

**d. Paranoid Histories of the 20th and 21st centuries:
and Review of Rene Guenon's Reign of Quantity and the
Signs of the Times**

Part I: 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. ¹

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 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

¹ Noam Chomsky: a Life of Dissent <http://cognet.mit.edu/library/books/chomsky/chomsky/3/10.html>

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 " ². 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, 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. We are supposed to believe he was born with huge understanding, present and unearned in his brain and heart. 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 trickster of make-believe. Laurant's gullibility is really what is at issue here.

² http://www.cesnur.org/2006/plz_laurant.htm Quoted in this review by another rather cultish follower of Guenon, Zoccolelli

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.³

³ 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

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 of 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 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 'Congress of Quantity' 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.⁴

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. 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.

He is such a dark and brooding writer. Where did the dark in Guenon

⁴ “Eternal Fascism: Fourteen Ways of Looking at a Blackshirt

come from? There was something dark, brooding and sinister in Guenon, like Edgar Allen Poe or Baudelaire⁵. 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 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,⁶ a vampire Sufi in a land of numerical and Kabbalistic conspiracies.

⁵ A helpful French correspondent tells me that Baudelaire can be shown to have had tendencies toward the "theofascist". 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 Papers LXXIV

Baudelaire thought 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." The reasoning that he learned was a nightmare. 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. 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 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." He has the idea right, but it is phrased as a joke. The idea expressed well 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.

⁶ 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, 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

Guenon was Rumi and Dracula in one person, acting out a crazy scenario in a 1950's horror movie.

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, 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 was merely play acting at being a theofascist, but Guenon was the real thing. 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. Guenon seemed to be part of the outsider romantic tradition. 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

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

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. By 1991 I knew it was not true. I had wasted 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.⁷ 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. 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 this Jack was a kabbalistic communist and prone to question our culture from a radical point of view. I liked that. 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. There was so much paranoia on the streets with homeless people in many cities. Bombs being dropped on Vietnam or 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. Jack was one of those that Walter Benjamin feared when he said that "the struggle against ideology has become a new ideology".⁸ In 1979, Jack

⁷ 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.

⁸ The Correspondence of Walter Benjamin and Gershom Scholem 1932-1940
edited by Gershom Gerhard

couldn't see around all this—around his own political/spiritual confusion and his ideological hatred of ideology and I needed to know why.⁹ 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, but when died, in fact in 1784. 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. He also thought at different times that he was Wandering Jew, or the Golem, or any figure that seemed immortal, martyred or powerful, from Stalin to various cult leaders.¹⁰ In a later book he tries to identify himself as a Vietnamese

<http://books.google.com/books?id=M1JQA66rxsEC&pg=PR13&lpg=PR13&dq=counter-history+scholem&source=bl&ots=YL4rJPDAmM&sig=A9trfSV2NvrQSx8NuOqd3bZBBWo&hl=en&sa=X&ei=PieoUczgO8avygH6vIDIBw&ved=0CFYQ6AEwCTgU#v=snippet&q=counter-history%20&f=false>

⁹ 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 far 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.

¹⁰ 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 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 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

practitioner of Voodoo.¹¹ 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 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. I don't think Jack ever 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. Fascism is really a part of human nature, what Hannah Arendt awkwardly called the "banality of evil". It is a will to power as Nietzsche called it, again without really understanding

Christians who could not admit the destructiveness of Christianity, or Zen Buddhists who deny the ruthless samurai origins of Zen.

¹¹ 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 a 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 Jack's 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 fanatical obtuse and emotional irrationality this 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.

what he was saying. Jack was on the verge of questioning this power, but he could never really question the religion he made of Marxism, unfortunately.

Jacks' fascination with cults was interesting. 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. 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. This is not a justification of capitalism, but a reasonable questioning of cults. The cult 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.

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 teachers of mine like Schuon or Chomsky were likewise flawed and very problematical. But they posed answers, and even if their answers were flawed, they did ask questions. In 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. 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. I had sympathy with his concerns for the workers and the poor. I admired his journalistic tendency and in one sees his Arcanes are a Poetic Newspaper. He was inspired by Mayakovski, the Russian poet and Amiri Baraka, and

interesting African American poet who died in Jan. 2014.¹² He thought his surreal and 'automatic' "voice" was sacrosanct. Whatever arose in him is what mattered. This meant his romantic subjectivity became the criterion of truth. 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 too 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, the non-entities. I read Marx in my teens and though I had a certain regard for his early work as a social protestor, and with Engels, I disliked wwaht was done with these ideas and the later Marx

¹² 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.

is partly responsible for a lot of death.

The same mentality 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). The allusion in the last line is, (“you will find me”) of course, to Jack now evoking Joe Hill, as in one of Jack’s favorite folk songs “I dreamed I saw Joe Hill” last night”. This was a song Jack used to 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. I certainly can identify with the longing in such songs to be free of corporate repression. But when one moves over to delusion, as Jack so often did, it became problematical.

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 and by Heidegger’s Enowning. Jack had this need of quasi-sacred texts like this . 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.

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. The Marxist Shekinah

was someone he often drew in the drawings he would hand out for free in cafes and on the street. 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 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 meant that one must see only with Marxists eyes, Just as Guenon 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.

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, and I feel I have yet to find a real way to do it responsibly, since so much of its basis is questionable. A poetry that serves Marxism or capitalism, Buddhism or Sufism seems inherently flawed, hard to take seriously¹³ 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. I should add that I also love it, and keep doing it, though I am probably not a poet at all. Indeed some of my critics have said as much and there may be truth to that. I tried to write poetry for many years,

¹³ See a film about Jack here. The Red Poet:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eWHTzYbCypc>

and too often failed at it. Or rather, it never quite struck me as true, even though I tried very hard, as language seems to be a very flawed medium. Prose is at least less subjective and able to be checked against fact.

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, because 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 totalistic power a poetry of theofascism. I dislike poetry because Plato's theory triumphed. Poetry does serve power, with a few exceptions.

Sure, there are few poets who question power, but most artists and poets end up serving it. Poetry is largely reactionary. Mayakovski ended up serving Stalin. Dante served the Church. Ezra Pound served Mussolini, Barks served Rumi and the Koran and Muhammad. Ginsberg served a form of anti-rational Guru centered Buddhism. My friend Jack Hirschman 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. 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 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.

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.¹⁴ 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 grail behind the veil, as 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, Maykovsky with clouds in his trousers, Buddha having overcome everything existing, this is great fiction. But I saw that religious ecstasies, and I was one of those, are not humble people at all, but rather people who long to be the voice of an absolute

¹⁴ 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..

power. 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 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 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 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. The same is true of Guenon. 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 is a vain desire that hides behind it a will to power.

That is partly why poetic claims to be a seer or prophet should not be exaggerated. 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”¹⁵ prophets out of the same tendency. While I love Chomsky for his admirable opposition to corporate power, his comparison of himself to the biblical prophets was embarrassing.

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 of not to become inflated with such missionary delusions. To some degree Chomsky has encouraged a cult about himself. 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 and knowledge. 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. 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, which I often agree with. I object to his encouraging a cult like atmosphere around himself.

The claim to be a prophet is a claim to a special authority or peerless

¹⁵ Said, Edward *Representations of the Intellectual: The 1993 Reith Lectures* (1994),

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. He 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.

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.

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” mystical inflation of Taoist/Confucian themes, the often trying 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.

There are various reasons why I have rejected the image of poet as prophet. The most obvious reason is that inflated poetry serves systems of knowledge and power. But the reason for this is somewhat complex. The problem is that most systems of power and knowledge define humanity as fundamentally lacking and in need of radical improvement. 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, but there is another sort of fascism, closely connected, which might be secular and I have no name for that. Perhaps transcendofascism or totalist-fascism or Maostaliterism, or even more convoluted would be TorqaMaoInnoStaliterism, combining three of the 20th century tyrants, or combining all five of the bad men of the last thousand years of religious and secular mega-tyrants.

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, 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.

’ 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 fo 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. 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 cold 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 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". 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. In 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. 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

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 orthodox religion has been largely discredited by science.

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 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 straight 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 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. 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 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 paean to Manifest Destiny, Ezra Pounds fascism or Eliot's affinity with the Nazi antisemitism.

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". There is a close relationship between myth and power structures, religion and economics, symbols 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 but who 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.¹⁶ Of course one man cannot be everyone, and the attempt to become so creates an injustice. The problem here is again symbolist 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.¹⁷ 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

¹⁶ 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>

¹⁷ His fantasy of burning New York is graphic...."For this Manahattan also must go, and the Bronx and Brooklyn too..... it's all gonna light the rain sulphuric in this here twon gonna buirn, with flames on all five sides, and uptown and down" Arcanes, Ist volume: Pg 220

was one Islamic ideology attacking another which had harmed the first to begin with. Islam attacked capitalism 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. None of this need have happened, and could have been prevented if states were held back from becoming transcendental systems.

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. He identifies with a Palestinian suicide bomber in the "Yakov Arcane". "I am Ali in the dynamite stick in Palestine", he writes 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 shinning new world order heaven, Marxist paradise. The martyred¹⁸ 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 and ideology..

This process of magnifying motives on the basis of myth 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 feature' too, however it might be

¹⁸ 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.

wonderful in other ways. Whitman's nationalist grandiose self, Nietzsche's Zarathustra and some of Wager'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. ¹⁹ 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 attempts connect himself with Blake as the inheritor of a lost 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. 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

¹⁹ (Ginsberg, Partisan Review, 292)

valuable thing in itself--- they made the mistake or 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 and 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.

We need no more speeches delivered from Buddhist, Islamic, 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 or 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 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 that 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.

I did not know that I had made a religion out of literature until 1991. 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. City Lights books was a beacon to a lot of 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.²⁰ 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 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. 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 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 roamtic 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

²⁰ 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 world wide 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. I got tired of it pretty quickly and found the madness and anger hard to deal with in concentrated doses.

work.

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. 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 and power 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 world 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.

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 of corporate entities. Merrill Lynch, Burroughs adding machines, how does James Merrill and his Ouija Board and Burroughs and his cut and snip differ? 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. I imagine a poetry that is like birds 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, 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, are we are them too. The ancient people already knew this and animals are women are what ancient art is all about.

I like Neruda' 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. 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 and 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 that signaling through the flames.

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. Poetry opposes all dictators, all power mongers, all fake combinations of word games designed to deceive or merely entertain. 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 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.

' 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 so 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. We do not need to make Joyce's mistake, or Blake's. I use my mind because I love nature, not because I love the min". 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 the impure.

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 sunlight and planets, plants and animals. A poet needs to separate her/himself the spinners of illusion and technological 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 does not deny reason, does not deify, does not worship the irrational and which looks at the world squarely and honestly.

The Beat poets left us with the ability to forge a truly democratic poetry, not based on competition, and which serves no elite ideology. I like that they did that. But I was disgusted with them in other ways, 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.²¹ 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

²¹ 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. I saw Gregory Corso shoot Herion one day. There are other examples, but this should suffice to make my point.

exist. 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 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. 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 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. 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 or gnostic.

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 Mallarme-like jewel-box, the Rimbaud high dive into the deluge. I do not believe in revolutionary ecstasy, 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. 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.

Poetry must find its way in this world---- the only world there is--- without any opening in the clouds at the mountain top. Poetry must come from our ordinary lives, or struggles to face the aging, suffering, birthing, loving and dying and living with other beings in nature and in cities. I want a poetry 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. I want a poetry that could save species, that questions and dethrone 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, lonely old women, 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 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?

“ This still sounds a bit inflated I suppose. But it is what I mean that matters, not how it sounds. But that anyway, 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 year” 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. Jack embodies both what is terrible in poetry and what is good. 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.

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. Like Guenon 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? “that kind of sense? I think he is the best poet of his generation and I prefer him to Ginsberg, for instance. 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 had 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.

So, this is the context of my encounter with Guenon. In the 1970[“] and 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 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 money 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 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.²² 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 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.

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.

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 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 Marxist then to consider such questions valid. I had no idea AKC was such a reactionary.

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. ²³. 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. 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. 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 with

²³ 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.

the facts of his life are admirable.²⁴ 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. 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 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

²⁴ 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

psychology itself.²⁵ As much as Guenon hated Sigmund I think Freud was objectively correct when he compared religion to a childish delusions.

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, 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. 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 was killed in the camps long after Kafka had died. Something in him 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. ²⁶

²⁵ Schuon also attacks psychology as discipline. Schuon crated 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 wall 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. 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.

²⁶ 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

Guenon is Kafka's hated father, or the evil kin of the Inquisitor who wants to torture Kafka.

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, an 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. Guenon 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

derived this from a nostalgia for Prussian aristocratic values, -- and a similar nostalgia would enthrall 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.

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.

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.²⁷ 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.

²⁷ 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.”²⁸

“Extra Ecclesium Nullus salus”²⁹ 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 Geay ³⁰ 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

²⁸ Hitchens, Christopher. God is Not Great. N.Y. N.Y. Twelve. 2007. pg 246

²⁹ Wolfgang Smith wrote a ridiculous essay that had this title and tried to justify this hateful dogma of Extra Ecclesium Nullus salus

³⁰ <http://www.libroelibri.com/regleabraham.htm>

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, torture, murder and betray without shame and remorse."³¹The 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. 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:

³¹ Hoffer, Eric. The True Believer: Thoughts on the Nature of Mass Movements Perennial Classic pg. 100

they claim they know the “inward truth”, the truth no one else knows. This is the nature of cults and totalistic systems, to only listen to automatic speech, to 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, it resides with children, leaves, efforts to love life and be in the Plein Air world of kitchens and bathrooms, birds and salamanders, jobs and hospitals, violins, schools and parks, where we all actually live.

Part 2 Review of Reign of Quantity.

So with this background in mind let us look closely at Guenon’s book. It has been interesting to read Reign of Quantity again.³² 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

³² 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.

requires careful documentation of a historical nature . 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. “³³

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.³⁴ 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.*³⁵ Aristotle uses them to try to describe the

³³ <http://www.trimondi.de/SDLE/Part-1-10.htm>

³⁴ 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)
http://www.amazon.com/Red-Shambhala-Magic-Prophecy-Geopolitics/dp/0835608913/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1300734895&sr=1-1-spell

³⁵ 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 Guenon. Both authors

actual world, not the fictional nether worlds employed by Guenon. Thomas Aquinas lifted Aristotle's concepts into absurd uses and Guenon follows Aquinas.
³⁶*Guenon 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 make everything about degrees of higher and lower, leading up to his preferred delusion of god.

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 off quality is much overblown when really skill or craft would have been a sufficient things to praise without all the metaphysics to bolster the authenticity and art or craft.

³⁶ 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 the 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

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.”³⁷

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, requires that someone be ill. He is therefore not really any more “solid” than the things that happen to him.”

³⁷Russell, Bertrand, History of Philosophy, NY, Simon and Shuster 1945, pg. 201

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 calculus³⁸. 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

³⁸ Guenon, Rene. The Metaphysical Principles of Infinitesimal Calculus unpublished (?) Manuscript translation by Richard Pickrell. Pg.152

*“...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”.*³⁹

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.⁴⁰ Of course none of Guenon’s prophecies have come to pass“ The traditionalists have 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.

³⁹ Ibid pg. 152

⁴⁰ 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

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 ⁴¹ and 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 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

⁴¹ This abuse of Descartes is common in the 20th century. I will discuss that more in the last chapter of this book

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 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.⁴²

⁴² 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

Guenon says that: "The doctrine of cycles.... Is naturally implicit in and fundamental to the whole of this treatise", namely the *Reign of 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

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 expect 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.

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 offshoot within 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 “initiatic teaching” as opposed to “profane education”” (pg 75)

such as Guenon thinks we have now in our schools, and which Guenon considers devils' teachings. ⁴³ *One definition of profanity states:* "A profanity is a word, 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 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.

⁴³ 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 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.⁴⁴ 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 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

⁴⁴ 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>

“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”. ⁴⁵ 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 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

⁴⁵ Ibid pg. 232

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 than 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.⁴⁶ No one is able to ask any 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.

⁴⁶ 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 is more than amply demonstrated in Guenon's text Reign of Quantity. (see Men Among the Ruins pg 98)

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”⁴⁷. 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 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

⁴⁷ 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.

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”.⁴⁸ 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 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

⁴⁸ Lucretius, On the Nature of Things Dutton. N.Y 1957 pg. 224

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 in an individual who is the "satanic caricature of everything that is truly traditional and spiritual"⁴⁹

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".⁵⁰ 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 of 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

⁴⁹ Ibid. pg.326

⁵⁰ Ibid. pg. 238

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 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.⁵¹ 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.⁵²

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

⁵¹ 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.

⁵² <http://www.traditionalists.org/write/tradsuf.htm>

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 may not even have existed, was not attacked by any 'sorcerers' and neither was Guenon.⁵³ 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.⁵⁴ The Apocalypse or Revelations, is a bogus text,

⁵³ 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.

⁵⁴ 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

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. John⁵⁵, if there was such a person, which is probably another fiction, created by the same Gospel writers. The earliest extant manuscript evidence⁵⁶ 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.....

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>

⁵⁵ 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 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.

⁵⁶ Some of the basic dates of various New and Old Testament biblical manuscripts can be found here http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_manuscript

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 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 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,⁵⁷ created by his own mind, and in his madness he cannot distinguish true from false. As fascinating as this madness

⁵⁷ 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

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 insanelly 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 or 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”⁵⁸

In these good old days life was “brutish and short” as Hobbes says and priests ruled everyone’s lives.⁵⁹

Guenon was a profoundly disturbed man suffering from paranoid 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 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

⁵⁸ <http://stevenpinker.com/publications/better-angels-our-nature>

⁵⁹ 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.”

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 harmless, who is one of the fathers of early brain science, and a sort of forbear of people like John Dewey. James is not threatening to anyone either. I disagree with his 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. ⁶⁰

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? 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 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

⁶⁰ 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.

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. ⁶¹

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”. ⁶²So Guenon was affronted by Bergson who apparently and rightly does not believe in this paranoid nonsense and does not have such attacks. Guenon is jealous that unlike himself, Bergson he 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

⁶¹ Ibid pg. 270

⁶² 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 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.

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 though 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 standard. ⁶³ 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

⁶³ 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 though 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.

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;

The big evil for Pound as for Guenon, ---as well as for crypto-fascist historians like Oswald Spengler is the Renaissance, Pound⁶⁴“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”. Pond 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

⁶⁴ 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, Wyndam Lewis etc.

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.⁶⁵ Indeed, the sale of indulgences is one of the origins of the private insurance racket, which began also with insuring slaves and slave 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.⁶⁶



⁶⁵ 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.

⁶⁶ 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 organization 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

One of JMW's great paintings is of a slave ship in which the captain of the slave ship "Zong"⁶⁷ had ordered 133 slaves to be thrown overboard so that insurance payments could be collected. Insurance companies got 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

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.

⁶⁷ 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...

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 of Bacon, 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 project ⁶⁸ 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 Capra⁶⁹ or of the modern period hate Descartes undeservedly. He is credited

⁶⁸ 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.

⁶⁹ 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

with bring us materialism, reductionism and relativism⁷⁰ and all sorts of other New Age and Traditionalists bugaboos.⁷¹

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.

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 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.

⁷⁰ 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.

⁷¹ 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. ⁷² 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 instrument makers. These are the very “low”

⁷² 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.

people that Guenon despises so much ⁷³ 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. It 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 history."⁷⁴ 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".⁷⁵ Caste and

⁷³ 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.](#)

⁷⁴ From Sam Harris, [Letter to a Christian Nation.](#) Pg ?

⁷⁵ 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

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 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

moralistic and someone with “bad Karma” is supposed to come back as an animal humans despise. They will be animals 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.

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.⁷⁶ 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”.⁷⁷ 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, Coomaraswamy, Lings or Evola were ever able to do. ⁷⁸

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,

⁷⁶ 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

⁷⁷ See New York Times May 18, 2012

⁷⁸ 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/>

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 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, shinning 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 be 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.⁷⁹ For Guenon only traditional yoga, which was hierarchical and

⁷⁹ 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.

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 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. ⁸⁰ Guenon was addicted to opportunistic secrecy.⁸¹ 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

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.

⁸⁰ 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

⁸¹ 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.

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 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 deceive.

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 thing 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. ⁸² One would think that in order to

⁸² 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 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

prove the end of the world Guenon 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 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

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

explosion at Krakatoa. There was probably Plato's Atlantis. There 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 make" 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. 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.