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**Atheist Fundamentalism (The Matrix Dictionary)**

Atheist fundamentalism 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 atheist fundamentalism. And what I in the following booklet have to say, could be said for each of these figures.

Atheist fundamentalism 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.

Why use the term “atheist fundamentalism?” Normally the movement around The Four Horsemen is termed “new atheism.” But this is in my view an inadequate term, since it doesn’t show the significant difference between a radical atheist like Richard Dawkins, and a moderate atheist as for example 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.

In this booklet I will show how this is coming to expression in the difference between philosophical education and ideological education, and how surprisingly self-contradictory atheist fundamentalism is in its “defence” of rationality and science,
which only seems to be an excuse for beginning a pathological, eliminating warfare against religion. In other words: the rhetoric and lack of rational argument exposes atheist fundamentalism as a hard-bitten ideology. The only adequate term is fundamentalism.

As an example of the self-contradictory aspect is Dawkins´ book *The God Delusion* where he states that religion simply is evil! When it is banished from the face of the earth, we can live in peace! It is a theme that goes from beginning to end. 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.

Furthermore: the “rational arguments” in the book is simply a bunch of pseudoscientific speculation, poor reasoning, diversionary ploys, seductive reasoning errors, techniques of persuasion and avoidance. Dawkins is obviously trying to do philosophy, but manages only to demonstrate his lack of competence herein. The reviewer of *Prospect* magazine was shocked at this “incurious, dogmatic, rambling, and self-contradictory” book. The title of the review? “Dawkins the dogmatist.”

There you are. That sets the level of the “rational argument” Dawkins claims he is a representative of.

The following booklet on atheist fundamentalism is not an analysis of Dawkins’ work, but Dawkins shows a pretty good picture of atheist fundamentalism as such, and since he is the most influential I will focus a bit more on him.

On the whole the booklet will be characterized by the claim that atheist fundamentalism, and it’s metaphysical theory materialism, is a central part of The Matrix Conspiracy. I will therefore also compare it with its apparently opposite metaphysical theory: namely the idealism of New Age. I will argue for that they are two sides of the same coin in a new kind of fascism. I will end the booklet with showing the invalidity of both these metaphysical theories, and present an alternative metaphysical theory: metaphysical naturalism.

The booklet is divided into seven parts:
1. Atheist Fundamentalism and Education

Atheist fundamentalism is, as mentioned in the introduction, 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/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.

Secondly, and relatedly, philosophical education can have corrosive consequences for political (and/or religious/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/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/atheist) order. Nor, finally, does ideological education stand in opposition to its political (and/or religious/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 fundamentalism is not surprisingly religion. And such an image is therefore extremely one-sided. Here it should be added that the science which atheistic fundamentalism is advocating is evolutionary biology, not surprisingly since that is Dawkins´ discipline. Science is very often seen as one and the same as evolutionary biology, or that evolutionary biology is the “real” science. Atheistic fundamentalism 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.

Atheistic fundamentalist´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 atheistic fundamentalists seem to have garnered much of their understanding of religious faith (about atheistic fundamentalism’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 fundamentalism 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 presumable 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 show 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 a clear sign 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 is two things involved: partly that atheist fundamentalism 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 intellectual risible. As one senior atheist scientific colleagues 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. Thought distortions are the background for poor reasoning, diversionary ploys, seductive reasoning errors, techniques of persuasion and avoidance, psychological factors, which can be obstacles to clear thought.

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.

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 fundamentalism breaks with all this. It´s irrational foundation could be used to justify any means for its goals, though the proponents never would admit this.

2. The Heredity and Environment Ideology

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, and a fundamental part of the Illuminati aspect of The Matrix Conspiracy. It is actually a kind of sociobiology, or social Darwinism; a reductionism.

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

Atheist fundamentalism advocate some kind of sociobiology. Social biology became notorious in 1975, when the American biologist Edward O. Wilson published a major treatise on the subject: Sociobiology: The New Synthesis. Accusations of sexism and racism were leveled because Wilson suggested that Western social systems are biologically innate, and that in some respects males are stronger, more aggressive, more naturally promiscuous than females. Critics argued that all social biology is in fact a manifestation of Social Darwinism, a nineteenth-century philosophy owing more to the English philosopher Herbert Spencer, than to Charles Darwin, supposedly legitimating extreme laissez-faire economics and an unbridled societal struggle for existence.

But the search for a synthesis of the heredity and environment split, a holism, is common in the pseudoscience of reductionism.

Within the pseudoscience of New Age the American physicist Fritjof Capra, has in his book, The Turning Point, outlined an ideology, where he combines quantum mysticism with reductionism, especially reductionisms such as historism and sociologism.
And, since the first publication of his ideas at the age of 23, the American New Age guru, Ken Wilber, has also sought to bring together the world’s far-ranging spiritual teachings, philosophies, and scientific truths into one coherent and all-embracing vision. This integral map of the Kosmos (the universe that includes the physical cosmos as well as the realms of consciousness and spirit) should then offer an unprecedented guide to discovering your highest potentials.

The ethical shipwreck is as follows: 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.

The self-help industry, and its belonging therapeutic techniques, for example exposes the paradox, that the more resource-filled a human being is conceived to be, the more it has to be supported therapeutic. The more self-actualizing a human being becomes, the more it is in need of help to actualize itself. And the more responsibility a human being is said to have for its own life, the more this same human being, as a basic starting point, is considered as a victim, as non-authentic, and therefore as powerless.

The one face of this paradoxical Janus head is the empowerment culture, the other face is the victimization culture (and the connected recovery movement).

The same fully individualized core of personality, which today makes us able to step out of the past’s fixed and subconscious attachment, has itself within New Age become the main interest, center for the identity in a degree, that almost all awareness here are directed inwards in a global seen exceptional narcissism. The ideological use of relativism and subjectivism sounds like this: “I have my truth, you have yours!”
“You judge” is the same as “You condemn.” In true spirituality the central goal is the elimination of the Ego.

This New Age narcissism works finely together with the narcissism of atheist fundamentalism (remember how New Age from Theosophy has inherited a worship of evolutionary biology).

Typical enough (foolish enough), then heredity and environment also are being used as a political tool. Often with followers on the respective sides of the extremities. 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.

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.

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 evolutionism – 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 evolutionism.

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.

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 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 Time Travel and the Fascism of The WingMakers Project and my Matrix Dictionary entry on Feminism as Fascism).

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 some kind of “collective evolution of consciousness” which 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 transcendent intervention from the divine.

With the Matrix Conspiracy we have two ruling metaphysical theories in the Western society: materialism (the bias of atheist fundamentalism) and idealism (the New Age bias). The consequences of both are a worship of the ego.

In materialism this could be depicted in Richard Dawkins´s notion of The Selfish Gene. In her book The Solitary Self – Darwin and The Selfish Gene, the renowned philosopher Mary 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. Midgley returns to the original writings of Charles Darwin to show how the reductive individualism that 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 in evolutionary biology as a cultural accretion that is not seen in nature. Heroic independence, argues Midgley, is not a realistic aim for Homo Sapiens. We are, as Darwin saw, earthly organism framed to interact 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. The Solitary Self is a significant re-reading of Darwin and an important corrective to recent work in evolutionary science, which has wide implications for debates in science, religion, psychology and ethics.

My own claim is that Richard Dawkins´ notion of The Selfish Gene (or The Selfish Meme) is a pure fantasy of how the environment is stored in some kind of postulated cultural gene, which has no more scientific or philosophical validity than many of the theories of “the evolution of consciousness” we see in the idealism of New Age. Both are paradoxically enough new kinds of Social Darwinism. And both are involved in the rise of a new kind of fascism (see the Matrix Dictionary entry The Matrix Conspiracy Fascism). I will return to Dawkins´ concept of the Meme, and the fascistic element in atheist fundamentalism.

In idealism the ego-worship could be depicted as self-assertion (or even self-love): the ultimate narcissism. Both materialism and idealism are included in The Matrix Conspiracy, though idealism is the ruling philosophy. The reason why both is included is that they define each other; they are so to speak complementary to each other, because they mutually exclude each other and at the same necessarily must supplement each other.

As a famous representative of the idealist worldview we could look at Oprah Winfrey. In Oprah Winfrey lore, one particular story is repeated over and over. When Oprah was 17, she won the Miss Fire Prevention Contest in Nashville, Tennessee. Until that year every winner had had a mane of red hair, but Oprah would prove to be a game changer.

The contest was the first of many successes for Oprah. She has won numerous Emmys, has been nominated for an Oscar, and appears on lists like Time’s 100 Most Influential People. In 2013, she was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom. She founded the Oprah Book Club, which is often credited with reviving Americans’ interest in reading. Her generosity and philanthropic spirit are legendary.

Oprah has legions of obsessive, devoted fans who write her letters and follow her into public restrooms. Oprah basks in their love: “I know people really, really, really love me, love me.” And she loves them right back. It’s part of her “higher calling”. She believes that she was put on this earth to lift people up, to help them “live their best
life”. She encourages people to love themselves, believe in themselves, and follow their dreams.

Oprah is one of a new group of elite storytellers who present practical solutions to society’s problems that can be found within the logic of existing profit-driven structures of production and consumption. They promote market-based solutions to the problems of corporate power, technology, gender divides, environmental degradation, alienation and inequality.

In this climate of stress and uncertainty, Oprah tells us the stories of her life to help us understand our feelings, cope with difficulty and improve our lives. She presents her personal journey and metamorphosis from poor little girl in rural Mississippi to billionaire prophet as a model for overcoming adversity and finding “a sweet life”.

Oprah’s biographical tale has been managed, mulled over, and mauled in the public gaze for 30 years. She used her precocious intelligence and wit to channel the pain of abuse and poverty into building an empire. She was on television by the age of 19 and had her own show within a decade.

The 1970s feminist movement opened the door to the domestic, private sphere, and the show walked in a decade later, breaking new ground as a public space to discuss personal troubles affecting Americans, particularly women. Oprah broached topics (divorce, depression, alcoholism, child abuse, adultery, incest) that had never before been discussed with such candor and empathy on television (see my article The New Feminism and the Philosophy of Women´s Magazines).

The show’s “evolution” over the decades mirrored the “evolution” of Oprah’s own life. In its early years the show followed a “recovery model” in which guests and viewers were encouraged to overcome their problems through self-esteem building and learning to love themselves.

But as copycat shows and criticisms of “trash talk” increased in the early 1990s, Oprah changed the show’s format. In 1994, Oprah declared that she was done with “victimization” and negativity: “It ’s time to move on from ‘We are dysfunctional’ to ‘What are we going to do about it?’” Oprah credited her decision to her own personal evolution: “People must grow and change” or “they will shrivel up” and “their souls will shrink”.

In an appearance on Larry King Live, Oprah acknowledged that she had become concerned about the message of her show and so had decided to embark on a new mission “to lift people up”. Themes of spirituality and empowerment displaced
themes of personal pathology. For Oprah, the transformation was total: “Today I try to do well and be well with everyone I reach or encounter. I make sure to use my life for that which can be of goodwill. Yes, this has brought me great wealth. More important, it has fortified me spiritually and emotionally.”

A stream of self-help gurus has spent time on Oprah’s stage over the past decade and a half, all with the same message. You have choices in life. External conditions don’t determine your life. You do. It’s all inside you, in your head, in your wishes and desires. Thoughts are destiny, so thinking positive thoughts will enable positive things to happen.

When bad things happen to us, it’s because we’re drawing them toward us with unhealthy thinking and behaviors. “Don’t complain about what you don’t have. Use what you’ve got. To do less than your best is a sin. Every single one of us has the power for greatness because greatness is determined by service—to yourself and others.” If we listen to that quiet “whisper” and fine-tune our “internal, moral, emotional GPS”, we too can learn the secret of success. Can we really? Well, a simple reductio ad absurdum argument can show how much lack of thinking this involves. If true it would mean that the starving mom in Africa who are trying to find ways to feed her children has drawn this situation toward her with unhealthy thinking and behaviors. It is not the external conditions (for example drought) that have determined her life.

Janice Peck, in her work as professor of journalism and communication studies, has studied Oprah for years. She argues that to understand the Oprah phenomenon we must return to the ideas swirling around in the Gilded Age. Peck sees strong parallels in the mind-cure movement of the Gilded Age and Oprah’s evolving enterprise in the New Gilded Age, the era of neoliberalism. She argues that Oprah’s enterprise reinforces the neoliberal focus on the self: Oprah’s “enterprise [is] an ensemble of ideological practices that help legitimize a world of growing inequality and shrinking possibilities by promoting and embodying a configuration of self compatible with that world.”

Nothing captures this ensemble of ideological practices better than O Magazine, whose aim is to “help women see every experience and challenge as an opportunity to grow and discover their best self. To convince women that the real goal is becoming more of who they really are. To embrace their life.” O Magazine implicitly, and sometimes explicitly, identifies a range of problems in neoliberal capitalism and suggests ways for readers to adapt themselves to mitigate or overcome these problems.
Oprah recognizes the pervasiveness of anxiety and alienation in our society. But instead of examining the economic or political basis of these feelings, she advises us to turn our gaze inward and reconfigure ourselves to become more adaptable to the vagaries and stresses of the neoliberal moment.

Oprah is appealing precisely because her stories hide the role of political, economic, and social structures. In doing so, they make the American Dream seem attainable. If we just fix ourselves, we can achieve our goals. For some people, the American dream is attainable, but to understand the chances for everyone, we need to look dispassionately at the factors that shape success.

The current incarnation of the American Dream narrative holds that if you acquire enough cultural capital (skills and education) and social capital (connections, access to networks), you will be able to translate that capital into both economic capital (cash) and happiness. Cultural capital and social capital are seen as there for the taking (particularly with advances in internet technology), so the only additional necessary ingredients are pluck, passion, and persistence—all attributes that allegedly come from inside us.

The American dream is premised on the assumption that if you work hard, economic opportunity will present itself, and financial stability will follow, but the role of cultural and social capital in paving the road to wealth and fulfilment, or blocking it, may be just as important as economic capital. Some people are able to translate their skills, knowledge, and connections into economic opportunity and financial stability, and some are not—either because their skills, knowledge, and connections don’t seem to work as well, or they can’t acquire them in the first place because they’re too poor.

Today, the centrality of social and cultural capital is obscured (sometimes deliberately), as demonstrated in the implicit and explicit message of Oprah and her ideological colleagues. In their stories, and many others like them, cultural and social capital are easy to acquire. They tell us to get an education. Too poor? Take an online course. Go to Khan Academy. They tell us to meet people, build up our network. Don’t have any connected family members? Join LinkedIn.

It’s simple. Anyone can become anything. There’s no distinction between the quality and productivity of different people’s social and cultural capital. We’re all building our skills. We’re all networking.

We are the perfect, depoliticized [sic], complacent neoliberal subjects.
When the stories that manage our desires break their promises over and over, the stories themselves become fuel for change and open a space for new, radical stories. These new stories must feature collective demands that provide a critical perspective on the real limits to success in our society and foster a vision of life that does fulfill the desire for self-actualization (read more in The Matrix Dictionary on Oprah Winfrey).

Both materialism and idealism are self-refuting views. Reductionisms are philosophical viewpoints, because they seek to answer the question about Man as such, but as philosophical viewpoints they are, as mentioned, epistemological and ethical shipwrecks.

We have looked at the ethical shipwreck. Let us look at the epistemological shipwreck. 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, both time-independent and mind (thought)-independent.

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

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 factual, 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 changeable), 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.

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.

3. Scientism and Philosophy of Science
The philosopher Massimo Pigliucci feels that the new atheist movement (atheist fundamentalism) 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 fundamentalism’s complete oblivion of their 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.

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 fundamentalism is an opponent to, but we have already looked at how self-contradictory its defence 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 the scientism of Atheist fundamentalism, which I will return to.

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 programme 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 a philosophical viewpoints.

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 in the Matrix Dictionary entry on Stephen Hawking.

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

Both New Age pseudoscience and the pseudoscience of reductionism are common in sharing some kind of scientism; that is: they overestimate 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 reductionism it happens in the form of pseudoskepticism (I will return to the concept of pseudoskepticism).

Dawkins is well known for his criticism of religious pseudoscience such as creationism and intelligent design, but is himself, in his atheistic faith, ending in the pseudoscience of reductionism (biologism). Another example within atheist fundamentalism 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.

Personally I am supporting true skepticism within science, but my method is in itself not building on science, but on philosophy. I am using critical thinking, but I am not a scientific investigator, who has to follow the precepts of conventional scientific skepticism. This is due to, that I have experienced spiritual crises and paranormal phenomena (therefore I can’t be an agnostic), but I am at the same time critical towards how to describe and behave in relation to such phenomena.

All philosophers will in atheist fundamentalism recognize the strange use of the concept of science as some kind of institution which uses critique of another institution, namely religion. An institution which is glorified by enlightenment, rationality and critical thinking. This hasn’t anything to do with science. It has something to do with philosophy, and especially philosophy of science.

The “heretical” atheist Michael Ruse has made the claim that Richard Dawkins would fail "introductory" courses on the study of "philosophy or religion" (such as courses on the philosophy of religion), courses which are offered, for example, at many educational institutions such as colleges and universities around the world. Ruse also claims that the movement of New Atheism—which is perceived, by him, to be a "bloody disaster"—makes him ashamed, as a professional philosopher of science, to be among those holding to an atheist position, particularly as New Atheism does science a "grave disservice" and does a "disservice to scholarship" at more general level.
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.

Consider the poem that Lucretius wrote in 50 BCE, “On the Nature of Things.” In *The Swerve: How the World became Modern*, Stephen Greenblatt tells a fascinating story about a papal secretary who, in the Middle Ages, traipsed across Europe in search of a copy of this reportedly lost poem. The story of the adventures of this secretary is in itself intriguing, but the actual poem was earthshaking in its time and, interestingly, still is today!

Lucretius’s poem portrayed religions as cruel and superstitious, fueled with ignorance and fear. In his poem, he proposed a scientific world vision in which all things, animate and inanimate, are composed of invisible particles, moving randomly and continuously in a void. There is no creator; living things have come into existence over eternity by random collisions of the particles and have evolved by a process of trial and error. Their purpose is only to survive, reproduce, and participate in a life of pleasure. Humans are not at the top privileged level of existence, and by understanding their own insignificance and the fact that there is no afterlife they will appreciate the wonder of life and filled with pleasure. The poem, which addressed Lucretius’s natural (“scientific”) worldview, was regarded as subversive and heretical, and those who openly supported it risked their lives. In fact, in 1600, the Roman Catholic Church Inquisition questioned Giordano Bruno, a defrocked Dominican monk, Italian philosopher, and scientist, and then burned him at the stake for openly supporting the views expressed by Lucretius in “On the Nature of Things.”

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 atheistic fundamentalists 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.

But this is a misunderstanding of science, which also trained scientists ought to have knowledge about, since reductionism is a philosophical and not scientific point of view. The different scientific disciplines ask limited questions about Man, or questions about specific sides of the human life. Such questions are then solved by experimenting, collecting systematic observations and from them draw up theories. The scientific disciplines collect systematic 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 have falsifiability or refutability, or said in another way: it 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.

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

And to this might be added that there are 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 (in atheist fundamentalism this war is clearly set between atheism and religion):
The first materialist version for example claims that Man fully can be described and explained with the methods of natural science. This happens in various forms of Naturalism, Biologism, Positivism and Behaviourism. It is clear that this first kind of reductionism (scientism and pseudoskepticism) are more accepted than the second openly anti-scientific version.

The second idealist version 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 Psychologism, Sociologism and Historism. It is particular this version which openly claims to be a supporter of anti-science, and accuses the other part of being reductionistic, and demand so-called alternative sciences. This is what we see in the more popular culture of New Age.

The first version is mostly the supporter of scientism and pseudoskepticism. Scientism is a term generally used to describe the cosmetic application of science in unwarranted situations not covered by the scientific method. Pseudoskepticism (or pseudoscepticism) is a term referring to a philosophical or scientific position which appears to be that of skepticism or scientific skepticism but which in reality fails to be so.

But both sides are examples of reductionism and are therefore examples of pseudoscience. Pseudoscience consists of statements, beliefs, or practices that are claimed to be scientific and factual in the absence of evidence gathered and constrained by appropriate scientific methods. Pseudoscience is often characterized by the following: contradictory, exaggerated or unfalsifiable claims; reliance on confirmation bias rather than rigorous attempts at refutation; lack of openness to evaluation by other experts; and absence of systematic practices when developing theories. The term pseudoscience is often considered pejorative because it suggests something is being presented as science inaccurately or even deceptively. Those described as practicing or advocating pseudoscience often dispute the characterization.

The demarcation between science and pseudoscience has philosophical and scientific implications. Differentiating science from pseudoscience has practical implications in the case of health care, expert testimony, environmental policies, and science education. Distinguishing scientific facts and theories from pseudoscientific beliefs, such as those found in astrology, alchemy, medical quackery, occult beliefs, and creation science combined with scientific concepts, is part of science education and scientific literacy. In short: this is what philosophy of science is all about.

But what precisely is the difference between philosophy and science?
"Wonder got already from the beginning human beings to philosophize and still does it”. This statement from Aristotle goes back to Plato and is also applying for today.

Philosophy begins with, that human beings are wondering. The word philosophy means love of wisdom, or love of learning. The word philosophy also means love of the unknown. The philosophical activity therefore involves the concepts of being critical and asking questions. In this it reminds about science (my book *A Dictionary of Thought Distortions* is a kind of a manual in critical thinking, and therefore in philosophy).

But philosophy is not science. Our wonder over Man becomes philosophy, when it 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 thinking and meditating over the things, not in an experimental-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 essence of Man, and for how all other traits of Man is connected therewith. The answer to, what the essence 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 essence of Man, and the question is solved, not by experimenting, collecting systematic observations and from them draw up theories. It is only solved by thinking and meditating over everything we already know about Man, and by searching for oneness and coherence in it.

The scientific disciplines, on the other hand, ask limited questions about Man, or questions about specific sides of the human life. Philosophy asks the most universal question about Man. The scientific disciplines collect systematic experiences and throw out theories, that can be determined by new experiences. Philosophy uses alone the tool of reflection and meditation. But the use of reason, thought, logic, consideration and means are shared by science and philosophy.
Philosophy reminds about science, but isn’t science. Philosophy asks the most universal question about Man, the common or universal which all of us have part in, and in that it reminds about religion. They both have focus on convictions and ideas, and see these as a condition for feelings, not as a result of feelings. They are both engaged in the moral and ethical aspects of the convictions, and especially in the understanding of the meaning of life. Moreover they both involve spirituality (metaphysics).

What is then the difference between philosophy and religion?

The difference is, that the silent assumptions, things that are taken for granted, dogmas, doctrines and premises within the religions, themselves are facing rational examination in philosophy. Is there coherence in it? Is it self-contradictory? What about one’s way of being, is it self-circling or self-forgetful? And what about the autonomy and the power of action? Are you yourself or are you dependent on others? And many other existential and philosophical problems.

4. The Committee for Skeptical Inquiry (CSI)

Richard Dawkins is one of the main gurus, if not the main, in The Committee for Skeptical Inquiry (CSI), formerly known as the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal (CSICOP). 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. It is therefore no surprise that CSI is as much characterized by self-contradiction as Dawkins.

If you dare to go into a forum of these dogmatists, trying to have a sober and rational discussion about something which is not shared by the members, you will be bullied out by people parroting Dawkins in every sentence. Indeed, New Agers are skilled internet trolls, they have tried their tricks on me several times. But I have never experienced a more sinister way of internet trolling than the one that comes from atheistic fundamentalists (on the nature of internet trolling, see my article The Curse of the Internet Troll).

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 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 conservativism, 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.

In connection with the Sokal Hoax I raised the question: 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, so-called “skeptic” 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 Lock 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.

Skeptical Inquirer is a bimonthly American magazine published by CSI with the subtitle: The Magazine for Science and Reason.

Creationism is a belief held only by a very limited group of people. 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 (read more here).

It is a well-researched and all through scientific 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 critical institution 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.” Where is this institution called “science” which promotes critique of certain parts of culture, which it is in ideological opposition to?

For example: in an article called Let’s Be SHARPs together: The Need for a New Umbrella Term (vol. 42, no. 1/January/February 2018), you’ll find precisely the ideological black and white thinking we discussed earlier in this booklet. 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 and ethical shipwreck, and furthermore a pseudoscientific reductionist viewpoint.

Hereafter they crave for an umbrella term for all this amazing atheistic work, and one must admit that there is nothing wrong with the authors´ egos here. First 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. 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.
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 an important concept in my own work as a paranormal investigator, because pseudoskepticism usually is 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 support, though my method not is science, but philosophy.

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

Truzzi attributed the following characteristics to pseudoskeptics:

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.

5. The Fascism of Atheist fundamentalism

The fascist element comes from the focus on evolutionary biology (which it shares with New Age). Time and time again we hear that true science is more less identical with evolutionary biology (I will end the article with a broader presentation of how to view science as the study of many different aspects of reality, and which therefore can use many different methods).

Besides the obvious distortion of science and philosophy we already have examined, then we know from history that the mix of biology and ideology is an explosive cocktail. The slippery slope movement is dangerously near. And when taken into consideration the degree of militarism (agressivity), and the zero tolerance policy (the intention of eliminating undesirable conduct), which atheist fundamentalism
promotes, we see fascism as a fact. This is reinforced by especially two biological reductionist viewpoints which Dawkins has created: The concept of *The Virus of the Mind*, and the concept of *Memes*. Due to the zero tolerance policy these two ideas directly lead to fascism. Both ideas are in re-defined ways also representative in the New Age ideology.

*The Virus of the Mind*

"Viruses of the Mind" is an essay by Dawkins, first published in the book *Dennett and His Critics: Demystifying Mind* (1993). Dawkins originally wrote the essay in 1991 and delivered it as a Voltaire Lecture on 6 November 1992 at the Conway Hall Humanist Centre. The essay discusses how religion can be viewed as a meme, an idea previously expressed by Dawkins in *The Selfish Gene*. Dawkins analyzes the propagation of religious ideas and behaviors as a memetic virus, analogous to how biological and computer viruses spread.

The essay was later published in *A Devil's Chaplain* (2003) and its ideas are further explored in the television programme, *The Root of All Evil?*, which we already have looked at.

The Virus of the Mind, and the idea of religion as the root of all evil, are fitting perfectly into the New Age ideology, and the emerging simulation theory, which claim that we are living in some kind of computer simulation as depicted in the Movie *The Matrix* (see the Matrix Dictionary on Simulation theory, and the pop culture file *The Matrix*). In surprisingly way the New Age Matrix agents are doing the same job as Agent Smith in the movie. And so are Richard Dawkins, though his metaphysical position is in opposition to New Age.

As an example of how New Agers use the concept of The Virus of the Mind, you could mention the Law of Attraction coach Magnetic Mama’s version of the Matrix when she in connection with “Narcissistic Abuse Recovery Coaching” says: “I can give you suggestions for coping with complex-PTSD symptoms and reprogramming negative beliefs (‘malware’) installed in childhood by your narcissistic household.” This is certainly not the speak of Morpheus, Neo, or the rebels. It is the speak of the machines and Agent Smith.

*Memes*

The word meme is a neologism also coined by Dawkins.
The Meme is an idea, behavior, or style that spreads from person to person within a culture—often with the aim of conveying a particular phenomenon, theme, or meaning represented by the meme. A meme acts as a unit for carrying cultural ideas, symbols, or practices, that can be transmitted from one mind to another through writing, speech, gestures, rituals, or other imitable phenomena with a mimicked theme. Supporters of the concept regard memes as cultural analogues to genes in that they self-replicate, mutate, and respond to selective pressures.

The concept of the Meme is a kind of social Darwinism, and as mentioned: it has nothing whatever to do with Darwin, but with the ideology of atheist fundamentalism. It is a biologicist fantasy with no more scientific foundation than Rupert Sheldrake’s “Morphic Resonance,” or Robert Lanza’s “Biocentrism.” (see the Matrix Dictionary entries Rupert Sheldrake and Robert Lanza).

The Meme is actually today an integrated expression in popular culture. As an example of how it is used in New Age, can be mentioned the astrology website The Cosmic Intelligence Agency (C*I*A), which says:

*The C*I*A and it’s connotations with the CIA (as in the American intelligence service founded in 1947) is in itself a paradox. For us we relate our acronym to the words to Consciousness Intention Astrology. What the C*I*A symbolises to us is a global movement, a collective mind, a meme that can work effectively behind the scenes to help and heal and influence culture and collective consciousness, by those who use, heal and are guided by the astrology we know and trust.*

The slippery slope danger of atheist fundamentalism has furthermore to do with the concept of religion as *The Root of all Evil*. It is easily to show its invalidity by showing two counter-examples. I will mention two: The one is the direct atheist militant movement of Communism. The other the anti-religious movement of Nazism. I am in no way making a comparison, or a guilt by association argument here. I simply want to show the invalidity of the opinion that religion is the root of *all* evil.

*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.

_Nazi anti-religiousness_

This might sound strange, since Nazism often is associated with some kind of romantic religious 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.

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 more fair to say that *ideology* in itself (both religious, atheist and political) is the root of all evil, rather than certain specific ideologies.

6. The Brave New World of Atheist fundamentalism

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 Ideology, 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 pseudoscience is trying to unite New Age pseudosciences with some of the pseudosciences of reductionism. 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 they for example have removed spiritual and philosophical claims about the meaning of suffering. 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 the concepts of suffering and negativity also have been removed. 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 pseudoscientific, 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 fundamentalism) and idealism (the New Age bias). The ruling methods of these two metaphysical theories are precisely biology and psychology.

Everything in the novel, 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 “growed” 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 Experience versus The Mystical Experience).

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 *Brave New World* all religion, philosophy, literature and art have been removed. And a great deal of this elimination is precisely what atheist fundamentalism 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.

I will now put up a list of Christian scientists whose work needs to be eliminated from the face of the Earth. It is people whom 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 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 fundamentalism is beginning to reveal a reductio ad absurdum argument.

I’m well aware that atheistic fundamentalists have arguments against this, but those are simply nonsense: such as the scientists couldn’t have been religious for real, or that the scientific method is atheistic 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 atheistic 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 fundamentalism. The premises of atheist fundamentalism are that all the work of these people should be eliminated. This is not an exaggeration. Atheist fundamentalism 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.

(After the elimination of the work of all these religious idiots we could imagine that atheist fundamentalism 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 (let´s admit it: entertainment is 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!”

When I read this novel I remember the quote from a nonviolent communication coach (a very sensitivity-focused communication form), whom I had a discussion with: “Would you rather be right, than happy?”

The politicians in Denmark – which is one of the most secularized, management-oriented and coaching-controlled countries in the world – have had scientists to make an investigation, that showed the Danes to be the most happy people in the world. A bit of a paradox, because other investigations also show, that they are the largest consumers of Prozac in the world. Prozac is in Danish called “lykkepiller”, which directly translated to English means Happiness-pills.
I have personally several times been attacked by NLP-coaches and psychotherapists for no other reason than being a philosopher; that is: a person who uses rationality and critical thinking (which is Old-thinking in their point of view). I have even, several times, been advised to seek NLP-psychotherapeutic treatment, in order again to be able to think new, and be flexible and willing to change (to claim that I have psychological problems, without any justification, and without being in a treatment-situation, is actually a very serious insult).

They call it self-improvement, which again is one and the same as adjustment to society, and therefore to the ruling ideology. An advice that doesn’t differ much from the theories behind the re-education institutions in China. A direct Stalinistic approach, which almost all companies today is using more and more, very well supported by atheist fundamentalism, as shown in the chapter on the Heredity and Environment Ideology.

I actually think, that there is a danger that this ideology, in its fascination of economical growth and consumerism (personal power, success, and so-called induced self-imagined X factor), might melt together with Chinese Communism, which more and more is importing Western Consumer Capitalism, is growing more and more as an economical power, but which still is a totalitarian ideology, that doesn’t accept democracy and human rights.

We more and more see how Western theorists of all kinds are praising China, how they more and more talk about what we can learn from China, but without mentioning China’s violation of human rights. That we in the Western world gradually will accept the violation of human rights is now seen in how we for example have subjectified and relativized the freedom of speech, so that it can be used as a means of offending other people. It is also seen in the treatment of the unemployed – “defect consumers” – who are treated as a kind of criminals. Their rights have in many cases directly been taken away from them, and they are put in re-education institutions, and work-training camps, precisely as in China.

Chan Koonchung’s novel The Fat Years, newly translated into English, portrays a China of the very near future that can best be described as slightly off-kilter. The year is 2013 and, following a calamitous worldwide economic meltdown, China has emerged seemingly unscathed.

It basks in a “Golden Age of Prosperity and Satisfaction,” as Jason Beerman writes in a review of the novel - complete with Lychee Black Dragon Latte-slinging baristas at Starbucks, which has been acquired by the Chinese conglomerate Wantwant. China is the preeminent world power thanks to its economic dominance and its soft power.
strategies which, among other things, have resulted in a Sino-Japanese free trade sphere.

Meanwhile, the Chinese people have achieved an accelerated course in yuppiedom thanks in large part to a rapid rise in domestic demand, which has resulted in higher living standards for newly urbanized and rural dwellers alike.

There is a catch, however, Beerman continues. The entire month of February 2011—a brutal and chaotic period immediately before the beginning of China’s Golden Age—has gone missing from people’s memories and no one other than the social misfits who figure at the center of the novel’s plot seems to realize or care. Simply put, everyone else is too busy making money.

This sounds like the type of late night fantasy a Politburo member might have after ingesting too much baijiu at a banquet. But Beerman writes, that the premise isn’t a classic dystopian one per se since the amount of control that the state exercises over the people remains somewhat of a mystery. A central plot point revolves around whether the government forced a collective amnesia upon its people by drugging the water supply or whether the people simply willed the missing period from their minds by ignoring it en masse.

The rhetorical question that lies at the center of the novel is this: “Between a good hell and a counterfeit paradise, which one would people choose?” Or in the context of the general Chinese populace portrayed in the novel, would people choose to forget or ignore an ignominious past in favor of a prosperous present and future?

The author of the novel, Chan Koonchung, grew up in Hong Kong and Taiwan but now lives in Beijing. The Fat Years was written in 2009 after Chan observed a major change to the Chinese mentality in 2008. Following the grandeur of the Beijing Olympics and China’s reaction to the world economic crisis, Chan felt a general domestic confidence boost vis-à-vis China’s place in the world, and he wanted to write a novel that examined this phenomenon.

Indeed, Beerman writes, the China of 2013 portrayed by Chan seems to have lurched forward into a stroke of good fortune, and the country scrambles to capitalize on this as best as it can. This means that while external factors have catapulted China to sole superpower status, its intact political system—corrupt, bloated, and paranoid—is ill-equipped to handle the change.

Chan uses this framework to poke holes in the country’s current political structure. Call it prosperity with Chinese characteristics.
For instance, in the novel, Chinese people have “90 percent freedom.” They’re free to make money, to be sure, but they’re also free to watch whatever is on TV, browse whatever books are in the bookstore, and read whatever articles appear in the newspaper or on the Internet. The catch is that all this readily available information is tightly controlled and access to non-sanctioned information remains out of reach.

Furthermore, the political narrative of the Communist Party of China originally revolved around the ideals of class struggle and equality. Following the dual debacles of the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, the Party conjured a new storyline of having saved China from foreign imperialism and humiliation in order to deflect attention from its own failings. In the novel, its raison d’être has come to include the idea that it should “accomplish big things” in order to rationalize one party rule and differentiate it from democratic systems of governance.

This type of protean leadership benefits greatly from a populace that willfully forgets. The Fat Years draws easy comparisons to both 1984 and Brave New World. Like Winston in 1984, Chen, the protagonist of The Fat Years, clings to old newspaper articles whose facts have since been wiped from the official record. And like in Brave New World, state-produced drugs are used to stabilize the population.

Beerman thinks, that what makes The Fat Years even more jarring than either of these classics is that it is rooted much more closely to current events and it is, at times, eerily prescient.

Much of the novel’s long epilogue section is a deconstruction of China’s hypothetical reaction in the wake of its rise to sole global dominance. The immediacy of the novel’s time horizon is such that the predicted trappings that would accompany China’s superpower status — a freely convertible yuan, an alienated and isolated West, the construction through Iran of a “Pan Eurasian Energy Bridge”— are really not that far-fetched.

In our brave new world, Beerman concludes, it is this plausible realism that fact makes The Fat Years a gripping, if not terrifying, treatise on the rise of China, present and future.

And, in the brave new world of The Matrix Conspiracy: if you not are behaving precisely as the ruling ideology wants you to behave, then you’ll meet the thought police of the Hermeneutics of Suspicion. From the coaches and psychotherapists of the self-help industry, you will, more or less explicit, be told that there is something wrong with you, that you not are “normal”. From the psychiatrists and doctors of the
pharmaceutical industry, you could even get yourself a diagnose, which paradoxical enough gives you some rights, but which also stigmatizes you.

The approach of The Hermeneutics of Suspicion is to attack the character of the person with whom they are arguing rather than finding fault with his or her argument. This move is within philosophy well known as arguing *ad hominem* (Latin for “to the person”). It is a technique of rhetoric (communicative swindle), since discrediting the source of an argument usually leaves the argument itself intact. Shifting attention from the point in question to some aspects of the arguer’s personality or behaviour are irrelevant to the point being discussed.

To try to have a normal conversation with, for example, a NLP-coach, or a psychotherapist, can be an odd experience. Have you ever met a person, that to everything you say, answers: “I can see, that you mean something else, than what you say” – (implicit: what the coach thinks you mean). Then you might answer: “No, I meant what I said!” Then the person answers: “When you say no, I see that you with that answer means something else, than what you say” – (implicit, what the coach thinks you mean)”? Well, then you probably have met one of our days thousands of NLP coaches. You see the same in other New Age psychotherapies – for example Nonviolent Communication. – But as mentioned, it could also come as a diagnose from a psychiatrist or doctor, or an accuse of being infected by a malignant God-virus, which you need to come in treatment for.

But how can they know this? How can they play the role as someone who know who you are better than yourself, at the same time as they totally denies and renounce what you think, and the reasons you produce; that is: your experiences, your education, your arguments, your articles, your books?

Well, the only way they then can get their knowledge from, is from their own theories. It is pure prejudice. Prejudice is a belief held without good reason or consideration of the evidence for or against its being true. The funny thing is that philosophy - that is: rationality and critical thinking – precisely is opposed to prejudice. We are all riddled with prejudices on a wide range of issues, but it is possible to eliminate some of them by making an effort to examine evidence and arguments on both sides of any question. Human reason is fallible, and most of us are strongly motivated to cling on to *some* beliefs even in the teeth of evidence against them (for example wishful thinking); however, even making small inroads into prejudice can transform the world for the better.

But these people do the opposite. They try to remove rationality and critical thinking through the hermeneutics of suspicion. And they have succes. As already mentioned, then a whole time-tendency within school, folk high school, universities and
continuing education, focus on so-called ”self-improvement – self-help”, which are inspired by them.

But you don´t only meet the problem of the hermeneutics of suspicion within high developed theories. You also meet it within the so-called common, mediocre life. For example: the whole of Karen Blixen´s life is a rebellion against this mediocrity of the common life, which tried to clip her wings in her childhood. It is a human insult. I will say that this is probably the biggest wall you will meet on your spiritual journey. And it is much more painful when you also meet it from friends and family, if you not are behaving “normal”. Like this it is somehow something that is coming from “within”.

But to stand up against these influences, and keep your philosophical integration intact, will for certain create a spirit of greatness. In some cases it is best totally to avoid these people, because they will clip your wings if they get the chance for it.

Do as Epicurus, treat people with friendliness and compassion as long as it is possible, but withdraw to your garden when they try to lure you into the world´s noise and political quarrels, because they think that this is a part of being “normal”. When you in peace are cultivating your garden you can also keep on cultivating your philosophical integration and the refined pleasure in this.

The removal of genuine rationality from the stage leaves open the possibility of accusations of rationalizations for ulterior motives. This form of analysis (leading us to think of groups or individuals “what is in it for them?”), is not only corrosive of trust in society. It is bound eventually to undermine itself. Why are such views themselves being propagated? What are those spreading them going to gain?

I think it is time for rebellion against this tendency in society, and especially within leadership theories. If we shall save our democracy and welfare society it is absolutely necessary, that we in relation to democracy-parasitic ideologies become philosophical rebels like Socrates, Henry David Thoreau, Gandhi, Martin Luther King or Krishnamurti – a kind of spiritual anarchists.

7. Materialism and The Problem of Consciousness

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 immediate sense experiences.
The support of a natural scientific view of nature has 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.

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.

Another of The Four Horsemen of atheist fundamentalism, the American philosopher Daniel C. Dennett, is in his book - with the ambitious title *Consciousness Explained* - trying to explain consciousness, partially through computer analogies, partially through neurology and psychology. This is not so much different than the New Ager Gregg Braden, and many other proponents of the idealistic inspired simulation theory, though these two metaphysical theories (materialism and idealism) are in opposition to each other (see the Matrix Dictionary entry on Gregg Braden).

Daniel Dennett´s research centers on the philosophy of mind, philosophy of science, and philosophy of biology, particularly as those fields relate to evolutionary biology and cognitive science. In a nutshell, this is the same stuff which we hear from Gregg Braden, though Braden not even are close to Dennett in scholarship.

Dennett´s position might be called scientific materialism/naturalism. Many current and recent philosophers—e.g., Willard Van Orman Quine, Donald Davidson, and Jerry Fodor—operate within a broadly physicalist or materialist framework, producing rival accounts of how best to accommodate mind, including functionalism, anomalous monism, identity theory, and so on.

Scientific "Materialism" is often synonymous with, and has so far been described, as being a reductive materialism. In recent years, Paul and Patricia Churchland have advocated a radically contrasting position (at least, in regards to certain hypotheses); eliminativist materialism holds that some mental phenomena simply do not exist at all, and that talk of those mental phenomena reflects a totally spurious "folk psychology" and introspection illusion. That is, an eliminative materialist might
believe that a concept like "belief" simply has no basis in fact—the way folk science speaks of demon-caused illnesses would be just one obvious example.

Much of Dennett's work since the 1990s has been concerned with fleshing out his previous ideas by addressing the same topics from an evolutionary standpoint, from what distinguishes human minds from animal minds (Kinds of Minds), to how free will is compatible with a naturalist view of the world (Freedom Evolves). Just try to say Consciousness Evolves instead, and you'll have New Age.

Dennett sees evolution by natural selection as an algorithmic process (though he spells out that algorithms as simple as long division often incorporate a significant degree of randomness). This idea is in conflict with the evolutionary philosophy of paleontologist Stephen Jay Gould, who preferred to stress the "pluralism" of evolution (i.e., its dependence on many crucial factors, of which natural selection is only one).

Dennett's views on evolution are identified as being strongly adaptationist, in line with his theory of the intentional stance, and the evolutionary views of Richard Dawkins.

In his book Darwin's Dangerous Idea, Dennett showed himself even more willing than Dawkins to defend adaptationism in print, devoting an entire chapter to a criticism of the ideas of Gould. This stems from Gould's long-running public debate with E. O. Wilson and other evolutionary biologists over human sociobiology and its descendant evolutionary psychology, which Gould and Richard Lewontin opposed, but which Dennett advocated, together with Dawkins and Steven Pinker.

Strong disagreements have been launched against Dennett from Gould and his supporters, who allege that Dennett overstated his claims and misrepresented Gould's to reinforce what Gould describes as Dennett's "Darwinian fundamentalism".

Dennett's book Breaking the Spell: Religion as a Natural Phenomena is in the name of science trying to debunk religion and especially the idea of God. But Dennett's book, like his other books, are unnecessarily lengthy arguments for his relatively simple, and by no means exceptional, ideas of naturalism. Dennett's belief that science can provide an adequate understanding of religion is obviously not a scientifically proven or even provable claim. It is a dogma, a declaration of faith. No massive accumulation of sarcastic putdowns or intellectual gymnastics can conceal this fact from the critical reader. Furthermore: we already have seen how Mary Midgley has shown how far from Darwin atheist fundamentalism is.
In opposition to this, and under impression of the discussion about the damage, which we have caused nature, there has in the later years been worked out conceptions, which claims, that nature has a value in itself. It is not only a means, but ought to be respected for its beauty and richness. It is by the way a point of view, which also is well known from older times. In lack of better you could call it a communicative view of nature, since it is implying, that we in some sense have a community with nature.

The communicative view of nature claims that nature is of value in itself, that there is a beauty and richness in nature, which is of non-causal and non-mechanical kind, and that Man as a natural being has a community with this nature. For instance: The Danish philosopher K.E. Løgstrup is not naturalist in the way the word was used in the above-mentioned. Through the whole of his life he had an energetic controversy with all positivism and empirical naturalism. His main objection is, that these reduce reality for important dimensions. The sovereign and spontaneous life-expressions are given with "life itself". You can say, that they belong to our nature, if you thereby understand it as a metaphysical nature. This you can also call naturalism, but it is in that case important to emphasize, that it is a metaphysical naturalism. This is also my view, which I will develop further below.

Mogens Pahuus has in his book Karen Blixen´s philosophy of life argued, that Blixen, when she speaks about God, is using the word in a quite other meaning than the traditional. According to him she uses it completely synonymous with nature, or rather, the creative powers in nature. In any eventuality it seems, like she thinks of the human nature as being related to the rest of nature. The human nature is a unity of spirit, instinct, sensation, body and feelings, something which you can´t control and master by standing outside it, but which is connected to life-feeling, spontaneity and self-forgetfulness, when you are one with it. Reason, you can say, is lying in an adaption to the realities, both in oneself and the surroundings.

In his book The Light of Nature the Danish philologist of Middle Ages, Axel Haaning, is portraying a line of philosophers of nature from the Late Middle Ages and Renaissance, who advocate a communicative view of nature, and who try to illustrate both religion, as well as science of nature, in a more large-scale perspective, but who have been standing in the shadow of the Age of Enlightenment, as well as the breakthrough of modern sciences. It is names such as Roger Bacon, Albert the Great, Jean de Rupescissa, Marsilio Ficino, Paracelsus, Gerhard Mandrel, Giordano Bruno.

Finally shall be mentioned Buddhism, which in some areas can sound very materialistic and naturalistic, but again there is talk about a metaphysical naturalism.
It is speaking about the Buddha-nature as the final goal of Man. The Buddha-nature is the original and innermost nature of the mind, which always is completely untouched by change and death.

So, 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. 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 occured 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 up from the ground explain brain processes from genetical and 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.

I have accounted for the abuse of this breakthrough from both postmodern and spiritual sides many places. I will refer to my articles Quantum Mysticism and Its Web of Lies, and Quantum Mechanics and The Philosophy of Niels Bohr.

Because you can’t – as Niels Bohr points out – replace classical physics with quantum mechanics, because the validity of classical physics is a necessary precondition for, that you can describe the quantum mechanical phenomena and
make account for the macroscopic ("classical") experimental arrangement. Bohr is writing in a famous discussion contribution against Einstein, who didn't want to accept, that the causality principle has no validity in nuclear physics:

"...the account for all experiences – regardless how far the phenomena are lying outside the reach of classical physics – must be expressed in classical concepts. The reason is simply, that we by the word "experiment" refer to a situation, where we can tell others what we have done and what we have learned, and that the experimental device and measuring results therefore must be described in the usual language with appropriate use of the terminology of classical physics."


Note, that Bohr here speaks about the usual language (everyday language) supplemented with the terms of classical physics. This is due to, that he regards the concepts of classical physics as a more explicit formulation of everyday language. In that sense everyday language is a necessary precondition for all natural scientific realization, and nor can everyday language be replaced by an unambiguous and formalised, logical scientific language.

My professor in philosophy, the late David Favrholdt, has developed this important theme in Bohr’s epistemology further in his own philosophy. He works with, what he calls *The Core* in everyday language.


The phenomenalist/idealist claims, that we only with certainty can know, that the here italicized concepts stand for something real; that is to say: something from the concepts different: *Time* – object – space – *logic* – body – person – *subject* – experience – memory.

The materialist claims, that we only with certainty can know, that the here italicized concepts stand for something real; that is to say: something from the concepts different: *Time* – object – *space* – *logic* – body – person – subject – experience – memory.

Favrholdt claims, that since these concepts are interdependent, they all represent something. Together they are what he calls *The Core* in everyday language. That they are interdependent means, that they have to be used in a certain way in relation to
each other, if we at all want to talk meaningful. The relations between them are not established by arbitrary definitions. We have discovered, that we shall respect the relations between them, if we want to describe something, whether we want to describe, that there is lying a phone book on the desktop, or that we have an experience of the phone book.

What we must say is as follows: When we as ordinary people – before we have heard anything about philosophy – orientate in life, we form a concept about reality. We associate with humans and animals and plants and non-living things in our daily lives, and we learn to discriminate between, what is dream and reality, - and what is lie or illusion, and reality.

Any human being understand, what we mean by saying, that the witness explained in the court, that the thief had a pistol, but in reality the thief was unarmed. We also learn to talk about the poetic reality, about the experienced reality etc. We learn to talk about things, which exist, despite that no one experiences them, or have consciousness about them. When they found the Golden Horns at Gallehus, they found something, which no one knew were there. But they found them. Is wasn' t so, that they arised, because they were experienced.

Then certain philosophers are coming and saying, that we don't know, whether there is anything behind our experiences. What can you do but ask them about, what they mean with ”experiences”. Then they explain this. But it turns out, that they only can do this by using the whole of The Core. And in this set of fundamental concepts is included the concept ”object” or ”thing” which represent ”things, which exist whether they are experienced or not”.

This is included as a necessary precondition for, that we can define or explain, what we shall understand by experience. So, because they have explained, what they mean by ”experience” - so that we know the correct use of this concept - they have already accepted, that we in our description of reality must assume a correct use of the concept ”things, which exist, whether they are experienced or not”.

The reason why the conceptual relations in the The Core not are conventional or accidental, but unavoidable as the relations in the number theory, is precisely because reality - the from our experiences (thoughts, mind) independently existing reality - is included in the determination of, how we have to use our concepts in order to be able to realize it, and describe it. It is not us who put reality in order, it is reality which puts us in order.
In accordance with Taoism there is nothing beyond the world. You can’t see the world from outside. You are in the world, and you can only define something from its opposition. What is the good? This you understand, if you know what the evil is. You can’t say anything about the world as a whole, because you can’t put the whole in opposition to anything.

We can choose not to describe it and instead soak ourselves in Hinajana Buddhistic meditation (or music), but if we want to describe it, if we want to find out, what is subjective and objective, if we want to achieve realization within physics, biology, psychology etc., then we must use our fundamental concepts in a correct, non-arbitrary way.

This involves, not an ontological dualism, but an epistemological, a so-called gnoseological dualism. Unambiguous description has the distinction between subject and object as a necessary precondition. And the fact itself, that we have to discriminate between subject and object in order to communicate unambiguous, actually indicates logically, that both materialism (the scientific bias) and idealism (the New Age bias) are mistaken point of views.

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 charaterized 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 scientifically 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.

It is from this mysterious consciousness that all philosophical questions come: Who am I? Where do the thoughts come from? What is consciousness and where does it come from? Is there a meaning of life? How does man preserve peace of mind and balance in all the relationships of life? How do we learn to appreciate the true goods and flout all transient and vain goals? Is the destiny of Man part of a larger plan?

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 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: compensatory karma. 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 lawfulnesses (also the quantum laws). The wholeness is one and the same as reality. So, in my view consciousness, wholeness and reality is one and the same. Please give this a moment of reflection. Awareness seems to be a quality of the now, and therefore a quality of life itself: nature. Many ancient Indian scripts say that the Universe is in meditation, or rather: the Universe is one great meditation! When you are in the Now life, nature and universe expands. Awareness seems to have the qualities of openness and spaciousness. Unawareness closes these qualities. We can all experience this quite easily. Take a walk in the forest. Unawareness, or distractedness, cause that we don´t see the nature we are walking in. Awareness causes that we see it much more clearly. And by practicing meditation (awareness in now), you begin to connect with this open dimension of your being. In fact, it introduces you to the unlimited spaciousness that Buddhists call Sûnyatâ (see my book Sûnyatâ Sutras). This spaciousness is also the source of love. Spaciousness is simply love. The openness and the spaciousness come from your heart, not you head. It is not neither mental nor material.

In other words: Matter (hereunder the body) and mind (hereunder thoughts, the unconscious, the psyche, subject, the content of consciousness) – are something else than consciousness.
If I should try to characterize this theory in traditional philosophy of mind, it would be a kind of double-aspect theory. The double-aspect theory is a type of mind-body monism. According to double-aspect theory, the mental and the material are different aspects or attributes of a unitary reality, which itself is neither mental nor material. The unitary reality is the form of consciousness, an aspect which is completely neglected in traditional Western philosophy, but very commonly known in mysticism and Eastern philosophy. In Western philosophy they have only contemplated the content of consciousness, and not the form (though Kant was very close to it with his concept of The Transcendental Apperception, the unity where the self and the world come together). They haven’t looked into the consciousness itself, as you do in meditation, but only followed its direction towards an object; what you call the intentionality of consciousness. In fact, they claim that consciousness always must have intentionality. But this is only what I refer to as the mind. Intentionality is the power of the mind to be about, to represent, or to stand for, things, properties and states of affairs.

Meditation stops the intentionality, and directs the mind into its source, namely consciousness itself, which is one and the same as reality and wholeness. You could also say that meditation changes the consciousness from being one-directional to being bidirectional. Bidirectional consciousness means that the consciousness both is directed towards its form and its content. It is being open to the form of consciousness, aware of both magnetic poles in the field of subject-object experience. I have also called this the wholeness of the observer and the observed.

You can actually make a fascinating comparison between Kant and the Tibetan Dzogchen master Longchenpa, because where Kant’s philosophy stops with the transcendental apperception, Longchenpa’s philosophy begins. Where Kant’s philosophy goes in the direction of the content of consciousness, and describes the categories of experience, Longchenpa’s philosophy goes in the direction of the form of consciousness, and describes the categories of enlightenment. Kant doesn’t mention the enlightened state. Longchenpa doesn’t mention the content of consciousness. Tibetan Buddhism in fact has a name for Kant’s transcendental apperception; it is called Rigpa, the knowing of the original wakefulness that is personal experience. So Kant and Longchenpa have the same starting point: the transcendental apperception, but go in two different directions. Together they could form the complete philosophy of the bidirectional consciousness.

As mentioned: I see materialism and idealism as complementary to each other, because they mutually exclude each other and at the same time necessarily must supplement each other. It is this which comes to expression in the necessity of an epistemological dualism in order to reach unambiguous thinking and description. But
this is not an ontological dualism. The double-aspect theory avoids the mind-body dualism, which claims that the mind and body are completely distinct and separable. The dual-aspect monism has the very specific further feature, namely that different aspects may show a complementarity in a quantum physical sense. This implies that with regard to mental and physical states there may be incompatible descriptions of different parts that emerge from the wholeness. This stands in close analogy to quantum physics, where complementary properties cannot be determined jointly with accuracy (see my article Quantum Mechanics and the Philosophy of Niels Bohr).

And the form of consciousness, the unitary reality, the wholeness, is itself neither mental nor material. It is Tao, the undescribable.

Furthermore: the consciousness-aspect is also the area of progressive karma: the dreaming tracks and songlines in the artwork of the universe and Man. Progressive karma lies in the transcendental apperception, or rigpa: the transcendental unity of all experience. It is also called the great vision, from which the Universe is created (see my article The Hero’s Journey).

The Buddhist philosopher Nagarjuna said, that the Now´s lawfulness around the function of a universal negationpower (the negation of the wholeness), is due to, that energy works as streams and dividings within the superior wholeness. And because the wholeness is a reality, each part will always fit into a correspondent part. This means, that each part only can be understood in relation to its negation; that is: what the part not is. Firstly this implies, that each part comes to appear as part of a polarization-pair, or a pair of opposites – like in the teaching of Yin and Yang - or seen as complementary as in quantum mechanics. Secondly it implies, that each part only can be understood in relation to everything else; that is: in relation to the wholeness.

So the more you, through the Ego´s evaluations, isolate these parts from each other, the more the abandoned parts will work stronger and stronger on their polar partners. Therefore these polar partners in their extremes will finally switch over in the opposite extreme. Another aspect of this lawfulness, or another way to describe this lawfulness is: energy returns to its starting point. This is also called compensatory karma, and the lawfulness works as wave movements and pendulum movements.

Herewith we can talk about the laws of the wholeness. These are known in all wisdom traditions: Tao, Dharma, Destiny, Karma, Hybris-nemesis, Original sin, Logos, the Will of God, and so on. They say as follows: energy returns to it´s starting
point. You may therefore say, that energy moves as a wheel. Thus it is these laws, which control all the different life-cycles.

The progressive karma, the dreaming tracks and the songlines, is the map of the wholeness. It is the map which shows the consciousness it’s direction back to its source, namely the wholeness. This map can therefore only be experienced in meditation, in neutral observation and bidirectional consciousness. You can’t experience it in a psychedelic trip, since the bidirectional consciousness only can be created through a long and vegetative meditative work. It is like changing the light beam of a projector in a movie theatre, and re-directing it into the projector itself. Or like changing the direction of a river. A psychedelic trip will just enforce the one-directional mind. As the psychedelic therapists say: just flow with it. No! I say, don’t just flow with it, work with re-directing a part of it into its own source! First here the glimpses of the wholeness begins (see a full description of this difficult topic in my booklet *The Psychedelic Experience versus the Mystical Experience*).

So, in my own work as a philosophical paranormal investigator I make a distinction between the metaphysical identification of the ultimately realm of reality (the wholeness; or the form of consciousness) - and the content of consciousness. The metaphysical identification of the ultimately realm of reality I call *metaphysical naturalism*, as we have investigated.

The metaphysical identification of the content of consciousness (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. The logic necessary in order to establish unambiguous descriptions of these models is clearly seen in the above-mentioned *Core* in everyday language.

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.

And in my pop culture file on *The X-Files* I also suggest that this philosophical method is pretty much Mulder’s method as well (I will use The X-Files as a popular illustration since questions of the paranormal also is what for example CSI works with).
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 (though this invalidates materialism). 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 then? 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. In my article Quantum Mechanics and the Philosophy of Niels Bohr, I have explained, with support from Bohr’s philosophy, that a Theory of Everything isn’t possible because you can’t describe the wholeness. We examined that with the logic of The Core.

Note that ontological pluralism 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 epistemological 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 undescribable (you can only describe something in opposition to its negation. The wholeness can’t be put in opposition to anything, and is therefore undescribable).

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.

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