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Richard Dawkins and the Rise of Atheist Scientism (Scientism Critique: Part 1)

Scientism is the ideology of science, and hasn't anything to do with the actual scientific methods used by researchers all over the world.

Today we are seeing a rising tendency to that science is being abused as a way of getting an ideology induced into people. I have in my articles and books several times asked this question:

How, given the recent and sorry story of ideologically motivated conceptions of science – Lysenkoism in Stalin's Soviet Union, for example, or Nazi critiques of "Jewish science" – could it again have become acceptable to behave in this way?

We see it especially in the rise of atheist scientism and new age scientism.

This Ebook will be the first of a three-part series on the rise of scientism. The two others in the series will be called: [Rupert Sheldrake and the Rise of Neo-Lysenkoism \(Scientism Critique: Part 2\)](#), and, [Gregg Braden and the Rise of New Age Scientism \(Scientism Critique: Part 3\)](#).

Recently I stumbled over an article by Rupert Sheldrake, where he openly supports some kind of Neo-Lysenkoism. This was quite a shock for me, and I knew I couldn't let it go. I realized that my previous article on Sheldrake had to be revised, and that I had to do a bit more research. Then I discovered his almost complementary relationship with Richard Dawkins. Remember: Dawkins's most notorious work is called *The God Delusion*. As an answer to this Sheldrake has written a counter-work: *The Science Delusion*. Richard Dawkins is a head figure in the skeptical movement (which claims to represent real science), and Sheldrake has in fact created a counter-skeptical movement, consisting of New Agers (the new, *real* scientists, according to him).

In this way, Dawkins and Sheldrake represent the two extremes in the so-called heredity and environment controversy. Together, the "Heredity and Environment Controversy" forms scientism as we experience it today.

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1) Introduction

Richard Dawkins' website is called: *Richard Dawkins Foundation for Reason and Science – A Division of the Center for Inquiry*. Note the concepts implied. It is concepts which require quite a bit of commitment. As we shall see in this ebook, Richard Dawkins and the movements supporting him, are everything else than what they on the surface claim to be representatives of.

Richard Dawkins is presented in this way:

One of the most respected scientists in the world and the biggest draw in secularism, Richard Dawkins always generates impressive crowds when visiting North America. Secularism is sweeping America as a movement, and Richard Dawkins is the catalyst who galvanizes it.

*From 1995 to 2008 Richard Dawkins was the Charles Simonyi Professor of the Public Understanding of Science at Oxford University. He is an internationally best-selling author. Among his books are *The Ancestor's Tale*, *The Selfish Gene*, *The Blind Watchmaker*, *Climbing Mount Improbable*, *Unweaving the Rainbow*, *A Devil's**

Chaplain, The God Delusion, The Greatest Show on Earth and The Magic of Reality. His most recent books are his two-part autobiography. Part 1 An Appetite for Wonder, released in 2013 and A Brief Candle in the Dark released in 2015.

He is a Fellow of the Royal Society and of the Royal Society of Literature. His around-the-world speaking tour is the focus of a recent documentary "The Unbelievers" which also features appearances by Woody Allen, Stephen Colbert, Cameron Diaz, Ian McEwan, Ricky Gervais, Stephen Hawking, Eddie Izzard, Bill Pullman, and Sarah Silverman.

There is something in this presentation which is strikingly similar to the way New Agers present themselves. And this similarity will be a common thread through this text-series. That Dawkins is presented as one of the "most respected scientists in the world" is, to say it mildly, economy with the truth. Despite promoting the virtues of science and scientific research, Dawkins is no longer involved in conducting original scientific research but is in effect a "science popularizer". Within the scientific community Dawkins is generally regarded as a very good communicator of science, but certain public hagiography of him as "the greatest scientist since Darwin" is misplaced. Like Sheldrake and Gregg Braden, most of his ideas are based on those of others, in particular the likes of R. A. Fisher, W. D. Hamilton, John Maynard Smith, Robert Trivers, and George C. Williams. To be fair to Dawkins, he always cites and defers to his sources, but some Dawkins fanboys don't catch onto historical and social context in which he has written, despite his stating them in his writing! Similarities between his books also leads to the criticism that he's written "the same book" again and again.

The only "scientific" work Dawkins has made is to invent the concept of the "meme", which he introduced in his book: *The Selfish Gene*. The Meme is a pseudoscientific concept, which is no more testable than Sheldrake's concept of "morphic resonance". I will return to this.

This leads to another criticism: namely that there seems to be two versions of Dawkins: the one who is very good at putting the work of others together, so that it looks like it is Dawkins himself, who is doing some thinking. The other version is the polemicist, and this is the version which has made Dawkins notoriously famous. It is also this version I believe is the true Dawkins. The polemicist is a contradiction of everything Dawkins has committed himself to: reason and rational argument. Let me give an example from *The God Delusion*. The God that Dawkins does not believe in is (and I quote from page 31): "a petty, unjust, unforgiving control freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser; a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal,

genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously malevolent bully.”

And religious people are all under one characterized as deranged, deluded, deceived and deceiving; their intellectual capacity having been warped through being hijacked by an infectious, malignant God-virus. In short: religious people are idiots. Dawkins sees religion, as he once put it on Twitter, as “[an organised licence to be acceptably stupid](#)”.

Furthermore: the “rational arguments” in the book is simply a bunch of poor reasoning, diversionary ploys, seductive reasoning errors, techniques of persuasion and avoidance, strawman tactics, sarcasm, etc., etc. It is impossible to go into it all, since this characterizes almost every page of the book. However, it is cleverly mixed together with his quotations from people who actual is capable of thinking.

Dawkins is seen as a head figure in two movements: new atheism and the skeptical movement:

1) New Atheism

New Atheism is advanced by a group of thinkers and writers who advocate the view that superstition, religion and irrationalism should not simply be tolerated but should be countered, criticized, and exposed by rational argument wherever their influence arises in government, education, and politics.

On September 30, 2007, four prominent atheists (Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, Christopher Hitchens and Daniel Dennett) met at Hitchens' residence in Washington, D.C., for a private two-hour unmoderated discussion. The event was videotaped and titled "The Four Horsemen."

It is especially *The Four Horsemen* which are the top figures behind New Atheism. And what I in the following booklet have to say, could be said for each of these figures.

New Atheism lends itself to, and often overlaps, with secular humanism and antitheism, particularly in its criticism of what many modern-day atheists regard as the indoctrination of children and the perpetuation of ideologies founded on belief in the supernatural.

Some critics of the movement characterize it as "militant atheism" or "fundamentalist atheism". This is precisely what it is. Why use the term “atheist fundamentalism”?

The concept “New Atheism” is in my view an inadequate term, since it, for example, doesn’t show the significant difference between a radical atheist like Richard Dawkins, and a moderate atheist as for example the philosopher Michael Ruse. These two modern-day atheists are, so say it mildly, very different, though they have the same above-mentioned missions. The difference could be said to be between an “irrational foundation” and a “rational foundation” in their arguments. Michael Ruse is a philosopher of science and uses rational argument, while Richard Dawkins is an ideologist who uses irrational argument; that is: prejudice, dogma and manipulating rhetoric. And yet Dawkins’s works must be characterized as philosophy, or rather: junk-philosophy. As we shall see, they are rooted in reductionism.

Dawkins’ polemic style has been adopted by other skeptics who very seldom are actual philosophers. Let me use the attacks on Michael Ruse as an example of the lack of rational argumentation these people are exposing. Ruse has sought to reconcile science and religion, a position which has brought him into conflict with Richard Dawkins. According to Ruse in 2009, "Richard Dawkins, in his bestselling *The God Delusion*, likens me to Neville Chamberlain, the pusillanimous appeaser of Hitler at Munich. Jerry Coyne reviewed one of my books (*Can a Darwinian be a Christian?*) using the Orwellian quote that only an intellectual could believe the nonsense I believe in”.

Ruse has also been in a conflict with Pharyngula “science” blogger [P. Z. Myers](#) (also a biologist, not a philosopher). Ruse says that “P. Z. Myers has referred to me as a 'clueless gobshite.'”

There you are. Ruse was therefore quite precise when he said that new atheists do the side of science a "grave disservice", a "disservice to scholarship", and that "Dawkins in *The God Delusion* would fail any introductory philosophy or religion course", and that *The God Delusion* makes him "ashamed to be an atheist". Ruse concluded, saying "I am proud to be the focus of the invective of the new atheists. They are a bloody disaster".

All this shows one of my concerns with the rise of scientism: the elimination of philosophy. We see a constant increase of “scientists” who want to be philosophers in the place of the philosophers, and are doing a great deal of work of destroying both philosophy and science. They more and more take the shape of a comical figure: [Iznogoud](#).

In this ebook I will show how this is coming to expression in the difference between philosophical education and ideological education, and how surprisingly self-contradictory new atheism is in its advocacy of rationality and science; an advocacy

which only seems to be an excuse for beginning a pathological, eliminating warfare against religion, or anyone who doesn't believe the same as themselves. In other words: the rhetoric and lack of rational argument exposes new atheism as a hard-bitten ideology. The only adequate term is fundamentalism.

2) *The Skeptical Movement*

The skeptical movement is a modern social movement based on the idea of scientific skepticism.

Scientific skepticism involves the application of skeptical philosophy, critical-thinking skills, and knowledge of science and its methods to empirical claims, while remaining agnostic or neutral to non-empirical claims (except those that directly impact the practice of science). The movement has the goal of investigating claims made on "fringe" topics and determining whether they are supported by empirical research and are reproducible, as part of a methodological norm pursuing "the extension of certified knowledge". The process followed is sometimes referred to as skeptical inquiry.

The roots of the movement date at least from the 19th century, when people started publicly raising questions regarding the unquestioned acceptance of claims about spiritism, of various widely-held superstitions, and of pseudoscience. Publications such as those of the Dutch Vereniging tegen de Kwakzalverij (1881) also targeted medical quackery.

Using as a template the Belgian organization founded in 1949, Comité Para, Americans Paul Kurtz and Marcello Truzzi founded the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal (CSICOP), in Amherst, New York in 1976. Now known as the Committee for Skeptical Inquiry (CSI), this organization has inspired others to form similar groups worldwide.

CSI is a program within the transnational American non-profit educational organization Center for Inquiry (CFI), which seeks to "promote scientific inquiry, critical investigation, and the use of reason in examining controversial and extraordinary claims."

Center for Inquiry (CFI) and Richard Dawkins Foundation are now formally merged.

Let's look at the concept of "critical-thinking skills," which the movement claims to be a representative of. Critical thinking has its roots in philosophy. In the term critical thinking, the word critical, (Grk. κριτικός = kritikos = "critic") derives

from the word critic and implies a critique; it identifies the intellectual capacity and the means "of judging", "of judgement", "for judging", and of being "able to discern". The intellectual roots of critical thinking are as ancient as its etymology, traceable, ultimately, to the teaching practice and vision of Socrates 2,500 years ago who discovered by a method of probing questioning that people could not rationally justify their confident claims to knowledge. As I have shown on my page, [Meditation as an Art of Life](#), in Greco-Roman philosophy, critical thinking was a part of a spiritual practice.

In the Skeptical movement, critical thinking is now wrongly being promoted as something "science" has invented. "Science" is broadly spoken of as if it was the name of some kind of institution, or, more precisely: a thought ministerium.

But critical thinking skills belongs to the subdiscipline of philosophy called logic and theory of argumentation. It is, as philosophy, committed to work for *The Wholeness*, and therefore in combination with all the other subdisciplines of philosophy. Within the skeptical movement all this has been removed, so that critical thinking works alone like a kind of thought police. Another way of distorting philosophy.

Guerilla Skepticism on Wikipedia (GSoW) is a group that edits Wikipedia articles to improve skeptical content. Some people believe that it is the tyrannical shadow government of Wikipedia, censoring views not in alignment with the Skeptical Scriptures.

GSoW was founded by Susan Gerbic, co-founder of Monterey County Skeptics, with the intent of improving skeptical content on Wikipedia and guiding fellow skeptics on how to contribute. Gerbic, a Center For Inquiry fellow and adviser to Skeptical Inquirer magazine, is also active in local skeptic organizations, and took part in a "sting" operation against self-proclaimed psychic and ghost hunter Chip Coffey.

GSoW have written or improved a number of Wikipedia pages about skeptics, science educators, and science-based medicine proponents who push back against pseudoscience and the paranormal in the media, such as Ken Feder, Sara Mayhew, Indre Viskontes, Kiki Sanford, Bryan & Baxter, Jennifer Ouellette, Tim Farley, Alan Melikdjanian, William B. Davis, Mary Roach, and Sikivu Hutchinson.

According to themselves, they also try to make sure all claims on paranormal themed pages are "balanced" and have citations to notable secondary sources. (For example, lots of obscure psychics have Wikipedia pages full of claims that often turn out to be written by the psychics themselves).

However, as we shall see later, *Skeptical Inquirer*, for example, is certainly not in any way a magazine known for allowing attacked people to answer, and therefore of providing any balanced view. Furthermore: in chapter 3: *Reductionism and Gaslighting*, I will demonstrate that, for example, the Wikipedia article on [Evolutionism](#) unquestionable are, if not directly written, then it is certainly edited, by guerilla skeptics. This is done in a way that are giving a deeply distorted image of, both the topic they are writing about, and about philosophy of science. But firstly, let me give another example, namely the Wikipedia article on [Divination](#). Divination is a typical target for the skeptical movement. Below I will reproduce the introduction to Divination:

Divination (from Latin divinare "to foresee, to foretell, to predict, to prophesy ", related to divinus, divine), or "to be inspired by a god", is the attempt to gain insight into a question or situation by way of an occultic, standardized process or ritual. Used in various forms throughout history, diviners ascertain their interpretations of how a querent should proceed by reading signs, events, or omens, or through alleged contact with a supernatural agency.

Divination can be seen as a systematic method with which to organize what appear to be disjointed, random facets of existence such that they provide insight into a problem at hand. If a distinction is to be made between divination and fortune-telling, divination has a more formal or ritualistic element and often contains a more social character, usually in a religious context, as seen in traditional African medicine. Fortune-telling, on the other hand, is a more everyday practice for personal purposes. Particular divination methods vary by culture and religion.

Now, notice carefully what follows directly after this (and we are talking about the Wikipedia introduction):

*Divination has long been criticized. In the modern era it has dismissed by the scientific community and skeptics as being superstition; experiments do not support the idea that divination techniques can actually predict the future more reliably or precisely than would be possible without it. In antiquity it was attacked by philosophers such as the Academic Skeptic Cicero in *De Divinatione* and the Pyrrhonist Sextus Empiricus in *Against the Astrologers*. The satirist, Lucian, devoted a witty essay to Alexander the false prophet.*

The degree of selective thinking and strawman attack, which these words expose, could be taken out of an article in *Skeptical Inquirer* (for example: where is the relevance of mentioning the satirist Lucian?). The introduction as such is not a fair and balanced description of divination, and the last quote is a directly abuse of the

concept of science. Let's be clear: *divination has not been dismissed by science!* If it has: show me the evidence! What does the authors mean by the expression: "the scientific community"? It sounds like some kind of Orwellian thought ministerium. What's for sure is, that there doesn't exist any such "scientific" community that practices critique of other communities in the world, *except* as a group of people advocating atheist scientism. And, as we shall see in this ebook: this is a group of people who are participating in the destruction of science in favor of their own private ideology. The above "critique" is a pure example of pseudoskepticism (I will return to that). And it is of course a huge problem, that these people are allowed to write Wikipedia articles.

GSoW also assists with translations of high-importance skeptical articles from English into other languages, such as Arabic, Dutch, Russian, Spanish, Swedish, and Portuguese.

GSoW is therefore very unpopular among the many supporters of paranormal, pseudoscience, and creationist/New Age science theories who would argue that their views are the least bit plausible, or even of any noteworthy relevance to the scientific consensus view on any given topic. They frequently accuse GSoW of devising an organized effort to prevent pseudoscience from permeating Wikipedia thereby bolstering the scientific quality and skeptical tone of the articles. This, of course, cannot stand, and so resistance needs to be mounted.

In March 2013, Robert McLuhan wrote on his blog Paranormalia that GSoW were coordinating the actions of editors at the online encyclopedia to label paranormal subjects as pseudoscience and to promote a skeptical point of view about psychic phenomena. He also claimed GSoW editors had destroyed Rupert Sheldrake's Wikipedia article (see [Guerilla Skeptics](#), by Robert McLuhan, [Rupert Sheldrake on Guerilla Skeptics and Wikipedia](#), by Rupert Sheldrake, and, [Wikipedia Under Threat](#), by Rupert Sheldrake). GSoW denies this, but, as I will demonstrate in chapter 3, the fact that they have edited an article on evolutionism, that directly distorts philosophy of science, makes it more than likely that they have made other similar "actions."

So, what we have to do with here are the two extremes of the heredity and environment controversy. They are both a part of the rise of scientism, and they are both examples of two hard bitten ideologies, which are opposed to each other. Atheist scientism is a right-wing ideology (liberalism/conservatism), while New Age Scientism is a left-wing ideology with roots in counterculture and postmodernism.

I know from own experience that both atheist scientism and new age scientism have a thought police. I don't know whether it is organized or carried out by lonely wolves.

The fact is that I can't have a public email. I can't open Facebook groups or pages without being trolled by these thought policemen.

In the following, I will under one apply the term *atheist scientism* to both new atheism and the skeptical movement.

2. Atheist Scientism and Education

Atheist scientism is, as mentioned, very occupied with what they call the indoctrination of children and the perpetuation of ideologies founded on belief in the supernatural. So, what kind of education is it they want? With their focus on "rational argument" you might think it should be philosophical education, especially philosophy of science, and not ideological education. But we have already had a glimpse of the self-contradiction. Let's go deeper into it.

Philosophical education has its basic objectives, first, the disposition to seek truth, and, second, the capacity to conduct rational inquiry. Training scientists, for example, requires the inculcation both of an ethic of inquiry – do not fabricate or distort results, take care to prevent your hypotheses (or desires) from affecting your observations – and the techniques of inquiry appropriate to the discipline.

There are of course many different forms of philosophical education, corresponding to the numerous ways in which truth may be pursued. Nevertheless, these forms of education share two key features. First, they are not decisively shaped by the specific social or political/religious/spiritual/atheist circumstances in which they are conducted, or, to put it the other way around, they are perverted when such circumstances come to have a substantive effect. There is no valid distinction between "Jewish" and "Aryan" physics, or between "bourgeois" and "socialist" biology; truth is one and universal.

Atheist scientism is convinced that evolutionary biology and materialism provide universal truth. This is, as I will show later, not valid, since it is based on reductionism. New Age scientism is defending a subjectivism and relativism which also are based on reductionism, however, this is reductionism in another direction.

Secondly, and relatedly, philosophical education can have corrosive consequences for political (and/or religious/spiritual/atheist) communities in which it is allowed to take place. The pursuit of truth – scientific, historical, moral, or whatever – can undermine structures of unexamined but socially central belief.

Ideological education differs from philosophical education in all these respects. Its purpose is not the pursuit and acquisition of truth, but rather the formation of individuals, who can effectively conduct their lives within, and support, their political (and/or religious/spiritual/atheist) community. It is unlikely, to say the least, that the truth will be fully consistent with this purpose. Nor is ideological education homogeneous and universal. It is by definition education within, and on behalf of, a particular political (and/or religious/spiritual/atheist) order. Nor, finally, does ideological education stand in opposition to its political (and/or religious/spiritual/atheist) community. On the contrary, it fails – fundamentally – if it does not support and strengthen that community.

Ideology altogether is a psychic disease; it is pathological. You are not in doubt about, that ideology is a psychic disease if you look at its collective manifestations. It appears for example in the form of ideologies such as Communism, Liberalism, Conservatism, National Socialism and any other nationalism, or in the form of rigid religious systems of faith, which function with the implied assumption, that the supreme good lay out in the future, and that the end therefore justifies the means. The goal is an idea, a point out in a future, projected by the mind, where salvation is coming in some kind – happiness, satisfaction, equality, liberation, etc. It is not unusual, that the means to come to this is to make people into slaves, torture them and murder them here and now.

That a thought-system has developed into an ideology shows in, that it is a closed system, which is shared by a large group of people. Such a closed system has especially two distinctive characters: 1) It allows no imaginable circumstance to talk against the ideology. 2) It refuses all critique by analyzing the motives in the critique in concepts, which is collected from the ideology itself (an ideology always thinks black and white, and therefore always has an anti-ideology, an enemy image, which it attributes everyone, who don't agree).

The enemy image in atheist scientism is not surprisingly religion (and all kinds of spiritual movements). And such an image is therefore extremely one-sided. Here it should be added that the science which atheist scientism is advocating is evolutionary biology. Science is very often seen as one and the same as evolutionary biology, or that evolutionary biology is the “real” science. Atheist scientism has therefore a very limited knowledge (maybe accept) of other sciences, as for example psychology, history and anthropology. So, you could say that the war is between evolutionary biology and religion.

Richard Dawkins's engagement with, for example, theology, lies at about the same level of reflection on faith that one can find in contemporary creationist and

fundamentalist literature. This is not surprising since it is from creationists and intelligent design theists that Dawkins seems to have garnered much of his understanding of religious faith (about New Atheist's minor understanding of theology, see John F. Haught's book *God and the New Atheism – a Critical Response to Dawkins, Harris and Hitchens*).

It is notable that atheist scientism is a special *American* phenomenon, and only can be understood in that context. There isn't anything universal about it. In connection with education it is therefore intimately connected to the American school system. The problem is then of course, that what is being said in America, will spread to the rest of the world.

The intelligent Design movement, for example, is an American conservative Christian anti-evolutionary movement whose ideas are lambasted in *The God Delusion*.

The professor of science and religion Alister McGrath says in his book *The Dawkins Delusion* that it is ironically, that this movement now regards Dawkins as one of its greatest assets. Why? Because his hysterical and dogmatic insistence upon the atheist implications of Darwinism is alienating many of the theory of evolution's potential supporters. William Demski, the intellectual architect of this movement, constantly thanks his Intelligent Designer for Dawkins. As he put it recently in a somewhat sarcastic e-mail to Dawkins: "I regularly tell my colleagues that you and your work are one of God's greatest gifts to the intelligent-design movement. So please, keep at it!" (page 26).

McGrath continues: "Small wonder that philosopher of science and atheist, Michael Ruse (who describes himself as a 'hardline Darwinian') commented in a leaked e-mail to Daniel Dennett that he (Dennett) and Dawkins were 'absolute disasters in the fight against intelligent design.'"

Ruse is for example arguing that an intellectually fulfilled Christian very well can be a Darwinian (click here for the talk: [Can a Christian be a Darwinian?](#)) Ruse has not surprisingly now been denigrated by Dawkins.

McGrath continues and says that on 22 October 1996, Pope John II issued a statement to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences offering support for the general notion of biological evolution, while criticizing certain materialist interpretations of the idea. The Pope's statement was welcomed by many scientists. But not Richard Dawkins. Here is Ruse's comment on what happened next:

When John Paul II wrote a letter endorsing Darwinism, Richard Dawkins' response was simply that the pope was a hypocrite, that he could not be genuine about science and that Dawkins himself simply preferred an honest fundamentalist.

Ruse's comment immediately helps us understand what is going on, says McGrath. If Dawkins' agenda was to encourage Christians to accept biological evolution, the Pope's statement would have been welcomed. But it's not. Dawkins is totally unable to accept that the Pope – or presumably any Christian – could accept evolutionism. So The Pope is not telling the truth, is he? He can't be. The Pope is a superstitious person who is just *pretending* to be rational. It's hard not to believe that science – or rather, a highly contentious and unrepresentative account of science – is here being abused as an ideological weapon to destroy religion.

McGrath thinks that one of the most melancholic aspects of *The God Delusion* is how its author appears to have made the transition from a scientist with a passionate concern for truth to a crude anti-religious propagandist who shows a disregard for evidence. This was evident in the Tv series *The Root of All Evil?*, which served as a pilot for the *God Delusion*. Here, Dawkins sought out religious extremists who advocated violence in the name of religion, or who were aggressively anti-scientific in their outlook. No representative figures were included or considered. Dawkins' conclusion? Religion leads to violence, and is anti-science. A highly naively, almost childish, use of the thought distortion confirmation bias. Confirmation bias refers to a type of *selective thinking* whereby one tends to notice and to look for what confirms one's beliefs, and to ignore, not look for, or undervalue the relevance of what contradicts one's beliefs. Confirmation bias is for example a typical aspect of pseudoscience.

McGrath says that he is puzzled over how Dawkins either must be completely unaware of this, or that he seems to ignore it. But I think there are two things involved: partly that atheist scientism is an ideology, partly how incompetent the supporters are in philosophy. Because they are doing philosophy apparently without knowing it. The latter is even more cemented through the paradoxical hostility towards philosophy which I will return to.

Unsurprisingly the series *The Root of All Evil?* was panned by its critics, who saw it as intellectually risible. As one senior atheist scientific colleague of McGrath said to him afterwards, "Don't judge the rest of us by this pseudo-intellectual drivel." Yet *The God Delusion* simply continues this flagrantly biased approach to evidence, mocking and excoriating alternatives, refusing to take them seriously. As McGrath says on page 27 of *The Dawkins Delusion*:

Yes, there are religious people who are deeply hostile to science. And that number will, if anything, simply increase due to Dawkins' polemic use of science in his epic struggle against religion. Perhaps it's time that the scientific community as a whole protested against the abuse of their ideas in the service of such an atheist fundamentalism.

An ideology is characterized by, that it is not able to contain, or direct refuses, rationality and critical thinking. We all know how dissidents have been killed, jailed and tortured under totalitarian ideologies.

Ideologies are using propaganda in order to get their "truths" forced through. In that connection they use thought distortions. Thought distortions are "techniques", that, unconscious or conscious, are used from an interest in finding ways of getting on in the world, rather than an interest in finding ways of discovering the truth. They are, as already mentioned, poor reasoning, diversionary ploys, seductive reasoning errors, techniques of persuasion and avoidance, strawman tactics, sarcasm, etc., etc.

It is therefore a paradox how The Four Horsemen, and especially Richard Dawkins in *The God Delusion*, are using such thought distortions, when we remember that the so-called goal is a call for rational argument. Dawkins' method is directly to ridicule, distort, belittle and demonize. But this paradox *precisely* shows that we have to do with hard-bitten ideology.

Dawkins offers slick hellfire preaching, substituting turbocharged rhetoric and highly selective manipulation of facts for careful, evidence-based thinking. Curiously, there is surprisingly little scientific analysis in *The God Delusion*.

There is little point in arguing with such fundamentalist nonsense. It's about as worthwhile as trying to persuade a flatearther that the world is actually round. Dawkins seems to be so deeply trapped within his own world view that he cannot access alternatives. Objections to his analysis are likely to be dismissed and discounted in advance, precisely because they are made by "biased" religious people who are foolish and arrogant enough to criticize "objective" and "rational" atheists. The God Delusion is above all characterized by a Begging the Question fallacy, and therefore circular argumentation. Materialism is taken as a universally true metaphysical theory, and everything is hereafter measured according to this premise, which not itself is analyzed. However, the whole card house is falling together since science itself (quantum physics), has shown materialism to be invalid. More about that later.

Critical thinking, or philosophy, is in opposition to thought distortions. Critical thinking is about spotting thought distortions, and examining them by presenting reasons and evidence in support of conclusions.

In philosophy you focus on, what co-operation and conversation require of you in order to that you at all can exist: that you speak true (don't lie), that you are prepared to reach mutual understanding and agreement (don't manipulate), don't make an exception of yourself (but treat others as equals). From this rises the eternal moral values (as for example that it is wrong to lie), and generally our ideas of right and justice: the so-called human rights, the idea about the individual person's autonomy and dignity: you shall treat the other not as a mean, but as a goal.

Atheist scientism breaks with all this. Its irrational foundation could be used to justify any means for its goals, though the proponents never would admit this.

3. Reductionism and Gaslightning

The whole development of the concept of scientism is based on evolutionism. Evolutionism was created in the 19th century, but the background is to be found in the Renaissance, not least in the scientific breakthrough from approximately 1550 onwards.

Evolutionism is an ideology and must not be confused with evolutionary biology. The ideology was created due to the success of science. However, it is typical for evolutionists to deny that the term "evolutionism" has any value at all. As mentioned: the Wikipedia article on [evolutionism](#) is unquestionable, if not directly written, then it is certainly edited, by guerilla skeptics. This is done in a way that are giving a deeply distorted image of philosophy of science. The article is wrongly claiming that the term "evolutionism" is used to denote the theory of evolution and that it mostly is used by creationists. The term is namely also used on departments of philosophy of science all over the world, simply because it is an absolutely necessary term. Why? Well, because we in fact has to do with an ideology. That the article focuses on the false dichotomy between the theory of evolution and creationism, reveals that it is written within a specific American context of the skeptical movement.

Evolutionism is an ideology which we still celebrate in the Western world. We find it natural to talk about progress, development, growth, renewal, innovation, visions, whether it's economic, political, social conditions, spiritual - and also when it comes to art. It is a linear view of history where it is about being constantly progressive, revolutionary, dynamic, unconventional, without rest, without end. Evolutionism is

so close-knitted in our minds that we find it very difficult to imagine that it could be different.

But evolutionism is a newer Western phenomenon. In the rest of the world, it did not exist before the Europeans. All pre-modern societies had a cyclic view of history. In the society of today it is stated in all areas that we must move on, develop ourselves, renew ourselves and the institutions, companies, develop trade, exports, imports. In the cyclic societies concepts such as gods, providence and destiny were central. But such concepts have long been replaced with ideas of growth and progress. In business, innovation and expansion have become key words. Evolutionism has gone so much into the blood that it also characterizes our view of spirituality.

There are different variations of evolutionism, as for example historicism and reductionism, as well as its current popularity in America, with transhumanism and its dreams about the future merging of humans and machines.

Evolutionism makes us blind for a number of relationships, as for example down-cycles, the shadow side of life, negative consequences, and most important: the wisdom of the past. I consider evolutionism to be the beginning of a long period of human decline (read more in my Ebook: [Evolutionism – The Red Thread in The Matrix Conspiracy](#)).

Along with the development of the sciences the so-called reductionisms have got status of whole research programs. After Darwin, many thought, that everything could be explained biological. This is a view which still is advocated, both by Richard Dawkins and Rupert Sheldrake; but from two different point of views. In Logical Empiricism materialism lived onwards in the form of Physicalism, which was about, that all sciences eventually can be reduced to classical physics – or eventually to "the intersubjective controllable language of things". Psychologism was one of the other ravaging reductionisms in the twentieth century. Freud and Jung thought separately, that they had the key to the understanding of diverse cultural phenomena because of the storeroom of the unconsciousness. Jung is still quite central in New Age. Moreover, there was Historism, which followers thought that they could generalize hermeneutics also to include the exact sciences. The latest craze in reductionism is Social Constructivism, which basically is a part of postmodernism. Sheldrake mixes his biologism (neo-lysenkoism) with social constructivism.

Surely – many are the people, who become seduced by the reductionisms. Maybe not so strange after all: all reductionisms imply a simplification, a manageable solution to all problems, a key, which saves the supporters for having to think fundamentally over the philosophical questions – which after all only a few are capable to.

The sciences ask limited questions about Man, or questions about specific sides of the human life. Such questions are then solved by experimenting, collecting systematical observations and from them draw up theories. The sciences collect systematical experiences and throw out theories, that can be tested through new experiences, or serve as the best explanations.

So, one crucial principle in science is, that a certain theory has to be testable. Another crucial principle is the use of abductive reasoning (inference to the best explanation).

Is it testable whether God exists or not? No! Is it testable, that the human consciousness only consists in some physical-chemical reactions in the brain, or that it only is a social construction? No!

Is the best explanation for crop circles, that they have been made by extraterrestrials? Although it is undoubtedly true, that strange patterns are sometimes found in cornfields (crop circles) - it doesn't follow that they must have been made by extraterrestrials. There is a wide range of far more plausible alternative explanations of the phenomenon, such as that they have been made by pranksters.

Pseudoscience is philosophical, political, religious/occult theories, that seek legitimacy by claiming, that they are scientific theories, while the fact is, that they either not is testable, or that they abuse the use of abductive reasoning.

Pseudoscience is for example seen in the New Age environment, where they demand that science has to be integrated with so-called "alternative sciences", such as Intelligent Design, Cryptozoology, Dianetics, Eugenics, Graphology, Homeopathy, Morphic Resonance, Perpetual Motion, Astrology, Personology, Phrenology, Theosophy, Physiognomy, Pyramidology, Quantum Mysticism, Quantum biology, Radionics, Time Cube, Ufology, Vitalism, and many more.

New Age pseudoscience is always based on some kind of spiritual or occult viewpoint.

More accepted pseudosciences is seen in the intellectual environment in form of reductionisms. There are two wings of reductionism. The one wing is where they for example claim, that Man fully can be described and explained with the methods of natural science. This happens in various forms of Naturalism (materialism), Positivism and Behaviourism. This is the wing where atheist scientism belongs. The other wing claims, that psychology, sociology or history can give the total and superior understanding of, what a human being is. These viewpoints are described

respectively as Psychology, Sociology and Historism. This is the wing where New Age scientism belongs. However, sometimes they are being mixed.

But neither of these wings are testable. Often the reductionisms then claim, that their theories are the best explanations. The reductionisms observe Man from fragmented viewpoints, for example as organism, as physical-chemical system, as society being, as psyche, as producer and user of language and meaning. But what becomes of *the Wholeness*? What unites all this knowledge to a total image of Man?

In the rest of this ebook the concept of *the Wholeness*, will be quite central, since it is this concept reductionism is in conflict with, or directly ignores and removes.

The reductionisms' explanations of this always end up as philosophical shipwrecks. Reductionisms are *philosophical* viewpoints, which under cover of being science seek to answer the question of Man, or reality as such. But no single branch of science gives anything else than a limited perspective on Man or *the Wholeness*. If the reductionisms should be taken seriously, then they shall contain a unifying perspective on all knowledge about Man. This is what philosophy is doing.

Our wonder over Man becomes philosophy, when it, for example, reaches the question of Man as such. Philosophy throws out answers to the question, argues for the answers and investigates their consequences. This happens first of all by reflecting and meditating over the things, not in an experiential-scientific way.

Philosophy is in that way a deepening of our everyday understanding. It is a reflection over well-known subjects. Its answers lie in continuation of our immediate knowledge and understanding. Similar you can say, that philosophy is a deepening of the forms of understanding, which lie in for example science, art and religion.

Philosophy seeks for oneness and coherence. This means, that it both ask for the fundamental trait of the nature of Man, and for how all other traits of Man are connected therewith. The answer to, what the nature of Man is, has to throw a light of transfiguration over everything we know about man.

Philosophy asks the most universal question about Man, the common or universal which all of us have part in, in spite of the fact that we can behave so different and be studied in so many various ways. Here it is about what, we can call the nature of Man, and the question is solved, not by experimenting, collecting systematical observations and from them draw up theories. It is only solved by reflecting and meditating over everything we already know about Man, and by searching for oneness and coherence in it.

The sciences ask limited questions about Man, or questions about specific sides of the human life. Philosophy asks the most universal question about Man. The sciences collect systematical experiences and throw out theories, that can be determined by new experiences. Philosophy uses alone the tool of reflection and meditation.

Reductionisms are philosophical viewpoints, because they seek to answer the question about Man as such, but as philosophical viewpoints they are epistemological, ethical and aesthetical shipwrecks.

Let us first try to look at the epistemological shipwreck. We have already seen that in philosophy truth is one and universal. The truth, which philosophy seeks to achieve, is a truth that raises over human views, yes over the whole of the human existence. That something is true means in philosophical sense, that it is true independently of, who claims it, and when it is claimed. And independently of, whether anybody at all has claimed it, thought it, believed it or knows it. Truths are therefore, in philosophical context, independent of both time and ideas.

Since all philosophical views, *qua* views, claim to be true in precisely this sense, then it should be clear, that views, which try to reduce or cause explain all views, are self-refuting views.

A self-refuting view can't be saved by saying, that it shall apply to all views except itself. For in that case you have to accept, that there exists at least one scientific and/or philosophical doctrine, which are independent of what you seek to reduce everything to, and this is precisely what the understanding itself claims, that there isn't.

It seems to be a common trait of the self-refuting philosophical views, that they pull the carpet away under themselves, because they seek to reduce fundamental concepts such as "meaning", "truth", and "validity" to something concrete, for example physical, biological, psychological, social or historical. Herewith they at the same time claim, that if these conditions had been different (because they are impermanent), then all our concepts about meaning, truth and validity also had to be different. But therewith they deprive themselves the possibility for being regarded as meaningful, true or valid.

Philosophy points towards *the Wholeness*. In philosophy, *the Wholeness* is the first principle. Reductionism points towards the parts, and claims that the parts are the first principle (s). Reductionism claims that the parts are the building stones forming the Wholeness. The Wholeness should be explained from the parts (matter, psyche,

society, etc); the Wholeness is a result of the parts. But since *the Wholeness* is everything, and therefore also *Negation and Infinity*, it should be clear that the parts can't be the first principle(s), since you can't build *Negation and Infinity*. It is logically impossible. It would never end. *The Wholeness* is therefore the first principle. The parts are a result of the Wholeness. You could, for example, claim, that a flower is the result of a lot of small building stones. But this is not the Wholeness of the flower. *The Wholeness* of the flower is also *the Negation* of the flower. It is here the aesthetical aspect comes in. And, aesthetics (beauty) is connected to *Consciousness*, to subjective experience.

None of the reductionisms can accept a non-reductionist theory of Consciousness. I will therefore shortly describe a non-reductionist theory of mind.

It is a version of dualism combined with the double aspect theory (inspired by pre-modern views such as Platonism and Vedanta). It takes into account the concept of the Enlightened Consciousness. The following is a completely non-religious description of this theory. I give it in order to show where the Western theories fail.

The first principle is simply the concept of *The Wholeness*. The next principle is the concept of the *Negation Principle*. The third principle is *Spaciousness*. Altogether: The True, The Good and the Beautiful.

And now to the concept of Consciousness, or rather: enlightened Consciousness. I have suggested, that a human being seems to have two aspects: an energy-aspect and a consciousness-aspect. Seen from the energy-aspect lawfulness rules: your body (and the material world) is subject to the physical laws of nature (both classical laws and quantum laws); your psychic system is subject to the lawfulness of the energy fields and of the energy transformations. The psychic system is what I refer to when I talk about thoughts and mind.

Seen from the Consciousness-aspect, then a human being seems to be akin to the Wholeness, to be transcendent in relation to these laws (also the quantum laws). The Wholeness is one and the same as Reality. So, in my view, Consciousness (Enlightened Consciousness!), Wholeness and Reality are one and the same. They are connected through the principles of Negation and Spaciousness. If you are aware in the Now, the Now, and therefore life itself, expands.

Spaciousness is also the principle behind objectivity. It is therefore a fundamental mistake to confuse subjective idealism with Enlightened Consciousness.

But, as suggested: all Western concepts of Consciousness is based on the energy aspect. They only talk about the mind. The dualists talk about mind and body as separated, and can't explain the causal connection between them. The double aspect theorists talk about mind and body as two expressions of the same, but can't explain what this "same" is, since they don't have a third principle. It is an obscured version of dualism. The materialists only accept the existence of the body (matter), and the idealists only accept the existence of the mind. But none of them works with the third principle: namely the Enlightened Consciousness which is akin to the Wholeness.

The Wholeness itself can't be described. How can you describe what the good is? You can do this because you can put it in opposition to evil. But the Wholeness itself can't be described since it can't be put in opposition to anything. It is therefore indescribable. This is also what the Taoists meant by their concept of Tao. Tao is the indescribable. Note that Eastern philosophy, and pre-modern Western philosophy, don't work with names such as mind and consciousness. In Greco-Roman philosophy, for example, they used concepts such as spirit, soul and body. They worked with a third principle: spirit.

Enlightened Consciousness is akin to the Wholeness. It is therefore neither mind or body/matter. It is a complete negation. It is present in a human being as Awareness, as Primary Presence. But it's not the mind. Though I'm not fully a supporter of [naive realism](#), I believe that naive realism (common sense) should be a starting point. We should start with our own subjective experience (the first personal inside-and-out perspective on reality). We must start with, that the trees, the birds, the mountains and the rivers are the primary reality we have access to through our subjective experience. We are always in a first-personal subjective experience, even materialists.

Due to the *Spaciousness of Consciousness*, we experience in Wholeness, not in parts. When we experience a flower, we not only experience the flower, we also experience the negation of the flower. We experience in spaciousness. This is the primary *Reality*. We don't experience atomic particles (Materialism), or energy fields (panpsychism). However, naïve realism is not without problems. We can be deceived by our senses. I will return to this.

Both Dawkins and Sheldrake are reductionists. They both end in some kind of biologism.

All reductionisms are common in trying to gaslight our first-personal subjective experience away. Reductionisms are *always* based on political ideologies.

The headline for the target of my cultural criticism is *The Matrix Conspiracy* - a world-spreading group of people who, in many different ways, try to convince us that reality is a "Matrix" (a "Computer Simulation", a "Hologram of Deception", "an Illusion", "A Product of the Mind", "A Product of the Brain", "A Mysterious Field", "A Void of Particles and Waves", a "Social Construction", etc., etc.), which manipulates us in certain ways (the "Matrix" is often postulated to be controlled by evil forces), and how we then ought to relate and behave in relation to this idea (read introductory article: [The Matrix Conspiracy](#)).

In the project of trying to make you believe in The Matrix, the "Matrix Sophists" make use of a gaslightning program of Orwellian dimensions.

Gaslighting is a form of psychological manipulation in which a person seeks to sow seeds of doubt in a targeted individual or in members of a targeted group, making them question their own memory, perception, or sanity. Using denial, misdirection, contradiction, and lying, gaslighting involves attempts to destabilize the victim and delegitimize the victim's beliefs.

I claim that all this is a part of a global spreading real-life role-playing game, which I call [The Godgame](#).

The "Matrix Sophists" often start out with postulations such as this: "What if I told you that everything you sense, think and believe, was wrong? What if reality is a deception?" The reductionists always say: "Reality is nothing else than the parts..."

4. The Heredity and Environment Controversy

When you today ask: *What is a human being?* most people answer, that Man "is a product of heredity and environment". This has become a whole ideology in the Western world.

As mentioned: reductionisms are philosophical viewpoints, because they seek to answer the question about Man as such, but as philosophical viewpoints they are epistemological, ethical and aesthetical shipwrecks. We have looked at the epistemological shipwreck, which has to do with truth and the Wholeness. Let's look at the ethical shipwreck, which also is a result of the elimination of *the Wholeness*. We will first look at the heredity and environment controversy as *one* generalized public opinion, and later look at the wings as opposed political agendas.

If Man only is a product of heredity and environment, then he has no longer any responsibility for his actions. Even the murderer, who is standing accused in court, is

able to defend himself with, that he basically can't help, that he has committed a murder. Firstly, he was born with some unfortunate genes, which did, that he wasn't all too clever. Therefore he was bullied in the school, and thereby he was developed to become aggressive and hot tempered. All this caused, that he in a certain situation committed a murder, but this he could not help. Heredity and environment led him precisely to this situation. Guilty? No, many people would say today, he is no more guilty, than a person is to blame, that he came to cough in a place filled with smoke. No, on the whole it is society and environment, which are to blame for the murder.

When you are advocating a reductionism and are claiming, that Man is nothing else than for example a product of heredity and environment, then concepts such as responsibility, guilt and duty lose all meaning. And it becomes meaningless to talk about human ideals. Why admire people, who have achieved something great? They have only good genes and a beneficially environment. Why condemn people, who spoil and break down society? They can't help it. All in all: the view is an ethical shipwreck.

Typical enough (foolish enough), then heredity and environment are also being used as political tools. Often with followers on the respective sides of the extremities. This often corresponds to the above-mentioned two wings of reductionism. And Richard Dawkins and Rupert Sheldrake represent clear examples of advocates of each wing. But they also expose the paradox, that each of them advocates biologism in two different variants.

In the dispute between heredity and environment it is for example considered political progressively ("left wing") to think, that the environment is more or less the sole decisive factor. The environment (upbringing, social conditions) is people themselves in the principle able to control and change through political actions. This is also background for, that Lamarckism in the form of Lysenkoism – which almost completely refuses the biological genetic meaning – got monopoly on engaging themselves with heredity in Soviet. This is quite literally Sheldrake's position. Despite how weird, and scary, it might sound, Sheldrake doesn't hide that he is in favor of some kind of neo-lysenkoism. I will not go further into that here, since I will deal with it in the text on Sheldrake.

Similar it is regarded as political reactionary ("right wing"), if you believe, that the hereditament (genes) of the individual is the most important factor, which determines its actual development. Ideological this is connected with, that in that case a social reformatory policy is not for a lot of benefit: the biological inheritance has so far been a destiny, which you have to tolerate. Right wing politicians have for example claimed, that aggression or competition is inborn in the biological nature of man.

Therewith the assertion can be used to justify, that specific social conditions, for example warfare or the capitalistic, economical system, is "natural". Evolutionism "proves" that the unlimited competition is as natural, as the survival of the best fitted. Moreover, we know Nazism's use of biological theories.

Richard Dawkins has probably done more than any other author to popularize such a one-sided gene-centered view of evolution. Sheldrake is therefore right, when he says that Dawkins's vivid metaphors are highly misleading. For example, the below quote is an example of how Dawkins describes how all the cells of the human body contains copies of the complete set of human DNA:

The DNA can be regarded as a set of instructions for how to make a body...It is as though, in every room of a gigantic building, there was a book-case containing the architect's plans for the entire building. The 'book case' in a cell is called the nucleus. The architect's plans run to 46 volumes in humans – the number is different in other species. The 'volumes' are called chromosomes (The Selfish Gene, page 28).

What Dawkins does, Sheldrake says, is to project on to the DNA molecules a anthropocentric (and teleological) factor, trying to squeeze the soul into chemical genes, which are thereby endowed with instructions, plans, purposes and intentions they cannot possibly have. He admits that these are metaphors, adding, "incidentally, there is of course no 'architect'. But despite occasional disclaimers, the entire force of his argument depends on anthropocentric metaphors and molecules that have come to life.

Dawkins endows genes with life and intelligence. Living molecules, rather than God (or *the Wholeness*), are the designers of the machinery of life:

We are survival machines, but 'we' does not mean just people. It embraces all animals, plants, bacteria, and viruses...we are all survival machines for the same kind of replicator – molecules called DNA – but there are many different ways of making a living in the world, and the replicators have built a vast range of machines to exploit them. A monkey is a machine which preserves genes up trees; a fish is a machine which preserves genes in the water (The Selfish Gene, page 26).

In Dawkins words, "DNA moves in mysterious ways." The DNA molecules are not only intelligent, they are also selfish, ruthless and competitive, like "successful Chicago gangsters". The selfish genes "create form", "mould matter" and engage in "evolutionary arms races"; they even "aspire to immortality". These genes are no longer mere molecules:

Now they swarm in huge colonies, safe inside gigantic lumbering robots, sealed off from the outside world, communicating with it by torturous indirect routes, manipulating it by remote control. They are in you and me; they created us, body and mind; and their preservation is the ultimate rationale for our existence...now they go by the name of genes, and we are their survival machines (The Selfish Gene, page 25).

We have already shown, that this isn't logically possible. As a response, Sheldrake writes:

The persuasive power of Dawkins's rhetoric depended on anthropocentric and his cartoon-like imagery. He admits that his selfish-gene imagery is more like science fiction than science, but he justifies it is a 'powerful and illuminating' metaphor [preface to The Selfish Gene] – (The Science Delusion, page 48).

Besides that Sheldrake here is right, it is a question whether he himself is much better, when it comes to writing science fiction instead of science. However, he has some quite good arguments. His self-contradiction is probably due to that he, in the same way as Dawkins, is very good at putting the thoughts of others together. Sheldrake is not a philosopher. I will return to that.

The most popular use of anthropocentric and teleological metaphor in the name of mechanism is the "genetic program." Genetic programs are explicitly analogous to computer programs, which are intelligently designed by human minds to achieve particular purposes.

Programs are purposive, intelligent and goal-directed. They are more like entelechies than mechanisms. The "genetic program" implies that plants and animals are organized by purposive principles that are mind-like, or designed by minds. This is another way of smuggling intelligent designs into chemical genes. And this is precisely what we see in transhumanism, which is the newest trend in atheist scientism. Transhumanists, and materialists, like David Chalmers, advocates a theory of mind which is called panpsychism, a theory which is also advocated by Sheldrake. It is a theory which proposes that things both have matter and mind qualities. It is a theory which, like materialism, seeks to avoid dualism, but basically it is a confusion of materialism (only matter and no mind) and idealism (only mind and no matter). It constantly slides over in either materialism or idealism. It is therefore a theory filled with self-contradictions. But the final consequence of transhumanism is some kind of techno idealism. It ends in solipsism. I will further go into panpsychism in the text on Sheldrake.

However, Sheldrake is right when he claims, that “if challenged, most biologists will admit that genes merely specify the sequence of amino acids in proteins, or are involved in the control of protein synthesis. They are not really programs, they are not selfish, they do not mould matter, or shape form, or aspire to immortality. A gene is not “for” a characteristic like a fish’s fin or the nest-building behavior of a weaver bird”. (The Science Delusion, page 48).

If you as reader, has a bit of your common sense left, you might ask where the external world, or the macrocosmic world, has gone? Good question. That’s precisely the problem. The external world, or the macrocosmic world, is another part of *the Wholeness*, and it has been removed. Primarily because this is what we experience with our minds. Materialism claims that minds doesn’t exist, and that the external world with its forms, its flowers, its trees, its rivers, its mountains, the beauty of the moon and stars, all are illusions created by some physical-chemical reactions in the brain. But, besides being gaslighting, it ends in solipsism. It is precisely the same which is claimed by idealism, which claim that the only real existing entity is your own mind.

Solipsism is the philosophical idea that only one's mind is sure to exist. There are varying degrees of solipsism that parallel the varying degrees of skepticism:

As an epistemological position, solipsism holds that knowledge of anything outside one's own mind is unsure; the external world and other minds cannot be known and might not exist outside the mind. The most absurd variant is metaphysical solipsism. Metaphysical solipsism is based on a philosophy of subjective idealism, which maintains that the self is the only existing reality and that all other realities, including the external world and other persons, are representations of that self, and have no independent existence. There are several versions of metaphysical solipsism, such as Caspar Hare's egocentric presentism (or perspectival realism), in which other people are conscious, but their experiences are simply not present.

So, solipsism is mostly known in connection with subjective idealism, but, as we can see, also materialists ends in solipsism: gene solipsism or brain solipsism. It is no surprise that the new materialism called transhumanism, ends in precisely the same problems as subjective idealists. I have investigated that in my article: [The Dream Hypothesis and the Brain-in-Jar Hypothesis](#). The dream hypothesis comes from the radical skepticist René Descartes. Later we find it in George Berkeley, who is an advocate of subjective idealism.

In philosophy, the *Brain-in-Jar Hypothesis* (or brain in a vat (BIV)) is a scenario used in a variety of thought experiments intended to draw out certain features of human

conceptions of knowledge, reality, truth, mind, consciousness, and meaning. It is an updated version of René Descartes's evil demon thought experiment originated by Gilbert Harman. Common to many science fiction stories, it outlines a scenario in which a mad scientist, machine, or other entity might remove a person's brain from the body, suspend it in a vat of life-sustaining liquid, and connect its neurons by wires to a supercomputer which would provide it with electrical impulses identical to those the brain normally receives. According to such stories, the computer would then be simulating reality (including appropriate responses to the brain's own output) and the "disembodied" brain would continue to have perfectly normal conscious experiences, such as those of a person with an embodied brain, without these being related to objects or events in the real world.

It is this hypothesis, which is lying behind the Matrix Movies, and a long list of works of fiction ([click here](#) for the list). But the worst thing is that it is this thesis, and the belief that it is possible, which the whole of the transhumanist movement builds on. And it is therefore this thesis that the whole of the Silicon Valley ideology builds on.

In the article, [The Dream Hypothesis and the Brain-in-Jar Hypothesis](#), I have shown that there are especially three logical problems the hypothesis runs into: The infinite regress, the solipsism, as well as the polarization-problem. I won't go further into it here. I would just add a variation of these three problems: namely the *Negation and Infinity* problem itself, which, as I already have mentioned, is combined with *the Wholeness*. How can you simulate *the Wholeness*, including the Negation Principle (you are always faced with the negation of yourself, and the negation of any concept, theory, and idea you might make up). And how can you simulate Infinity itself? Look at the stars. Where does it end? How can you simulate that? I would suggest that you instead focused on the beauty of the stars.

However, it is no surprise that Dawkins has been an ardent defender of the gene-centred view of evolution. The gene-centered view of evolution is the idea that natural selection acts on individual genes via their phenotypes, thus segregating the most proficient genes for propagation. The "old world" view of Darwinian natural selection is that the fittest organisms are punched through, with little explanation as to why or how (other than they are the most useful/best adapted). The problem with this theory is that offspring are often as different as unrelated members of the species. The gene-centered view of evolution attempts to resolve the mystery as to why some alleles make it while others don't by looking at the segregation of genes over time. There is a rowers analogy that one can use to understand this concept, but it is best taken head-on.

Rather than look at the organism as a whole, this view holds that it is better to look at the benefit of each gene individually. This view also holds that the best genes will segregate by virtue of natural selection, thus creating the best organism for the conglomeration of genes provided. As lesser genes die off and are taken over by the fittest, the organism, as a whole, becomes more fit for survival.

The gene-centered view of evolution arose in part out of attempts to explain the evolution of altruism and sociality among various animals including humans. Nothing in Darwin's original hypotheses about natural and sexual selection explains, for example, why worker bees would die defending the hive. The fact that the bees are sisters or half-sisters born of the same queen means that each bee in the hive shares most of her genes with her sister bees. One approach is the gene-centered view. The altruistic behavior of the bees does the individual insect no good, but allows the genetic lineage to continue.

Dawkins has debated this issue with many other scientists and thinkers, perhaps most famously Stephen Jay Gould. Gould and Dawkins battled over a number of topics including the gene-centred view as well as punctuated equilibrium and approaches to cultural evolution such as evolutionary psychology. Gould penned an attack against Dawkins and a number of other thinkers accusing them of "Darwinian Fundamentalism."

Moral philosopher Mary Midgley has also criticized Dawkins' use of the "selfish gene" metaphor. In volume 53 (1978) of *Philosophy*, the journal of the Royal Institute of Philosophy, J. L. Mackie published an article entitled *The Law of the Jungle: Moral Alternatives and Principles of Evolution*, praising Dawkins's *The Selfish Gene*, and discussing how its ideas might be applied to moral philosophy. Midgley responded in volume 54 (1979) with "Gene-Juggling," arguing that *The Selfish Gene* was about psychological egoism, rather than evolution. The paper criticised Dawkins' concepts, but was judged by its targets to be intemperate and personal in tone, and as having misunderstood Dawkins' ideas. Midgley disputed this view, arguing that while Dawkins purports to be talking about genes—that is, chemical arrangements—he nonetheless slides over to saying that "we are born selfish" (*The Selfish Gene*, p. 3). Besides that, why is it that people criticizing Dawkins, can be criticized for being personal, while Dawkins can do this uncriticized, and that in a degree which Midgley never has done? Why is it, that people criticizing Dawkins, need to be "highly scientific" when the fact is, as I show in this text, that Dawkins own books are nothing but polemic junk-philosophy owing all their deeper thinking to others? However, this is the great illusion Dawkins has succeeded in creating about himself.

It is thought provoking how much he gets insulted when people answer him in the same way as he talks about them. In an article in *The Guardian*, [Is Richard Dawkins Destroying His Reputation?](#), Sophie Elmhirst writes:

*These days, Dawkins describes himself as “a communicator”. But depending on your point of view, he is also a hero, a heathen, or a liability. Many of his recent statements – on subjects ranging from the lack of [Nobel prize-winning Muslim scientists](#) to the [“immorality” of failing to abort a foetus with Down’s syndrome](#) – have sparked outraged responses (some of which Dawkins [read aloud on a recent YouTube video](#), which perhaps won him back a few friends). For some, his controversial positions have started to undermine both his reputation as a scientist and his own anti-religious crusade. Friends who vigorously defend both his cause and his character worry that Dawkins might be at risk of self-sabotage. “He could be seriously damaging his long-term legacy,” the philosopher Daniel Dennett said of Dawkins’s public skirmishes. It is a legacy, Dennett believes, that should reflect the “masterpiece” that was *The Selfish Gene* and Dawkins’s major contribution to our understanding of life. As for Twitter: “I wish he wouldn’t do it,” Krauss said. “I told him that.”*

Midgley wrote that she had previously "not attended to Dawkins, thinking it unnecessary to 'break a butterfly upon a wheel'. But Mr Mackie's article is not the only indication I have lately met of serious attention being paid to his fantasies." In a rejoinder in 1981, Dawkins retorted that the comment was "hard to match, in reputable journals, for its patronising condescension toward a fellow academic." He wrote that she "raises the art of misunderstanding to dizzy heights. My central point had no connection with what she alleges. I am not even very directly interested in man, or at least not in his emotional nature. My book is about the evolution of life, not the ethics of one particular, rather aberrant, species." In volume 58 (1983), Midgley replied again, in "Selfish Genes and Social Darwinism": "Apology is due, not only for the delay but for the impatient tone of my article. One should not lose one's temper, and doing so always makes for confused argument ... [but my] basic objections remain."

Dawkins’s answer is typical for a reductionist. The reductionist throws out some philosophical claims, and when someone then criticizes the philosophical aspects of them, the reductionist answers that it is not philosophy but science.

The bad feeling between Dawkins and Midgley appeared not to diminish. In a note to page 55 in the 2nd edition of *The Selfish Gene* (1989), Dawkins refers to her "highly intemperate and vicious paper." Midgley continued to criticise Dawkins' ideas. In her books *Evolution as a Religion* (2002) and *The Myths We Live By* (2003), she writes

about what she sees as his confused use of language—the sleight of hand involved in using terms such as "selfish" in different ways without alerting the reader to the change in meaning—and some of what she regards as his rhetoric ("genes exert ultimate power over behaviour"), which she argues is more akin to religion than science. She wrote in a letter to *The Guardian* in 2005:

[There is] widespread discontent with the neo-Darwinist—or Dawkinsist—orthodoxy that claims something which Darwin himself denied, namely that natural selection is the sole and exclusive cause of evolution, making the world therefore, in some important sense, entirely random. This is itself a strange faith which ought not to be taken for granted as part of science.

In an interview with *The Independent* in September 2007, she argued that Dawkins' views on evolution are ideologically driven: "The ideology Dawkins is selling is the worship of competition. It is projecting a Thatcherite take on economics on to evolution. It's not an impartial scientific view; it's a political drama." In April 2009 Midgley reiterated her critical interpretation of *The Selfish Gene* as part of a series of articles on Hobbes in *The Guardian*. In her 2010 book *The Solitary Self: Darwin and the Selfish Gene*, she argues that "simple one-sided accounts of human motives, such as the "selfish gene" tendency in recent neo-Darwinian thought, may be illuminating but are always unrealistic."

In *The Solitary Self*, Midgley explores the nature of our moral constitution to challenge the view that reduces human motivation to self-interest. Midgley argues cogently and convincingly that simple, one-sided accounts of human motives, such as the 'selfish gene' tendency in recent neo-Darwinian thought, may be illuminating but are always unrealistic. Such neatness, she shows, cannot be imposed on human psychology. She returns to Darwin's original writings to show how the reductive individualism which is now presented as Darwinism does not derive from Darwin but from a wider, Hobbesian tradition in Enlightenment thinking. She reveals the selfish gene hypothesis as a cultural accretion that is just not seen in nature. Heroic independence is not a realistic aim for *Homo sapiens*. We are, as Darwin saw, earthly organisms, framed to interact constantly with one another and with the complex ecosystems of which we are a tiny part. For us, bonds are not just restraints but also lifelines.

Now, Dawkins has himself sensed that his reductionism faces a problem with the actual existence of other people, and, on the whole, the external world. But instead of acknowledging the existence of the external world, he invented a concept called the Meme.

In scientific contexts, a meme is an idea or behavior that spreads from person to person within a society. The term was coined by Dawkins in his book *The Selfish Gene* in 1976. Dawkins proposed the idea that social information could change and propagate through a culture in a way similar to genetic changes in a population of organisms - i.e., evolution by natural selection. Sticking with its roots in genetics and evolution, the term is derived from the word gene, which is a unit of hereditary biological information made of DNA. Compared to a gene, which has a physical existence within a cell nucleus, a meme is far more abstract and this has led to accusations that "memetics" isn't really science.

Sheldrake believes that his concept of morphic fields is a better alternative to Dawkins's concept of memes. In *The Science Delusion* he describes this on pages 182-184.

He writes:

In the standard materialist view, all inheritance is material except cultural inheritance, which everyone agrees works in a different way, primarily through animals and humans learning by imitation. In 1979, Richard Dawkins proposed the term 'meme' for a unit of cultural inheritance, by analogy with gene:

"Examples of memes are tunes, ideas, catch-phrases, clothes fashions, ways of making pots or of building arches. Just as genes propagate themselves in the gene pool by leaping from body to body via sperms or eggs, so memes propagate themselves in the meme pool by leaping from brain to brain via a process which, in the broad sense, can be called imitation" (The Selfish Gene, page 249).

Sheldrake continues:

This idea has itself proved to be a successful meme, showing that there is a need for such a concept. The materialist philosopher Daniel Dennett has used the meme concept as the 'cornerstone' of his theory of mind. But the term meme is too atomistic and reductionistic, and various authors have proposed new terms to refer to complexes of memes linked together in larger structures, like 'co-adapted meme complex' or 'memeplex'.

Sheldrake is right that the concept is reductionistic, but it doesn't seem to occur to him that the concept of the meme is pure pseudoscience. On the whole, the concept of reductionism is not explained by Sheldrake, only that materialism is a reductionism. He doesn't talk about other reductionisms (perhaps because he himself ends in

reductionism), and he don't talk about the difference between philosophy and science.

Sheldrake writes further, that atheists are particular keen on the idea of religions as meme complexes, and think of them as like viruses infecting other people's brains. They regard themselves as immune (I would add, that there is a direct fascist smell over such a rhetoric). Sheldrake writes that materialism must itself be a virus-like meme complex that infect materialists' brains. When the materialist memplex is particularly virulent, it turns its victims into proselytizing atheists so that it can jump from their brains to as many other people's brains as possible.

Despite all the speculations about memes and their role in culture and religion, their nature has remained obscure. Materialists like to think of them as material structures inside material brains, but no one has ever found a meme inside a brain, or seen one leaping from brain to another. They are invisible. They are not testable. They are pseudoscientific fantasies.

However, Sheldrake claims that they are in fact patterns of organization or information, and he proposes that it is more helpful to think of them as morphic fields, transferred from brain to brain by morphic resonance. This is Sheldrake's alternative biologism, which belongs on the environment side. He writes:

From a materialist point of view there is a fundamental difference of kind between genetic inheritance and cultural inheritance, because the former' is material and the latter is not. Thinking of memes as if they are material objects is an attempt to overcome this problem, but it is a rhetorical manoeuvre, not a scientific testable hypothesis.

I once attempted to discuss this point with Richard Dawkins. I said to him that memes and morphic fields seemed to play a similar role in cultural inheritance. He replied, "They have nothing in common whatsoever. Memes are real because they are material. They exist inside material brains. Morphic fields are not material and therefore they don't exist". That was the end of the discussion. But like morphic fields, memes could only work through patterns of brain activity. Memes cannot possibly be material objects, like little computer chips or miniature CDs (The Science Delusion, page 183-184).

This is an example of Dawkins's begging the question style. He believes in the starting point, that it is an unquestionable premise that materialism is universally true, and is the very essence of reality. Any other claim is therefore, without

argumentation, automatically rejected as false, or, that they need to explain their points of view from the premise of materialism as universally true.

Sheldrake believes that from the point of view of morphic resonance, there is only a difference of degree, not of kind, between the heredity transmission of form and behavior and the cultural transmission of patterns of behavior. Both depend, according to Sheldrake, on morphic resonance. He writes:

Morphic fields are not atomistic and particulate, but organized in nested hierarchies or holarchies, which fit much more naturally with the structure of culturally inherited patterns. Language, for example, is made up of a nested hierarchy of levels: phonemes, in words, in syllables, in phrases, in sentences [...] (The Science Delusion, page 184).

Sheldrake's concept of morphic fields and resonance are just as pseudoscientific as Dawkins's concept of the meme. Sheldrake unites his theory with a theory of the evolution of mind, which means that consciousness is reduced to the above-mentioned energy aspect. This would be alright if Sheldrake proposed his theory as philosophy. But he proposes it as a scientific theory, and therefore needs to reduce it to something that perhaps could be testable. This ends in a reductionism, a biologism.

The combination of the two extremities – the heredity and environment ideology – looks like a kind of social Darwinism. Before we go further, it is important to mention, that the theory of evolution – also in its most modern Neodarwinistic version – is a natural historical report, and not a natural scientific theory. Neodarwinism can – as all other historical sciences – only retrospective explain the development up to now in a rational way. This appears clearly from the fact, that it can't give any scientific well-founded prediction of the future development. It is not possible with any reasonable precision to predict the future biological development on the background of the theoretical foundation of the theory of evolution. In other words: the theory of evolution is a historical relative point of view, and can be changed by new discoveries, as it has many times.

Until today Man has not been able to do anything in order to change his genes. This has been changed with the modern genetic engineering, which already in principle has made it possible to change the genes of our gametes. In the future the problem about conscious changing peoples' genes in order to improve certain characteristics is not any technical difficulty. It is in turn a serious ethical and political problem about setting limits and about, where these limits have to be set.

If you begin to carry out experiments of changing the human genes, and if you are building this on a metaphysical theory about the human nature (philosophy of mind), which is wrong, the consequences will be catastrophic.

With the Matrix Conspiracy we have two ruling metaphysical theories in the Western society: materialism (the bias of atheist scientism) and subjective idealism (the bias of New Age scientism). Both of these implies some kind of solipsism (brain solipsism or mind solipsism), and both therefore ends in nihilism, and in different forms of gaslighting programs.

Most commonly, nihilism is presented in the form of existential nihilism, which argues that life is without objective meaning, purpose, or intrinsic value. This is the consequence of materialism. Moral nihilists assert that morality does not exist at all. Nihilism may also take epistemological, ontological, or metaphysical forms, meaning respectively that, in some aspect, knowledge is not possible, or reality does not actually exist. The latter is the postmodern point of view, and therefore also a point of view we often hear from New Agers, and their create-your-own-reality mantra.

Transhumanism is a philosophy based on materialism, and its ideas of changing the human nature is as radical as you can imagine: namely that a human being needs to be changed into a cyborg. Transhumanism is carried forward by atheist scientism, as exemplified in the propaganda tours of [Yuval Noah Harari](#). Atheist scientism is also carried forward by the above-mentioned guerilla skepticism whose aggressivity doesn't leave much room for considerations of its own metaphysical theories. My main booklet on transhumanism is: [A Critique of the Simulation Theory and The rise of Digital Totalitarianism](#).

And, as mentioned in my article [The Fascism of Theosophy](#), then the reductionism of Theosophy is due to the attempt of synthesizing spirituality and science. Theosophy is, precisely like atheist scientism, especially inspired by Darwinism, and its theories about human evolution. And the idea continues today in New Age and Ufology, where spirituality, apart from Darwinism, furthermore is sought synthesized with new developments within psychology, psychotherapy, natural science, especially biology and quantum mechanics. The whole thing is presented as an ideology with a lot of attempts to predict the future evolution of Man, often connected with some kind of "spiritual eugenics," or "DNA-activation practice": the applied "science" or the bio-social New Age movement which advocates the use of "spiritual" practices aimed at improving the genetic composition of people, usually referring to human populations (see for example my articles, [A Critique of the Human Design System](#), and, [The WingMakers Project](#)).

In New Age you constantly hear the expression “the evolution of consciousness.” It is an utterly reductive and distorted view of how consciousness is developing spiritual. Consciousness doesn’t “evolve” towards something, and certainly not as the kind of “collective evolution of consciousness” which, for example, Ken Wilber, is talking about. The spiritual growth of consciousness has to do with a process of awakening, and this is exclusively an individual matter. Furthermore, it can only happen through a transcendental intervention from the divine. More about “the evolution of consciousness” in my booklet on Rupert Sheldrake.

5. Scientism versus Philosophy of Science

The philosopher Massimo Pigliucci feels that the new atheist movement overlaps with scientism, which he feels is philosophically unsound. He writes: "What I do object to is the tendency, found among many New Atheists, to expand the definition of science to pretty much encompassing anything that deals with “facts,” loosely conceived..., it seems clear to me that most of the New Atheists (except for the professional philosophers among them) pontificate about philosophy very likely without having read a single professional paper in that field.... I would actually go so far as to charge many of the leaders of the New Atheism movement (and, by implication, a good number of their followers) with anti-intellectualism, one mark of which is a lack of respect for the proper significance, value, and methods of another field of intellectual endeavor."

As mentioned, I guess that atheist scientism’s oblivion of its own self-contradictory views partly is due to the ideological aspects of it, partly the lack of competence within philosophy of science. The latter is cemented through a hostility towards philosophy, and therefore a part of the same form of anti-intellectualism as New Age.

The most significant example of the hostility towards philosophy is Yuval Noah Harari. Yuval Noah Harari is an Israelian historian who has achieved international fame for having written a history of Homo Sapiens (humankind), a prophetic prediction of its end, and the beginning of a new species called Homo Deus: an immortal cyborg with divine powers. The book that started it all is called: *Sapiens – A Brief History of Humankind*.

In her article, [Yuval Noah Harari: The age of the cyborg has begun – and the consequences cannot be known](#), Carole Cadwalladr asks Harari:

In some ways, I say, it struck me that Sapiens isn’t actually a history book – it’s a philosophy book that asks the big, philosophical questions and attempts to answer them through history.

Harari answers:

“Yes, that’s a very accurate description. I think that I see history as a philosophy laboratory. Philosophers come up with all these very interesting questions about the human condition, but the way that most of them – though not all – go about answering them is through thought experiments.

This is completely distorted and wrong. I must admit I ask myself whether he does it deliberately.

Even more relevant, perhaps, is Jared Diamond's *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, which explores the different ways human societies developed, and especially why some became powerful and ended up ruling the world while others didn't, based on differences in natural geography.

On CBC radio, Harari cites Diamond's *Guns, Germs, and Steel* as one of the greatest inspirations for *Sapiens* by showing that it was possible to "ask very big questions and answer them scientifically". But Diamond's book immediately came in for heavy criticism from specialists working in the disparate fields on which he drew. But, in the same way as Harari, no one will care. Because the trick is to get the propaganda out in the public (via social medias), where no one ever will read the critics (note the subtitle of Diamond's book: *A Short History of Everybody for the Last 13,000 Years*).

There seem to be a modern trend of scientists writing books with titles like this; scientists who apparently want to be philosophers in the place of the philosophers, and who leave behind them a wake of philosophical shipwrecks. Also the New Age Guru, Ken Wilber, has done an attempt with his book: *A Brief History of Everything* (see my article: [A Critique of Ken Wilber – Updated](#)).

Anti-intellectualism is hostility to and mistrust of intellect, intellectuals, and intellectualism commonly expressed as deprecation of education and *philosophy*, and the dismissal of art, literature, and science as impractical and even contemptible human pursuits. This might seem like something atheist scientism is an opponent to, but we have already looked at how self-contradictory its defense of science and rational argument is.

Something that I never really fully understand is why academics feel the need to denigrate other academic disciplines. But this is what happens in both atheist scientism and New Age scientism.

Just because one happens to think something is so worthwhile that they devoted their lives to it doesn't thereby mean that everything else is crap. But that seems to be the attitude of many scientists and advocates of science towards philosophy. Do a Google search for "philosophy is useless" if you disbelieve me.

Physicist Stephen Hawking, one of Dawkins' favorite scientists, has for example told Google's Zeitgeist conference that philosophers have not kept up with science and their art is dead. Speaking to Google's Zeitgeist Conference in Hertfordshire, the author of 'A Brief History of Time' said that fundamental questions about the nature of the universe could not be resolved without hard data such as that currently being derived from the Large Hadron Collider and space research. "Most of us don't worry about these questions most of the time. But almost all of us must sometimes wonder: Why are we here? Where do we come from? Traditionally, these are questions for philosophy, but philosophy is dead," he said. "Philosophers have not kept up with modern developments in science. Particularly physics." And hereafter he is keeps on doing what he just has claimed to be dead: philosophy. Apparently without knowing it. His books can't be described as anything else than philosophy. He is taking some themes up which is commonly known in philosophy, and presents them as "scientific theories" he entirely himself has thought out.

Hawking went on to claim that "Scientists have become the bearers of the torch of discovery in our quest for knowledge." He said new theories "lead us to a new and very different picture of the universe and our place in it".

In a 40-minute speech, Hawking said that the new "M Theory" of the universe was the "unified theory Einstein was hoping to find". He compared the idea to the computer programm Google Earth, saying it was a "map" of theories, but added that a new, bigger Hadron Collider the size of the Milky Way was needed to collect more data to prove it.

"This technology is some way off," he said, "and I don't think even Google could afford to build it." But Hawking has presented nothing more than a new theory of everything among many other theories of everything, which only can be described as philosophical viewpoints (a theory of everything is basically a cosmology belonging to the philosophical discipline metaphysics).

I know, I think, why some people seem to think that all that matters are science. I too think science is quite important. But once you stop knowing about things, and start arguing about things you cannot know by science, you are doing philosophy, and so it is self-contradictory, to argue, philosophically, that philosophy is crap. Not to mention hypocritically. The argument that a lack of evidence for God leads us to

conclude there is no God is not science; it's philosophy! – read more about Stephen Hawking's junk-philosophy in my article on [Stephen Hawking](#).

This is the paradox of atheist scientism, and why it also paradoxically come to be a part of the same anti-intellectual movement as New Age scientism. Atheist scientism is doing philosophy and not science. And as a philosophy it is, as shown, a shipwreck, both epistemological, ethical and aesthetical.

Both New Age scientism and atheist scientism are common in overestimating the importance of science, for example by claiming:

- 1) that philosophy and religion need to be founded in science.
- 2) that certain single branches of science can give an explanation of everything.
- 3) that certain single branches of science are self-sufficient and that philosophy and religion are superfluous.

In New Age it happens in the demand of “alternative sciences.” In atheist scientism it happens in the form of pseudoskepticism (I will return to the concept of pseudoskepticism).

Richard Dawkins is well known for his criticism of religious pseudoscience such as creationism and intelligent design, but is himself, in his atheist faith, ending in the pseudoscience of reductionism (biologism). Another example within atheist scientism is Daniel C. Dennett, who in his book - with the ambitious title *Consciousness Explained* - seeks to explain consciousness, partially through computer analogies, partially through neurology and psychology. I will return to Daniel Dennett.

All philosophers will in atheist scientism recognize the strange use of the concept of “science” as an overall term for some kind of obscure institution which uses critique of another institution, namely religion. This “institution”, or “thought ministerium” is postulated to be glorified by enlightenment, rationality and critical thinking. But this hasn't anything to do with science. It has something to do with philosophy, and especially:

- 1) Philosophy of Science
- 2) Logic and Theory of Argumentation

Science is in fact developed out of philosophy. It is illuminating to step back in history and consider the important role that philosophy played in the ancient world. Philosophy, the study of the fundamental nature of knowledge, reality, and existence, is regarded as a distinct academic subject today, especially because of the ruling anti-intellectualism. Philosophy in the ancient world, however, represented the discipline of studying the natural world in a rational way, as a variety of scientific disciplines do today. Science and philosophy, considered to be such distinctly different disciplines today, were in effect one branch of knowledge in the ancient world.

Let's look at Harari's book, *Sapiens*. It surveys the history of humankind from the evolution of archaic human species in the Stone Age up to the twenty-first century, focusing on *Homo sapiens*. The account is situated within a framework provided by the natural sciences, particularly evolutionary biology.

But people ought to be aware that Harari's book has nothing whatever to do with evolutionary biology, history or science as such. It is an attempt of doing philosophy in the disguise of science, without scientific validation or philosophical argumentation. It is therefore ideological propaganda. Such attempts are also called scientism.

Harari is just one example of worshippers of the ideology of evolutionism. As mentioned: in my Ebook [Evolutionism - The Red Thread in the Matrix Conspiracy](#), I described the different variations of evolutionism, as for example historicism, as well as its current popularity in America, with transhumanism and its dreams about the future merging of humans and machines. The latter is Harari's favorite.

My intention was to show how evolutionism makes us blind for a number of relationships, as for example down-cycles, the shadow side of life, negative consequences, and most important: the wisdom of the past. I consider evolutionism to be the beginning of a long period of the decline of wisdom. So, in a paradoxically way Harari is right: we are facing the end of *homo Sapiens* (wise man).

Historicism is the belief that historical, and by extension present and future, events unfold according to predetermined sequences. You could mention Hegel's dialectics. But it is found in many belief systems, for example in the 19th and some early 20th century anthropology and archaeology (generally referred to as "cultural evolutionism") - societies evolve through time on a single path from small bands of hunter-gatherers to nation-states resembling those of 19th century Europe — and no further.

You can also see it in certain formulations of biological determinism applied to historical processes, e.g. racist theories that posited the achievements of European civilization were due to biological superiority. These ideas were often tied into the anthropological theories above.

Then there is the above-mentioned Hegelian dialectics - every development in history (thesis) would lead to a reaction (antithesis). The contrast between both will lead to a reconciliation or otherwise be settled (synthesis), which would eventually become a new thesis, etc. This view had a great influence on Marxism - civilization goes through several stages, from primitive communism, through the rise of the state and private property, to feudalism, capitalism, socialism and finally to communism.

You can find it in dispensationalism - a fundamentalist Protestant Christian belief in seven periods of time or "dispensations" the earth will go through; according to this belief we are currently in the "dispensation of grace" and will be until the rapture happens.

Oswald Spengler's *The Decline of the West*, arguably an intellectual influence on Nazism, claimed a civilization model in which each civilization necessarily passes through several epochs and eventually declines.

Auguste Comte's positivism - in his famous *Law of the Three Stages* Comte postulated that all human societies would pass through three stages: the religious stage, the metaphysical stage and the positive stage. He believed his own philosophy kicked off the third stage.

A common trait of historicists are egos that seem to follow their grand fantasies.

It should be easy to see how all this has influenced the New Age movement, where the concept of historical stages has been applied to consciousness, and the coming New World Order – the New Age.

Finally, there is Futurism. Many works of technological determinism may be found under this heading. Its current incarnations are known as "transhumanism" and "Singularitarianism." Many New Age systems merge with futurism, as for example the WingMakers Project and The Human Design System (see my blog post [The WingMakers Project](#) and my article [A Critique of the Human Design System](#)).

It should be mentioned that it is comparatively easy to invent such historical systems. You just have to more or less copy and paste from others, who have done a harder thought work, as for example Hegel and Marx, and then insert your own terminology.

Evolutionary art (postmodern art) is just the repetition of an idea, and therefore not something new, despite that the new is what the ideology are fascinated by.

Historicism was especially popular during the 19th century but has got it renaissance in futurism and New Age, which is spreading worldwide via internet and social media. Basically, historicism is a historian's scientism. Historicists attempted to get the study of human history to become a natural, 'hard' science. They typically identified a 'motor' behind all human history (class struggle, national mission, racial destiny, reason, violence, or repressed sexuality). By careful study of the workings of the motor during human history, most historicists believed it could be used to predict the future, which if successful would in effect turn history into a natural science.

Eventually, these attempts failed, as it turned out human behavior is not as predictable as most historicists believed it is. It has sometimes been argued that much of the nasty cataclysm of war and violence of the 20th century was caused by failed attempts to forcefully have reality fit the perpetrator's pet historicist theory.

Notably, most historicists were not historians (Comte, Marx, and Hegel were philosophers) and historians have generally been aware that their field of study is distant from the natural sciences. This is in stark contrast with practitioners of many other social sciences. What sets history apart from both the natural and social sciences is that it looks for the unique rather than the general. Many historians (though there are exceptions) have been plainly not interested in formulating general laws about human history.

Historical determinism and historicism were decisively rebutted by Karl Popper, who argued that it is impossible to predict the future course of history. His argument goes like this:

- 1) The biggest historical changes in recent history have for the most part been caused by technological changes. If you could get somebody who lived a hundred years ago to time travel to the present the most striking differences would probably be technological ones, and even if that is not the case many of the social, cultural and political changes can at least in part be ascribed to changes in technology.
- 2) Technological progress depends heavily on scientific progress.
- 3) Therefore, in order to predict the future, one should be able to predict future scientific knowledge.

4) It is, however, not possible to predict future scientific knowledge. You can't predict a scientific fact that has not been discovered yet. If you could, it would not be a future discovery but a current one. In other words, if you know a fact that is not yet known, you know it now, so it's not a prediction any more. Knowing things you don't know yet is an impossible logical contradiction.

5) Therefore, it is not possible to predict the future course of history.

Many theories espousing historicism could be considered as scientific hypotheses that were initially valid but eventually failed. Continued adherence to such theories, however, should be classified as pseudoscience. Many historicists will tell you that the revolution or the rapture is still going to happen, but at some undetermined point in the future. Although they do make a prediction, it is not a testable one, making it impossible to falsify, making it essentially worthless for scientific purposes.

In the historicism of New Age (inspired by postmodernism), there has gone inflation in the concept of paradigm shifts. The bridge between science and spirituality is an expression you hear all the time within New Age. And they try to create “alternative sciences” all the time. Each new number of a New Age magazine or New Age promoting website with respect for itself, must contain at least one new “revolutionary” new “scientific” theory, which is the beginning to a “paradigm shift” in science. The number of new forms of “alternative sciences” within New Age is therefore today almost comically large.

Since the late 20th century there has been a renewed interest in bringing history and natural science closer to each other. We saw that in the above-mentioned examples. Although some have tried to formulate laws about human history, these attempts have stayed short of complete determinism.

One example is Richard Dawkins' *The Selfish Gene*, presenting a gene-centered view of evolution, leading some historians to adopt a gene-centered view of history. Harari has made this into a fundament for his “historical research” – (see *Sapiens* 269-271).

More relevant is as mentioned, Jared Diamond's *Guns, Germs, and Steel*.

Notably, neither Dawkins (a biologist, who wants to explain everything from biology) nor Diamond (a geographer who want to explain everything from geography) is a historian. Harari is a historian, but he apparently like Dawkins and Diamond more than historians.

Let's look at Harari's evolutionary model. In his article, [A Reductionist History of Humankind](#), John Sexton lines up Harari's model. He writes about Sapiens:

Books like this meet an appetite for sweeping history written in an accessible style and stressing the role of science and technology in shaping human destiny. Probably the best-known work in this genre is Jared Diamond's Guns, Germs, and Steel (1997). Diamond endorses Sapiens on the cover and receives special thanks in the acknowledgments: Diamond "taught me to see the big picture," Harari writes. But whereas Diamond stressed the role of climate and disease as well as technology in shaping human history, Harari makes the curious claim that it is only when humans have started making things up — imagining entities that do not objectively exist, like gods, ethical principles, and limited liability corporations — that we have made progress toward becoming a super species. Harari's vision of history is therefore actually quite different from Diamond's: while Diamond was really concerned with the influence of the external environment on human culture, or the power of matter over mind, for Harari, history is the story of the gradual triumph of mind over matter.

The basic outline of this story will be familiar to most readers. The genus Homo evolved from primates several million years ago, and modern humans emerged, certainly in Africa but also, perhaps, in other parts of the world, several hundred thousand years ago. Around 70,000 years ago, we underwent the first in a series of revolutions, which Harari terms the Cognitive Revolution. The causes of this event, which in his telling is decisive for all of human history, are largely unknown — he makes no bones about the fact that all that remains from this period is, well, bones. But whatever happened, humans began doing things no species had ever done before and spread rapidly across the planet. Around 11,000 years ago, the Agricultural Revolution turned some of us from hunter-gatherers into farmers, which led to a deterioration in diet, longer hours of work, increased susceptibility to disease, and, ultimately, immense power over nature. Around 500 years ago, the Scientific Revolution began. The world we live in today is in large part a product of this latest, and possibly last, revolution.

Along the way, Harari breezes through some other great and mysterious matters, including the development of language, the rise of religion and the gradual triumph of monotheism, the invention of money, and the growth of empires. Sexton notes that Harari makes a number of striking claims (Harari's straightforward statements which he doesn't support with scientific validation or philosophical argumentation):

- Prior to the start of the Cognitive Revolution around 70,000 years ago, when humans started making things up, they were an unremarkable species in the middle of

the food chain; it was only after the Revolution that large-scale social cooperation became possible through fictions.

- Modern science distinguishes itself from all preceding traditions in its “willingness to admit ignorance.” In fact, the “discovery that humans do not know the answers to their most important questions” is what “launched the Scientific Revolution.”
- Humans’ mastery over nature, especially in the form of industry and the market, has freed us from many forms of drudgery but has also helped to alienate us from each other and to bind us to industry and technology. The state and market now act as — often inadequate — replacements for lost communal bonds.
- All behavior and “whatever is possible” is by definition natural, because nothing can go against the laws of nature. Any behavior we might call “unnatural” is so only by virtue of cultural norms, not biology. The distinction between natural and unnatural is an invention of Christian theology.
- Liberal humanism is a religion founded on “monotheist beliefs.”
- The nation-state is declining in power and we are on our way to a “global empire” with one culture.
- Current developments in biotechnology may lead to the end for us sapiens: we will replace ourselves with bioengineered post-humans, immortal cyborgs who will be as different from us as we are from other species.

Like Diamond, Harari is occupied by letting science answer the “big questions” and in this quest he must, for example, wipe out the complete history of philosophy, so that only science is left to answer the big questions. In *Sapiens* he writes about the scientific revolution:

...We call it the Scientific Revolution. It began in western Europe, a large peninsula on the western tip of Afro-Asia, which up till then played no important role in history. Why did the Scientific Revolution begin there of all places, and not in China or India? Why did it begin at the midpoint of the second millennium AD rather than two centuries before or three centuries later? We don't know. Scholars have proposed dozens of theories, but none of them is particularly convincing (page 272).

This borders to falsification of history, since the development of science has a quite well recorded history. It namely began with Greco-Roman philosophy, and was developed under the influence of Christianity. But Harari's project of letting science

answer philosophical questions leads him to selective thinking. In his brilliant article, [A Response to Yuval Harari's 'Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind'](#), C. R. Hallpike writes:

Harari's next major turning point in world history he refers to, reasonably enough, as 'The Scientific Revolution'. Around AD 1500 'It began in western Europe, a large peninsula on the western tip of Afro-Asia, which up till then played no important role in history.' (272) *This is a unconvincing assessment of a region that had been the seat of the Roman Empire, the Christian Church, and Greek science which was one of the essential foundations of the Scientific Revolution. Harari's opinions about how this got started are even less persuasive:*

"The Scientific Revolution has not been a revolution of knowledge. It has above all been a revolution of ignorance. The great discovery that launched the Scientific Revolution was the discovery that humans do not know the answers to their most important question." (p 279).

This is a statement whose truth is not immediately obvious, and he justifies it as follows:

"Premodern traditions of knowledge such as Islam, Christianity, Buddhism and Confucianism asserted that everything that is important to know about the world was already known. The great gods, or the one almighty God, or the wise people of the past possessed all-encompassing wisdom, which they revealed to us in scriptures and oral traditions" (pp 279-80).

These traditions may have claimed to know all that was essential to salvation and peace of mind, but that kind of knowledge had nothing whatsoever to do with pre-modern traditions of science. In Europe this meant Aristotle and Greek natural philosophy but about which, astonishingly, Harari has nothing at all to say anywhere in his book. Apart from a willingness to admit ignorance and embrace new knowledge, science

". . . has a common core of research methods, which are all based on collecting empirical observations - those we can observe with at least one of our senses - and putting them together with the help of mathematical tools" (p 283).

This is a nineteenth-century view of what science does, whereas the really distinctive feature of modern science is that it tests theory by experiment, and does not simply collect empirical observations [...]

So, you can't trust Harari. In fact, you are in for a huge manipulation project. That he in fact is willing to tell fake stories, can be seen in the controversy with the Russian edition of his book *21 Lessons For the 21st Century*. Harari was allowing several omissions and amendments in the book, using a softer tone when speaking about Russian authorities. Leonid Bershidsky in Moscow Times called it "caution — or, to call it by its proper name, cowardice", and Nettanel Slyomovics in Haaretz claimed that "he is sacrificing those same liberal ideas that he presumes to represent".

In his article, [Putin Gets Stronger When Creators Censor Themselves](#), Bershidsky writes:

To reach China's enormous audiences, writers and filmmakers must submit to official censorship. But in Russia, where censorship is constitutionally banned, Western creators and companies will sometimes allow their content to be excised in order to avoid displeasing the authorities.

The latest incident involves Israeli historian Yuval Noah Harari, whose book "Sapiens. A Brief History of Humankind" sold 1.8 million copies in 45 languages. His third bestseller, "21 Lessons for the 21st Century," came out in Russian in June. Eagle-eyed readers soon spotted a difference between the Russian translation and the text published in other languages.

The non-Russian versions of a chapter about humans being a "post-truth species" addresses the difference between the Russian and Ukrainian narrative of the Crimea invasion. Russian President Vladimir Putin claimed Russian troops weren't involved. He, Harari wrote, described the fighters as "spontaneous 'self-defense groups' that may have acquired Russian-looking equipment from local shops. As they voiced this rather preposterous claim, Putin and his aides knew perfectly well that they were lying."

In the Russian version, however, the lengthy passage on Russia and Ukraine was replaced with what appears to be a partial translation of a Harari column on the Israeli website Ynet (skirting the bits where the writer calls Russia "tyrannical" and undemocratic). Mentions of Putin are gone, and instead there's a passage on Donald Trump making thousands of false statements.

It was soon revealed that Harari authorized the change, which was suggested by the Russian publishing house, Sindbad. "My goal is for the main ideas of the book, concerning the dangers of dictatorship, extremism and fanaticism, to reach the broadest possible audience, including in countries with non-democratic regimes," he said in a statement. "Some examples in this book can repel this audience or lead to

censorship on the part of a certain regime. For that reason I sometimes allow adaptation and authorize changing certain examples, but never the main ideas of the work.”

It's rather post-truth to teach the residents of dictatorships about post-truth only using examples from other countries.

But, as I have shown in my Ebook, [Yuval Noah Harari: The Historian Who Wanted to be Philosopher Instead of the Philosophers](#), in Harari's world, truth is precisely post-truth, and a question of power. He is fully in line with the modern neo-liberal management theorists and their mantra: “It is not facts, but the best story, that wins.” Harari is special in that he uses both New Age (postmodernist) scientism and atheist scientism, and mixes it. But that's rather typical for transhumanists, where materialism and subjective idealism slide together (a result of the theory of mind called panpsychism). The politics behind is a rather new form of liberalism called *progressive neoliberalism*. It is a mix of both left-wing and right-wing politics. I would claim that the advocates are, with a phrase lend from Lenin: “useful idiots” in the destabilization game played by Russia and China. See my extract from the above Harari Ebook called: [Yuval Noah Harari: A Neoliberal Marionette Puppet in the Dance Between Surveillance Capitalism and Chinese Communism](#).

So, today philosophy can be said to be the discipline that must point out that it is necessary to avoid that science is being mixed with religion, spirituality and/or politics. This is done in philosophy of science, which is a necessary study for any scholar.

Philosophy of science (or theory of science) is a sub-field of philosophy concerned with the foundations, methods, and implications of science. The central questions of this study concern what qualifies as science, the reliability of scientific theories, and the ultimate purpose of science. This discipline overlaps with metaphysics, ontology, and epistemology, for example, when it explores the relationship between science and truth. It is probably here atheist scientism would say stop. But paradoxically enough they end in anti-science. Let me explain.

Anti-science is a position that rejects science and the scientific method. People holding anti-scientific views do not accept that science is an objective method, or that it generates universal knowledge. They also contend that scientific reductionism in particular is an inherently limited means to reach understanding of the complex world we live in.

And to this might be added that there are, as mentioned above, two versions of reductionism, which very broadly defined could be termed as materialism and idealism. This is important since it seems that these two versions are in war with each other.

6. Skeptical Inquirer – The Magazine for Science and Reason

AS mentioned: the Committee for Skeptical Inquiry (CSI) is a program within the transnational American non-profit educational organization Center for Inquiry (CFI). CFI and Richard Dawkins Foundation are now formally merged.

Skeptical Inquirer is a bimonthly American magazine published by CSI with the subtitle: The Magazine for Science and Reason. In Volume 44 no. 1, January/February 2020, there was an article by Kendrick Frazier, called: *Science, Philosophy, and a Lifetime of Reason: A Mario Bunge Centenary Festschrift*. Frazier writes in a comment to an article by Mario Bunge (*The Philosophy of Pseudoscience*):

“It provides a comprehensive, explanatory, intellectual, philosophical framework for virtually every issue we address in the SKEPTICAL INQUIRER”.

Physicist and philosopher Mario Bunge used the term scientism with a favorable rather than pejorative sense in numerous books published over several decades, and in articles with titles such as "In defense of realism and scientism" and "In defense of scientism". Bunge dismissed critics of science such as Hayek and Habermas as dogmatists and obscurantists. In - *Mario Bunge, Evaluating Philosophies*, he writes:

To innovate in the young sciences it is necessary to adopt scientism. This is the methodological thesis that the best way of exploring reality is to adopt the scientific method, which may be boiled down to the rule "Check your guesses." Scientism has been explicitly opposed by dogmatists and obscurantists of all stripes, such as the neoliberal ideologist Friedrich von Hayek and the "critical theorist" Jürgen Habermas, a ponderous writer who managed to amalgamate Hegel, Marx, and Freud, and decreed that "science is the ideology of late capitalism."

Is Mario Bunge a philosopher? No, Bunge is a physician. And mentioning this is of course the essence in what it is I try to show: we see an anti-intellectual scientism movement, where one of the aims is to eliminate philosophy. Bunge began his studies at the National University of La Plata, graduating with a Ph.D. in physico-mathematical sciences in 1952. He was professor of theoretical physics and

philosophy, 1956–1966, first at La Plata then at University of Buenos Aires. He was, until his retirement at age 90, the Frothingham Professor of Logic and Metaphysics at McGill University in Montreal, where he had been since 1966. So, here we see a physician, who for years taught philosophy, and thereby a physician who taught philosophy students deeply distorted views of what philosophy in fact is. In the Rupert Sheldrake text, we shall see how this attempt of exchanging philosophers with scientists, has moved into spirituality, where atheist scientism is seeking to replace spiritual teachers with atheists, as is the case with Sam Harris, who claims to be an enlightened Dzogchen master.

Frazier writes (in a quotation of Michael R. Matthews):

Bunge's unifying thread is "the constant and vigorous advancement" of Enlightenment thinking "and criticism of cultural and academic movements that deny or devalue" its core planks, "namely naturalism, the search for truth, the universality of science, rationality, and respect for individuals...At a time when specialization is widely decried..., it is salutary to see the fruits of one person's pursuit of 'Big' scientific and philosophical picture".

The self-contradiction is of course the complete lack of skepticism among these "skeptics."

I will give an example: [The Conceptual Penis as a Social Construct: A Sokal-Style Hoax on Gender Studies](#) is a new article in the [Skeptic Magazine](#) (not Skeptical Inquirer, but similar) which are going the rounds among prominent members of the skeptic community. It is an attempt to take down the field of gender studies by getting a "Sokal-style" hoax article published (read my article [The Sokal Hoax](#)).

But, but: have you ever witnessed a prank gone wrong? If not, here you go: This is precisely what happened when the philosopher and mathematician, Peter Boghossian and James Lindsay, respectively, had the article published in a journal called Cogent Social Sciences. The article was simultaneously published in the magazine Skeptic.

The project was loudly advertised as a "hoax on gender studies." It primarily aimed to expose what the authors presume to be the nonsensical absurdity of gender studies, an interdisciplinary field that attempts to understand gender identity and how these identities play out in society.

Yet Boghossian and Lindsay's prank article unambiguously failed to do this and ultimately have exposed and harmed the skeptic community itself. First, the open-access journal that published their article [requests that authors pay](#) to publish. In the

case of Cogent Social Sciences, the recommended fee is a whopping \$1,350. Boghossian and Lindsay were, for unknown reasons, asked to pay less than half of this, namely \$625, but the journal apparently never got around to actually requesting the money. Boghossian has repeatedly declared on social media that he and his colleague paid “nada” for the article’s publication, which taken out of context is patently misleading. So Boghossian and Lindsay used precisely the same shadow journals as for example New Agers does (see the Matrix Dictionary on [Predator Open Access Publishing](#)).

Furthermore, their article was initially rejected by a serious journal, “NORMA: International Journal for Masculinity Studies”. But they were referred to the smaller outlet, ‘Cogent Social Sciences’, that offers publication where you ‘pay what you like’ (and, apparently, they didn’t pay [anything](#)).

Which raises a very important question: why are the titans of the skeptic/rationalist community being pointedly irrational, when it comes to the reason this hoax was published?

The article in Skeptic Magazine highlights how regularly people will vastly lower their standards of skepticism and rationality if a piece of information is seen as confirmation of a pre-existing belief – in this instance, the belief that gender studies is fatally compromised by seething man-hate seen in connection with Capitalism and climate change. All these things were what Sokal avoided.

The standard machinery of rationality would have triggered a moment of doubt – ‘perhaps we’ve not put in enough work to separate the signal from the noise’, or ‘perhaps we need to tease apart the factors more carefully’.

That slow, deliberative mechanism of self-assessment is non-existent in the authorship and sharing of this piece. It seems quite likely that this is due largely to a pre-existing hostility towards gender studies, ‘identity politics’ and the general focus of contemporary progressive America.

It seems the conclusions drawn from Boghossian’s hoax go beyond post-hoc rationalization and into a more recent trend in conservatism, where an irrational idea is accepted not because it conforms to that person’s beliefs, but because it contravenes the beliefs of ideological opponents.

Perhaps, on some level, authors like Sam Harris, Richard Dawkins, Steven Pinker and Michael Shermer recognized that significantly more effort and analytical rigour was needed to come anywhere near a comprehensive conclusion about an entire

field, but that niggling feeling was buried deep beneath the visceral thrill of seeing their ideological opponents dealt a mighty blow.

This reveals just how problematic the pay-to-publish model can be, even tainting the peer-review process — which in the best of circumstances can be flawed. But the fact that Bohannon got the phony paper published is not an indictment of science itself. Why would it be? To show that the intellectual values of a field are fundamentally flawed, one would need to publish in the best journals of that field and trick genuine experts into believing the hoax is a non-hoax. That was what Sokal did in the notorious “Sokal affair,” which attempted to unveil the obscurantist vacuity of some postmodern theory.

It was in connection with the Sokal Hoax that I raised the question which started this text:

How, given the recent and sad story of ideologically motivated conceptions of knowledge – Lysenkoism in Stalin’s Soviet Union, for example, or Nazi critiques of “Jewish science” – could it again have become acceptable to behave in this way?

At that time the question was aimed at the left-wing postmodernism, which Sokal exposed. Sadly enough, now this article in the Skeptic magazine has shown the precise same thing going on in the right-wing conservative/liberal, so-called “skeptical” atheist movement. But, as I have shown above: all real scientific skeptics knew it.

The Postmodern-generator, the random nonsense computer used to generate much of the content of the hoax paper, is available [here](#).

There certainly is a lot of good rational thinking among skeptics, especially the philosophers and other trained scholars among them, but if you for example have a look at the Skeptical Inquirer magazine, it can be tiresome to hear the same analyses of the same topics again and again, as for example Creationism, The Roswell mystery, The Loch Ness monster, old ghost stories, old conspiracy theories, etc., etc. – and the same implied conclusions: all people with a religious or paranormal faith are idiots.

Creationism is a belief held only by a very limited group of people in America. And if those analyses again are being limited to a very few people within creationism, the whole thing is getting a bit tiresome. Take for example the 8 pages long article Fire-breathing Dinosaurs in the July/August issue 2017 of Skeptical Inquirer ([read more here](#)).

It is a well-researched article, that shows why dinosaurs can't breathe fire, and that the creationist idea of fire-breathing dinosaurs therefore is an example of pseudoscience. But what's the point in using so much energy on such a limited topic? (it seems like the magazine is desperately in need of material in order to have enough content for the next issue). In other words: the magazine is focusing on a one-sided enemy image. It is confirmation biased.

Moreover, the magazine has an almost embarrassingly problem with understanding that its own method is philosophy of science. We've already investigated that. The magazine is for example talking a lot about rational argumentation/critical thinking, and fallacy labels are often casually thrown around in a way that just distracts from the substance of a discussion. There is a thought distortion called *That's a Fallacy*, which is the manoeuvre of falsely accusing someone of committing a fallacy. It is a form of rhetoric which can be particularly pernicious. If you are putting forward a case and someone confidently declares that what you have just said involves a number of fallacies, then you may be tempted to back down, giving your attacker the benefit of the doubt. But the onus should be on those who accuse others of fallacious reasoning to spell precisely why they believe this to be a fair charge, otherwise the charge is at best vague. The concept of a fallacy is again something which is studied in the sub-discipline of philosophy called Logic (the study of arguments, or the study of correct reasoning). And the casual use of fallacy labels used in the skeptical community again witnesses about a lack of training in this field, and furthermore: the lack of ability to recognize all this at all.

Instead *philosophy of science and logic* is identified as some kind of thought ministerium called "science." For example: you repeatedly hear expressions like: "They must face the critique from science," or "science must go into a critique of this." They identify themselves with "science". For example, in *The God Delusion*, Dawkins writes:

In his 1996 book Is There a God?, reissued in 2010, [Richard] Swinburne endears himself to scientists by praising the virtue of simple explanations but then, astonishingly, goes on to claim that God is the ultimate simple explanation for everything:

"Theism claims that every other object which exists is caused to exist and kept in existence by just one substance, God. And it claims that every property which every substance has is due to God causing or permitting it to exist. It is a hallmark of a simple explanation to postulate few causes There could in this respect be no simpler explanation than one which postulated only one cause. Theism is simpler than polytheism. And theism postulates for its one cause, a person [with] infinite power

(God can do anything logically possible), infinite knowledge (God knows everything logically possible to know), and infinite freedom . . .” (p 43).

As I wrote in my review of the book for the Sunday Times:

Swinburne generously concedes that God cannot accomplish feats that are logically impossible, and one feels grateful for this forbearance. That said, there is no limit to the explanatory purposes to which God’s infinite power is put. Is science having a little difficulty explaining X? No problem. Don’t give X another glance. God’s infinite power is effortlessly wheeled in to explain X (along with everything else), and it is always a supremely simple explanation because, after all, there is only one God. What could be simpler than that? (page 14-15)

I won’t go into the argumentation, just say that this is nothing more than an example of a logic and theory of argumentation exercise. And that’s philosophy, not science. What I want to point out is the use of the word “science” as if it was some kind of thought ministerium. Where is this institution called “science” which promotes critique of certain parts of culture, which it is in ideological opposition to?

Another example: in an article called *Let’s Be SHARPs together: The Need for a New Umbrella Term* (vol. 42, no. 1/January/February 2018 of *Skeptical Inquirer*), you’ll find precisely the ideological black and white thinking we discussed earlier. The article begins like this:

Two things that serve to maintain morale, focus, and motivation within the “community of reason” are its comparative unity and its growth over the past century, in particular within education, affluent, liberal, democratic communities. This relative unity contrasts with the bickering, arbitrary schisms – and even bloodshed – among religions around the world.

While supernaturalists’ criteria for truth, sources of knowledge, and philosophical positions vary widely, wildly, and arbitrarily, this quietly emergent community of reason, bolstered by extraordinary successes in hundreds of technical, medical, and other scientific endeavors, is in overwhelming agreement as to the sources of true knowledge.

While theists murder each other over how an allegedly sacred text should be interpreted, atheists join various (overlapping) groups or subscribe to parallel publications according to their individual interests or preoccupations. Those focused on ethics in society and improving people’s lives tend to join humanist organizations. Those concerned with pseudoscience and spread of belief in the paranormal will read

or contribute to skeptical magazines. Those upset over the continuing harmfulness and absurdity of the world's religions contribute to online atheist forums, and so on.

So firstly, we have the postulate that there exists some kind of institution they call “the community of reason” which is atheist, and from where all scientific, humanistic and ethical work come; that is: all the improvements of the world. This would mean that all the scientists, humanists and ethicists who have contributed to this work must be atheists, or else this would not be possible. Because, as the article explicitly claims: theists are not occupied with scientific, humanistic and ethical work, “but with murdering each other.” Theists are in other words ruled out. This is in a nutshell what the article claims. It is parroting Dawkins’ manipulative rhetoric words for words. It claims that it is doing scientific work, but can’t show how this is done *exclusively* within a community of atheists, except by claiming it. It claims it is doing humanistic and ethical work, but can’t show how this is done *exclusively* within a community of atheists, except by claiming it. In fact, we have already examined how materialism both is an epistemological, ethical and aesthetical shipwreck, and furthermore a pseudoscientific reductionist viewpoint.

Hereafter they crave for an umbrella term for all this amazing atheist work, and one must admit that there is nothing wrong with the authors’ egos here. Firstly, they consider the term BRIGHT, but admits that it is too arrogant. Hereafter they decide for the acronym SHARP, with the argument:

“Although positive, SHARP is less arrogant and aggressive than *bright*, since its opposite is most comfortable *blunt* (rather than *stupid* or *dim*).”

Thanks, I can now comfortable term myself *blunt*, rather than *stupid* or *dim*; terms atheists often have put on me. Are the authors philosophers? Of course not. The authors are David J. Tyler, a former Australian Army officer, and Gary M. Baker, a practicing clinical psychologist. Maybe they should take a course in philosophy before they boast about their own sharpness in a field, which they don’t even know is philosophy.

What also is puzzling is the lack of peer review of the magazine’s pseudo-intellectual writers such as the magician James Randi (in the magazine called “A Magician in the Lab), who admittedly have made a lot of great exposures of con artists, but whose understanding of philosophy of science is as limited as those he criticizes. For example: in vol. 41, no. 6, November/December 2017, the editors apparently had send Randi a copy of the book *Dear Martin / Dear Marcello: Gardner and Truzzi on Skepticism* by Dana Richards.

About the book: In 1952, Martin Gardner wrote the book *Fads and Fallacies in the Name of Science*, which has become a modern classic of the skeptical movement. He is best known as the Father of Recreational Mathematics, but was also a frank critic of pseudoscientists and a contributor to the *Skeptical Inquirer* magazine.

Marcello Truzzi was one of the founders of the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal in 1976. He left that and founded the Center for Scientific Anomalies Research, which was more aligned with his views. Truzzi left the organization after only a short time, arguing that many of those involved "tend to block honest inquiry, in my opinion. Most of them are not agnostic toward claims of the paranormal; they are out to knock them. [...] When an experiment of the paranormal meets their requirements, then they move the goal posts." Truzzi coined the term pseudoskeptic to describe critics in whom he detected such an attitude.

In *Dear Martin / Dear Marcello* Dana Richards presents the unedited, colorful correspondence between these two well-known figures within the skeptical movement as they probed and wrestled with fundamental questions such as:

1. The demarcation problem — how to distinguish good from bad science?
2. How should scholars on the fringe (paranormalists) be treated?

In short: a book about philosophy of science.

Apparently, it was Randi's job to write a review of it. At least, I think it must have been. Because you'll have to look a long way for any qualified review. Randi obviously doesn't understand what the two persons in the book are talking about. The only place he can find some kind of recognition is a place about Uri Geller where his own name is mentioned. He then uses the opportunity to tell about his own achievements in that connection. He concludes with the words: "I cannot simply recommend the book unless the readers are really prepared to work at extracting the wisdom to be found there, and that would require some considerable dedication." After these words he ends the "review" with another reference to himself and his achievements, completely unrelated to the book. Where is the peer review?

In fact, if I should characterize CSI, I'm supporting Truzzi. The term pseudoskepticism was namely coined by him. Pseudoskepticism is usually used in opposition to an assortment of questionable claims (from UFOs and paranormal phenomena to alternative medical practices to religious ideas). Pseudoskepticism refers to arguments which use scientific sounding language to disparage or refute

given beliefs, theories, or claims, but which in fact fail to follow the precepts of conventional scientific skepticism, which I myself support, though my method not is science, but philosophy.

The term “pseudoskepticism” has gradually been expanded to include any unsubstantiated invalidation of a theory.

So, beneath it’s apparent “scientific” look, atheist scientism, hereunder Skeptical Inquirer, is as false as New Age Scientism, and any New Age magazine. But it is in another direction.

An early controversy of CSI (COP) concerned the so-called Mars effect: French statistician Michel Gauquelin's claim that champion athletes are more likely to be born when the planet Mars is in certain positions in the sky. In late 1975, prior to the formal launch of CSICOP, astronomer Dennis Rawlins, along with Paul Kurtz, George Abell and Marvin Zelen (all subsequent members of CSICOP) began investigating the claim. Rawlins, a founding member of CSICOP at its launch in May 1976, resigned in early 1980 claiming that other CSICOP researchers had used incorrect statistics, faulty science, and outright falsification in an attempt to debunk Gauquelin's claims. In an article for the pro-paranormal magazine Fate, he wrote: "I am still skeptical of the occult beliefs CSICOP was created to debunk. But I have changed my mind about the integrity of some of those who make a career of opposing occultism." CSICOP's Philip J. Klass responded by circulating an article to CSICOP members critical of Rawlins' arguments and motives; Klass's unpublished response, refused publication by Fate, itself became the target for further criticism.

To summarize: CSICOP published a scientifically false report. They blocked all attempts by a member of their own Executive Council to inform members that the report was false. When their own selected referees agreed the report was false, they suppressed the referees’ report. This went over a period of four years (1977-1981) and if “bungling” explains the beginning of it, Rawlins’s term “cover-up” certainly does not seem too strong for what followed.

Marcello Truzzi was editor of the CSICOP journal when it was called Zetetic. He had a difference of opinion with the Executive Council, about whether dissenting views should be published. He says CSICOP isn’t skeptical at all in the true meaning of that word but is “an advocacy body upholding orthodox establishment views”. In other words, their alleged skepticism has become just another dogmatic blind faith.

Truzzi started his own journal, now called the Zetetic Scholar, in competition with CSICOP’s journal, now called The Skeptical Inquirer. He follows the normal

procedure of what is usually considered adult debate among sane people: he prints articles on both sides of every question and allows open debate, unlike The Skeptical Inquirer, which only prints articles on one side, since they already know the truth. Their fury against him is what any student of priestcraft would expect.

Metamagical Times, by Douglas Hofstadter, p. 111-113:

Hofstadter, a good friend and admirer of CSICOP's super star Martin Gardner, gives his version of Prof. Truzzi's exodus. Truzzi wanted to publish articles on both sides of the Velikovsky controversy. Gardner held that this would give Velikovsky "undeserved legitimacy," and insisted on the one-sided attitude which now prevails in CSICOP. To attack a man's ideas, and then refuse to let him, or his defenders, answer the attack seems to me Idolatrous, if not fascist. To say that after attacking him, allowing rebuttal gives him "undeserved legitimacy" is a rationalization that, I think, only the most faithful can believe, or even discuss with a straight face. Hofstadter defends Gardner as well as he can, calling Velikovsky "obnoxious", but ends up admitting that he, personally, would prefer open debate. He still supports CSICOP, however.

CSICOP, meanwhile, isn't listening to Hofstadter. They still won't allow open debate in their journal. The heretical Jeffersonian view that even the "obnoxious" have the right to be heard hasn't percolated their craniums yet.

Richard Dawkins himself refuse to debate openly with the people he has insulted - see for example the article [Dawkins Refuses God-Debate - "Apt to be interpreted as cowardice", says Oxford academic](#). Dawkins refused four British invitations to publicly debate with the philosopher William Lane Craig. The answer for the refusal is of course not Dawkins's childish excuses, but that such a debate would expose Dawkins as someone not being able to discuss on a high academical level. Craig has done that before with Sam Harris and Christopher Hitchens. See these videos:

[Sam Harris vs William Lane Craig The God Debate](#)

[Does God Exist? William Lane Craig vs. Christopher Hitchens](#)

Truzzi attributed the following characteristics to pseudosceptics:

- 1) The tendency to deny, rather than doubt.
- 2) Double standards in the application of criticism

- 3) Tendency to discredit, rather than investigate
- 4) Presenting insufficient evidence or proof
- 5) Assuming criticism requires no burden of proof
- 6) Making unsubstantiated counter-claims
- 7) Counter-claims based on plausibility rather than empirical evidence
- 8) Suggesting that unconvincing evidence is grounds for completely dismissing a claim

Truzzi characterized true skepticism as:

- 1) Doubt rather than denial; nonbelief rather than belief
- 2) An agnostic position, one that says the claim is not proved rather than disproved
- 3) Maintains that science need not incorporate every extraordinary claim as a new “fact.”
- 4) As a result, has no burden to prove anything
- 5) Discovering an opportunity for error should make such experiments less evidential and usually unconvincing. It usually disproves the claim that the experiment was “air tight” against error, but it does not disprove the anomaly claim.

Two other articles in *The Skeptical Inquirer*, which I have criticized:

[Examples of Atheist Propaganda in Skeptical Inquirer - Example 1: James E. Alcock](#)

[Examples of Atheist Propaganda in Skeptical Inquirer - Example 2: Steven Pinker](#)

7. Is Religion the Root of All Evil?

The Root of All Evil?, later retitled *The God Delusion*, is a television documentary written and presented by [Richard Dawkins](#) in which he argues that humanity would be better off without [religion](#) or belief in God.

The first part, titled "The God Delusion", explored the beliefs of religion and their conflicts with science, while in the second part, "The Virus Of Faith", he brought in the theory of the meme to explain religions, making them akin to viruses, and explored the moral implications of religious belief.

The program is, as already discussed, filled with strawman attacks, focusing on worst examples and selective thinking, etc., etc.

This is typical rhetoric in atheist scientism. Just listen to this quote from Sam Harris from *The End of Faith*:

The danger of religious faith is that it allows otherwise normal human beings to reap the fruits of madness and consider them holy. Because each new generation of children is taught that religious propositions need to be justified in the way that all others must, civilization is still besieged by the armies of the preposterous. We are, even now, killing each other over ancient literature. Who would have thought something so tragically absurd could be possible.

Before going further into it, I have constantly heard that I should listen to this American philosopher, Sam Harris, and his incredible philosophy books. Is the guy a philosopher? No, of course not. He is a neuro scientist! Add one more scientist to the endless row of scientists who want to be philosophers in the place of the philosophers. The above statement is so naive, ignorant, one-sided and black and white, that it is not worth commenting on. It sounds like something you could hear in a kindergarten.

When you hear atheist scientism in this generalizing, one-sided way, claim, again and again and again, that religious people, besides being idiots and mad, are the cause of all evil in the world, and that peace only can be reached through atheism, it is of course a fair objection to note that some of the modern world's most disgusting wars (Nazism and Communism), has been fought, perhaps not in the name of atheism, but with atheism as an underlying view.

There is nothing in this that claims that atheist people are stupid and evil, but nor are religious people. But that's how they are depicted by atheist scientism.

Dawkins has of course heard this objection, and answers:

Individual atheists may do evil things but they don't do evil things in the name of atheism. Stalin and Hitler did extremely evil things in the name of, respectively, dogmatic and doctrinaire Marxism, and an insane and unscientific eugenics theory

tinged with sub-Wagnerian ravings. Religious wars really are fought in the name of religion, and they have been horrible frequent in history (The God Delusion, page 315-16).

Does this mean that the “individual atheists” of respectively Nazism and Stalinism, in that case, would have to be characterized as being better, because they don’t fight under the name atheism? That’s what the “argument” implies. What’s worse is that it downplays the wars of Nazism and Communism in an attempt of getting religious wars into focus. Whether or not wars are fought in the name of atheism or religion, is not the problem. It is a play with words that are irrelevant. It is red herring.

Dawkins hasn’t must else to say about Nazism and Communism. Therefore, I will do it. It is namely easily to show the invalidity of the constant, and quite central argument of atheist scientism, that religion is the root of all evil. You can do this by showing precisely the two above-mentioned counter-examples. The one is the direct atheist militant movement of Communism. Here it actually seems like a war fought under the name atheism. The other is the anti-religious movement of Nazism. I am in no way making a guilt by association argument here. I simply want to show the invalidity of the opinion that religion is the root of *all* evil.

1) The League of Militant Atheists

The League of Militant Atheists was an atheistic and antireligious organization of workers and intelligentsia that developed in Soviet Russia under the influence of the ideological and cultural views and policies of the Soviet Communist Party from 1925 to 1947. It consisted of party members, members of the Komsomol youth movement, those without specific political affiliation, workers and military veterans.

The league embraced workers, peasants, students, and intelligentsia. It had its first affiliates at factories, plants, collective farms (kolkhozy), and educational institutions. By the beginning of 1941 it had about 3.5 million members from 100 nationalities. It had about 96,000 offices across the country. Guided by Bolshevik principles of anti-religious propaganda and by the Party's orders with regards to religion, the League aimed at exterminating religion in all its manifestations and forming an anti-religious scientific mindset among the workers.

It propagated atheism and scientific achievements, conducted "individual work" (a method of sending atheist tutors to meet with individual believers to convince them that gods do not exist); most of the peasantry was unimpressed, and even the party apparatus regarded the League as meddling and inefficient.

The League's slogan was "Struggle against religion is a struggle for socialism", which was meant to tie in their atheist views with economy, politics, and culture. One of the slogans adopted at the 2nd congress proclaimed: "Struggle against religion is a struggle for the five-year plan!"

The League had international connections; it was part of the International of Proletarian Freethinkers and later of the Worldwide Freethinkers Union.

The league was a "nominally independent organization established by the Communist Party to promote atheism". It published newspapers, journals, and other materials that lampooned religion; it sponsored lectures and films; it organized demonstrations and parades; it set up antireligious museums; and it led a concerted effort telling Soviet citizens that religious beliefs and practices were wrong and harmful, and that good citizens ought to embrace a scientific, atheistic worldview.

2) *Nazi anti-religiousness*

This might sound strange, since Nazism often is associated with some kind of romantic "spiritual" occultism. But this is not accurate. Hitler, attempting to appeal to the German masses during his political campaign and leadership, sometimes made declarations in support of religion and against atheism. He stated in a speech that atheism (a concept he linked with Communism and "Jewish materialism") had been "stamped out", and banned the German Freethinkers League in 1933.

In his book *Mein Kampf* and in public speeches prior to and in the early years of his rule, he affirmed a belief in Christianity. Hitler and the Nazi party promoted "Positive Christianity", a movement which rejected most traditional Christian doctrines such as the divinity of Jesus, as well as Jewish elements such as the Old Testament.

Adolf Hitler's religious beliefs have in that way been a matter of debate; the wide consensus of historians though, consider him to have been irreligious and anti-Christian. In light of evidence such as his vocal rejection of the tenets of Christianity, numerous private statements to confidants denouncing Christianity as a harmful superstition, and his strenuous efforts to reduce the influence and independence of Christianity in Germany after he came to power, Hitler's major academic biographers conclude that he was irreligious and an opponent of Christianity.

While a small number of writers accept his publicly stated views as genuine expressions of his spirituality, the vast majority believe that Hitler was skeptical of churches generally – although he "freely acknowledged the religious needs of the masses" – but recognized that he could only be elected and preserve his political

power if he feigned a commitment to and belief in Christianity, which the overwhelming majority of Germans believed in. Hitler himself told confidants that his reluctance to make public attacks on the Church was not a matter of principle, but a pragmatic political move. In his private diaries, Goebbels wrote in April 1941 that though Hitler was "a fierce opponent" of the Vatican and Christianity, "he forbids me to leave the church. For tactical reasons."

We have to remember that Hitler's fundamental philosophical inspiration was Friedrich Nietzsche, and that he therefore shared Nietzsche's anti-religious philosophy (Nietzsche is by the way also the head philosopher of the postmodern New Age "spirituality").

Once in office, Hitler and his regime sought to reduce the influence of Christianity on society. From the mid-1930s, his government was increasingly dominated by militant anti-Christians like Goebbels, Bormann, Himmler, Rosenberg and Heydrich whom Hitler appointed to key posts.

These anti-church radicals were generally permitted or encouraged to perpetrate the Nazi persecutions of the churches. The regime launched an effort toward coordination of German Protestants under a unified Protestant Reich Church (but this was resisted by the Confessing Church), and moved early to eliminate political Catholicism. Hitler agreed to the Reich concordat with the Vatican, but then routinely ignored it, and permitted persecutions of the Catholic Church.

Smaller religious minorities faced harsher repression, with the Jews of Germany expelled for extermination on the grounds of Nazi racial ideology. Jehovah's Witnesses were ruthlessly persecuted for refusing both military service and allegiance to Hitler's movement. Hitler said he anticipated a coming collapse of Christianity in the wake of scientific advances, and that Nazism and religion could not co-exist long term. Although he was prepared to delay conflicts for political reasons, historians conclude that he ultimately intended the destruction of Christianity in Germany, or at least its distortion or subjugation to a Nazi outlook.

Hitler certainly had some kind of romantic mystical religiousness, but this was inseparably combined with his political concepts of blood and nation.

So, it would be fairer to say that *ideology* in itself (both religious, atheist and political) is the root of all evil, rather than certain specific ideologies.

8. The Brave New World of Scientism

The accepted ideology today is consumerism, or consumer-capitalism, and the supreme good in the future is constant increasing production, constant increasing consumption. The thought-system behind this ideology comes from the so-called Management theory, which again builds on New Thought, Humanistic psychology, New Age and Postmodern intellectualism - and their relativism and subjectivism. This idealism is, as we saw in the chapter on the Heredity and Environment Controversy, connected with materialism as two sides of the same coin.

With the industrial modernization Man has cultivated a mind, which can solve almost any technological problem; that, which the German philosopher Habermas called the instrumental reason, as viewpoint supported by atheist fundamentalism. But apparently human problems have never been solved. On the contrary mankind are about to be drowned in its problems: problems concerning communication, the relationship with others, heaven and hell. The whole of the human existence has become one extremely complex problem. And apparently it has been like that through the whole of history. Despite the knowledge of Man, despite his millenniums of evolution, Man has never been free from such problems.

The solutions to such problems require a communicative (philosophical) reason, a reason, which understands the human community. But as Habermas says, then we are not using such a reason, on the contrary we are using an instrumental reason on human problems, where it only should be used on technical problems. We seek to solve human problems technically, where they should be solved in a philosophical way. The systems (the market, the economy, the bureaucracy, the systems) have colonized the lifeworld.

An aspect of, that the instrumental reason has conquered territory from the communicative reason consists in, that we in connection with human problems treat each other as means or as items, which have come on the wrong course (the treatment society). It is interesting, that the New Age movement, which actually should be a spiritual alternative to this, and be an advocate for a communicative reason, on the contrary is one of the most aggressive advocates for the instrumental reason. This is due to its psychologizing of philosophy. New Age is possessed with all kind of self-invented forms of treatment, and with pseudoscientific attempts to justify them as science. Often they manipulative use instrumental/scientific inspired terms about their methods, but which are without any scientific meaning at all. It is just a rhetorical trick to persuade people to pay the fee.

In a lifeworld colonized by an instrumental reason there is an atmosphere of hermeneutic of suspicion. Ideologists as such could be called Hermeneutics of Suspicion.

The philosopher Paul Ricoeur has referred to the “hermeneutics of suspicion” encouraged by writers such as Marx, Nietzsche and Freud. What people think, and the reasons they produce, may not be the real reasons at work. It then becomes easy to become suspicious of the motives of everyone, whether as the representative of an economic class or the purveyor of a morality, or just as an individual with psychological problems to solve.

The last mentioned is a typical trait of the management theories and their use of coaching and psychotherapy in leadership theories and personality developing courses. In this way they end up concealing power relations at the working place, they lead to difficulties assigning responsibility towards children in the schools, they reduce our spouses to means for our personal development (self-improvement), and remove political incitation and social responsibility by disguising social problems as personal/psychological problems.

In my article [The Matrix Conspiracy](#) I claim, that a serious problem in the future, is that a new kind of scientism is trying to unite New Age scientism with atheist scientism. I call it the Illuminati aspect of the Matrix conspiracy.

Because you can see the same development in the so-called diagnosed life, where large pharmaceutical companies are speculating in creating new diagnoses, which have to be treated with medicine: a product of the reductionistic view of human nature (biologism), where materialism is taken for granted. In the self-help industry the same is happening in form of so-called positive psychology (where the “positive” is about material glory, money, success, personal power, sex, health, beauty) and where you have to ignore, repress, turn your back to everything you find negative. Here they work exclusively with subjective idealism. So, though the psychiatrists and doctors of the pharmaceutical industry, and the coaches and psychotherapists of the self-help industry, may be in opposition to each other (as shown in the movie *Cuckoo’s Nest*) it is in my view a product of the same Matrix conspiracy.

It is therefore interesting to compare the characteristic traits of New Age (the self-help industry) and the pharmaceutical industry with Aldous Huxley’s novel *Brave New World*. This novel foresees the end of democracy in a scientific, technological fixated meritocracy. The novel is about a totalitarian state, which keeps psychological and genetic control with everybody, so that they surrender to the claimed “blessings” of the progress of the instrumental or technical reason; that is: through the reductionisms of psychologism and biologism.

We have seen that we with the Matrix Conspiracy have two ruling metaphysical theories in the Western society: materialism (the bias of atheist scientism) and

subjective idealism (New Age scientism). The ruling methods of these two metaphysical theories are *precisely* biology and psychology.

Everything in *Brave New World*, also humans, and human problems, are treated instrumental or technical. Psychology and genetics are controlling people down to the smallest details, children are being born and “grewed” on bottles, brains are being trimmed, characters are being converted after the needs of the dominant state. Notice the similarities with the New Age product called NLP which are about programming your brain so that you can become a success in society; that is: so that you work in favour of Consumer Capitalism.

The people in this meritocracy are considered to be happy. If they experience some kind of negativity, they are in large quantities supplied with the drug Soma, which makes them “happy” again. With the New Age colonization and the destruction of the indigenous cultures and the wisdom traditions, not only religion will be removed, but also the spiritual practice itself, since New Agers don’t bother to use all the time a spiritual practice requires. Spiritual practice will in that way be replaced by psychedelics (see my booklet [The Psychedelic Renaissance and David Jay Brown](#)).

In fact, right now there is done a lot of experimental work with psychedelic microdosing, a practice to use sub-threshold doses of psychedelic drugs in an attempt to improve working conditions. Although the practice is not scientifically proven, people use LSD, psilocybin mushrooms and other psychedelic drugs to try to improve their creativity and performance on problem-solving tasks. There is also carried out scientific experiments with it, and its probably only a question of time before the pharmaceutical industry is putting this into mass production. And then we have something which looks like the drug Soma used in Huxley’s novel. In the time of writing, Netflix has just launched a new documentary called: *Have a Good Trip: Adventures in Psychedelics*, which is a long commercial for beginning to use drugs. A long line of famous actors, musicians, comedians and writers are telling their best drug stories. It is more or less astounding how this can happen without critique. The documentary is started and ended with Deepak Chopra, talking about quantum mysticism and that reality doesn’t exist as anything else than a projection of your own mind. The end lines: Have a Good Trip! In other words: a commercial.

In *Brave New World* all religion, philosophy, literature and art have been removed. And a great deal of this elimination is *precisely* what atheist scientism tries to put into work if you take it literally. And when considering the aggression this is promoted with, I guess that it should be taken quite literally.

We have already seen that without Greco-Roman philosophy and Christianity, there would exist no such thing as science. To widen this *reductio ad absurdum* argument

out, I will now put up a list of Christian scientists whose work needs to be eliminated from the face of the Earth, if we should take atheist scientism literally. It is people who by Dawkins must be characterized as “deranged, deluded, deceived and deceiving; their intellectual capacity having been warped through being hijacked by an infectious, malignant god-virus.”

I will only mention a few:

Francis Bacon

Galileo Galilei

Isaac Newton

Johannes Kepler

Louis Pasteur

Wilhelm Röntgen

Max Planck

Werner Heisenberg

(Charles Darwin himself was a Christian, though he dealt with some theological speculations when he made his discoveries – again: read Mary Midgley’s book *The Solitary Self – Darwin and the Selfish Gene*). [Click here](#) for the full list of Christian scientists. Now if you expand the list to cover religious scientists from other religions (for example Albert Einstein), the whole no tolerance policy and eliminative aim of atheist scientism is fulfilling the reductio ad absurdum argument.

I’m well aware that atheist scientism has arguments against this, but those are simply nonsense: as for example that the above-mentioned scientists couldn’t have been religious for real, or that the scientific method is atheist in its nature. Towards that you could argue that a religious attitude just would motivate the scientific wonder. But the fact is that the scientific method neither is atheistic nor religious, it is neutral. If it were atheist it would justify the above-mentioned Communism and Nazism.

We can continue and continue with this reductio ad absurdum argument, and expand the list (s) to religious philosophers, writers, artists and composers (Bach, Mozart, etc., etc.). Try to think about it, and all the wonderful work, you would have to say

goodbye to in a society controlled by atheist scientism. Look at architecture. Take a trip to Venice and Rome, and wave goodbye. The premises of atheist scientism are that all this work should be eliminated. This is not an exaggeration. Atheist scientism has itself lined up its premises, and I'm only mentioning the logical conclusion. It hasn't any premise at all, which wouldn't logically lead to elimination. On the contrary. The complete elimination of religion and religiousness is the open goal. Period. Furthermore: materialism leads to nihilism.

(After the elimination of the work of all these religious idiots we could imagine that atheist scientism maybe would allow some kind of propaganda art, for example paintings of *The Four Horsemen* in front of the war against religion).

In order to get this idea forced through all science therefore needs to be strictly political controlled. It would be a society without any depth at all, and where boredom continually needs to be fought with superficial entertainment (however, let's admit it: entertainment is also more interesting when it involves religious elements). In *Brave New World* entertainment (besides the use of drugs) is very important in order to keep the citizens "happy." It talks about so-called sensitivity-entertainment. You can go to sensitivity-parties, or you can watch sensitivity-movies, etc. Everywhere the people are meeting sensitivity-influences.

Somewhere in the novel there is a discussion between the main character Johannes and the President about the lack of truth and beauty in this society. The President argues that it might very well be that there isn't any truth and beauty, but the people are happy. Johannes objects, and says that the whole society is completely meaningless. The President continues: "Yes, but the people are happy!"

9. Materialism and The Problem of Consciousness

Materialism is also called naturalism. In the view of nature in natural science, nature is reduced to atomic particles, empty space, fields, electromagnetic waves and particles etc., etc. Characteristic is, that nature is explained, and is described, in a way, which is a world away from our direct subjective experiences here and now. It is important to have the "here and now" included, because the Now is characteristic for consciousness, and for life, and for *the Wholeness*.

It is via our direct subjective experience, that we experience in Wholeness; that is: it is in our direct subjective experience here and now, that flowers, trees, smells, pains, joys, beauty, love, rivers, moon and stars, have their existence. But as explained above, this must not be confused with subjective idealism. The subjective experience is also characterized by spaciousness, the source of objectivity itself.

Such a subjective experience is, according to naturalism, an illusion. And here the gaslightning program starts. According to naturalism the real truth, the actual reality, is to be found in the parts. But not only that: it is to be found in the limited parts of the microcosmos which you only can observe via an instrument. And these limited parts are in reality only a description in words. So, materialists confuse the description with the described. Macro-cosmos, the direct here and now, is an illusion produced by the brain.

Naturalism is of course, as anyone with a bit of common sense left, an absolutely absurd metaphysical theory. It has a very difficult time explaining away what the direct subjective experience, which we all constantly are in, actually is, and basically, what the *Wholeness* is. None the less, naturalism is taken for granted by most scientists.

The support of a natural scientific view of nature has namely almost always led the supporters forward to combine it with an instrumental (technological) view of nature. This conception of nature is seeing it as pure material, or alone as a means for the unfolding of Man.

The instrumental view of nature rests on a sharp division between Man and everything else; that is to say: between inner and outer nature. Man is by force of his inner nature radical different from, and is standing over, the outer nature. This is, among other things, due to, that he, with reason and science, is in the position to master nature.

By the way, this thought characterizes almost all traditional Western philosophy, where the art of philosophizing is due to thinking alone, even though the theories within this tradition in other crucial points are highly contradictory. You find it in Christianity, in Descartes' view of Man as a self-dependant being, in the Enlightenment philosophers, in Romanticism's view of Man as a historical being, in Kierkegaard, Karl Marx and Auguste Comte, who respectively founded existentialism, Marxism and positivism.

It is this view of nature that has led to the damage of nature. Now, when we talk about that reductionism means elimination of Wholeness, it is easy to see how, for example, deforestation can be made plausible, without any considerations over how trees work in the Wholeness. Another example is from Denmark, where instrumental reductionists got the idea that it would be more "profitable" and "effective" if they made all streams into uniform straightened channels. In the 1960s they used millions of money on this project. A poet, who think in Wholeness, could have prophesized

the consequences, but not a reductionist. All life in the streams died. Hereafter they had to use millions to re-create the original watercourses of the streams.

The view of Man as a self-dependent being has also given rise to a severe problem with the external world. This is an exclusively Western problem, and especially, a *modern* Western problem. The above-mentioned theory of the spaciousness of consciousness has no such problem. Anyway, the problem with the external world has become a central philosophical problem in the Western world. It is called *the problem of the external world*, a problem limited to Western philosophy, which only is accepting two ways of attaining knowledge: sensation and reason (thinking), and is describing consciousness as if it was a camera inside a box (if you think this sounds primitive, you're right - Western philosophy is light years behind Eastern philosophy in that respect, and it is getting worse). You could call it the consciousness-in-a-box philosophy. It is without doubt one of the causes of the top-heavy Indo-European way of thinking, which makes the energy-image of Westerners look like that of a reverse cone.

Descartes, for example, argues that since it is possible to doubt that physical bodies exist, an argument must be given to prove that they exist. All of these considerations make up what is called *the problem of the external world*. Descartes argues that the external world is known to exist because we have clear and distinct perceptions of it. If our perceptions were false, that would indicate that their efficient cause: God, was a deceiver. Since deception cannot logically be present in God, our perceptions are true, and there is, in fact, an external world. Descartes is the main philosopher (besides subjective idealists like George Berkeley) who is standing behind the concept of the brain-in-jar hypothesis and later the simulation theory.

David Hume, dean of the empiricists, continues in the same consciousness-in-a-box style, and claims neutrality on the problem, writing that all we have before our minds are ideas, and we have no way of knowing whether our ideas correspond to an external reality.

Emmanuel Kant, self-proclaimed reconciler of rationalism and empiricism, argues that there is an external world of things-in-themselves, but we are forever cut off from it because our sensory system can provide us only with phenomena that we cannot assume deliver us the qualities of the noumena. We are a consciousness in a box. Also Kant ends in solipsism.

Even in the most modern psychology departments you will still see sketches of the human perception drawn as if it was a consciousness in a box.

The problem of the existence of the external world is one of Western epistemology's most vexing and important questions, as it highlights the fault lines between rationalists and empiricists. They have never considered the much deeper philosophy of the East (they believe they are far superior).

The problem is connected with the so-called *Problem of Perception*. The philosophy of perception is concerned with the nature of perceptual experience and the status of perceptual data, in particular how they relate to beliefs about, or knowledge of, the world. Any explicit account of perception requires a commitment to one of a variety of ontological or metaphysical views. Philosophers distinguish internalist accounts, which assume that perceptions of objects, and knowledge or beliefs about them, are aspects of an individual's mind, and externalist accounts, which state that they constitute real aspects of the world external to the individual.

The position of naïve realism - the 'everyday' impression of physical objects constituting what is perceived - is to some extent contradicted by the occurrence of perceptual illusions and hallucinations and the relativity of perceptual experience as well as certain insights in science.

Realist conceptions include phenomenalism and direct and indirect realism (I myself support a direct, *critical* realism, but with the assumption, that meditation can result in enlightenment, and therefore a change in perception). Anti-realist conceptions include idealism and skepticism. Idealism and skepticism are the theories behind the above-mentioned dream-hypothesis and brain-in-jar hypothesis. Both idealists and materialists are in that way anti-realist, despite that materialists are talking about micro-cosmos as reality itself. The reason is that when it comes to the perception problem, they can't get outside the brain. They end in brain-solipsism.

As an example of a paradoxical anti-realist point of view, we can use Dawkins's book *The Magic of Reality – How We Know What Is Really True*. The description of the book goes:

Magic takes many forms. The ancient Egyptians explained the night by suggesting that the goddess Nut swallowed the sun. The Vikings believed a rainbow was the gods' bridge to earth. These are magical, extraordinary tales. But there is another kind of magic, and it lies in the exhilaration of discovering the real answers to these questions. It is the magic of reality - science.

Packed with inspiring explanations of space, time and evolution, laced with humour and clever thought experiments, The Magic of Reality explores a stunningly wide range of natural phenomena. What is stuff made of? How old is the universe? What

causes tsunamis? Who was the first man, or woman? This is a page-turning, inspirational detective story that not only mines all the sciences for its clues but primes the reader to think like a scientist too.

The fact is that the book is a piece of gaslightning. It is a reductionism because it is a “philosophical” attempt of showing what reality “really” is. But the Wholeness, which we only can experience subjectively, first-personally, and which myths and religions try to depict, is cut away, focusing on something which are miles away from what anyone would term as “reality”: namely descriptions of the very small.

The only thing which can be termed magical, is the Wholeness. Any attempt of reduction is de-enchanting. Dawkins book is called wonderful and poetic, but that is precisely because he is using metaphors taken from myth and religion.

Sheldrake has an excellent piece in *The Science Delusion* about brain solipsism (though he doesn't use that expression). He points out, that before the mechanistic revolution [and still in Eastern philosophy] there was three levels of explanations: bodies, souls and spirits (my above-mentioned philosophy of mind includes such a three-fold explanation: body, mind and enlightened consciousness). Bodies and souls were part of nature. Spirits were non-material but interacted with embodied beings through their souls. The human spirit, or ‘rational soul’ according to Christian theology, was potentially open to the Spirit of God.

After the mechanistic revolution, there were only two levels of explanation: bodies and spirits. Three layers were reduced to two by removing souls from nature, leaving only the human ‘rational soul’ or spirit. The abolition of souls also separated humanity from all other animals, which became inanimate machines. The ‘rational soul’ of man was like an immaterial ghost in the machinery of the human body.

Sheldrake asks:

How could the rational soul possible interact with the brain? Descartes speculated that their interaction occurred in the pineal gland. He thought of the soul as like a little man inside the pineal gland controlling the plumbing of the brain. He compared the nerves to water pipes, the cavities in the brain to storage tanks, the muscles to mechanical springs, and breathing to the movements of a clock. The organs of the body were like the automata in seventeenth-century water gardens, and the immaterial man was like a fountain keeper.

The final step in the mechanistic revolution was to reduce two levels of explanation to one. Instead of a duality of matter and mind, there is only matter. This is the doctrine

of materialism, which came to dominate scientific thinking in the second half of the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, despite their nominal materialism, most scientists remained dualists, and continued to use dualistic metaphors (page 32).

Sheldrake hereafter gives a wonderful description of the “consciousness-in-a-box” theory. He writes:

*The little man, or homunculus, inside the brain remained a common way of thinking about the relation of body and mind, but the metaphor moved with times and adapted to new technologies. In the mid-twentieth century the homunculus was usually a telephone operator in the telephone exchange of the brain, and he saw projected images of the external world as if he were in a cinema, as in a book published in 1949 called *The Secret of Life: The Human Machine and How It Works*. In an exhibit in 2010 at the Natural History Museum in London called ‘How You Control Your actions’, you looked through a Perspex window in the forehead of a model man. Inside was the cockpit with banks of dials and controls, and two empty seats, presumable for you, the pilot, and your co-pilot in the other hemisphere. The ghosts in the machine were implicit rather than explicit, but obviously this was no explanation at all because the little men inside brains would themselves have to have little men inside their brains, and so on in an infinite regress (page 32-33).*

Sheldrake is right when he writes:

If thinking of little men and women inside brains seems to naïve, then the brain itself is personified. Many popular articles and books on the nature of mind say ‘the brain perceives’, or ‘the brain decides’, while at the same time arguing that the brain is just a machine, like a computer. For example, the atheist philosopher Anthony Grayling thinks that ‘brains secrete religious and superstitious belief’ because they are ‘hardwired’ to do so:

“As a ‘belief engine’, the brain is always seeking to find meaning in the information that pours into it. Once it has constructed a belief, it rationalizes it with explanations, almost always after the event. The brain thus becomes invested in the beliefs, and reinforces them by looking for supporting evidence while blinding itself to anything contrary”.

According to Sheldrake, Grayling (2011) made these remarks while paraphrasing arguments by Michael Shermer in a book called *The Believing Brain*, endorsing them as likely to be ‘the right view’.

The above description sounds more like a description of a mind than a brain. Sheldrake concludes:

Apart from begging the question of the relation of the mind to the brain, Grayling also begs the question of how his own brain escaped from the 'hardwired' tendency to blind itself to anything contrary to its beliefs. In practice, the mechanistic theory is only plausible because it smuggles non-mechanistic minds into human brains. Is a scientist operating mechanistically when he propounds a theory of materialism? Not in his own eyes. There is always a hidden reservation in his arguments: he is an exception to mechanistic determinism. He believes he is putting forward views that are true, not just doing what his brain makes him do (page 35-36).

Remember, what I told about truth above. So, Sheldrake is quite good when giving these descriptions. The question is whether the above thoughts are his own, or, whether he has “bought” them from others, just like Dawkins does. Because, as I will show in the next Sheldrake text, this is also what Sheldrake does. There is namely no coherence in his thinking.

Anyway, naturalism stands for any view, which considers nature, or the natural, as the most common basis for explanations and evaluations. A naturalistic view of human nature is this conception: Man is a piece of nature.

Naturalistic views can be traced back to the oldest Greek philosophy, but all newer forms of naturalism are characterized by modern natural sciences. Naturalism therefore very often advocates the conception, that all phenomena in the world can be studied through natural science. However, it is important to be aware, that naturalism in itself isn't a scientific point of view, but a philosophical point of view. No single branch of science gives anything else than a limited perspective on Man or reality. If you are claiming anything else, you end in reductionism; that is: where you reduce Man and reality to only being a result of a single influence. You accentuate one influence at the same time as you understate all others, and therewith you get a problem with creating unity and coherence in your theory. Both Man and reality are all too complex to be written down to one influence.

The view of nature, which is characterizing naturalism today, is characterized by three things:

- 1) Nature is understood as something, which goes off regularly. This regularity can be formulated mathematical, and is what we understand as the laws of nature. Through insight in the laws of nature Man can learn to make use of nature to his own advantage.

2) This regularity is not an expression of any, to Man, understandable reason. That will say: there are no purposes or intentions with how the ways of nature function. They are only controlled by causal regularity of a mechanical kind. This materialistic ontology claims, that the only thing which has real existence, is mass entities in motion. The whole of nature can fully be explained from the knowledge of these mechanical principles. All explanations use the cause and effect relation. They are causal. Teleological explanations - that is: explanations from purposes - are rejected.

3) Nature is understood and explained from itself. In other words: nature contains in itself its causes. It develops itself by force of immanent powers. It produces itself, is a *natura naturans*. Naturalism doesn't set the scene for religious explanations.

In *The Science Delusion*, Sheldrake equals science as such with materialism (naturalism). This is a distorted generalization, but he is correct that materialism as promoted by atheist scientism as an ideology. However, Sheldrake himself is an ideologist, and, as all ideologists, he can't see his own ideological black and white thinking.

Anyway, he puts up what he calls "The Ten Dogmas of Modern Science", and these are a quite good description of materialism. They are:

1) Everything is essentially mechanical. Dogs, for example, are complex mechanisms, rather than living organisms with goals of their own. Even people are machines, 'lumbering robots', in Richard Dawkins' vivid phrase, with brains that are like genetically programmed computers.

2) All matter is unconscious. It has no inner life or subjectivity or point of view. Even human consciousness is an illusion produced by the material activities of brains

3) The total amount of matter and energy is always the same (with the exception of the Big Bang, when all the matter and energy of the universe suddenly appeared).

4) The laws of nature are fixed. They are the same today as they were at the beginning, and they will stay the same for ever.

5) Nature is purposeless, and evolution has no goal or direction.

6) All biological inheritance is material, carried in the genetic material. DNA, and in other material structures.

- 7) Minds are inside heads, and are nothing but the activities of brains. When you look at a tree, the image of the tree you are seeing is not 'out there', where it seems to be, but inside your brain [me: brain-solipsism].
- 8) Memories are stored as material traces in brains and are wiped out at death.
- 9) Unexplained phenomena like telepathy are illusory.
- 10) Mechanistic medicine is the only kind that really works.

Together these beliefs make up the philosophy (or ideology) of materialism, whose central assumption is that everything is essentially material or physical, even minds.

As we have seen, materialism in itself results in metaphysical nihilism. No one is able to live that without contradicting oneself. Sheldrake is therefore right when he writes:

But few atheists believe in materialism alone. Most are also secular humanists, for whom a faith in God has been replaced by a faith in humanity. Humans approach a godlike omniscience through science. God does not affect the course of human history. Instead, humans have taken charge themselves, bringing about progress through reason, science, technology, education and social reform.

Mechanistic science in itself gives no reason to suppose that there is any point in life, or purpose in humanity, or that progress is inevitable. Instead it asserts that the universe is ultimately purposeless and so is human life. A consistent atheism stripped of the humanist faith paints a bleak picture with little ground for hope, as Bertrand Russell made so clear. But secular humanism arose within a Judaeo-Christian culture and inherited from Christianity a belief in the unique importance of human life, together with a faith in future salvation. Secular humanism is in many ways a Christian heresy, in which man has replaced God (page 24-25).

The other side of the reductionism therefore advocates a focus on environmental influences. But, could it be, that it is wrong to say, that Man only is a product of heredity and environment? Has science really proven this assertion? No, it hasn't. Firstly, science till today has not been able to give any explanation of, that we have a consciousness, that we are conscious about ourselves and are able to reflect and meditate over our own wishes, actions and doings. In natural science all explanations are quantitative; that is to say: they are given within the frames of, what can be measured, scaled and counted. It speaks from an outside-and-in perspective on Man. But when we speak about everything, that the word consciousness covers – thoughts, feelings, considerations, pains etc. – then it seems quite clear, that it is not something

that is quantitative. When we are using an inside-and-out perspective and describe our states of consciousness and our experiences of, what we think is beautiful, ugly, attractive, repelling etc., - then we use a completely other language than the quantitative language of natural science. We use a language pointing at the Wholeness. So how should one be able to reduce everything to natural science?

The interesting is however, that the more science develops, the more you have to give up backgrounds, which once occurred evident to everyone. In nuclear physics and the quantum mechanics we have learned, that there exist processes, which is not cause determined, and which do not follow the old rule about, that everything has to be continuous. Brain functions are in a wide extent quantum mechanical, and since the quantum mechanics breaks with the principle of causation and determinism, then the human brain is not fully a cause determined system. And then you can't go up from the ground explain brain processes from genetical or environmental factors.

The fundamental principles of classical physics, namely the perception of space and time as absolute and the principles of causality, determinism and continuity, must therefore be completely given up with the breakthrough of modern physics at the beginning of this century. The only exception is the principle that energy and matter are constant, which also in modern natural science is considered to be fundamental.

It is therefore astounding, that atheist scientism, which claims to be representatives of science, are promoting a metaphysical theory, materialism, which are proven wrong by science itself. Sheldrake is of course making aware of this, but it is interesting, as we shall see in the text about him, that he doesn't really make aware of the real reason why quantum physics breaks with materialism, but ends up in quantum mysticism.

And finally, to the concept of consciousness itself. In science it is inexplicable what an "I" or a "Self" is. I wake up in the morning, and I know, that I am the same as yesterday or ten years ago, in spite of the fact that my body since then has changed look and that the content of my thoughts in many ways has become something else. What is this "Me"?

It is not my body, because then I should each morning go out in the bathroom and look in the mirror, in order to find out who I am. Nor is it the content of my consciousness, my thoughts and my memories, because then I first had to evoke a line of memories each morning, before I knew who I am. The whole of the total science has no explanation of, what a "Self" is, or what personal identity is.

In this there also lies another factor, namely the question about the free will, the possibility of Man consciously to decide on his own present condition and within some limits to make a free choice.

Meanwhile I mean, that the concept of free will and free choice is unfortunate concepts. In my understanding the will is the will to power, and belongs to the Ego, which makes it choices on background of the past, and which therefore is determined by both its personal and collective history. Therefore the Ego always strives towards being something else than what it is, it imitates others, are a slave of others ideas and ideals, and its actions are characterized by irresoluteness and doubt. A more fortunate concept would in my understanding be the freedom that lies in the existential concept of being yourself; that is: where you live in accordance with your own essence and thereby achieve authenticity, autonomy, decisiveness and power of action. I will therefore use the concepts of freedom of action and freedom of decisiveness.

The assertion that Man is nothing else than a product of heredity and environment, has become an ideology, a part of the planlessness of our welfare society, where no one is responsible, where no one can help anything, where everything is to blame the genes or the society. However facing this reductionism you can place a more true understanding, which has science on its side: Man is a product of heredity and environment, yes, but also of your own consciousness about yourself.

I am born with some specific genes, which to a high degree put limits for, what I am able to and not able to. In some ways I have had good growing up conditions, in others bad. But I have since my childhood been conscious about myself and my surroundings, and have more or less freely been able to decide on something, rather than something else, within some limits. So therefore I am not only a product of heredity and environment, but also a person, which has become what I am, due to a line of decisions, which I have made through life.

It is a viewpoint between two extremes. On the one hand we have the assertion, that no one can help, that he is as he is. No one is able to change himself. My answer is: yes, you can. You can within some given limits work with yourself, and consciously decide to reflect and meditate over your background, your past, your environment, the whole of your character. You can decide to start a spiritual practice, which you know in longer term will change your outlook and way of being. In a spiritual practice you can change yourself quite considerably.

On the other hand we have Sartre's assertion about, that a person's life is determined alone by all the choices, he makes; that is to say: by the evaluations, which the inner thinker makes by saying yes and no, justifying and condemning, accepting and

denying. But this is an overstatement, which sounds a bit too much of "everyone is the architect of his own fortunes". Moreover there is the problem with the Ego and its thought distortions.

It is therefore not true, that freedom lies in choosing to become what you want to. You can for example without guilt become beaten down by an assailant, so that you have to spend the rest of your life in a wheelchair. Here it is so so with being the architect of your own fortunes.

Truth lies in the middle of these extremes. Heredity and environment put some limits for, what we can do and not can do. But our self and our consciousness, which scientific seen can't be explained alone from heredity and environment, makes us capable running to decide on, how we want to react in a lot of the situations, life puts us in. Therefore you can in some situations talk about a personal responsibility.

10. Ontological Pluralism

If we return to my above-mentioned philosophy of mind, then I make a distinction between the metaphysical identification of the ultimately realm of reality (the Wholeness; or the Enlightened Consciousness) - and the content of consciousness (the energy aspect of man: mind and matter). The metaphysical identification of the ultimately realm of reality I call *metaphysical naturalism*.

The metaphysical identification of the content of consciousness – the energy aspect of reality (or the content of reality) I call metaphysical pluralism.

Metaphysical pluralism in philosophy is the multiplicity of metaphysical models of the structure and content of reality, both as it appears and as logic dictates that it might be, as is, for example, exhibited by the four related models in Plato's Republic and as developed in the contrast between idealism and materialism. Within these models is the more restricted sub-fields of ontological pluralism (that examines, and describes, what exists in each of these realms). Ontological pluralism deals with the methodology for establishing knowledge about these realms.

One of the central ideas of Rupert Sheldrake is to promote a new kind of science, or rather, a plurality of new sciences. He is ending his book *The Science Delusion* with a chapter called: *Scientific Futures*. In a nutshell this builds on postmodernism and is an attempt of justifying New Age scientism. Sheldrake's own "science" is Neo-Lysenkoism, which I will return to in the next text. It is therefore clear that New Age scientism builds on different variations of Neo-Lysenkoism. We need to remember

that the intellectual background for New Age is postmodernism, which again is a direct result of the counterculture and Marxist and Stalinist approaches to science.

Sheldrake is the owner of the anti-skeptic site "[Skeptical About Skeptics](#)" which claims to debunk skeptics. It is actually a New Age haven for all kinds of weird ideas and pseudoscience. The website claims psychokinesis, fraudulent mediums (such as Eusapia Palladino), ghosts, reincarnation, telepathy and other New Age topics have all been scientifically proven (these tests must have happened in another obscure scientism institution we don't know about). New Age "scientists" featured on the website included Craig Weiler, Victor Zammit, Guy Lyon Playfair and Chris Carter. It also has a section entitled "Links to Outstanding Websites" which links to dubious sites such as [SCEPCOP](#) owned by Winston Wu.

Sheldrake is frequently featured in New Age documentaries, which are promoted as science documentaries. Note that my critique of these doesn't mean that I don't believe in the paranormal aspects of life. I experience it daily. It has to do with that these people promote themselves as scientists, and that you are lured into some kind of Neo-Lysenkoism.

So, there is in fact, a New World Order emerging: the world of Alternative History, Alternative Physics, Alternative Medicine and, ultimately, Alternative Reality. And Sheldrake is one of the head ideologists behind this New World Order.

It is therefore relevant to end this ebook with my pop culture file on *The X-Files*. I will use The X-Files as a popular illustration since questions of the paranormal both are central in Sheldrake's work, and in atheist scientism, especially in the skeptical movement. I will make use of the book, *The X-Files and Philosophy*, and I will investigate this in two parts:

- 1) The Realm of Science
- 2) The Realm of the Fantastic

1) The Realm of Science

Mulder: *When convention and science offer us no answers, might we not finally turn to the fantastic as a plausibility?*

Scully: *...What I find fantastic is any notion there are answers beyond the realm of science. The answers are there. You just have to know where to look.*

- “*Pilot*”

One of the central (and most beloved) subthemes in all of the show’s numerous subplots is the distinction between “science” and the “fantastic.” It’s part of what makes the show so watchable. One of the things *The X-Files* does so well is to blend the two: for example, cryogenics – a “proper” science – was responsible for the freezing of the head of Dr. Arthur Grable in the episode “Roland.” What was “fantastic” was the level of control Arthur had over his brother Roland. Thus, you have the perfectly “ordinary” scientific process of freezing heads with the psychic ability of controlling brothers’ actions (at least sometimes).

Psychic abilities are outside the norms and conventions of mainstream science, sure. But are they fantastic? Why not simply unusual? Scully and Mulder imply the mainstream is scientific. But perhaps they should say that the divide is between the nature of consciousness and will on the “fantastic” side, and, on the scientific side, phenomena that obey laws of nature, even if some laws are really weird. Let’s take a look.

What should be included in the “realm of science?” Stuff that fundamental physics deals with is safely in the realm of science. The X-Files also treats most of the special sciences, such as geology, meteorology, chemistry, and biology as “proper” sciences. Let’s acknowledge that fundamental physics and the special sciences belong in Scully’s “realm of science.” These sciences differ wildly in terms of subject matter. For example, biology is a whole different ball of wax than fundamental physics, a human cell, say, is a very different object of study than a quark. So what do all the sciences share that permit each of them to hold citizenship in the realm of science?

Each of them, in varying degrees, relies heavily on observation and experiment. Observation is obvious: if I want to know what’s going down in a cell, I should look at it. Possible compare observations with others in journals. Experiment is a bit more tricky to nail down. Ideally, experiments are controlled, and can be repeated in any lab, anywhere. It’s tricky to nail down because each science employs different kinds of experiments. At any rate, experiments and observation aim at general knowledge of the observed.

Wherever water is observed it’s a sure bet you’ll find the chemical compound H₂O. Through experimentation, we know that adding baking soda to vinegar results in an unstable carbonic acid. Often, both observation and experiment are employed. For instance, a great deal of observation and experiment, has not revealed any exceptions to the laws of thermodynamics (leaving aside debates in quantum mechanics).

Scully tells Mulder that the answers are in the realm of science, but one just has to know where to look. In other words, observation, experiment, and what is already known from these will give us the tools to launch a scientific investigation of the tools to demonstrate a falsehood or hoax.

Mulder says that if science and convention fails us, we can look to the fantastic as a plausibility. This is a really strange claim. For one thing, if the realm of science has not *yet* found a way to explain something, it doesn't follow that they won't eventually, using the same methods as usual. No, if Mulder's claim is to be taken at face value, then the "fantastic" is a realm with objects of enquiry that cannot undergo the treatments of experiment and observation, or be subjected to the discovered body of knowledge derived from them. Mulder, in effect, introduces the realm of the fantastic (though he accepts Scully's false distinction).

So, *The X-Files* presents us for two FBI agents (Mulder and Scully) who work as paranormal investigators. A paranormal investigator (PI) is a person who investigates claims regarding the presence of ghosts, demons, spirits, aliens, lake monsters, the chupacabra, and other "strange and bizarre" things. (The Association for the Scientific Study of Anomalous Phenomena (ASSAP) lists [45 subjects for investigation](#)).

The paranormal investigator should be distinguished from the parapsychologist or laboratory researcher of psi, although some paranormal investigators also do lab work.

Some PIs are field PIs. Some are "house" PIs. The field PI goes on site to investigate. The house PI reads the reports of field PIs, but does not travel to the site of weird phenomena. House investigations are essential, since nobody can travel to all the places that warrant investigation. To get a complete picture of paranormal investigations, one must rely on the reports of others even if one is a field investigator.

There are those who do not go into the field to investigate, nor do they study the reports of those who do, yet they accept or reject the conclusions of a PI. Such people are sometimes characterized as either "true believers" or "debunkers." In that case Mulder could be characterized as a true believer and Scully a debunker, but those are not the correct terms.

It is probably fair to designate someone who accepts a claim that a ghost or lake monster has been verified, even though he or she hasn't done any investigation or studied any reports, as a "true believer." But I don't think it is accurate to refer to

everyone who rejects a claim that a ghost has been verified, even though he or she hasn't done any field investigations or studied a specific report, as a "debunker." To debunk is to expose something as false or as not what it is claimed to be. You can't expose something by simply denying its existence. A better term for such people would be "paranormal denier," rather than debunker or skeptic. From the first episode Scully certainly fits this term, but she changes. And Mulder is not a true believer, though he has experienced paranormal phenomena. Both are due to their jobs as FBI agents committed to scientific skepticism. Scully probably fits the term "scientific paranormal investigator". And Mulder would, as we shall see, fit the term I use on myself, namely a "philosophical paranormal investigator".

Debunking is often what a PI does after investigating a place that others have claimed to know is haunted or inhabited by a monster, etc. Debunking is also something that a house PI might do after studying the reports of field PIs.

We have thousands of years of stories about strange phenomena, and many years of investigation into paranormal claims, but no hard evidence yet that a single ghost, for example, exists. If one is familiar with the history of ghost stories and spirit hunting, and one has studied the reports of many PIs, one might reject a current claim that a ghost has been spotted or that a building is haunted by a demon without doing a personal investigation. Since the existing scientific evidence has failed to verify the existence of a single ghost, lake monster, spirit, or alien being, the likelihood of the next positive report being true is slim. Thus, being a paranormal denier seems much more reasonable than being a true believer, accepting a ghost story without investigating it. One should not claim to know that there is no ghost or demon, nor should one claim to know with absolute certainty that any investigation of allegedly haunted premises cannot possibly find the presence of a ghost or a natural explanation. Even a paranormal denier should admit that it is possible that the next ghost story will prove true, even if it is highly improbable.

The scientific PI (Scully) approaches an investigation with an open mind, collects and examines as much relevant evidence as is reasonable for the claim being investigated, develops hypotheses, and tries to falsify them. Yes, a scientist tries to falsify, not verify, her hypothesis. If you set out to verify your hypothesis you are very likely to be misdirected by confirmation bias. You will look only for those things that confirm what you believe and you will systematically ignore those things that might disconfirm your belief. To keep an open mind, the scientist, like a good detective, must not form hypotheses too early in the investigation, as the tendency of all of us is to confirm, not disconfirm, our hypotheses. Unless you are lucky, and your first guess happens to be the right one, you run the risk of building up a convincing case for a false claim. (The study of criminal profiling offers examples of the dangers of

forming hypotheses too early in an investigation.) The importance of trying to collect data that is relevant to the investigation in such a way that one's biases don't lead one to ignore important avenues of investigation cannot be overemphasized.

A scientific PI also knows the purpose and limits of the technology she uses in the investigation. The main tools in the PI's toolkit should be critical thinking and a healthy skepticism. If she brings a camera or tape recorder to the scene, she uses them for documentation, not as tools for identifying "spirits" or "demons". If you're collecting data from measuring devices, you have to take multiple samples at different times on different days. The good scientist works first at ruling out natural and obvious sources of phenomena. When a gate closes behind her, she doesn't think 'the ghost of grandma', she thinks wind or gravity. When a rapid thumping or scratching noise is heard above the room, she doesn't think 'the ghost of a murdered guest'; she thinks squirrels or rats, or tree branches scraping the roof. When a temperature change occurs, she does not think 'Satan is here'; she thinks wind draft or architectural feature that needs exploring. When she feels a presence, she might think infrasound rather than ghost. When she sees something that looks like a light or a human form moving without visible cause, she might ask 'is my brain tricking me? Is there a physical source for these perceptions?'

A scientific PI does all the necessary groundwork before actually setting out to a location, including historical research and interviewing people. One example should suffice to illustrate this point. It comes from PI [Ben Radford](#):

“The ghost hunting team of Ghost Hunters International traveled to Montego Bay, Jamaica, to investigate ‘one of the world’s most haunted places’: Rose Hall, said to be haunted by the ghost of an evil woman named Annie Palmer, ‘The White Witch of Rose Hall.’

“....Annie Palmer is in fact the title character in a famous Jamaican novel, *The White Witch of Rose Hall*, published in 1929 by Herbert G. de Lisser. There was no real Annie Palmer even remotely resembling that of the White Witch. Thus Annie Palmer never existed, thus they presumably could not have found any evidence of her ghost. Rose Hall, ‘the most haunted house in the Western Hemisphere’ and indeed one of ‘the world’s most haunted places’ is in reality merely myth passed off by careless writers as fact.”

As psychologist Ray Hyman once quipped: don't try to explain something until you're first sure it happened.

There are a few individuals and groups who have earned the reputation of being scientific in their approach to paranormal investigations: [Peter Brugger](#), [Joe Nickell](#), [Ben Radford](#), [Jan Willem Nienhuys](#), [Richard Wiseman](#), [Chris French](#), [Massimo Polidoro](#), [Luigi Garlaschelli](#), [Karen Stollznow](#), [Independent Investigations Group](#), the [Skeptical Analysis of the Paranormal Society](#) (SAPS), and a good part of [The Association for the Scientific Study of Anomalous Phenomena](#) (ASSAP).

Some might object to my examples because all of them except ASSAP are skeptics or affiliated with skeptical organizations. [Skeptics might object to the inclusion of ASSAP because of its history](#). However, if you understand what a skeptic is, you shouldn't quibble with including the skeptics. Only if you mistakenly believe that a skeptic is automatically a denier who rejects without inquiry every claim about ghosts, demons, lake monsters, UFOs, etc., would you object to including these skeptics as scientific investigators. As noted above, being a denier is distinct from being a skeptic. Any good scientist must be a skeptic; no good scientist is a denier. The scientist must be open-minded, willing to investigate claims that will probably turn out to be unfounded, and willing to test several hypotheses in the search for the truth. ASSAP, I admit, is a mixed bag. In the area I will be focusing on—investigating ghosts and hauntings—it seems skeptical and scientific in its approach. With regard to things like past-life regression, remote viewing, morphic resonance (Rupert Sheldrake has been a long-time member), ["operation lightning strike," and a few other paranormal things ASSAP seems to be in the "true believer" camp](#). – also see my article [Regression Psychotherapies](#).

Some PIs are so uncritical and unscientific in their approach to the investigation of paranormal claims, that they deserve to be ranked as "pseudoscientific PIs." This is a tempting term to put on Mulder, but as an FBI agent he is not a pseudoscientist. I will return to Mulder's philosophical method in the end of the text.

The pseudoscientific PI (PPI) not only fails to do important preliminary investigative work, such as historical research, he usually leaves critical thinking out of his toolkit. Instead, he packs his equipment box with electronic gizmos: EMF detectors, Gaussmeters, audio and video recorders (including infrared cameras), thermometers, Geiger counters, radiation monitors, motion detectors, dowsing rods, Ouija boards, and even psychics. A typical PPI thinks of ghosts as "spirits," non-physical beings that have "crossed over" from the natural world to the supernatural world, or as "forms of energy" that somehow exist in space independent of any obvious material object. The PPI thinks his work can somehow prove the existence of life after death. Yet, the tools the PPI brings to an investigation are ridiculously inappropriate for detecting spirits or non-physical entities. While it is not impossible to conceive of an

energy form that manifests itself to our senses as a human or animal form under certain conditions, the evidence that such energy beings exist is speculative. The philosophical paranormal investigator would supply such speculation with good arguments.

2) *The Realm of the Fantastic*

The X-Files traditionally divides the realm of the fantastic into three categories: *the alien*, *the supernatural*, and *the monstrous*.

With regard to the alien, I refer to both Extraterrestrial Biological Entities (EBEs; see what I did there?) as well as their technologies. In the episode “Deep Throat,” there’s a scene where Mulder is watching for UFOs over a secret military installation. Eventually, balls of light are seen dancing erratically and with great speed over the darkened landscape. The speed, sharp angles, and extreme acceleration clearly defy *known* laws of physics. On the other side of this coin, intelligent EBEs themselves are generally thought to be exceedingly unlikely and *The X-Files* introduces two distinct alien races at war, with humanity caught in the middle. But unlikely does not necessarily mean beyond the sciences. Presumably, if there were such entities, they could be studied using the usual methods of biology and chemistry.

The X-Files also dabbles in the supernatural, for example in “Shadows.” The spirit of Lauren Kyte’s boss, Howard Graves, is avidly protecting her from dangerous people as well as trying to explain that he did not commit suicide. He was murdered. In one eerie scene a terrified Lauren is awoken by ghostly sounds in her bathroom. As she walks down the hall, we hear a man’s voice, presumably Graves, pleading silently for his life to unknown assailants. Upon entering the bathroom, there is the macabre and uncanny sight of blood running swiftly out of invisible wrists, coloring the bathwater a rich, rich crimson. This also is an event that would indeed seem beyond what is known about the laws of the world learned through experiment and observation.

Finally, there is the monstrous. There’s a wide variety of the monstrous: the failed experiments of the alien-human hybrid experiments (and also the alien-human hybrid experiments of the Chupacabra from the episode “El Mundo Gira”); the “natural” mutants such as Guy Mann in “Mulder and Scully Meet the Were-Monster”; finally, there are the monstrous beings that are a mix between the natural mutants, and supernatural ones. For example, the lycanthropes in the episode “Shapes” or the zombies in “Millenium”...or vampires (“Bad Blood”). Natural mutants are not outside the realm of biology, identifying and observing what has occurred at the cellular level as well as the bodily changes. This is also true of the alien-human hybrids, failed and successful, as well as the Chupacabra. (That episode applies an X-

Files alien twist to the Mexican creature of folklore). However, the lycanthropes from “Shapes” and “Tooms” are different. It does seem that their identity does feature supernatural properties.

Let’s bring these points together. According to Mulder, the realm of the fantastic is beyond the reach of the realm of science on the following grounds. Certain alien technologies are beyond the scope of physics because they violate known laws of physics. From the supernatural element of the fantastic, we have phenomena that seemingly defy known laws of everything: just how can blood already spilt, spill again, into a bathtub from wrists that are noncorporeal? And finally, from some versions of the monstrous, such as “Tooms,” we have unexplainable beings insofar as they are also somewhat supernatural.

But those events are beyond observation and experiment. True, stuff like blood from incorporeal wrists, voodoo, and flying crafts that defy the known laws of physics are extremely rare events. Well, rare from the perspectives of most of us. I imagine such crafts are a commonplace thing among alien. Also, such things being really weird and exceptionally rare, we just say they don’t exist, or aren’t scientific, or involve superstition.

For Western civilization, there is also a historical bias against the supernatural. This bias goes back arguably about five hundred years, but it really took off with Hume, Kant, and the rise of empiricism. A favorite target of these thinkers and this movement was the supernatural, both in the religions sense and the ghostly-witchcraft-y sense.

The combined effect of relative rarity, strangeness, and cultural bias leads us to the basement office of the FBI, where Mulder and Scully exchanged the quoted words in the beginning of this chapter.

But *The X-Files* does not allow us to escape culpability. The show is not a passive exercise in entertainment; it not only includes us but *implicates* us – luring us in and then exploding truth all over our wide-eyed faces. Chris Carter’s series cleverly translates fear through the lens of allegory; through the language of science fiction, laced with a bit of horror – making the reality of our insecurities more palatable, offering a safe platform for cathartic intervention.

Little green men; flying around in saucers hatching plots to take over the world...*and all that stuff*. The fantasy lures us in *and then* we realize that *The X-Files* is a whole lot more than a weird-looking-but-strangely-cute extraterrestrial stretching its finger toward the moon and asking to phone home. Carter’s aliens are all about world

domination, death, destruction, an alien baby or two and – true to genre – a government cover-up. Some scary shit, right? Yup, even for our musing mystic and skeptical scientist – six seasons in, walking up a dark staircase in “How the Ghosts Stole Christmas”:

Scully: *These are tricks that the mind plays. They are ingrained clichés from a thousand different horror films. When we hear a sound, we get a chill, we, we – we see a shadow and we allow ourselves to imagine something that an otherwise rational person would discount out of hand...*

Mulder: *Tell me you’re not afraid.*

Scully: *All right, I’m afraid. But it’s an irrational fear.*

The thought of being abducted by an alien and fondled under bright lights, or being swiped by a sewer monster and incubated with worm larvae, is frightening but only *sort of* because, like Scully, we ‘logic’ the scenarios into submission. Mulder might call “misplaced anxiety,” as suggested by his comment in “Irresistible”:

“It’s been said that fear of the unknown is an irrational response to the excesses of the imagination. But our fear of the everyday, of the lurking stranger and the sound of footfalls on the stairs, the fear of violent death and the primitive impulse to survive, are as frightening as any X-File, as real as the acceptance that it could happen to you.”

The proverbial monster under the bed; literal, hideous and unscrupulous in its fear-invoking propensity – it’s all smoke and mirrors; masking a “greater” truth. But what does this mean for Mulder and Scully, and *The X-Files* mythology – if monsters are indeed a manifestation of minds perverted by industry, as suggested by Rousseau and the Romantics?

Perhaps the point is not the monsters themselves but what they represent – our own degeneracy. The *X-Files* manipulates its monsters into a metaphor for the moral disintegration of mankind, as acknowledged by Scully in the show’s pilot, “It’s like all the horrible acts that humans are capable of gave birth to some kind of human monster.”

Personally, I see paranormal phenomena in the light of spiritual crises.

Mulder can seem like a materialist since many of the X-Files do have materialist explanations for the Moth Men who evolved green skin camouflage for life in the

Everglades in “Detour,” and Big Blue the lake monster in “Quagmire,” and the aggressive parasite in “Ice,” and the Neanderthal-like woman in “Jersey devil,” and a man-like creature that comes out of hiding every thirty years to feed on human livers in “Tooms,” and a teenager possessing a proboscis and an insatiable appetite for humans brains in “Hungry.”

While far-fetched, all these X-Files have explanations falling roughly within the parameters of evolutionary theory, a complete materialist theory. And let’s face it, the material world does have some pretty weird stuff that doesn’t qualify as immaterial or paranormal in any way. African frogs change sex spontaneously, elephants mourn their dead, time stops at the speed of light, and causality breaks down at the quantum mechanical level of reality. The material world can seem like an X-File!

So, is Mulder a materialist? Well, not exactly. Because there are also plenty of examples of Mulder believing in things falling far outside materialist explanations. For example, in “Shapes,” Mulder investigates a case on a Native American reservation that resembles the very first X-File, a human who shape-shifts into an animal to attack other animals and humans.

An elder tribesman explains that the Manitou, an evil spirit, inhabits a person periodically to release its own savage energy causing the shape-shifting, and Mulder accepts this story. And in “Avatar” Mulder explains Agent Skinner’s visitation from a ghostly woman as a succubus who warns him of danger. Then in “Calasari” a still-born brother returns to haunt his living twin, and Mulder ends up asking the grandmother’s Romanian priest to perform rituals in order to subdue the spirit and free the child.

Mulder again uses immaterialist explanations in investigating a man who survives virtually countless near-death experiences simply because he is genuinely “lucky,” the one man on Earth with almost perfect luck (“The Goldberg Variations”). Mulder also accepts the power of religious snake-handling (“Signs and Wonders”), and voodoo (“Theef”), and even genies (“Je Souhaite”).

In these episodes Mulder makes no attempt to bring these theories “down to Earth” with a more materialist explanation. There simply are no materialist explanations for things like shape-shifting, luck, voodoo, genies, and ghosts, in terms of electrons and quarks. Yet, Mulder is happy to accept such immaterialist entities. So, Mulder can’t be a materialist if he uses idealist explanations.

Is Mulder an idealist? While idealists do not typically take on the topics of ghosts and avatars, this is the metaphysical worldview that admits the reality of immaterial

objects, like minds, ideas, and free will. But since Mulder uses both materialist and immaterialist explanations, we have to look at a third option, a metaphysics that combines the two.

Some philosophers say that we don't have to decide between either materialism or idealism. Instead they argue for the before-mentioned ontological *pluralism* admitting that reality is made up of many different kinds of things. For example, there are particular beings, such as Bob Dylan and Socrates and Barack Obama, and there may also be things like the color red, the number two, and the world of *Alice in Wonderland* (see my pop culture file [Alice in Wonderland](#)), and weather systems and foreign policy and moral laws, and the way we eat a lobster.

And all these different things can be real, but they may not fit into one neat ontological category like "material beings" or "immaterial beings," and may not fit into one neat scientific theory like quantum mechanics or relativity theory.

We may be stuck saying that the world is pluralistic, and, what's more, we may have to appeal to many different explanations in order to make sense of our very real and everyday complex world. This view has the difficulty of explaining how all these things interact, but most pluralists simply accept this problem rather than accepting the absurdity of the other two metaphysical worldviews that deny the existence of either material or immaterial things.

The history of pluralism is long and includes Aristotle who famously claimed that "being is said in many ways" and gave ten categories of being, as well as Descartes who argued that mind and matter are two distinct substances, neither of which is prior.

Now doesn't this sound like the view Mulder holds? He doesn't try to fit the evidence into either a materialist or idealist metaphysics, but he's willing to follow the evidence and let it suggest what explanation might be called for. Many different metaphysical possibilities are open to Mulder because he is not concerned about how they all reduce to one ontological stuff.

Viewers are used to thinking of Scully as the scientist and Mulder as not so scientific. But these days ontological pluralism comes with support from science as well. Philosophers like Nancy Cartwright in *The Dappled World* and John Dupré in *The Disorder of Things*, both members of the Stanford School of the Philosophy of Science, known for its pluralistic approach to metaphysics and science, have argued for scientific and ontological pluralism. These philosophers probably aren't going to buy into the existence of ghosts and the transmigration of souls, like Mulder, but they

would probably agree with Mulder's insistence that the laws of physics don't apply as often as we would like to think.

After all, we appeal to many different successful sciences to explain our own complex reality. For example, we might appeal to social forces when talking about things like marriage and child rearing practices, and economic forces when talking about employment rates, and biological explanations when trying to understand reproductive patterns in insects and psychological explanations when trying to explain the mind of a serial killer. Reductionism is when you try to reduce everything to just one kind of reality. Both materialism and idealism are reductionisms.

As Patrick Suppes, another member of the Stanford School of the Philosophy of Science, has argued, science has become increasingly complex over time, increasingly specialized, and increasingly pluralistic: in other words, we are getting farther and farther away from the view that one science can unify all the others. And the fact that there is not likely to be just one simple scientific theory to explain everything suggests that the world itself must be really be made up of lots of different kinds of things.

Note that this hasn't anything to do with relativism. Relativism is essential about language, and in the most extreme forms, idealist, in which it claims that there is no reality outside our language and ideas. Reality is a linguistic construct. Ontological pluralism is essentially about different kinds of reality. When you see an elephant from different angles, this doesn't make the elephant unreal. But that's what relativism claims. Relativism says that each person or group of people defines their own truth, establishes their own ethics, and chooses their own values, and since you can't see the elephant in its wholeness, none of those truths, ethics, or values are inherently any more true, ethical, or valuable than any others. Relativism would for example not allow that an investigation could show something to be false, or that you could reach an experience of the wholeness. Relativism is essential both anti-scientific and anti-spiritual. The enormous failure of New Age is therefore its support of relativism and idealism.

My own notion of the ultimate reality, the Wholeness, and the gnoseological dualism we all must use in the same way in order to obtain unambiguous description of the different kinds of reality within the Wholeness, both suggests that truth is universal and absolute, and that the absolute in the end is undescrivable (you can only describe something in opposition to its negation. The wholeness can't be put in opposition to anything, and is therefore undescrivable).

This pluralistic and scientific ontology is precisely what Mulder holds, and it allows him to see things that others don't see. Very often a person's metaphysics more than evidence serves as her guide to choosing beliefs and theories to consider. This isn't a bad thing, unless her metaphysics is bad. For example, if someone is a materialist, she isn't going to entertain the possibilities of ghosts, telepathy, mind control, God, or angels. Her metaphysics prohibits her from even considering those things as possibilities.

Mulder's pluralist metaphysics allows him to entertain possibilities others do not, and this in turn allows him to do fantastic detective work, while Scully's too often reductionist and materialist philosophy shuts her off from different parts of reality for which there is good evidence. In other words, Scully's metaphysics often does the work of rejecting theories even before she considers the evidence.

But while Mulder's pluralistic metaphysics allows him to see possibilities, he has way more work to do in sifting through different possibilities. His more open metaphysics doesn't do the work of rejecting theories for him. And Mulder does reject plenty of theories, both mainstream scientific, and paranormal.

In "All Things" Mulder checks out a crop circle case in England only to learn that it is a hoax. In "Clyde Bruckman's Final Repose" Mulder rejects the phony celebrity psychic The Stupendous Yappi, but Mulder accepts this actual precognitive ability to see people's future deaths in the aptly-professioned life insurance salesman Clyde Bruckman (Peter Boyle). Mulder is also critical of Scully's sister Melissa (Melinda McGraw), who uses New Age techniques like crystals and theories about negative and positive energy in trying to communicate with Scully in her coma.

As Dupré argues, pluralism requires a set of virtues and good judgments rather than a simple, one-size-fits-all formula to decide which theories to accept. And this is just what Mulder has, namely, good judgment – amazingly good judgment. Mulder's metaphysics is so open that he has to do the work of looking at the facts rather than appealing to one neat worldview to "decide" for him. In other words, Mulder has to do the work of a real scientist.

From the "Pilot" episode onwards in *The X-Files*, we see Mulder's pluralistic metaphysics clash with Scully's unified metaphysics, and it is always Mulder's metaphysics that can handle the cases. The apparent choice between materialism and idealism is really a false choice, and Mulder, like today's pluralist philosophers of science, actually holds the position of ontological pluralism.

There really are many different kinds of beings in the world, not just in world of the *X-Files*, but also in our own world as well.

Part two and three of this Ebook:

[Rupert Sheldrake and the Rise of Neo-Lysenkoism \(Scientism Critique: Part 2\)](#)

[Gregg Braden and the Rise of New Age Scientism \(Scientism Critique: Part 3\)](#)

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