one thing but do not liberate nature and animals, these are only for human use and abuse. He needs his huge

¹³⁹³ India is the most vegetarian country on earth, with 29-40% vegetarian. Meat corporations are trying to destroy that, of course. They want everyon eathing animals, and want to subvert the just idea that one “do no harm, (Ahimsa).

beefsteak slapped on a plate, and apparently thinks it OK to eat shark fin soup or murder bears. Michael Albert's rather obtuse preaching suggests a man who has little insight into the world.

Why should the abstract character of system of signs and symbols in language make Chomsky think the human animal superior to any other animal?. He disparages animals and says

“Animal communication systems have thus far failed to demonstrate anything remotely like our systems of phonology, semantics, and syntax, and the capacity to process even artificially created stimuli is highly limited”

Why would anyone demand that animals be human, any more than that a zebra should be a Roseate Spoonbill, or should humans be given a crow's test? In fact there is no reason to pursue these comparisons ad nauseum, as Chomsky does in his 2014 essay on the “Mystery of Language Evolution”, from which the above quote comes. Thinking in symbols is a very destructive way to think, as I have shown throughout these books. Ants and bees appear to think through chemical markers, or pheromones. The notion that merely using symbols makes human superior to other species is ridiculous, it merely makes them more brutal and willing to destroy our planet. There is no reason to compare animals with humans unless the comparison goes both ways. Can Humans echolocate like bats, or use infrasound like elephants, communicate by smell like moths or see ultraviolet like wasps and bees? No, not even close. In many ways animals and insects are superior to humans. Darwin had respect even for the intelligence of worms, and never thought they should be other than as they are. After Darwin and J.G. Romanes there was an unfortunate tendency to denigrate animal species that arose as a result of Behaviorism. Evolution has no favorites and to think it does in

merely rank religion or politics of an egregious kind. ¹³⁹⁴

In many ways human language makes people far worse than other animals and precisely because of their false belief that they are so much better. Language is very close to religion and politics and as such has strongly involved in brutality, extinctions, harming the earth and creating war. ¹³⁹⁵ I showed this earlier in my essay on Pascal Boyer.

The ability to speak has not made people better. You can tell a lot about people by how they think of animals. Chomsky says he basically agrees with this human centered prejudice and monstrous endorsement of cruelty. That is what Descartes would think too. Racism, sexism and how animals and nature are treated are “incommensurate”, Chomsky claims, invoking Cartesian speciesism. Nonsense. Sexism and racism and the linguistic prejudice that hold humans to be superior are very close. The speciesism of Albert and Chomsky creates substantial outclass of living beings, not just animals, but nature in general. This is repulsive and goes far to discredit Chomsky’s thought. This surprises and repulses me even more than his attempt to whitewash Descartes.

¹³⁹⁴ See the letters of G.J. Romanes to and from Darwin and George Romanes’ books on Animal Intelligence and Mental Evolution in Animals., both books of which Darwin was aware. He had interest and sympathy with Romanes point of view and Romanes was something of a student of Darwin’s. Romanes had an interesting attitude to animals of all kinds and rates their intelligence very highly. His work is simple by comparison with what could be done today, which has barely scratched the surface of animal intelligence. I was watching a crow look for worms or bugs in the grass today(2016) and it is abundantly clear in every movement that this is a bird of great mind who can seek and plan its movements with deliberation and brains. Animal intelligence and cognition in the wild is under studied partly because of the unfortunate influence of behaviorism and corporate science as well as the latent speciesism that has long been part of animal experimentation. Romanes is worth re-reading, as he notions of animal intelligence are profound.

¹³⁹⁵ It would be interesting to do a book entirely on bad experiments designed by people studying animals. There are so many, torturing animals in mazes, putting dogs on electric floors,, cutting jelly fish to see if they can swim, all the way back to Descartes killing live dogs and experimenting on them as they died. Scientists will do all sorts of elaborate experiments to avoid studying them in the wild, which the most important kind of study one can make. What these bad experiments show is how stupid humans can be rather than how intelligent animals are.

But what really shocked me about this discussion with Chomsky was his willingness to deny direct evidence against his claims, and to try to brow beat me into submitting to his outrageous denials of the evidence. I had written Chomsky in an effort to investigate his science because I was writing about his science positively in a poem. My discovery was unwelcome and more or less destroyed the poem I was trying to write. But the truth matters more than a poem.. I could still write a poem and tell the truth about what I learned, even though that poem is now a mess. I had made similar investigations to write about Darwin¹³⁹⁶, Newton or Hawking. To my deep dismay I came away from Chomsky doubting he is a scientist at all. I saw how he misused science. Yes, I do believe that Chomsky did valuable work in claiming that the capacity for language is genetic. But he appears to have failed to have proven his main thesis that grammar is innate. His willingness to deny direct evidence makes me question Chomsky embrace of rationalism. His rationalism was showing clearly dogmatic and irrational features. Chomsky used rationalism to flout direct evidence and erect any arbitrary rule he wished to, regardless of the reality of the matter. If you question him too closely he accuses you of having an inflated self-image or of being insane or somehow mentally deficient. This where his claim to be a prophet takes on a terrible and self-interested subjectivism.

What I learned was that his willingness to deny evidence suggests a dogmatic refusal of the scientific attitude. ¹³⁹⁷ This disturbed me so much

¹³⁹⁶ Reading about Darwin really enlightened me. The more I found out about him, and I read many books about him as well as his own work, and as I did I liked him more and more. He was very interested in animal rights and both he and she wife worked on animals behalf, He also was against slavery. Adrian Desmond admirably shows in his Darwin's Sacred Cause, How a Hatred of Slavery Shaped Darwin's Views on Human Evolution, Darwin was not just against slavery but saw him science work as a major contribution to ending both slavery and race and religious prejudice.

¹³⁹⁷ Vyvyan Evans writes "All exclusively language-specific biologic structures remain purely hypothetical and by now there is good empirical evidence that no such structures exist." I read

I started doing research on Chomsky's science. He has many enemies and most of them can be dismissed as right wingers who are politically motivated. They misrepresent and distort what he has been trying to do out of hate or prejudice. I do not hate Chomsky or need to misrepresent him. As it turns out, there are serious claims by people such as Daniel Dennett, Steven Pinker and John Searle, all of them well known philosophers more or less of Chomsky's generation or a little younger. These men doubt that what Chomsky is doing is valid science. I think they may be right, Chomsky 'second cognitive revolution' may be a failure", as John Searle says. Christina Behme concurs and writes

"Given my findings about Chomskyan linguistics, the question may arise if there is anything salvageable. Considering his voluminous output, the potential gain of finding the pieces worth keeping may seem not to justify the tremendous effort required for completing this work".

Descartes theories about animals are ridiculous. He claims they do not feel pain, even if they have "sensations". Descartes argument about animals not having minds also is an argument that denigrates animals in order to claim that only humans have language and that we are fundamentally separated from animals in our ability to use words. Here again we see language used as a political tool to outlaw nature. This side of the argument is fundamental to Chomsky's theory of language. It is here that Descartes speciesist attitudes toward animals implicate Chomsky's theory of language. Language may not be an instinct at all, as Darwin said. Linguistics, like religion, is a human centered construction used to disparage and put down animals and nature, who do not

this in 2017, a few years after writing this essay. It is good to see that someone is thinking about this, as what he says here is true, in my experience of Chomsky.

conform to the artificial norms dictated by and implicit in linguistics.

Descartes imagines humans are the only “thinking things”, he was able to devalue everything that was taken to be outside thought. Anything that does not think or speak is off lesser value to Descartes. Chomsky’s erection of thought via symbolist thinking in language is the source of his speciesist ideology and it depends of holding that abstract reality is superior to actuality. This is basically a religious or metaphysical claim and not an objective one. Peter Singer is right to implicate Descartes in justifying animals abuse for some centuries after him. Descartes speciesism depends upon and ‘integralist’ notion of language where language is equated with thought. Chomsky also equates language with thought. Chomsky linguistic theory is really a form of political thought control. For Descartes and Chomsky language could not be about communication primarily because that puts it into the realm of the ‘lesser’ reality of animals and nature. What he calls FLB—Faculty of Language Broad) Chomsky is even “hostile”, Pinker says, to the idea that language is about communication”. ¹³⁹⁸

Language is about communication, in fact, but Chomsky and Ian Tattersall and other speciesist bigots refuse to admit this. They refuse because to admit that it is to admit continuity between humans and animals, not separation and absolute difference. They claim a kind of

¹³⁹⁸ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=piGbuSTckr8&NR=1>

Pinker compares Chomsky to the romantics Rousseau and Marx, rightly I think, and should have added that Cartesian notions of privacy also lead in Chomsky’s thought. like Samuel Beckett, Chomsky thinks language is mostly solipsistic monologue. Pinker notes the formalistic beauty of Chomsky’s writing on language, as in his Sound Pattern of English, (1967). But this formal beauty is an effect of his anti-empirical rationalism, and one finds a similar beauty in Beckett, where language takes off on its own into the Cartesian void of doubt and subjectivism. Is this science? No. In Beckett it is art of a despairing kind, in Chomsky it is reason and speech trying to recreate itself as universal relevance, and failing, due to a lack of ground in empirical and Darwinian facts. “Fail better”, Beckett stubbornly concluded. Noam will never admit he failed.

absolute uniqueness for humans.¹³⁹⁹ Every species is unique in its own way and to assume a hierarchy in nature is self-serving chauvinism. Hummingbirds, no more than a few inches long, can fly from the Amazon to North of Lake Superior, and have been able to things like this for millions of year. An Albatross can fly without beating its wings over the surface of the ocean for thousands of miles. Intellectuals like Chomsky and Tattersall do much to justify the continuation and preservation of rank speciesism, and so can eat and abuse animals, submit them to medical abuse, animal testing on products, hunting, genetic altering for profit and mass production of factory farming. Their chauvinistic “humanism” becomes just another form of racist like disregard if nature. Genetic engineering is not a form of “intelligent design”, as Yuval Harari and others maintain. There is little intelligence in it. Genetic engineering is about deforming existing evolutionary designs in favor of those deformations that give greedy men profits, and thus it is really ideological engineering by capitalists. It pushes the ethics of slavery into the structure of the cell and DNA itself. This is properly speaking, disgusting, and should be opposed. There might be a few cases where one could imagine that this is harmless. But the consequences of every alteration should be carefully weighed. It should not be done merely to make someone rich. Species are self-created and thus should be respected as to their integrity.

Chomsky follows Descartes to the letter and claims “the form of language ...is largely determined by internal factors.” (CL. 64). Of course, language is a portrait of human centered obsessions and nature domination, as it has always been a way to discriminate against those

¹³⁹⁹ An interesting case of a human becoming an animal is that of the so called Gazelle Boy observed by Jean-Claude Auger. The boy had adopted Gazelle postures, sounds of language, running and eating. He did not become human at all and was never captured. Barbara Noske discusses this in her excellent, Beyond Boundaries, Humans and Animals. She also discusses other facts about animal communication. She does not accept Chomsky’s theory of language.

who are lower class. Both Darwin, Pinker and many others dispute the idea that language is merely internal. . The very structure of language, all language being formed around subjects and objects, shows it originates as a way of seeing the natural world, which is everywhere both inside and outside us. It amazes me that Chomsky accepted the internalist side of Descartes argument, when the most simple empirical observations of animals and humans shows language is mostly about communication. Humans, birds and whales all have ability to communicate when born but this must be nurtured by parents and environment. Certainly, the origin of this capacity is in the brain in both humans and animals. But there is no evidence that I can find that there is a locus of universal grammar originated in the brain as Chomsky originally postulated. Grammar is a social construction as is obvious, since it can be turned into political ideology as Chomsky has done with his absurd FLN and FLB. Faculty of Language Narrow or FLN is a Chomskian fiction that creates a human centered, prejudicial notion of human superiority. Chomsky must define language as thought because only then can it be made to differ from animals, as if animals do not think too.

So I looked deeper in Chomsky system of linguistic thought. John Searle referred to Chomsky notions of innate grammar as a “stunning mistake”. This seems to be an accurate assessment.¹⁴⁰⁰ This is obvious just on prima facie evidence. Language changes very quickly, such that

¹⁴⁰⁰ In *The Rediscovery of the Mind* Searle writes: “Chomsky claims that innate, unconscious rules cause verbal behavior. In other words, there is a cause/effect relationship between ‘rule’ and language. But studies of neuro-physiology indicate that language is caused not by ‘deep unconscious rules’ but by neuro-physiological structures that have no resemblance to the patterns of language at all. The brain’s hardware produces patterns, but these patterns are not causally related to language produced by humans: they merely delineate the possible forms that human languages can take.” In other words actual evidence brings Chomsky’s ideas into question but he ignores this.

Quoted in this essay

http://www.developingteachers.com/articles_tchtraining/grainnatepf_mark.htm

Shakespeare would hardly understand the language of Beowulf and we can barely understand Shakespeare. Language appears to be an accidental fact of our brains and is very lightly and ephemerally attached to us. It is a constructed social product not an innate fact like bird migration which last eons. Pinker maintains that language is probably innate, but he has no evidence for this.

Dennett complains that Chomsky's linguistics appears to be based on a denial of Darwinian evolution. This is not exactly accurate but it is true Chomsky hedges on this subject quite a bit in his own defense. He slurs its importance and downplays all animal achievements in communication. He gives lip service to Darwin, when it suits him. Following Descartes, Chomsky claims that language is unique to humans and animals have no language. "language appears to be a unique phenomenon, without significant analogue in the animal world", he writes.¹⁴⁰¹ This assessment has no real study behind it. Indeed, little research has been done, but what has been done shows strong analogies between human and animal communication. They should not be expected to be the same, as indeed they are not. He quotes Descartes that animals are very stupid compared to humans

"[I]t is a very remarkable fact that there are none so depraved and stupid, without even excepting idiots, that they cannot arrange different words together, forming of them a statement by which they make known their thoughts; while, on the other hand, there is no animal, however perfect and fortunately circumstanced it may be, which can do the same" (*Cartesian Linguistics* 116–17).

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¹⁴⁰¹ Language and mind 1968

The problem here of course is the notion of “words” and the demeaning expectation that animals should make human words or sounds rather than birds songs, whale calls, raccoon vocalizations or dolphin whistles and squeaks. Descartes said elsewhere that “But the greatest of all the prejudices we have retained from infancy is that of believing that brutes think.” Actually it is the opposite that is true, animals do think and it is a prejudice to imagine they don’t. They don’t think exactly as humans do on all occasions, often to their credit. Anyone who has spent much time with dogs, crows¹⁴⁰², ravens, dolphins, parrots, otters, green herons or thousands of other species knows that animals have intelligence and can reason and use strategy, plans, elementary logic or avoidance, give commands, warnings, mating sounds and many other communications. Animals think, communicate and act on their thoughts both on their own and in concert with one another. As Katy Payne has shown Elephants have elaborate communication skills.¹⁴⁰³ Parrots and dolphins demonstrate behavior that is as sophisticated as verbal phenomena in many humans. Chomsky tries to say that only humans have “language” or grammar and linguistic abilities that engender thinking. He overrates grammar. He cramps and parses definitions of grammar and usage to justify a speciesism that is

¹⁴⁰² Crows use tools, recognize faces and are very smart. “If Men had wings and bore black feathers, few of them would be clever enough to be crows.” Henry Ward Beecher said. They also care about their dead, and I have seen them hold a sort of vigil for them. Like Ravens and other Corvids they mostly avoid humans if they can, and seem to know humans are needlessly destructive.

¹⁴⁰³ <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/nature/episodes/my-life-as-a-turkey/full-episode/7378/>
Joe Hutto’s study of Turkeys is exceedingly interesting. There are moral questions that can be asked about why he did this and it does result in the birds being harmed later in their lives. But the experiment was extremely interesting as to the complexity of Turkey vocalizations and “language”. The birds were able to refer not just to snakes as a category but to individual species of snakes. As Darwin notes, the ability of share with others via vocalizations the presence of a danger is already the beginning of language. Darwin writes “ (Descent of Man. chapter 3

“may not some unusually wise apeline animal have imitated the growl of a beast of prey, and thus told his fellow-monkeys the nature of the expected danger? This would have been a first step in the formation of a language.”

already part of his mental make-up. A similar argument has been made that only humans have “self-conscious” music, but this also turns out to be false.¹⁴⁰⁴ Following Descartes, Chomsky denigrates animal abilities to do complex language skills. He subjectivizes language¹⁴⁰⁵ and overly exalts grammar and humans. Like Tattersall, he does not understand how destructive symbol use can be.

Descartes speciesism wrongly assumes animals are stupid and therefore it is OK to torture them with impunity. From this erroneous premise he derives his notion that language is somehow unique to humans. This is also false, if language is understood as communication, as it should be, humans merely have a more sophisticated form or communication than other species—in our terms---, just as ducks have a more sophisticated mode of flying or otters of swimming, in their terms. Language is part of evolution, like music, which evolved in birds and in us. Chomsky denies any relationship between human language and birds or bird music and human music, presumably. But this is obviously mistaken.

The notion that humans are somehow superior to birds or aardvarks

¹⁴⁰⁴ From *Frontiers in Evolutionary Neuroscience*

“Birdsong: is it music to their ears?”

Sarah E. Earp and Donna L. Maney

“We found that the same neural reward system is activated in female birds in the breeding state that are listening to male birdsong, and in people listening to music that they like,” said Earp, who recently published the study’s findings in *Frontiers of Evolutionary Neuroscience*.

¹⁴⁰⁵ He writes in “Biolinguistics and Human Capacity” 2004 that “the most elementary concepts of human language do not relate to mind-independent objects by means of some reference-like relation between symbols and identifiable physical features of the external world, as seems to be universal in animal communication systems” I am sure that he is mistaken here. Language is a social institution, not a natural fact like photosynthesis, as Searle has pointed out. Thus language is primarily about communication. Chomsky spent his life doing formal grammar studies, which was a mistake. If he wanted to learn about language he should have studied the brain, animal communication and human language as a biological, social fact. A truly Darwinian study of communication in animals and humans has yet to be done. This would require scrapping the Chomskian system and starting anew.

has no validity as an evolutionary postulate. Darwin knew that evolution is not about hierarchy and to make it that is to lie about it. Evolution does not play favorites, as each species seeks its own survival and slowly created its own form over eons. Language did not evolve for thought, as Chomsky likes to sometimes say. If language evolved at all, and it by no means proven, it was an accident that overlaid the brain, or took advantage of parts of it. Biology links us to all other species and does not separate us from them. Darwin writes that language is always changing and evolving just as species change and evolve, in direct opposition to Chomsky's myth of a Platonistic universal grammar. Darwin writes:

“The same language never has two birth-places. Distinct languages may be crossed or blended together.*(2) We see variability in every tongue, and new words are continually cropping up; but as there is a limit to the powers of the memory, single words, like whole languages, gradually become extinct. As Max Muller*(3) has well remarked:- "A struggle for life is constantly going on amongst the words and grammatical forms in each language. The better, the shorter, the easier forms are constantly gaining the upper hand, and they owe their success to their own inherent virtue."

Darwin says that language and its relation to Natural Selection is “a marvelous problem.”, as indeed it is. He says in a letter to Asa Gray that “I wish someone would keep a lot of the most noisy monkeys, half free, & study their means of communication!” . Unlike Chomsky, Darwin sees human and animal communications as part of the same continuum, as it necessarily has to be. Notice too, that Darwin's instinct was correct that one must study animals that are free, or half free, and not lab animals, whose behavior severely distorted by captivity. Chomsky's myth

of a Platonistic universal grammar has slowly unraveled.¹⁴⁰⁶ It is a medieval fantasy of a universal language. It simply does not exist. The 6-8000 languages in the world are much more varied and diverse in syntax, grammar and organization, not to mention use, than appears that Chomsky thought. Chomsky's theory is about him, not really about language. It is a quasi-religious construction. Universal Grammar appears to belong more to the history of religion and myth than to science, or at the very least it belongs to the domain of failed hypotheses.¹⁴⁰⁷

¹⁴⁰⁶ Indeed, grammar is probably the less important to language than the fact of communicating. Grammar is a practical matter of nouns and verbs and how they are arranged in a sentence to help us talk to each other. Grammar is about conditioning, social constraints, interactions and practical matters of how to express what one means to say. Different cultures and classes do this very differently. The fiction of Universal Grammar just does not say what language is and his theory failed. Rather than admit it, Chomsky varied his theory endlessly, trying to make it work, when it simply did not cover the facts.

¹⁴⁰⁷ See for instance http://www.princeton.edu/~adele/LIN_106:_UCB_files/Evans-Levinson09_preprint.pdf



Darwin would take a dim view of Chomsky's unwarranted speculations. In Descent of Man Darwin ridiculed those like Descartes and Chomsky who

“have insisted that man is divided by an insuperable barrier from all the lower animals in in his mental faculties. I formerly made a collection of above a score of such aphorisms, but they are almost worthless, as their wide difference and number prove the difficulty, if not the impossibility, of the attempt.” (Descent of Man, Chapter 3)

The beauty of Darwin was his thorough understanding of both animals and people. This is what is now required of us, but not all scientists yet understand his example in this. Chomsky, foolishly, imitates Descartes and ignores Darwin. Descartes views on animals are a really repulsive speciesism, and lack any real evidence, but are assumed by Chomsky as fact. In order to assert human centered speciesism Chomsky must both deny Darwin and make language not primarily about communication but rather about inner life. What Chomsky does is help create an ideology of supremacy to human beings by trying to discredit all “lower beings”, who do not have the kind of communications system that humans have. Chomsky’s claim that human beings are utterly “unique” is really a religious or ideological construct and not a fact. Nina Varsava explains the need of the artificial notion of the “human”, very well

“The human, then, is produced, although never finalized, through anthropomorphism and its denial: the continuous circulation of anthropomorphic representations preserves the human/animal categorical divide and its attendant ethical code—which, as we have seen, serves the interests of humans at the expense of all other animals.”

In other words, the human/animal divide is a cultural construction and not based in fact, and it results in huge injustices. It is more like a religion or akin to racist or sexist fictions and prejudices. Varsava goes very far to show that the apotheosis of humanity that we see in Tattersall, Chomsky and other writers is a religious ideology, a fiction. It is not a fiction we should accept. They act as cheerleaders of human supremacy and uniqueness in ways that are deeply flawed and speciesist. She wants to show that the concept of “the human is a

corrupt concept—that there are no factors which justify the moral weight it is given.” Chomskyeen linguistics and Tattersall’s notion of the humans as the “Masters of the Planet”, is a corrupt concept.¹⁴⁰⁸ Chomsky criticizes capitalists for wanting to be “masters of the universe”, but then hypocritically supports the idea that humans are “Masters of the Planet” in his linguistic theory. In Tattersall’s book, not ironically called, Masters of the Planet, Ian Tattersall writes a chapter called “In the Beginning was the Word”. This title itself is indicative of a delusion. There was no “Word” of course, but what Tattersall is doing is trying to claim a nearly mystical exception of human language, as if we are made quasi-divine by it. He tries to advance the theories of Chomsky and Stephen Jay Gould about language with much hyperbole.

Yuval Noah Harari¹⁴⁰⁹ claims that humans are different than

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“I am starting to conclude that the American Museum of Natural History has some history of dubious practices. In the 1970’s a Dr. Aronson was accused of cruelty to cats, who he was using to do experiments of feline sexuality. While the museum defended him, they later stopped such experiments and started a program, according to a 1976 document written by AMNH, in their words, “would place greater emphasis on natural populations of animals and on field research, as opposed to physiologically- oriented laboratory research with domesticated or laboratory-bred animals.”. (see http://digitallibrary.amnh.org/museum/annual_reports/source/R1976.pdf

This is something of an admission, if not an admission of guilt. Many years earlier, a director of the AMNH from 1908-33 was Henry Fairfield Osborn. He was a scientific racist and pushed the idea of purity of blood, reflecting the views of some of the rich patrons of the museum. Tattersall is not exactly a racist or a man who abuses animals, but he is a speciesist, which does reflect on today’s upper classes, many of whom share speciesist attitudes about humans as the “Masters of the Planet” Unfortunately museums are often creatures of their times and reflect some of the ideology that may be the least flattering at a given time. Tattersall writes like an apologist for the corporate ideology of global culture so much a part of New York culture, where he lives.

¹⁴⁰⁹ Harari, for the moment anyway, is a Buddhist, and takes an impersonal point of view as an historian. I find a Buddhist view of history to be a false view, as I have explained elsewhere in these books, even though in Harari’s case it has some interesting results. But detachment is a fictional state itself and one that tends to imagine the world as a human creation of the mind. This is not the case and so Buddhism tends to denigrate reality, even as it claims to value it. Harari’s analysis of gods and corporations is quite right, but then he veers off in misunderstanding science, having no distinction between valid observations and corporate abuse of science. To his credit he is a vegan, but one who mistakenly thinks that “the notion of animal or human rights is a fiction”. This would be great news for CEO’s if it were true. Thousands upon thousands of

chimps because of the “mythical glue” that “has made us the masters of creation” (Sapiens, page 38). This is little different than Tattersall ‘Masters of the Planet’ idea. The “master of creation” is a much larger claim. Myths are false of course as is the whole idea of “creation”, so Harari is merely playing with magnified metaphors here. There is no evidence the universe was “created”. Such mythic pronouncements are really about humans attempt to control everything on earth. Unlike Chomsky and Tattersall, Harari is not a speciesist, since he opposes factory farming of animals. But his need to exalt and cheerlead a human centeredness in conceited language is oddly cut off from his interest in animal rights.. It suggests he has not really escaped the mythical. Indeed in the final chapter of this otherwise interesting book, Harari claims that humans are “an animal that has become god” Marx already claimed this in his essay on “the Jewish Question”. It is an absurd supposition that merely means that the human tendency to transcendental magnification is still unrecognized and so not gone beyond. Marx merely makes humans into gods and so makes nature infinitely exploitable, just like capitalism. Marxism is merely another human centered ideological system of belief, just like Free Market capitalism.. For a Marxist, the world is nothing but the creation of man through human labor. The world in fact is not a creation of human labor. To make it so is to make dictatorship of workers by the state the principle action of politics. This is merely humanist religion as a new power play and has not gone beyond human centered delusions at all.

If any of these men actually spent some time with animals in wild circumstances they would see that animals lives are rich and interesting. Animals are not at all moved by the human conceit that inspires these

workers have suffered terrible abuses as have animals and to say that their suffering and subsequent fight for rights is fiction is to discredit and abuse them further. David Neibert and Peter Singer and others have written well on animal and human rights and should be studied. Harari says little that is helpful on this subject.

absurd oracular sentences conferring ultimate status on humans. Humans cannot even come close to the spatial intelligence of birds, for instance, who can fly through dense thickets and not touch a branch, or who can put a predator behind a tree between them and be virtually invisible to the danger. The truth is the entire earth and all species are threatened by humans and such delusions of grandeur must be stopped. Human centered philosophies such as one finds in Tattersall and Harari are part of the problem.¹⁴¹⁰ Harari should be trying to stop these transcendental delusions, not augmenting them. But Harari has at least asked the question that Tattersall and Chomsky both avoid, due to unawareness of animal and natural suffering. Harari asks

“Is there anything more dangerous than dissatisfied and irresponsible gods who don’t know what they want?”

No, there is nothing more dangerous than human pride and ignorance in combination. If only Harari and Tattersall would apply this question to themselves. We need to start downsizing the rich, abolishing CEO culture, undoing the excesses of capitalist animal and land abuse and stop the insanity of systems of transcendental magnification. That is just the beginning, analyzing and explaining the ethics that is implied in natural systems would be the next step, and this is hardly even started.

¹⁴¹⁰ Harari assessment of science and capitalism is almost scary. He is in some ways a corporate promoter of futuristic fantasy. He reminds me of the fake future that was preached to me when I was a kid, flying cars, food coming out of replicators and other such nonsense. None of it was true. The future is just a way to sell gimmicks like iPhones or computers. It has changed very little except for those who got rich off the hype. Harari equates science with imperialism, and is partly true but largely not true. He makes no distinction between corporate science and science as a study of things as they are. (Leonardo would be very surprised, even horrified, at that!) There are abuses of science that are imperial, (land and ocean destruction, polluting, DDT etc.) but not the impulse which gave us pottery, blacksmithing, Franklin’s key and kite, vaccines and so much else

Chomsky and Tattersall created a fiction that language originates by some miraculous process outside evolution, in a sudden mutation, which gives humans an absolutely “unique” status on earth. As I have explained, every species is of unique worth. Actually there are no hierarchies in Darwinian evolution, Darwin was rightly opposed to the ideology of teleological purpose. Man is not the pinnacle of nature, except perhaps in dirty and wasteful cities like New York and Shanghai, which are hugely wasteful of earth’s resources and unfortunate places, sinks and drains on natural systems.¹⁴¹¹

What Chomsky and Tattersall created is more religious fiction than science or evolution. It is close to Creationism, in a way, not real inquiry. They posit humans as a sort of miraculous happening. As I said this sort of human centered cheerleading has little to do with language and a lot to do with a humanist suprematism of a speciesist sort. Chomsky was something of a cult leader and his theory of language is more symbolist suprematism than science or fact.

In both cases Chomsky and Tattersall have a fantasy of language starting in some mysterious “non- adaptive” Gouldian “exaptation”—a mutation that has no basis in reality at all. This is supposed to have led to the ability of humans to use symbolic expressions and abstract thought.

The most delusional tendencies in human culture come precisely from the symbolic and abstract. So it is very hard to see this as an advance over the communication skills of bird’s song, whale sounds or gorilla and Chimp communication. Of course, many humans think this is an advance, but that is just speciesist prejudice. Bird song is a very

¹⁴¹¹ Tattersall’s latest book, The Strange Case of the Rickety Cossack: and Other Cautionary Tales from Human Evolution is an attempt to rescue his dismal theory of chauvinistic speciesism, and self-congratulatory paleoanthropology from his earlier book. He rather apologizes for the excess of Masters fo the Planet. it. In his final chapter he finally admits that man might not be the “pinnacle” after all. This should have been his initial premise before he wrote Masters of the Planet. He should have understood the notion fo Darwin that nature is not hierarchal, but he didn’t and this led him into Chomsky and Gould, who are certainly mistaken on this.

sophisticated thing with its own form of natural syntax, order and expression, none of which are like the human, perhaps to their credit. To suppose the fictional and alienated realm of human language to be superior is merely a prejudice, not a fact. Symbolist thinking involves a denigration of the actual, or in this case a denigration of all other beings seen as beneath humanity.;

Chomsky's tendency to romantic anti-intellectualism arises from a rejection of empirical evidence and the need to have truth arise "within" or because of a wild mutation, "Merge", or some interior monologue, infinitely in love with its own voice. This essentially romantic need for truth to be an inner reality rather than something found by science or experiment is what explains his and Gould's disparaging attitude to science and evolution of other species, including earlier humanoids. His refusal of experiment and peer review is a slap in the face at objectivity. He does not want to be accountable. Fictions and lies are a major part of human abstract communication, facts which he never discusses in his linguistic theory. Primitive notions of symbolism and magical thinking are part of Chomsky's theory. A barely suppressed Platonism of symbols or archetypes are emphasized because these can be felt within as imaginary constructs. They do not need to be demonstrated in the world or subjected to any verification. Thus in romantic and symbolist thinking, any nonsense can be entertained as fact, however phony or superstitious. Tattersall and Chomsky create a human centered fiction of linguistics and try to float it as science.

Varsava, rightly I think, wants a "a deconstruction without salvation of the Western concept of the human." ¹⁴¹² This is logical and needed. The notion that humans are the "Masters of the Planet", as Tattersall calls mankind, is merely a new version of manifest destiny, the peculiar

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belief that humans are exceptional and miraculous. Actually humans are the ones who are destroying all that is lovely and loveable in our world. They are precisely the worst danger our planet has ever seen.

Tattersall has little understanding of nature. Nina Varsava complains that

“In *Becoming Human*, for example, Tattersall holds that language is “universal among modern humans,” and “is the most evident of all our uniquenesses: the one in the absence of which it is least possible for us to conceive of humanness as we experience it” He goes on to deny language to nonhuman apes, suggesting that ape calls are inherently emotional, which makes them categorically nonlinguistic: “Not only do chimpanzees not have language,” he declares; “they don’t even have an incipient form of it, Tattersall’s allegation echoes the dominant attitude of the sciences in the nineteenth century—”

Tattersall views are not very different than 19th century Manifest Destiny ideology. That is a shameful thing in our world, where nature teeters on the edge of mass extinctions and global warming. Chomsky’s theory is more a part of this problem than anything like a solution. Trying to stress that humans are utterly “amazing” and “unique” in a time when global warming is caused by us alone, and threatens our planet is perverse. ¹⁴¹³ Abstract symbolic thought can be utterly

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Climate Change Deniers.

The denial that global warming is human caused has a perverse and recent history. Climate change denial is rooted in “free market fundamentalism,” much as creationism is rooted in religious fundamentalism. A few of the better known anti-science and global warming deniers are listed below. Most people who accept this nonsense are victims of these people. Most of the creators this bogus system of denials are cynical and know very well they are wrong, but wish to promote profiteering at the cost of lying and denial of overwhelming evidence. Victims of

climate change denial are usually not terribly bright people who care little about evidence and have fundamentalist tendencies. Victims of climate change denial listen to these lies and do not realize they are being sold a con job. Most climate change deniers have no science on their side at all. By and large the creator of this lie are oil, mining or fracking industry propagandists, or paid liars like Glen Beck, Limbaugh, Bill O Riley or other paid liars of the far right

Many work for right wing or free market “think tanks” which are merely more industry mining or oil company propagandists supported by Koch Industries or other far right financiers. There are no reputable scientists who oppose global warming. . Naomi Oreskes’ book *Merchants of Doubt* is a good read about how this sub-culture group of pro industry liars and propagandists got started with Tobacco companies 50 years ago. They are all liars trying to push the profiteering of big business, and do not mind destroying people or the earth so long as they can make lots of money. Naomi Klein’s book *This Changes Everything* is also a very good read against the deniers.

Below is a tiny selection of names involved in this insidious movement, that your mom.

Carlo Stagnaro is the environmental Director of the Istituto Bruno Leoni, the Italian “think tank” or propaganda creator that promotes extreme free market policy and privatizations.

Fred Singer far right and crooked “scientist” who is famous for denying the effects of Tobacco, DDT, Ozone depletion and Climate change. Connected to Koch industries. Paid liar.

From an article in Rolling Stone

A former mouthpiece for the tobacco industry, the 85-year-old Singer is the granddaddy of fake "science" designed to debunk global warming. The retired physicist — who also tried to downplay the danger of the hole in the ozone layer — is still wheeled out as an authority by big polluters determined to kill climate legislation. For years, Singer steadfastly denied that the world is heating up: Citing satellite data that has since been discredited, he even made the unhinged claim that "the climate has been cooling just slightly." Last year, Singer served as a lead author of "Climate Change Reconsidered" — an 880-page report by the right-wing Heartland Institute that was laughably presented as a counterweight to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the world's scientific authority on global warming. Singer concludes that the unchecked growth of climate-cooking pollution is "unequivocally good news." Why? Because "rising CO2 levels increase plant growth and make plants more resistant to drought and pests." Small wonder that Heartland's climate work has long been funded by the likes of Exxon and reactionary energy barons like Charles Koch and Richard Mellon Scaife

Willard Anthony Watts (Anthony Watts) is a blogger, weathercaster and non-scientist, paid AGW denier who runs the website *wattsupwiththat.com*. He does not have a university qualification and has no climate credentials other than being a radio weather announcer. His website is parodied and debunked at the website *wattsupwiththat.com* Watts is on the payroll of the [Heartland Institute](#), which itself is funded by polluting industries

Dr. Frederick Seitz Tobacco industry apologist, nuclear advocate, global warming denier.

Ian R. Plimer (born February 12, 1946), a mining geologist, mining company director and anthropogenic global warming denier with no evident expertise in climate science, has written the "denier's bible", a book called *Heaven and Earth*, which makes mutually-inconsistent claims^[2] and was panned as being riddled with errors. In 2011 he wrote the "anti-warmist manual" *How to*

delusional and this is a case where it is just so.¹⁴¹⁴ One can understand why there is an audience for such vaunted hyperbolic nonsense, since we live in an age of reality denial. But the truth is otherwise. Harari is wrong that humans are gods, but right that people who think they are gods or who create and believe in them are dangerous. `

The claim that language proves our uniqueness holds little truth in it. Language may go back much farther than Neanderthals. It will turn out that language has its origins in earlier evolution, perhaps in Homo Erectus, (the original maker of fire and tools) or before, and indeed stretches back into animals and birds. It appears that language developed through a gradual Darwinian process of both biological and cultural evolution -- rather than, as Chomsky, Tattersall and others state, through one or just a few random, untraceable genetic mutations or “exaptations”.¹⁴¹⁵

Hauser and Tattersall wrote a piece denying that Neanderthals¹⁴¹⁶ had language, as this would make humans much closer to animal evolution. Actually there is gathering evidence that Neanderthals did have language, had burial, used shells as jewelry, flint axes as symbolic

Get Expelled From School: A guide to climate change for pupils, parents and punters, which reviewers found to be full of scientific errors, containing flawed and undocumented diagrams, and sloppily edited.

Patrick J. Michaels (±1942-), also known as Pat Michaels, is a largely oil-funded global warming skeptic who argues that global warming models are fatally flawed

¹⁴¹⁴ Both Tattersall and Chomsky get there basic Idea from Stephen jay Gould who was mistaken on may things, including the fiction of Non-adaptive exaptations, a concept which is close to a religious fiction or a Martian fantasy.

¹⁴¹⁵ Chomsky and Tattersall got the notion of the sudden emergence of language, which is the hinge pin of their idea of language as an exclusively human uniqueness, from Stephen jay Gould. Whose idea of punctuated equilibrium or sudden mutations seems to have been largely discredited.

¹⁴¹⁶ <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3781312/>

Much more interesting than the denials of Neanderthal language is the work of Dr. Svante Pääbo and Ed Green. For a video summation of some of their findings see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rohwn11xeI>

objects and made sophisticated tools out of birch pitch. They also made flint scrapers more sophisticated than human ones of that age, which Tattersall tried to denigrate some years ago. Tattersall claims that Neanderthals did not have the use of symbols. That is probably not true but one can see why he claims this. As I have shown throughout these books symbolist thought is not always a good thing and is the source of many human problems. Exactly what the Neanderthals contributed to the human genome is not known, but to suppose them stupid and incapable of abstract thinking is prejudicial and borders on speciesism or racism. These are academic racist prejudices against these people and no doubt born of irrational cheerleading for human supremacy as their ultimate goal. The problem with the biased and self-congratulatory nature of human anthropology and history has yet to be dealt with.¹⁴¹⁷

Ancient humans did not share these race prejudices, as they are now known to have bred with Neanderthals often, and had offspring, and up to 4% of our DNA is Neanderthal. As Svante Pääbo, and others have shown, --- Neanderthals are in us, it turns out, as we absorbed them by breeding with them. They did not go extinct, exactly, nor were they killed off by human superior technology as the speciesist myth claims. These are merely miscegenistic myths born of racist prejudice. They are part of

¹⁴¹⁷ Speciesism is really just this self-congratulatory human-centered cheerleading. I found it to be rife in history departments in college and it is present in anthropology, economics and many other disciplines. It is partly narcissism of course, but it goes deeper than this, into religion and ideology going way back in time. It amazes me it still exists, as humans are currently destroying much of the world, degrading ecologies everywhere and destroying species at an unprecedented pace. To claim to be “Masters of the Planet” they are destroying is more than an odd paradox, it is a lie, and one that is horrendously perverse and destructive. To think highly of humanity might have made sense 2400 years ago, when Aristotle wrote. But by Da Vinci’s time, being dubious about humans was already a fact he could not ignore. One can only be glibly pro-humanity if one lies to oneself now. One can only believe in the greatness of humanity if one is a con man marketer, , or believe that making a billion dollars is a good thing, or to be a self-appointed prophet like Chomsky or Schuon, and think oneself the summit of mankind, In fact, being an historian propagandist is writing another kind of fiction, and I for one just won’t do it. A goodly part of these books is to question just this sort of cultural self-aggrandizement. There is not much time to stop more species going extinct and I wish to help the earth survive, even if it means downsizing CEOs, demoting Plato and calling into question all the religions.

the human species and they could breed with us. Denying early humans like Neanderthals language is part of the old racist prejudice against them and part of Chomskian speciesism. Homo Erectus, used fire and stone tools for a million years before Homo Sapiens, and that already suggests language, or precise communication skill of some kind. Homo Erectus is part of the human family too. The *FOXP2* gene is involved in speech and language was found in Neanderthals suggesting they probably had speech too. Erectus may even have bred with the Denisovans, and Neanderthal with the Denisovans and Neanderthals with modern humans, Paabo claims to have shown through DNA analysis.

So the human family tree is now very broad and blurred, which is good, and continuity between supposed different species suggests that humans are from a much larger family than previously thought.¹⁴¹⁸ There are now facts which suggest that the species lines between Neanderthal, Erectus, Denisovan and Sapiens were not formal or fixed. Anthropology was wrong for decades about this. Now there is evidence that the early cave paintings in Spain were probably done by Neanderthals, suggest that they had symbolic expression probably before homo sapiens. There are differences, but it is claimed that Neanderthals were 99.7 % the same

¹⁴¹⁸ There is some evidence that that female Neanderthals and male Sapiens did not produce fertile offspring. There is no mitochondrial DNA inherited from Neanderthals, Paabo claims.. (others question this) "We might have inherited most of our Neanderthal genes through hybrid females", Paabo said. Neanderthals and male Sapiens did not produce fertile offspring. Another author, David Reich of Harvard Medical School, told reporters that we and Neanderthals "were at the edge of biological compatibility." This means they were hybridizing, and some male children of these unions were not fertile. This is ambiguous however. Reich also writes "Neanderthal alleles caused decreased fertility in males when moved to a modern human genetic background." Decreased fertility is not the same as sterility. So it remains ambiguous if Neanderthals and humans are separate species. Some sources say they are and others that they are not.

as Homo Sapiens, which basically means that having two names for these “species” might be a mistake, or at least the two species were not exactly two species..¹⁴¹⁹ They are substantially one species, even if there are slight differences, exaggerated by anthropologists who think that humans are “masters of the planet”. Darwin was right, continuity matters more than uniqueness in the development of humans and other species. Speciesism is a minority opinion and happens to be mistaken. We are not “masters fo the planet” as Tattersall claims. There are millions of other species and they have rights too.¹⁴²⁰

Previously Tattersall had denied that Neanderthals could interbreed with humans, but he was wrong about that. It turns out Neanderthals and humans are probably variants of the same species and share a good deal of DNA, (1-4%). David Reich showed that. " it was modern humans with modern human behavior that interbred with Neanderthals,"¹⁴²¹, which means that very likely they did have language too, since the individuals whose DNA was sequenced were from about 45,000 years

¹⁴¹⁹ Tattersall admits that humans and Neanderthals are 99.7 percent alike in his book, The Strange Case of the Rickety Cossack, on page 197. Tattersall is a morphologist, and thus studies aesthetic differences between species, and likes to throw out terms like gracile, for homo Sapiens or Robust for Neanderthal. Paabo usually avoids this sort of type casting, and says for instance, that the DNA evidence suggests that Neanderthal rather than Homo Sapiens were probably the dominant one in the mating events that put the Neanderthal code in human DNA.. Paabo writes that “all, or almost all of the gene flow was form Neanderthals into modern humans” But this does not mean that Neanderthals did not raise human children. They probably did and we raised Neanderthal/human babies too, again suggesting that language was probably on both sides.

¹⁴²⁰ See this essay on the shortcomings fo the Chomskian theory

On the antiquity of language: the reinterpretation of Neanderthal linguistic capacities and its consequences

Dan Dediu^f and Stephen C. Levinson

Levinson states in his conclusion that

“In this paper, we have tried to review the evidence supporting the claim that Neanderthals, Denisovans and contemporary modern humans shared a similar capacity for modern language, speech and culture. Furthermore, we argued that regarding these lineages as different species is unhelpful, and that their admixture probably shaped present-day genetic and linguistic diversities.

<http://pubman.mpg.de/pubman/item/escidoc:1760092:6/component/escidoc:1795944/fpsyg-04-00397.pdf>

¹⁴²¹ <http://www.newscientist.com/article/dn26435-thoroughly-modern-humans-interbred-with-neanderthals.html#.VM7nJE0U8dU>

ago, which is somewhat after language is imagined to have begun. It looks like language might go further back than that and was probably spread across many early hominid species or races. Humans are increasingly seen as interbreeding with Neanderthal and Cro-Magnon, possibly even before leaving Africa. Neanderthals made clothes and spears and probably art too, so it is very unlikely they did have language too. So Tattersall and Hauser are probably wrong about denying language to Neanderthals. Chomsky's notion of a "language revolution" by sudden mutation is a myth.

The speciesist hatred of others species which Chomsky, Tattersall and Hauser show might be a majority opinion, as humans have a long history of speciesist hatred of primates. We have all but killed off Gorillas, Chimps, Bonobos and Orangutans. But these 19th century notions of human 'manifest destiny' applied to species are tired and unnecessary anymore, and these men stand in the way of a scientific understanding of human origins that would help us see our common ancestry with all beings on earth, including primates and Neanderthals, as well as others species. Darwin was right that all species are unique and there really is no hierarchy in nature.

While it is true that the inner life of animals can be hard to access, just as it is for humans to understand people with disabilities or Alzheimer's, it is also true that much more effort is being expended now on trying to see the world from the point of view of animals and birds, or Alzheimer's patients. But there is a great deal that we can know from relations that do not involve human language. Chomsky is safe among those who know little about animals in asserting this rather counter-intuitive thesis that animals have no inner life. But anyone who has spent a good deal of time with animals outside of laboratories, with traditions of serving profit, will tell you otherwise.

Chomsky chose the discredited animal researcher Mark Hauser

as his associate in recent work. A bad choice both in the fact that Hauser is in trouble for poorly done research and because Hauser appears to have studied animals mostly in labs, which tells one little about actual animal behavior.¹⁴²² This combined with Chomsky's choice of Stephan Jay Gould as a model of evolutionary theory, when Gould's theory of spandrels and punctuated equilibrium, has been seriously questioned¹⁴²³, further brings into question Chomsky's linguistic theories.¹⁴²⁴

¹⁴²² This lamentable dearth of understanding of animals in the wild is evident in his book Animal Minds. I read this book before I had any idea of his close relation to Chomsky and thought it very poorly done. Hauser's was later made to leave Harvard and accused of research misconduct. Cognitive psychologist Julie Neiworth of Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota tested some of Hauser's work on Tamarin monkeys and found that Hauser's attempt to prove a relation to human language was not accurate. She said "I don't think this behavior is a marker for human language at all. It likely is something abstract and deeper tied to hearing and recognizing sounds," she says. How does she know that? Because she also tested them with patterns of tamarin call noises, barks, hoots and the like, split into their simplest forms and put into patterns. "That's their language, those noises." Neiworth says. "We don't know what they all mean, but we do know a lot of them and those are the ones we used." This also suggests a rudimentary language of their own among Tamarin, a fact that Chomsky and Hauser tend to deny.

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/tech/2012/09/29/marc-hauser-research-reviewed-harvard-scandal/1600229/>

¹⁴²³ Dennett discusses Gould at some length in his Darwin's Dangerous Idea. But his ideas are discussed elsewhere too and dismissed by most evolutionary thinkers. For instance, John Tooby and Leda Cosmides write that "the best way to grasp the nature of Gould's writings is to recognize them as one of the most formidable bodies of fiction to be produced in recent American letters" Gould, like Chomsky wants to make the past a great mystery, and thereby promotes his own theories that have no evidence, as if they did not require precedent.

¹⁴²⁴ Nina Varsava gives a good example of a speciesist who is proud of ignorance of nature and animals. "A more sensible definition of language might appeal to what makes language so very important, or what its primary function is, which seem to amount to the same thing—i.e., *communication*. But Tattersall's conception of the human as abysmally apart from, and superior to, all other animals requires a particularly narrow definition of language. His reasoning promotes a view of animals as non-linguistic and unthinking creatures, supports the categorical distinction between humans and all other animals on these grounds, and accordingly defends the supremacy of the human, which is based on that distinction. The "yawning cognitive gulf" that Tattersall posits "between modern Homo sapiens and the rest of nature" permits him to make diametrical claims against the possibility of human empathy towards animals: "Adept as you may be at reading the minds of members of your own species," he writes, "you simply cannot imagine the dog's actual state of

I asked Barry Kent MacKay, the great Canadian bird artist, and animal researcher and advocate, what he thinks of Chomsky's and Hauser's disparaging ideas about animals. Barry has who has spent his whole life studying birds closely, said

Chomsky wants animals to be human. Even within our own species how things are said, and what is said can vary immensely, so why should we expect animals to "talk" as we do, the real question being how and what they can communicate, and whether it is more or less than we do, and there is absolutely no reason to assume that it can't be more, but more about things we don't know, or care about, or are important to us. I can't imagine what an elephant or a Blue Whale needs to know, or needs to communicate.

I have a similar concern about "intelligence" We are, beyond doubt and by far, the most intelligent species, based on how WE measure intelligence. But I can think of other ways to measure it that make us pretty dumb, indeed. If the function of intelligence is to destroy the life-support capability of the planet, than we are, hands-down, the best there is...no other species comes close, but that does not fit even our own definition of "intelligence".

There seems to be universal "alarm calls" that humans can imitate that call smaller birds "to arms" over the presence of a predator. I've seen a very large number of kinglets, augmented by a few chickadees and a Downy Woodpecker, thus mob a Northern Saw-whet Owl, and of course it is common to see jays do it around an owl, or crows, but also chickadees, nuthatches and so on. I

consciousness" The " yawning cognitive gulf", ironically, is in Tattersall himself and those who think as he does."

once saw Mountain Chickadees and a Golden-crowned Kinglet
“mobbing” a Northern Pygmy-Owl

This is exactly right. Bird communications can be very sophisticated and even cross species lines. Chomsky wants animals to be human and can't handle comparisons that take other species points of view. Linguistics is speciesist by definition, language being to us what the “Beak” of a Platypus is to them. If Platypuses had Platypusingists, they would certainly be Platypus-centered too. An attempt to study all forms of communication in all species would require a much less human centered science, and this is growing. The faults of human communication could be studied too, which are currently outside the domain of linguistics study. Chomsky developed a prejudicial and human centered system, rather like the bogus Physiognomy and Phrenology theory of the early 19th and early 20th centuries. Ian Tattersall's notion of language, which echoes Chomsky and supports it with paleo-anthropology, is likewise akin to the bogus “scientific racism” and anthropology of Buffon, Ernst Haeckel, St. Hillaire, Broca, Coon and others. Tattersall is not a racist so far as I know, rather, he has shifted the same sort of anthropological thinking to prejudice against non-human species based on language and the self-centered ideology of symbolist thought. 18th and 19th century ideas of language already had a racist component, but when this was discredited after the Nazis, speciesism took over as the primary form of discrimination in social sciences like linguistics and anthropology. Tattersall and Chomsky are two of the main proponents of this atrocious, pseudo-scientific system of belief, but they are hardly the only ones. Speciesism is common in today's universities. Indeed, ever since Descartes speciesism has been endemic in most social science.

Just as bogus physiognomy studies were used to analyze the human face and deduce racist characteristics, so Tattersall Hauser and

Chomsky use language to deduce speciesist prejudices about animals. They have enshrined speciesism irrationally in their linguistic speculative systems. Their linguistics is a pseudo-science, and is inherently speciesist and not based on evidence or science. Chomsky, Hauser and others to try to push his ideology because they know so little about nature themselves. He knows virtually nothing about animal communication and has not studied it in natural populations. Hauser's understanding is distorted by animals abused in cages. They know little about wild animals and how they communicate so there is no surprise they see it as a great "mystery" and wish to suppress others from inquiry into it. Even in their proposal for studying wild animals they suggest extreme means. Hauser suggests that "we can imagine that in the not so distant future, it will be possible to non-invasively obtain neural recordings from free-ranging animals, and thus, to provide a more fine grained and quantitative measure of spontaneous processing of different stimuli".¹⁴²⁵ Animals live in nature just as we do and removing their natural context will not tell them much about how animals communicate, perceive and live. They can watch animal themselves in the world, now, but few of them do and when they do they do not know how to read what they see. Chomsky plays the Pope of language when actually he is probably wrong in many ways about it. It is abundantly clear that animals communicate far more than humans realize.

Darwin, in contrast was quite a good nature observer and he denied language was innate in Chomsky's sense. Darwin is much more sensible and not ashamed of empathy and reason, writes that

"language certainly is not a true instinct, for every language has to be learnt. It differs, however, widely from all ordinary arts, for man

¹⁴²⁵ Chomsky, Hauser et al. "Mystery of Language Evolution" 2014
<http://journal.frontiersin.org/Journal/10.3389/fpsyg.2014.00401/full>

has an instinctive tendency to speak, as we see in the babble of our young children; whilst no child has an instinctive tendency to brew, bake, or write. Moreover, no philologist now supposes that any language has been deliberately invented; it has been slowly and unconsciously developed by many steps.”

Chomsky wrongly claims that language learning is effortless for children. Actually it is quite hard for children to learn it and it takes years,¹⁴²⁶ just as it takes a long time for birds to learn to sing. Chomsky claims that in human language we “we find no striking similarity to animal communication systems”¹⁴²⁷ This is nonsense. I have watched birds and animals raise their young and doing it myself has had a huge overlap with what I have seen raccoons, Canada Geese or Orioles do with their young. Most people are so alienated from nature that they have no idea how similar animals and birds are to us.

Actually A New Study, called “Stepwise acquisition of vocal combinatorial capacity in songbirds and human infants” by Dina Lipkind, Gary F. Marcus¹⁴²⁸ and others shows that language acquisition between

¹⁴²⁶ Since we homeschool our children I know exactly what it takes to teach children language. It is a labor of love certainly, but not that easy and requires a lot of patience and care, seven days a week, over a period of years.

¹⁴²⁷ <http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/us/chomsky.htm>

¹⁴²⁸ There is a New York Times article about this too,
http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/02/science/from-the-mouths-of-babes-and-birds.html?hpw&_r=0

And the study itself is here:

<http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v498/n7452/full/nature12173.htmlg>

Pinker’s and Jackendoff’s refutation of Chomsky Hauser and Fitch is here:

http://pinker.wjh.harvard.edu/articles/papers/pinker_jackendoff.pdf

This seems to me to be a very important refutation of many of Chomsky’s claims. Indeed, it is a step toward erecting linguistics on a non Chomskian basis. While Pinker’s own views may have problems, at least he allows for an empirical approach. While some of Chomsky’s idea can be saved perhaps, much of it would be well to jettison and begin again on a Darwinian basis, with

humans and birds shares striking similarities. Chomsky tries but fails to discredit these studies, as was expected, as he tries to discredit any threat to his power. But despite him, science now supports Darwin's view of language, not Chomsky, whose theory is incorrect.. This study negates Chomsky's notion that human language is unique. Obviously human language shares important characteristics with bird communication as it does with many other species. Chomsky wrote in his Hauser and Fitch(2002, 2014) and more recent essays that animal and human communication were radically different. He is clearly mistaken on this.

Indeed in more recent findings it was shown that some birds, such as Japanese Great Tits, have syntax, a quality that Chomsky always denied to birds. The experimentalists state in their paper that "Here we provide, to our knowledge, the first unambiguous experimental evidence for compositional syntax in a non-human vocal system"¹⁴²⁹ This has profound implications and shows Chomsky to be incorrect. In Descent of Man Darwin had already speculated on the similarity of bird and human communications systems. He was right and has been proven to be right experimentally. Chomsky theories are wrong in so many ways.

There are various ways that disproves the major thrust in the Chomsky's theory. But Chomsky was already refuted earlier by Darwin himself.

much more research to be done on animal societies in the wild. I also am pleased to see that Pinker and Jackendoff largely if not entirely defeat Chomsky's human centered speciesism.

¹⁴²⁹ See Experimental evidence for compositional syntax in bird calls. Nature Communications, March 2016 Toshitaka N. Suzuki, David Wheatcroft, & Michael Griesser;

<http://www.nature.com/ncomms/2016/160308/ncomms10986/full/ncomms10986.html>

Darwin was already far ahead of Chomsky in the 1860's. Jackendoff and Pinker are correct when they state in their essay contesting Chomsky claims. Pinker and Jackendoff state in their "The faculty of language: what's special about it?"¹⁴³⁰ that Chomsky's theory of language is "sufficiently problematic that it cannot be used to support claims about evolution"¹⁴³¹. Indeed, the basics of the Chomsky theory are all failing, as Pinker and Jackendoff, Dennett, Searle and others show. Of course Pinker also endorses Chomsky's views, since he was one of his students, and does not see what else might be mistaken in Chomsky. One can expect that the discovery of the similarities between bird and human communication is just the first of many to be found between animals and humans in the upcoming decades. I have seen enough of the capacities of animals and birds to guess that they are much more sophisticated than most humans realize. Chomsky's theory of language will be merely an historical curiosity one day. Some of what he said was helpful but much of it was not.

¹⁴³⁰ http://public.wsu.edu/~fournier/Teaching/psych592/Readings/Pinker_Jackendoff_2005.pdf

¹⁴³¹ Chomsky's hostility to biology and evolution in particular is bizarre. According to Pinker Chomsky thinks that current biology must be revamped to accommodate the findings of [Chomsky's] Minimalist linguistics: The evidence for this is Chomsky own statement below...

Any progress toward this goal [showing that language is a "perfect system"] will deepen a problem for the biological sciences that is far from trivial: how can a system such as language arise in the mind/brain, or for that matter, in the organic world, in which one seems not to find anything like the basic properties of human language? That problem has sometimes been posed as a crisis for the cognitive sciences. The concerns are appropriate, but their locus is misplaced; they are primarily a problem for biology and the brain sciences, which, as currently understood, do not provide any basis for what appear to be fairly well established conclusions about language (Chomsky, 1995, pp. 1–2).

Pinker points out that this is presumptuous of Chomsky. He tends to think his ideas are god given and everyone should move over. The truth is otherwise, sometimes he is just mistaken and this is one of those times. He has made no "well established conclusions" about language other than to those who follow his rather cultish dogmas which have little empirical evidence behind them.

Chomsky, like Pinker is overlooking the obvious. We are animals. We evolved from animals. Crows do elaborate communications to warn each other about hawks and also mourn the death of loved ones, as do elephants. A wolf pack has an amazingly diverse and varied array of expressions of emotional states, calls indicating whereabouts and many others feeling states indicated by different sounds. They think and strategize too. They employ complex strategies to bring down prey which indicates some measure of "reason" and even "creativity", which is Chomsky's primary claim for human language uniqueness. Bower birds make something very much like human art out of colored object and female bower birds judge the results of these nests.¹⁴³² This is very like human communications in love. Darwin observes, rightly, I think, that language is laboriously learned, like an art and humans have a tendency to want speak at birth but must learn it from parents and foster parents. Darwin explicitly denies claims that language is genetic: it is nurture not nature. He compares this learning process to that of birds....

"The sounds uttered by birds offer in several respects the nearest analogy to language, for all the members of the same species utter the same instinctive cries expressive of their emotions; and all the kinds which sing, exert their power instinctively; but the actual song, and even the call-notes, are learnt from their parents or foster-parents. These sounds, as Dines Barrington*(2) has proved, are no more innate than language is in man." The first attempts to sing "may be compared to the imperfect endeavour in a child to babble."¹⁴³³

¹⁴³² For a very interesting essay on the subject of art and its biological origins see The Art Instinct by Dennis Dutton. Dutton also rejects Stephen Jay Gould's non-adaptationism. He is closer to Steven Pinker, who also dissents from Chomsky's views for Darwinian reasons.

¹⁴³³ http://www.infidels.org/library/historical/charles_darwin/descent_of_man/chapter_03.html

Like the recent essay that proves just this, mentioned above, this is an explicit denial of the innateness theory of language as held by Chomsky, Pinker or anyone else. Darwin does not deny that the capacity for communication is genetic in the brain, or that the apparatus of the larynx or mouth might favor speech, he denies that grammar or talking or language use is genetic. Of course he did not know about genes, yet. But he is saying that language is a proclivity not an innate structure. This appears to be correct. Language is largely cultural. Darwin continues:

The slight natural differences of song in the same species inhabiting different districts may be appositely compared, as Barrington remarks, "to provincial dialects"; and the songs of allied, though distinct species may be compared with the languages of distinct races of man. I have given the foregoing details to show that an instinctive tendency to acquire an art is not peculiar to man. (Descent of Man Chapter 3)

Birds acquire song and people acquire language by similar mechanisms. The capacity is present genetically insofar as parts of the body and brain have been adapted to language but that actual use of song or language proceeds by way of instruction and culture. The work of Con Slobodchikoff on Prairie Dogs, like similar work on birds, suggests that even animals like Prairie Dogs have a language of sorts, which they can use creatively in their own sphere of interests, as can humans. Slobodchikoff states that the divide that linguists make between language reserved only for humans and communication, reserved for animals is a falsehood.

“Calling it communication sets up that us-versus-them divide,” he says. “I don’t think there is a gap. I think it all integrates in there. You can go to Barnes & Noble and pick up book after book that says humans are the only ones with language. That cheats our understanding of animal abilities and inhibits the breadth of our investigation. I would like to see people give animals more credence, and I think it’s happening now, slowly. But I would like to push it along a little faster.”¹⁴³⁴

Darwin’s Descent of Man, chapter 3, puts Chomsky’s work as a linguist in question and I think defeats many of its main postulates. I would go further and say that Chomsky’s understanding of language is still behind what Darwin understood 140 years ago. Darwin says that language is learned by many small steps and this is accurate, just as birds learn to sing. He supplies endless examples of his points from experience and reality. This is very refreshing compared to Chomsky who has little understanding of other species or even domestic species. Many animals and birds create complex structures for habitation, and very likely humans derived their buildings types partly from animals structures such as beaver lodges and dams or termite nests. Humans warn each other just as animals do, announce the proximity of food, exclaim in pain or pleasure, deceive others with feigned imitations¹⁴³⁵ and many other similarities. Chomsky is mistaken that animals have no creative use in communication, as Slobodchikoff has shown in his Parairie Dog studies. Consider the many complex birds songs, the amazingly varied utterances of the Starling or Robin, to site two common

¹⁴³⁴ This was in an NYT article about Slobodchikoff theory of animal language, May 16, 2017. Here. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/12/magazine/can-prairie-dogs-talk.html>

¹⁴³⁵ Blue Jays do a perfect imitation of red tailed hawks which they use to scare other birds and humans too.

birds, or Mannikin mating dances, or Lyrebird imitations of other birds or Elephant and Giraffe infra-sound and whale singing. Bees appear to have complex communications.

Chomsky denies animals have “language” after he sets up rather narrow and exclusive, elitist and speciesist notions of what human language is supposed to be. Darwin is much more open to actual experience and has a detailed and amazing knowledge of actual animals. Chomsky’s cramped computational view of language is all dusty blackboard and university office, formalistic and abstract city and streets. It is hard to imagine Chomsky studying birds or walking by a pond, much less sailing on the Beagle for years to study flora and fauna. Chomsky writes:

the fact that human language, being free from control of identifiable external stimuli or internal *physiological* [emphasis added] states, can serve as a general instrument of thought and self-expression rather than merely as a communicative device of report, request, or command (CL, 11-12).

[human language] is not restricted to any practical communicative function, in contrast, for example, to the pseudo-language of animals (CL, 29).

[Cartesians want to account for intelligent behavior] in the face of their inability to provide an explanation in mechanical terms (CL, 12).

While it is true that no other species has language in quite the way the way humans do, it is obvious that Darwinian evolution developed human speech out of antecedents in our animal ancestors. No other species has communication skills in the ways Dolphins, Prairie Dogs or Elephants do either. The notion that one is superior to the other is just

speciesist prejudice. The quality of unique capacity occurs everywhere in nature. There is both difference and continuity between insect, bird and mammal communication, but all are developed via evolution. Human communication privileges humans in their own eyes, but it also makes them think other species are worthless and deserve extinction, which hardly suggests humans are as great as they imagine they are. There is nothing “pseudo” about elephant or whale communication as Katy Payne has shown. She has shown that “ elephants use their low-frequency calls to coordinate their social behavior over long distances”¹⁴³⁶. So this basic premise of the Chomskian system is Descartes’ speciesist and prejudicial thesis restated. Elephants and other species show empathy for each other and communicate closely. Darwin is a wonderful antidote to grudging supremacist bigotry.

Darwin is at pains to show that though the capacity or need to speak may be “instinctual” or genetic, as we would say now. But the doing of it must be taught, as must bird song, and so grammar itself is probably not instinctual or genetic, but practical and changeable in different societies. He stresses that writing must be learned as well, and it is even harder to learn that speaking. Darwin notes that the singing of songs in birds “is no more innate than language is in man” (Descent pg. 298) He notes that the instinctive tendency to acquire an art” is common to both birds and humans.

Chomsky’s linguistic theory is suspect and lacking empirical evidence. At end the of his paper “A Minimalist Program for Linguistic Theory” (1995) Chomsky even notes himself the failure of his linguistic theory to achieve status as “science”. The notion of “deep structure”

¹⁴³⁶ See the Elephant Listening Project on Elephant Language here:
<http://www.birds.cornell.edu/brp/elephant/cyclotis/language/language.html>

See also Katy Payne’s book Silent Thunder

failed. He is theorizing and guessing in a rationalist way, with little or no dependence on empirical testing, and this leads him merely to make a theory that looks more like his own ego than like nature. This is a mistake and a mistake that Chomsky has been loathe for too long to admit or give up. It appears that Chomsky's main impetus in rejecting aspects of Darwinian theory come from Stephen Jay Gould, whose idea of "spandrels" appears to be the source of Chomsky's odd ideas about language being somehow independent of Darwinian adaptation. Chomsky's insistence on language having primarily to do with thought rather than communication is part of this rejection. It appears likely that he is mistaken in this. Darwin, once again, was right that language is primarily about communication and derives ultimately from primate ancestors.

Darwin's argument, stated in the Descent of Man, is that language might have some of its origins deriving ultimately from singing in primates. He uses the example of loud and vivacious Gibbons calls. He implies also that language may have been encouraged by sexual selection. This is a very amazing and pregnant passage, still largely overlooked in Darwin's work which ought to be much more deeply studied:

"I cannot doubt that language owes its origin to the imitation and modification of various natural sounds, the voices of other animals, and man's own instinctive cries, aided by signs and gestures. When we treat of sexual selection we shall see that primeval man, or rather some early progenitor of man, probably first used his voice in producing true musical cadences, that is in singing, as do some of the gibbon-apes at the present day; and we may conclude from a widely-spread analogy, that this power would have been especially exerted during the courtship of the sexes,- would have expressed various emotions, such as love, jealousy,

triumph,- and would have served as a challenge to rivals. It is, therefore, probable that the imitation of musical cries by articulate sounds may have given rise to words expressive of various complex emotions. The strong tendency in our nearest allies, the monkeys, in microcephalous idiots,*⁽²⁾ and in the barbarous races of mankind, to imitate whatever they hear deserves notice, as bearing on the subject of imitation. Since monkeys certainly understand much that is said to them by man, and when wild, utter signal-cries of danger to their fellows;*⁽³⁾ and since fowls give distinct warnings for danger on the ground, or in the sky from hawks (both, as well as a third cry, intelligible to dogs),*⁽⁴⁾ may not some unusually wise apelike animal have imitated the growl of a beast of prey, and thus told his fellow-monkeys the nature of the expected danger? This would have been a first step in the formation of a language.

As the voice was used more and more, the vocal organs would have been strengthened and perfected through the principle of the inherited effects of use; and this would have reacted on the power of speech. But the relation between the continued use of language and the development of the brain, has no doubt been far more important. The mental powers in some early progenitor of man must have been more highly developed than in any existing ape, before even the most imperfect form of speech could have come into use; but we may confidently believe that the continued use and advancement of this power would have reacted on the mind itself, by enabling and encouraging it to carry on long trains of thought. A complex train of thought can no more be carried on without the aid of words, whether spoken or silent, than a long calculation without the use of figures or algebra. It appears, also, that even an ordinary train of thought almost requires, or is greatly facilitated by some form of language, for the dumb, deaf, and blind

girl, Laura Bridgman, was observed to use her fingers whilst dreaming.* Nevertheless, a long succession of vivid and connected ideas may pass through the mind without the aid of any form of language, as we may infer from the movements of dogs during their dreams. We have, also, seen that animals are able to reason to a certain extent, manifestly without the aid of language. The intimate connection between the brain, as it is now developed in us, and the faculty of speech, is well shown by those curious cases of brain-disease in which speech is especially affected, as when the power to remember substantives is lost, whilst other words can be correctly used, or where substantives of a certain class, or all except the initial letters of substantives and proper names are forgotten.”

These gems of insight are far in advance of anything written by Chomsky about language, communication, animals and humans. These gems of insight, which suffuse all of Chapter 3 of Descent of Man and other works of Darwin, should have been developed by Chomsky but were not. Chomsky ignores Darwin and imagines, falsely, I think, that Descartes is wiser and truer on language. Descartes’ theory of language is self-involved and anti-natural. It is paltry and appears to be born of prejudice and should be abandoned as should most or perhaps all of Chomsky’s theory. Looking at language from a Darwinian point of view means to study communication across species lines and all the way back in time. It does not mean merely studying grammar, which is merely codified rules of speech and is a later development. Crows talking, Wolves howling, Neanderthals talking to Modern Humans, Whales communicating are far more important. Indeed, there is reason to abandon Chomsky theory of language and start anew. It would be nice to see Chomsky himself abandon this, though that is unlikely. His ego is attached to the theory and it is a theory that accords well with human

centered ideologies, both capitalist and socialist. He does not seem to want to follow the normal route of science that a theory must be tested and submitted to review. He is a very uncompromising fellow who listens to no one. There is reason to doubt he is doing science at all, and if it is not science, it is demagoguery, as he himself says.

John Searle notes regarding Chomsky's early work up till the 70's or 80's that "the original paradigm had failed".¹⁴³⁷ His later 'paradigms' do not look very promising either. Indeed, while Chomsky politics is interesting, most of Chomsky's claims for linguistics appear to be on very shaky ground, if not outright fiction. Not only does universal grammar appear to be a fiction but notion that FLN and FLB are different things really is just an excuse for speciesism.¹⁴³⁸ Animal communications are rigorously exclude from his 'narrow' definition of language. His notions of "I language" obscure more than they explain,¹⁴³⁹.. While he is certainly right that language has a genetic component, little is known about it. In brain injuries the locus of apparent language activity can even be rerouted to other parts of the brain, that in itself suggests that a language "organ" is not the right way to speak of how the language works in the brain. It is spread over different areas of the brain. Moreover, language appears to be a cultural phenomenon as much as a genetic

¹⁴³⁷ <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2002/jul/18/chomskys-revolution-an-exchange/>

¹⁴³⁸ These acronyms stand for Faculty of Language Narrow and Faculty of Language Broad, and we in use as of 2004, essay with Hauser and Fitch.

¹⁴³⁹ According to Pinker "Merge" and "recursion" in language is hugely overrated by Chomsky. This is extensively discussed in Pinker and Jackendoff, "The faculty of language: what's special about it?". I wonder if recursion might be the dead end of the Chomskian theory, a sort of self-referential self-portrait of the grammarian himself, just as Descartes ends in the dark of *Je Pense Donc Je Suis*", as Beckett shows him, talking to himself in a black room. Chomsky ends in recursion, tautological analogy, and similitude. But I don't think this tells us much about what language actually is, it merely states a sort of Chomskian religion of the mind looking at itself. Rather like the mythical Unified Field Theory, Merge appears to be a myth born of straining after the origins of language in the vacuum of Chomsky's rationalism without much empirical study.

one. It appears to be brought about more by social conditioning or learning than by genetics, as Darwin claimed. The ideology of innate grammar may be invalid, because there is no evidence that can verify it. In his *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, Karl Popper proposed a generally accepted variant of this doctrine: a hypothesis is valid if and only if it can in principle be falsified by empirical evidence. Chomsky has little evidence to support most of his ideas. It is much more likely that grammar is a product of language use, --a product of the process of using nouns and verbs, and not that grammar is innate and prior to language use. This was both Darwin's and Skinner's point of view and it appears to be right, given the empirical evidence, though exactly how this works has not yet been fully understood. I think Chomsky has gotten away with his pandering of very insecure and questionable ideas in linguistics by force of personality rather than by force of actual discovery. Chomsky rejects Skinner's¹⁴⁴⁰ and Russell's stimulus response theories and balks at accepting Darwinians idea when he can get away with it. He is an abrasive and difficult person and forces his followers to conform by being overbearing manner. One must either be his accomplice or his victim. I have tried to be neither: I do not accept his claims and demanded of him better explanations which he will not and cannot provide.

Chomsky's claim that language is mostly about solipsistic thinking appears to be overstated as it leads him to deny that language is primarily about communication.¹⁴⁴¹ This need to deny the obvious is

¹⁴⁴⁰ There is a rather devastating historical review of Chomsky's bad attack on Skinner by David Palmer. Palmer claims that:

My own exploration and evaluation of Chomsky's theories led me to predict that his work will ultimately be seen as a kind of scientific flash flood, generating great excitement, wreaking havoc, but leaving behind only an arid gulch.

¹⁴⁴¹ Pinker notes that "In fact, over the years he[Chomsky] has become rather hostile to the idea that language is a system designed for communication. He believes that language evolved for

strange in Chomsky. I suspect it to be a pose, rather a didactic one, which is about his getting attention and creating controversy, rather than saying anything concrete about language. He says outrageous things so others will notice him, when it is obvious that language in fact is primarily about communication. He does this in politics too.¹⁴⁴²

Clearly animals do have a kind of language and do communicate in a great variety of ways. Darwinism suggests that human language is one of these ways, more complex than the others, but there is no need to demean or denigrate what animals can do. Bats can echolocate and humans have only learned to do this recently and only with elaborate and

beauty, not for use. Chomsky's skepticism about evolution extends far enough to say that there is nothing about language that is particularly well adapted for communication... He believes that people have a spontaneous tendency to cooperate and create for the sheer sake of it without regard for reward or consequences. That is the deepest root of Chomsky's belief system. This leads to his radical politics. It also leads to a conception of language that emphasizes creativity, but devalues the utility of language as a system of communication. It cannot be explained in terms of its beneficial consequences, which is the essence of natural selection."

¹⁴⁴² So for instance he denies that voting is about voting. In his first point in an essay written with John Halle called "An Eight Point Brief for (LEV) lesser evil voting", he states

"Voting should not be viewed as a form of personal self-expression or moral judgement directed in retaliation towards major party candidates who fail to reflect our values, or of a corrupt system designed to limit choices to those acceptable to corporate elites".

At the very beginning of his plea that we should vote for Clinton, he strips voting of its essential meaning. More than this he chops off the legs of the very reason there is voting in a democracy. Voting is precisely self expression and moral judgment—our values, reflected in our choices. If voting is not about our values, our moral choices and self expression, there is no reason at all to vote for anyone. Like saying that language is not about communication, he is trying to undermine all understanding, just as voting for Clinton is really an admission of defeat and a willingness to court corporations and their candidate. He is just trying to get attention. Moreover he is trying to force people to do what he wants them to do. It is a power play. I suggest his idea that language is not communication is also this sort of exploit. He wants to take over all discourse on the subject, and to do so in an absurd way, proclaiming absurdity as a first principle. Duchamp might admire this con job, as that is how Duchamp tried to hide the fact that he could not paint, but it is a con job and I do not admire it. He destroys discourse and then considers Clinton as his candidate of choice, enjoining us to be as conservative as he is, because in his failing old age. The fact is that Chomsky is no longer to be trusted as a source of advice on politics.

The candidate Jill Stein denies the very thing that Chomsky says. She says that voting is a moral choice and we have a responsibility to make the world better. I agree, and appreciate not being manipulated as Chomsky is wont to do to denigrate his readers. See also Chris Hedges who has written well on voting for the lesser evil and how destructive it is. We have the right to vote for whoever we think is best. If the wrong candidate wins, we are not responsible for that. Those who voted for them are.

expensive technology, radar, sonar and so on. If one must compare bats and humans on a scale of values that has flying while vocalizing as its main term, bats are far superior to any humans. No human can swim as well as a dolphin or fly as well as a Tern or a Nighthawk. If language is a ‘unique property of evolution’ for humans, this might not be an entirely good thing, given the despicable facts of what we have done with it. Animals have capacities that are also unique, which really means that uniqueness is a normative fact of evolution, and thus meaningless: every being and every adaptation is unique. Hierarchy is an illusion as evolution is a bottom-up process of incremental development, species by species. The notion that one species is superior to others is false; each is unique and has its own capacities and traits and survives by virtue of these. Each deserves protection from human self-centered chauvinism. Many species have faculties or capacities that humans cannot touch. Octopuses can change skin color and shape at will. Terns can fly 15,000 miles on their own energy. Camels can go long periods without water. Elephants can communicate using infra-sound, as Katy Payne and others have shown. Humans have language, that is our special ability, but that hardly invalidates the superiority of other species to humans in endless other ways, from penguins, to Butterfly wing patterns, to the marvel of birds wings. David Neibert asks “humans give Crows a human test, why not give Crows a human test?” Yes, this is right, humans would fail just about any test given like this, as for instance, a dog smelling test, or a Peregrine flying test, or snake in a chipmunk hole test. Humans would always lose.

In order to explain Chomsky’s rather strangely Platonic ‘archetypal’ notions of “deep structure” and “universal grammar”¹⁴⁴³ he cannot rely

¹⁴⁴³ Chomsky wrote that Universal Grammar implied the possibility that all human languages are already in the human brain before birth. This is a Platonic idea and seems untenable and unworkable--- as are Platonic concepts in general. Evidently Chomsky later dropped this idea, which was central to this theory. He also justifies some of his ideas by reference to Alexander Koyre, a rather reactionary Platonist, who was an influence on the traditionalists and their anti –

on Darwinian evidence because there isn't any, so he resorts to cosmic and rather occult theories, Chomsky claims that the:

" language faculty appears to be biologically isolated in a curious and unexpected sense....To tell a fairy story about it, it is almost as if there was some higher primate wandering around a long time ago and some random mutation took place - maybe after some strange cosmic ray shower - and it reorganized the brain, implanting a language organ in an otherwise primate brain."¹⁴⁴⁴

Language did not occur miraculously or outside of evolution. It is hard to imagine this sort of fantasy coming from someone who claims to be a scientist, but that is just the problem I am getting at here. He would rather invent romantic or mythical fictions like this that do the hard work of finding Darwinian evidence for his theories, in brain science or in nature and other animals. It is likely, as Darwin and lots of evidence suggests, that language is primarily about communication, and evolved because of ordinary natural selection and sexual selection as well as social and cultural factors. Chomsky mistake is to never have gone on

science program.. He quotes Koyre's anti materialistic notions lifted from Newton that ``a purely materialistic or mechanistic physics . . . is impossible". This is really a misunderstanding of physics, I think. Koyre is a favorite of science bashers. Chomsky also uses Goethe as an example, another Platonist. Another Platonist that influenced Chomsky was Julius Moravcsik, a philosopher. Chomsky does not call himself a Platonist as far as I am aware. He would probably deny he is one. But the concept of "Universal Grammar" UG, a virtually Platonist concept, is an idealization along the lines of Platonic "Archetypes"--- "Eidos". The actual mechanism of language in the brain appears to be quite different than Chomsky idealized notion of grammar. Chomsky is guilty of what A.N. Whitehead called the 'fallacy of misplaced concreteness', making UG into a factual entity, when really it is just an idealistic postulate. Plato's archetypes are also guilty of this. In the end the postulate failed, as the Archetypes failed. Chomsky also quotes Koyre in other essays, for instance he quote Koyre's idea that in science "We are left with the ``admission into the body of science of incomprehensible and inexplicable `facts' imposed upon us by empiricism",-- this is nearly a romantic and religious statement again attacking empiricism. This is a mistake on Chomsky's part I think. Here:

<http://www.chomsky.info/articles/2000----.pdf>

¹⁴⁴⁴ Chomsky *The architecture of language* Oxford 2000, p4

the Beagle or a similar voyage of discovery, looking for the roots of language in animals, birds and our own biology. Like Descartes Chomsky is off in the ozone of his own reason, and has little understanding of the natural world, and this brings down the roof on his theories on his own head.

Chomsky is evoking the rationalist Plato and the archetypes which he transmogrifies via Descartes and Humboldt into “innate grammars”, which have never been proven to exist. This is mythology and religion, not science. Chomsky’s Platonistic claim that people are born with innate knowledge of grammar is postulated but unproven after 50 years of Chomsky’s research. Language has naturalistic or realist explanations that are cultural, Darwinian and empirical, and Chomsky largely ignores these. His influence by Descartes and Humboldt does not make much sense unless he is trying to create a self-sustaining faith or dogma that is rational and non-empirical, but in that case we are not dealing with science so much as sort of Cartesian dogma, a Cartesian Church as it were, with Chomsky as its priest. An example of his Platonist theory¹⁴⁴⁵

¹⁴⁴⁵ Chomsky’s rather Neo-Platonist views are evident here: the puzzle as to how a child can master a grammar is, for Chomsky, an instance of ‘Plato’s problem’ - “the problem of explaining how we can know so much, given that we have such limited evidence”....” Plato’s answer,” says Chomsky, “was that the knowledge is ‘remembered’ from an earlier existence. The answer calls for a mechanism: perhaps the immortal soul. That may strike us as not very satisfactory, but it is worth bearing in mind that it is a more reasonable answer than those assumed as doctrine during the dark ages of Anglo-American empiricism and behavioral science - to put the matter tendentiously, but accurately.”.... Chomsky forgets to add that Plato’s theory of the Eidos is thoroughly discredited. “So we should not associate the doctrine of the soul with the dark ages: on the contrary, it is the opponents of Plato’s theory who are in the dark ages. But there is a problem: talk of man’s ‘immortal soul’ sounds like antiquated *language*. For the doctrine to appear more acceptable, it needs to be rephrased:....”Pursuing this course, and rephrasing Plato’s answer in terms more congenial to us today, we will say that the basic properties of cognitive systems are innate to the mind, part of human biological endowment” ... So UG is really a template of the Platonic soul modernized.... language is a sort of meta-Platonic template in the brain deposited there at birth and this does not appear to be the case. (see N Chomsky, ‘Linguistics and adjacent fields: a personal view’ in A Kasher (ed.) *The Chomskyan Turn* Oxford 1991, p15. and also see N Chomsky, ‘Linguistics and cognitive science: problems and mysteries’ in A Kasher (ed.) *The Chomskyan Turn* Oxford 1991, pp26-53; p50.).

of Language is his explanation of language unfolding in children in a quasi-automatic way. I have small children and it is not automatic, but halting and difficult with constant corrections and amendments from parents and peers, exactly as Darwin says. Learning English or any other language is no small matter but takes years to accomplish. Chomsky underrated the vast influence of natural selection and parents and teachers. Darwin claimed that language is learned with difficulty and much time and practice and I can confirm this having taught my own children most of the language they know. That my children are genetically predisposed to learn it is unquestionable. But they mangle grammar with such regularity it is clearly not inborn, but learned.

Darwin says that “language certainly is not a true instinct”. He implies it is a cultural creation. The spread of language over the earth and the fact that languages change so easily and quickly would indeed, suggest a cultural development, not a genetic one. Chomsky and Pinker both imply it is an instinct, without giving really good reasons why this should be so. I think it is safe to conclude that the subject of linguistics is hopelessly deadlocked and confused, inherently political and as yet incapable of real science and objectivity.¹⁴⁴⁶ I suspect Darwin is right

¹⁴⁴⁶ Geoffery Sampson argues against both Chomsky and Pinker in his [The Language Instinct Debate](http://www.grsampson.net/Atin.html). Sampson appears to be another far right critic of Chomsky, but his arguments appear to have some reason in them, independent of his politics. I don’t think I agree entirely, as language does appear to have some evolutionary foundations. But I show this to show how conflicted this domain is and how neither Chomsky nor Pinker have really made it clearer or better. here:

<http://www.grsampson.net/Atin.html>

Sampson says “I conclude that there is no language instinct. On the available evidence, languages seem to be products of cultural evolution only. The biological foundations on which they depend are an open-ended ability to formulate and test hypotheses, which we use to learn about anything and everything that life throws at us, and perception and phonation mechanisms which evolved to serve other functions and have no special relationship with language.”

and not Chomsky. Chomsky appears to leave out Darwin and the obvious idea that language is logical phenomena, born perhaps very indirectly out genetic inheritance and commonality with other animals.. Chomsky expresses the unlikely hope physics will explain language. This privileging of physics over other sciences is absurd as it is no more important than other sciences. When Chomsky was young physics was given artificial status because of Einstein and the Manhattan Project. If anything physics is the least of the sciences and what really matters is understanding living things. This is probably pure fantasy that Chomsky tries to tie language back to physics. Language is a biological and cultural fact of biological evolution not a factor growing from $F=MA$, even though, obviously the brain is effected by physical forces. He claims Newton's frustrated mystical idea about gravity implies mechanism is fiction and all is the ghostly mind. He does not understand that Newton probably misunderstood gravity. Rather than pursue the hard evolutionary science that needs to be done, Chomsky allies himself with the romantics rather than with biology. ¹⁴⁴⁷ Chomsky writes, talking about his own formative influences, that

The question how cultural evolution developed the complex languages used during recorded history out of simple precursors is an interesting, worthwhile question. But it is surely a very different question, to which different kinds of evidence are relevant and different sorts of answer available, from the question how an alleged "language instinct" might have evolved biologically.

¹⁴⁴⁷ Chomsky proneness to mystagogy and mysticism is evident in the following quote----.He attacks Darwin obliquely on the basis that "one element of a famous disagreement between the two founders of the theory of evolution, with Wallace holding, contrary to Darwin, that evolution of these faculties cannot be accounted for in terms of variation and natural selection alone, but requires "some other influence, law, or agency," some principle of nature alongside gravitation, cohesion, and other forces without which the material universe could not exist." Wallace's pursuit of spiritual "agency", which is what is referred to here, forced him to become embarrassingly religious in later years, a fact Chomsky fails to note. Darwin was right in this argument against Wallace's irrational religiosity, as many have noted, (see David Quammen The Reluctant Mr. Darwin: An Intimate Portrait of Charles Darwin and the Making of His Theory of Evolution on Wallace and Darwin) Chomsky effort to spiritualize the language faculty with a mystagogy surrounding gravity and thought, is unique, but very eccentric and probably wrong. The abstract and internal character of a language is one of its worst properties, as it tends to divorce humans

“This Platonistic element in Humboldt’s thought is a pervasive one; for Humboldt, it was as natural to propose an essentially Platonistic theory of “learning” as it was for Rousseau to found his critique of repressive social institutions on a conception of human freedom that derives from strictly Cartesian assumptions regarding the limitations of mechanical explanation. And in general it seems appropriate to construe both the psychology and the linguistics of the romantic period as in large part a natural outgrowth of rationalist conceptions.¹⁴⁴⁸

Such romantic concepts lead up to Chomsky himself of course and go far to explain his sometimes mystagogical and irrational tendencies. He distorts the history of science to lead up to his own theories. He is good at appearing very rational but the basis of his thought is anything but rational. He is a mythical thinker. It would be far simpler at this point to admit the romantic fiction of innate grammars has failed and that that these suppositions were really moonshine, a dead end. But Chomsky keeps going on and on, trying to spin ever tighter webs of myth and theory around the carcass of innate grammar.

Language grows out of our brains, but does so because of the evolutionary development of communication skills and cultural conditions and this is something that evolved over time, through genetics perhaps, and the development of the brain and or culture. Chomsky’s innate Platonism is a lifelong illusion of his, which derives from Descartes. He denies his Platonism, of course, but I think I have proved

from nature and creates a sort of doubling whereby religion and other abstract alienation becomes possible. Chomsky, like Wallace tries to make a virtue of this failing in human language, when really it is one of the most unfortunate of illusions. This might be the source of Chomsky’s dislike of Darwinism and of animals, who are way down on the totem pole of Chomskian theory.

¹⁴⁴⁸ From one of Chomsky’s lectures in Language and Mind reproduced here
<http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/us/chomsky.htm>

it. He is fixed on this idea irrationally, as John Searle suggests in his excellent “The End of the Revolution” which is about the failure of Chomsky’s linguistic theories to bear real fruit.¹⁴⁴⁹

I hasten to add that Chomsky insistence on the genetic origin of language might be partly correct in that there is a genetic component that provides the capacity for language, as is shown in brain studies on Broca’s and Wierneke’s areas and other areas of the brain as well, most of which involve communication or understanding of communication, both meaning and expression.¹⁴⁵⁰ But the fact that the areas of the brain that are concerned with language are about communication and meaning, already suggests that Chomsky’s grammatical, “Cartesian” and functional linguistics might be beside the point. Darwin said on the other hand that language is not an instinct. This means it is not innate and not genetic. Until genetics and physical studies of the brain start showing what is actually the case, I cannot decide this question, nor can anyone lese.

Grammar appears to be a minor development of meaning and expression through communication needs--- in other words grammar is a development of custom and use in social contexts , not the archetypal or

¹⁴⁴⁹ The following essay used to be online, now you have to pay for it. That is a shame.....it is a good article that really scours Chomsky’s plate and does so with tact and reason. He shows that many of Chomsky major efforts are mostly fantasy, there is no LAD, no universal grammar, and very likely one could go on,... no I language no Merge etc..... Indeed, Merge appears to be little more than a reduction of language to tautology, which gives us little or nothing.
<http://www.scribd.com/doc/47780900/John-Searle-End-of-the-Revolution>. New York Review of Books

¹⁴⁵⁰ Much has been learned about language from the complex reactions to various kinds of aphasia. Darwin already understood this. In some aphasias patients can hear but not understand words, in other aphasias patients cannot speak but can understand language. In other cases, patients with damage to these areas of the brain can relearn language in other areas of the brain not usually used for language, suggesting again that language is not just in one area but is occurs in various areas of the brain. There is no “language organ” per se, but only a generalized adapting of the brain itself to use. There is no universal grammar. Language is easily lost in Alzheimer’s and other diseases. How this works is still largely unknown, though much more is known that was the case.

“universal” genetic center of all languages as Chomsky contends.. Grammar is a by-product of intentions and the practice of communication, not a cause, in other words. We have good brains and brains that allowed us to invent language as part of our culture

There are areas of the brain that appear to have to do with meanings, such as an area for animals or famous people, face recognition and even cerebellum or motor areas appear to be involved in language in complex ways. But though the exact process remains obscure, much more is known about it now than was the case even 20 years ago. What is known about it appears to contradict Chomsky’s claims. The brain/language connection is Darwinian and adaptationist, not Platonic or Chomskian. There is no language “organ” per se, but rather an adaptation of the various parts of the brain and body (vocal cords, mouth) to language that probably grew up by the usual Darwinian processes.¹⁴⁵¹ It is of course very sad that Chomsky turned out to be wrong in so many ways. But as John Searle notes that

“ It is often tempting in the human sciences to aspire to being a natural science; and there is indeed a natural science, about which we know very little, of the foundations of language in the neurobiology of the human brain. But the idea that linguistics itself might be a natural science rests on doubtful assumptions.

“¹⁴⁵²

I suspect Seale is right. Searle’s claims that

¹⁴⁵¹ Dennett appear to be correct that Chomsky was led astray by Stephen Jay Gould who tried to minimize the importance of direct adaptation. See Dennett book Darwin’s Dangerous Idea, that has a whole chapter on both Chomsky and Gould. Dennett is highly critical of Chomsky’s effort to eliminate Darwinism from linguistics. Rightly so.

¹⁴⁵² <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2002/jul/18/chomskys-revolution-an-exchange/?page=2>

‘there is no universal grammar common to all languages; there is no Language Acquisition Device in the brain; grammar is not innate but mastered through experience of language and life; there are no deep structures in the brain; language has many functions other than describing things’. It is time to more seriously doubt Chomsky’s linguistics, both in its sources and its final goals.

So Chomsky’s “Universal Grammar” goes the way of Descartes Pineal Gland. It goes poof, it never existed. What would be really grand, even stupendous, would be if Chomsky himself admitted that some of his critics might be right, not just recently but over many years. I do not mean his political critics. I am not talking about his politics here. To admit that his critics are right and the basic trajectory of his linguistic theory is mistaken would be a good thing. This would be the right scientific stance for him to take, rather than his usual dogmatic stand, denying direct evidence. He would then reveal himself to be actually willing to question himself and that would be grand. He would regain my respect if he did that. It would liberate the next generation of scientists to do better and newer work on language along Darwinian lines. This is already occurring. People are dropping the Chomskyeen ‘paradigm’, or ideology. Chomsky’s repressive hold on the study of linguistics has held linguistics back for long enough. But there is no relenting with Chomsky.

Searle notes in his essay that Chomsky’s “work in linguistics is at the highest intellectual level.” I agree with that, but that does not mean he is true or right or immune to going off the deep end in his understanding of language. Everyone makes mistakes, sometimes mistakes that last a lifetime. He is hampered by his inability to admit he is wrong. It was a glorious illusion or fantasy. Chomsky says he wished to prove that “human languages are basically cast to the same mold, that they are instantiations of the same fixed biological endowment, and that they “grow in the mind” much like other biological systems, triggered and

shaped by experience, but only in restricted ways.” This has not happened, and his ambition has been partly thwarted by his own dislike of empiricism and his dogged pursuit of rationalist inquiry on the grammatical blackboard instead of in nature and actual practice. The theory he created spun out a Chomskian mythos which does not fit reality.

Certainly in respect of Descartes, Chomsky has taken his ideas uncritically and refuses direct evidence that questions his embrace of the prototype of his theories. This is not healthy or conducive to the long term viability of his work. Descartes was important in creating the impetus behind early science, but his science itself has little value. Chomsky made a huge mistake trying to adapt the Cartesian program into linguistics. He should have abandoned that decades ago. A romantic strain of irrational rationalism that has anti-Darwinian features led him astray. His involuted, subjectivist and baroque theory of language is solipsistic, and may reflect more Chomsky’s own mental convolutions more than it does on the facts of language and how it actually operates.

Language appears to be, like religion/politics and culture, a by-product of evolutionary developments in the brain and body. Darwin was probably right and Chomsky and Pinker wrong that language is a genetically formed instinct. But this is a hugely conflicted area of study, and I do not claim to know the answer. But that there is a close relation of language, religion and politics going far back into culture and evolution seems to be a fact. They are all systems of custom and power, organizing people into manageable groups and mental faculties. How this came about in terms of the evolution of the brain is as yet very unclear.

.....

That is my main conclusion, but a few other tangential details need to be discussed . I cannot find the quote at the moment but somewhere Chomsky says that over population of the America is not a problem there is lots of open space. This is nonsense and shows again a lamentable lack of understanding about nature, and the huge pressure animals and plants suffer due to overpopulation. Chomsky is a city person and knows little about nature. He also states somewhere that we should not bother about animals and nature because humans are such a threat to their own survival that we should concern ourselves only with human things. This also is merely a mask for speciesism. Obviously, concern with other species is part of concern for our own species and care of one does not exclude care of the other. Indeed, care of nature and animals is the beginning of care of ourselves, the human comes after the horse, whales, mice and platypuses. Not before. We cannot care for ourselves without also caring for our world, which is so much part of us.

.....

The political journalistic work of Chomsky is usually pretty good. I think his real contribution is in journalistic politics and not in language. He is good at writing virtual running critical commentary on what appears in the News, particularly the New York Times and Wall Street Journal, for years now. But in recent years the foibles of old age seem to have confused his thought quite a lot. Chomsky has been comparing himself to Socrates and the Biblical Prophets.¹⁴⁵³ This is another

¹⁴⁵³ Chomsky says “Prophet just means intellectual. They were people giving geopolitical analysis, moral lessons, that sort of thing. We call them intellectuals today. There were the people we honor as prophets, there were the people we condemn as false prophets. But if you look at the biblical record, at the time, it was the other way around. The flatterers of the Court of King Ahab were the ones who were honored. The ones we call prophets were driven into the desert and imprisoned. (Interview by Harry Kreisler, March 22, 2002) Chomsky talks about this a lot, and brings it up on many occasions, for instance he mentions the biblical chapter in Kings 1, in which King Ahab condemns Elijah. Chomsky identifies himself as the misunderstood or outcast prophet. And he says he began to do so when he was still a child. There is a pathology in this and

indication of his romantic and idealized –nearly mystical, Platonism. I could understand if he compared himself to Tom Paine or Voltaire, or better yet, Bertrand Russell, whose political incisiveness Chomsky echoes in various ways. But he prefers to compare himself to biblical prophets and Socrates. But Socrates was opposed to democracy and was defending the reactionary proto-Nazi state outlined by Plato in the Republic. The Biblical Prophets were certainly fictional characters who are part of a very toxic system of reactionary religion and dogma, handing down edicts and demands from a fictional god. Chomsky's claim that they were doing "geopolitical analysis" is absurd and his projection on them of what he is himself doing, does not hold up to the facts. This need to style oneself as a prophet has a long history which I have outlined at length in this book. It is invariably fraudulent and is a claim at being a power broker, a claim of inaugurating a paradigm revolution. Chomsky does claim to have initiated a revolution in linguistics. In fact he failed to do so. But the need to appear as if he did do it is tremendous for him. One finds this in Nietzsche too, when he declares that God is dead and then turns around and resurrects Zarathustra, who is Nietzsche's own alter ego, as a sort of prophet-god. I have shown how Schuon, Muhammad and Christ all had similar magnified terms applied to them or declared themselves prophets or sons of god or whatever. The prophets were fundamentally conservative and defending a status quo as part of a fictional projection and make believe that is the biblical religion. It appears that Chomsky's latent Platonism and tacit religiosity drives him to make these objectionable comparisons. Comparing himself to prophets is a typical thing for cult leaders to do and Chomsky resembles cult leaders in various ways, if not in every way.

He is unable to admit when he is wrong and has a terrible need to promote himself at all costs. This overweening self-regard has some bad consequences. For

it is this tendency that generates some of cultic characteristics of him and his followers (see <http://www.tabletmag.com/scroll/50346/the-lefty-lion/>)

instance quite apart from the free speech question, Chomsky's support of the far right holocaust denier French scholar Robert Faurisson raises other questions. Chomsky defended Faurisson's right to free speech in an essay entitled "Some Elementary Comments on the Rights of Freedom of Expression". One wonders what he was actually thinking when he did that. The willingness to side with a neo Nazi indicates Chomsky's rather diffused and wandering allegiances to whatever outlying libertarian idea that serves him at the moment. Indeed, he often allies himself with Islamic or Liberation Theology causes. In these cases Chomsky appears as libertarian willing to support a far right ideologues and apostates stigmatized by western politics. He excuses himself on the grounds that Voltaire defended the right of fools to speak. That might be taking Voltaire a little too literally. I don't think Voltaire meant to side with fanatics in the opposite camp, regardless of their willingness to abuse power. Of course, siding with liberation theology in south America is opportune as we all wanted an end to client states in South America. It is the fact that Chomsky has refused to criticize the religious basis of this, while yet supporting their politics because it suits him, which rubs the wrong way.

But then George Monbiot shows that Chomsky is quite willing to engage in holocaust or genocide denial when it suits him. Chomsky denied the importance of atrocities in Rwanda and elsewhere. That is an awful thing to do. Rwanda is the largest atrocity in recent decades. This suggests his willingness to use atrocities as a tool of politics, which is hypocritical since this is exactly what he accuses the American government of doing: "worthy atrocities" verses unworthy ones.. Monbiot concludes that Chomsky "is deliberately ignoring a vast weight of evidence which conflicts with his political beliefs". He does this in linguistics too, suggesting against that language and politics have a very close relationship. Chomsky is himself an example of the close tie of religion, politics and language.

As I have shown throughout this essay, Chomsky is weak on following evidence and too strong on dogma and ideology. This is what creates his cult like status and his linguistic myths. Had he been more honest about the failure of his linguistics or his political ideas it might have been better for him. I would admire

him more, not less if he could admit when he is wrong. I would like to say it could be the man's age or forgetfulness are is at issue here. But this may not be the case, as these are tendencies in Chomsky that have been appearing for years now. His attack on B.F. Skinner in 1959 has come under attack too, and appears to have been motivated more by careerism than a search for truth.¹⁴⁵⁴ Many have said that his attack as unfair, and mistaken. Julie Andersen says this in her essay "Skinner and Chomsky 30 Years Later Or: The Return of the Repressed" (1991) O'Donohue and Ferguson's *The Psychology of B. F. Skinner* (2001) come to a similar conclusion . They claim Noam Chomsky's review of Skinner's *Verbal Behavior* was influential, but was badly done in its exegesis. Kenneth MacCorquodale's, review of Chomsky's book rejects it as cogent and says that Chomsky completely misunderstood Skinner. E.O Wilson says this too, but nuances it and says, "both Skinner and Chomsky appear to have been partly right, but Skinner more so" ¹⁴⁵⁵ There appears to be a good deal of truth in this. The hatred of Skinner in Chomsky's essay is hard to explain, but appears to be motivated by bad will, and the effect was harmful to linguistics for decades. Skinner himself wrote before he died that

"I have never been able to understand why Chomsky becomes almost pathologically angry when writing about me but I do not see why I should submit myself to such verbal treatment. If I thought I could learn something which might lead to useful revisions of my position I would of course be willing to take the punishment, but Chomsky simply does not understand what I am talking about and I see no reason to listen to him." Quoted in Julie Andresen

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¹⁴⁵⁵ Wilson, E. O. *The Social Conquest of Earth* Liveright Publishing, 2012. Page 235.

“Skinner and Chomsky 30 Years Later

Skinner also wrote that “Linguists have usually studied listening rather than speaking (a typical question is why a sentence makes sense), but *Verbal Behavior* is an interpretation of the behavior of the *speaker*, given the contingencies of reinforcement maintained by the community. “ This is a far bigger question and one that is well beyond Chomsky’s formalist approach. But as this attack raises many questions , I cannot help but wonder what other mistakes Chomsky has made in his science and linguistic studies. As a scientist he is too willing to deny evidence that contradicts his case. He does not submit his work to falsifiability, and indeed is not open to criticism at all. As David Palmer points out that Chomsky work has left little but a desert of squabbling intellectuals, whereas Skinner inspired work on autism and teaching children to read that has had great benefits.¹⁴⁵⁶ E.O. Wilson’s most interesting comment is that language is a later development and that “as suggested in Darwin, the fit between language and its underlying mechanism evolved because language evolved to fit the brain, rather than the reverse” (Pg 235)

Chomsky also recently came out objecting to the marvelous work done by Dawkins, Harris, Dennett and Hitchens questioning religion. This is another mistake. The devotion of Chomsky’s followers is summarized by radio producer David Barsamian, who describes the master’s resplendence when he wrote in openly religious terms about Chomsky that: "he is for many of us our rabbi, our preacher, our Rinpoche, our sensei." Yes, that is exactly the problem with Chomsky, he has not created a healthy atmosphere of inquiry and science around him, but rather has cult followers who call him rabbi and “Rinpoche”, which is a reincarnated Tibetan Lama—a virtual god in Tibetan culture.

¹⁴⁵⁶See <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2223153/> for an excellent essay on how and why Chomsky misused Skinner. Skinner’s ideas has had positive benefits on learning for children and autistic, whereas Chomsky failure is more and more obvious and has born little good fruit.

While Chomsky was a pretty good journalist, which is to say I often agreed with his politics, he was never my guru or my cult leader. I find the adulation of his followers off putting, and like their cult leader they tend to be mean and authoritarian. Chomsky has a lot of groupies and followers ,like Michael Albert and other writers at ZNet, They imagine they are the sine quo non of the Left, and they are not, indeed their cultish lock step makes them a terrible thing for the left, as they fragment it and create an elitist cell of believers who do little more than talk to each other. I have watched ZNet for years now and it is mostly a divisive influence on the left that cycles around the Chomskyeen ego with groupies vying for approval from the master.. For instance, Chomsky has a follower named Paul Street, whose writing sometimes like and who wrote insightfully about Obama. But Street appears to be unable to have any critical insight into his guru. Street is a rather self-conscious Marxist, trying to pretend he is a Marxist such as the 1930's produced, with little awareness that those days are over. Marxism was hugely destructive to all leftist causes and enshrined a religious credo and nature hatred little different than state capitalism. The killing of people in Marxist countries of Russia and China under Stalin and Mao was so horrendous that the ideology is permanently suspect. Mao Tse Tong is said to have killed between 20 and 45 million people during the Great Leap Forward campaign in the late 1950's and early 1960's. The total toll for Mao is probably much higher than that, though reliable numbers are hard to know. Stalin killed millions too, Kulaks, people in the Gulag system, people who disagreed with him, though again the exact number is unknown. Capitalism too has done its destructive things, just as bad in many ways. There is little reason to identify oneself with either ideology. Both ideologies have their religious true believers and Paul Street is one fo these, as on the other side is Milton Friedman or Rand Paul.

A Marxist who becomes a Chomkyeen is changing religions in a

certain way. A Marxist now must read dogma as truth even if the evidence is not there for the dogma, as is often the case in Marxism. Marxism is in many ways just state capitalism, with all the money going to the state instead of to the capitalists and they call the shots. It is a top down system with CEOs of a kind. In China Marxism has become a kind of state capitalism supplying cheap workers for western corporations, who exploit the workers and those at home too. To be a Marxist after a century and a half of failure takes a certain hard headed refusal of evidence. Chomsky relies heavily on dogma too, with similar irrational results. He plays the Prophet and the scientist when he is neither, except in his followers imaginations. Street and other writers at ZNET, whatever their good points, use Chomsky in their writing as an unquestioned authority and that is again in common with the Marxist faith, since Marx also set himself up as a guru who did not need to prove his claims.

Indeed, Marx and Chomsky are prone to a nearly religious following. This rather repulses me. Michael Albert is forever sending out messages trying to grub money to support him and others who work on the ZNet staff. ZNet is a political cult, and I am hardly the only one to say so. Their collective vision of the future is one of rule by committees and has many Soviet style features, despite their denials of this. I would not want to live in the society they have actually created at ZNet, where dissent is repressed, valid questions are not allowed, and they want to impose their views on everyone in the future. It is good to have alternatives, but their particular alternative is unpalatable, for the most part, even if they are right about some things. The incestuous and narcissistic preaching to the choir that goes on at NET draws many good minds out of the left into a vortex of praise for the ever needy Chomsky who needs this sort of worship

Chomsky is not a cult leader in the classical sense, but he has tendencies in that direction. His cult suppresses any inconvenient information about their master, and protects his often irrational and

dogmatic mistakes without owning up to anything. He likes to excommunicate those he disagrees with¹⁴⁵⁷. And his ability to negate anyone who questions him too closely is amazing and manipulative. He calls anything he disagrees with a “rant”, reduces his critics to nasty and absurd labels, when they be very clear headed, or right, and he marginalizes those he speaks with all sorts of demeaning expressions or claims not to understand them. I have never seen him admit to wrong doing, though I have seen him do wrong and cruel things.

I find his need to compare himself to fictional prophets and tendency to mysticism and cultish leadership objectionable. I would like to see Chomsky formally renounce his canonization which he has himself encouraged. But he loves adulation too much. He cannot be educated himself even though he has theories of education. He claims, like another cult leader I knew once, to have always thought what he thinks now, as if he were born full headed out of the brow of Zeus. He needs to come back to the fold of science and falsifiability. Evidence must be sought in service of reason,. Reason should not fly forth on its own, “like Minerva form the head of Jupiter” detached from empirical evidence, into irrational grandiosity and self-inflation. In the end Chomsky appears to me to be a cult leader who became that way though politics, whereas in the rest of this book I was looking at cult leaders who become political tyrants through religion. This illustrates some of the modalities of power and how closely religion and politics really are. In both cases, ideology becomes an excuse for .mistreating others and setting up a regime of knowledge as a way to manipulate others for power.

¹⁴⁵⁷ There is a video of Chomsky being badly treated by the far right pundit, William Buckley, which the cult around Chomsky likes to use as an example of his victims status, but actually Chomsky does this same thing to people he does not agree with. I never liked Buckley much, though he was good for never heard before words, but Chomsky meanness is quite equal.

And lastly, I end this essay with a measure of real hope. Chomsky's heavy, obscurely formalistic, grammatical and computational hand has been an intolerable burden on linguistics for many years and has done little good for anyone. Many writers claim that he is a hindrance to further research, not only in linguistics itself but in the evolution of language, a topic Chomsky has avoided and repressed or tagged as an insoluble "mystery" when actually more and more is coming to light about it. What he has written about recently, too little too late, it is not very helpful. I think his reign should be at an end by now and if we won't abdicate, as he should, he needs to be ignored. Once his work is behind us, the way is open for a renewed effort to pursue the Darwinian study of language into nature itself, as Darwin himself wished. We now know that language was probably found in Neanderthals too, our close relatives, and very likely goes back to Homo Erectus. It is a creation of slow evolution, and thus part of the natural world, not a quasi-divine result of a fictional mutation, UG, or 'spandrel' or 'punctuated equilibrium'. This means there is no human exceptionalism, and as Darwin said, we are all part of evolution and there are no favorites. This is a great leap forward for science, and opens up the study of the communications of animals and the relation of humans to animals in concrete and systematic way. This is also a very exciting prospect. It opens up all communications in nature to renewed examination. How do birds actually live and think? How do Ungulates or Turkey Vultures communicate? How do dolphins see the world around them, or Hummingbirds negotiate and speak to each other in their tiny world and migrate huge distances. Crows recognize one human face from another and communicate effectively. Raccoons can make 51 different kinds of vocalizations and are extremely smart. We don't yet know why or what they are saying. Once these and many other research projects start to see animals in their own terms, our world will be non-Chomskian. It will be better and clearer and will set humans once again into natural fabric of the universe, not separated

from it, as was the case in the Cartesian and Chomskian system of rationalistic dogma. Our systems of communications may be different and some more sophisticated than others, but we all talk, call or sing on the same earth, and we are all related.

*

**Beyond the Dead End of Traditional and
Modernist Aesthetics: Restoring Intelligence
to Art.**

(The complement to this essay can be found here in a museum show I designed, with accompanying text. Here. Copy and paste:

<http://www.naturesrights.com/StayingAmazed.pdf>”



Eugene Delacroix, "Liberty leading the People"

It might be useful to discuss some modernist and traditional art theories I rejected many years ago and by implication some ideas about art I hold to now. In recent years I have done a lot of research on the origins and history of art, especially realist art. Darwin claimed that "the sounds uttered by birds offer in several respects the nearest analogy to language". Evolution is itself a supreme art, and one that human art imitates when it is good, and, to a degree, when it is not. Darwin also notes that the sense of beauty and need of novelty, is hardly unique to humans. Our ability to wonder and imagine, seek novelty and reason are

also evolutionary, Darwin maintains¹⁴⁵⁸ He says that music, art and language are part of our origins, and also appear to derive from nature and not just culture¹⁴⁵⁹ The ability to produce images in our heads in dreams as well as imagine them easily during daylight, seems to be an evolutionary capacity that predates language. Young animals like to play and are very creative at doing it, from birds to deer to chimps, just like young children. It is not farfetched to see such play as evident in Beethoven's music, even while one sees the profundity that might inhabit the same music, say, in the 3rd, 7th or 9th symphony. The first products of human art and craft are not linguistic but are visual art in the Caves of Chauvet. While different cultures have different art expressions, art itself appears to some degree to be an adaptive need, practiced by humans. Art appears to be Darwinian in its origins, as people are *homo farber*, makers of things, and this has to do with showing fitness, depth, intelligence and probity.¹⁴⁶⁰

But it seems some art is more directly adaptationist than others, as some art also a "by product", though this idea is questionable as I said earlier. It seems to be a 'by-product' only in some of its manifestations. In other words, art might be an instinct that is universal, but group art made for a given elite or caste is not. The "art instinct" made cave art possible, but it did not cause the aristocratic art of the Baroque which

¹⁴⁵⁸ See Chapter 3, Descent of Man, section called Sense of Beauty, for more on this. Darwin is perhaps the first thinker who wrote of beauty, imagination, making and art as natural facts and not merely human faculties.

¹⁴⁵⁹ Denis Dutton the Art Instinct is an interesting discussion of the evolutionary origins of art. He relies heavily on Darwin. But his theory is not very well thought through as he implies religious art is somehow an adaptation, which it does not seem to be. It appears to be a co-opting of the art motive in view of propaganda for an ideological system and thus a sort of lying in view of power.

¹⁴⁶⁰ John Griffin, a Tasmanian traditionalist author, seems not to have understood Darwin. In his book, The Origin of Beauty, he fails to see that the sense of beauty is certainly part of our biological endowment, even if businessmen fail to get in touch with that, and stupidly destroy beautiful lakes in Tasmania to make more money. He, and tries to postulate the usual "transcendent" fictions to justify the sense of beauty in humans. Even chimps have a sense of wonder, as Jane Goodall showed. Beauty is nowhere an advertisement for god fictions, however authors might fall for this delusion..

aggrandized the ideology of the rich. Nor did evolution bring about Roman art's aggrandizing the Caesar. It is hard to see how the concept of a "by product" theory of evolution is very useful here, as art as social propaganda is hardly the same thing as the need to make about of use and beauty or art born of wanting to be sexually attractive to men or women.

Religious art is also a promotional fiction, like art made to promote Hindu caste or a Mayan warrior elite. While Pinker claims that music may be a "by-product" of evolution, this appears to be false if one is talking about the need to sing love songs. The musical impulse appears to be as hardwired in humans as it is in birds, if less constrained. Darwin claimed that language might derive from music and were perhaps a result the processes he calls natural and sexual selection. As the Bower bird makes elaborate mating places for the female, so humans make elaborate arts, books and dances, imaginings of many kinds. Art has its origins in our animal response to nature, not in our claims to be the ultimate unique exemplar of all species. That is merely self-congratulatory hyperbole, and narcissistic bragging, in short, class warfare. Class warfare is not evolutionary,--- it is merely selfish bragging at the expense of others. Such class propaganda might not be art at all, but rather lies told to justify a counter revolutionary elite, like the Nazis or the Christians who destroyed the Library in Alexandria and smashed Greek sculpture.

Of course there is more to art than merely showing romantic attentions or child's play. Da Vinci is not great because of his mating prowess though that is part of the allure of his sense of beauty expressed in the Mona Lisa and elsewhere, but more than this, his art is deep, intelligent and full of prescient inquiries. Art is more than just showing "fitness", like a Peacocks tail, though some art does this very well. Picasso's art is above all the art of a macho wanna-be centaur who thinks more with his genitals than his mind. That has some evolutionary

value, or at least many women thought so who married him. Whereas Da Vinci in contrast is a mind of great depth who even records and describes genitals in drawings of inquiry and profundity. But he appears to have been homosexual and had no children of his own.

Perhaps Darwin would say there are different kinds of fitness. In any case, human expression, art, language, the need to communicate is clearly an instinct that developed via evolution through nature and did so through the development of all the animals, not just humans. We derive from the same evolutionary processes that made birds sing, Ostrich's do their amazing mating dance, or birds seeking a better place to build a nest. If one takes three of the greatest of human expressions in the last 500 years, namely the works of Da Vinci including his notebooks, the Journal of Thoreau and Van Gogh's letters and paintings, it is clear that all three of these are basically about humans as part of nature. They all go very far in telling us how it is to be a human being in the actual world and what life is about. Rembrandt, Beethoven or Shakespeare do that too in very different ways. These are examples of how art is a universal effort to join art and science, beauty, wonder and thought in a seamless expression of insight and amazement at existence itself. Nazi art, in contrast, of the art of a group of warlords who killed a lot of people. Is this art at all? Is corporate art, art? Such art often hangs in huge corporate vestibules, chosen because it is utterly meaningless. Is that just the bragging of a militaristic elite too?

So in what follows I will be comparing aesthetic systems which I think are false, to an art that is closer to nature and more in line with the origins of art making. After all the oldest art, from Chauvet, Lascaux and other early caves, going back 30,000 years, shows animals first and people only incidentally, people who are still very much part of the animal world. This implies art making has to do with a realistic picturing of actual environments and reality very early on. Gods are later fabrications, and much of what goes by the name of art is the art making

faculty co-opted for service to one or another ideology, mythology or system of power and caste. This is not to say that art is an organ, as Chomsky said that language is an organ. It is not. Art at its best is a full expression of humanity, nature and what it means to be alive on earth. Art might be partly seduction as Darwin implies in the sexual selection theory, but did he mean that seduction into a destructive regime of an elite power also art. It seems a valid question. It appears that art has some of its basis in an evolutionary drive to create, but at the same time it is heavily influenced by culture, which is partly evolutionary and partly driven by political fictions.

So art is in part an effect of evolution, and a healthy expression of this relates us to nature and science. Da Vinci already understood this very well. Aristotle and some of the early Greek artists grasped this too, dimly perhaps. Realist art begins with Greeks and Romans, and is suppressed by Christianity, but comes back about 1430. There is a real sea change in art in the early 1420's. Jan Van Eyck was one of the first to use oils in the 1420-30's, about the same time as Gutenberg developed his printing press (1439). There is real progress here, which in many ways prefigures what science would become. The change is not due to the use of optical instruments but to a change in the mentality of men like Van Eyck. Science grows to some degree out of the art motive, which has objectivity at its root. Van Eyck was in love with depicting the reality that he knew and did it over and over again in many works, exploring textures, wood, cloth, old skin, jewels, plants, architectures, landscapes, bridges, whole towns and the people in them. Realism develops partly in reaction against the Catholic Church and partly in embrace of a new kind of thinking, recalling the Greek experiments, that would soon become science.

The Black Plague also can ironically be credited with creating a new

willingness to question authority, as the Church could not cure the Plague with prayer. Also the rich landowners are also decimated by the Plague and so the workers grow wealthier due to being in greater demand. The ubiquity of death caused many to dwell more on their lives on Earth, rather than on Catholic themes of the beyond, sin, hell and the afterlife. Medicine improves after the Black Plague too, as a new concern with reality and how to deal with it is encouraged. Ideologies that support the upper classes come into question.

An artist who exhibits both the realist tendency and worked for the ideologically driven church was Tilman Riemenschneider. Riemenschneider is one of the most interesting of the Christian artists of the late middle ages, a natural inheritor of the work of Van Eyck, only now in sculpture.. He was a master who must have grown up on the amazing achievements of Jan Van Eyck and the realism that made outward appearances so important. It is certainly not a matter of lenses and optical devices that made Van Eyck so good, but a thorough description of reality, paint stroke by paint stroke. He did some amazing wood sculptures which depict people of the time and some amazing 'secular' work that shows the desire to hold to reality. He was tortured and much of his property seized after his support of in the Peasant's War of 1525. He died in 1531.



detail of St Jerome and the Lion 1495.

artwork by author

Realism also develops in Italy from Da Vinci's time. There was a concerted attempt to rediscover and truly understand the works of ancient Greek and Roman authors, some of them coming from Islamic sources and some coming through new translations. Most of the books in Leonardo's personal library, and he had 170 or so¹⁴⁶¹, an enormous number of books in those days, were of Greek or Roman authors. In Leonardo is born the idea of art as a pursuit of knowledge of the world, no longer an ideal world, but the actual world, and most good art since his time is a contribution to this pursuit. Leonardo never was concerned with art about art or art about its own materials and methods. He would have thought such art silly, as indeed it is. Art for him is part of an effort to understand all aspects of the actual world, beginning with nature, and to improve upon the world if possible. He was very interested in methods of painting particularly that of the Van Eyck school, because of its physical accuracy. His interest in geometry and math is part of his effort to understand the earth and its processes, and this led him into physics and inventions. It is a strait line fomr Van Eyck to Leonardo to the Dutch

¹⁴⁶¹ These included texts by Archimedes, Liv, Pliny Ovid, Aristotle and many others. Also important to Leonardo was his friendship with the mathematician Luca Pacioli, as Leonard illustrated his book "De Divina Proportione"

masters up to Courbet. But of that, more later. First we must consider the reaction against enlightenment.



Francesco Melzi.

The only likely portrait of Leonardo da Vinci

He never did a self portrait

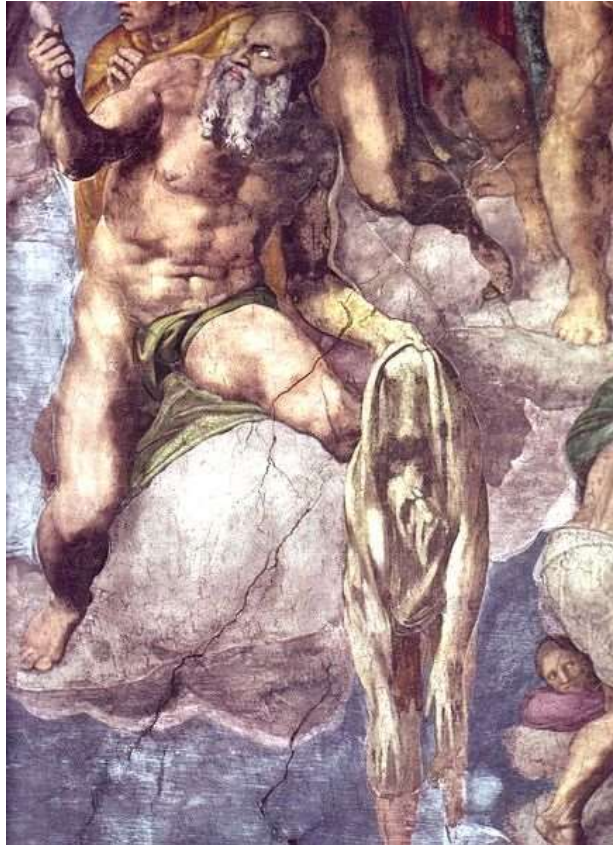
Da Vinci shows best what realism is in his practice of trying to draw everything, from simple machines, to anatomy, to children, water, light, space mountains and everything he could he defines painting as

“painting embraces or includes in itself every object produced by nature or resulting from the fortuitous actions of men, in short, all that the eye can see. He seems a poor master who can only do the figure well. For a [good artist can not only see] how many and various actions are performed by men only, but how many different animals there are, as well as trees, plants, flowers, with many mountainous regions and plants, springs and rivers, cities with

public and private buildings, machines too, fit for the purpose of men, diverse costumes and decorations and arts? And all these things ought to be regarded as equal value, by the man who can be termed a good painter.

That this means is that drawing the human figure is just the beginning, art is about everything and all subjects are equal to it, as all subjects are equal in nature. This is far ahead of its time, and of our time too. Realism is not an exploitive art but an art that seeks to understand and nurture all that is good on earth. There is nothing of the cramped, empty corporate and abstract art about it. It is deep and gritty, poetic and homely and explores the facts and reality of things, not the negation of reality, not cyberspace or religious fictions. Realism is part of the struggle against classism and economic elites that are destroying our planet. As many museums and art galleries are taken over by the corporate elite they, of course, dislike Realism and the over 500 year history of its democratic ascendancy. They are opposed to the meaning of Leonardo's vision and that of Darwin and Courbet too. They oppose unions, nature's rights, and often human rights in practice. The Boards of museums choose the director and insure that rich white guys will control museum culture. They do this as an act to gain prestige, power and influence. Their point of view is usually conservative and favors wealth over reality, money over social content. They want to stop democracy, and turn art into corporate and CEO-controlled emptiness and money. But the truth is otherwise. Realism is not about Boards and indeed is against them. Life is everywhere and it is the earth and all that is on it that matters. Realism shows reality. It shows how much we have to change what we do to make the lives of everyone better. It always has this critical edge. Even if it is hidden, as in Da Vinci's drawings or Goya's portraits.

In contrast, Michelangelo is a reactionary force in many ways, quite the opposite of Leonardo. He is not a realist but a Platonist and idealist. (see earlier essay on Plato) His gigantic figures have little to do with reality, adding muscles to human anatomy that are too humongous to be believable. He harkens back to Dante and the medieval mind. His only self-portrait shows him as a pathetic flayed skins hanging in mock humility of the hand of a saint who is the a bloated giant of transcendence. This formula of ridiculous humility combined with delusions of grandeur can be seen in many places and has often led to atrocity and institutional cruelty. His depiction of himself as a self-pitying, boneless skin harkens back to the self-abnegation promoted by a toxic Christianity in the Dark Ages. I find his false self-pity,--- which incidentally gets him into heaven--- objectionable. His depiction of Christ as a whirling tyrant of death looks forward to the Absolute Monarchies of Europe. To my mind the Last Judgment of Michelangelo is one of the worst art works of inflated propaganda ever done and contains one of the worst self-portraits ever done.



Despite his considerable drawing skills, (see the Battle of Cascina) his art is merely Church propaganda, lies told to advertise an unjust institution. Leonardo mostly disliked institutions and the Church¹⁴⁶² and was forward looking or rather, he is present and an amazing, with an inquiring mind that looks to each thing for the reality of it, how to draw it, now to understand it. He is the antithesis of a Platonist. He is the first scientist.

So from Da Vinci and Van Eyck art moves forward and backward. Backward is into Michelangelo and Luca Giordano's "The Triumph and Glory of the Habsburgs", who were an unjustly rich aristocratic family who were deeply entrenched in the Slave trade, the extermination of

¹⁴⁶² Leonardo did work for various tyrants, namely the Sforzas and Cesare Borgia. But he seems to have been disgusted with them in the end. He was also friends with Machiavelli. Machiavelli's skeptical attitude to Borgia is contained, I think, in the Prince, which I believe is a satire of him and like rulers.

Native Tribes and the gold obsession of the Europeans during the Rococo and later. These absurd images are the very definition of religious magnification, a term I have used in all these essays. These absurd glorifications, one could call them wedding cake magnifications, people the ceilings of churches all over Europe during the 1600's. They are the origin of corporate art and one can draw a line from them and Versailles all the up to Ingres and Symbolist art into the art of corporate emptiness.



Giordano Luca. The Triumph and Glory of the Habsburgs (1695).
Monastery of El Escorial

In opposition to this tendency to absurd magnification of unjust

religions and powerful and greedy aristocracy one can trace a very different art history. Da Vinci and Van Eyck lead through Van Der Goes, De Hooch, Ter Borch, Vermeer, Rembrandt and on up to Chardin, and Courbet, Millais, Brett, and Langley¹⁴⁶³ and goes largely underground after 1920, when subjectivist abstractions takes over as the market aspect of art promoted by increasingly corporate serving galleries and critics who make of art an irrational and formal dogmatism, rather as the Catholic Church had done. Critics become dogmatic cardinals in the church of modernist irrationality. Lack of skill is exalted, as is shoddy workmanship, bad drawing, abstract art about itself, and ugliness.

But there are realist artists all along though this period, from George Tooker¹⁴⁶⁴ to Ben Shaun, Andrew Wyeth, Charles Burchfield, and Edward Hopper. Abstract art quickly becomes an irrational promotional tool for corporate structures, which themselves grow out of the old aristocratic inequality which the French Revolution sought to supplant. Art about art becomes a mantra for delusion and a human centered painting, totally subjective and speciesist, comes to rule. There is not yet an effective rebellion against the corporate ideology, but there must be eventually, if the earth and art, is too survive.

With this history in mind I will show what a Realist/Science based aesthetic is and contrast that with the traditionalist and modernist

¹⁴⁶³ John Brett was a painter of landscape and the Cornwall coast, and did some lovely children and seascapes and Walter Langley was a socialist who started the Newlyn school, and did some very moving work on the lives of the working class fisherman and their families in Cornwall. Nothing in the world is so good at capturing the feeling and social facts of the times as the French realists, Newlyn artists and some Americans, recording the daily lives of people going back as far as Van Eyck or further.

¹⁴⁶⁴ Tooker's work is interesting and celebrates both community and alienation from community until In later years he unfortunately degenerates into a catholic painter and loses his focus. He was early on influenced by Martin Luther King.

aesthetics . ¹⁴⁶⁵ These are both ideological systems of art theory, one supporting dead or dying aristocratic regimes of China, India, Persia, and Christendom. Modernist aesthetics grows out of Theosophy and Symbolist art as well as the dying aristocracies of Europe and supports corporate or communist art. I will be criticizing the manner in which such art was made to serve powers.

The traditionalist idea of art is largely mythical and based on adult make believe. It develops the myths of the Buddha, Christ, and Muhammad as well Krishna and others in Safavid, Rajput or Hindu painting, Mosque abstractions, or various Symbolists as its exemplars. Are these fictions art? It seems they are and they are not. In one sense Hindu or Christian art is a lie, but in another some fictions try to tell the truth. Guenon talks about Craft and Art in chapter 8 of his book Reign of Quantity. This is a ridiculous book, but important as being typical of what would become Traditionalist aesthetics, one of the few aesthetic theories in modern times to challenge modernist aesthetics. Schuon and Burckhardt extends Guenon's ideas and those of Ananda Coomaraswamy in his essays on "Sacred Art" . To some degree these ideas can be seen as an extension of theosophy, which heavily influenced Guenon and Coomaraswamy and which also influenced Kandinsky, Mondrian and others. Indeed, as Roger Lipsey has shown, traditionalist aesthetics and high modernism are remarkably similar. ¹⁴⁶⁶ The spiritual in art in the 20th century is a complex affair. This is an important

¹⁴⁶⁵ I began this chapter as part of a review of Guenon's book Reign of Quantity. This chapter was originally part of that chapter as a digression. But it got too long and went way beyond Guenon's retrograde theories, so I have made it into a chapter of its own.

¹⁴⁶⁶ Lipsey, Roger An Art of Our Own, Shambhala 1988. Lipsey was an academic who was a promoter of Coomaraswamy's work and remained something of a promoter for traditionalism in general. While the traditionalists hated modern art deeply, Lipsey is right that many of the ideas at the basis of seminal figures like Kandinsky and Mondrian are indeed, "spiritual" Another book that explores this same area is Maurice Tuchman's The Spiritual in Art. I am here rejecting both traditional art and the modernist art that Lipsey refers to as spiritual and abstract. Such art really belong in the history of religion. Religion in the 20th century becomes a personal thing and gets annexed by the corporations.

subject and I will dwell on it for some length. Guenon's aesthetics is a hodge podge of modernist and traditional ideas and thus I can use it to discuss traditional and modern aesthetics of many kinds.

How do these system deploy delusions as compared to facts? Are they intended to deceive or to draw toward or away from the actual and real conditions of life. It is immediately clear that traditionalist and modernist aesthetics are delusional, non-factual and elitist systems of social and aesthetic control. Realism is thus not only a threat to religious myths, it is also a threat to the irrational cultural elites, corporate structures and CEO culture as well as to economic boards and elites.

What Schuon and Guenon call aesthetics is really just a formal subjectivism of a narcissistic nature, born of the Symbolist Movement, one that William James would have agreed with, for similar mistaken reasons.¹⁴⁶⁷ For James, art is a subjective experience and has a collective dimension like religion. The felt qualities of experience is what matters to James and this view absorbs art into his definition of religion, which also is all about feeling.- The implication of his Varieties of Religious Experience is that religion is valid as a subjective experience and this experience is aesthetic and "factual" because it is felt. This confuses the subjective and objective in a falsifying way. This is basically the Protestant notion that "faith is more important than works". The notion of being "born again" is a subjective delusion that develops out of this. Like James, Schuon and Guenon are basically promoting subjective transcendentalism as an objective thing, when it is not. This is what the Symbolist school holds too as far as their aesthetic theories are

¹⁴⁶⁷ James is sandwiched between Whitman and Emerson. He is like the former in terms of Whitman's effort to be a Platonistic 'universal man', which Schuon also attempted. He is like Emerson in a certain quasi Hinduism, as in the theory of the oversoul or the idea of a Platonistic subjectivism that is universalized.

concerned. Schuon and Guenon go even further than James who was tempered by his pragmatism, and claim religion to be part of art history in a plenary and totalistic sense. They identify art as being valued only in “traditional culture” by which they mean traditional China, India, Native America, Islam and medieval Christendom and so on. This is the art of Rajput Brahman aristocrats, Monasteries, Chinese theocrats, and other political/ spiritual elitists.

To understand Symbolism as a theory of art, one has to go back further and understand why the Symbolist aesthetic developed. The rebellion against symbolism was a rebellion against aristocracy, elite families, heraldic inheritance and social control by economic elites. The French Revolution inspired a realist Classicism such as one sees in David and Girodet. David’s *Marat* is really one of the first French Realist or Naturalist works. This is an aesthetic that is closer to science. By the 1850’s Realism and Naturalism throw over mythological painting, (there is actually little difference between the two) were the heirs of the ideas of the French Revolution. The conservative government of France, first under Louis Philippe I (reign: 1830 to 1848) and later by Louis Napoleon (1848-1870), was a self-destructive reactionary government that was in some ways a throwback to the decadent days of the 1700 and the outrages of Louis 14th and Absolutism.¹⁴⁶⁸ It is this toxic stew of French aristocracy and backward leaning conservatism that slandered Courbet and sought to hurt him and drive him from the country. Its symbol was the Vendome Column which sought to picture Napoleon and a quasi divine emperor. Courbet wanted it taken down, as indeed, it should have been, or rather it still should be in a museum as Courbet said. It is a

¹⁴⁶⁸ The neo classical use of the human figure was employed by both the far right and the left after the French Revolution. In the 1790’s Delacroix had created “Liberty leading the People” using the classical body. But by 1850 the realists had largely taken over while classical imagery was largely used in support of the reactionary regimes in France.

monument to a tyrant, not too different to one that might uphold Adolf Hitler as a Roman Emperor on top of a column showing his war exploits.

Realism largely rejected the aristocracy and their notion of the “divine right of kings”, the absolutist and the Monarchical as a viable way of looking at reality. So called “History” paintings were more political myth and propaganda than anything else, and were devoted to theocracy and monarchy.¹⁴⁶⁹ The French Revolution opened up the possibility of a realist art that was not based on religious fictions, nobility or the dreams of monarchs. Jules-Antoine Castagnary, a critic who sided with Gustav Courbet, wrote of the Salon in 1857 that

“It is the human side of art which takes the place of the heroic and divine side of art, and which affirms itself with the strength of numbers and the authority of talent.”

In other words the primary reason for the failure of art as “history”¹⁴⁷⁰ and mythological painting (the “divine side of art”) was that

¹⁴⁶⁹ There are painters today who think that resurrecting David’s Napoleon on a rearing horse or Van Dyke’s view of King Charles, or of aristocratic and overdressed women in august poses will give corporate CEO’s or even ordinary folks proper dignity, not realizing that these forms are corrupt from the inside, and no less corrupt used to glorify anyone. Reducing art to the aristocratic fashions of yesteryear will not make it better.

¹⁴⁷⁰ Calling mythological painting “history painting” is something of a misnomer. It is common thing, --even Rembrandt refers to his painting of biblical subjects as history painting, though actually history has very little to do with what he made. It is really literary painting that he was doing, much of it based on the fictions in the bible. Rembrandt is probably the best of the illustrators of the Biblical fictions. His drawings alone, on this subject, are without peer. Jesus probably did not exist, but Rembrandt’s drawings of this fictional character make one wish he had. These are great drawings. The same is true of Bach’s Cantatas and Mass. This is great music, even though it is probably done in devotion to a mythology and a non-existent person .

. There is an attempt to create real history painting during the French revolution and after in the realist movement. Indeed, some art such as Courbet’s great “The Painter’s Studio” or other works showing strikers, coal miners, or the plight of women become a virtual social history of the 19th century. The roots of this are in the Dutch of course, from De Hooch, Steen and Ter Borch. Art in the 19th century is close to photography and part of history in a real sense. This is true to a degree in the 20th century too, though abstract art does great harm to this. But when reality is painted in

a more human art of the actual and democratic took its place, and as it became clear that humans are animals and only a part of nature, human centeredness becomes suspect.. Courbet refused the idea that there was a “higher reality” than the actual, and said, “I cannot paint an angel because I have never seen one”. He is right about that and knew that those who claimed to have seen one were delusional. The very notion of a “higher truth” makes the actual dirty and shocking, and abuses the world we actually live in.¹⁴⁷¹ When Courbet said that art “is the most complete expression of an existing thing”¹⁴⁷², he was saying that the world we live in is what really matters and what we should care about. Religion makes people care about a world that is not there and helps people serve the rich who also claim a kind of bogus immortality. The French realists like Courbet, took the early Dutch realists like De Hooch, Rembrandt, Ter Borch or Vermeer as their exemplars. This theory of art, which I share, goes back to Da Vinci. Da Vinci wrote that

“ If poetry treats of moral philosophy, painting has to do with natural philosophy. ... Truly painting is a science, the true born child of nature, for painting is born of nature, or to be more correct,, we should call it the grandchild of nature; since all things were brought forth by nature and these her children have given birth to painting“ ¹⁴⁷³

the 20th century, by artists like Raphael Soyer, Gwen John, Edward Hopper, or Harvey Dinnerstein, it is much more interesting than the vapid abstractions that rule most of the 20th century.

¹⁴⁷¹ The moralistic notion of human nature as “folly” compared to the ideal truth of Christ which one sees in Erasmus, Bosch and Breugel, ends up as an absurd love of repulsion as one can see in the performance art of Paul McCarthy, Herman Neech, the movies of Polanski, or the ugly photos of Cindy Sherman. The flesh becomes a sort of glorified evil, and is as absurd as the glorified idealism that is its oppsite.

¹⁴⁷² Berger John. Portraits John Berger on Artists, Verso books, 2015. Pg 229

¹⁴⁷³ Richter, Irma. Selections from the Notebooks of Leonardo Da Vinci Oxford, 1977 page 195-200

Da Vinci's aesthetic theories were never taken seriously. But they should have been, indeed. Poetry is inferior to painting as seeing is better than hearing and experience is better than tall tales and stories. Leonardo was right that art should serve nature. In the late 1800s the exalted mythological painting so dear to the monarchists and champions of the far right, was dying. George Stubbs horse studies, even his anatomical studies, continue this idea.



George Stubbs anatomy study of horse

Realism was a movement away from religion and monarchy and towards the ordinary and the real, the actual and the people. It is the most important art movement since the Northern and Italian Renaissance, which it extends. Much of the art that is good in the last nearly 400 years comes from the 'naturalism/realism impulse. I think of

Frederick Church's marvelous small studies of nature, rainbows, waterfalls, mountains or comets or Heade's Mexican Hummingbirds and Orchids.

Artists have often been said to be reacting against photography in the middle of the 1800's. I am not sure that the invention of the photographic process mattered that much. Turner and Courbet liked it, as did Eakins and many other artists who embraced it. It was much more of a positive influence on realism than a negative one. I see it too, though I do not depend on it, and think the human eye is much more sensitive. The political awareness of the Enlightenment grew so much after the French and American revolutions that religion and aristocracy began to be seen, rightly, as a major impediment. By 1848, there was a real sea change in culture. France rejected the Bourbon restoration eventually and undid the unfortunate experience of Napoleon.

Classicism, which starts out as a progressive force, becomes a regressive one. The American Civil War was a local event that did not affect Europe or Canada. However, when one looks at it as part of class conflict, it was a rebellion against the old order too. A 'confederate' and slave holding aristocracy was defeated. Degas' mother was from such a slave holding, southern family. The notion of Impressionism as a progressive force is thus not at all an obvious truism.

Courbet's realism, in contrast to the superficial apoliticism of impressionism, in contrast, was truly progressive. Courbet, following Da Vinci, reverses the age old effort to make art the handmaid of religious or aristocratic powers. Courbet was mercilessly attacked by the French aristocracy and the Napoleonists, who took over again after the Franco-Prussian War of 1871. They scapegoated Courbet in the worst possible way, as his letters show, slandering him, ruining his family and forcing him into exile for an act which he did not commit, the destruction of the Column on which a rather bad sculpture of Napoleon was erected, called the Vendôme Column. Courbet objected to the glorification of conquest and

unjust war the column celebrated. He wanted it dismantled and put in a museum, not torn down. This is proven in his letters.¹⁴⁷⁴ Courbet was probably killed by this scapegoating. He was longing to return to his beloved Ornans and France shortly before he died. He struggled against the vicious campaign of slander against him to the very end. Someone should make a movie or write a book about this. It is one of the worst treatments of any artist by any government. Only the abuse of poets by Stalin can be compared to this, or the murder of journalists. This shows again how the upper classes are the enemy of real art, and only want art to serve themselves. Courbet, without ideals and without religion, is the most interesting man in 19th century France and one who was himself a victim of all that is destructive in France at that time. His friend Jules Castagnary sought to rehabilitate Courbet from the false charge of the Vendôme affair. Courbet should be exonerated and the government of France should publicly apologize for their mistake. The Vendôme Column should be unriveted and put in a museum, and the crimes of Napoleon openly discussed. Courbet was right.

Impressionism is overvalued, I think, as some of the best realist work was done in the 1840s till the 1920's, and in small pockets up to the present. Monet was the best of them. I don't think of Van Gogh as an impressionist, though he is often included in the post impressionists, though that is rather an obtuse category made up by critics. Courbet's story is far more important than the impressionists, who are fluffy and innocuous in comparison to Courbet. Symbolist and abstract subjectivity, born of spiritual reactionaries, takes over after WW1, but appears to be slipping into repetitive nonsense now.

The classical models that Turner followed, Claude Lorrain and

¹⁴⁷⁴ See Petra ten-Doesschate Chu. Letters of Gustave Courbet. This is an important book and a great service to art history. It tells the tragic story of one of the greatest of modern artists.

Poussin, for instance, is also evident in Cole, Ingres, Bingham, and others, and this manner is largely rejected or reinterpreted in later painters such as Winslow Homer or Eastman Johnson. What I mean is, after the civil war, there is a decided turn against idealization and towards reality. One could rightly say that this was inevitable given the Enlightenment, and we are still in the period that begins with the Enlightenment. In Europe this same change happens after 1848 and the Pre Raphaelites where you can see the art split into a symbolist camp and a realist camp. The Symbolists give us the dead end of abstract art. This arises from Baudelaire. In later life, he became increasingly reactionary, an anti-semitic and hated nature and democracy. He is usually considered one of the fathers of the Symbolist Movement. Abstraction and Corporate art are reactionary and grow from the Symbolist Movement and its embrace of a human centered and radical subjectivism.¹⁴⁷⁵

On the other hand, the realists give us, among so many others, Courbet, Stanhope Forbes and Laura Knight, Hammershoi, Ilsted, Repin, Sargent, Kollowitz, and other realists, including those in China¹⁴⁷⁶. This

¹⁴⁷⁵ It is interesting to see how Baudelaire became a reactionary after his early relationship with Courbet who was the complete opposite. Courbet already had seen through Baudelaire, as he showed in his great statement on poetry, in which he showed Baudelaire, Gautier and Lamartine, and other poets drinking deadly water from a fountain poisoned by a nude woman, a model. He describes this painting, which was lost in an accident, in letter 64-2, on Jan 16th 1864. He calls it the "Hippocrene Fountain", others call it the source of the Hippocrene. It is a major realist statement against poetic otherworldliness.

¹⁴⁷⁶ Chinese art has an amazing history in realism.. Indeed, some aspects of Song dynasty (960-1279) aesthetic ideas in poetry and paintings are not that far from my own. Some poets are artists upheld the value of ordinary realism and were trying to question power and not exalt it. (see some of the later work of Mei Yaochen, for instance, or his amazing poem, "A Lone Falcon above the Buddha", it could have been written yesterday its accuracy is so precise). Chinese art history is still undervalued in the west. But actually there are artists in China going back to the Song dynasty, (1100 C.E.) who are far ahead of artists in Europe. For instance, (Chang Tse-uan) or Zhang Zedun's amazing "Up the River during the Qingming Festival" has no European counterpart till 300 years later when Van Eyck did the background of the Chancellor Rolin painting, which also shows a bridge and activities and towns along a river.

change was already evident in the great genre painters of the 1600's. Tsvetlan Todorov, a historian of great interest, put his finger on it in his essay of Dutch art of that time:



I reproduce the whole scroll here just to show its extent. There are 800 people in it, countless animals and buildings, ships and carts. It needs to be seen close up and studied. These two works by Courbet and Zouan, are really the beginning of realism as well as the attempt to picture life in many modalities and viewpoints. The river is the source of life in both works as it would be in Mark Twain's writing. Courbet's self-portrait in the Studio evokes a similar effort to picture life in many ways and celebrate it. There is a modern attempt to animate Zouan's great work and these are interesting too as he was such a good artist, he really shows what life was like in 1100 in China. This goes beyond mere history into nearly evoking the reality of that time. Zhang's work is certainly one of the world's great paintings, as is the Studio of Courbet

the genre painter is not satisfied only to renounce history, he makes a choice, a highly restrictive choice, among all the actions that make up the tissue of human life. He renounces the representation of everything that exceeds the ordinary, and remains inaccessible to the majority of mortals. There is no place here for heroes and saints. ¹⁴⁷⁷

Yes. Art begins to be about reality and the ordinary and abolishes hero worship and saints. Heroes and saints were merely propaganda props for political and religious power. There are nearly constant efforts to keep heroic/saintly art alive from the absurdities of Rococo art to modern abstractions. Symbolist art goes in the opposite direction from realism, which is progressive. Symbolist art is retrograde, early on evoking the Middle Ages and subjectivist idealization and perceptions. The Symbolist manifesto was written by Jean Moreas in 1888 and was published in *Le Figaro*. Baudelaire, Mallarmé, Verlaine and other subjectivist poets were cited as originators. Eventually the ideas of symbolist ideology would influence Action Française, the French Fascist group of Charles Maurras that Guénon originally admired. ¹⁴⁷⁸ Symbolist art, from which most of misnamed “modernism” derives, ¹⁴⁷⁹ developed in

¹⁴⁷⁷ Todorov essay, “In Praise of the Quotidian”, 1997

¹⁴⁷⁸ I write about Maurras elsewhere in the book as well as Guénon’s relationship with Action Française.

¹⁴⁷⁹ Modern merely means recent and all recent art is ‘modern’ the notion that ‘modernism’ is somehow only to be connected to those who create art for its own sake, art about art or art about its own methods and materials, is the fictive innovation of some very bad art critics, such as Clement Greenberg, Arthur Danto and many others. Many of these critics are really promoters of corporate culture and are limited and hard to take seriously. Indeed, most of them have done far more harm than good. There are a number of critical pieces about modern art that are interesting. Tom Wolfe’s *The Painted Word*, which I read many years ago, and largely agreed with, in the 1980’s. Scott Burdick’s “Beauty”, a series of videos critical of abstract art, is very good at showing up the emptiness and inanity of so much modern art. I don’t agree with everything he says, for instance he talks about spiritual art and “transcendent beauty” without really knowing what he is

the 1880-90's and was a reaction against realism and a throwback to Medieval, Monarchist and mythological themes. Abstract art develops out of some of the Symbolists. That is why abstract art was able to serve the corporation so readily, as it was also autocratic, monolithic and based on subjective mythology. The death of the Kings merely displaced autocracy into the injustices and arbitrary dictatorship of CEOs. CEOs call what they do "freedom", I call it a psychopathology.

The rise of abstract art goes against the direction charted originally by Da Vinci. Yet if you begin with Da Vinci, it is clear how Rembrandt follows, then De Hooch, Vermeer, Ter Borch and on up to Van Gogh. I admire Leonardo of the notebooks, more than the painter, though I love his works in oil too. I like Vincent for the same reason, though in his case, his mental illness intervened so tragically, but if one looks at his early work, it is reality that was his main concern. The best of his later work has this in it too. Other artists like Menzel or Ilsted, have glimmers of this in them too, and that is what I love in them, the effort to demonstrate actual lives and facts of things, light, situations, people and animals. Stubbs has it in his dogs and horses and Millais in some of his better works. Paintings of the relative world are all that matter, the symbolists and abstractionists fail, by this understanding. Subjectivist art is by definition a human centered art and one that is therefore speciesist and prone to transcendentalist inflations. International architecture which is fundamentally anti-nature is also prone to inflated skyscrapers towering over largely dead cities, void of nature and crawling with humans in a virtual caste system of homelessness and excessively rich people.

This division or split in culture, between the Symbolists and the

saying. Transcendent beauty is a fiction for reasons I have spelled out in this book. But he is correct about many other things. see

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qGX0_0VL06U

See also Deana Petherbridge on the bankruptcy of drawing after Picasso too.

Realists, is already evident as the Pre- Raphaelite movement¹⁴⁸⁰, which started out as a realist movement in Millais, Ford and Hunt and then was subverted by D.G. Rossetti who pushed it into an encrusted and subjectivist byway of symbolist and escapist conceits. English art divides along political lines in the middle of the 1800's. As 1900 approached, art become more detached from reality, mythological and retrograde. Such

¹⁴⁸⁰ The best of this school are its early members who tried to be objective. John Everett Millais's *Ophelia* and other works are wonderfully observed. William Holman Hunt's "Our English Coasts" remains one of the best landscapes of the 19th century. Hunt got increasingly religious as he got older and his art fails in that.

Ford Madox Brown is very interesting as in his great works "Work" or "The Last of England". Victorian painting is full of wonderful, intelligent works full of life and feeling, badly neglected by the prejudices and narrow-mindedness of "modernist" art historians, who tend to despise content, feeling, intelligence and objectivity in art. His painting "Work" is probably one of the most important paintings of the last two hundred years. He did a lot more than this, and his Murals in Manchester City Hall are social histories of this city and are partly about science and freedom. His "Crabtree Watching the Transit of Venus", his "Chaucer" and his "The Last of England, a picture of Immigrants, are good examples of real social history painting, and not at all the mythological nonsense that Rossetti was up to. Brown is closer to Hubert Herkomer, Luke Fildes, George Clausen and Frank Holl than the later symbolists and indeed, is on the trajectory of great realist painting, and not the road to abstract conceit, which is where the line from Rossetti goes. "Work" is probably the single most "Dickensian" painting there is. If Dickens social vision has a visual counterpart it is this painting as well as Luke Fildes' "Applicants for Admission to a Casual Ward" of 1874, or Herkomer's "Eventide" and Frank Holl's "Newgate Prison".



artists as Edward Burne Jones and William Morris, (arts and crafts movement) were a big influence on Ananda Coomaraswamy (AKC) who pushed the aesthetic of otherworldly symbolism even further than Rossetti. There are links to monarchist and far right movements all along. Coomaraswamy's view of art, education and religion grows out of symbolist concerns, and so does that of Guenon and Schuon, who largely followed Coomaraswamy. Like them AKC is a reactionary throwback to the caste systems of Europe and India.¹⁴⁸¹ Schuon's paintings are nude versions of Rossetti's or Hodler's works, redone with pretence of the universal. The anti-science aesthetic of these thinkers advocates an art that is opposed to enlightenment and liberal democracy, human rights and sense. There is an intellectual escapist art that exalts subjectivity.

Da Vinci and later Courbet and Van Gogh. throw out the medieval and Symbolist notion of Eckhart that "the eye with which I see God is the same eye with which He sees me".¹⁴⁸² This is transcendental narcissism in a nutshell. Realist art creates a different emphasis. Eckhart's aphorism, in realist art becomes instead, 'the eye with which I see nature and reality is the same eye with which nature and reality enter into me and from which I come'. In other words, this is a Darwinian art, an art immersed in nature and fact, and the gods are gone. The aesthetic symbolist of Platonistic 'essences' which are supposed to be "behind" the world of nature and myself is gone. What is left is ourselves, nature, earth and all the beings and biomes upon it. Art is no longer about a fictional "eternity" but about factual reality.

¹⁴⁸¹ William James was inspired by his father's involvement Swedenborg and Theosophical tendencies, which also inspired Coomaraswamy. This system is also a throwback to medieval Hindu and European superstition and caste. Of course in James there is also the pull towards pragmatism, and makes his spiritual tendencies less idealistic, and so acceptable to some, though not less fictional, in fact.

¹⁴⁸² Meister Eckhart was a favorite writer of Ananda Coomaraswamy, and he implies transcendental subjectivism very dear to the traditionalists.

So then, once one understands the reactionary nature of most mythical art in the middle of the 19th century¹⁴⁸³, then it becomes clear how the Symbolist movement developed and then collapsed into corporate art. Abstract art comes from this collapse. The aesthetic of Guénon and Schuon is reactionary, mythological and monarchist and harkens back to those who hated the equalizing tendencies 18th century... They are throwbacks to those who hated human rights and the French Revolution and wanted the return of corrupt kings.

Once one understands that this far right reaction was the basic attitude of the traditionalists, then we can proceed with a discussion. Their religion is merely a magnification¹⁴⁸⁴ of their political motives and dressed up as a metaphysic and an aesthetic as well as a method or behavior code. Aspects of Symbolist aesthetic also develop into surrealism or abstractionism. How this happens is not a complex matter. Kandinsky starts out as a Theosophical symbolist, as was Coomaraswamy, and develops into an abstractionist, for instance. The value of the symbolist movement was to turn art away from representation of reality to an increasingly escapist, corporate, abstract, construct, decorative art about art: fashionⁱ. Corporate globalization and the creation of a universal religious ideology are part of the same tendency. It is all about power, wealth and insuring that the rich stay rich. This means that the art of Duchamp and Warhol is not art either. It is merely advertising. As the great Japanese Haiku artist Issa said:

Writing shit about new snow,

¹⁴⁸³ Not all art with classical themes are reactionary as I have pointed out elsewhere. David's Marat, Delacroix's Liberty are forward looking. Classical art was used for both sides of the political spectrum. Overall it was a liberating force beginning with Da Vinci but always had a side that supported the monarchy and the repressive Church.

¹⁴⁸⁴ This an important concept in these books, a typical example is the huge Rococo and Baroque illusionistic paintings done on Church ceilings in the 1600s. The show angels and gods, Jesus or Mary, as well as glorify aristocrats and mythic figures. They are clearly class paintings meant to stupefy and urge submission. Many other examples exist in all religions.

For the rich,
Is not art.¹⁴⁸⁵

Gauguin, a businessman turned artist, was one of Schuon's favorite artists, had already encouraged the abstracting of art. His devotion to art for art's sake and abstraction would soon come to serve corporate ideology. What grew from the Symbolists is an autonomous art that reflects the fiction of corporate autonomy, self-referring, contentless, and all about money and power. The spiritual abstractions of Kandinsky and Mondrian grew out of Cezanne and Gauguin, eschewing skill and drawing, art as inquiry as well and beauty. Art becomes a subjective brew of empty signs and symbols, which ultimately serves corporate branding, the ideology of corporate personhood, anti-science and a dearth of objective inquiry. .

However, Guenon had no notion of any of this. His followers overestimate his intelligence. He had no clue as to what the Symbolist movement actually was. He was living in deep fictions. Schuon knew the Platonist Symbolist movement and was openly influenced by it through his spiritualist father, Paul Schuon, and Guenon, but had little critical insight into it. One can see then that traditionalism is basically a reactionary theory, and I deplore it. But that said, then one can qualify all the bad that it did. One can also notice the few things it got right, as even the worst theories must get something right.. I do not wish to ignore the fact that Guenon, Coomaraswamy (AKC) do occasionally say something that makes sense. Their questioning of human alienation via mass production and environmental harm is what appealed to me about them, especially AKC. Indeed, it was this that drew me into it. I did not see that their answer to alienation from nature was worse than the problem of alienation from nature and in no way a solution to it.

¹⁴⁸⁵ Hass, Robert. The Essential Haiku, versions of Basho, Buson and Issa Ecco Press, 1994, pg. 187

In Chapter 8 of *Reign of Quantity*, Guenon correctly notes that industry has had a deleterious effect on non-human existence and made art a luxury instead of a part of everyone's life as it should be. Coomaraswamy made the same points, though both of them take this as a dogma. They mistake the reasons for this however. There is nothing wrong with metal or tools. Condemning technology outright is ludicrous, condemning industrial exploitation, the hedge markets, financial speculation, CEO culture and globalism is another matter. Chomsky and Coomaraswamy are in agreement that creativity is important in human life. I agree too as does anyone sensible. This is one of the few occasions in Guenon's crazy book where I do agree with him. Any decent craftsman who knows about the satisfactions of making living art understands the importance of creativity, personal observation, accurate rendering and craft. Few things can be as satisfying as drawing with a pencil or painting, designing building, making a house or a sculpture. Indeed, creating is a primary human drive, as it derives from nature and is not exclusively a human desire. Evolution is hugely creative. Creativity and hands on making and inquiry are essential to a decent education. None of the traditionalists understood this.

The creative instinct certainly has some of its origin in the need to procreate, as Darwin suggested. Sex is part of art. Death is part of art, anything that we experience is part of art. Anything we think about what we might experience or what experience might or might not mean, can be part of art. In this sense, art is culture, in addition to being part of evolution, with nature at its base. The existence of dreams in both human and animals show that brains are creative and are so as part of their evolutionary makeup. Making art and having children is a similar source of joy in life for similar reasons. The earliest art images have to do with sex, fertility and animals, ---those basic facts of our existence on earth. This is not a mistake, but part of the evolution of humans in nature.

Da Vinci was right about the wonder and beauty of machines. Simple machines exhibit a natural beauty that cannot be denied: levers, screws, inclined planes, cog wheels or ladders. Complex ones do too for different reasons. But Guenon is right about the impersonality of mass production, but he did not understand why it is sometimes of good thing, depending on how it is done. Mass production is harmful, not in itself, as there are reasons to make certain things by machine and many of them. What is harmful is if production techniques that make the rich richer and starves workers and harms the environment. This was true of slavery too, and for similar reasons. If global warming is to cause the Galapagos Islands, Florida, Bangladesh and the San Joaquin Valley to go underwater, which is quite likely, than the rich who profit from such abuse are hardly exemplars of human evolution or of evolution itself, but rather represent humanity at its most shameful. If profiteers are merely greedy men it is hard to see how this might be a good thing. But does this mean we should stop making things cheaply and quickly if it can be done without these side effects. No, but the main thing there is to remove the noxious side effects and the men who profiteer from them. Circumscribe the CEO and regulate them into harmless docility. Regulate stock markets and tax all profits heavily. The problem is not the making a mass objects, but the capitalization of this process for a few monopolists. Religion, like rampant capitalism, depends on deception. This is why the far right always wants to circumvent the freedom of the press and free inquiry, making universities unaffordable.

AKC, Schuon and Guenon did not realize that art does not need religion and is a truly marvelous thing without it. There are many amazing craftsman, painters, potters, jewelry makers, cabinet makers, carpenters and many others, who are not religious at all, nor are they greedy corporate monsters who only care for profits. Creativity reaches down into the basics facts of existence and our hopes for the future. It has to do with creating new life and sustaining the one that we already

have, looking toward the future and the past. The history of painting for instance ties every serious painter to the past in a direct and profound way. Going deeper into the basics of our existence through art might we mean throwing out delusions held dear in the past.

One of the truly great things about the enlightenment was to free the craftsman of religion. Guenon and Coomaraswamy abhorred this fact. They liked the worker as a slave to priests and autocratic dogmas. While it is true that capitalist mass production has produced some awful results, it has also made some good things, from cars, and computers to toasters. The problem has always been the injustice of unfair labor and CEO profits, not the fact of making things cheaply. Labor saving devices are hardly to be laughed at or hated. Glorifying craft or 'women's work' is not true to human nature. No one wants to endlessly wash laundry by hand, iron clothes or work like a slave at a loom for low pay. Capitalism abuses Chinese, Indian and Mexican workers to profit from overworked and underpaid labor. The slavish service of art to religion was really a form of tyranny and thought control and it is good it is increasingly gone from the earth, surviving only in a very few places. Corporate mass production, based on a monarchist model of the CEO as King is the real problem in our world. Non exploitative and sustainable manufacturing can be a very good thing.

The Romantic attitude of Coomaraswamy (AKC) toward traditional craft was too unilateral and driven by caste and other attitudes that are quite destructive.. Mindless repetitive work is not a good, despite Gandhi's and AKC's efforts to glorify it.. The practice of painting Icons for instance, is ridiculously formal and deafeningly restrictive. It might seem quaint and charming to suppress ones individuality to paint in a proscribed manner for an dictatorial institution—to "Paint for God" as it were, but it is deadening to do so for any length of time, and not really different in any objective way than painting corporate Icons, capitalist advertising, and Logos for a CEO the communist party under Stalin or

Mao. The control of art for the state or religion is a form of thought control, control of knowledge, and control or repression of the freedom to work and create. Indeed, totalism of religion, business or politics is poison for art in either case. One realizes at last that the making of images that serve an ideology, be this the Church or Marx or the CEO is untenable.

This shows us the problem of the control of images by power in general. A good deal of art history can be dismissed and merely propaganda, be it for the Roman Emperors, Japanese Samurai, Napoleon, the German Kings or rich landowners in England who needed ridiculously inflated pictures of themselves to prove their pedigree. English Manor houses have hallways, great rooms and staircases covered with pompous portraits of ancestors and primogenitors. This ancestor worship was itself a sort of civic religious practice, though in this case the religion has to do with feudal ideology and the cult of private property.¹⁴⁸⁶ Indeed, the Icon is probably an outgrowth of ancestor worship, such as one sees in the worship the Pharaohs of Egypt or the Emperors of China. The creation of the Christ myth clearly had the mythic image of Christ as an alternative to the corrupt Caesars. The creation of a mythic Jesus to replace Zeus and Jupiter was a fact of history, as one of the first things Christians did once they got enough power was to start destroying Greek and Roman temples, architecture, books, libraries and music.

Neither Guenon or Schuon faced the problem of images as power symbols in the history of art. Nor do they face in a detailed and exact way the particular harm that capitalism does to art, once the artist is freed from theocracy and aristocracy. Nor did they grasp the value and importance of artists not having to be 'anonymous'. The self-denying nature of medieval art did not have a good effect on the society as a

¹⁴⁸⁶ There is a similar ancestor worship in China and Japan

whole. On the contrary, it lead to the same problems it leads to under capitalism or communism. The artist becomes an anonymous slave to a propaganda system. Coomaraswamy liked this anonymity. Anonymity merely underscores the artist as ideological slave, unable to think for him or herself, turning out images to glorify the state of the Church. This is a far cry from the model set by Da Vinci of the artist as freethinker and rational mind able to be free of any ideological control and serving only science in the disinterested pursuit of truth, as far as this is possible. Da Vinci had to work for some awful people, the Sforza's in particular, but he seems to have stayed largely free of too much bad influence from this, outside the war machines they insisted he work on and which he clearly had serious questions about doing. But he was an amazing inventor and had an endlessly fertile imagination..

The world doesn't need more Virgin Mary's, corporate Branding nor more peasants looking happy standing next to tractors. If we compare Leonardo's Mona Lisa with the Russian Icon a few things become clear. Mona Lisa is about nature and the background of it refers to an ancient landscape such as Darwin would have understood. This is the real landscape of our actual earth where Carboniferous and Jurassic periods come and go and humans evolve to use language. Mona Lisa herself is a figure of great depth and sympathy, her sleeves and hair almost like water or air in their delicate tracery and profoundly suggestive hints of growth and life. Certainly the best portrait of the last 500 years, this is an amazing painting. It includes Darwin as a prediction and beauty, inquiry and love of nature as a mode of life and thought. Compare this with an Russian Icon, which is a formula painting and refers to a world that does not exist and a heaven that is make believe and uses human forms that are little more than child's cartoons.

Bissera Pentcheva claims that true Byzantine Icons have a 'sensuality' in them that is physical, phenomenological and magical. Well, a few do. Yes, there is some truth to this. Certainly, in the Schuon cult there was

a certain erotic or theatrical magic, as well as a ‘phenomenological presentation of sensuality’, to use Pentchava’s terms. But this magical notion of Icons as sensual conveyors of metaphysical or erotic ideas is still theatre, not reality. An Icon is a theater of power and based on various falsehoods and sleight of hand. Christian aesthetics can hardly be described as “sensual” though occasionally its art is this, though always with a strong dose of repression added in as an moralistic antidote. Gothic Adam and Eves are sometimes ‘sexy’ but are always surrounded by repressive priests or hells. ¹⁴⁸⁷ I don’t think there is a more anti-sexual system of ideology in the world than Christianity, and this ideology comes with its own built in hypocrisy.

This does not mean that iconoclasts are correct either. The denial of representative images is as much power trip as control of non-representational imagery is excessive and allows endless multiplication, as is obvious on Islamic mosques. I mean that Icons as a category of art are inherently questionable—just as are non-representational images---precisely because they both posit a notion of reality that is false. The Icon is based on a radical rejection of reality, however mystical reality might be re-presented as iconic reality. ¹⁴⁸⁸ The actuality of Byzantine aesthetic theory is that it denigrates the world in favor of the mental and the abstract, which it alone associates with the ‘spiritual’. Christian eroticism, if it is allowed to exist at all, is only allowed within the context

¹⁴⁸⁷ Hugo van der Goes and Jan Van Eyck did some lovely Adam and Eve’s but their work is otherwise tightly controlled by Christian ideology

¹⁴⁸⁸ For more on Icons see her [The Sensual Icon](#), as well as the writings of Kallistos Ware and other propagandists and theological rhetoricians. The iconoclastic controversy is important to any discussion of the abuse of art by power. Moslems, Protestants, Shakers Zen Buddhists all proscribed images in certain ways. Control of the images people see is part of control of minds. The use of icons as conduits of correct cultic thinking were well understood by those who hate icons as well as those who use them for power. The use of Icons by Maoist and Stalinist communists as well as capitalists who use images to create a fetishized capitalism (“advertising”), are all examples of such abuses of aesthetics. Andy Warhol is a typical example of a creator of utterly empty ‘corporate icons’ of capital. Abstract art serves a similar function of creating empty signs that signify brands or corporate personhood.

of sacred “transmissions”. Marriage must occur ‘before god’ and art must be consecrated by priests.

But aniconism is just as bad or worse in its control of images. In corporate art, aniconism banishes all meaning, just as in Islamic art it is intended to negate all thought but that which the Mullahs allow. Islamic tile patterns in Mosques are pretty until one realizes what they are meant to do, and then they are forbidding and oppressive. The Shaker forbidding of imagery and Zen minimalist aesthetic are as oppressive in their way as International architecture, the pin stripped suit and the suffocating emptiness of paintings by Mondrian, Frank Stella or Ellsworth Kelly. Miscalled “modernist” art is full of empty images that are meant to blunt thought and elicit ascent to corporate capitalism. The banishment of meaning and content is a way to affirm Money as the absolute value of art. This creates Icons as empty as those of Lenin or Mao and as standardized as those of Russian orthodox Iconographer handbook. Icon recipes and templates are dictated forms and are meant to convey meanings as restrictive as corporate skyscrapers.¹⁴⁸⁹

The hatred of real things and beings and the facts of existence is a regular feature of the major religions as well as corporate art and one that brings them fundamentally into question. Religion is not merely a “by-product of evolution”, as Boyer calls it. It is also a deliberate effort to lie about reality, mislead and control the thoughts and livelihoods of

¹⁴⁸⁹ This is not to say that all Chinese realism is political propaganda, it isn't. There have been some fine artists in modern China, such as Jiang Zhaohe. He did his great painting of Refugees portraying Beijing after the city had been bombed by the Japanese planes. It is a 12-meter long watercolor. A very well done essay by the artist Xuning Wang, discusses realism both eastern and western with great interest.

<http://ro.ecu.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1122&context=theses>



others. Art, poetry and myth play a big and shameful role in this effort. The embodiment of the “idea” in Byzantine art requires crucifixion to be ‘embodied’, since fiction can only be forced on reality by force. Reality becomes untenable, and must be forced through “suffering” to “transcend reality”. The image of the dying man on the cross is all about lying about the facts of existence. This is really an insane notion of ‘reality’ or reality turned on its head, associating life after death, with images of extreme bodily pain. Grunewald’s Isenheim Altarpiece is the ultimate image of Christian aesthetics and deifies suffering and the doctor priests who are supposed to treat it. Corporate Iconography also lies about reality, and claims a kind of deathlessness, and deifies the corporation as an empty and meaningless monolith. Rilke did occasionally say things that are true. He was even capable of a moment or two of realism in his often dreamy and unrealistic work. For instance as when he condemned advertising as a lie about reality

“just beyond that,
behind the last of the billboards, plastered with signs for
"Deathless,"
that bitter beer which tastes sweet to those drinking it
as long as they have fresh distractions to chew . . . ,
just beyond those boards, just on the other side: things are real.
Children play, lovers hold each other, off in the shadows,
pensive, on the meager grass, while dogs obey nature.” (Duino
Elegy #10)

Rembrandt understood this long before.



Dog sleeping Etching by Rembrandt

Religion is just this lie about reality that Rilke explains and is akin to advertising the “deathless” skin cream, Insurance scams or alcoholic drinks that will make you ‘live forever’. A lot of art plays into this too, trying to create the illusion of infinity or eternity, selling dreams, Buddhist calm, heavens everlasting, Allah’s Houris. Reality is not in the advertisement or in the Icon, it is in the actual world outside of the billboard, Icon, Zen Garden, Buddha, Church, computer or TV.

Guenon says many bizarre things about basic aesthetic ideas. He claims that “form must not be endowed with a spatial character”.... since “space belongs to corporeal manifestation alone”. (R of Q, pg. 59) That is ridiculous. Only the flat, fictional “incorporeal” fiction of Beyond Being matters to Guenon. The ‘incorporeal’ is total fiction, Hindu or Platonist. But Schuon told me the same thing when I studied painting with him. He told me to eliminate space from my work if possible. I did not want to. I love space. Reality must not be part of art for religion, only symbols matter. Plato is the enemy of art, as he hates the actual and only wants idealized abstractions, Icons, picture of the highest and thus only for the ultra-rich aristocracy. Platonic art ends in corporate art, which to me is an atrocity of sorts, a mangling and destruction of reality. Imitating the fact of space is one of my foremost pleasures in painting. Precisely because space is the envelope in which everything exists, in fact. Space is

existence and existence is what matters. Painting reality and space is a joy. Painting a symbolic heaven as a flat gold space is mere make believe and mindless.

To read the images of history requires an undoing or unraveling of the abstract imagery of power and claims to false knowledge. History is a puzzle of the mind, an archeological dig into both the mind of the past and ourselves in the present. One is surrounded everywhere by unknowns, facts, random events. One organizes the unknowns and the knowns into patterns that one hopes will answer needs in the present and hopefully point to something close to the truth of the matter. My concern is not to build new icons of power, as both Marx and Foucault tried to do, but rather to de-transcendentalize history, if this phrase makes sense. Join the actual, and paint life as it is.

Religious Icons are pictures of mythical powers; they are the advertising of traditional worlds. The image of the Virgin Mary, for instance is perhaps the most pervasive and successful of the advertising Icons of the Medieval Church. Icons, be they Christian, Tibetan or Hindu, picture an abstract world superior to this world, and they devalue this world.¹⁴⁹⁰ Both Jesus and Mary probably did not exist in fact, but are mythic constructions.¹⁴⁹¹ Icons are supposed to be figurations of

¹⁴⁹⁰ One of the 'quintessential' ideas behind Christian thought, according to Etienne Gilson, is the idea that 'there is nothing corporeal that does not reflect the incorporeal'. The entire universe is thus an aesthetic advertisement for Christian supremacy. Everything is a 'signature' of God. The universe proclaims the glory of the church. There is no need of billboards, nature was made an advertisement for Jesus.. Science performs a similar feat but has the advantage of actually being real-- It sees the universe as a reflection the need for rationality, intellect and mathematical explanatory power. The universe does not really proclaim the glory of scientific man, indeed, perhaps the contrary is true: humans are mucking up the world.. Evolution is really an advertisement for the skills of each species and not merely human accomplishments. Not all knowledge systems seek to seize on the universe as an advertisement for their claims. The claims of science are really very different than religion. The good thing about real science is that is true whether you believe it or not.

¹⁴⁹¹ The forbidding of showing the prophet Muhammed is really just a reversed effort to insist on the same power of his image, here controlled by the absence of his face. The Qin Emperor tried to do the same thing by showing his face covered with a sort of metal veil that hung down over his

heavenly or divine witnesses that stare out at the viewer from a better world beyond: they are witnesses to the 'truth' of the knowledge that rules and denigrates the world of ordinary lives and beings. Realizing that such images are propaganda is painful. For a while I thought the Virgin Mary might be a real thing and I tried to act and pray accordingly. It had meant so much to me and for a time my researches showed that my dreams must be cruelly destroyed. But that was the pain of loss I was feeling, soon to be taken over by a disinterested search for the truth of the matter. I did not lose the love that I had for the Virgin, I merely lost the illusion that she was real. The love was misplaced and would find a real things, people or animal to adore.

The icon is a model of correct behavior, and acts as an emotional center or an ideological training device. It represents the theory of knowledge that governs the society. In Russian Churches one kisses the Icons, as if they were beloveds. It is that intimate. Tibetan Icons, painted on rocks, flags or paintings, for instance, functioned to explain to a mostly illiterate population a Buddhist system of beliefs, largely controlled by the Priests in the Potala in Lhasa. The Icons thus served to justify, explain and teach the ideology of state control or to dictate an intimate mentality and create and constellate emotion reactions, much as television and advertising support corporate control today through sitcoms and managed, entertainment news.

The really unsatisfying flatness of Russian Icons is a result of intellectual tyranny by the orthodox church strangling any humanity or actuality that might be in the forms. The unsatisfying Corporate or Marxist Icons of Modernist art, such as Barnett Newman or Malevich, are

face. The veiling of altar by an iconostasis has the same meaning. It is all about controlling what people think and getting them to submit to the fictions of power.

also unsatisfying for the same reasons. Suffocating flatness, a denial of the real, and the creation of a non-existent world of a self-referring “art-piece”—what could be more boring? Card board cutouts of subjectivity, white squares on white background, blue poles, drip paintings, minimalist emptiness, corporate clones, squares of “deathless”. All decorative lies to the viewer. Icons tend to look childish and dead, like badly done Japanese cartoons, or like a good deal of modern art. Both traditional art and modernist abstractions are dead ends.

It might be useful here to discuss even more concretely some of these issues. So, briefly, I will talk about one of the mistakes of my experience--- learning to paint Icons, first with Schuon’s direction and then my last ones in rebellion against him. I will use myself as an example to explore why Icons are a dead end. I reached that dead end myself, nearly 25 years ago. I only worked on these for a few years, and quickly got over it, when I realized it was a dead end.

I studied painting with Schuon for the two years I was in Bloomington, and did a dozen or so works, most of them under his tutelage, in 1990 and 91. No one else who studied with him has made it out of the cult mentally intact. So, though I have written about this elsewhere it would be useful to discuss it further in the midst of this discussion of aesthetic theories of Traditionalism and modernism. Schuon told me he was “the greatest painter in the world”. He was prone to this sort of delusion of grandeur. He was not anything of the sort. But I quickly learned that he really didn’t know much about painting. His technical knowledge was pretty pitiful, as was Sharlyn Romaine’s, his nominal 4th “wife” who painted his ideas for him in later years.. I doubt many of his paintings will fare well with time as he did many of them in in oils on paper. It is not a good idea to paint in oil on paper, without first putting some kind of gesso on the paper. He was technically rather

incompetent.

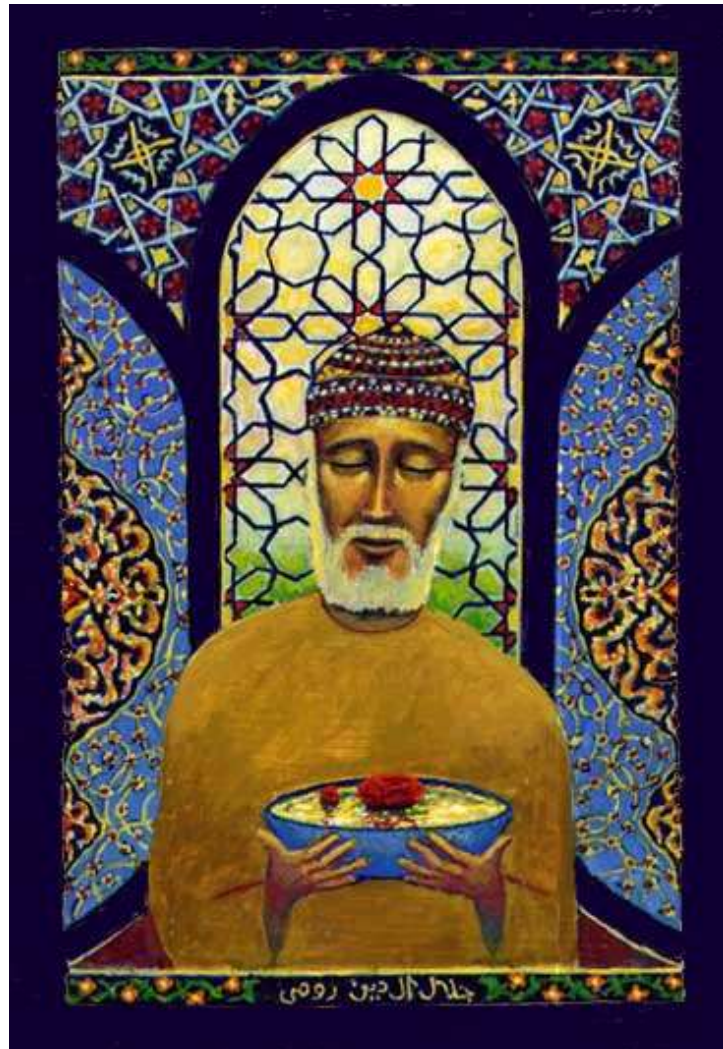
When Schuon and Sharlyn were done with a work, and they churned them out pretty fast—they did not have much else to do----Schuon had me make machine copies of the painting they did at a local office store. I made copies of Virgins, mythical scenes, older paintings and or nude Icons of Schuon they had already done. They would use these “Xerox” copies as they were called then, and would paste them on a mass produced sticky board and paint the next painting on the copy paper in oils. In other words they used to finished painting as a drawing for the next one. This a very bad way to do it and I objected for archival reasons, and explained why, but they did not care. Sharlyn tried to say that Schuon was in a white heat of creativity and she would redo the paintings in later years when they started to fall apart.

I saw in the end that I was a better painter than Schuon. That was disconcerting. I had hoped for a teacher who knew more not less than I. I liked Symbolist art, not realizing that what I liked in it was the realism not the orientalist and spiritual fantasy. But as I studied with Schuon I realized I did not like what he was doing at all. It took me less than a year to surpass him. At first I thought these were real things, as I was trained to do. What he was doing was really erotic, self-aggrandizing icons and they were not that well done .I have no objection to erotic art as such, though it is more often badly done than not. He was making cartoons of symbolist paintings after the manner of icons, doing self-portraits with prominent penis and making Native American paintings that were closely connected to his nudist primordial gatherings.

I did not know any of this in 1990, when I was seeing his art for the first time I was not yet in the cult, but about to move to Bloomington. I thought Schuon was an Islamic, Sufi master then and had all sorts of delusions about who he was largely created by followers of Schuon, Huston Smith and others. He was a Sufi Master but I did not yet know that Sufism itself is utterly empty and fictional. Those who want a merely

orthodox Sufism are as deluded as those who follow Schuon. I was misled in every direction and wanted to know the truth about religion. I was misled about Schuon just as I had been misled by other religions. But the other religions had taught me to doubt what I was told. As I studied with him I came to see that this was really a very sick mind and I was painting his illness and imitating his psychotic episodes.

I will show some of the works I did while in the cult to illustrate this. In the first, below, is a portrait of the Turkish poet Rumi, who I admired then, but don't admire anymore. I was still six months from moving to Bloomington. No one knows what Rumi looked like so I made up what he might look like. It is really a self-portrait as mystical poet, in which I combined my interest in oriental textiles and architectural and tile design with an interest in Russian iconography. At the time I thought I was painting Schuon as Rumi. It is a painting of my many projections at the time. I was only 30 then, and was swayed by a mystical symbolist style that came from my earlier work in drawings (I explain this in my Philosophical Drawings) I was quite a mystic in those days, prone to cosmic and transcendent thoughts and states. I was wildly seeking the truth wherever I could find it, or hints of it. While there was an element of truth in my ecstasies and insights, much of it was delusional and suggested by precedents. I was wrong about many things, as I would later find out.



The only thing I like about this picture now is the geometry, which is well done and the scene out the window which evokes California light near Point Reyes, where I used to live. The painting shows a young man in an old man's beard who is love with the "inward" drunk on his own emotions, drunk on what he thinks is the "holy spirit" but really is his auto-suggested life force magnified by his hopes and dreams. It is me I suppose, in fantasy, or perhaps it is my wish for a wish man, such as I never met "Spirituality" is just this inflation of inner feeling, what James

calls the “appropriation”¹⁴⁹² of an inner “fact”, which really is not a fact at all but just a cluster of feelings or images. The religious try to make such feelings into a self-hypnotic and perpetual state. Rumi was a master at this self-delusionary process of self-inflation as “transcendent” and imaginary other. Indeed, the very notion that the “transcendent” is possible is already an admission of hatred of the earth, life, existence and nature. This hatred blossoms in into the “spiritual in art” and the spiritual in art is escape and exploit, of necessity.¹⁴⁹³ This is a picture of a romantic illusion, and born of a man who was all illusion and I was combining the illusions of Rumi with that of Schuon and coming up with an icon of mystical naiveté, opening into transcendental fictions.

I had studied Persian miniatures and Chinese art and was increasingly open to all traditional arts. I loved cathedrals and have visited many. Religious art exploits what is best in humans to try to turn beauty and pathos, sadness and fear into metaphors that can be used to ensnare the faithful. This does not mean that Chartres or Salisbury cathedral enshrines something “transcendent”. It means that such places are carefully orchestrated to create this feeling and feelings are

¹⁴⁹² James writes that “the inner state is our very experience itself; its reality and that of our experience are one.” He calls this a fact, but actually he is mistaken here, thinking of pink elephants does not mean they actually exist. Much of what Esalen has pushed is of the delusory nature. See pg. 499, Varieties of Religious Experience.

¹⁴⁹³ You can see this is the writing of Donald Kuspit. I read an essay by him in the early 1980’s in which he said art is not necessary and all that we really need is the critic!!, and it was clear he meant he was himself the replacement for art. The critic Arthur Danto has a similar sort of narcissism. This absurd arrogance seems to be still present in Kuspit’s work, but now he is pushing reactionary and spiritual art, as might have been predicted based on his original vainglorious position. In his essay on Kandinsky, for instance, Kuspit writes that Kandinsky’s ideas in the “Concerning the Spiritual in Art” abandoned “the representation of objective reality for the direct presentation, as it were, of his subjectivity” This ought to be criticized, but Danto and Kuspit are apologists for corporate art and thus cheerleaders to some degree. This wallowing in an abstract and subjective morass is what Schuon did too, without giving up objective reality entirely, just enough to be sure that his subjective divinity was paramount. William James idea of religion as subjective self-regard is what one sees in modern spiritual art, and such art ends in being an abstract corporate art about art, usually. Schuon’s Icons are not too different than narcissist abstractions, except that Schuon wanted to create works where the erotic ‘vibration:’ as he called, it was paramount.

not truths even if they allude to truth. Standing in an old growth redwood forest and hearing the Varied Thrushes sing is much better than a cathedral because it is what it is and there is no deceit involved. For art to be used to tell the truth as a redwood forest does is a new idea. This is not Dada's idea of "art as life", where intelligence is sacrificed to the mundane of found objects. Redwood trees involve eons of intelligent adaptations to the vicissitudes of the reality they live in. They are not dumb like most modern art, which merely reflects human centered notions of reality as a construct designed to reflect human boredom, dust or ashtrays..

So I wanted to learn what all religions had to offer, and since they are all avid to offer their wares it is easy to approach them and ask for what they know. So in 1985 or 86, I studied Russian iconography with a Rumanian artist in Cleveland and learned to paint a Russian icon under his direction, applying gold leaf in the old way. I wanted him make mosaics as they made them for Saint Mark's in Venice. Indeed, in previous years I had lived in New York City and London and was utterly sick of what was empty nonsense dished up for sale as Modern art. I have a great deal of respect for fine craftsman. The emptiness and vanity of the art world in New York had repulsed and horrified me and I wanted something true and real. I looked into Byzantine aesthetics or the Persian miniature or in Hindu or Chinese art.¹⁴⁹⁴

To go back even further, my earliest art training was self-

¹⁴⁹⁴ I still have a qualified admiration for Chinese and Japanese art, particularly their landscape painting and paintings of small beings, little birds, flowers and insects.. When I bracket out the Buddhism, Taoism and Zen and ideological meanings attached to such works, it is very clear how much some artists and poets had a deep love of the natural world in China and Japan. The mountains one sees in these works actually exists and are not fantasy. I love some of their paintings of birds and flowers, fruit trees in bloom and autumnal screens are full of life and character. Problems arise with Asian art partly due to it being mostly done for the very wealthy and thus deeply under control of Confucian and Taoist ideology of the Imperial state and its aesthetic requirements. There were artists who subtly made allusions to things outside accepted imagery, but such symbolism tended to be arcane and difficult of access. It is a literati art and by definition it is elitist. But I stress that this does not mean there were not real naturalists among them and great artists.

instruction in my teens when I was reading Leonardo and admired Rembrandt and Van Gogh. I have always loved Vincent and did copies of his work when young, many of them lost now. I wanted an art that engaged real life and was science based. Art school rammed Duchamp, John Cage and Warhol down my throat and though I was tempted by these fashions for a time I finally realized they were empty and dead ends. Indeed, Warhol, minimalism and Duchamp led to the “death of painting”, when painting was what I loved. Masters of “conspicuous triviality” they were repulsive to all that I loved in art. All these artists really killed was their own art, what little they had of it, and none of them had much skill or understanding of what art is or was. Duchamp’s incredibly stupid comment that one should use a Rembrandt as an ironing board is proof of his shallow mind. They were merely corporate artists, selling ideas for the corporate art market, omnivorous in its desire to everything into marketable fodder to the ultra-rich. They made painting into a new form of money, when none of them could paint at all. Such art is not art at all but just a con man scheme. It is a way to turn art into an iconography of money. These large empty paintings, now decorating corporate vestibules and museum walls, are little more than advertisements of wealth and status, and have little value in expressing the life of our times. They merely express to the corporate fiction of the life of money and capital, which is really not life at all. That is the real death that is the death of painting. It turns painting into nothing, just as art for god was nothing at all but an account of those who manipulated symbols to enrich a self-serving institution.

This is not to say that museums and those who work there have not value. Though they are few and far between there are good directors and curators. I loved Sherman Lee’s 1980 show of Realism and Naturalism. I was influenced by Sherman Lee at the Cleveland museum, who was also great scholar of Chinese art. I admired his devotion to art as knowledge and culture and was not about to give that up for fashion, advertising

and contentless abstractions and corporate brands. He was interested in the museum and a model of scholarship and education and not as a black buster money gathering side show. Indeed, what Lee taught me was that art is history and insight into reality, even if it is full of delusions as it often is.¹⁴⁹⁵ The notion of art as part of inquiry, intelligence and history is far different than the reigning ignorance in modern art. Greenberg thought that art must be a celebration of its independent properties, ‘an inward looking focus on itself’, paint as paint and nothing else. This narcissistic aesthetic was a dead end that is still being repeated over and over in corporate art. Clement Greenberg’s idea has failed to make any really interesting art. Indeed, one can skip over much of the art as mere between 1940 and 2010 and not miss much. Most of it is merely decorative footnotes to corporate history.

In the early 1980’s I was still feeling the influence of Jack Hirschman, under whose influence I began a series of a thousand drawings.¹⁴⁹⁶ These drawings had a linear, Celtic, Chinese and traditional animal art style, with a dose of automatic surrealism, as its basis. I admired the animals style that one finds in the Book of Kells, Viking art, as well as ancient Tattoos from Pazyrck and early Chinese art. Animals and nature are the basis of art. I called these the Philosophical Drawings and some were gathered into collections I have written about elsewhere. They are a sort of catalogue of what I knew then about

¹⁴⁹⁵ Lee’s discussion of Chinese art in Eight Dynasties of Chinese Painting is quite interesting as he shows how it was largely a Patron dictated art. The Chinese love of nature can be quite wonderful but on the other side of the coin, it is largely an art of a certain class, and represents elitist values of an escapist, Buddhist and Taoist or Confucian orthodoxy. This does not prevent my loving some Chinese art for its accurate depiction of the beauty of the natural world. But it is good to be aware that a great deal of Chinese art represents a power structure and like European art is full of propaganda for the interests of a given class, with metaphysical ideas that serve and justify that class.

¹⁴⁹⁶ Actually I began them before I got involved with him, but while I was studying him they flowered to some degree.

spiritual and mythic things, human situations, myself, life and existing. Everything is all mixed, and not yet mature. They suggest Paul Klee like poetics of forms and patterns. I liked Klee because of his poetic attempt to combine word and image in an evocative concert. Only recently have I have realized that Klee was influenced by Rudolf Steiner, who was himself influenced by Boehme and others of a Platonistic stripe.¹⁴⁹⁷ Like Kandinsky he was trying to make religious art in a modern context and compares himself to a god. He wanted to make art where “only the slightest breath is needed to transform religious feeling, religion into fact”, as he wrote in his *Creative Credo*. I must have been influenced by this religiosity in ways I did not realize. What I still like in Klee is his child-like art of Haiku-like poetry. But there is also a tendency there to the abstract that grows out of Steiner and questionable spirituality. But Klee’s biology interested me. I liked his effort to make art as a diary of what he knew, and this led me to think that a rebellion against corporate art might be possible.

I went to see a John Cage concert at the Cleveland Orchestra in in the late 1970’s and did not then know that really Cage was working with many of Coomaraswamy’s ideas. I had deep misgivings about what he was trying to do. More “conspicuous triviality”, to use Russell’s phrase and which characterizes so much Corporate concept art. At that time, I wanted to learn the art of the past, since modern art was such a dead end. So by the mid 1980’s, avoiding Warhol and the New York art world, I was primed when I read Coomaraswamy and thought he might have an answer. I was wrong, and it would take me years to figure out why. In the 1980’s I learned icon painting, and flirted with learning the Persian miniature style. But this was very much a side interest, while in fact my primary interest was more in line with Da Vinci and Van Gogh.

¹⁴⁹⁷ Klee and other mystical artists are often playing on a variations of the “correspondence theory” of Jacob Boehme, which itself is merely an outgrowth of Platonic Archetypes, the “signatures of all things” as Boehme calls them..

Most of my studies were done after nature in gouache all through the 1980's. My Philosophical Drawings were already close to a dead end. The majority of studies of the 1980's are either Lake Erie or Point Reyes California, where I went to paint landscapes from life in 1986 to 1989. The Philosophical Drawings started failing because the symbolist impulse itself is a failure. Had I been smart enough, I would have seen that the whole project of spiritual in art would fail, and had to fail. I had inklings of this, but could not yet assimilate what I was feeling and thinking. This was already obvious, though I do not think I saw it until 1990 or so. But my employment as an oriental rug restorer, and repairer from 1984 to 90, kept me closely involved with oriental art and textiles. I was struggling with the deeper meanings of what art is. And I was not yet fathomed the depths of the philosophical questions that still haunted me. What is the meaning of living and does god exist and how much truth was there in religion. What is history and what can it teach me? These are important questions for art. How does art deal with reality? What is the role of science and biology and how do fit into a world that is threatened and where so many species are going extinct? This book records my findings, but it took me nearly two decades to really get to the bottom of some of these matters, as this essay shows, I think.

So there were two conflicting tendencies in me in 1989. On the one hand I was doing realistic studies of nature. This was an increasingly vital concern. I still am doing deeper studies in this area all the time. This was deeply satisfying. On the other hand my imaginative drawings and studies in iconography and oriental textiles had led me to seek traditional methods of art creation. I did not then realize that the romantic tradition of imagination as preached from the Symbolists and late Pre-Raphaelites to Blake, Palmer and Klee had led me astray. I did not yet realize that this was as much a dead end as modern art, which I already knew was a dead end. My art already knew the answer and in

1989 I was doing deeply objective Plein Air works, but I still had to play out the endgame, as it were.

When I moved to Bloomington I did so with the intention of studying art with Schuon. I did not at first see that I had gone backwards and it was a mistake. In fact, I was already at the end of the spiritual in art and was painting Plein Air in Point Reyes National Seashore, far beyond what he could do. Living next to National lands had become a lifelong concern of mine. So, of course, It turned out to be a horrible mistake to study with Schuon, but one that was good insofar as it taught me to realize that spiritual and traditional art was itself a dead end, though I did not see yet that corporate art grew from the same set of motives and impulses. I do not think I would have grasped the full extent of the delusion of spiritual art had I not done this. I did not know of anyone who had really explored these questions, so I was entirely on my own. I was left with Plein air and my own search into reality.

So I will recount some of this education in more detail. My study with Schuon was quite systematic and deliberate, from the beginning. Initially, I asked Schuon permission to copy his work and he said I could, indeed, he insisted I do so. My relationship to him as a student of painting was started by me but taken up and encouraged by him. I was hoping he would take me on as a student, but it was he who began to teach me. When I first visited Bloomington I brought him this copy of the icon called the Virgin of Vladimir, perhaps the most famous of Russian icons(on the left) as a gift for Schuon. It was to be a gift. I only have this blurred photo of it, on the left.



The real Virgin of Vladimir Icon is to the middle. My copy was pretty accurate to the actual thing, though that is hard to see, given the poor photo.

The next copy I did was done after my first visit to meet Schuon in January 1989. This was before I moved to Bloomington and was done in Gouache. Later, Schuon let me know he did not like the image of Mary as a mother, he preferred her as a love interest or as a romantic or erotic image of longing and attraction, stylizing his Virgin after the erotic Krishna and the Gopis images of the Rajput period or the erotic imagery of Gauguin, Hodler and others.. Icons for him were a way of attracting people to religion by way of eliciting a “sexual attraction”. He told me this himself. He said this is what I needed to do in my paintings. I was to elicit a “sexual attraction” on the part for the viewer. These are thus porn-iconography. Here are some of my early attempts painting under Schuon’s direction. It took me some time to realize my mistake.



Paintings I did with Schuon's advice and consent

I like the fact that the Schuon cult is so ashamed of these images they will not show them on the internet.¹⁴⁹⁸ It is good that these rather kitschy and cartoony Icons are not seen. So, for the moment, I have blurred my copies quite a lot, so that they are not visible in any detail.

The first and last are fairly exact copies of his work done with his explicit permission, here blurred as I said. I did not know exactly what these images were when I copied them. I would not find that out till later. He gave me permission to copy in person and so did not need to write it down. Everyone knew I was studying painting with him and eventually I became the framer for people in the cult. This is easily proven. I was also sent to make copies of these works frequently at copy shops. Copyright law is very explicit about copyright exemptions relating to "*fair use*". When one artist copies another's work, as related to "educational use", it is fair use. In most museums of the world it is

¹⁴⁹⁸ The cult is really paranoid about showing these images. They did publish a hard to find book about some of them, but that was so they could claim copyright on them. But the icons of Schuon himself, which are even sillier, cannot be seen anywhere. They are rather poorly done and kitschy image of him acting the part of holy man in the pose of Shiva or other gods, nude penis stylized and exposed. They are porno-icons of the great man as vehicle of a bogus esoterism. More like cartoons than good paintings, they are supposed to be the summit of art, but are really closer to poorly done Russian icons with the quality of erotic cartoons. (correction: poor renditions of them can be seen on Devie's website, but you have to sign up to see them.)

permissible to draw or paint copies of any work, even contemporary work. But added to this general permission Schuon himself gave me permission to copy his works in person. Copyright laws states clearly that permission to copy is sufficient to forgo any infringement. These were done as part of research on Schuon's own aesthetic system. I do not to violate any copyright agreements by showing these versions here. They are copies done with his permission, in the age old tradition of artists copying works of those with whom they study. I will eventually provide clear images of them but for now will not, for the reason just given.

Not only was I given permission to make these copies I was also encouraged to copy both his originals and my copies by mechanical means and distribute them far and wide. I was given money to copy and frame many of his works. That was one of my jobs in the cult. I made frame pictures for many people out of copies that I made myself... Some of my works, as well, were distributed by Schuon himself or his wives, and were shown in public. Copies of Schuon's works were sold in the cult store which was in Maude Murray's basement. I showed some of these images in Sharlyn Romaine's gallery where there were rooms devoted to Schuon's art . . . Maude mentions how he loved my copies of his works in letters. I asked him if I could copy the painting the first time I met him. This began a steady stream of paintings resulting in a two year dialog between he and I about painting and art. I talked to him about these works in person and through Maude Murray and others.

So I did the first copy of one his works in gouache, a medium he never used. This is the first one above. But when I moved to Bloomington, I brought the Virgin of Vladimir as a gift for him and he wanted me to redo it, as I said earlier. So I did with this next image as the result. The actual painting of the Vladimir is now buried under the image below. Schuon insisted I redo the image after his "virgin", so I did.

It became the second shown above. It was also the second of the series of works I would do with him as advisor and teacher.

It amazes me now that I looked up to him then. I was prepared to believe he actually knew something. That is because I did not know him well yet. All I heard in the cult was that he was the greatest man in the world and the greatest painter ever. The truth was otherwise and it was a slow and painful awakening. I knew about painting, so relating to him on that subject would teach me what kind of man he really was. Indeed, it was the best test of him that I could devise. After I did a few paintings, he encouraged me to do others, so I did a more complex copy in oil, this time painting over an old Russian Icon I had. This is the 3rd image above. I altered a Russian Icon I had been given by an old woman I knew who had died.¹⁴⁹⁹ I put Schuon's virgin in the icons, making it quite different than it had been. The result was picture of motherhood and much better than most Russian icons, which are clumsy and perpetuate medievalisms. The coloration is Byzantine or Quattrocento, as I always admired the medieval use of clear bright color and imagined that is how Greek sculpture and architecture was once painted. I liked the early Byzantine mosaics like those at San Vitale. Indeed, I liked the Greek use of color generally, as it was a folk art of gypsy like love of bright colors. I have always loved flowers and primary colors, like ones sees in early mosaics or in the Book of Kells.

¹⁴⁹⁹ She was an old woman I helped in San Rafael California. We become friends at the rug shop where I worked, and I visited her occasionally. I did not know she was dying until the night she did, when she called me and asked for help because she felt very bad. I told her to call an ambulance, right away. She was not able to. Months before, she had offered to leave me a lot of money when she died, and I said I did not want it. She left me this Icon instead and I repainted it as above. I was not looking for any rewards, just as later I was not looking for rewards in Bloomington. I accepted gifts when I was given them.

The next painting I did under Schuon's direction was of one of his works, again with his permission. It is the fourth image above. It was called "Layla Haqiqah". The "night of the truth". This is one I admired very much, though what I admired in it was the twilight effect, or "afterglow" I have always admired in sunsets, combined with the love of the female body. When I realized what the image actually was I no longer admired it. I realized at last that what he was having me do was to paint him as the Christ child in a sort of erotic embrace with the "virgin", who was now in some kind of fanciful and sexual relationship with him. I had spent a lot of time at Schuon's house and other houses studying his work and thought it was the best of his nudes, though now it seems to me rather silly and cartoonish. He was not a very good painter and rather amateurish in his procedures.

At this point in 1990 was his already equal as a painter, though it never occurred to me to want to have sexual 'visions' of this sort, not that I had anything against sexual images as long as they were not exploitive. It was not until somewhat later that I found out about his grandiose psychology and how it lay at the basis of these strange works. I realized at last I was copying the rather twisted sex fantasies of a man with serious delusions of grandeur and did not know it. I had reached his level of painting quickly and mastered what he had to teach. Indeed, I think my version rather better than his, because it has more depth and resonance of color. I put more feeling into the paint. Romaine's paintings were flat and rather lifeless in color and application. I am not bragging here, just stating a fact. They were doing mythical studies trying to make Schuon a king of existence. I was trying to understand. We had totally different motives.

This one was somewhat damaged at a certain point and I have never bothered to correct it.

So, I was already surpassing Schuon in my skill and execution after doing a few literal copies of his works. So much for his claim to be the

best painter in the world. I am not the best either, but I was better than he. I then set about to master his subject matter and launch forth on my own. Once I began to actually understand what his subject matter really was about, my whole view of Schuon changed and it led to my abandoning his cult. I went about studying his work systematically and with his approval and commentary. I spend many hours and visits to his house studying his works the basement and went to all his disciples houses and studied his original works there too. I saw his drawings and was given access to all his available works and many photographic sources. I even did two painted Teepees for cult members in addition to many Icons framed and decorated. Perhaps something I wrote in my Account of 1991 can sum up how I came to see the basic theses Schuon's artwork. This was written just months after I left the cult, so it is very fresh and accurate to the time .

“The paintings of Schuon and Sharlyn Romaine - and it must be remembered that they are suggested, organized and corrected by Schuon when they paint in the sexual posture I have described – the paintings of the two of them are psycho-spiritual narcissistic fantasies of their own divinity. They have made all the world's religions and all the world's great art a kind of theater wherein they play out the drama of their egos. In this theater of masks which Schuon has created, Sharlyn Romaine is the Buffalo Cow woman bringing the sacred pipe and Schuon is the Great Indian chief who receives it; or Schuon is the Christ-child and Sharlyn Romaine is the Blessed Virgin; or Schuon is a cute little lion cub laying at the feet of Sharlyn Romaine impersonating the female Hindu saint Lalla; or again Schuon is the sacred letter Om floating above the spread-legged Lalla- Sharlyn Romaine; or again Schuon is Shiva as a swan who floats across the waters to a naked Goddess- Sharlyn Romaine, naked on the shore. Likewise, in the Primordial

Gatherings, Sharlyn Romaine is the star, the Warriress, the Bringer of the sacred pipe; and in other dances Sharlyn Romaine plays the part of a Hindu goddess or a South American Princess with a headdress made up of bird feathers. Or again, a Balinese or Hindu temple prostitute. Maude Murray said that in these 3rd level Primordial Gatherings that Sharlyn Romaine's love of Schuon "pours from every pore of her naked body." But one must ask, what strange perversion is this that requires Schuon to make his sexual interests public, which needs an audience? Even when Sharlyn Romaine paints her pictures with Schuon lying on her naked thigh looking at her private parts, Maude Murray must be a witness. Maude Murray would say that she did not feel married to Schuon, she felt like a witness. But why does Schuon need a witness? Catherine Perry observed that Schuon needs constant adulation and must constantly don new masks because there is a crying insecurity and emptiness in the core of the man."

The paintings of Schuon are sexual theatre and are about parading Schuon's particular delusions to a constrained and obedient public, namely the cult, who were all trained to receive the "blessing" of his insanities, hanging them up in their houses. I was conscripted to paint Virgins that were clothed to substitute for the rather perverse Icons followers actually had up when "profane" people came to visit. The logical result of Schuon's obsession with Platonic Archetypes was this sexual or self-pleasuring theatre where he played out sexico-mythological fantasies ad nauseum. The production of these works went on day after day in a sort of hot house atmosphere of self-promotion, art shows held for cult members and primordial gatherings held as live demonstrations of what the art was about. Schuon justified his Icons of the Virgin and of himself

in writings. Romaine was made to write this explanation of Schuon's art, Schuon himself supplying the words'. Romaine wrote:

“For centuries the Blessed Virgin has been saving souls and at this moment she offers us her most precious gift by giving us her body in a powerfully direct way. Beginning with the adoption of our Shaykh on the voyage to Morocco in 1965, the blessed Virgin has chosen a most intimate way of revealing herself. These Icons are an exact replication of her message given to the Shaykh on the ship, both in standing and in kneeling and they have been given to us.”

Schuon claimed that as a result of this 1965 vision that “this had as its immediate result the almost irresistible urge to be naked like her little child; from this event onwards I went naked as much as possible, indeed, most of the time...” This rather crazy vision of his is where the “icons” and the “primordial gatherings” come from. It was indeed the center of the cult and of all that he had to teach. Romaine, on Schuon's insistence is here saying that both Schuon's body and his Icons be worshiped as direct manifestation of the 'divine'. Dissent from this delusional fantasy was never permitted and quickly punished in the cult. His paintings were all propaganda images about the myth of his—and her--- holiness, when neither of them we even slightly holy in fact. We were witnessing a sexual theatre shared between Romaine, Schuon and the nude Virgin Mary/ Devadassis¹⁵⁰⁰ who wanted to give Schuon her own sexuality. I was aghast at what I had got involved in and ashamed.

I won't tell the whole story of Schuon's bizarre antics here. Here I

¹⁵⁰⁰ I define this concept earlier in the chapter called “Metaphysical Misogyny and Nature Hatred in Tantra, Buddhism and the Major Religions”

just wish to show the environment in which I was learning about his ideas and art. I was studying painting with him as all this become known. When I started these paintings I had no idea what I was getting involved in. It took me two years to figure it out. The reader can see the progression of my paintings through Schuon's style and then beyond it. You can see in this progression the result of Schuon's "teachings", though really he was a pretty bad teacher. I began to grasp slowly that my idealized version of who Schuon was an utter figment of my imagination largely created in me by Huston Smith, my friend Scott and my misreading of Schuon's books, which I did not then understand.. But I did not grasp this right away. It took time to learn who he really was and what and how the cult functioned.

About a year into the cult and I knew on a deep level all of it was a fraud, but did not yet have definitive proof. That is when Maude came along and insisted she would teach me all that Schuon could not teach me because of his age. I wanted to know what she had to teach, so I submitted to her. The only way to get close to Schuon was through his wives. This was obvious. I got to know them all pretty well. Maude told me I was chosen by her and by God to be taught all about him. I was not chosen for this of course, I was merely in the wrong place at the wrong time. I stayed on another year because of her, finding out more and more every day. I knew I was in a cult, but did not yet admit it to myself in a complete way. I knew it was a huge mistake, and I was afraid. But I was always a curious fellow and wished to know what I did not know. I soon learned that there was a lot to be afraid of and this was indeed dangerous group. As time went on, I did what I could to question Maude's actions, insofar as I could do so without incurring the ire that was quite visibly visited on anyone who questioned the master too deeply. I loved Maude, despite all her weaknesses, and wanted to try to get her out. The whole thing became a kind of chess game and the more I played the more I learned what a scurrilous character and a fraud

Schuon and his inner circle really were.

Below is the progression of most of the icons I did with Schuon. As I said the first Icon I did was a gift for Schuon of my copy of the Russian Icon the Virgin of Vladimir, below on the left. I have discussed this already, but there are a few other things to be said. Huston Smith had recommended me into the cult. I went to see Schuon and then moved there a few months later. I brought it to him from home in California .. I showed it to him and he thanked me. But he said I made a mistake, and scolded me for “imitating the accidents” and asked me to take these mistakes out. Actually it is a good idea to imitate accidents. Everything that exists is an ‘accident’ of some kind. We are physical beings and accident is what we are made of. So the second one is the repainted icon.

When some time had passed he wanted me to redo it blue and so I did. So I did the third version, done on top of the 2nd Vladimir. This was done over for him in the following months, as per his directions of painting on a copy of the one I had done before, as Schuon did. I was complaint and painted this version on his request. As you see below



“Virgin Mary’ paintings done by me with Schuon’s advice or participation
1989-91j

He was very proud of this blue icon and called it the “Vladimirskyya”. You can see I made the virgin look like his virgin. He immediately sent it to his followers all over the world as an Icon to put on their wall for when “profane people” came around who were not supposed

to see his nudist icons. I was supposed to be proud of being used like this. But I wasn't. So the painting was dedicated to lying. This disturbed me and helped me see his ability to lie and promote lying. His first impulse was to use my work for lying to others. It was interesting to see him use me this way, and I had to suppress my misgiving about this. It could not be known I disapproved of what he did with my art. I began to question why I wanted to study painting with this man at all.

The forth Icon was based on a drawing he did for me on top of an copy of the third painting. He gave me explicit instructions to paint it as he dictated. He insisted I pull back the Virgin's veil and expose her breasts. So I did that. He did a drawing of exactly how to do this, and gave me the drawing. I remember he did a drawing on top of a copy of the painting. My house was full of copies of paintings, as I had by now become both a student of Schuon's and the cult framer. I was making many frames each week and making lots of photo copies when Schuon finished a painting. This gave me a tiny income. It was never about money in any case, I was trying to see what traditionalist painting might be, just as I had studied with a Byzantine iconographer and studied oriental carpets and art in earlier years. I knew more about painting than Schuon did and I tried to help them, but I saw Schuon was not able to learn from others, he had to be the Master of all.

By now I had been initiated into the "primordial dimension" which really was just a cult of nudity and eroticism. There was a special show of the work of Romaine and Schuon at Romaine's house¹⁵⁰¹ and I was led there by the Murray's who had me read the essays on sexuality and 'sacred nudity' he had written. I was initiated into the cult by Schuon's wife and

¹⁵⁰¹ She was then living near Dr. Mark Goren, a (partly homeopathic doctor, and member of the cult, , the poor man died of cancer in 2002), down Rt. 446, away from Inverness Farms Road. This is where I used to see Schuon and Romaine drive by in her clunky old Datsun, with Schuon looking so pretentious in the back seat, nose in the air. It was funny to see this wanna be king acting out a Charlie Chaplin part and incapable of understanding the humor of it.

the one who know more about him than they others.

I was involved with Maude by now who was teaching me all about Schuon personal history. In the fourth painting I am on my own, as I was already having serious doubts about him. The forth was my own invention, "the Virgin of the Sea", with a twilight colored veil and which does not occur in his work. Take away the symbolic halos and it is a portrait of a woman against the sea with a baby and full of romance. The romance is one that involves nature and a woman who inspires love. Yes, it has the cartoonish quality of Schuon's works. I would never do anything like it again, but it might be the best of the ones I did for him. It is headed back to life and reality, even though it is not there yet. The child could be just an ordinary child, a far greater fact than any of the gods, who are made to believe.



I was already beyond Schuon at this point and making the Virgin a part of a real landscape and rejecting Iconism. I was expressing space, which was really in violation of his aesthetic. I was headed for rejecting symbolic and traditional art in general. I had already rejected it long ago, but here was exploring the dead end of symbolist art.

The last image is of Maude Murray. Schuon always painted himself as the Christ Child, a fact that, once I learned of it, always repulsed me. I took the Christ child out and show a woman,-- an

idealized Maude-- granting mercy in a way that Schuon was never capable of. I felt very sorry for Maude and meant this image to comfort her, who Schuon had been mercilessly torturing for months when I did this work. I wanted to show her as she wished herself to be, or rather as I wished her to be, a woman of great love who gives to others. I was idealizing her, as I knew, but the intent was to supply for her what Schuon had denied her. It failed to do that I know, as she suffered horribly from Schuon after I left the cult. I had used Schuon's own method to subject him to analysis in the end, making a painting that was about trying to comfort a woman, the very woman he was intent on destroying to inflate his own delusional ego. I was also hiding my own personal feelings behind grandiose images. He hid his personal delusions in his art as a means of aggrandizing himself. I reversed this and used the personal as means of bringing him into question. I was using his own means and methods to undermine his art. Meanwhile the whole structure of mythical art was collapsing around me, and I would never again do another mythical drawing or painting. I saw through the pretence of symbolist and spiritual art and gave it up for ever.

I finally had painted myself right out of Schuon's aesthetic. It only took me maybe 8 paintings to go beyond him and reject his aesthetic. Indeed I rejected the whole vision he had of the universe, and I did so due to the fact that I learned concretely what he had to teach. He was a liar and a fraud and his art merely an extension of an enormous ego and a mental illness. My study with him had shown me that the essence of his work was really an erotic imposture, using the Virgin image as a way of sexual/spiritual self-promotion. It repulsed me the more I learned about who he was and what he was really about. I studied his work more than anyone has, and I know what I am saying.

My study of art with him was not merely an academic study, but by actually studying painting with him and seeing how shallow and psychological his art really was, I saw through the whole cult. When I left

the cult I burned several of the paintings I did with him in disgust. I only have photos of them. His decadent symbolist virgin really ends up being a formula of erotic art. Though I have no objections to nudity or erotic art, it was not the eroticism I objected to. I disliked the implicit delusion of grandeur in Schuon's art and found it repulsive. I finally rejected his art because I rejected Schuon himself as an artist motivated by a pathology.

One could say that Van Gogh had a pathology, which is true, but in Vincent's case, the result was to increase our understanding of nature and being human on earth. Vincent was a decent man, however imperfect, and one loves him precisely because he is so human. He was so intelligent, so inclined to identify with others, so wishing to help the poor or other artists, so much the man who would not paint merely to please the powerful.¹⁵⁰² I did not feel this with Schuon. He hid everything about himself that was human and fallible. The deeper I went into his art the more empty I found it. His was a cold, decadent vision of paranoid grandeur. I disliked it and realized at last what a terrible mistake I had made to study with him. But I had to know and studying art with him was one of the best ways to get to really know who he was--- and to come to the end of Symbolist art, a course I had pursued since my studies in Jung, Hirschman and Coomaraswamy. My painting was already founded deeply in realism and lots of Plein air work I did in Point Reyes in

¹⁵⁰² It is useful to compare a really repulsive panderer to power like Francois Gerard to Vincent Van Gogh. Vincent was a realist who was devoted to social justice. Gerard did a lot of very fawning paintings for the ultra-rich. He liked to paint Napoleon and of the far right Bourbon Kings of the "restoration" period. He painted as if the French revolution never happened and as if Napoleon had not betrayed the revolution. In contrast there is David's portrait of Marat or Girodet's portrait of the Jean Baptiste Belly, a represented to the recently freed state of Haiti. These last two are real steps forward in art history. Gerard's works are steps back into theofascist decadence, as are Schuon's virgins as are Warhol's cult of celebrity or Jeff Koons and Damien Hirst's attempts to glorify the corporate wealthy in today's art world. Vincent opens up into human reality and these others block that path and open only into empty power and money. The basis of this is in Courbet, the French realists and the Victorian realists. Monarchist art becomes Symbolist art and then corporate art in the 20th century and abstract art takes up the mantle of the old history painting, now become utterly meaningless. Ingres leads to Mondrian and Warhol

California

I realized at last that he was a bad teacher and what he had to teach me was not what I wished to know anything further about. I saw months before I left the cult that Schuon was a fraud and his paintings was a tissue of dreams and delusions. I was a better painter than he before I even met him. But by the time I left I was a better person too, without trying to be. It was the truth that interested me and not merely mythic lies.¹⁵⁰³ I stayed because of Maude, who I hoped to get out of the cult. When I left the cult at last, I soon returned to realism, though initially of a rather idealized sort. With a year of leaving the cult I had abandoned Schuon's and Coomaraswamy crack pot theories of art and had gone forward to do my own work. What I realized is that these men

¹⁵⁰³ Years before I had allowed myself to be influenced by Jack Hirschman's Marxism. I tried it on for size for a few weeks when I was studying with him daily in San Francisco. I studied with him for 6 months or so in 1979 and 80. I had done the same thing in my teens, due to seeing what the steel industry did to its workers. But I decided at least that that was an interesting but ultimately fruitless experiment. Enlightened socialism is one thing, as long as it does not become a tyranny, but Marxist Leninism quite another. Taking care of everyone is an obvious duty of any society, whereas favoring only the rich while the poor suffer is obviously unjust.

Jack was a better person than Schuon and I never utterly rejected Jack as a fraud the way I did Schuon. Indeed, Jack was accessible and human, whereas Schuon really had no friends and all his relationships were stunted and formal, dictated by his needs. He really did not know anyone, because only he mattered to himself. Those who he claimed to love, as he said, were just symbols of himself. I saw through Schuon pretty well and only stayed in the cult as long as I did out of care for Maude. The two men are similar in that both were radical outsiders who rejected much about the world that we live in. But though Jack is misguided in many ways, prone to excessive alcohol, he was a not a bad man. But Schuon had a criminal mind, remorseless and self-obsessive, able to lie on a whim and was totally into power and self-inflation. That is a very different thing Jack was not a psychopath. Prone to paranoid delusions, yes, but not really insane as Schuon was. In retrospect, I would never choose Schuon to be a mentor. Jack was a teacher in reality and taught me some hard things, many of them despite himself. They were phases I went through in a long education, though I still have good memories of Jack. What I went through because of Schuon was a trauma and a horrible one. To see so many people hurt and so many lies was profoundly disturbing. I learned what a pit of lies and delusions religion really is.

Besides my father the only other important models for me were my uncle Jack and more distantly and hesitantly, Chomsky. But my relation with Chomsky was never one of trust and though I like some of his ideas, I found him too much a cult leader personality to have much to do with him personally. The times I have had to do with him I found him harsh and cruel and not very likeable. He does not mind lying and his scholarship is questionable. If any of these men were father figures, I ultimately rejected them as fathers, though I learned a lot from each of them. I finally got free of them and learned to see with my own eyes as this book amply demonstrates.

were the last decadent expressions of the medieval, Hindu and canonical and theocratic view of art serving power. They are closer to the empty abstractions of corporate art than to realism. Corporate, Catholic and Hindu art are all about power. I rejected all that when I rejected Schuon, Guenon and their gangs. Just as I had once fallen for Hirschman's aesthetic ideas, I fell also for those of AKC and Schuon. But that was the end, I have not really accepted fully anyone's ideas of art except my own, and I have found those who I appreciate compared with those I doubt..

One of the first paintings I did after I left the cult was based on a photo I took of a woman I loved, wading in Merced Creek in Yosemite. It is a fairly ordinary nude, nothing great, but a work of one still learning. I wished to return to the ordinary world after an absence of some years. I did not belong in religion, that was clear, and rejected it finally. So that was the end of that. I had not given up art, just my delusions about it.

Perspective and space, which have always interested me were back. Life and light are back, and gone is all the nonsense about "Sacred Art" negating the actual in favor of the 'eternal'. I painted a real woman in a lovely real place. The hands could be better done and the figure itself is lacking in precision, but it is a realist work. The painting is a little idealized still, but at least I was on the track toward an art that is based in reality and science.

My experience of art with Schuon was bad in the end. It was disconcerting that he was so easy to surpass so quickly, even when doing things in his own domain. I had hoped for much more with him. Indeed, the whole exercise was a mistake and I wish I did not have to speak of it at all as it is embarrassing. But education is full of such blind alleys and mistakes and it is good to tell the truth about it, even if it is embarrassing. It was a scientific dead end, as it were, and one dusts oneself off and starts experimenting again,

My detour into the spiritual in art was a disaster and I was glad to leave it, much the wiser perhaps for having made such a huge mistake. I

learned that the spiritual in art is about projection, especially projection of emotion. Sacred art projects feeling states, and ones that are useful to a reigning priesthood. This is quite obvious in both Buddha's and Crucifixions, where quietude and pity are excited. Sacred art is mythic fiction and propaganda and cannot be made by anyone who is interested in the actual reality of our lives and our world. I learned how Schuon was really just making erotic advertisements of his own divinity. Once I saw that with certainty I ceased to be his student and became his critic. Now I scarcely think he is worth too much more effort at criticism. He cannot be taken seriously.

I was a great lover of Da Vinci in my teens and still am. Leonardo has still not been surpassed in the history of art. I agree with Leonardo that art should try to approach science and that art is science in an important way. Art must stay close to experience and inquiry into nature and study nature endlessly. Leonardo thought that art or painting goes beyond philosophy because it shows you the things themselves and not just the ideas about things. This is true. Painting goes beyond poetry in this respect too. Poetry can only evoke, while painting can show directly. Painting can be objective whereas little poetry leaves the subjective.

I learned to my surprise that so called "spiritual art" and modernism are really quite close. Yet, while there is beauty in sacred art, it is exploited beauty. So much modern art is utterly empty of objective beauty,, nature, inquiry and real science. Caspar David Frederick, Whistler, the Symbolist movement, Kandinsky's and Picasso's abstractions had a disastrous effect on art. You can already see this in Roger Fry's rather obtuse 1917 statement

So long as representation was regarded as the end of art, the skill of the artist and his proficiency in this particular form of representation was regarded with admiration..... With the new

indifference to representation we have become much less interested in skill and not at all interested in knowledge.”¹⁵⁰⁴

. This is an admission of art being consigned—‘suicided’--- to empty and mindless decoration. Fry wants an art that is stupid and poorly done. Art, as Leonardo showed, is about knowledge and skill. Why anyone would be proud of killing art in this way is not that hard to understand, however. Bad boy artists, so much like what the corporate CEOs wanted to see themselves as, were ‘mavericks’ and mavericks were good for gallery profits. Selling poorly done inanities for excessive prices was the big ‘revolution’ in modern art. “Nonobjective art” was great for corporations, whose whole existence was premised on the subjective delusion of corporate personhood. Just as sacred art was erected on the premise of mythic subjectivity, corporate art is based on mythic abstractions too. I well understand that the rich would want just such an impotent art as this, shorn of all critical insight and inquiry, beauty and social content. It has been said, rightly I think, that a great deal of modern art is really just picking over the corpse of the death of painting. Actually painting is not dead at all, it is the art world of the rich in New York and elsewhere that is the corpse, killed by its own greed and emptiness. There are many artists who have nothing to do with these corporate cadavers and are still developing the pursuit of skill and knowledge. What we need is a thorough criticism of why corporate art failed. Indeed, toward this end I have made the following list. The characteristics of Corporate art are as follows

1. Art as objective inquiry or knowledge is largely banished, no using of art to seek knowledge or truth, it must be subjective, deal with ‘systems’, or advertising icons and be fashionable and

¹⁵⁰⁴ Quoted in Lambourne, Lionel, Victorian Painting, Phaidon Press, London 1999. Page 502

decorative. Art should only be about irony, clever misdirection, infantile emptiness or things as commodities. The subjective or incidental “marks” of the personality of the artist are supposed to be the primary content of art, such that art becomes more and more an ego theatre or “performance” in an “installation” or gallery space.

2.Skill and technical proficiency are discouraged or shunned, and infantile, abstract imagery rules, the more insane, atavistic, visceral or childish, the better.

3.No depth, emotional or intellectual. Thoughtful meditation is forbidden, Art must be empty or stupid. This means that content, storytelling, factual recording of the world, social realism, or natural history and representation are banished. Art must be meaningless, preferably about itself or some aspect of the artists accidental personality. Or it must be abstract and intellectual but again without real content, empty, corporate or metaphysical.

5. Beauty is disallowed, , rejected things, shocking stuff, feces, guts, found objects, childishness, ugliness and sickness are preferred. The banishment of beauty and knowledge is a dogma in “modern” that is, Corporate art.

6. Nothing “beyond the paint” Art must be about itself and its own materials. Not about life, the past, things , people, the universe or actuality. Cult of the Brushstroke, personality, cult of materials, art is not about anything “beyond the paint”¹⁵⁰⁵.

¹⁵⁰⁵ Van Gogh often used the expression “beyond the paint” for a good painting in his letters. He describes Van Goyen and Vermeer in this phrase, in letter 539. In Letter Vincent notes that Gericault and Delacroix often go ‘beyond the paint’, whereas Bourgeureau does not. In letter 439 for instance, footnote 3 quotes a contemporary periodical:

“when the colours in them do not appear as pigments, but the substance of them vanishes and the impression is that of life or reality, in other words when the physical media do not

In short, everything that I love about art is forbidden in corporate art. I have never wanted anything to do with these aspects of what is called “art”. Brushstrokes matter very little to me. I do not paint to make marks, but make marks in order to show what is beyond the paint. Style is an accident of making art, not its end or object. Writers or artists who strive after the “stylistic” are really just making self-aggrandizing fashion poses. Style is just another name for showing off, as Mozart well knew, as so he wisely denied having a “style” Those who strain after style usually have little to say. Japanese and Chinese art developed a very effete cult of the brushstroke too, which is slightly different, but this was really only of value mostly to esteemed gentleman connoisseurs. Using paint to create personality (Cezanne, Picasso) or suppressing paint to deny personality (Ingres) are both beside the point. I don’t think Rembrandt was trying to make exciting brushstrokes, he was trying to make something “beyond the paint”, as was Ingres or Delacroix. As with Mozart it is what the music or art says that matters, however subtle this might be. This true of Van Gogh too, who used elaborate brushstrokes in this later work as a kind of therapy, a way to describe the world and nature, “beyond the paint” as he said on numerous occasions. Even in Rembrandt’s and Van Gogh’s experiments with juicy or resonant paint and rhythmical strokes there is method used to evoke what the paint is not.¹⁵⁰⁶

Art is the inquiry into reality, a kind of science, which seeks

stand between the work of art and the viewer, but the mind of the creating artist speaks *directly* to that of the viewer. Then painters say that a painting is ‘beyond the paint’

Vincent notes further that in his own work he is pleased when “But if one steps back a little it’s indeed beyond the paint — and then there’s air around it and a restrained undulating light falls on it. At the same time, the least little lick of color with which one might glaze it is telling.” This is indeed a magic that Da Vinci and others understood well and it is complexly foreign to the so called “modernists” who want paintings to be nothing but paint, as if they were house painters or ad men..

¹⁵⁰⁶ Some late experiments of elaborate brush strokes used almost as music notation, evoke animal style in art more than they do self-conscious art that is playing with paint. They have more in common with Celtic knots, Viking Braids or oriental carpets than with art about art.

knowledge of the world by means of skill and exact craftsmanship, It involves knowing at its deepest and love of nature. Art must have a devotion to truth and beauty in the non-Platonic sense of accuracy to nature and fidelity to how things really are.. This is why I reject the art world as preached by art critics and the art magazines (Art Forum, Art in America etc.) and most art schools utterly .

The impoverished nature of corporate art or modern art is largely due to corporate influences. The transfer of power from the Church and aristocracy to the corporation has a similar, I would say, historically determined, corrosive effect on art. In both cases art is made into a lap dog, a sort of dancing bear or slave, to be demeaned and used for the masters pleasures. Indeed, the devotion to the abstract is largely an effort to render art in service of the abstract fiction of corporate personhood. Kandinsky, Mondrian, Arp, Duchamp, Malevich, Newman, Pollack, Rothko, Reinhardt, Le Witt, all had spiritual pretensions in their art. These fictions serve the ideology of abstraction, which itself is transcendental pretense meant to keep those on top where they are. These fictions of corporate personhood is as much make believe and the Christ or God idea were. Abstract fictions are delusional and self-referring, a side effect of language. Corporations seized on such art as talismans of their own self-referential culture as symbols of power. One can see this in public sculpture as well, as in this transcendent and rather art Deco sculpture in Cleveland, which I photographed as they were ripping down another office tower behind it. The idealism of the 1960's (evoking the 1930s and 40s) which has so much in it that was religious and transcendentalist is here contrasted with the firing of the American work force and the sending of jobs overseas to be done by nearly slave labor, just so CEOs can make unjust amount of money that they do not need. It is called the "Fountain of Eternal Life". So this war memorial sculpture, rising out of the flames of war into "eternity", is a bit of a disappointment now, when America is being destroyed by the ultra-

rich who only care about themselves and want to destroy unions and soak the middle classes. Patriot civil religion is contrasted with the fact of national self-destruction.



Marshall Fredericks' Sculpture (1964) and destroyed building in
downtown Cleveland

Photo by author, 2011.

Meaningless abstractions filled the vast vestibules of corporate skyscrapers with adequate talismans of nothing. Minimalist abstractions are non-controversial advertisements for money makers. The passage from Coomaraswamy who was a symbolist and traditionalist, to the abstract art of Kandinsky and Ad Reinhardt is seamless. Reinhardt was a deep reader of Coomaraswamy and a friend of Tom Merton and did his

corporate abstractions out of readings in that ideology.¹⁵⁰⁷ Reinhardt produced pictures--- his Black paintings especially--- that were nearly text book examples of Coomaraswamy's ideas, creating a sort of "via negativa" as Coomaraswamy would have called it. The "neti neti" "not this not that", Lipsey calls it quoting the pretensions of Advaita Vedanta and Jnana Yoga's life denying notions of apophatic spirituality. This ridiculous reduction of art of nothing ends in creating the ideal art of corporate America. Reinhardt, Warhol, Duchamp and Schuon meet in an uneasy advancing retreat of art into delusions so deep that they express the dead end of what art in the 20th century became.

Resistance to this is important. Art needs to identify with science and inquiry, beauty, fact, and reality. It needs to resist idealization and corporate abstraction and explore things as they are, refusing the dogmas of the art schools and magazines like Art Forum or the misnamed Art in America most of which contains little or nothing of the good artwork being done in America or around the world. They picture the emptiness of corporate art exclusively.

I suffered the "death of art" myself in art school and after in pursuit of the spiritual and in modern art.¹⁵⁰⁸ They both collapsed. My education in art was an example of the failure of both 'modernism' and the spiritual in art. The dead end of both had to be gotten beyond, if I was to grow and art was to survive. I realized eventually that there was a long

¹⁵⁰⁷ This is discussed in Lipsey's An Art of our Time, pages 329-333. Reinhardt "like Coomaraswamy—and probably modeled on him---also recognized the illuminating analogies to Eastern thought in Western Religious authors, particularly the late medieval mystics".

¹⁵⁰⁸ An art Critic who typifies both modernism and the "post art" art is Donald Kuspit who pushes the "spiritual in art" with essays on Kandinsky and various modern artists who also explore a kind of resurgent reaction against modernism, which dovetails nicely with corporate art in certain ways. Kuspit's book the End of Art is an example of this tendency and so is his advocacy of painters like Joseph Raffael and Anil Reve, who do neo-Buddhist or Hindu/abstract works. Critics have way too much power in modern art and create fictions like priests and sustain delusions by fierce rhetoric, almost medieval in its devotion to ideology. In his early work Kuspit set up himself as the meaning of contemporary art, and this narcissism seems to have spilled over into a devotion to irrational and romantic abstraction.

standing artery in art that might be the aorta and this was realism, beginning with Da Vinci. So with these general comments about how I now think about art in mind, I will conclude about my experience learning to paint in Schuon's manner..

Schuon's first paintings were badly done orientalist nudes of big breasted females carrying pots on their heads. His work never really left the domain of exotic and erotic kitsch. Schuon told me one of his favorite painters was Ferdinand Hodler, a Swiss painter of a century ago, along with Gauguin and Roerich, all Symbolists.¹⁵⁰⁹ You can see the basic aesthetic ideas of Guenon and Schuon on art in Hodler's work. There is a flat space, implicit notions of hierarchy, symmetry and an



Here is one of Roerich paintings, very similar to Schuon's

¹⁵⁰⁹

He also liked Nicholas Roerich: who was another follower of Blavatsky as was Guenon and Coomaraswamy at one time. Roerich dreamed of setting himself up as the leader of a new Asian state of Shambhala, along with the Penchen Lama, who together would rule central Asia as a sort of collectivist religious state and theocracy. His absurd dream failed. Roerich appears to be a sort of communist theofascist, recalling Alexander Dugin in some ways, but he seems to have megalomaniac streak rather like Schuon. See Andrei Znamenski's Red Shambhala.

attempt to create a sort of icon. Hodler was a Symbolist and both Guenon and Schuon tend this way too. The most interesting paintings by Holder are his landscapes and his remarkable series of paintings of his dying love Valentine Godé-Darel. But these would not have interested either Guenon or Schuon. Such humanistic themes were anathema to them. Schuon's taste was really symbolist and decadent. His Virgin Mary paintings are meant to be erotic, porno-icons. He told me he wanted to use sex to attract viewers and I was to do the same thing in my paintings. For Schuon the erotic and the spiritual were in many ways the same feeling. For Schuon the Yoni was the ultimate symbol of a deluded metaphysic, not the source of human life and evolution, as it actually is in reality, as Courbet pictures it. Schuon did not like children and did not want his wives to have any. None of them did.



In the painting by Hodler above you can see the basic pose of Schuon's nude virgin which he virtually copied from Hodler. ¹⁵¹⁰ In Holdler's case

¹⁵¹⁰ Dominique Devie claims to belong to a group and an unknown person in that group did similar paintings to those of Schuon. I do not know who this person is or anything about how they came to be done. I presume they are not exact copies, but loose interpretations. You can see them on Devie's website. But you have to sign up to look. He has recently made this website secretive and wants to hide what he is doing.

there is also the tendency to paint nude children or young women, which is also the case in Schuon's painting and to a lesser degree Gauguin, though Hodler's paintings are much less obsessive and grandiose. While there are definite hints of an infantile narcissism in Hodler, there is more of a tendency to the infantile in Schuon—a cult of "naïveté". Holder paints a very young boy staring up at gown up female angels and other images of this kind, which suggest a certain immaturity or infantile outlook. The child prophet learning his destiny from the divine angels. This is also to be found in Schuon's art work, as well as his cartoons or doodles, which have never been published.



Schuon saw himself as the Christ child and painted himself in various sexual liaisons with the Virgin Mary. In Schuon's art the virgin is

The images were under the title

<http://cret.blogspot.com/album/schuonneries/page1/>

a sort of divine prostitute who gives herself to Schuon like a Fin de Siecle Salome, dancing the dance of many veils. Indeed Schuon's sexual mentality is really formed in decadent late 19th century Symbolist movement that his father belonged to. The antecedents to Schuon's Virgins can be found in the steamy orientalist eroticism of Ingres, Gerome, Khnopff, John Lewis, Bonnat, Eduardo Debat Ponsan, Gustav Moreau, Couvarribias and others. This painting by Gaston Bussière (1862-1928), a French symbolist, orientalist work, is typical of the genre that influenced Schuon. There are thousands of such paintings and photos and some of these definitely influenced Schuon. I include this one almost at random, as there are so many other choices. Schuon probably would have thought this pose a little silly, but it has feature of his preferences.

He also liked Harem Orientalism and collected nude or seminude pictures of Balinese temple dancers. He saw women in misogynistic terms of late 19th century orientalism.



He told me he also liked the rather vampy vixens of Fernand Khnopff. He did not single out this one in particular, but Knopff's work does have echoes in Schuon's work. The image below by Knopff shows various idealizations of the female figure. They are more glowing and fin de siècle than Schuon, but like Schuon's Virgins these reduce women to otherworldly symbols and show them as gates to an imagery world. and The image of the woman with many breasts would be absurd to Schuon, of course, but it is not atypical of a Hindu/Greek mythos of the idea of femininity deformed by ideology and symbolism. He did not like images of women as mother's. They had to be lovers and objects of sexual attraction.



Schuon's Virgins are really temple prostitutes, combining Schuon's sexual and symbolist dreams with the standardized procedure of Russian

icons and Hindu temple sculpture.¹⁵¹¹ He called these ‘visions’ but I began to see that Schuon’s ‘visions’ were really just his erotic imagination running away with him. He saw things in his imagination and then made them out to others as if they were real. There is no trick to this, it is a matter of his conning others about what really happens to everyone. Schuon tried to turn his daydreams into first principles and means to control others. The Pre-Raphaelite impulse was fired by a decadent erotic form of medievalism in quotation. In short he was making religio-pornographic icons of a Romantic and symbolist tendency.

His art is really an extension of Orientalist and Symbolist concerns, therefore. In this he is very close to modernist abstract art form Kandinsky to Mondrian, both of whom he despised. His icons are not that different than Piet Mondrian’s attempt to show his version of Blavatsky’s theosophical goddess. In Schuon, as in Piet Mondrian it is hatred of actuality that is in triumph, the mystical is romantically attached to negation of the actual. “The artist must be able to abolish tragic expression” Mondrian wrote, .. “the artist sees the tragic to such a degree that he is compelled to express the non-tragic”.¹⁵¹² This escapist

¹⁵¹¹ Schuon’s advice as a painting teacher was pretty bad and I grew out of and beyond his teachings quickly. He told me he was “the greatest painter in the world”. But I quickly learned that he really didn’t know much about painting. His technical knowledge was pitiful, as was Sharlyn Romaine’s, who painted with him, in a bizarre way. (I have described elsewhere, she was nude while painting and he contemplated her “yoni”.) I doubt many of his paintings will last long as he did many of them in oils on paper. They would have me make copy machine copies for them. The works I copied were “Virgins” or Schuon’s nude Icons of himself. They would paste copies of paintings they had already done on a sticky board and paint on the copy paper in oils. This a very bad way to do it and I objected and explained why, but they did not care. Schuon said that the apocalypse was coming and they did not have time to do it properly, since there was not much time and they needed to do as many as possible. I saw in the end that I was a better painter than Schuon. He was technically incompetent, obsessed with onanistic and grandiose fantasies his art was psychologically disturbed, even if it occasionally reached a certain pornographic beauty of a symbolist and pseudo-Iconic sort. What he was doing was really erotic art of a sort and not that well done. He was trying to create a deliberate erotic mystique. This is really what his “Plenary Esoterism” was all about. I was painting to understand reality, not to make delusional enticements into a bogus system of metaphysics. Schuon was not a painter but a propagandist and an interior decorator.

¹⁵¹² Quoted in Lipsey, Roger An Art of Our Own, Shambhala 1988 pg 74 Lipsey worked closely with Rama Coomaraswamy on the books Lipsey put together about Rama’s father Ananda.

leap out of the “world” and into the imaginary and ‘transcendent’ is ubiquitous in symbolist art and religion. Like Schuon, Mondrian was after an otherworldly escape into a subjective ideal. He banished all objective reference from his work. Art becomes an expression of the purely ‘inward’, and the inward is the ultimate power, the ultimate esoteric truth, the negation of life in abstract ideology. Actually, his rhetoric aside, his paintings express nothing at all. Out of this vacuous denial of reality he creates top down social hierarchy. Like Schuon Mondrian is a Platonist, and wants a top down system of society, ruled according to subjective idealization, not too different from Heidegger. This is symbolist hatred of the actual brought to a life denying conclusion, which prefigures the corporate art of Barnett Newman, the Minimalists, Anne Truitt and Rothko, which also imply a sort of worship of the fictional idea of the existence denying, mystical void, the Via Negativa. Nonsense, of course, like Mondrian and empty of meaning and so perfect for corporate lobbies of skyscrapers, or corporate museums, celebrating the cult of the new and emptiness of the Corporate Person, the new god of the world. Prior to getting to this vacuous conclusion, Mondrian did his idealized nudes. They are echoes of Schuon’s nudes as well as Ayn Rand’s deification of the impersonal “individual” as you can see:

Lipsey promoted Schuon’s ideology in this book, (pg, 462). By showing the tacit similarity to high modernist art to spiritual art of China, Japan, India and medieval icons he who the service of art to power. I am arguing against the thrust of Lipsey ideas and thus against the ideology of the service of art to power via “spirituality”, which really is a sort of code word for justify social control, be it corporate or religious. .



Piet Mondrian. Evolution.

Like Schuon's "virgins" these are theosophical Icons, worthy of Ayn Rand novels. Mondrian wanted an "end of art", and he wanted an artist who is "free from art". Like Duchamp he is not really an artist, but an ideologue who's sometimes made objects. He and Duchamp's wanted to destroy art, and did so in their own lives, if not in fact, by reducing art to nonentity and childish jokes. This 'end of art' is purely make believe, of course. It merely ended for these purveyors of mystical make believe. He and Duchamp jumped off the end of the pier of art and that is a good thing for art as they were not really artists anyway. No reason to pay them much mind. Indeed the current art world is as bankrupt as the current political world.

I recently saw a show(2018), at CMA, of Georgia O'Keefe's works such as her lovely Ram Skull with the mountains and the Sunflower which is far better in person than in reproduction. Distracting and even overwhelming the lovely art was a largely irrelevant show put up alongside her beautiful paintings about the clothes she wore, mostly black

suits, very minimal and empty, even puritanical. The show largely pictured her as an empty headed clothes horse, whose only concern was not painting but fashion. Her painting and clothes are separate things and belong in different space, It was totally distracting. Next to this and connected to it by museum advertising, was a show about Catherine's De Medici's Valois tapestries, as if a 20th century nature artist and a 16th century Queen of France were somehow comparable. They are totally different people from different cultures, and their differences go far beyond both being women. The 6 tapestries were extremely well crafted textiles and my daughter and I discussed whether what they depicted was art. She quoted Issa's Haiku, "writing shit about new snow, for the rich, is not art". The show was not really about the excellent craft of the workers on the tapestries, but sought to glorify the monarchist wealth of the Valois family and their history, as if that mattered. In these two connected shows we can see what is wrong with so much modern art: the reduction of fine art to empty fashion and the reduction of art to the whims and fancies of the ultra rich

The Valois family is largely what gave us the French kings who themselves created so much injustice they brought on the French Revolution. Why current museums need to extol the empty fashion world and the monarchist world of the ultra rich is the real question. It is clear that the money structure of museums makes them subservient to the rich, and this is what harms the art not just of local cultures, but world wide.

Mondrian wanted an art devoted utterly to totalistic delusions, art in service of the spiritual. He says in one of his last writings that "if we cannot free ourselves, we can free our vision" The "vision" is freed of reality and delusion is in triumph, reality itself is denied and in its place is subjective fiction. The metaphysical fiction of 'balance' now made into a totalistic world view that is ultimately sympathetic to corporate capital

and the monolithic and minimalist corporate individual who is his own law. In short these images are prototypes for the fiction of the ‘corporate person’. Not too different than Ayn Rand. Mondrian’s “vision” is really just Platonic Blavatskian metaphysics restated in terms that could well have been uttered by Schuon or Guenon . The art these men all wanted was a decadent dead end, a repudiation of our world and what actually matters in it. ¹⁵¹³ O’Keefe is a different story. Largely she is a nature painter and a good one.

The painting of Gauguin and Schuon goes back to the idealistic art of monarchist theocracy, and looks forward to the empty abstraction of corporate art. When one compares De Hooch, Millet, Ilsted, Clausen, Hammershoi, Van Gogh or Millais to Schuon’s rather quickly done and very paltry efforts it is hard to take him seriously as an artist. Schuon seeks to turn Russian icons into erotic self-referring propaganda for his own esoteric and self-aggrandizing cult and ideology. This is closer to Marxist Icons than to art. His self-portraits are diagrams of the Grand Pooh Bah. Indeed, Schuon’s Primordial Gatherings were really just 19th century sex fantasies combined with Schuon’s peculiar notions of his own divinity with Native American and Hindu imagery. He had a lot of “visions” and they were invariably self-serving fantasies, as are all such “visions”.

William James idea that religion must serve the individual fantasy is made concrete in Schuon’s art and symbolist and abstract art in general. The bankruptcy of the Jamesean idea is manifest in Schuon and in

¹⁵¹³ A recent artist who typifies the trajectory of the Symbolist movement and Blavatskian metaphysics is Thomas Lyon Mills, who for many years now has been rummaging around the Roman Catacombs doing paintings which seek to resurrect Byzantine and Medieval ghosts, gods and dreams in the dust and detritus of tombs for the dead under Rome. His is an art of the dead, as it were, a religious art, utterly devoted to fiction and the romantic vision of dream worlds that never existed but keep being asserted as if they did. I once thought in similar ways, but long since have given all that up. A lot of modernist or post-modernist art is highly subjective and eschews reality and beauty in favor of vague feeling and ambiguous projection verging on the meaninglessness or the fictional. It is an art of the ‘twilight zone’.

corporate art. This is why I reject both James, Corporate art and Traditionalist aesthetics. Reality is not fantasy, and one must be clear about that. This is not to say that dreams and fantasy cannot be entertaining or even necessary in some cases. But good art is not fantasy, though it might employ it on occasion.

Like Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres , Schuon spent little time in the Orient, but tried to make himself master of what he really knew little about. Ingres was an “armchair orientalist” as was Schuon. This is not to say that Oriental art might not have a lot in common with Schuon’s ideology. It does. Tibetan Thankas, or Hindu temple sculpture do have a lot in common with Schuon and I dislike both for similar reasons. These are political and social propaganda, not really art. They both tend toward a transcendentalist and misogynistic excess and a fantasy world where reality is denied in favor of a make believe of archetypes or imaginary metaphysical “principles” or gods which are, in fact, subjective fictions. Just as the Temples of India served a Brahmin caste system, so modern art serves the corporate class and their fiction of the corporate “person”. In both cases it is an abstract ideology that is served by the art. The purpose of such art is to create the illusion of a social elite who exploit those who are falsely made lesser than the elite. Once one sees this completely, there is no turning back to it. It is an art of injustice and fiction.

Also like Ingres, Schuon had a shame about his paintings and feared its exposure in public. Should his images be made public was a topic in cult discussions. Most are still not public. Ingres kept his “Turkish Bath” painting secret for many years, for instance. Like Ingres’ painting of the “Turkish Bath” below, Schuon primordial gatherings had a strong voyeuristic element. There was also an implied harem composed of other men’s wives and thus an atmosphere of the exotic and forbidden. Schuon liked lesbianism and encouraged it with his wives for his viewing pleasure, as the famous and widely circulated photo by Schuon of Maude

Murray and Barbara Perry nude and embracing demonstrates rather well.¹⁵¹⁴ A similar voyeuristic enjoyment of a male fantasy of lesbianism is evidenced in Ingres' Turkish Bath.¹⁵¹⁵

¹⁵¹⁴ There is also a weird homoeroticism in Schuon's self-love, his creation of bizarre and onanistic and Iconic self-portraits as a prophet and his strange paintings of Native American men doing nude calisthenics. None of these are publically available, But I watched closely their creation and they were basically done as masturbatory fantasies by Schuon and his fourth wife Romaine. They would paint in the nude and he would stare at her sex as she painted images of his divinity. Divine onanistic images of the self-referring prophet at the end of time, perhaps, but actually just erotic images of cartoon prophet, images of metaphysical and mutual masturbation fantasies concocted between the two of them. They were then pandered as "icons" among followers, thus becoming part of the delusional mythos of the whole group.

¹⁵¹⁵ One of Ingres students was Edgar Degas. Degas was the best of the impressionists as far as drawing goes, as he studied with Ingres. But there are questions with Degas. His relationship to the young dancer he sculpted and drew raises questions about his misogyny. He could have helped this girl, who died as a prostitute. His strange involvement with slavery via his mother also raises questions. She was from a southern family that owned and sold slaves. Later Degas painted the Cotton Exchange of New Orleans, which was involved in exploiting freed African Americans in the Post-Civil War American South. Degas father and brother were involved in buying pro-Confederate bonds during the Civil War and depended on slavery and its later perpetuation under the new regimes set up after the south lost. There were ties between the families friendly to the Degas with the White League, a racist organization. This cast some doubt on the student of Ingres, who like Ingres appears to have been something of a far right reactionary.



Ingres¹⁵¹⁶ painting like Schuon's Primordial Gatherings “ highlight the phantasmagoric character of most male visions of the “harem” Schuon's paintings like those of Ingres are “mirage paintings”¹⁵¹⁷ just as the primordial Gatherings were mirage like fictions born of Schuon's delusions of grandeur and the slavish devotion of deluded followers. His deluded followers were all twitter about the profunity of these fictions,

¹⁵¹⁶ Ingres best works are not his paintings, but his portrait drawings, some of which are really extraordinary acts of skill and observation. There are few examples of drawings done so well and so fluidly, assuming they were not merely copied from a Camera Lucida, which is sometimes claimed though it has not been proven.

¹⁵¹⁷ See Orientalism: Delacroix to Klee, by Roger Benjamin, Art Gallery of New South Wales 1997

when actually all that was in evidence was a literary and erotic imagination gone crazy and haywire.

Schuon can be usefully compared to Duchamp's last work in Philadelphia, "Entant Donnes". In this work both terror and transcendental beauty are combined in an image of exactly what repelled me from Modern art and Schuon, as well as religion in general. In it you can see the door of the Inquisition and the beauty and lie of transcendental spirituality. This is a work that glorifies crime and torture in a beautiful and transcendental way. ¹⁵¹⁸ A woman lies on brutal sticks holding up a lantern of hope in the midst of her torture. Duchamp was a bad painter, and an equally bad sculptor and made up for it with absurd intellectual games that really are not art but elitist con-manship made up of clever puns. ¹⁵¹⁹ The notion that Duchamp made art democratic is not true. He made it empty of real content and made it corporate and elitist in a rarefied subjectivity that requires elite translation.

Duchamp echoes the Eucharist and the flaming excess of El Greco's need to burn reality down ¹⁵²⁰ with metaphysical delusions. Dada for him

¹⁵¹⁸ If you grasp the toxic nature of this combination you grasp an important element in this book.

¹⁵¹⁹ Duchamp's "aesthetics of indifference" leaves us with no recourse but to feel utterly indifferent to him. His absurd urinal is merely the daring of a impresario of inanity. He says that "This choice was based on a reaction of visual indifference with at the same time a total absence of good or bad taste ... in fact a complete anesthesia." Anesthesia is precisely the feeling I get from his sorry works, empty of real content but full of pretence and posturing. He is posturing at democracy when actually it is really the death of art. It is an elitist ploy that opened the door to all the meaninglessness esoterica of elite corporate art and an art as capital meaningless investment. This was the opposite of democratic art whose traditions lie opposite to Duchamp with artists like Chardin, Jules Breton, Eastman Johnson, Leon Lhermitte, Van Gogh, Hopper, Burchfield, Ben Shaun, Bateman and some of the Plein Air painters of today. All of these bypass the "aesthetics of indifference" and open up into nature and real democratic ideas based on nature and human rights "

¹⁵²⁰ I wrote a short chapter about El Greco's painting that might be worth quoting here in full as it goes to the heart of some of the ideas in these books:

El Greco and Philip: The Transcendent Crystal that Rises out of the Blood

Philip also, like Columbus, saw himself as an apocalyptic judge, serving god and having the power over life and death according to the dictates of his faith. A painting by El Greco of Philip II, called the "Dream of Philip II" pictures what the Royal cataloguers called a

"Glorification" of Philip. But actually it pictures in symbolic, diagrammatic form, the actuality of the relationship of knowledge and power to atrocity. In this painting, Hell and earth are on the same level, implying that there are only two realms: heaven, the world of knowledge and truth on the one hand, and earth which is no more than an extension of hell. Immediately behind Philip, there is a gaping mouth of a dragon or demon- the Mouth of Hell- and in this devouring mouth, men and women suffer apparently deserved and frightful torture. Philip has his back to them and could care less: they are merely Moors, Jews, Indians or sinners. In the background people seem to be fleeing from a lake of fire or blood as if the apocalypse were already occurring. Philip himself is completely indifferent to the suffering, and even somehow the enforcer of this suffering. His face is benign, neutral, and disinterested, though perhaps slightly ecstatic as he contemplates his function as the divine representative of a bloody minded god. Above Philip, floats the serenely Divine Name of Christ, like a Platonic insignia, clear, crystalline and pure, like the eternal Word or the final sound of the golden apocalyptic trumpet. The divine name of Christ rises like a transcendent crystal out of the blood of those Philip had murdered.. Numerous, bloodless and earthless angels float around the divine name, reflecting well the otherworldly delusions of grandeur that allowed Philip to feel righteous, even as he murdered the innocent Jews, Moors, Ottomans, and Indians. The angels look at Philip and point to the Divine Name. Philip is aware of them, of his mission and his Manifest Destiny. The god concept functions here as an enabling mechanism that allows and to a degree, even helps organize and create atrocities., just as the Bhagavad Gita helped Himmler murder Jews in the Camps. The painting reveals the mentality of the Spanish atrocities and how they grew out of the central beliefs of Western culture.

El Greco gave the painting to Philip in the hopes that it would secure him prestige and royal patronage, apparently. It did neither. But the painting well reflects both the self-righteous sadism of Philip, as well as the Byzantine and Platonic idealism of El Greco, whose Platonist mysticism, seeking the transcendent luminosity of the other world, could both justify, glorify and seek the patronage of a King who used the blood soaked silver and gold of the New World to create more corpses of Jews, Moslems and Europeans in the old world. Gold and silver were Philips right, as the defender of Christ, and the killing of Native Americans was just and good, because it was done for the glory of god. Stannard quotes the saying of Cotton Mather and other religious Puritans that the Native Americans "must be pursued like wolves..[until] they are consumed" or exterminated. He notes that the genocidal project of the Puritans, and one could add, the Spanish, was advised and supported, even whipped up, by religious leaders, and that political and military leaders, indeed the "whole white nation... followed these minister's genocidal instructions with great care. It was their Christian duty as well as their destiny".

became an esoteric system of make believe at war with reality. Like Schuon he uses women as a prop for his ego and erects her into a symbol of his own metaphysical pretensions.

In any case, certainly Schuon's deluded notions of aesthetic sexuality are only dimly suggested in Guenon's and Coomaraswamy's rather torrid and paranoid romanticism as well as the fantasies of Novalis and German Idealistic hopes of fascist dictatorship. But Guenon's hatred of space is part of Schuon's aesthetic and this hatred is strange and reactionary. These men deny space in art and thus actuality.

I love space in art and have tried to represent it in two dimensions. Space is a marvelous thing. The flatness of Icons is a dead, unreal, abstract space. Actual space is alive with life and change. The world is not flat as is the flat earth vision of Guenon and Schuon and other fundamentalists. The non-spatial icon results in the bizarre image of souls after death being two dimensional, like eschatological pancakes. This is what Guenon suggest is the fate of souls after death. They become flat pancakes. Eschatological pancakes are not digestable. This is funny with an odd, perverse sort of humor. Though one can be sure Guenon did not think so, prone as he was to believe his own delusions. He had no sense of humor. It is funny because metaphysical thinkers like Guenon strain mightily to prove that the most ridiculous fabrications are true and the so often get caught counting angels on the head of a pin to prove the case that what never existed has always existed.

For Guenon, spiritual 'agents', in Pascal Boyer's sense, are everywhere, lurking and about to do to us harm. The psychic and political fight he imagines taking place in the minds of men is purely imaginary. Guenon gets caught up in concepts and his sense of reality betrays him and he begins to talk like a lunatic discussing the plots the surround

him in all directions. The spritual war he imagines is not happening anywhere, yet like Mad Meg he sees it everywhere. The paranoid mind must above all else prove the existence of the universal plot, and will stop at nothing to do so, even at the expense of reason.

Guenon tries to do just that in this Reign of Quantity. People that read this book and take it seriously get sucked into the same phantasmagoria of mirages. Above all the ascribing of agency to beings or things that do not have it is a linguistic problem. Guenon is a Platonist and Platonists generalize everything, creating a world of essences that is not there. A tree is not just a tree but partakes of universal treeness, they think. A man is not just a man but he must be the Lord of the World or Universal Man. This reduction of the world to meaningless generalities is the “essence” of traditionalist and symbolist art. Creating the conceit of an “eternity” in art is partly what Schuon tried to do in his “Icons”. That is why he closes all the eyes of his Virgins and himself in his self-portraits. Like the Buddha, he contemplates the eternity of a subjective vision that is delusional, but that he imagines gives him power over all time and space. Like Buddha in rapture and Virgin Mary’s in contemplation of the divine, Schuon’s art tries to pretend to an eternity that does not exist. It is hoped that the delusion will spread through the paintings into the viewer, like a flu, pulling you in by means of sexual allure. He told me that this was the main point of his paintings. Eternal sexuality is what is pictured. It is a fantasy that has its compelling qualities, as who would not want to have sexual fulfillment forever, but it is a fraud, a fantasy, as there is no such thing. Nature does not work that way. Sex is a means of enjoyment in the act of creating babies that will perpetuate flesh and bone, and flesh and bone is what we are about,¹⁵²¹ not fictional eternities.

¹⁵²¹ Da Vinci made this quite clear in his amazing anatomical studies, which even now are perhaps the best ever done. He shows the amazement that evolution is. He is not trying to draw inane delusions or the transcendental imagination. He is drawing how the radius in the arm turns

In contrast to the purple dust and sex/death obsession of esoteric abstract art, there is the rise of realism in painting. The rise of realism is also a political rebellion against the restoration of the monarch in 1848, when Courbet came into his own and began his militant and brave rejection of art as a service to church, god, kings and authority. His amazing painting the Artist's Studio of 1855, is perhaps the first attempt by an artist to paint his own life in its reality. It is an openly political work too, which shows the exploited and the exploiters on the left side. Courbet is no longer hiding the facts of existence behind a screen of metaphysical make believe as Schuon and Medieval art did. Jesus, angels and Mary are all gone. Courbet later tried to indict poetry in a painting too, showing a nude woman, "reclining on a moss covered rock.....spitting in the water that was poisoning them all.". Baudelire, Lamartine, Nerval are among those thus satired by Courbet.¹⁵²² This condemnation of poets is echoed in Neruda and others. Poetry can be wonderful, but often it is a excuse that supports the ideology of the upper classes. Courbet was protesting that, and rightly so.

the forearm even as the Humerus swivels on the Ulna. This double hinge is an extraoridnay thing and it is real, not imaginary.

¹⁵²² This is discussed in a letter of Corbet written to Castagary on Jan. 16 1864) see Letters of Gustav Courbet, 1992 pg. 234



. Baudeliare's presense in the Ateleir, or the Painter's Studio is likewise fraught. An xray shows what Jeanne Duval looked like.



His lady friend Jeanne Duvall used to be in the picture too, but now you can just see a shadow of her next to Baudelaire. But in the xray image you can see she looks in the mirror in a voluptuous pose and Charles in oblivious and dreaming over his books. No wonder Baudelaire insisted she be taken out. She is the lively one. His denial of life and nature is obsessive and religious, rather like that of Mallarme, who likewise wanted to reduce poetry to the merely subjective and the other-worldly. Modernism is bankrupt.

Courbet was a bright man.¹⁵²³ His understanding of reality was in opposition to the reactionary forces of the time. He was the real inspiration of painters like Millais, Millet and others. The realist movement extends the concern of Greek sculpture, Da Vinci and science into the 20th century. Abstract art in contrast grows out of the Symbolist movement and the painters of the far right, and is a throwback to Russian icons, and esoteric medievalism now applied to a corporate minimalism. Modernism is the misnamed child or the far right reactions against the French Revolution and the Enlightenment.

There is little expression of what were the facts of the medieval life in the Pre-Raphaelites. There is a real separation between Rossetti's dreams of an invented medievalism and Millais or F.M. Brown's attempts to be objective. Indeed the early Pre-Raphaelite work of Millais is objective and amazingly contemporary. He is a realist, unlike Rossetti whose one realist painting, "Lost" was never finished. Rossetti was painting medieval and iconic fantasies, as was Schuon. Millais is a totally different story. His vegetation and bankside in the painting of "Ophelia" took him 11 hours a day, six days a week, over a five-month period in

¹⁵²³ I do not like everything in Courbet. His hunting paintings are atrocious, I understand why he liked hunting though. In England and France the King claimed to own most or all animals, and this made hunting a patriotic duty if one hated the King as much as Courbet did. Not that I favor his "fanatical poaching" as he called it. I don't. But he saw hunting as a duty for this reason. In America the democratic state alone claims the right to sell licenses to kill, with the same supremacist result. Animals are killed as part of the mercenary greed of the state.

1851. The objective effort in this makes the work amazingly present. Or take his late work, much disliked by modernist critics, but much better than anything modernists have done, like this amazing study of dew drenched plants



John Everett Millais
Dew Dreched Furze, 1890

The same is true of painters like Rachel Ruysch or Rosa Bonheur as well, both of whose realism goes so deep. Vincent Van Gogh, who shows himself in his amazing letters as an unacknowledged scholar of 19th century art.¹⁵²⁴ He understood very well that art was about reality, not

¹⁵²⁴ The Van Gogh museum in Amsterdam has put out a new edition of his letters which are extremely interesting and how that Vincent really was a sort of scholar of 19th century art. A man who sought to do Dickens in painting and a deeply compassionate person, not all the madman

fake dreams of the dead, and his horror at the Symbolist way Gauguin was going is well considered and accurate. While Vincent flirted with Gauguin's symbolist abstractions, briefly, he recognized it as a dead end finally. Vincent's early work, much neglected, might be the some of the best of his efforts. His difficult and expansive later work of course has great merit, but he is really himself before he goes to Paris and is influenced by the impressionists. His potatoes are incredible, before the infinity of the starry skies, which really are derived from Millet's version of the Starry sky. The influence of Anton Mauve and other realists on him is much greater than has been acknowledged.

Vincent's fight with Gauguin is really about Courbet and the Naturalists. Gauguin would go on to be a precursor of empty abstractions, whereas Vincent began his fight with long acting epilepsy and he tries desperately to hold on to reality. Courbet would fight with the backwards conservatism of the French state. Both men would lose their fight, but win it in a curious way. They announce the importance of potatoes and shoes, rivers and women, the presence of nature and the social network of our times. Van Gogh's dislike of religion is very serious, as is Courbet's, and has a certain relationship to my own, though I was never as fanatic as Vincent was, since he was a minister's son and wished to impress his dad. But he went through an ordeal in religion that was very traumatic and survived it. He writes about it that

worshiped in art histories.. The letters have many dimensions. They are a social history of the time, an art history, a psychological history and of considerable literary merit, among other things. But in this book attention should be drawn to the early letters between Isleworth and Borniage (1875-78) where Vincent gets converted to a species of protestant evangelism and tries to become like his Parson father, who was very hard on Vincent. It is the tale of a cult conversion really. Vincent is so open and obvious in trying to sell himself on an ideology that is clearly false. He fails in his own eyes, but succeeds as an artist. He is able to leave the ideological system suddenly as all such systems of mind control can be left. Vincent is lonely and vulnerable and lost his job at Goupil's art dealership in Paris, and so is vulnerable to cultic influences and the bible. He gets out of it pretty well that and becomes the great painter we all know.

“I told Pa that I found the whole system of religion loathsome, and precisely because I dwelled on those things too much during a miserable period of my life. I don’t want anything more to do with it and have to guard against it as something fatal.”¹⁵²⁵

I understand exactly what he is saying and feel the same way.¹⁵²⁶ This is a psychological reaction to totalist system of belief and it explains his dislike of Gauguin and Symbolist movement. Vincent is not close to Gauguin, but rather to the novels of Emile Zola. Impressionism was too superficial for him. He was inspired by the English social realists especially Charles Dickens, Frank Holl, Hubert Herkomer, Luke Fildes, Ford Madox Brown and others. These men, like Courbet or Clausen, were very brave and started what is really social history as a form of art as the periodical *The Graphic* shows. They are in art what Dickens, Hugo and Zola were in literature. How to present the facts of human life in a way so as to improve the lives of those who suffer.¹⁵²⁷ Engels and Marx, despite their later development, which was very harmful, were realists too, early on. Engel’s The Condition of the Working Class in England, is one of the first social histories of ordinary people. The failure of Marxism had to do

¹⁵²⁵ Edited by Hans Luijten and others. Vincent Van Gogh-- the Letters Vol. 2 pg 12, Letter 194 Dec. 29th 1881. Later when Vincent suffers from hallucinations and epilepsy he has religious delusions that are very disturbing to him. Many writers try to quote Vincent out of the context of his life as a religious artist but this is false and shows a very shallow reading of this very deep and thoughtful artist, whose lucidity quite belies all the fanfare about his later mental troubles.

¹⁵²⁶ To see more on what I think about Realism and art see this exhibit I designed. It is a continuation of this essay. Here: <http://www.naturesrights.com/StayingAmazed.pdf>

¹⁵²⁷ Vincent’s paintings are exceptional in other ways too. Many of his works have never been part of the art market of buying and selling. The largest collection was that of Theo Van Gogh, and was inherited by his wife and that forms the nucleus of the Van Gogh Museum. The art market is very corrupting and tends to reflect the values of the ultra-rich. In Vincent’s case, his letters and much of his art attracted attention independently of money and this is amazing in itself. Vincent has since become part historian, part social thinker and part artist and I admire him for all these things.

with the coalescing of power in the hands of the state, which proved just as destructive as the location of power in the hands of corporations. The fact that English Law and government actively encouraged and allowed the Potato Famine¹⁵²⁸ in Ireland between 1845-49, shows that these abuses tend to be part of a capitalist power structure. Marxist has created similar problems in palces like China or Russia

It is this that makes Vincent great and which is above all present in his work and letters from the beginning. The epileptic madness that haunts his later years is part of this perhaps, but hardly the main thing in his work. One can see a genius in the work of Julien Dupre too. As the three great paintings of a woman worker raking hay show



. My roots are in art like this, and to this day I still thrill at images such as I saw recently when I discovered Peter Ilsted's work.

¹⁵²⁸ The Potato famine was casued by the ownership of Irish land by absentee English landlords and politicians, who grew plenty of corn, oats, rye, wheat and other crops, but would not allow the peassants and poor of Ireland to eat them, thus causing at least a million perhaps more people to strave to death. Another 1 to 2 million were forced to immigrate to America or Canada. The problem was the state sponsored selfishness of property ownership and "laissez faire" economics. Let them starve but make sure the owners make money selling "their" crops. Such crops should have been seized for the Irish, rather than people be made to starve so a few speculators could thrive off their corpses. Women and babies were killed, old peole and strong men, all so a few spcualtors could get rich of the grains that the poor did not get, which would have saved them.



These are great images of space and light and the reality of the artists life. They show us precisely the feelings and textures of 19th century air and space in a way that reaches beyond the clothes the people have on and show what we all see and love in our own world. This could be said of J.M.W. Turner too, whose work is a hymn to science and technology of a kind. Those who think he was a precursor to abstract art have not understood him. He was a great inquirer into the habits of nature, light and atmosphere, clouds, the sun, color, coppermines, blacksmiths, weather, anything to do with light, indeed, his best work is extremely well drawn landscapes, nature and light studies. He did studies of ironworkers, magnetism, and new and old ships, steamships, architecture in many weathers as well as some very fine drawings such as this one from 1797 of a waterfall.



Or this 1839 *The Castle of Trausnitz overlooking Landshut*, done in water color.¹⁵²⁹

\$63

¹⁵²⁹ For more on Turner and his love of science and objective drawings see Turner as Draughtsman, by Andrew Wilton, Turner and the Scientists, by James Hamilton and Turner in the North by David Hill.



J.M.W. Turner

1839 The Castle of Trausnitz overlooking Landshut

Astounding and complex yet simple in its evocations of light and form. Another artist I admire is Eastman Johnson. Partly forgotten today, I think he is much better than Winslow Homer and Sargent. He did many things of value. For instance, I love Johnson's portrait of Mount Vernon, General Washington's house. Johnson intimates who Washington really was.



He does not paint the imposing main house except as an incidental--- but concentrates all his attention the slave quarters around the back and a broken fence and a slave girl in the grass and her father on the stoop. It is more indictment of Washington than anything else. People who look at this tend not to see any of this, but it is a powerful protest work against one of the clichés of American history. It also has that lazy summer feeling that one feels in Virginia. Washington was a man of untrustworthy policy, as when he promised Native Americans that he would protect their lands and then betrayed them when he appointed General "Mad Anthony" Wayne, whose Legions did great harm to Ohio Natives when they attacked the Indian confederation in the Summer of 1794 and created the "Treaty" of Greenville. He made money off this betrayal of Ohio and that helped him support his slaves back in Virginia. Johnson's ironic painting of his great house is thus a just protest against a man who was imposing on the outside but a hypocrite in his back yard.

Johnson did many paintings about the liberation of the African Americans, fleeing from the south, the Underground Railroad or African American literacy. his blueberry picking is wonderful as are his kids in Barns and the studies for maple sugaring, which he did in opposition to Sugar Cane farming which used huge number of slaves.

Johnson's paintings evokes a world partly gone now, not entirely, but it is a good world they picture. I have picked blueberries in Ontario myself, not far from Killarney. At the right time of the year they are everywhere and so sweet one can hardly keep away for them. One quickly becomes expert at finding the best ones. Bears like them too. We watched bears eating them. When I was a kid I spent some days on an island in Maine and there were a lot of blueberries which they mother made us go out and pick for blueberry pancakes, and it was one of the best breakfasts I have ever had. So the world they describe is not entirely gone.

Of artists of my parents' generation, I like Raphael Soyer, some of Ben Shahn, and the Mexican muralists and aspects of Andrew Wyeth's work. Wyeth vacillated between surrealism and realism. I prefer the more realistic sides of him. His politics are atrocious. But he is a man of contradictions who can seem like a gun toting animal hunter and far right, neo Nazi republican on the one hand, and on the other a liberal democrat in his work, who disliked racism of any kind, loved animals, put up poor African Americans, befriended Native Americans, not to mention stadiing for women's rights and and was a decent fellow who happened to have amazing facility with a brush and to do some really wonderful studies and finished works. Unlike pseudo-artists like Duchamp, Wyeth is a hard working artist and one that has verve and insight into nature and meaningful places and things. My respect for him has increased with time rather than decreased, unlike Duchamp who I

fell for at one point, but whose cleverness seems to hide rather a bad artist who did great harm. The absurd hatred of Wyeth and love of Duchamp by the art gallery establishment in New York, shows how empty they are.

Hilton Kramer, Rosenberg, Greenberg etc. were art promoters of the 60's and 70's and they were certainly mistaken and shows what provincial ideo-dogmatics they were. Why anyone ever listened to them is beyond me. Few art critics are worth the ink they write with. Wyeth's autobiographical realism is deep and sincere, however one may differ with his views on other matters. His *Geraniums*, and *Garrett Room*, and some of the Helga Pictures, nature studies, dry brush watercolors, dogs sleeping, windows, and dry cornstalks are great art, not merely "illustration". He was one of the great watercolorists in America, along with some works of Homer and Sargent.

Another artists who I think understood the main direction of painting since Leonardo was John Constable. He is right on mark in this statement in his lectures of 1836

“...Painting is a science, and should be pursued as an inquiry into the laws of nature. Why, then, may not landscape be considered as a branch of natural philosophy, of which pictures are but experiments?”¹⁵³⁰

This defines very well what painting form Plein air and nature is. Proving this in his own work Constable did some great Plein air works, cloud studies, tree studies and others.

¹⁵³⁰ Fourth Lecture on Landcape Painting, June 16, 1836



John Constable

There are few people in the contemporary scene that I identify with. I like aspects of the contemporary Realism, the Atelier and Plein Air movements, but some of it tends to be retrograde and to ally itself with reactionary forces, as sometimes, but not always, happened with Wyeth.¹⁵³¹ Art is not a spiritual or mythological escape. There is an unfortunate tendency in modern art and galleries to go back to the decadent aristocrats of the aristocratic age. This is due to corporate

¹⁵³¹ I would make a case that Wyeth is only nominally a republican, or confused. The evidence of his work suggests a liberal minded man who did many portraits for the poor and the ordinary. He did many pictures of the Olson and Kuerner families, Helga, African Americans, women, dogs, animals and nature. He was independent of the art world in New York. I see him as part of the American realist tradition going back to Eastman Johnson. His wife Betsy was the business person and it will be interesting to see how Wyeth is seen in the future.

patrons largely.¹⁵³² When art becomes myth it tends to support the status quo and so picture a nostalgia for lost empires and aristocratic and classical conceit. The vapid angels of Borgeau or the erotic histories of Gerome will not save us, though at least they both could draw well and both made some beautiful figure studies or orientalist works. The effete pictures of Van Dyke and David are not good models either. Art that aspires to be religion does not interest me either, as is the case with much modern art(Reinhardt, Kandinsky) or such romantics as Inness, even though I like some of his work.

But I am interested in art as a branch of a progressive science, not corporate science but the science of nature. Art comes from nature, and while aspects of it might be influenced by our being human and evolved, it is and is not Darwinian, which means that it is basically about existence and survival, not just as a species but a member of the biotic planet, where all living things exist and deserve to thrive. For art to be useful in our time it cannot be Dada, or stupid, nor can it merely explore itself, in imitation of the corporation and its psychopathic narcissism.¹⁵³³

¹⁵³² This makes Duane Keiser's attempts to escape from the Gallery systems interesting, which Van Gogh complained so bitterly about, rightly. Keiser sells his work on Ebay and through emails. Keiser's attempt to show his own life in Haiku like small works is interesting---painting Crane Flies, flowers on a window sill or his daughter swimming or himself in the studio. His small works have a nearly the flavor of Chinese or Japanese celebration of the everyday life and are far more interesting than his larger works.. I like these far more than his pop images of doughnuts, candy and Putter butter and jelly sandwiches. I should also mention Wendy Artin, and Katy Schneider, both of whom have some amazing things, the one does excellent watercolors of Roman sculpture and ruins and nudes of great light and delicacy. Schneider does very real explorations of pregnancy, family and children.

¹⁵³³ A good example of an artist who was ambiguous in his response to corporate art is Al Payne, a little known artist. He and I shared an apartment in San Francisco in 79-80. I got to know him quite well as we discussed and argued about everything. He flirted with minimalist painting, performance and systems painting, which he awkwardly called "metaconceptual" painting in the 1970's. None of this was terribly interesting, and was often flirting with corporate art ideology. But when he had kids in the 1980's a latent humanism and naturalism returned and he did some fine folk like works of his kids. He called these paintings of the "Here and Now and Existence" painting, This is wonderful. While the figures are naïve, they are at least honest. His later work has a verisimilitude to actual existence which is good. It negates the conceptual work of his earlier years, for the most part, with some exceptions

Al's work was later more or less seized by Paul McCarthy after Al died and turned into an art

The dissolution of reality after Impressionism did no one any good. The notion that we "construct" the world out of our mental states is a lie about our world and ourselves in it. The world exists and is not a human construction. The profound alienation from the natural world implied by the idea of "post-modernism" (pomo) and its rampant subjectivism is very disturbing. In fact, the whole idea of 'post-modernism' is an abuse of language. It is a fiction created by a corrupt, corporate art world. The world that is now is our world and it is not "post" anything.

To summarize then, The downfall of the 19th century aristocratic elites and then the fragmentation of art after Impressionism resulted in art being exploited by the corporate elites. That is what the subjectivism of Duchamp and Warhol is really about. They are pseudo-democratic elitists, really reverse elitists, who extol the presumed virtues of regressive subjectivism, mindless automatism and market buffoonery. Bankers, free market devotees and Hedge fund operators exploit all and sundry and buy Warhol's or others works promoted by corrupt galleries acting as the 'arbiter elegantiarum', to use the phrase applied to

posturing scheme, held a sort of prisoner entombed in a big box. Paul McCarthy was also an old friend of Al's, but he misunderstood Al badly. McCarthy's work, which I have never liked, employs a sort of sensationalist sex organ and human waste obsessed aesthetics of scat and shock tactics. He seeks the notoriety of a B Movies and a feces throwing schizophrenic atavism. His 'bad seed' Snow White extravaganza is an attempt to turn vapid Disney cartoons into a scatological vision of life as humiliation, setting up a sort of dirty minded new form of exploitation.. This is modernist and pop stupidity pushed to an obscene and false extreme. Along with Jeff Koons, he represents well the depravity and decayed narcissism of upper class corporate America, with their willingness to destroy the planet to make money. Al Payne managed to escape this to a degree and to do delicate things about his children and ordinary life between 1986 and 2000.. Encasing or rather entombing his own work in a minimalist box was a mistake, dictated by his depressive personality, perhaps, but then exploited by McCarthy in a cynical misuse of Al's art for more notoriety. AL's own presentation on of his work can be seen here:

<https://archive.org/details/AlPayne-SelectedWorks1969-2006>

Petronius, the author of the text called Satyricon. The New York art world does indeed evoke Nero's decadence as well as a Felliniesque satire of the ultra-wealthy. It promotes the perpetual and childish 'destruction of art', turning human creativity into silly jokes, vapid icons of irony, cheap advertising, empty images celebrating stolen wealth, found objects and glorified non-entity festooned with celebrity iconography.

What the New York/Paris/Tokyo art world created after World War 2 is what I call Corporate art. Corporate art is the emptiness that visits the pages of *Art in America* magazine. Indeed, as an experiment I take a look in this sad magazine once or twice a year and can find nothing in it worth looking at. One finds in this magazine utterly vacuous abstractions and 'installations' dictated by the dogmas of a corporate market. To consider Corporate Art to be 'art' is a mistake. What goes by the name of art these days is mostly an extension of fashion and speculative capital exchange and has little to do with actual art making, skill or beauty, curiosity and knowledge and lots to do with advertising and promotion, emptiness and corporate autocracy and control. Although it poses as 'democratic', it is really anti-people, anti-nature, minimalist, formalist, systems and process oriented rather than content driven. It is often atavistic and deals in ugliness and crudity. It is anti-aesthetic and opposes the beautiful, and basically is not about art at all but about commerce, as well dictating what art will be by galleries and art commissars (so called 'critics')..

Henri Matisse speaks approvingly of having heard Toulouse Lautrec say, rather stupidly, that "at last I don't know how to draw".¹⁵³⁴ Being proud of drawing badly seems to be a leitmotif in modern art, glorifying ignorance. Picasso says that when he was young he "could draw like Raphael, but I have spent all these years learning to draw like

¹⁵³⁴ Quoted in Deanna Petherbridge's The Primacy of Drawing pg. 415

[children]". First of all, though Picasso did some pretty good drawings in his career, however inconsistently, no drawing by Picasso comes close to Raphael. Indeed, while Picasso did a few fine things, many of his works are very hard to take seriously, and are superficial and frankly, childish and silly for an adult. Second, neither Matisse, Lautrec or Picasso knew much about children, much less about why or what children draw. Picasso left a mess when he died, as he had little to do with his many children and they all fought. Few of these artists understood children's drawings. Art for children is not blissful stupidity, but an attempt to understand reality. As they learn more their drawings become more and more sophisticated and concerned with reality and problem solving. I spend my days with a couple of young drawers and their attempt to grasp reality can be very concentrated and intense. The idealization of childhood is a misunderstanding akin to the ideology of the "noble savage". ¹⁵³⁵ Bad drawing is not a virtue, even among kids, they try really hard to make good drawings.

Drawing is generally not a descent into madness and the idiotic. It can be on occasion, but it is also a conveyance of great insight into reality. The search for authentic "outsider art" is itself an admission of the inauthentic insider emptiness of the art world. Addicted to "irony", the true irony is that the art world as it now exists has very little to do with art. It is really a fashion business run by gallery owners and effete, servile critics dogmatized by their own pronouncements. It is a scam for the ultra-rich to get them to part with some of their not-at-all-hard-earned money. Petherbridge concludes her great book on Drawing(2010, pages 413--414) by stating that recent art has rejected intelligence and "differentiated skill based systems of drawing" in favor of expressive

¹⁵³⁵ Petherbridge pg. 415)

irrationalism, "atavism" and "primitivism". This is quite right and amounts to an indictment of modernist art, if not all contemporary art. The dumbing down of art for corporate culture has required art to become as stupid and vacuous as possible, empty of content. The main thing is that art is sapped of meaning. Recent art "enshrines Robocop rather than Rembrandt as the graphic model for young artists" Recall that Duchamp, ever the maker of very poor paintings, must have resented Rembrandt and wanted to see his works become "ironing boards". Most recent art has tried to destroy "skill and technical considerations" and has a 'fear of literalism" or realism, as well as a notion of drawing as an "interrogative practice" or art as a method of study. Study or inquiry, intelligence, beauty and the seeking of meaning in the reality of things is the criteria of art. Recent art abandons the very things I consider to be art and it promotes meaningless geometries, glorified video installations or ugly scratches as the ideal corporate art. Art in the galleries of New York and the university art schools in our time endeavors to be anti-intellectual and vacuous, and erect art proud of meaning nothing, inquiring into nothing, telling no story. Such art is perfect for corporate lobbies as it signifies nothing yet takes up space and entertains without any thoughts to think. Critical thinking is studiously avoided.

It is clear that the attack on the humanities in recent years is partly due to the ineptitude of the arts themselves, who sold themselves out to the corporations and the emptiness of modern art styles. A healthy rebellion against this trend brings us back to Da Vinci and Courbet. Petherbridge offers some hope in wishing art a return to "intelligence of practice". Rejecting the inanities of Duchamp and much of the art world, she hopes for an art that once again seeks into the meaning of things, "investigating the world". (page 432.) Drawing and painting are above all an attempt to understand our world and our place in it, and as such they

are basically one with the scientific project, not the corporate project, which is also bankrupt, and this bankruptcy is reflected in the emptiness of modern art. Art can only progress forwards into beauty and science, rejecting corporatism and the ready-made inanities of "installations" and corporate art. Art has a history and this history is important and the cult of the inane and the new means little, it was just a mistake made by art as a vehicle of artists spoiled by a useless rebellion that played into the hands of the ultra-rich..

The anti-intellectualism among modern artists is an attempt to make a virtue of being dumb, and takes pride in emptiness, nonsense and the inability to draw or paint. It is this virtue of stupidity that has made art such a willing accomplice in the corporate con-game. Post-modern art is closer to religion than reality. Such art is not really art at all but a byproduct of fashion, fetish and commodity capitalism. Art, from its inception, has had the unfortunate vice of sucking up to power, and this is readily obvious in Hindu sculpture, Catholic Virgins, Islamic tile work, Michelangelo or Chinese scrolls of emperors in flowing robes. Now art serves the corporate vacuum of the Board or the CEO and the virtue of wealthy emptiness that is at the heart of the phony mystique of "corporate personhood". Corporate art is as empty as the art that served the Pharaohs. If art is not to be merely a by-product of power systems it must look to science and reality as deeply as it can, so to be as independent of the need of money as is possible, without starving to death. The art martyr thing is also no longer necessary. What is necessary is to stay alive and look at the corruption with a dispassionate eye, and seek to do all the good one can for people, nature and animals of the future. Our best revenge against modern/postmodern art is to seek truth and beauty, nature, life and reality, even if this beauty is found in the mundane and the ordinary, or what Neruda called the "impure"..

The aesthetic that dictates much of what happens in the current art world is unsustainable. Much of what goes by the name of art is as distorted and destructive as the insanity in the banking sector that caused the recent global recession. The art of our time is fictional, 'derivative' and vacuous because it reflects corporate and government fictions, such as the fiction of 'corporate persons', which leave real persons without health care, good jobs or decent housing. So if art is to not serve such powers, it must be clear about what it will serve and why. For art to be progressive it must be attached to science and to free inquiry. It must dedicate its fruit to all people and nature. It should be accessible, not esoteric and it should embrace feeling without being superstitious or exploitive or sentimental. I have known artists who have no idea what they are making or why and think this empty vacuum is a virtue. It is not a virtue to be ignorant or to draw badly. So part of the reason for this series of paintings is to continue to try to define art as a branch of study and knowledge that serves understanding, education and science and not as a formula that serves a conceit with materials or an empty system of "signifiers". My concern is with exploring the truth about the world I live in..

My painting was far ahead of my drawing since 1982, when I began doing plein air studies of Lake Erie. I kept doing this in England and Ireland and then in Point Reyes California and later, Eureka, California, where we lived near Redwood National Park among other amazing places. More recently I have done it in Ohio, both in Rocky River Reservation and more recently in Cuyahoga National Park. Living next to National Parks has become a lifelong commitment.. I once actually felt guilty doing all these works, thinking wrongly that they were too material and real. But actually that was my true bent and what I was best at. The mistaken detour into Schuon's work taught me a great deal in that I realized after

I left Schuon that it was the spiritual in art that was the dead end, just as corporate art is a dead end and both dead ends are closely entwined. After I realized the absurdity of the paintings I did when I studied with Schuon I was tempted to destroy them all. I did destroy a few, after taking photos of them, but then I thought they should be used to illuminate my own mistakes. So I kept some of them. They are good examples of why Symbolist and abstract subjective art goes bankrupt and are a dead end. The best painting is a scientific process. In my own experience trying to paint what I see teaches me that as far as one goes in trying to understand what one sees, there is further yet that one can go, and each effort to perceive goes a little deeper. I realized in 1997, after waking up in a hospital nearly dying, that what matters is not the dreams of my imaginary “soul” but the actual experiences of my mind and body in everyday life. Symbols are merely coded signs of political interests and signs of human supremacy. An art that does not serve this is what is needed.

The problem is actually our brains themselves, that has intrinsic limitations,--- the reality out there is far more complex and rich than our brains can handle or absorb, so each artwork is a further effort towards seeing into the actuality of things, which is always a little beyond us. If you watch yourself painting or drawing real things you will see with surprise sometimes that there are many things in what you are looking at you just did not see until now, and you know therefore that there are yet other things that you have not seen yet. Imagination reaches to a point, but reality is even beyond that in its variety and complexity. Nature is almost endless diverse. Art is not beyond death in any spiritual sense, but it is in an actual sense, in that one can paint reality in a way that really approximates the truth of things in a way that is beyond photographs and closer to the feel and texture of things and perceptions.

My experience with Schuon was useful in teaching me that the whole

trajectory of traditionalist art form Platonic aesthetics to Christian Icons, Buddhist sculptures, Tibetan Thankas and Persian or Hindu miniatures and onward into aristocratic art, and thence into symbolist art and corporate art is a history of art as a mode of symbol construction. The art is constructed in view of supporting unjust political regimes that sought to excuse themselves with transcendent advertisements. I realized that the traditionalist idea of art is a dead end. It finishes in sterile and childless fantasies, as does so much misnamed modernist art, and for similar reasons.

I came to realize that traditional art grows up in defense of unjust regimes and pushes conservative values. An art that is really democratic has to be based on science, as Dewey wrote. This becomes quite clear in the 19th century, where revival of Greek and medieval art tend justify far right leaning regimes, that is, after the Bourbon restoration which occurred after Napoleon's downfall in 1815. Realism and naturalism, and their devotion to democratic socialism, grow up in opposition to these far right tendencies and try to keep alive a more science based and realistic art.¹⁵³⁶ The modernist or symbolist aesthetic results in work that is not

¹⁵³⁶ P. Winston Fettner writes about the importance of the enlightenment to this process:

"Jefferson's conviction that a republic required the humanities is best viewed within the wider context of the enlightenment, and can be traced to the effort to replace absolutism with democracy. Take, for example, Condorcet: "Constitutional democracy, not enlightened despotism, is the political ideal of Condorcet and the group of which he was the spokesman... If the new democratic society of France was to survive, it had to provide for the enlightenment of its citizens. 'Public education is a duty of society to its citizens.'"

It's in that context that Kant famously connected the slogan of the Enlightenment, "dare to know" (*aude sapere*), with maturity as the ability to think for oneself. And the opposite impulse is embodied in the anti-intellectual strain in American culture, the broader trend within which the crisis in the humanities finds its context and which displays the anti-democratic function of dumbing-down the public sphere. Without each individual's ability to think for herself, we are reduced from citizens to consumers, prey to impulses, at the mercy of the advertisers who sell us soap powder, automobiles, and politicians. Without critical thinking, historical knowledge, and rhetorical skill, we are incapable of the sort of reasoned decisions that are the foundation of genuine democratic

that different than reactionary Modernist works from Ingres to Hodler to Mondrian. In other words one can trace an ideology that spreads in art from restoration France up to Mondrian. In the end I rejected them for the same reason I reject corporate art. They created propaganda for an ideology that is ultimately empty and reactionary and creates objective harm. In Corporate art the 'subjective' becomes its own world, a world that hates the actual world. The abstract subject becomes everything. A paradoxical and narcissistic impersonalism thus comes to reign, art becomes about itself and creates its own abstract world, a world where corporations reign in place of kings. Where there is the fiction of 'corporate persons' there is the fiction of corporate art to serve them. Art becomes the nonexistent voice of the dead, life negated in its very affirmation. Corporate art is thus a fatal brew born of history and injustices. It is the death of art really. Art becomes meaningless and primarily about money.

Art has many wonderful possibilities but the direction of the traditionalists is a dead end, as is corporate art. I found this out myself, concretely and by my own experience, through study, experiment and inquiry. This is not merely the opinion of some academic art critic bent on a career, but the experience of an artist who has been there. Painting is an exploration of the real, and in my own foray into the symbolist experiment was short and clear. I saw clearly that this way is a dead end and there is no turning back to it. I believe strongly that anyone that follows this spiritual, corporate way will end up with nothing real or worthwhile in art. Real art lies elsewhere, in the specifics of the actual, in

life. A shallow education without the humanities generates immature subjects, permanent adolescents who define success in terms of conspicuous consumption, scrambling to earn enough to purchase the latest styles and gadgets, addicted to entertainment and cheap pleasure, and incapable of reflective political engagement.”

http://www.academia.edu/875988/The_Crisis_in_the_Humanities_and_the_Corporate_Attack_on_the_University

knowledge and science, inquiry and yes, sometimes, beauty and truth, though not in the romantic sense of these terms.



Millais: Ophelia

Painting that has abandoned the dogmas, subjectivism and human centered regimes of modern art is free to explore everything. Objective reality has returned and the whole world is open to explore anew. The modernist aesthetic is merely the corporate aesthetic. Gone now is the repressive cloak of reality which curtained art for the last 80 or 90 years. Art was veiled behind the thick and meaningless narcissistic cloak of ultra avant-garde art, which achieved so little. We can now free ourselves to use skill again and be intelligent. Gone is the obsession with the materials and tools of art alone. The need to refine the use of oils and

pencils never ends, but now we can use pencils and paint to explore reality again and not deny it. There is the knowledge of centuries in this paint and pencils and it ties me to Van Eyck, Rembrandt and others. It also ties me to real minerals and the earth. Art, for me is no longer about modern materials, most of which are derived from plastic, but about the whole world beyond the paint. The whole world and everything everywhere, opens up beyond the fascism of the paint for paint's sake, beyond the art for art's sake.

Yes, I am alone now, as far as possible from New York Galleries and their tricks and con-men. One can be honest and free, and even if few understand what one is doing, ordinary people get it, and the art marketers, curators, jurors and critics do not get it. But they were a big part of the problem weren't they? But it scarcely matters because now one is alone before the whole world, and art is not dead, but very much alive, and all that one paints is a beginning of an inquiry into existing on earth. One is no longer alone but shares all the world with birds and trees, cells and oceans, all beings and things everywhere. Who cares if a few greedy free marketers reject us. We knew they hated real art and the humanities long ago. Their promoting of conspicuous vacuity is behind us now, and we are free of them.

We stand with wild grasses and distant galaxies, with birds and old fences, gestures of life and pain, tears and joys, painting the things that are. Painting has become a humbling thing, and even the vocal gestures of crows talking back and forth, or the look of old Boxcar metal wheels have great meaning. Reality is not merely the subjective impressions of sunlight, or even less the bizarre recording the extreme emotions or mental states as in surrealism, but the actual facts around one, no matter what they are. I am at last free of the art critics and paint what I wish, and I am free of the "isms" and phony art history that leads to emptiness and the corporate wasteland. The art history of the ideologues is behind us and now I see and discover my own Art history. I no longer

need to follow the 'shock of the new', not that I ever really did, or to obey the art dogmas in the current issue of crack pot art magazines, not that I ever did that either. As Vincent said, those where "dealers in men", and we do not need them. The whole art market with its curators and art gallery impresarios are behind me. I have become a painter, not long after most of the world abandoned real painting. But I have always loved art as a real search for understanding and knowledge and it does not matter what the art world does. It is empty. I am a painter at last, and always have been, and am free to do what I wish.

To see more on what I think about Realism and art see this exhibit I designed. It is a continuation of this essay. Cut and Paste: Here:

<http://www.naturesrights.com/StayingAmazed.pdf>

...

Conclusions: Earth without Religion

“Imagine there's no heaven
It's easy if you try
No hell below us
Above us only sky
Imagine all the people
Living for today...

Imagine there's no countries
It isn't hard to do
Nothing to kill or die for
And no religion too.”
John Lennon

The idealism of my youth is not just faded away but has been abolished for realism. I see what people are now in ways I could not have done when I was 20. My understanding of historical development is far ahead of anything I could have thought even more recently, when I was 40. While a certain naïve and innocent willingness to believe is gone, it has been replaced by a much deeper and fact based love of what is actual. Some might accuse me of being bitter, but that is no matter, it is a realism that they cannot yet assimilate themselves that they mistake for bitterness. I am not the fool I once was. I once modeled myself, for a

short time, on Shakespeare's Fool in King Lear. But actually, what would happen to the fool after Lear dies. That is the character I would like to meet now.¹⁵³⁷ So as I come to the end of these books, some things stand out.

My conclusions are happy and not happy. The unhappy conclusion is that we really are in an endangered world. The leaders of our world are like King Lear. They have not yet realized how corrupt and selfish they are. The problem is power, corporate greed and ideological narrowness. But what needs to give, is all the things I thought were real when I was a kid. Then capitalism seemed obvious, whereas now it is the most questionable thing on earth. Religion seemed to have truth in it, now I can say without equivocation, or Nietzschean historionics, that religions are finished. This is just a fact, though many still cling to those delusions. Communism turned out to be as destructive an ideology as "free market" capitalism was. These are merely more delusions. All this is reflected in the so called death of art, which is not dead at all, just repressed, as I explained in the previous chapter.

So the unhappy truth is that these failures must be faced. That is not easy for most people. The forests are in trouble, the seas are in trouble, the sky is over heated and animals are dying and going extinct at unprecedented rates. People pass all this by like roadkill. They are failing to realize that they are killing the world off. Much of this can be laid at the door of ideologies and religions, capitalism and its enemies.

The good news is slight, but real, and that is that the failure of these

¹⁵³⁷ The Fool in King Lear sees the human being behind the foolishness of the King's power. He helps Lear deal with the suffering brought about by his own stupidity and lack of insight. Cordelia would have done that too. The Fool realizes the vanity of Kings, and goes beyond that to what really matters in our world, which is caring, and seeing beyond all the illusions to which humans are prone, even old men. I am not sure that Shakespeare saw as deeply as the character of the Fool sees. I would like to think so, This is why I wonder what a playwright would now say about the Fool if the play continued beyond the Lear tragedy. I would be a modern play and no longer the half medieval mentality of Shakespeare, still stuck in the mind fashion of Kings and Churches, as Shakespeare himself was.

systems can be understood and faced and there is a way to heal ourselves and the earth. To do that first requires that one admit what is wrong. I have tried to do that here and to show a little of what might be the way out. Facing up to my own delusions has been a hard road for twenty or more years, but it is possible, and we all can change. People can say I am crazy all they want, but if they get this from me, than all the effort is worth it. I certainly do not know all the answers, but am willing to raise the questions and suggest a few answers.

It is clear what needs to change. CEO culture must be stopped. Nature's Rights must be listened to. The daily lives of people is what matters, caring for their actual needs, and the actual needs of the natural world. Star Wars is not real, serial killers are not the main problem, the problem is just such myths, such falsehoods. Religion and ideology must decline. Science and technology must be monitored for corporate abuse and harms done to nature and humans. Society must be a concept that extends even to plants and geology, the atmosphere and ecologies. We are not alone and not exceptions. Reality is the daily life of children, women, old men and women, fish, White Pines, ducks and salamanders, not movie stars, not generals, and certainly not con-men presidents or prime ministers.

I could probably write in this book for some years yet, as the thesis keeps yielding new points of view, information, relationships and facts. I have often wondered if this book would ever end. But it is already too dense and taxing for a reader.¹⁵³⁸ So, it has to be time to stop. I cannot change the world by myself. There are so many others things I should be doing. I started editing the book four or five years ago, thinking it was done, but ended by writing and rewriting another 700 pages and making

¹⁵³⁸ I wrote this book to attract people to exact points of view, and factual concerns. I tis also written as a strait book , but I expect few will be able to read it entire. It is meant to be an internet book and so to come up under many tags.

the whole into three books instead of one, though it coheres as one work. I've "loaded every rift with ore", as the saying goes.

But this was the first book I have ever written for the internet, specifically. These books are best read on the internet and have many references which are searchable. This is a book about stretching my own thought and the thought of readers. Certainly there is an effort to stretch the bounds of disciplines and go beyond the usual differences between sciences and humanities. This effort to stretch my own thinking has made me aware that I am wrong about many things, at the same time as it has forced me to try to refine my thinking to be more accurate and exact. Even with this effort, I fear I am still limited in what I can think. These limitations are part of who I am and where I am in my life and times. Such things are structural and part of me and not easy to go beyond except little by little. So there is little I can do about this weakness which I have not already sought by many means to correct, inch by inch, paragraph by paragraph, year by year. I just have to live with my weaknesses, now that these books are done. Others will see them perhaps, and I cannot help that except to apologize in advance, if my thought has been too narrow, was inaccurate, or I did not push myself far enough. I am not aware of this now and apologize in advance. It is not for lack of trying, but I just cannot think beyond what I have understood in these books up till now.

Others can think beyond me. It is really a long series of separate essays, and even some of the footnotes contain little essays on diverse topics. And it is very much geared to specific references and a vast array of researched facts rather than strait narrative, though there is some of the latter. It was meant to reach across a very wide spectrum of searchable content. I don't expect anyone to read the whole thing, though someone will eventually. I know it is difficult to read and this is due to the fact that it is packed with so much information about many areas. There is a lot in these books. In fact, it is so baroque packed

with things that there is something for just about everyone. But doing this meant being long winded and sometimes fragmented. I meant it to be like that, as it will go online eventually and there it can find its readers, who will look only at parts of it, but each part leads to other parts, it is organized to do that, leading others to the larger questions and suggesting solutions. I am not a stylist like James Joyce who wrote himself into obscurity. I write to inform, not to show off. Content matters more than style. So I opted for completeness rather than stylistic perfection. It is not an esoteric text, which are elitist games anyway: I mean to be understood, if not understood all at once, all the time.

The Index is highly developed, and one might look up references to nearly any subject. I think the best way to read the book initially is to look up what interest the reader in the search bar after consulting the Table of Contents or the Index. The book moves around a lot and yet is always going forward and deeper into the material. It is not written like an ordinary philosophical or historical text at all, but is meant to be searched into. It is a dense and rich text, with many things to find and think about. Indeed, if anything it is meant to teach thinking about the world we live in.

Nowadays few master a given person's work, as I have done with some of the people discussed here. So these books are meant to communicate an understanding in smaller doses, even if the whole is exhaustive and lengthy, offering theories and ideas about history, religion, philosophy, language, nature, art, poetry and culture. It ended up being a summation on my thinking and experience over the last 40 years and one that hopefully brings all that time to a conclusion, so I can start fresh on new things. These books are, as it were, the dues I paid for much of what I learned in life.

Of course, there are things I think about that are not in these books. It is mostly an autobiography of things that I questioned, or explored, rejected or entertained for while a gave up on. It does not tell the story of

my searches into nature, for instance, though there is a lot about nature in these books. The one personal chapter, about my time in the Schuon cult, is merely a small fragment of my life and hardly the most important. I offer it only as an illustration of abusive cult leaders and to praise their victims for their resistance. These books says little about my history with painting, or my very young years, my personal relationships or my family. Indeed, it leaves a great deal out, things in fact which are more important than what is discussed in this book. I worked on these books slowly because I always put family or art work before working on these things. Though parts of it read as an academic text, I am not writing an academic text here, but reflections on aspects my own experience, so it is different than more theoretical texts on religion, which are less accurate, I think, and less willing to talk about actual religious practice.

I think I have shown the way to a few things that are hopeful and drawn some conclusions about what has been. The bulk of this book was written in the last 8 years. But I started it in 1996. It is now 2015. That is long enough to work on anything. 19 years. Though there is an essay in here from 1994 and that is 21 years ago now. I did not work on it that whole time, for instance I did not write at all between 2000 and 2006, though I did a lot of study during that time. but it has taken me a great deal of time, punctuated by changing diapers for my kids or my mother, who I cared for too, even when she was in nursing homes, who I would visit six or seven day a week. In the midst of these things and paintings, I found time to write and research, off and on. Though for about 5 years I was so busy caring for my mother and my child I had no time to paint. I could write though, and so starting in 2006 I began work on these books again, after putting it aside for some years. But even then the work was intermittent, because If I didn't visit my Mom often, she would have been more neglected than she was. Nursing homes in America are an unspoken atrocity. They are unethical places that profit

from the sick the old and infirm. The American medical system is fundamentally immoral. It is immoral to profit from the sick. Hospitals exploit patents. Insurance companies only want to insure the healthy and they farm everyone for profits, while being parasitical organizations no one needs. . In nursing homes, administrators hope families will not visit and money will pour into them.

If religions really were efforts to answer questions about the universe, as is often claimed, I could take them more seriously. But it really doesn't do this. Indeed, religion is opposed to serious inquiry on such matters. It opposes curiosity and wonder. One is supposed to have wonder for gods or the void, neither of which actually exist. True wonder grows out of the facts of nature itself and our actual existence, not symbols. Humans tend to fall in love with their own languages, or math systems, when neither math nor language are reality. Nature is not a symbol system that refers to transcendent entities and to make it one is to malign it already. There are no transcendent entities. $F=MA$ is not itself a part of the facts of force, mass and acceleration, it is just a description of what happens. Transcendent systems make life easier and simpler for many, but at the cost of concrete realities and facts. That is not a fair trade. My rejection of metaphysics and religion is hardly going to make life easier for anyone. But it does make life more real, and the personal, actual and ordinary becomes far more important, as does facing up the aspects of society that destroy and undermine, impoverish and harm people and nature. This is not without meaning in a time where everyone is being screened, photographed, watched and surveilled by the corporations and the state. More and more people live in bubbles of unreality created by the internet and cell phones, virtual reality and human centered cities where nature has been abolished. The world is awash in make believe and myth, ideology and falsity. I do not know if this can be undone. Maybe.

The human centered world requires a certain insanity to be

maintained internally, which makes city dwellers so prone to desperation. They suffer a lonely madness of many kinds, not least of which is greed for endless money, as well as the grind of poverty created by the greed. But facing the facts of what happens to others because of mad systems of myth has its own peril. Facing the facts of religion requires going insane to a degree as one grapples with the unreality of the fictions religion makes up. Religions maintain the unreal as real and deny reality to the actual and this makes all its followers disturbed in how they live and act. Religions depends on normalizing the insanity of the Greek Gods or the Christian ideology of apocalypse. How do you internalize the constant stress of the imminent end of the world and not go a little mad? To believe these tall tales one has to suppress the need of evidence.

But the process of coming to understand the motives behind these insane stories is very sane and should not be misunderstood as insane. I've been told more than once I am insane for writing these books, when actually it is one of the saner things I have ever done, even if they are far from perfect. I concluded the essay on Science above with praise of a new scientific effort to understand other species and all of nature on earth, on its own terms. It would take centuries to do this and all life would prosper as a result. The old science of rape and pillage for capitalism would be gone at last. I wrote this, more or less:

To try to understand nature from the point of views of all living things is a real challenge. No one has done it yet, stuck, as so many are, on human advantages. Once we abandon myth and ideology it becomes apparent what is all around you. No spirits, just the facts of what you see, feel, hear, smell and taste. Greed created the clear cut forests, the ultra rich created a world of poverty and war. Science begins with the simple, the cells, weaving the rainbow of forms into the fabric of sea and forest and air, and

this is what really matters, and we have only begun to study it as it is.

This book is the first that I know of to really question and critiques mysticism across many cultures. I do not remember when I realized that religions are political or psycho-social occurrences, and not real, but delusional products of fiction. Schuon was the end of my doubts about this and not the beginning. It actually began as a nagging doubt when I was a teenager and read William James. Later I sought for truth in Zen, Sufism, Christian mysticism, Jung, Christ and others. Even the delusions of the great Rembrandt moved me. All these were dead ends as far as their epistemology goes. Rembrandt's life of Christ is merely sincere protestant delusions. When one boils down Rembrandt's delusions one comes up with love for one other, for nature and dogs and elephants, ones wife and child. The myths disappear.

The religions taught behavioral norms the served changing ideologies more than anything else. I saw it in the Schuon cult of course, and the conviction grew on me as I examined more and more evidence. I realized that the evidence does indeed indicate that Jesus, Buddha, Zoroaster, Krishna and Muhammad never existed, but are as much political fabrications as the Greek and Roman gods. Even if they did exist it scarcely matters as it is clear in history that these were developing myths and not actual history. If these men did it exist it is irrelevant and forgotten, covered over with myth and the original men wiped from history. The truth was always irrelevant to the myths and long ago deliberately forgotten.

More recently I realized that even the notion that religion has an imaginary evolutionary benefit, appears to be a fiction. The idea that religion grew by evolution appears to be a result of academic pandering to politics. The function religion does serve appears to be political, serving an in-group at the expense of an out-group, and this was a many

millennia long mistake people made, in different ways, in different cultures. But once one realizes the mytho-political nature of religion, history become a very different thing, and the present becomes a very different thing too. One can no longer take seriously the differences between say, Jewish and Iranian religions, which are there to exaggerate their social difference and increase nationalistic fragmentation. They create war, which means they are killing each other and each other's children. Actually Jews and Iranians, shorn of their mythic cloaks are the same people with the same needs. The history of the nation-state is a history of illusions too, held at the cost of lives and blood. Insanity is often the result, as well as the cause of wars, religions and conflicts between nation states. Stopping this means analyzing the motives and functions of the ideas involved and how they drive people over an edge through propaganda and whipped up conflict. Stop the myths and you stop the wars, stop the delusions and people wake up to see themselves as the fragile beings they are, just like those they thought they hated. Stop the myths and you stop the hate.

We are merely an extension of the animal world, fish that have learned to walk and birds that think and our religions and ideologies are merely delusive figments of our collective imaginations. Nationalism is illusory, as is the Bible and the Koran on which the nationalism of Iran and Israel are erected. Since religions are political constructions, they are easier to dismantle. Dismantling theocratic states has proven not too difficult in the past. It is a matter of education, which should be much more generously supported than it is now. It is healthier to see Jews and Moslems as people deserving of equal rights, new students of existence, and not as Jews and Moslems locked in an endless war over the fictional gods and a "holy land", which long ago ceased to be "holy", anyway, given all the blood on it. Religious wars are now nationalist wars, and fueled by corporate states, so all these ideologies, including corporate ideology, have to be addressed and diminished to stop such wars. Dismantling

these delusions is the essential work in our time. Getting over the inevitable hurt that Judaism or Islam are revealed as both fabrications is hard for many, and they will suffer to do this, as I have. Facing illusions and the fact that one has been duped is hard to do.

What I learned from the failure of religion and other ideologies is that we are not alone on the earth. All that matters is the facts of things, behind the fictions. We are not just related to other humans as religions tend to preach, but we can realize our basic unity with others without religion and without denying difference. We do not only have those other human beings we love closely and well, but we are related to all living beings and things, birds and salamanders, insects of toads. and this is what matters. Geologic realities, weather, Sea stars, Anteaters, Primates, other humans: we are all part of it. It is liberating to realize that there is no life after death, as life and all members of every species, take on deepened significance, and every day matters. The loss of religion does not make one immoral, as many want us to fear. Getting to know all that one can about the earth we live on is what matters. Trying to leave it a better place than what our parents gave us, matters. Push it forward. Caring and fighting for the existence of all being that exist, in real terms, not Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Buddhist or Jain terms. There is no point in serving or giving one's life to spiritual fictions. We cannot stop those who are committed to this, but we can educate everyone.

These books record things about my intellectual growth and the changes I went through up into the late 1990's, with hints about what would come later. These books cover a wide swath of religious thought, myth, art, science, history and ideological development. It also covers things that arose during the period I was writing, poetry, art, language, historical theory, theory of science, language. It is critical of religion across the entire spectrum of history and religious studies. It is written in praise of science. It contains what I think are a complete refutation of

Platonism and mysticism and a reversal of the romantic, subjectivist tendency started by William James over 100 years ago. It is not just an “atheist” text, though it is that too, though as I explained, the idea of atheism is rather limited. I am beyond atheism and live in relation to actuality and reality as much as I can. I am not bragging to say this; it is just the way I have developed. My earlier work is superseded by this text, and though there are things of value in it, I have moved well beyond it. Indeed, my Master’s Thesis is well behind me and I am on my own now.¹⁵³⁹ I was thinking to update my Thesis to reflect all I have learned, but I do not have time to do that. I am not writing as an academic, but as a man who nearly died, and who is attached to no ideology and no system of belief. I am an artist who studies and thinks, and tries to understand, who fails and gets up and tries again.

Yes, it is a fragile thing to create and explore though one’s life. Even ideas can be used in the creative life, not just pencil and oil paint. I have attempted so my things here. I try show how and why traditionalist exegesis fails, and how the Creationist movement and Intelligent Design have failed, as well as how religion itself has failed. Indeed, all the attacks on science by the New Age, Platonism, Christianity and Islam, Buddhism, Neo Kantians and any other source, has failed. Science has succeeded beyond Darwin’s wildest dreams. By science I do not just mean sub-particle physics, which is a tiny fraction of real science. Speculators on the fringes of physics would like to reconnect us to

¹⁵³⁹ My Master’s thesis is still struggling with ‘the reality is a construction’ idea. I was not quite over that yet, when I wrote that in 1997, though I am now. In this sense some of my professors were right that it is subjective. But at that point my way of thinking as largely empathetic, and personal, and I identified with my subject until I myself partly became what I was studying, so there is a good deal of objectivity in this too. I realized this when I spent two weeks in the hospital while coming to conclusions in my thesis and kept dreaming of the atrocities I was writing about as if I myself suffered them. Time passes and what one thought of as important changes with time. In 20 years’ time, if I am still alive, maybe this book too will seem very dated, and one day I myself will be very dated and gone. No one is totally objective, and it would be a mistake to try to be. I like hand worn and handmade things for this reason. What matters is the touching and the involvement,, the love and the caring. Who cares if this seems sentimental to others, it is the way of life as both the very young and very old know.

irrationalism. This will help no one. Real science is how to make pottery, how to build a house, how to study photosynthesis, why Monarch Butterflies¹⁵⁴⁰ are dying off or even how to make clothes that fit. Science is a solid interaction with reality, not fiction. It is just like art. One tries to paint reality just as one tries to find out what makes cells move or why the body and brain work together. These books are thus a contribution to Darwin's project. Magical thinking and superstition are still with us as education continues to be a low priority. Education is under attack by corporate culture who want to turn children into factories of profit. That is not education at all. The world will have to fight these false theories and delusions and the men that profit from them. Religion will persist so long as magical thinking is not stopped by real education. The rich and powerful like people to be stupid, and thus it is necessary to limit the rich, tax them and yet not depend on their handouts. They are a relic of what ails us too. But children are new born every day of every year and the future is hopeful that they will find teachers to love them and show them a decent way to live that does not harm others or the earth we are all a part of.

There is the exciting prospect of a more complete and scientific critique of religion than I have given here. A scientific appraisal of religion as failed systems of knowledge is due in the future. Already there are real attempts to try to assess religion as a fact of scientific inquiry. None of them go far enough and I think I have shown some of the

¹⁵⁴⁰ Monsanto corporation, since 1990, has killed about 970 million of the butterflies – 90 percent of the total population – have vanished across the United States.

Monsanto made their herbicide, called glyphosate--- brand named as "Roundup"--- and then they made their seed stock of corn and soybeans resistant to this herbicide,--- so farmers plant the seeds and spray the herbicides and the herbicides kill everything but the resistant plants. This is "shock and awe" applied to the plant world and one victim of it, there are no doubt others as yet undiscovered, is Monarchs. They kill milkweed, too which is the host plant for the Monarch. Monsanto should be dissolved as a company, their charter revoked, and their product made illegal.

reasons why this is so. I think the inquiry about the relationship of brain science to religion is very promising, but so far inadequate. Pascal Boyer's thesis in his writings and books is that religion is a by-product of various aspects or mental systems of human brain activity. Humans project 'agency' onto concepts, gods, things or beings that do not possess it. Humans make inferences about intentions in their environment and interact with false information or imaginary fictions. This appears to be an accurate thesis to a point. But there is far more to religion than this. The problem with it is that Boyer largely leaves out history. Boyer is an anthropologist and it is not a bad thing to study a very narrow range of experience in science. But he is really studying tribal religions mostly, which are disappearing. But religions are primarily systems that serve political power and Boyer has barely touched on this fact. Since most of his examples stems from very small tribal groups rather than large religions, he has not studied the effects of ideology on large groups. So, though he is right to study religion via brain science, we are still very far from having a cogent theory of the origin of religion yet, much less its social and psychological development in recent millennia. I think I have started this project here and hope others will continue it.

But this does not mean that the thesis that science will one day assess religion accurately is mistaken. It only means that Dennett's and Boyer's approach is too narrow and weak and leaves out huge areas of fact and inquiry. They are too involved in power systems themselves, and so tend to endorse current corporate power myths and delusions too much. I don't think Boyer quite grasps how much the ascribing of agency to beings or things that do not have it, is a linguistic problem, for instance. The role of language in human societies and how language evolved is still too little known. Humans want to ascribe agency to stones or gods partly because it is easy to anthropomorphize these things given the abstract character of language. Language favors magical and delusional thinking, a given human Joan, or 'Stephen' becomes 'all men'

just by changing a word. Religion magnifies human motives and does so to claim 'transcendent' powers. To do this requires delusions.

I mean to question the magnifying role of "transcendence" in these books. This is a key idea in these books as I think it helps unlock how religions operate and why they become destructive. So I have written an account of a great many "transcendent" delusions across history and reflected on them as a means to show how societies have operated or failed. I show how 'transcendent' delusions helped create nightmare and wars, conflicts, nation states and corporate corruption on many levels. The key to this was following out facts and behavior in many people and institutions.

Religion is a linguistic and political phenomena, a delusion of abstract and symbolic thought. Linguistics teaches us that abstract and symbolic thought is some sort of miracle on earth, but I have been at pains to show this is not the case and all animals lives are significant, not merely human lives. Humans are not better because they have words, indeed, words may make them worse than other species in many cases. There are evolutionary reasons why some people have the ability to dupe others, but it is not because of natural selection, it is because it gives them cultural control and often this is often against the interests of human survival. So the direct role of evolution in religion is not just questionable, but probably non-existent. The disaster on Easter Island was hardly to anyone's benefit, yet, it occurred on one island, largely because of competition, whereas on another Island, Anuta, collaboration, sharing and compassion for others was emphasized. The concept of cooperation encouraged them to share their finite resources equitably, and they survived This was not because of religion but because they were fair. This explains a great deal about why capitalism does not work, as it echoes Easter Island. Finite resources are used to enrich a few and marginalize the many and nature. This is unhealthy and destructive. Capitalism no longer has any real justification for holding power. It was

an ideology like a religion. Religion is the art of delusional theatre, produced to manufacture power over duped followers. A society cannot be based on competition and delusion and sustain itself for long. Nature's rights might become a sustainable idea, the earth a place for all beings to exercise the need to exist and not to suffer needlessly..

In any case, the search for wider understanding of religion via brain science and linguistics is certainly worth pursuing. With Chomsky's work superseded, a new day of inquiry begins. There is also a new awareness that such subjects as language (communication) have yet to be explained well. Language must be studied not merely as a formal system of grammars, but as part of the depths of the natural world, not merely the human centered world. An evolutionary assessment of religion or language will not be enough by itself. R.J. Lifton's work goes much deeper into the psychology of systems of power, assessing their history and how they operate socially and psychologically. Lifton's analysis is far better than Boyer's in this regard. But neither Boyer or Lifton tell the whole story of why religion occurred and why it is now failing. It would be good to see a scientist study religion who combines Lifton with Boyer's and Dawkins approaches, as well as an inquiry into the origins of language, politics and culture.

I have also traced here Russell's, Berlin's and Popper's idea that romanticism leads to fascism. I did this to prove the close relationship of ideology and religion to politics. I have traced this further into the history of poetry and romanticism and their relation to politics. I think I have expanded on Zinn's idea of the history of ordinary people and taken their point of view against religions and institutions. One corollary of this avenue of evidence led into showing how science is really an outgrowth of ordinary people's lives. I have traced the history of the reactionary far right back in time to the Christian repression of the Romans and the Greeks, through the French Revolution and the English civil wars. The French and American revolutions were pivotal events so I dwelled on

them at some length. Then I show how efforts to subvert the advances of human rights thought brought about reactions to the French Revolution sought to reinstate the aristocracy, against ordinary people and women's rights and unions. When this failed corporations arose to take the place of the unjust and powerful, created along the lines of a religion, magnifying the corporation into a transcendent status. Further I show how art followed a similar path with symbolist art trying to restore the bankrupt aristocracies by adopting the Neo classical art of an earlier period and how current corporate art recalls and imitates the Symbolist and traditional art of the past.

This book is also a long meditation on history, from the reasons for the killing of Hypatia and the advent of the Dark Age to Innocent the III and the myths the Templars and then on to the rise of science, the enlightenment and the fading of religion . There is real progress here and so those who decry progress and hate science have a chapter exposing their fraudulent claims too.

It was obvious to me from an early age that the state of things as they are is highly unfair and weighted to the unjustly rich and powerful. I did not write this book to serve power or wealth, on the contrary, I hope to be one in a long line, past, present and future, of those who question the powers that be and how they have organized the world for their own benefit. So these books might be seen to have made judgments about good people and bad people. But that is not very accurate. I do not believe in the existence of evil. There are those who have done harm or whose ideologies promote power and injustice for some at the expense of the many of nature, and so should be questioned. In this category I discuss the shortcomings of Plato, Aquinas, De Maistre, Evola, Nietzsche, The Romantics, Guenon and Schuon, Chomsky, and others. Another category would be those who are questionable but who possibly or probably never existed, such as Jesus, Muhammad, Buddha or Praxiteles. The evidence suggests these are all fictional chapters and

used by elites to create mental systems of social control. And then there are those who I admire and who might be mixed in what they presented but who overall did some good . They helped move the world in a better direction. The latter are my heroes, as it were.

So in the course of the studies for this book I discovered many who have made such efforts. and many others too numerous to mention. I am thankful to all those who helped me. My heroes are not the usual ones and they are not perfect, as I am not either. Among the heroes of this book are Leonardo, who has my deepest love, with his incomparable hand for drawing and his ever fertile brain trying to understand the facts and mysteries of our earth. I owe an apology to Charles Darwin, who I misunderstood in the past, but as I learned more and more I came to admire him almost as much as Leonardo. I also am thankful to Tom Paine, who was one of the only people to participate in all three of the progressive resistance movements in England, France and the United States, Paine is still not given credit for his importance. I admire Hypatia, who held out against the dark ages which overwhelmed and killed her. I admire Blacksmiths, Carpenters and Potters who helped create science, ship builders and artists, engineers and inventors. I admire Llorente, friend of Goya, who researched the Inquisition and who caused the Church to destroy all their records because they did not want the truth known. There is Bertrand Russell, who stood up for science and opposed ignorance and greed, and loved life--and Ed Abbey, who hated Plato and the symbolist mentality that forgets the ordinary in favor of gods and symbols. John Everett Millais who loved the specific and praised the butterfly on the blind girl's coat. He knew that Ruskin was wrong to see only Platonist symbols of rivers and ignore the ordinary creek right in front of him. The realists at the middle of the 1800's created an art whose motives still go on today, and go back all the way to Leonardo. They defeated Ruskin and the closely related aesthetics of the traditionalists in advance of their birth. They defeated abstract art in

advance of its own self destruction and cubes and empty Platonic forms.

I you look at a map of the U'S you will see that a tiny fraction of North American land is set aside as National, Provincial or State park land. The majority of land is abused with impunity and the animals on it controlled or put at risk. The Park system is wonderful, but it is designed to liberate all other land to abuse. This is wrong and the mentality ought to be brought into question. No land should be abused or wasted.

National Parks are great and since 1986 I have systematically lived next wild areas, national or state Parks and Seashores and wildlife refuges.¹⁵⁴¹

The parks in the U.S. park system are tiny and fragmented, but it is one of the few areas left where some rational control is excoriated despite continued efforts of corporations, oil companies, snowmobilers, mountain bikers, or hunters to exploit the land. Since America has been so parsimonious in saving public land and protecting species and biomes, the trees and animals in the U.S are often in decline or facing extinction in some cases. Merely making reservations is not enough. The idea of nature's rights is to make all land and water, air and biome protected and a concern for other species universal. This said, I have lived close to nature most of my adult life thanks to living near wild land. So I wish to say think you to the wild lands of North America.

I want to thank a wetland area where I spent over two years walking around, almost every day in 1998-2001. I called it Heroes Wetland and it has informed most of what I have done since then. I had nearly died of a heart attack, a very bad one and was weak. I was at the end of my Master's thesis and finished it and then stopped caring about the human world. I was tired of the lies people tell, the politics, fantasy, power trips and struggles and the religious atrocities. Nature does not lie. It is sometimes violent, and horrible, yes, but it does not lie or live by fictions. It was so refreshing to see life through their eyes. I studied animals and

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birds, water and clouds, sunlight and rain. It was perhaps two of the best years of my life. I studied animals and birds as much as I could from their point of view. I want to thank the Orioles and Geese, the Raccoons and Warblers, Teals and Deer I learned so much from, watching their births, deaths and lives. This taught me about having children and the importance of rights to these animals. They are not less complex than us, and they live as we do with desires and their different ways of communicating. I learned from them much of what is the bedrock of these books. If there is a basis to these books it is with birds and animals trees and wildflowers. These are in fact where we come from and our relatives, and matter far more than all of human culture. Indeed they are the basis for what is good in our culture and art.

Also I want to thank David Hall, who researched religion in the UK as I did and who came to similar conclusions. We exchanged some warm letters and I was very sorry to learn he died. I would like to thank Val Plumwood, who stood up for animals and women in Australia and the world and who survived a Crocodile attack and loved Wombats, and also John Livingston who fought for nature, and R.J. Lifton, who studied systems of power and mind control and opposed them in China, cults, corporations, Nazi Germany and elsewhere. Maude Murray, who is the real hero who brought Schuon into question and resisted Schuon's autocratic terrorism and delusions of grandeur. She helped bring down a cult leader and lost her mind for a while, in the process. She was later silenced as so many are, by the religion of Islam and the cult. I admire the Nominalists such as William of Occam(d.1347) who helped bring about science by denying Plato. Thank you to everyone who has ever questioned Plato, eventually his philosophy will be rejected for what it is.

I do not want to leave out Russell McCutcheon, who started questioning the domain of religious studies. There are two essays in the first book about Mark Sedgwick and Arthur Versluis that question this area of study concretely. They are not the best chapters in these books,

but they were necessary. I admire the Greek and Roman sculptors, who started making sculpture that was true to life. Also I enjoyed and used Umberto Eco's essay on Ur Fascism, who is a realist, though I have not studied him. His books on art are interesting. I want to thank Thoreau too, who taught me to perceive grasses and ponds, light and ordinary things, and Mark Twain for his skepticism and humor and, Richard Dawkins, Victor Stenger and Steven Pinker. I admire equally, lesser known people such as Clifford Conner, Barbara Ehrenreich, and so many others. My wife Bonnie was especially helpful in this and I thank her and dedicate this work to her.

I don't think I have Richard Dawkins expository skill or thorough understanding of evolution, but I have done my best to explain science and Darwinism and question the meme theory and the theory of evolution applied to religion. Jonathon Miller's attempt to assess the history of disbelief is also something I admire, as his analysis has great merit. Some of the sources I have unearthed here, such as Isaiah Berlin's study of Joseph De Maistre or Karl Popper's study of Plato's ideology were helpful in decoding the enigma of why humans need delusional systems to begin with. I didn't need these authors to tell me that the reactionary thinkers of the 19th century prefigure totalitarian systems, but they deduced this correctly. Critics of these writers have not defeated their analysis. Platonism is questioned to its depths and rejected, and with this romanticism. Shelley and others led me to love Plato earlier in my youth but that love has been burned away now by the fire of facts and deeper thinking. Real life is a fire that burns away the cold flames of illusion eventually, not always perhaps, but undeniably and the world is better than it was hundreds of years ago. It will be better yet if we all keep trying.

My studies have unearthed a lot of interconnected themes that have direct bearing on the study of magnified and delusional systems of authoritarian power. My understanding of power differs sharply from

that of Michael Foucault, who I question acutely. I think this theory of how transcendent systems operate is new and is my own. I explore in minute particulars the mentality of metaphysics and how was used to disparage nature and reality in favor of and irrational patriarchy.

Transcending transcendence is an ironic necessity. I think the idea explained here about how religion is used to magnify motives explains a great deal. Metaphysical systems are examined and shown to be closely connected to political delusions of the far right or systems of unjust power. I have my own political views, but in these books, to some degree, I have gone beyond them, and showed how politics is the basis of many systems of philosophy and metaphysics.

I even wrote critiques here of thinkers that I might otherwise have once liked or admired, such as Hirschman or Chomsky. No one is perfect and the cult of prophets, even if they are right on many things, needs to be questioned. I also wrote an extended critique of the medieval idea of the “Intellect” and its political heritage. It helped created the notion of the romantic self which is the ultimate source of William James vaulting of the ideology of subjectivism, as well as the many who follow upon James in erecting the ‘subject’ as an ultimate. No one has written about this in any depth, as far as I know. I do not say this to praise myself, just to record what I think might be the case, and hope others will carry the torch further. Jack Hirschman got lost in a dream of poetic power, and imagined himself as a template of reality. He wasn’t of course, no one is really. But through him I saw the limits of poetry and its closeness to politics and religion. On the positive side, I learned from Jack to use art as a mode of knowing, and to seek to express major aspects of the time I live in. But I had learned this already from others, like Leonardo. So I doubt I really need Hirschman. I feel art should be clear and understandable, whereas Jack was enamored of esoteric obfuscation..

These three books chart some of the history of the growth of

subjectivism and its hatred of science. I even traced this into Left leaning systems such as post-modernist criticism and Chomsky's rationalism. Chomsky, who is not exactly a scientist, but thinks he is some sort of prophet, and who erected rationalism into a self-serving entity that is some ways he divorced from empiricism. Chomsky has excellent merits as a journalist of great depth and a political thinker, but he has a messianic complex of some kind and his followers tend to get caught in the glow of that cult like aura. His Cartesian linguistics is highly questionable, so I questioned it. I used him as an example of someone of the left who is ambiguous in his overall philosophy and who can be questioned by virtue of the themes and critiques advanced in this book throughout. I am on the left myself, so this was difficult to do, but I think needed to be done. So, again, I look forward to the study of nature and language largely free of the Chomskian approach, and picking up again where Darwin left off and by-passing many of the conclusions Chomsky came to in his late work. I find the study of nature beyond the ideology of Chomsky and romantic idealizations especially exciting and if I were just starting college now I think I might go that way, into the study of species, communications, brains and biological ecologies.

I was at pains to show that even though religion and the state are officially separated in our age, ideology taken over the role once served by religion and ideology infects many of our political systems. Marxism and neo-liberal economic theories are examples of this. I show religion and politics are very close and often indistinguishable. I suspect they will turn out to be one thing, and conditioned by a distorted evolutionary need of group dynamics for cliques and power relations. An analysis of language will be part of this, I think. Undoing the demonization of the other is part of what questioning religion is about and should lead to a fairer and better world. Power dynamics are what ties religion and politics together. While there is an evolutionary element in the mechanics of the development of religion/ideology, this does not mean that religion

was developed by evolution. It merely means that religion is an unfortunate by-product of brain design and power struggles, with systems of make believe serving given groups at the expense of others, leading to violations of rights and justice, as various as the times and places in which they occur. The need of power is an aspect of human evolution, but religion did not evolve, it merely grew up according to the differing power needs of different social systems. So I supply in depth critiques of Zen and the Samurai and Taoism/Confucianism and the cult of the emperor in China. I also question the Hindu ideology of caste and its roots in thinkers such as Shankara or the Vedanta system. I follow this into the use of some Hindu ideas in leaders who promoted and maintained the concentration camps and created the atom bomb. There are long discussion of Christian history too.

I discuss the history of the Eucharist and the likelihood that Jesus is as much a myth as Muhammad. Since this book is really a critique of power and systems of unjust ideology, it goes beyond merely a critique of the religions. Hence there are discussions of Aristotle, who comes out pretty well, if questionable in other ways. Aspects of his thought helped undermine medieval Christianity and that was a good thing, because he helped forge the mentality that would become science. Augustine, Plato, Plotinus and Aquinas, do not come out well, nor do many others, from T.S. Eliot to Heidegger and the Romantics.

Questioning power relations is not just about religion. The religions, small and large, are really just a part of what I have questioned in this book. I have also questioned the psychology of cults and dangerous individuals and organizations, as well as the idea of corporate personhood and the rise of the corporations as an unjust and threatening series of institutions, which replaced the defunct aristocracies. When the aristocracy failed corporations took over. The erected their repulsive fiction of being “persons” on the of the 14th amendment was created to protect the persons of ex-slaves.. The world is

now threatened above all by them. Corporations must go the way of the European aristocracies eventually, and be eliminated as workable organizations. They are responsible for many injustices, not just to labor, but to democracy and the fate of the earth itself, now threatened by global warming and injustices towards nature and animals. The rights of nature and animals shall not be infringed, once they are accorded rights and legal or ethical status and beings in their own right. Val Plumwood is right that animals deserve our care and sympathy, though one hopes a system of legal rights will develop for animals and nature, a land ethic too. Peter Singer is right that they deserve even more than that.

There is a theory of history implied in this book too, but its main features have to be inferred from what I have written. I have a strong basis in both intellectual history, social history and art history. The historiography of my work has idiosyncratic features, as I am partly or even largely self-taught. Even when in schools I was self-directed. Most history is the propaganda of institutions. It took me 40 years to put together what I have written here and my mind is not yet competent enough to figure out why I came to think as I did. But I have expressed inklings as to why throughout the book. It took me a long time to jettison myth and religion from historical analysis, as so much of that is subconscious, but once I did, the way was open to start looking at history with new eyes, unvarnished with adulation of great men, critical of great books and willing to question just about anything, while yet deeply loving of those things that have positive results for those who are in need.. The last book, Persistent Delusions, charts some new ground by exploring history in a new way and reading texts based on a more thorough ground of evidence. My studies in Greek and Roman history and ideas and how they led to science taught me a great deal, as did the analysis fo the Eucharist, Chomskyeen ideology, the history of anti-science and the theory of evolution.

My aesthetic ideas also have a new foundation that is related to both art and poetry. The detailed discussion of art over several centuries underscore and supports my other researches in philosophy and politics and shows again the importance of science and its influence on naturalistic realism and the dead ends of the spiritual in art as well as corporate art. My early attachment to a sort of social realism developed beyond religious associations into an embrace of actuality in landscape and the figure, Plein air painting and a celebration of nature and family. This is and is not personal: it is the way of nature.

The history of myths and religions are full of information about why social orders required or needed delusions. The history also tells us why these delusions tended to undermine the survivability of these social orders. The symbiotic relation of religion and politics in history, shows that religion is not really an effect of evolution per se, but rather is a result of brain anomalies and tendencies that are misused for social motivations. Religion is really not a theory of the world, in fact, but a theory whose real meaning is utilitarian. Religions are not about reality and thus not a theory of the world, but are about control of minds and social control of in-groups, even when such control does harm to the group that is attached to the religion. Islam is clearly a baneful influence on individuals in the Middle East, yet they persist clutching to it. The Mullahs need it, the oil billionaires need it, the men of Islam need it, even if women suffer from this need. The same is true of Christianity. Religion may have had a beneficial impact on culture 5000 years ago, but it is hard to see that it is anything but a problem for method of escape and facilitating injustices today. Religion decreases our Darwinian fitness as a species and threatens the earth just as much as corporatism does. Indeed, corporatism is in some ways an outgrowth of the absolutist state and thus of religion. It too should be questioned as much as spirituality itself. The ideology of corporate personhood is an abstract and transcendental claim that is fundamentally religious and fictional, a

perverse and repulsive abuse of the 14th amendment was created to protect the persons of ex-slaves.

Understanding and dismantling the fiction of religion from the inside out is certainly a praiseworthy goal. I have tried to do it here as a non-scientist, though in the end it is non-corporate science that I wish to justify. I hope others go further than what I have accomplished here. I think I have brought some of the basic conflicts and delusional knots that characterize all religions to the fore. Others need to carry the torch a little farther, and hopefully in a deeper and better way.

I have long wished to write a book such as I wish I myself had had and I myself needed. This is such a book. It surveys a wide area while still going into scholarly detail about very specific things. It would have saved me a great deal of suffering if I had this book years ago, when I was in my teens and curious about everything, including religion. Indeed, this book is a huge red flag which should warn the young to stay clear of the miserable danger of cults, ideological systems and religions. I needed to know why religion is false and why it does not and cannot answer the most basic questions about human existence. I think my book goes far in explaining why religion is false. Only science has proven itself useful in answering basic questions. A scientific understanding of religion itself is still needed, and so far, the attempts to analyze religion from a scientific point of view are not still very weak and fairly superficial. We need to develop means to go deeper into social motivations and how they impact belief and power systems.

As I have gone to pains to show, religion promotes an idea of the self as a supreme fiction. The world or nature is a secondary thing, a mere “Maya” or samara” a place of suffering illness and death. This is a Buddhist myth, and is not the way the world is. There is no escape from reality. Biology is a fact of our lives and it is the first science, as without

life there is no science at all. Physics is a great thing, but it is limited and there is so much we do not know about galaxies, quasars, planets, atoms, forces. But life since is more accessible and deeper. The basic premise of the major religions is a very harmful lie which puts the human invention of a transcendent mind above all.. Nature is not symbolic and to believe this is very harmful. What is really protected in religion and what William James sought to protect was the right to believe subjectivist delusions. There is no evolutionary advantage in this. James was a 'prophet' of the growing arena of marketed delusions rampant in capitalist societies. The cult of meaning that James and others created results in an utterly meaningless subjectivism in spirituality. Spirituality is merely privatized delusions become distractions and enabling devices to allow rapacious greed and power mongering among the powerful, Churches or Mosques, Commissars, Kings or Presidents, cult leaders or corporate entrepreneurs who can then do their business unquestioned and unabated. The glory of the Jamesean era of subjective delusions is that private spirituality acts as a dumbing down mechanism so that they rich can continue to exploit with minimal criticism. In the suburban New Age, everyone revolves around the pivot of their private delusions, to which they are given a right by the Constitution in the 'freedom of religion'. This no real freedom, it is the lie of freedom. The right to choose illusion is a bogus right. Meanwhile, economic freedom which alone would make them really free, is largely taken from them. All religions are cults and delusional systems of adult make believe. It is time to reject the whole Spiritual Marketplace created by James and Huston Smith, religious studies departments and so many others. We must outgrow this and learn to see the world as it is understood by scientific inquiry. We have to also learn to question those leaders and corporations that steal from us our freedom and rights.¹⁵⁴² After all,

¹⁵⁴² How to end Corporate Personhood, Fracking and Citizens United: Corporations should be

corporations themselves are fictional entities, rather like gods, and claim falsely to be “persons” who have legal rights and freedom of speech.

Corporation claim that money is speech.

It is thirty years since I began my experiments with religion. Forty years since I first read William James’ Varieties of Religious Experience. I consider this book to be the negation of the huge mistakes James made in that work. I also I think of this book as a negation of Aldous Huxley’s Perennial Philosophy and as well as a defeat of both traditionalist movement and religion as a whole. I think of this book as a contribution to the ongoing defeat and questioning of religion began by Tom Paine, Charles Darwin, Bertrand Russell, Richard Dawkins, Robert J Lifton, and many others. I love biology and science and mean to do science justice in this book. I also try to express here a love of

legally attacked on the grounds that the very idea of corporate personhood is a violation of the first amendment, which states that government shall make no law to establish religions. Corporate personhood is a spiritual or religious fiction that has no basis in reality. Corporate Personhood is a transcendental fiction, like gods. Corporations do not die, eat, or marry like people. They do not have babies, do not excrete, burp or feel suffering or breathe. They are virtually immortal and have great wealth, which they steal from others. They pretend to a god like status as being beyond time and the vicissitudes of flesh and brains and bones. Such laws as “Citizens United”, give corporations extraordinary ‘transcendent’ rights to equate money and speech, and thereby make corporations godlike citizens against which ordinary citizens are made meaningless mortals compared to these gods. This should be struck down, and ended as a gross injustice. Fracking proceeds under similar usurpations of real citizens’ rights repressed by bogus corporate “persons”. If money is speech than only the rich can vote. Corporate personhood can be abolished under the first amendment which forbids the establishment of religion, and corporate person are religious or transcendent fictions. Corporate Personhood developed out of the idea of the Catholic Church as the body of Christ, which is an absurd transcendental abstraction. Locke’s idea is to create a religion of money based on what he calls “ money- some lasting thing that men might keep without spoiling”. This is to make money into a symbol of eternity. and Money, like the Eucharistic species, brings a resemblance of immortality. Putting corporations beyond risks, like gods, is what the ideology of corporate personhood is all about. Getting corporations out of America is thus like getting the English out in 1776. They are an affront to our democracy. Citizens United was spearheaded partly by Justice Antonin Scalia, a far right catholic who is used to thinking of the body of Christ and the body of corporations as transcendental “persons”. Scalia thought we should pretend that we are back in 1787 and only the reality of that time applied to the Constitution. This absurd position is irrational and wipes out labor laws, school desegregation or abortion laws, and makes no sense, as the constitution has always been a progressive and evolving document as was meant to be such.. He forced Bush to be President even though Gore won in 2000. Scalia died in 2016, having done much damage to democracy, helping republican make the rich obscenely rich, not unlike Louis XVIII.

scholarship and a doggedness of inquiry that I have pursued over many years. Some people have said that this book is an angry book and one that is due to my psychology. But I do not think that is true. It was a patient and calm book that I worked only slowly over many years. It was never written out of passion or hate. Those who hate the ideas in the book are likely to say all sorts of things that are not true. There are things in this book which it is just to be angry about. The caste system is hateful and the destruction of so much of the natural world makes me angry. But I did not write this book out of anger. Indeed, I began this book nearly 20 years ago, in 1996. Or at least that is when I began writing this. Most of what it contains goes back much further than that. I only worked at it intermittently. But I am glad my duty to do it is over. I am free of religion now. I am not happy I spent so much time of this, but I had to if I was going to be thorough. But now I can do other things.

This is not just a scholarly text but has a great deal of lived experience in it. Scholarship needs to be grounded in ordinary life to be real. I went to monasteries and practiced many religions. I knew a lot of the people mentioned in this book, Schuon, Coomaraswamy, Huston and Wolfgang Smith and many others. There are many idealized accounts of these people out there that are largely fiction, which this book tries to correct. Personal experience really matters, as there is no real insight without it. What I learned from these people is that one cannot be a useful thinker simply by reading old texts. One must look at the actual world and try to see things objectively. The dominance of the subject in “spiritual” people leads them far astray of reality. They create gods after their own image, and the Gods they create are usually male dominating misogynists who use ‘life after death’ concepts to solidify power over others here on earth.¹⁵⁴³

I also think of this book also as being a contribution to a more

¹⁵⁴³ Of course there are also goddess worshipers, who merely replace the old male gods with the old female ones, with results that are often just as sexist.

thorough historical analysis of the far right, and why the far right is dangerous and promotes ignorance and anti-intellectualism. The analysis of the far right is not just applicable to America, but also to Iran or India, China or Japan and elsewhere. I don't pretend to be thorough about this analysis, and there are many aspects of the far right that are not dealt with in this book. But I know I have analyzed aspects of the far right that have never been looked at in quite this way before, as I have followed the far right back to Roman times, through religious ideology and to those who rejected the Enlightenment. Certainly more research needs to be done in this regard. The more it is explained the closer we get to having people turn against it, as it is a very destructive phenomena.

Some might find this book overly critical or cynical, I don't think it is at all, if anything is an effort to clear the ground of fictions and help build a new world that is better and kinder to others, including other species. These books begin the direct observation of nature. When I gave up religion I continued my study of the natural world. Nature is not a fiction as gods are. It is an actual, breathing living set of beings and processes. It is not a construction of the mind, though it is in the minds of some who developed romantic views of it. But one must distinguish between poetic views of nature and the actual beings and processes that constitute nature. I delved deeply into landscape and birds, rivers and animals of many kinds. When one sees how Canada Geese, Chipmunks or Orioles actually live and raise their babies it is much clearer what humans are. Our earth is quite an amazing place and all the beings on it are of value. I seek to look at the ordinary as it is, accepting the facts of nature and earth, humanity and history, such as it is, and as we are. Deal with reality. The rest is mistakes and failed efforts.

Critical thinking is an essential component of both science and democracy. Positive thinking is good for millionaires as they are "bullish" on their own profits, but that is no way to live a life. Others might blame me for this or that fault or say this book is due to my psychology. I am

imagined to be crazy, and I wish it were so, actually. Religion could then be excused of its crimes and harms and the world would be so much better off than it is. But that would not be the truth of that matter, and I cannot pretend I do not know what I know. The fact is that I am a realist, and that means looking at things as they are as best I can, even if it is embarrassing or involved me in things I now regret. The hard work of trying to restrict those who desire undue power, and wish to have excessively more than others has hardly begun. Self-assessment is a lifelong process. We all make mistakes. I retain a certain compassion for those who might be harmed by fictions and totalist systems. But once I came to know enough about how systems of power operate, Islam and Stalin or the ideology of American exceptionalism, the Jesus myth or Zen are not so very different. They were all fictions that led to a large variety of power, art, myth and culture and abuses over time. Science is something different, and though abuses have been done in the name of science too, the knowledge that has been gained is incalculable. It is the effort to be objective and realistic that matters, and this means being realistic about the errors and harms done by science too.

This is a book that is meant to turn the reader toward the earth in an optimistic way, encouraging attention to the actual, skepticism of the supernatural, and love of the real. I care about science, and science too needs the same critical eye cast upon it. We can't have just any science, but need a science that is responsible and seeks the best evidence. Not a science that serves corporate or other power, but a science that serves truth. The only legitimate power comes from knowing what is true and helping all to have a life worth living, respecting the rights of nature as well as the rights of humans. The fact that religion has failed us is cause of concern. For instance there have to be better safety nets put up for people and animals. Christian soup kitchens do some good by trying to feed so many, but they do it usually with a kind of blackmail where those who receive there help have to get a sermon or a church service. This is

proselytizing by another name. How can “secular” society address those good things religion has done, but will cease to do as religion inevitably fails further that it has already?.

Religion has convinced mankind to hate actual beings, the world, and ordinary life, sex, women, family, animals, the body, the physical—when these are what really matters. It is no mistake that early art is all about animals and child bearing. This is the stuff of reality. What does not matter is eternity, gods, metaphysics the unreal delusions of mystics, the otherworldly hatred of life, gods, martyrdom, romantic ‘beloveds’, the beyond, the One, “unified fields”, the CEO, or corporate persons--- all of these are conceits and inventions of states and religions, especially male centered ideological systems, which most of them are. This is not to say I favor female centered ideology such as the goddess religions, either. A repugnance for superstition and resistance to dogma, systems of power and the myths that serve them is necessary. Critical thinking cannot be avoided and repressed, no matter how much the state, the Churches or the corporations try to silence dissent and stop free inquiry and the humanities. Appeals to authority go along with delusions and fictions and resistance to this is a virtue. The Enlightenment continues and we are the inheritors of Goya, Tom Paine and Bertrand Russell. Science has made life better in objective ways and that is what matters. It needs to extend its range and be less human centered. All life matters, not just human life.

Virtually all my experiences with religion convinced me it is not worth considering a valid form of knowledge. By default it is a valuable for understanding why human delusions and willingness of self-deception are important to humanity. Religion serves the purpose of helping an old woman deal with the loneliness of a mean husband and a bad marriage, or it might help another woman deal with numerous abortions, or a man who lost his job and is not respected by his children, suddenly finds that

‘god loves him’. Religion is in many respects the detritus left over by the tragic human willingness to believe lies rather than face hard truths. Life’s hardships offer plenty of occasions where one will accept unjust authority because one is between a rock and a hard place or needs a job, or just had a baby, or one’s husband or mother died. Religion preys on all these human weaknesses. The prime purpose of religion appears to be to assure complacency, inner peace and acceptance of hierarchical injustice by means of self-delusion and self-denial, in the face of economic and psychological exploitation. To protect the status quo and insure continuance of the power of the ruling class is primarily what religion is about. This is why even the poor resist questioning religion, as they were taught it is their duty to sacrifice themselves for the church or internalize the will of the masters.

I am quite aware that those who are religious or who unconsciously serve religions out of misplaced notion of ‘freedom’¹⁵⁴⁴ will read this book and ignore it, hate it, misquote it or negate it. That is often the way of the religious, they take pride in ignorance and will do nothing to alleviate it and are proud of that too. I know a Jewish woman for instance who is proud that for her the world is only a little over 5000 years old, as that is old enough for her. Silly to be proud of this sort of ignorance. Creationism begins with just this narcissistic acceptance of myth and reality denial. The religions consider it a virtue to be persecuted for being ignorant and believing nonsense and lies. One invests one’s feelings and

¹⁵⁴⁴ Freedom is a strange concept. It would be interesting to see a thorough study of its history. Lately the concept has come to mean the freedom of the rich upper capitalist classes to do whatever they want and damn the earth and every species on it, destroy the climate and pollute the air and the seas. Such “freedom” means nothing and is merely a delusional exploit, a right to speculate on a corrupt market that hurts the whole earth. There should be no such rights.. Freedom for Courbet meant something very different and was a good thing that he lost due to the machinations of the far right aristocrats who destroyed him. Freedom for Tom Paine was much like it was for Courbet, a real thing that meant liberation for the poor and the middle classes from the oppressions of the rich in England, America and France. Slavery was something that was really awful. It had to be removed. But originally the “freedom sought by the “founding fathers” was based on slavery and was obviously hypocritical, as is most of the freedom preached by the markets today. The aristocracy was also a very unjust system. Their “freedom” negated that of others.

one's life in religion and it cannot be wrong. Religion encourages superstitious complacency, a cosmology of wishful thinking and the metaphysics of self-delusion.

My job was to question this persistently over many intersecting domains and disciplines, over many years and concerning many cultures and contexts. Where I am mistaken, it will be found out by inquiry not dogma. I have gone into the major religions as a participant and come out as a skeptic, maybe even more than that, an exposé of fictions and falsehoods perhaps. This was a very personal book in many ways. I use myself and my experience as examples, a procedure that I think is valid and which bypasses the pretention of disinterested scholarship which has always seemed to me a bit of a ruse and a lie. Certainly there is a need of evidence and accuracy, which I think I supply, but no one is absolutely disinterested. But I do not pretend to a disinterestedness when I was very interested in all the things I discuss. I have developed a certain detachment only after being very attached, and that attachment give me knowledge I would not have had otherwise, and that allowed me some measure of disinterest. I am not bitter, I am on the otherside of bitterness. I have knowledge and knowledge won with hardship. I often use my own mistakes as a starting point and this suggests a deep honesty, and this requires a courage which I think is part of science, or should be part of science. I was involved in a personal way with many authors, beginning with William James, John Dewey, Da Vinci and other heroes of my youth. Most of the people mentioned in this book I did not know personally. Some I did know personally, such as Hirschman, the Coomaraswamy's, Wolfgang Smith, Schuon and Chomsky, though there was little personal involvement with Chomsky. I preferred Zinn, who I met, once, and had a short correspondence with, briefly. It was obvious Zinn was the better man. It was clear to me that he was afraid of Chomsky and bowed down to him obsequiously. I did not admire that. Nor did I admire Chomsky as a man much, though he

wrote some good things. By the time I met Chomsky I was skeptical of such men automatically. Their power was very questionable.

But in the end I had to look at these men and women and my involvements with myself as a sort of specimen. I was myself deluded by each one of these in different ways and at different times and ages. This suggests that there is real insight in these books, born of deep inquiries, but it also suggests that I can be wrong and might be wrong in aspects of this book. It could not be otherwise. Most of my intellectual life as an over thirty five year old adult is in these three books. I was never one to claim to be always right, and indeed, I was a seeker and not a seeker after one doctrine that I could hold too all my life. The world is too rich and various for that narrowmindedness. Where I am wrong I hope others will learn and improve the quest for the truth more than I have been able to do. Books are important but they are never the whole truth. Though it is quite true that without the sharing of knowledge, human kind would still be in caves.

I mean to appeal to ordinary seekers too as well as scholars of wide learning. I have always been interested in philosophy, and this book is a philosophical text. not based on academic study but on lived experience in the real world. My philosophical leanings are toward science and away from transcendentalism, Platonism and philosophy as an adornment of a power system. I spent a lot of time in the book defining my thought relative to a whole array of cultural figures of many kinds, not just philosophers.

I was a student for many years, longer than many, perhaps. I am still a student now. I studied poetry with Jack Hirschman and sat at 'his table' every day and evening for months. I learned from many others I won't name, teachers and friends, even my enemies. I was attracted to critics of the existing system. I could see that those critics were far from perfect people. I could see that I was mistaken in my interest in some of

them, being fallible myself. Hirschman, Chomsky, Schuon, all of my teachers had clay feet, and in the end I grew up, saw their weaknesses and grew beyond them, for the most part. They were dust rising, I do not think of them often anymore. Indeed, if anything I regret being as enamored of them as I was. It was a mistake and I said goodbye to the ruins of each of them in turn. But loving them was a way of deeply understanding them and it was inevitable that the love would, the more knowledge I gained of them. They were all cantankerous people, and Schuon was crazy. My apprenticeship is over now, and I am getting old. I stand on my own feet now, shaky as they are.

It could be that I was looking for a father when I sat with Hirschman in North Beach cafes day after day or when I joined the Schuon cult to see if Schuon actually knew anything real. It soon became clear Schuon was too insane to be a father to anyone. But actually all my so called father figures were bad fathers, even if some of them tried. Even if they were father figures, which I doubt, they were failures at it. I did not get much from them, as such men make bad fathers. I was attracted to men who seemed to offer alternatives to the corrupt world of corporate capitalism. I could see that the world was corrupted by power and money. But they did not offer much in the way of an improvement, and indeed, each of them had their own sort of corruption. I learned much more from animals and birds, nature and art than any of the men I have discussed at length in these books. I have learned much more from my children and my wife.

I did best with those who were friends or brother or sister surrogates rather than fathers. Perhaps if I had chosen other father figures, I would have fared better, I don't know. Or maybe the father/son, master/apprentice relationship ought to be altered to be less hierarchical and more hands on, directly personal, rather more friendly. After my own Dad died I should not have looked for another father. Teachers are best when they are there with you and not some ideal, unreachable genius or

con-man. The best teachers I had were in college and listened to me and paid attention to me as much as I to them. Teaching is really a very personal act, and universities and schools have gone the wrong way to make it more impersonal. Corporate education is not healthy for humans. Graduate school, where there is a supervisor and the student is allowed a great deal of freedom is a better model for many students, even in the younger years. Freedom of inquiry, learning by doing, open discussions, seeking answers to hard questions, these are good things for the very young too. I learned a lot from professors in college.¹⁵⁴⁵ Even small kids need an open ended educationl, where they can invent and create, learn closely with others, like chimps or enlightened homeschool kids. Certainly it was my way, even in high school, to seek out teachers as individuals. I could thrive in an atmosphere where I had freedom to study my own subjects directed by my curiosity and had advisors who would respect that.

In the end the only really instructive and satisfying thing was to become a father and teacher myself. And that I learned from animals and birds and my mother, my wife and children rather than from any man. I value this far more than academic hierarcy which tends to be male centered and too medieval to be taken very seriously. It occiasonaly gets things right, almost be accident. So, the good father I was looking for I hope will turn out to be me in the end. I work at trying to be a good father in any case.. The ideal teacher or father does not exist. But to be fallible and go on loving your own flesh and blood as best you can, that is something. Indeed, being a father myself is the best thing I have ever done. My work succeeds so far as it is grounded in nature and it is gronded very deeply in that.

¹⁵⁴⁵ These were Donald Ramos an expert on Brazil, who taught me all sorts of things, Jim Borchert whose teaching assistant I was and who wrote about black history, David Adams in Native American history, and Thomas Hartshorne in literature. Other teachers have been Jack Hirschman, poetry and politics and Barry Kent Mackay, who taught me a lot about birds and nature.

This book was written by another part of me than the one that loves my kids and family. I am not at all detached there, but in this book, I was often miles away writing it, like a reporter or scientist doing research at great remove, following out all the leads. While the ruins of religion and systems of men's power stand around me, I am made more aware than usual of what matters in life, the green things that come up in spring and blossom into wildflowers. Children, wildflowers, animal lives, the pursuit of the ordinary, the love of nature through art, what could be better than these things? This is what should be the model for education, as well as a model for how one lives.

When I left the poetry world in San Francisco I called it the "zoo of egos", as I watched a lot of more or less corrupt people trying to jockey for meaningless position in the hierarchy created by City Lights. I had no taste for it. There was a similar 'zoo' in the Cleveland poetry world. The phrase 'zoo of egos' is itself mistaken, as it disparages animals too much, who are often much better than humans. In any case, the things I discuss in these books are not me, and no one should confuse me with what I have reported even though I am in this books everywhere and it still reflects my shortcomings and strengths. Do not "kill the messenger". Religion was a dream that in my own life and in the real world, turned into a beautiful lie, or sometimes a nightmare of deceit and I wrote down how this happened and what it all was. Delusions will not stop just because I wrote this book, that is for sure. But at least someone has called attention to how it affects real people and what harm it does to real people in the world.

One must seek knowledge wherever you can and eventually it comes to you, if work for it. To get towards the end of life is an accomplishment all by itself, but to get there and to love children and seek to tell the truth about life as best one can, that is a gift to leave one's children. To get to the end and say what I have learned, that is somewhat what I am about here. I try to say here some of what I have learned in all my studies and

failures, hoping to benefit others. It might help a few, a little, who knows? I did the best I could in the time I have to spend on this.

This book cleans my house of my own delusions and mistakes, to some degree, if not making me immune to other delusions I do not yet know about. It tries to show what I feel has merit in life. Life is the progress toward some measure of clarity, even if it is never entirely clear. In 2007 I wrote something for a book of drawings I made in my teens and it applies to this book too. I wrote

“I've been writing all my life and still feel like the mastery of my craft is not yet accomplished. My writing, like my art, has always been a labor of mistakes and rewriting, starting over every year, every day. I go on creating against the odds, despite unkind critics, my own criticisms, my own altered mind, so different than it was twenty years ago or even last year. My work is under constant improvement and yet is never complete. My life is about slipping into something different than what I thought I was. My writing records a strange change in myself over the course of 35 years. I admire writers who can come to an end and feel they have said what they wished. I am amazed at them. I can't do that. I am always in doubt about what I wrote and realize later on that my doubts were well founded. I've written these books over twenty times and it will not be done even when I am dead. My writing is a process that is never finished. When it is finished I will have failed, and to some degree every work, however beloved it was, becomes my next failure. I am often loathe to say anything is finished because once it is done, it is past tense, no longer living and breathing out of my heart and mind. It succeeds if it lives in someone else's mind and heart. So long as I am alive my work still trembles with expectancy, waiting for me to work on it some more or waiting for a viewer or reader to take it in. The exploration is

endless. My paragraphs are little essays that never quite escape from the time they were written in, even when they are encrusted and added to over many years. I seem to be an encyclopedia of moments, an uncertain humanity enclosed within a restless thought, trying to find my way in nature and loving nature best. I am as far as you can get from Moby Dick, the book that celebrates murdering whales and a metaphor for U.S imperialism. I celebrate self-questioning, the undermining of power and empire. I celebrate self-doubt, changing one's mind, searching. Do not call me Ishmael, or anything biblical. I am inquiry, questions, on and on till the next source of questions and wonder arises. Blame me for this if you wish, or come with me and look at the wildflowers or birds neither of us has yet seen.

I originally wanted to call these drawings essays. That means explorations, attempts. The Philosophical Drawings are like my writing, they are stories about essays, attempts, above all, they are stories of the restless effort to express in drawings what is so hard to say any other way: the story of a restless search for a perfect musical line, an art born of my heart, a quest for the source of the fire burning bright in the depths of the cave of creative possibilities....

This is as true of these books as it was of my early drawings. I am far from perfect and fail often and try again. These three books are really just more attempts at describing reality and I half expect them to fail, as all true things are not the complete truth. I search for the creative moment, the instant where new thoughts open up, the vista I have not yet seen. Sure it makes my work hard to read. But the important thing is to listen to what is attempted to be said, sentence by sentence. It will become clear in the end. There is life in it, and life always involves some failure and some success. The Philosophical Drawings are one of my

many failures, a failure that yet has flowers in it with some hope for betterment. A thousand drawings that seek to tell the story of that time and do so in flashes that fade, imperfectly, trying again and failing again, yet getting up and going on. One is supposed to write like Newton or Aristotle, as if one knew everything, but I don't know everything, and refuse to lie. This is a difficult and argumentative text. I agree with little and argue endlessly about things that might not matter to most people. Such excessively critical thinking is perhaps going too far at times. But since no one else has examined many of these things, some good might be done by it. So I have gone ahead and promote such a careful and thorough vetting of ideological delusions, it seemed to me worth doing. I am interested in creating a reference text which gives anyone who loves science and is critical of religion lots of sources and texts of interest. As a whole, maybe it will be seen and understood by a few, maybe not, but even the fragments have important things to say to someone. Maybe this will extend the care taken by others to find out more and push the many ideas these books advocate yet further.

In the end it is the truth as best one can know it that matters, and truth is often joyful, ordinary or exceedingly painful. So there is pain in this book. I do not deny it. But I use myself as an example of how far wrong it is possible to be and yet still recovery is possible, if only for a time, and if one will try to be honest about it. I have an old fashioned sense, perhaps, that such owning up matters. One can examine one's mistakes with some dispassion. Scholarship on its own is a clarifying process, and so I followed out the evidence, in all the pages of these long texts, as far as I could, given my own strengths and weaknesses. The personal nature of this book insures it will never be quite done. If I live long enough I will see all the mistakes in it and the faults in it, though it is unlikely I will have the time or inclination to return and correct them all. Time cannot be escaped. There is no perfect book and every one of them has faults. I am responsible for all the mistakes of this book. I have

no secretary and no editor, so I am alone guilty of the mistakes, all of them. My typing and editing skills are not that good, so it has been a struggle to type it out and correct it. The more I edit the more I have added, as I am always seeing new relationships and implications. My eyes are not that good anymore, so I do not see all the typos and mistakes very well. Perhaps others will no doubt see the many kinds of mistakes in content I have made too. Few will read the whole thing, no doubt. But, one does not write for the perfect reader, but for the small chance that one might open a mind or suggest a new way of thinking that might make the world a little better place. The internet allows a series of texts like this one to be available by content and not just as a covered book in a library, so I have made it searchable and written a fairly complete and long subject index to make it easily searchable across many subject areas. The purpose of the index, partly, is to cross reference otherwise disparate subjects and show how they all interact through one text. The evidence is self-supporting and makes for very few weak spots in the thesis. This makes the index itself something of a synopsis of the books. It also indicates something of the breadth of the research involved, years, decades or research, which is endless and crosses so many boundaries I long since ceased to think of boundaries between disciplines as real. This is creative procedure and I hope a fruitful one that ought to make others creative too.

I think these systems of make believe created for adults need to be brought much more seriously into question. I think I have done this, for better or worse. This is an intellectual autobiography too, to a degree. I was a thinker and thought through all that I could. Since I wrote this entirely alone and with no support system to further my career. It has a certain honesty and clarity it might not have had. It is a history book too and a philosophical text of sorts. All these implications swarm through the text like so many bees and I hope few will be hurt by it and some helped with the honey that is here. I know there is honey here, and it is

the honey of curiosity and search, science, inquiry and love of scholarship and fairness in thought, nature and art. Some will only see what is negative in it, or see it as unfair, which really has little to do with me, and that is not my fault. It might be their own fears and unfaced delusions they see. I hope this book helps others. Of it there are faults in this book, I hope to come to learn of it eventually. I regularly find that I am wrong about something, so very likely I am mistaken in ways I do not know yet.

I have been a student all my life. I study everything. Da Vinci points out that art is a total education in all directions and this is entirely correct. There is nothing like it. Few artists understand this nowadays. But art opens to everything. Many things can help, from anatomy books to color charts to science studies to drawing from life to art of the past, to seeing birds, people, architecture, trees, inner fantasy, clouds, water, relationships, family, snow, strawberries, apple trees, insects or other subjects as varied as possible. Therefore, while these books explore some of the obvious things I studied, like Jack Hirschman in 1979-80 or religion from 85 to 91, and Chomsky in the 1990's, these are just highlights. I got over each of these people in time, and was not reacting against them so much as I was working beyond and through them, with the exception of Schuon and the traditionalists, who I have rejected and see little merit in.¹⁵⁴⁶

¹⁵⁴⁶ David Fideler, anxious to justify his 'epistemological pluralism' which I think mistaken, writes me and says that I have rejected Schuon only to embrace Dawkins, from one fanatic to another. But this is false, as actually I do not agree with Dawkins by-product theory as I wrote above. But yes, I love Dawkins and think him a very good scholar of nature. Also, Dawkins is not a fanatic. Schuon cannot be taken seriously at all, whereas Dawkins at least is a scientist and rather a good one, explaining in many books what evolution is about.. I do like Dawkins on evolution, and he is an excellent writer on this. His accounts of the evolution of individual beings are fascinating. This is his primary work and value. Fideler wants to justify his Platonistic mysticism. I was interested in science from an early age. It was never a moving from one fanaticism to another. What I like about science is exactly its following of evidence and standing up to fanatics. Fideler's views are mistaken on science and me.

In the end this is the age of tyrants, of Vladimir Putin in Russia and Trump in America, In smaller countries too, from France to Spain to Japan, the global capitalists rule and the far right is resurrecting the old aristocratic falsities, some of them evoke the Traditional delusions and the world suffers under the threat of nuclear and environmental destruction. This is why it is important to understand the threat to the earth and to people who are science loving and aware of nature. We must look at the threats that face us accurately. We must overcome what threatens the earth. But these books are partly the story of this overcoming. In the end it is in restricting the wealthy, extolling the virtues of the ordinary, stemming the black tide of the far right, using science for good and working with and not against nature that matters.

I connect this overcoming to many current thoughts about how I see the world now. But for the most part these books are an intellectual memoir of how I challenged various world views and went beyond them, seeking my own way of thinking and being. There are many things I do not discuss in these books, and I have been aware of its narrow focus.. I lived in England for a while and California numerous times and other places. I read philosophy, science, and studied painting, birds, and wetlands. I will write about many of the other things I have thought about in my life, elsewhere. Here I was mostly concerned with tracing thoughts and actions in my life that involved ultimate questions and the answers I found about why religion is false and how the world operates in history. Strange that I have hated writing this book for years and thought it an intolerable burden to tell the truth as best I could. But here as I come to the end of it, I realize I shall miss it. I will miss the excitement of this inquiry. I will not miss the facts it discusses. Religion is no longer real to me, I am well over it. I am over Schuon, Jesus, Socrates and other members of that disaster. 'Goodbye to all that' and good riddance.

But it was over 20 years of my life that is in this book and it is sad that I have become old in the process. When I began it I was under 40 and now I am over 60. My mind was not settled then and in many ways I was still a young man with my life ahead of me. Now I am mature and I have learned so much, and so many I once knew are dead or beyond reach. Like Krapp in Beckett's play, I look back on my life and see little that mattered but a few moments where everything was clear. No, that is an exaggeration. I am not like Krapp, I have had many discoveries and days of endless inquiry. I am not a romantic as he was, really, but a seeker. In the learning I have seen my own fallibility and my strengths. I am fallible, I know that. These books explore the extent of my intellectual powers. I know that is limited and there are things I must be wrong about. Was I wrong about Chomsky, Hirschman or Praxiteles? Did I do enough research? I think I did a lot. But I am not entirely sure. I am only pretty sure I am right, not totally positive. I am sure I was not mistaken about Guenon or Schuon. Should anyone care? Perhaps not. So what was it all about except an attempt to address some of the ideas current in my time and to be fair to nature and animals, which I truly love? I am sure nature is restorative and unsure that many humans are. It is a story of much searching and loss, finding and going on. I regret that I could not know all that I know now when I was younger. I always knew that what I wanted in life was to study nature, paint and to have children. I do that now and it is wonderful. That is what moves me now, it always did really. But I had this other life, years ago, now largely overwith, and it was so full of sound and fury, and maybe it signifies nothing. Or maybe by writing about it will help a few people not have to go through what I went through, wasting time. People die every day and their whole life is lost. How to retrieve some of this vast experience is a real question. Was I trying to paint a picture of my times by someone who loved passionately in it as best he could. Yes. Maybe that is the value of these books, and it won't be visible to others till after I am gone.

But, on the other hand, I loved the search itself and all the questions that were raised and answered, even if I was mistaken, hardly anyone else thought what I thought.. While I may be wrong in what I say here, being wrong is not the end, as others might raise these questions and find their own answers to them as I have done. It is permissible to study religions as archaic, delusional social systems and trace their effects on thought and behaviors. Things that used to be thought of as nothing, like existence itself, are now shown to be paramount, and things that were once sacred, like Platonic ideologies, are now brought under the microscope to be looked at objectively, and dismissed as false. It is not nothing that nature can restore itself in a few years, and humans have gone on to ruin so much. It is we who must be questioned, nature is innocent of us.

To look at life as it is, is a hard and heavy task, but one that matters greatly. Life is indeed short, and I have examined it closely. I do not regret that and pass what I have learned along, mistakes and all. The burden in the end is trying to find out the truth and admit what it is, once one has learned it. I know many will ignore what I have found out, and a few will realize I told the truth as best I could. It is often a painful process. It would be easier for me if I did not make any of this public.. But that would be dishonest somehow. I liked working on it in secret and taking my time about it, mulling things over, making endless inquiries, doing the research. There is even a hidden joy in it too, and it is in the search itself and the inquiries. They are endless and I will no doubt continue this somewhere else, perhaps in other mediums. But the life worth living is indeed a thinking one, and I have thought myself through life, with passion and purpose, and have not given up on it, just because it becomes difficult or unseemly, and some people dislike hearing it..

So these are books that have my heart in them after all. I have loved doing it even when I hated it. There are those who might say that my judgments are too harsh or that I am unkind to some thinkers. But the

world is a dangerous place and these books contain conclusions hard won over many years of study. I myself have been surprised at some of the conclusions I have come to. But this is what happens when one follows evidence rather than dogma, common delusions or inherited assumptions.

I wished to write a book such as I wish I had 30 or 40 years ago. I needed a book that could have helped me learn what is wrong with the religions and ideological systems of various kinds and why I rejected them. I hope this is that book for others. I hope it will clarify some issues for others. Life begins when you realize life itself is it is all we have. Most of what is harmful in the world comes from greed and cramped minds, walled in by dogma and holding others back and down to prove their need of power. There is no 'other world' and your one chance to help the world, nature and the common good starts here and now, in the open, where animals have as much chance as we to live a good life.

What is space: what is light; why are planets round; what do plants exist and why are our ancestors so closely related to Grasshoppers and Platypuses; and what is color about beyond Newton? Why are plants and animals symbiotic? How is our language related to that of birds, Prairie Dogs and animals? How do we decrease human greed and downsize corporations to make the earth more livable and stop the ruination of it? How do we stop CEO's from ruining lives and environments? Without religion the world becomes full of questions as we begin to see and sense a totally interesting and mysterious place. What is the meaning of earth, water. clouds, biology, comparative anatomy, now that the gods are gone, mere delusions overcome? It is a place we need to explore more deeply and with great sympathy. This is our earth that we share with the great variety of life upon it, and we wish to know all these lives not so we can exploit them, but so we can appreciate them and love them.

The “Great Mystery” is physical and not fictions or metaphysics. As Vladimir Nobakov, who was both a writer and a science man, a Lepidopterist, said, “the greater one's science, the deeper the sense of mystery” So these books lead me into these inquiries.. I have tried to be honest with myself and tell the stories of what drew me and repelled me, and why some things mattered and stay with me and others things failed and I will never go back to them. I cannot do more than this here. There is a lot of objectivity in this effort. Maybe elsewhere in other things I can be of some use. But the subject of this book is behind me now and I am very glad of that. Religion was a dream that failed and is finished. These books are a record of my 25 year education about and rejection of totalistic and irrational ideologies and systems. I see clearly that what matters is not fictions, but facts about our blue planet and the existence of all things and beings here. As a document that records my intellectual searches and to a degree, some of my personal history, including some of my failings, I hope it will be of use to those who made similar mistakes or who might feel and think in similar ways. I hope others might flower and grow with new insights as writing this has done for me.

Mark Koslow, 1996- Aug. 2017

INDEX

I have not indexed all the names in these three books, but have sought to explain some of the content of the books by indexing important concepts and terms that occur throughout these texts. This is a departure from the usual purpose of indexes, as it makes the index into something of a synopsis of the content. This is intentional as I do not wish my meaning to be ambiguous. But this index also serves the usual purpose which is to look up where a given person or idea is discussed. The names that are indexed are part of the central argument and the evidence that support it. I do not usually include all the references to a given name, concept or idea, as this can be done by an ordinary search. I only try to indicate where a given concept of name is most saliently considered. It is thus a much longer index than is normally the case

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