

On God, Atheism, Religion, Philosophy, and Evil

Exploring a perspective on what constitutes a human being

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0.0 Revs Since Release

Rev	Desc
1.00	Initial draft ready. Trimmed off Section 7 & 8 in print to pdf.
1.01	Added welcome and links for ease and welcome. Also fixed up barcode.
1.02	Dumped phone ideas into unpublished sections of paper. Perfect is enemy of the good.

0.1 Links to Resources

In this essay you will find numbered references, all of which are on the internet. Please consult the last two pages of this essay to find the numbered reference that corresponds to a barcode. The barcode enables you to use your mobile device camera to go quickly and easily to that specific reference. One last note, this essay relies another essay called “On Rationality”⁽¹⁾. In theory, it would be optimal to read that work prior to this work, but that is not really a prerequisite. Then again you could use AI to give you a quick summary to establish the core ideas. The concept of patterns of being is built on top of the “On Rationality” work.

0.2 Welcome to Classic

Truth is now unnecessary. Don’t you know we are in a “post-truth” era? Pinker, Dawkins, and Harris will tell you to “Be rational”, which is basically a dig at anyone who doesn’t align to their intellectual fashions. Practically everyone is neatly piling into groups for safety, and are repeating slogans they can’t intellectually defend. It makes sense. Once the foundations of stability get pulled from under your feet, banding into groups is instinctual. Furthermore, the system rewards it, as now you only have to contend with the leaders of groups; neater and easier. All of this is in poor taste. Let the world run through its capricious intellectual fads. Over here, in this dark corner of the interwebs, we are planting seeds. Classic crops of truth, intellect, and above all honesty and bridges to everyone who is intellectually honest. Welcome to the unpopular club; we are happy you are here.

Part 1 – Core Concepts

1.1 Introduction

Lately I have come to notice that many concepts in popular culture are experiencing boundary failures and are mixing into a full blown mess. Cults are equated with religion; religious people cheer as a religious leader lands an intellectual “got-cha” on an atheist; atheists deem the religious as backwards and barbarous; and science is the new flavor of God: “I trust the science”, and “I believe in science” followers say. This seems unwise. All these topics are nuanced, very interesting, and important.

This essay attempts to explore God, Atheism, Theism/Religion, Cults, philosophy, and evil. Having tasted the flavor of many of these topics, let me assure you that none of these words point to the same exact concept. Sure, there is lots of overlap, yet, each concept has deep structural boundaries that set it apart from the others. This essay explores each concept, and once each concept is well defined, we’ll bounce around and try to tease out the hardest concepts that we can find, and play with them.

This work does not intend to deceive, diminish, offend or impart any ill will towards anyone. It is a view from a mind that has experienced incredible errors and mistakes, and is articulating the current iteration of understanding. It is a summary on today’s (~2026) comprehension after years of ignorance. I apologize for any ignorance that remains in my mind that has found itself into this paper.

1.2 Patterns of Being

Before getting into the subject matter of this essay, we need to consider a concept called “patterns of being”. One important question is: what separates humans from other animals? There are many valid answers to this question, however, let’s explore only one of them; specifically that humans are unique in the animal kingdom where there is an additional adaptive layer which is not physical. Where all animals adapt physically to the environment (Darwin’s theory of evolution), humans have developed an additional adaptive layer which can be viewed as “software adaptability”. All animals have multiple patterns of being, for example, a wolf can activate a “looking for food” pattern, or “I want to play with another wolf” pattern, where the pattern is understood by other wolves who then react appropriately. The ‘patterns of being’ in a wolf are limited to what wolves exhibit, and novel patterns emerge at the pace of evolution. What differentiates modern humans is that we have a practically infinite number of ‘patterns of being’, and we are able to create new ‘patterns of being’ by modifying current ‘patterns of being’. If animals were equated to a device that can store and play stored songs, where songs are patterns of being, then humans have WAY more songs than other animals; and we are able to remix songs as a means of creating new songs. So, a pattern of being could be seen as a person’s internal state which allows them to interpret the world, and comprehend it. This is an important concept as it is gateway to understanding the infinite variety of human action.

The action that we take is always rooted in our own internal understanding of the world. It should be apparent after some thinking that a high level guide for human action is the interplay of that person’s model of the world (their understanding of how things work, and their experience), their goals (what they want to happen, to create or to bring about), and their values (limits on using force, understanding of what is acceptable, etc.). Classic patterns of being are the same idea as Carl Jung’s archetypes, which generate known action as an outcome from that pattern of being. For example, if a friend is being very kind, you may say “you’re a saint!”. You are mapping the actions of your friend as a match to the pattern of being of the saint archetype; selfless help. The secret-sauce of humanity happens when a classic archetype is modified based on some parameter from another archetype or classic archetypes are mixed with other patterns of being. Imagine our music storage hardware playing a remixed song of the pattern of being of “hero” remixed with “technologist” with a sprinkle of “businessman”, and the emergent human behavior will generate novel outcomes in the physical world. How humans behave, as

in, the action they take, is tied to the pattern of being they are internalizing at that moment, which allows for a much, much wider pattern of action than a wolf. It is not a stretch to say that novel and creative human action, is the continuous merging of patterns of being created internally by each person. What we are is essentially the pattern of being we are “playing” at that time.

Understanding the “pattern of being” concept and how it relates to human action is something this essay uses as a foundation. At the most basic level, human thinking gives rise to action. Your internal state, which is how you interpret the world, is a pattern of being. Each person carries their own model that is derived based on their experience, intertwined with goals and values. This understanding changes with life experience, which ultimately plays a massive role in the kind of action that is within the realm of possibility.

It seems that patterns of being, map to very predictable action. The pattern of being of a saint (classic archetype), will never generate the action of robbery. It also won't tell us if the person takes big steps or small steps when they walk, but the set of action is going to be very predictable. We are all playing out patterns of being, that we ourselves create using that which we comprehend.

Patterns of being are a known recipe across cultures as an interplay between a model of the world, goals, and values as described by the paper “On Rationality”⁽¹⁾. When the model of the world, goals, and values are locked into known parameter ranges and within fixed ratios to each other we get classic archetypes, aka classic patterns of being, which generates predictable action. Long story short, the chaining of patterns of being and creating new patterns of being generates incredible variability in human action. Patterns of being generate both incredible and often beautiful results as well as very ugly results.

The physical world is rigid in its rules, which is why science is possible. If we hit a beach-ball, it will fly. The results of our touch and interaction with the physical world is pretty deterministic. What we have the most amount of control over is our thoughts, and understanding of the world. Which is to say that we are able to construct a pattern of being. Since actions are the result of our thoughts, it's best to focus inwards as a means of interacting with the outside world. Yes, we are accountable for our actions; however, the emphasis of this work is that inward reflection and internal work in improving our patterns of being is the ultimate human performance tool. We are in essence accountable for what we think. Which can be developed and greatly improved to allow for being the best version of ourselves.

1.3 Action & Patterns of Being

The root of the human experience is action. Not thinking. Culturally, we are too enamored with IQ. In the section on “Patterns of Being” there is an emphasis on internal reflection to construct a superior pattern of being. The purpose of this work is to give rise to superior action. However, it is important to understand that action is the core objective. The question is simply, how do we take better action? What is the best gift we can give the future? How can we maximize beauty? In the first few decades of life, action is critical to gain exposure and experience, and ability. In our youth its important to take in experience, and to wrestle with it all. To become self sufficient and knowledgeable. The point is that at some moment, it's important to analyze our internal state, our patterns of being that give rise to action. There comes a moment when our skilled and experienced action requires significant reflection. Precisely because we are efficient and capable, it's important to consider our actions. The more capable the person, the more important these reflections become. Even though in reality, self reflection is a core trait of anyone who lifts heavy loads. The purpose of this section, is to prevent people from believing that cultivating a pattern of being is an end in and of itself. The purpose of a superior pattern of being is to create beauty in the physical world. To use our talents for the right purpose, and to be careful to not create a wake of harm as we move forward.

that this universe experienced a “start”. Since something exists (ex: the universe) we then look for a cause. This human reality creates a problem: how can the universe have a start, and at the same time be infinity old? This is logically impossible. Given that the start-vs-infinite makes the “cause” of the universe impossible to wrestle down, for the sake of simplicity, we can state: “the cause that gave rise to the universe is God”. Perhaps it is simply human limitation that forces us to attribute the universe as “created” as it could come to be without creation, through some phenomena foreign to the human experience. However, this human limitation of ‘cause and effect’, which creates a necessity for the concept of God does have issues. This perspective of making sense of the world, which attempts to simplify the origin of the universe as “created by God” leads to all kinds of extrapolations regarding God. While this perspective eliminates the need to ponder the source of the universe, it creates curiosity about God. Some humans are infinity curious, what can I say?

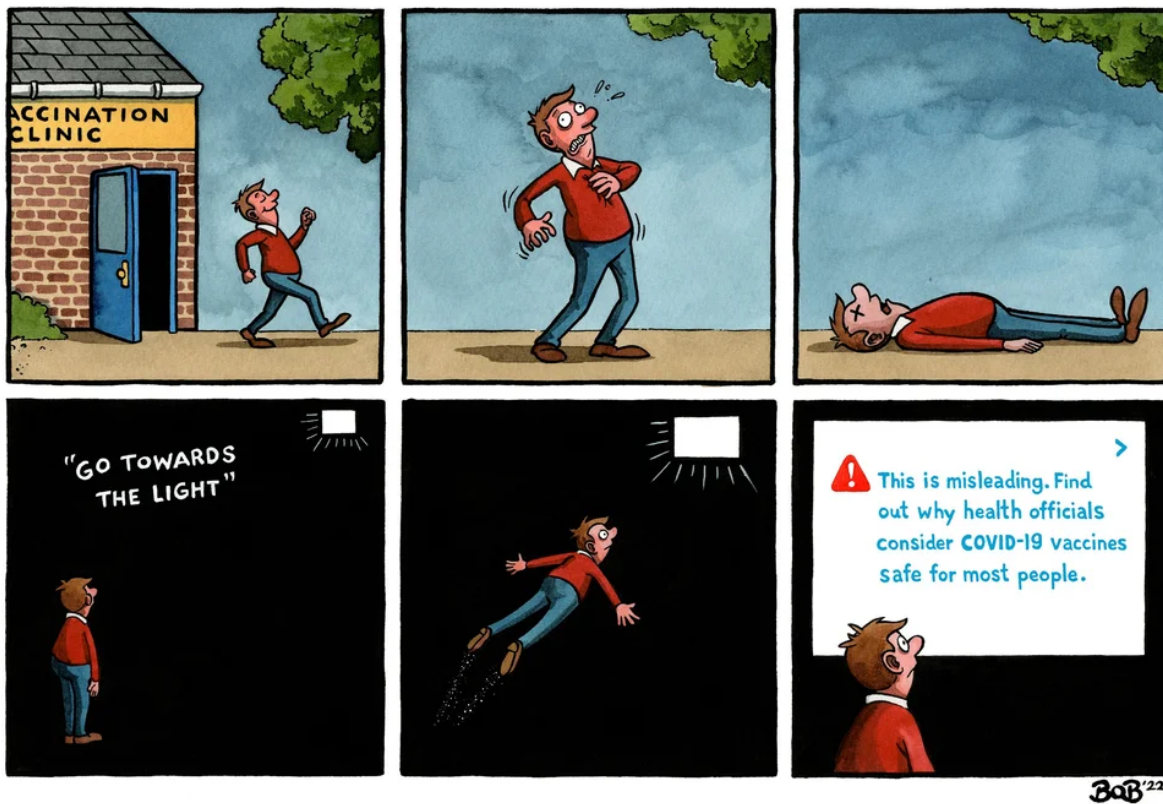
Long story short, the existence of the universe as mass, energy, and “rules”, given the human experience pushes us to ascribe the creation to the concept of God. Otherwise, it’s impossible to wrap our mind around the origin of the universe. It’s very easy, and very functional to say that God created the universe, or what is today considered “the simulation”, and that God is the origin of all the energy in the universe (including living things). It’s functional as a container for unsolvable complexity outside the capacity of the human mind.

2.3 Belief and Knowledge

Ricky Gervais lays down some solid thinking in an interview with Dawkins⁽²⁾. He brilliantly lays down the distinction between knowledge and belief. Atheists believe there is no God, and theists (the religious) believe there is a God. Each person is pushed into one group or the other based on what they believe. Both groups are in the realm of belief. Regardless of which group an individual belongs to, they do not know if their belief is correct or not. This is a very solid point. Knowledge of God, as a functional container incomprehensible ideas, as a concept, as an entity, as energy, is not something that we seem to be able to know at this point in humanity. We may believe one way or the other, but that is merely belief, not knowledge. Nobody knows if God exists or not, we merely believe. Something that muddies the water is near death experiences.

2.4 Near Death Experiences

Given that we cannot know about the existence of God, and are relegated to belief, near death experiences throw a spanner into our definitive clarity. Near Death Experiences (NDE) are a phenomenon when a person dies, and then comes back to life after having been dead for some time. This phenomenon is in the collective consciousness as we all seem to know that a sensation of floating and “going towards the light” means we died. How do we know that? From the testimony of those who have had a NDE. Here is a popular (177K Followers on X) cartoonist @bobscartoons leveraging this collective consciousness knowledge in a cartoon:



For what it's worth, I have viewed many NDE first hand account videos, and many appear to be genuine. Many online NDE videos share a person's experience to the best of their ability. Some, to me, appear like some sort of fraud where the person is seeking attention, or is selling something, or something else. Of course some of the NDE videos online do not pass the smell test. Yet not all NDEs are a hoax. Some of the NDE videos that I find credible and interesting, are listed below, and I would recommend you watch a few to help you understand the phenomenon:

- Surgeon Struck by Lightning: Discovers the God Energy⁽³⁾
- Brought Back To Life: Man Dies and Discovers We are All One⁽⁴⁾
- Teacher Drowns & Meets the creator of the Universe⁽⁵⁾
- Navy Diver Drowns and Meets his soul family⁽⁶⁾
- Fire Captain dies and sees the illusion of life ⁽⁷⁾
- Atheist dies & finds there is life after death⁽⁸⁾
- Woman Dies from Abusive Relationship: God shows her how to leave⁽⁹⁾

There are several issues which make NDEs a serious topic. One issue is when an NDE occurs, and the person who is out of body observes spaces which are corroborated by people who were in those spaces. For example, this phenomenon is described by the surgeon who was struck by lightning, and by the lady whose abusive husband injured her back. In both cases. Living humans corroborated the out of body experience, and confirmed that what was seen out of body was true. The second issue is the incredibly similar motifs of overwhelming love and re-integration into a collective of like "entities", and the total absence of secrets. So even though these stories are anecdotal, there seems to be more to our human life than what appears to our physical senses. Those who have died report a "post body" reality with divinity in the mix. Make of that what you will. I recommend watching the suggested videos to expand your information sources as you search for the truth. Based on those testimonials, it seems that the purpose of earth, if indeed it is a "simulation", is to learn to be more kind to yourself and others, to have trust, faith, forgiveness and love for yourself and others, all while remaining authentic.

2.5 What Cannot be Mapped to God – Extrapolation of No Malice

As a brief summary, we have the following: given that humans have a cause-effect perspective; and infinity as a concept is very hard for humans to contend with; God is an excellent conceptual stand-in for incomprehensible concepts (infinitely small, infinitely large, infinity old). No one knows if God exists or not, and all humans fit neatly into either (a) those who believe in the existence of God, and (b) those who believe God does not exist. NDEs as a phenomenon, suggest that perhaps there is life beyond the physical body. This is where we are now. It does not mean that up to now we are absolutely correct. Up to now we are simply laying out rational and logical thoughts with our ever persistent human constraints. Unfortunately, we are about to make an extrapolation, which is in the domain of assumption. Such is the nature of the topic.

From the perspective of this paper, there is no such thing as “God of War”, or “God of Hate”. It’s not a matter of monotheism or polytheism; whether there is one or many, it’s beyond us humans to grasp. The point is that if we attribute to the concept of God infinite power (from a human perspective); with such power, even a little bit of anger, or ill intent, and this whole universe comes apart (remember that infinity is “big”). For this reason, the concept of God can only have positive attributions, such as Kindness, Faith, Beauty, Forgiveness, Trust, and Love.

Let’s think of the concept of God as the highest, best standard that can be imagined. This is a very high level concept that lends itself to a moral guide, one that is essentially unattainable. For example, the most kind, the wisest, the most generous, the most creative, the most forgiving, and so on.

This extrapolation simply states that God is exclusively positive. Having said that, of course it is important to acknowledge that suffering, pain, and ugliness in this world exist, and it will be addressed shortly how those realities coexist with God.

2.6 On Beauty

God of course can be viewed from many different perspectives. So far we looked at God as a concept to simplify the incomprehensible, and as a wholly positive entity. Another way to view God is by looking at the concept of God through the lens of beauty. However, before we leverage beauty in the essay, there is some practical work that needs to happen regarding the concept of beauty. There are issues with beauty as it may be so subjective that it loses meaning; and it’s a high level concept (like justice) that requires some clarification. So, what is beautiful? Let’s start with constraining the concept of beauty. The first constraint is that beauty only applies to positive and creative outcomes. For example, if we are building a new house, the demolition of the old house cannot be beautiful. Only the new house or resulting landscape can be beautiful. Let’s see if we can squeeze this example further. During demolition, if we find a very efficient, low cost, quiet, low risk to people, fast, with optimal garbage staging, all while containing debris as a means of getting the demolition done, the construction manager would be right to say “beautiful”. Even though the process is destructive, creating a plan towards an optimal outcome where all involved parties benefit, and there are no parties that “lose”, it could be considered beautiful. Furthermore, since the demolition is a step towards a net positive to everyone involved (customer who wants house, construction workers, neighbors, etc...), and is on the trajectory to create something that anyone would want (a new house), a successful demo plan and it’s execution, could be beautiful. These examples flesh out the concept of beauty as positive, where beauty is a win-win situation, an outcome that is positive; no one is net losing. The concept of beauty as positive also implies all participants are there voluntarily. The second aspect of the concept of beauty implies experience and skill. The person who is evaluating something as beautiful needs to have enough experience and knowledge to appraise that which they are looking at.

For the most part the high level aspect of the concept of beauty is pretty simple as it is descriptive, and not prescriptive. Justice as a high level concept gets complex as it has to prescribe an outcome to parties that are in conflict in their desired outcome. Creating a prescription in a conflict where everyone is satisfied is a challenge. So, prescriptive high level concepts are a can of worms. However, a descriptive high level concept is much simpler, as we only need to constrain it's criteria. The main constraint is that the individual layers that give rise to something beautiful cannot be ugly. In our house building example, the land cannot be stolen, the technical structure cannot be rotten, and so on. Beauty cannot be constructed with ugly layers within itself that cannot be made right.

By our definition, beauty is something that is desirable and welcome. All those who comprehend the reality of that which is beautiful are happy to have it in their life, and/or wish it onto others as a means of well wishing. Beauty brings out a smile as you see it. With the concept of beauty well articulated, we can now leverage it in this essay, and say that God enables the creation of beauty.

Another view of God through the lens of beauty is that beauty is creative. If God is the energy found in all living things, then beauty, facilitates more living things.

Part 3 – On Atheism

3.1 Fundamental Atheism

Atheism is the belief that there is no such thing as God, or an afterlife. We are finite meat bags, that exist on a flying rock sphere, and when we die, there is no continuation. Post rigor mortis, the only thing that persists is our belongings, memories of us in the minds of other meat bags, and a handful of social media accounts. Atheism is the state of not believing in a God. It does not mean anything beyond that one and only belief.

3.2 Group Membership

Atheists are not a group which typically bands together around atheism. People who like to ride motorcycles band together, and ride motorcycles together. People who are culturally the same will band together at cultural events, such as Spaniards at running of the bulls. Atheists typically don't band together because what defines this group is not believing something. Atheist individuals will join groups that are more aligned with what they do believe rather than what they don't believe. For example, if you don't like sowing, but love shooting guns, you will likely join a gun club rather than an anti-sowing club. Being an atheist is not so core that people will band around it; especially in the west where atheism feels very common. In the west there have been several recent religious scandals (ex: catholic child abuse, Canadian residential schools), which contributes to the withdrawal from religion, and atheism is not something unusual. Generally speaking, being religious was never cool in the circles I interacted with throughout my life. Growing up I knew people that went to Church, and practically everyone celebrated religious holidays, but it was more cultural than religious. Most of the people I know that celebrate Christmas are about as religious as the tires on my car.

Since the atheist group on it's own isn't much of a cohesive group, and each atheist is very different, grouping of atheists doesn't have any interesting emergent properties. It can't be said of all atheists that they witnessed religious corruption which turned them off religion; or that they all think religious people are gullible, dumb, weak, or somehow inferior; or that science has replaced God in the heart of an atheist. Those are common atheist motifs, but cannot be pushed to all the individuals in the group.

A cohesive group with emergent behavior is the theist/religious folks. Let's consider them next.

Part 4 – On Religion

4.1 Defining Religion – Challenges, Assumptions, and Perspectives

Religions have been around for a few thousand years, across most (if not all) populated regions of earth. Pulling a thread through all of them under the banner of “religion” is not an easy task. An additional issue is that religions change with time. A religion with the same name, and the same holy scripture, can drastically vary through time. For example the Catholic church and its stance on gay marriage today, and 20 years ago is quite different. As the duration increases, say a few hundred years, Spanish Catholicism goes from burning people alive at the stake in public squares to, not doing that sort of thing. Beyond the differences attributed to geography, and time, the state of a society also plays a role in religion. All else being equal, if the world is collapsing due to political mismanagement bringing poverty, versus a wealthy and politically stable time, the religious doctrines from the same religion are going to vary (for example in their prescriptive morality). The stance of religious leaders will also vary under conditions of extreme suffering, such as foreign invasions, conquests, and wars relative to peaceful times. Given the reality that religions exist practically everywhere through time and geography, and through both good and horrible times, how can we start to wrestle down that which is common to all religions across incredible spans of time and circumstances? The first step is to provide some constraints via assumptions.

In the journey of defining religion, the following assumption are taken by this work:

- Religion is a team sport – Religion is not an individual activity, rather it is a social activity. For example, the pattern of being that creates beauty on an individual level is not religion; but the sharing of information to attain that pattern of being with others would qualify as a mandatory dimension to a religion.
- God’s Love for Humans – All people are equally close to God; meaning God loves every person on this planet regardless of their religion, their inbuilt differences, the mistakes they made, and so on. The choice to increase the distance from God is on each individual person to make as an expression of free will. More on this later on. For now, let’s make it explicit that there are no favorite people in the eyes of God. We are all loved equally by God, regardless of what has been suggested by any religious leader.
- Past Adherents vs. Modern Adherents – Modern humans have a responsibility to meet a higher standards in term of morality relative to past humans. Modern humans have more experiences on the historical record to better understand the lessons within existing holy scripture as put forth by the original teachers; the very people who tapped into divine patterns of being around whom the scriptures exist. The modern human is privy to knowledge about first encounters between civilizations, video and images of the realities of war, awareness of divine patterns of being, and the understanding that we are all the same due to high volume transportation resulting in interactions that are not under states of fear and duress. The volume of information available to the modern human places us at a significant information advantage relative to past humans. There is significantly less confusion today due to the modern state of the historical record and technology, and for this reason this paper is forward looking. This paper is not interested in adjudicating any past events. This paper is forward looking in its scope, and is not at all interested in creating backwards compatible concepts.

4.2 What is a Religion?

A high level conceptual view of religion is the cultivation of a pattern of being that is in alignment with the concept of God (as defined by this work). As already established, God is exclusively positive; and God’s love is equal towards each person; then we can say that spreading the pattern of being which is generating an alignment with God (ex: actions that elevate all humans) is the purpose of religion. In essence, a religion is the propagation of information about how to improve your patterns of being; or in

other words, to modify cognitive structures to allow adherents to move towards fully realizing their potential for creating beauty. A religion will have the following aspects:

1. An understanding of divinity – which would be an interpretation of God/Divinity, supernatural assistants (ex: angels), supernatural systems (ex: karma), and defining a connection between humans and God. One example of a connection between humans and God would be that the human soul (that which persists after bodily death – as described by people with NDEs) is a tiny part of god that we custody throughout our life. An important aspect of religion is an interpretation of figures and systems of divinity, and their relationship to humans. It is the explicit assumption of this work that the divine, is absolutely and wholly positive.
2. Human superstars – which are those people who have set incredibly high standards through incredible patterns of being and the actions those patterns generate. Let's consider original and phenomenal religious leaders such as Christ, or Krishna, or Muhammad, or Guru Nanak, who in essence are humans who have attained a pattern of being that was regionally the first of its kind; regardless if they are viewed as enlightened humans or divine incarnations. They transcended the typical patterns and arrived at something novel and exceptional. In my limited understanding it would be at the bare minimum the total elimination of all fear, with the abundant and persistent presence of forgiveness, compassion, faith, trust, and love for both themselves and everyone else. The superstars are necessary because they are the harbinger of what is possible for a human to become. Merely by existing and interacting with others as an elevated pattern of being they elevate all people. By demonstrating the novel pattern of being, it is added to the human record of what is possible as a new high watermark to emulate. The greats that taught others, tried to impart their pattern of being as a means to enable others to ascend. I suspect that the teaching part was harder than the discovery of the pattern within themselves. These superstars with elevated patterns of being are a core pillar of religion.
3. Stories – regardless if the stories are written or verbal (or both), stories are the medium of human information transfer. The stories are a guide using drama to help us cultivate novel patterns of being, or to improve all our existing patterns of being. It is inevitable that the stories are going to have geographical and cultural elements as part of their drama. Stories are going to attempt to capture what the greats taught which would be morality, and a world view that is brought to us in its most unchanged (original) version. “Unchanged” is key as we can weave anything intellectually via interpretation and substitution, and totally end up with something that the original greats didn't teach. When the pattern/essence of the teacher who is recognized as exceptional is made to persist (verbal and/or text), it becomes a guide for the religious adherents (humans seeking the way of beauty). The stories are a pathway towards an improvement of all the existing patterns of being of the adherents. The stories are an attempt to pass the information of how to cultivate, and move towards an exceptional overall pattern of being to other people. It's important to note that every story is likely to have a super tiny deviation from an ideal alignment with God, which is resolved via averaging and volume. Each story misses the mark a bit. But they all point to the same direction, each slightly off. The stories are an attempt to chart a course to enable adherents to tap into a superior pattern of being. These stories are the main body of knowledge of the religion.
4. Some medium of sharing the Information – which to date has been other humans that through conversation attempt to impart information. By passing along stories, and the teachings as information, the purpose is to facilitate the motion of the adherents towards an elevated pattern of being. In this domain, there are professionals such as rabbis, imams, pastors, and so on. There are also non-professionals, who are adherents that are not in a leadership role with an

elevated understanding in some aspect. Remember, religion is a social activity, not an individual activity.

In a nutshell a religion is the transfer of information between people with the goal of creating beauty through the evolution of the internal state of the adherents. Ultimately the goal of religion is to create a process of enabling adherents to manifest the beauty that can be created by them. Religion is the guide to improve the current state of the adherent through an elevated pattern of being. Ideally, the final destination would be to give rise to the best possible action by allowing adherents to enter a mode of being that ranges from satisfying to rapture. From a different perspective, the purpose of religion is to facilitate people taking good action on their own, without any prescription on what actual action to take. The purpose of religion is for the individual to discard the need for religious leaders, and to exist in a state of satisfaction on earth. Religion's purpose is to eliminate the destruction of beauty. Religion's purpose is to enable adherents to be in an alignment with the concept of a wholly positive God.

It's a body of knowledge that is voluminous, that spends a lot of effort to describe something indescribable. Religion attempts to teach a pattern of being to people who have never experienced the pattern, and do not comprehend the joys of attainment of the pattern. It's an errand that is literally impossible. In practical terms it shows what is possible, and leaves adherents to chase that possibility with a highly imperfect zigzagging map. The most likely outcome of religion is the improvement of the existing patterns of being in the adherents to be more aligned with the reality that we are all one, and we are all connected through God.

Religion is a fine dance of enabling adherents to live a whole and full life. One of beauty, joy and creation of what they want to see. A life that brings forth the best version of themselves.

Perhaps the best way to achieving the elevated pattern of being is through being very self aware, and interacting maximally with the world in an attempt to create beauty. I suspect that was the path of many of the greats.

Those who yearn will attain.

4.3 What is Not a Religion?

Religion is a means of conveying information to adherents to enable them to improve all their current patterns of being, and to ultimately facilitate cultivating a pattern of being that is in alignment with a wholly positive God. By having a superior pattern of being, action, which is the outcome, is going to generate better outcomes for others, as well as the individual. To better understand religion, and to validate this work's understanding, let's investigate the flip side of what religion is not. By looking at what religion is not, we can tighten up our comprehension about religion. So, what is not religion?

Religion has an embedded understanding about the relationship between humans and Divinity. A body of information with prescription on how to live life "the right way" without any connection to divinity would be a branch of philosophy or self-help literature. If the subject matter is in the domain of the interpersonal but exclusive of any divinity, it is not a religion. The concept of as an exclusively good divinity is the guiding north star of religion.

Functionally speaking, religion aims to enable adherents to improve all their patterns of being across the board to be more aligned with the concept of God. From a functional perspective, information which undermines that core mandate would be seen as the opposite of religion, and therefore not religion. For example, the church of Satan worships personal power, status, and material wealth as a

means to serve yourself. Such a pattern allows to look at people as ripe for exploitation, which would be against the concept of God; as God loves every human. Such a profound misalignment would render the church of Satan as not a religion. Since slopes get very slippery, any body of information short of viewing every human as very valuable, and connected via divine systems cannot be religion, as it would functionally oppose the concept of God. If the superstars, and or stories, and or the clergy teach a lack of respect towards the people alive on this earth now, and in the future, it cannot be a religion. However, there is more to be said about the corruption of religion, and will be covered shortly.

We can further extrapolate that any human system that doesn't aim to empower individuals, and make them strong, cannot be considered a religion. This creates a large pool of phenomena that includes:

- Systems that encourage outsourcing of thinking from individuals to some other entity such as a spokesperson, expert, administrator or anything along those lines.
- Any system of information delivery that creates "useful idiots", where the interpretation of the world are such that people are funneled into predictable action.

However this opens a problem. Is religion an attempt at empowering people, or is it a system that successfully empowers people? It seems that once the four criteria of religion are met (Divinity, superstars, stories, and information sharing), then we have a religion. Yet how well the religion achieves it's goals of empowering the adherents, is the domain of responsibility of the professional administration of the religion. If they themselves shine bright and can show the way for others and are effective, that is great. If they are dull and unaccomplished, then the effects are lost, and likely the attempts at the goal are less than ideal. Both are religions, and the administration that drinks it's own cool-aid would likely have better results.

4.4 Religion and Corruption

Having looked at what religion is not, it is import to realize that where we have people, there is a potential for corruption. Since religions have humans at the core (it's a team sport), we must consider religious corruption. Many people think of corruption as a grand problem in the upper layers of human society. If you look up the definition of corruption, right away corruption is presented as the abuse of entrusted power for private gain by executives, politicians, and other high status positions. This definition, onto which all major online sources converge seems like an inappropriate connection between the concept itself and one of it's narrow applications. Corruption is a deviation from a known state or process, which most of the time generates spoiled, broken, or damaging outcomes. This high level definition of corruption indeed applies to politics and governance, but it also extends to computer science (ex: corrupted memory), biology/oncology (corrupted communication between cells), law (corrupt interpretation of legislation), and more. There is no shortage of disciplines where a slight deviation from a known state or process can result in very unwelcome outcomes.

One source of corruption occurs when a clergy leader does not draw inspiration from, or is not aligned with a divine pattern of being. What you get in such an instance is the wrong pattern of being imparted onto the adherents. In the instance where the fault lies in a lack of experience, or ignorance, this type of corruption is both inappropriate and innocent. How can one human know everything regarding a highly complex body of knowledge? This type of corruption is not malicious, and is a simple fact of life.

A second source of corruption is when the teachings of the religion are in conflict with the interests of the individual responsible for delivering the religious information. Some foundational realities present themselves. One option is when the individual responsible for delivering the religious information begins putting forward a position or idea or information which benefits the them, but is not in an ideal alignment with the holy scripture. Another option is when some communal desire is against the teachings of the religion and will occur regardless of the religious information delivered. In this case the individual responsible for deliver religious information has to decide to deliver the original

religious information and be honest and unpopular, or be corrupt to garner societal popularity? These issues which incentivize corruption exist across all religions, and are part of the profession of religion. When the clergy leader must choose between status, resources, or benefits and imparting the absolute best information that they can share that presents an unwelcome conflict inviting corruption to manifest. These conflicts which are unpleasantly common, exist across all religions; it is inevitable that there will be a conflict between religion in its highest fidelity form with the people who deliver the information.

Even when the religious leader has the best intentions, such as love for their entire group, and is refusing status, there can be issues. For example, imagine a religious leader wants to see development of some financial sector that is currently depressed due to political fashions. On the level of the individual, it is easy to conflate their desire to help people through the benefits of economic development with helping people through religious teachings of doing the right thing. If the religious leader makes the economic advocacy into a religious topic we get unintentional corruption. In such an instance we have a religious leader becoming a political advocate without delineating the two roles; in such an instance we get a religious expert that is using religion as a means to a political end, which is corruption of religion. It is corruption because a genuinely religious leader can usually take the position of any reasonable political side; it is merely a matter of implementation that gets difficult. A second less nuanced example could be a pope who is being improvised by the proliferation of some other geographically close religion, who then declares the other religion to be blasphemy. When religion and politics mix, it's always fertile ground for corruption, it begs for religious experts to overstep their expertise and corrupt the religion. It is beyond the scope of religion to take political or technological sides. Religion cannot adjudicate the conflict of what is better: electric vehicles or the competing gasoline vehicles. Any religion that claims that it can, has been corrupted.

A third source of corruption is the basic human trait to arrange into groups, which very often results in group competition. There is nothing wrong with competition as a concept. However, it's important to recognize that competition can be really great, and really ugly. If two religions in geographic proximity attempt to compete on which group can be more creative and generous, that is super great. Unfortunately, history shows that when there are groups that compete, competition can degrade into everything that religion is opposed to. This is the third source of religious corruption; where religion creates a group, and having a strong group is a pathway towards towards group competition, and resulting outcomes that are the opposite to what religion teaches. We can observe this phenomenon in modern times. Specifically, the Jordan Peterson and Sam Harris "debates"⁽¹⁰⁾ showcase this phenomenon. In the debates you can observe a crowd from mostly religious people and atheists. When Peterson lands a religious intellectual blow, the religious part of the audience cheers, and when Harris provides a strong atheist point, the atheist members cheer. What you can observe if you watch the videos, is that people have a tendency to band into group. Think about it, a religious person celebrating when an atheist is handed an intellectual blow, is the celebration of superiority, which is not what the religious superstars would do (ex: Christ). What you can observe is the competition of groups, where the aim seems to be "I am better than you". History has shown that to have group leaders that provide the intellectual firepower to view the in-group as "better", it leads the group to all kinds of places, that are counter to religious thinking. This is not in line with the teachings of religion, which is corruption, which can lead to scary times.

A fourth source of corruption is intellectual corruption. This is when the clergy leader or leadership is willfully misaligned with the divine pattern of being. Given a clever religious leader, it becomes incredibly difficult to catch through intellectual means. This type of corruption is often felt as somehow 'not right'. This means that nailing an intellectually corrupt religious leader, and catching them red handed is practically impossible. It is critically important to remember that passing along information is the task of the clergy. In practically all instances the clergy is a specialist in the stories and their

interpretation. Given that each story has an incredible amount of lessons within it, the direction of the lessons, their interweaving, and the emergent morality that is the foundation for action is in the hands of the clergy. The human mass that is being shepherded by the clergy is trusting, and under the guidance of the clergy. The human mass guided by the clergy is not in a position to really push back if the clergy is knowledgeable and clever. The established trust between the human mass, and the clergy, along with the status of the clergy gives the clergy a communal leadership role. So if the lessons the clergy chooses to impart make a direction of action obvious, no one can really push back against the selection of the lessons and their interplay. It can always be put forward as simply a quality stringing of lessons that generate a practical and useful guide. Even if the cherry picking of the lessons and their outcome was due to corruption relative to high fidelity teachings by the religion. A slight, and nuanced twist on a story is intellectual corruption, and one that is impossible to portray objectively as a corrupted clergy leader.

Religious corruption can lead to ugly places. One such story is when Francisco Pizarro with his 168 men met the leader of Inca Empire in 1532. The group was accompanied by a religious figure named Vincente de Valverde (a friar). The friar gave the Inca emperor Atahualpa a bible and demanded submission to the Spanish Crown and Catholic church. When the emperor threw down the book, the friar's response was supportive of aggression, which incentivized the military command with 168 men with horses, metal swords and military training to attack and slaughter more than 2000 Inca. An incredible military victory, but an incredible failure of religion. Perhaps there was excessive fear, that triggered a "fight or flight" response from the Spaniards, or, maybe the perception of reward was genuinely grand. Regardless of the reasoning for the action, judging those men is outside the considerations of this work. However, we can assess this historical record to illustrate the optics of potential corruption:

- Optimal alignment with the religion - We can also infer something about the spiritual state of the friar, by asking: if the friar in the story was replaced by Jesus Christ, would the interaction be the same?
- Self interest conflict with religion – if the friar was part of establishing a Spanish colony, then surely there would be reward. Did this potential reward play a role in the friars view of other people as per the teaching of Christ?
- In-group interest conflict with religion – Spain at large would likely benefit from a colony, and the interests of the in-group might have overwhelmed the religious teachings of Christ that the Inca were to be respected as people.
- No hard evidence of corruption – The friar being on the side of the strong group, and putting forth that they are in the graces of god and are doing the right thing, did not raise any eyebrows on the religious front.

The point of this brief and shallow analysis is not to throw shade on people from 500 years ago. It is simply an example which has the optics of all the conflicts and challenges that lead to corruption. Having these events on the historical record requires modern people to extract appropriate lessons, and to meet a higher standard for patterns of being that are communicated through religion.

It is interesting to note that the problem with religion, is the humans. The same problem faced by science, technology, Law and every other powerful body of knowledge, process and systems that generate tangible outcomes. It is within every human to utilize information, cultivate a pattern of being, and while existing in the physical world, achieve their needs and wants. Yes, religion facilitates the creation of beauty; yet, it can be perverted to create ugliness to serve an individual rather than everyone. Religious corruption is in effect a misalignment between the divine pattern of being, and the pattern of being of the leadership. Human failure, and shortcomings are a reality we must all contend with; starting with ourselves.

4.5 What is a Religious Person?

So far this essay considered religion, and what religion is not. We now know that religion is a vehicle with specific criteria that has the function of delivering very specific information to a group of people. Which people? The adherents of the religion. The adherents of the religion are religious people. Religious people are a group of religious individuals. Which then brings about the question: what is a religious person?

If we allow authority and experience to guide us, the Supreme Court of Canada has guidance for us. In a landmark decision called *Syndicat Northcrest v. Amselem* the court had to figure out the legal threshold for when religious protections as outlined in the Canadian Charter apply to an individual. As part of the threshold discovery, the court had to articulate what criteria a person has to meet in order to be considered religious. Being religious or not was an important step when moving through the process of seeking court action regarding freedom of religion as defined in the Canadian Charter. The highest court in the land states the following⁽¹¹⁾: "... In essence, religion is about freely and deeply held personal convictions or beliefs connected to an individual's spiritual faith and integrally linked to one's self-definition and spiritual fulfillment, the practices of which allow individuals to foster a connection with the divine or with the subject or object of that spiritual faith."

Looking over that decision for the first time in 5 years, I am stuck with how accurate it is. The Supreme Court of Canada really does have moments of brilliant clarity and wisdom. The only issue with the definition from my perspective is that even though it's spot on, there needs to be significant delineation of the various concepts that are currently merged into a singularity. The court's answer to "what is a religious person?" is a bit unwieldy. Can we use our understanding of religion to answer the question such that each concept is more "stand alone"? Let's try.

To be a religious person it means to consider the information delivered by religion, as understood by the individual, to integrate those lessons, standards, and duties across all patterns of being, and to attempt to carry out action that is in alignment with the religious information as understood by the adherent. If we were to be less precise, we could simply say that to be a religious person is to take in the information of religion, and utilize it to try to keep action in alignment with the concept of God. A religious person is someone who takes religious information, and attempts to incorporate it into their system of thinking. The whole point of religion is to provide people who choose to improve themselves various food for thought as a means of cultivating an internal state that is superior to their existing state; where superior means aligned with the concept of God. The journey of evolution towards an improved state is complex. However, as we trend towards the optimal state we experience less pain, and more beauty. What changes to a large extent is ourselves, and as we act on the world itself, our actions have an effect on the world.

A religious person working to be in alignment with the concept of God, results in selective integration of religious information into existing patterns of being; or seen another way, the internal work updates their model of the world, goals, and values. So long as the person believes in God, and repeats this pattern of consideration and integration, they are religious. The number of cycles is not relevant so long as the adherent has done it at least once, and continues to believe in God. Essentially a religious person believes in God, and has used, or is using religious information to modify their patterns of being and the resulting actions with their concept of God. Ideally it is an iterative loop of self reflection and alignment with God. Jordan Peterson for the longest time wouldn't answer if he was religious or not; I believe his position was that it is a "showoff stance" to associate yourself with the highest standard – that of the concept of God. I would contend that an attempt to align yourself with the highest standard has absolutely no bearing on how good the implementation happens to be. The path from snapping into belief in God to being a saint is not an event like turning on electrical lights with a switch. Chill bro,

it's a long journey, not a destination. I might have to rescue him from a whale one day. Why did my nose grow right now?

Now that we understand the criteria that defines a religious person, what has no bearing on a person being religious or not? First off, it's not a standard of behavior. Anyone observing an asshole in broad daylight is not guaranteed to be witnessing an atheist. Statements such as "I never bang prostitutes... I'm religious!" are absurd because being religious does not mean that you have self mastery and a perfect comprehension of the world. Being religious has nothing to do with elevated moral action. It is normal to have religious people fall short of the mark. Second, social gatherings around religion does not have any bearing on a person being religious or not. Going to a house of religion (ex: temple) does not make a visitor religious or not. Sam Harris visiting a church is not going to convert Sam. Visiting places of religious significance does not make a person religious or not. Richard Dawkins visiting Jerusalem or Mecca is not going to have an impact on his religious beliefs. Engaging with religion intellectually does not have any bearing on a person being religious or not.

It is interesting to note that religion, unlike atheism, has a binding capacity to unite groups of people. People that are religious are way more likely to get together around the axis of religion. In a way this is a part of religion, because, how else would the information be shared efficiently if it wasn't a person talking to a group? Having said that, social gatherings that are religious do not have any bearing on determining if a person in attendance is religious or not. What does have a bearing, is if the person believes in God, and is thinking about how to be aligned with God using their own mind. So long as the belief in God persists, and the person is attempting to be in alignment with God, through reflection and updating their pattern of being, then that is the only criteria of relevance in determining if a person is religious or not.

4.6 Religion & Volition

Next, it is important to briefly consider an implicit aspect of a religious person. Specifically, the individual's belief in God, and internal work regarding alignment with God is an exclusively voluntary act, as in, it cannot be forced. Any attempts to force a person to be a religious person, would simply result in theater; where people act and pretend to be religious, but are not. Even attempts to deduce if a person is religious or not, are impossible. How could anyone really deduce if a person is genuinely holding a belief or are simply pretending? Any religious person harbors belief and performs internal work on their own volition.

4.7 Religion vs. Connection With God

If we consider the people who are inside of a place of worship, listening to the delivery of information from the religious leader, we can arrive at some conclusions. One is that there are going to be some people in the structure that believe in God. Second, there will also be people there who do not believe in God. Religion at it's core is information delivery, but the reality is that religion very quickly becomes a social and cultural system of people coming together. An important moment to consider is that there are people who believe in God that are not inside the place of worship, and do not go to places of worship. These people are the topic of this section.

It is important to delineate a belief in God from religion. A belief in God is something that some humans come to based on their experience and time on earth. They understand the central themes of religion, which then resonate based on a foundation of belief. A person who has a connection with God doesn't necessarily merge into an established religion. The information delivered by religion is not the only way to connect with God. One approach is to try to interact with the beauty in the world, and to create wealth that is beneficial to everyone. Being independent of religion does not prohibit always

being authentic while attempting to be kind, trusting and faithful, forgiving and loving to yourself and others.

Simply by existing in the world, we have an opportunity to touch the world. As we touch the world, the world touches us. When we take action, we learn about the world as it rarely is how we think it is, and our internal understanding of the world changes. The chaining of these lessons coupled with reflection, allows life experience to emerge. The greater the life experience the better. Where greater is more variety (both good and bad), and more novel experiences (not the same ones over and over). A rich life experience makes certain things much brighter and more obvious to see. It helps better understand the information delivered by religion when such information is encountered. An alignment with God becomes somehow easier with life experience. Rather than being involved in religion, trying to create beauty in the world is another parallel stream to allow a connection with God to flourish. Dare I say, it might be superior?

A belief in God is independent from religion as it's a belief that is private and internal. A belief which likely has enough life experience to fuel itself. It is interesting to note that those who believe in God, and visit differing religions can always see the beauty and some amount of God in the information delivered. Creating beauty in the world is something wonderful that also functionally facilitates an alignment with God.

4.8 Religion & Science

Religion and science are often conflated. Many people, especially atheists, believe that science and religion offer information in the same domain. In a way this is a valid perspective, one I used to hold myself. However, if we consider both closely, there is a huge difference between religion and science. Religion provides information regarding how to establish a pattern of being which improves a person's alignment with God; and science is both the body of knowledge that we now know about the physical world, and the process of how to go about adding to that body of knowledge. Science creates a boundary around what we know for sure, and does not allow inside that boundary anything that is not absolutely certain to be correct. The knowledge inside the boundary that we know for sure, is exclusively about the physical world. How the heart works, the structure of DNA, the distance to the sun at any given time, and on and on. The limitation of science is that it cannot advise us in terms of how we should treat a person from whom we need nothing, who we will never see again, who might need our help. Science can tell us about the chemicals the brain will release if we help, and how that may affect our mood. But at no time, can it suggest the "right" course of action. Religion on the other hand, is a totally different animal. Unlike science there is no formal process to arrive at a known destination. All the religions are basically spit-balling into the dark about what people feel. The grouping is tight, that's for sure, but it's still all feel, and nothing objective. Where science is definitive and certain on each and every component, religions can only be seen as a whole. There is no single item in religion that can be pulled out of the whole corpus, that stands on its own. Science is a group of facts, where religion is a guide averaged from generations of humans from various regions. Since the themes from the various regions converge, it seems that there is something to the religious bodies of information. Science and religion are complimentary; religion suggest the way forward, and science provides the know-how on getting results. Both religion and science are meant to create beauty. Both can be made ugly. If religion is not corrupted, and the adherents foster a connection to God, the union of science and religion is going to be beauty and wealth.

As a side note, it is very important to not combine religion and science. Science must be allowed to discover the truth, without being cramped by religion. Any smart-ass tactics like tracing the lineage of religious figures to acquire the age of earth is profoundly unwise. Any attempts for a religion to absorb science are a horrible idea; and vice versa. The wonderful reason why science works is that there is

structure and order to the universe. These rules of the universe in the physical domain are consistent, and their discovery for the purpose of technology should not ever be constrained in the manner experienced by Galileo Galilei. Religion is religion, and science is science. One is a vehicle to understand the rules of the cosmos and the other is a guide how to utilize the emergent technology for humanity as a whole. It would be wise to let each flourish, and intertwine as needed to achieve beauty.

The delineation between science and religion is something I now deeply understand and fleshed it out in this section for the sake of completeness on religion. However, this idea is not my own, and was introduced to me thorough Jordan Peterson's Maps of Meaning UofT course on YouTube⁽¹²⁾.

4.9 Perspectives on Religion

Throughout the journey of this section where we are unpacking religion, there has been an attempt to define and build an understanding of religion. Truth, a subject matter explored in a previous work⁽¹³⁾, is by definition, a model of reality built using facts that is never invalidated by objective future exploration of reality. So what is the truth about religion? Is the perspective of this essay the correct one, or is some other perspective superior, and more true? Let's consider other perspectives on religion and see how they compare as a means of trying to understand religion.

Stupid fairytales – I'll never forget a time in middle school (grade 7 I think), where the teacher raised the concept of religion, and one of the kids said out loud "it's just a bunch of stupid fairytales". Such a perspective is valid. The encoding of religious information within stories does have elements that we are no longer witnessing today. How can it be that some of the supernatural aspects found in religious scripts are not happening today? Also, the stories seem unrealistic by today's understanding. One might say that fairytales are fiction, which would be technically correct. If we then consider one of the main purposes of fiction, then we could say that fiction is the lie that shows the truth. By embellishing and inventing events and characters, it is possible to better emphasize the lesson/lessons or information. We also have to consider that religion is the transfer of information. For this reason we should expect that religious stories are likely incorporating elements of fiction that are meant to facilitate various lessons. As for the elements of the supernatural we cannot ever know if they are true or not. However, looking at holy scripture as "stupid fairytales" is unwise because each story contains embedded information, that when taken in aggregate provides incredible guidance. Where guidance is a part of the human journey that is very hard to figure out. Stories can be taken as both simplistic, and complicated. It's akin to a dual purpose movie which caters to both children, but is sprinkled with adult humor for the adults. The stories in the holy scriptures have the same duality. The dramas are "simple", but the lessons have profound repercussions when ignored. If the lessons are ignored, then issues abound. So, based on the important role of guidance through the embedded lessons, we cannot accept the premise of "stupid fairytales" as a comprehensive perspective. The depth of the works is not accidental, and for this reason, the view of the works as insignificant is an incomplete perspective. The fact that supernatural things that happen in the holy scriptures are not found on social media today, has nothing to do with the element of guidance embedded in the works. While "stupid fairytales" is a valid perspective it overlooks a huge part of the corpus – the guidance aspect of it; which is not at all superficial or simplistic. For this reason it cannot be said that this perspective is complete in it's description of religion.

Societal Control – Another perspective of religion is the ability to leverage control over the population to elicit behavior desired by the political rulers. Such a perspective seems valid, and can be observed throughout history. By the time religion is firmly established in some locale, the religious administration must be well organized. There has to be consensus among the religious leaders as to the teachings, how to interpret current events that are of interest to the adherents, and more. The alignment of religious leadership in a given locale is going to either be hierarchical (ex: Roman Catholicism

where the pope is like the CEO), or distributed and decentralized (ex: Sunni Islam with local autonomy, consensus and no formal clergy). Given a large enough population, some sort of a religious leadership formation is going to appear. In locales where the political leadership can establish a consensus with the religious leadership, then surely governance of the hoi polloi will be easier. However, in such a system where there is an honest alignment between religion and political leadership, there are no issues, as there is no corruption of religion. In such a circumstance, when the teachings religion are aligned with the leadership and society, that would be the tide that lifts all boats. Societal alignment with morals, ethics, forgiveness, community, productivity and wealth from the political leadership is not exactly bad. Of course the empowerment of the population by an alignment between religious and political leaders is rarely what is meant by those who say “religion is used to control the population”. What is meant by that perspective is that the religious leadership has been corrupted by power, and is working with the political leadership to achieve benefits for the leadership at the cost of the people. It is alleged that the aims are primarily beneficial to the religious leadership and political leadership, but not the general population as a whole. Essentially, a political and religious merger provide “spiritual cover” for actions that are counter to the teachings of the religion. Let’s deal with this perspective. First of all let’s be honest, yes, that does happen. The corruption of religion is something that we have to contend with in the world. Religion, which could become very influential, will attract individuals who thirst for power at any cost. This is a fact of life. Those who thirst for power will likely find avenues to grab power, rather than to generate a novel system from inception. As a result, religion, which can become a tremendous source of power, attracts such people. The same is true for many, many other fields that wield power (ex: police officers). It’s just another human reality. Having said all of this, if the religious leadership is not corrupt, and is aligned with political leadership, there is nothing wrong with that. Even if such a state of alignment likely leads to bad incentives, there is nothing bad about it. The issue is when the religious leadership is indeed corrupt. However, at that time the criticism of “religion is a system of control” is not correct, as what is in control is a corrupt person, not religion. It is a corrupt person wielding something powerful, and abusing it. A knife can make dinner or kill a person; the knife is not good or bad in either circumstance. It is a tool. When religion is being used by a corrupt person for societal control, it is not an issue with religion, but rather with human corruption. For this reason, on careful consideration and delineation, we can say that religion aligned with political rule is either not bad (no corruption); or, if the religious leadership is corrupt, then it’s not anything to do with the religion, but the leadership. Once the concepts surrounding this perspective are delineated, it seems that this “religion as a means to govern” perspective falls apart from an intellectual standpoint. History also has a track record that frequently shows that when governments get oppressive, religious people are the first to encounter ‘unpleasantness’. When governments crush individual empowerment, freedom from government, and human flourishing, honest religious leaders quickly find themselves in the cross-hairs. Furthermore, it should be noted that in all corrupt governments (ex: dictatorships) you will find either a corrupt religious leader, or religion is banned. Religion as a source of control is either not religion, or if it is a religion with corrupt leadership the perspective falls apart. For this reason, this perspective is appears to be not correct.

Commune of the Weak – I apologize up front to any readers that this is going to offend, and in all honesty it is pretty offensive. However, there are no perspectives that are off the table in terms of analysis or discussion. Otherwise mere offense can shut down pursuit of comprehension, exploration of ideas, and ultimately bridges between people. Furthermore, perspectives cannot be watered down to make something ugly, less hideous to make the analysis of it more civil. Let’s look at the very soul and heart of any idea, concept, thought or belief. Here goes. There is a perspective of places of worship being filled with weak people. Elderly, overweight, unattractive women, handicapped, and people with deformities are the norm. When a regular house of worship service is unfolding it does not look like a pool of Miss America contestants on one side of the aisle, and deployed soldiers wearing suits on the other. Obviously the core strength of humans is intelligence, and cooperation. Yet attractive young ladies, and fit strong young men are biologically optimal specimen – which is not what places of

worship look like on a regular service. Forget about a high status religious wedding where the men are doing well, and the ladies are pretty. I'm talking about the regulars. This perspective is not wrong. Let's explore the perspective a little bit. When people are emerging from childhood, it is important to understand that they are typically flying high. Everything in their wake has been mastered. People exiting their late teens, essentially childhood, are generally not confused about what needs to happen next. The next steps are obvious for most of the cohort. Economic security, and finding a partner are a no brainer. These realities keep young people busy. Mastering a craft, and settling down with a partner are very necessary upon exists from childhood. An important consideration regarding childhood is that there is ample direction. In school, in athletics, all over, typically the direction is abundant; along with the abundant work of learning the basics. Once childhood is exited, and a profession is mastered along with family creation, direction falls of the map. Should the focus be on the previous generation turning elderly, the next generation, pleasure, more work, community, mentorship, hobbies, or something else? The evaporation of direction is not a trivial problem as there is both pleasure and problems in every single option. Another consideration is that by the time people get into a comfortable rhythm, life usually rocks them hard. If not in our teens or 20's, in our 30s and 40s for sure. Right when we are responsible and all is going well, we get handed a crisis that knocks us on our butts. These two common realities combine and culminate in seeking direction. Which is something that the information in religion is providing. These realities explain why places of worship are commonly not brimming with the young. If we consider the perspective one more time as a "commune of the weak", so far it has been equated with a commune of the old/frail/ugly/unfit. Such a perspective, by it's very nature is a perspective of young people. Since youth is commonly strong/handsome/fit, the pointing to others as a "commune of the weak" is a byproduct of youth. So, this youthful perspective that is typically outgrown, can be grouped into one of two takes. First, this perspective morphs to a "commune of the not young". Second this perspective can morph into a commune of individuals that are weak, and band together for strength. Let's consider each one.

The "commune of the not young", is simply an immature view. Such a view is simply an observation of people with experience that require direction. They have done everything that they needed to do, and are now in the market for guidance. The question of "now what?" can hound the soul. As already discussed, this is something youth hasn't matured to, as they move through a deterministic path, one order of consequence after other. So, "commune of the weak" is actually "commune of the experienced" or "commune of those seeking direction". If we argue that seeking direction is weakness, then we simply say all humans have periods of weakness. So when youth point out weakness, they are pointing to their own future. Which then tells us that that is simply the human journey. In reality, it is wise to think carefully about what to do. Once people are aware that action almost always has second and third and fourth order consequences, it's important to tread with respect. So for this reason carefully considering direction is not a bug, it is a feature of experience. Therefore, this perspective of "commune of the weak" that morphs into "commune of the not young" as a weakness is actually careful conduct through life; which is not a weakness. It is simply that youth does not yet comprehend what only experience can teach.

The other possible take on "commune of the weak" is that life was more than you could handle. You couldn't get through on your own, and "needing help" is a weakness. That wouldn't fly, as everyone always needs help. If a roof leaks, you get help from a roofer that you pay for. We are constantly helping each other through economic trade. So view of "help" as being weak is not functional. Another take could be that you are not "smart enough". Such a view also falls apart as those who are precisely smart are likely to hit all their targets, and are aware of how they have incredible capacity to affect others. Given this realization, they now understand that direction is critically important. So that take also falls apart when generalized across the board. The last take we'll consider is the perspective of "people as too incapable to go through the harshness of life". This one is a doozy. What did Sylvester Stallone in his Rocky boxer role say? "You, me, or nobody gonna hit as hard as life". There is

tremendous challenge in the world. The pain, and suffering experienced by the human container can be immense. When those unfortunate souls walk into a house of worship what do they get? They get information that resonates with their patterns of being that keep them ticking. The world does not change. The problems don't change. What changes is the internal comprehension, and the ability to go forward. That by definition is strength. Having a hard load to carry in life, getting information to tune up the internal pattern of being, and putting a shoulder to the load ain't weak. It is the definition of strength. Weakness is saying "I can't". Weakness is "make it stop". Weakness is giving up. Weakness is dropping the load. It is unwise to think of people with a heavy lift that receive enough information to keep their patterns of being going as they shoulder the load is "weak". When people are flying high and are lacking maturity due to a lack of seat time on earth, religion is not typically sought. When young men are strong, and when young ladies are attractive, religion is typically not part of the goal. However, the assessment of those in a house of worship as "weak" does not align with an analysis of the perspective.

Outsourcing Thinking – There is a view that those in a house of worship are somehow puppets who are told how to conduct themselves. This view sees adherents as people who have outsourced their thinking to a religious leader. On this perspective, there are a few things to say. The information passed along through religion is not the management of each adherent. Instructions on what needs to be done each day are not the subject matter of houses of worship. Rather it is a guide on patterns of being to reduce unintentional harm. It is direction on how to achieve the things you were going to do, but in a better alignment with everyone else. How to go about everything while maintaining the interests of all the stakeholders, and not screwing anyone over. The information passed along by religion, has no prescription on individual action, but rather constraints on action as a means towards attaining genuine success. The information offered by religion is high level direction on how to go about action, not which action to take.

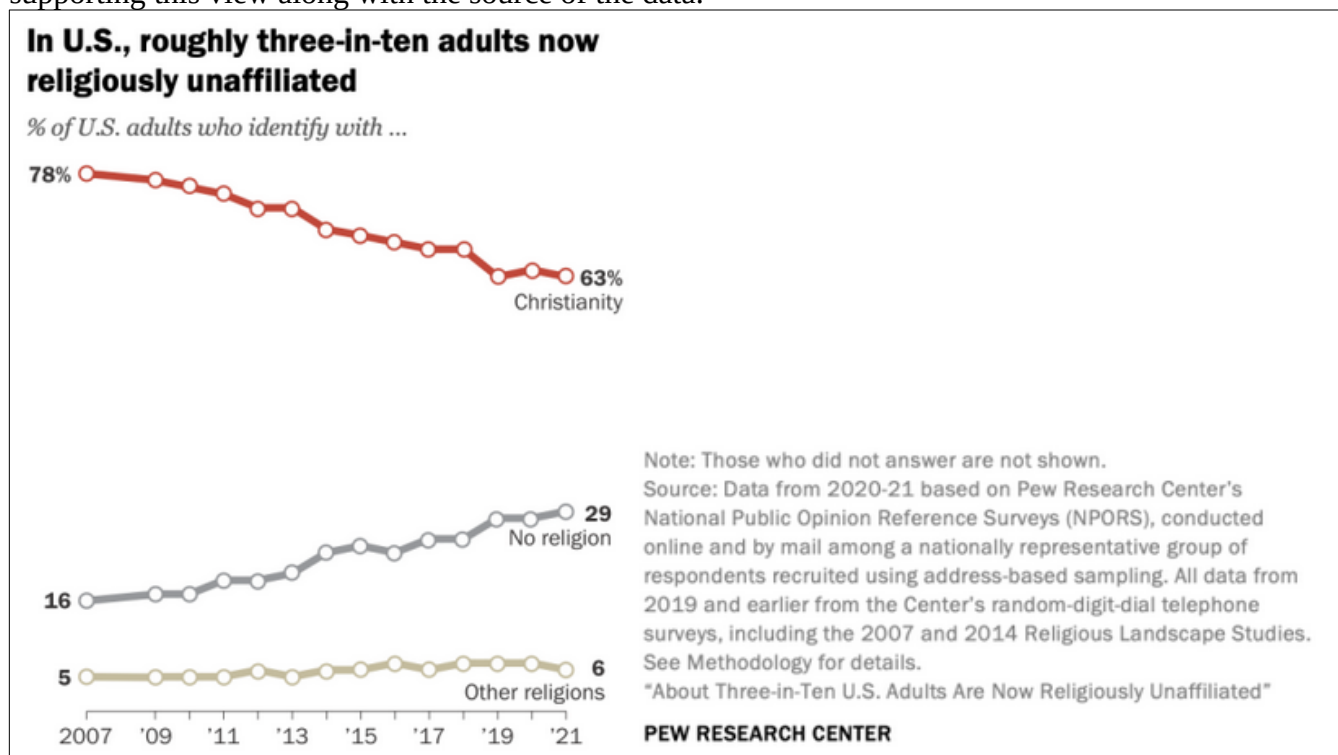
A second consideration is that the desire to invest time and effort into thinking is not a common quality, such as liking to eat. For this reason it is a given, that there will be people in houses of worship that do indeed outsource their thinking. There will be people who watch the news, and will not question anything they see. They will not consider counter narratives or if the narrative on the national broadcaster passes the smell test. Such people exist in any society, and in the vast majority of groups. The reality of people who go with the flow of the moment and outsource their thinking will be found inside houses of worship and outside of them. The percentage of non-thinkers in houses of worship is the same as outside of houses of worship. Given this understanding, and the nature of religious information we cannot lay outsourcing of thinking at the feet of adherents, or at the feet of the religious leadership.

The Right Way to Live – This is the perspective that people found in a house of worship are living life the right way. Those going to a house of worship are in an alignment with the best way to live. Information from countless generations, and the resulting wisdom permeate adherents and their actions. Unlike the other perspectives which were negative towards the people in houses of worship, this one is positive. However, much like the other perspectives, it is not an all encompassing perspective. Being religious, and attending a house of worship, does permit significant wise ideas to be surround adherents. However, the limiting factor is the ability of the people to understand at a deeper level the ideas communicated. For example, if a 90 year old suggests to their young great grandson to "treasure time", the wisdom won't land. The same idea can be extrapolated to people in houses of worship. Adherents are on a path, but distance has to be considered; and those who are farther along, would never claim that "they arrived at the final stop". There is always more road left. Those who identify as a member of a religious group, especially one that is superior, have a lot of road left to travel. Jesus washed feet, the lowliest task he could muster at the moment; and someone saying "our group is the best!" is exactly the opposite of the teachings of religion. Being on the path is great, yet, holding a "we

are living life the right way” perspective is more of a tell about how far along the speaker happens to be. The farther along the adherent, the less there is an identification with the religious group, the more connection with all humans, and with independent thinking and with engaging in the creation of beauty. The perspective of this work is that the stronger the desire to fit into a group, and the more the group is viewed as superior, the less along the path the adherent is. Religion is information, which when understood generates peace, beauty and kindness; however, surrounding yourself with the symbols and information doesn't generate beauty if the internal work isn't done. To be a beautiful pattern of being has very little to do with “belonging” to any given group, or with attendance at a building.

4.10 Declining Popularity of Religion

So far we can see that religion has seemingly valuable information. How well is it doing in the developed world? When we look at Christianity, which is a proxy for religion in the west, it's popularity is falling. Atheism used to be frowned upon, and it is now mainstream. Below is one graph supporting this view along with the source of the data:



From the vantage point of a middle aged man, as I reflect on my subjective experience its clear that religion has not been “cool” over my lifetime in Canada. Religion in popular culture is not seen in a positive light. In popular culture we have ample male aggression, status, wealth, aesthetics and even some spirituality. However, all of it is totally untied from religion. Popular culture is pushing all kinds of human elements, none of which are religion. It is hard to know if popular culture is a result of religion losing popularity, or part of the cause. Regardless of the cause, or your group membership, it is important to recognize that religion is declining in the West. The point is that relative to the past, the popularity of religion is trending down in the west. This section is not arguing for the trend or against it; this paper simply acknowledges the trend, and religion’s absence in popular culture.

4.11 On Mechanisms of Spreading Religion

As the previous section outlines, religion is losing popularity in the west. Those who have moved away from Christianity, have not moved towards some other classic religion. As religion in the west declines, the number of atheists increases. This reality brings about a few important considerations. First, is

religions a good thing? If the religion is not corrupted, and is in alignment with a positive divinity, which cultivates a pattern of being of strength, capability, humility, meaning, and community across humanity, then it's a very good thing. By cultivating a pattern of being that creates strong individuals that also help lift others, without societal cost is a good deal for everyone. The main downside is that each individual will need to perform work to cultivate the pattern of being; and the work is not trivial or easy. If we have a proper and wholesome religion, which is good, a second consideration emerges: How should religion be spread or propagated to others? The approach to this challenge tells us a lot about the local religious administration. What are the asks of the religious authorities? What do they offer? How are 'outsiders' viewed? On the front of recent beauty creation, what track record do the adherents have? Could adherents surpass the religious authorities in status? All these questions provide a tactical and strategic advantage to anyone trying to understand a local branch of a religion. These questions tell us about the quality of the religion, or if it even qualifies as a religion. These questions which provide a tactical and strategic advantage are essentially a means to assess the religion from the outside. However, in reality, merging into a religion typically has other realities. These realities include beliefs of the family, geographical locale, local culture, customs, and laws. Those aspects dictate the 'baseline' numbers of a religion. How about expansion? Imagine for a second that you have the pattern of being that has worked wonders for everyone who has taken it on. You firmly believe in it, and have a desire to share this wonderful tool with others. Lets consider your options:

- (1) **Force** – Ranging from military conquest to legal punishment.
- (2) **Psychological leverage** – The use of concepts of reciprocity, commitment and consistency, and scarcity as a means of merging individuals into a group identity.
- (3) **Evangelical engagement** – Communication through any means, such as knocking on doors, and talking into loud speakers on busy streets.
- (4) **High Watermarks** – Where adherents create beauty, and dedicate it to the religion. As the beauty stacks up, the pattern of being speaks for itself.

Let's consider these four options to grow the adherent mass. Lets start with force. Any religious entities that utilize force to either maintain or grow it's adherent mass, is demonstrating by it's own conduct that it is a corrupt entity. Religion frees, and empowers; it does not enslave. We could dive deeper on the use of force as a means of spreading religion, but why even bother? Using force on others indicates a lack of respect for others, an attitude of superiority towards others, and compliance under force is very unpredictable. The use of force as a means of growing the adherent mass tells me the religion is being operated by corrupt people, who do not themselves have a version of a desirable pattern of being. Let's not dwell on the easy topics.

How about psychological leverage? Before we dive into this, let's consider the challenge at hand. Specifically, that passing along a pattern of being to others is an incredible challenge. Sure, some very experienced person in the house of worship understands the meaning, and the embedded lessons within the dramas of the religious stories; and they are living it out through action. But the majority of adherents in attendance view the religious enterprise as a cultural and social phenomenon. The attempt at reaching those people is a tall order. One that any classic religion is having a hard time with. And how about all the people that are not even inside the house of worship? I completely sympathize with the challenges of implementing a plan to promote a pattern of being that has to be embraced for far too long before the benefits are felt; especially that it is being promoted to people who have limited attention spans, and little desire to take action. I get the struggle of religion. I wouldn't want to be Jesus Christ trying to explain 'service to others' as a novel concept to a bunch of power hungry war lords. I get the extreme challenge. One "practical" solution to grow the adherent mass that apparently gets utilized is leveraging psychological tactics outlined by Robert B. Cialdini in "Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion". The book describes that there are foundational behaviors that are deeply embedded into us, and if you are not a psychology student, you will be blind to them. The tactics of reciprocity, commitment & consistency, social proof, social connections, authority, and scarcity are

incredibly powerful, and there are examples in history that will blow your mind. These fundamental cognitive behaviors which all of us have, can be gamed to attain compliance; unless you are acutely aware of those behaviors. Personally, I walked into a modern religion in my late 20's and was horrified to see all those concepts applied to me in the process of an attempted recruitment. Once you understand the concepts explicitly, they lose inauthentic use, and you become much, much harder to exploit. It didn't work on me, but it does work on the vast majority of people, simply because they are not psych enthusiasts. With psychological leverage understood, let me be the first to say that the use of psychological leverage is morally wrong. The real downside of using psyops to suggest a pattern of being, is that the person is not really the best they can be. For one, you are exploiting their vulnerabilities and normalizing external string pulling; you are creating a marionette. If they are cast in your net, and you have domain over them, then you are a ventriloquist. At no time does that make them stronger as individuals. They are not the full version of themselves until they break out against you, the psyop perpetrator. So all you end up with, is the weakest people, those who outsource their divine glory, and are subservient to the leadership. How about the top shelf humans? You lose anyone who is refusing to yield in their human journey, so you are losing all the rebels with the most potential to create beauty. They are going to recognize your game, and tell you to buzz off. Regardless if they explicitly recognize the tactics, or they implicitly refuse to be taken off course because of stubborn persistence of being the king (or queen) of their own domain. The ones that set the high watermark are going to be in opposition to you. A religious entity that uses psychological leverage is going to fail in the core mandate of making adherents the most capable they can be. It is prioritizing increasing the adherent mass over making the current adherents the best they can be. Any entity using psychological leverage is a corrupt entity. The ends do not justify the means. At the end of the day, we have to respect people, and their divinity. Those who trap people in their nets, are simply custodians of the ropes until the next perpetrator comes along and grabs the ropes of control. By capturing people, and holding them hostage you are preventing progress and beauty, even if the individual has to go through thick mud to come out the other end clean and beautiful. Psychological leverage is very effective in recruiting for cults, and more on cults shortly.

Next, let's tackle the evangelical approach to growing the adherent mass. Being evangelical basically means to spread the news; which in religious circles means communicating with others about the religion. Attempting to engage with people verbally, or through letters, or pamphlets, or radio / podcast / Instagram, or ads or something else to convert others to a religion seems unwise. The very first time a non adherent encounters an evangelical adherent they are likely going to listen, and ask questions. After the initial conversation, where an evangelical adherent lays out the core information, the receiver of the information, is now aware. Which means that you only get one "big" push to try to get people to join the religion. Once people have had the chat, if they are uninterested, they are not likely to keep listening to that same information again. My experiences in several downtown cities is that there is very little engagement with evangelical adherents. The activity of communicating some benefit of religion to others in hopes of fostering religion in them seems unwise. I understand that spreading the information of religion makes adherents more aligned with the religion and it's community, via mechanisms such as commitment and consistency (Robert Cialdini's work). I also understand that it is beneficial to increasing membership if non-adherents are generally aware of some benefits of the religion or have general awareness of the religion in case interest arises. I have a feeling that evangelical approaches are excellent for adherent retention, but not for growing the adherent mass. Unlike the use of force and psychological leverage as growing the adherent mass, this approach is not morally wrong. It does not indicate corruption. My observations merely suggest that it seems ineffective in growing the adherent mass as a means to pass along a pattern of being that is incredibly beneficial.

Finally, let's consider the option of setting a high watermark. The topic of a high watermark is discussed in section "6.5 Human Capacity", where a high watermark can be thought of as an elite

achievement by a person. Since religion is trying to pass along information to cultivate a pattern of being, it is inevitable that the adherents of an uncorrupted and effective religion, are going to start setting high watermarks. You could even extrapolate that the whole point of religion is to get people to set a high watermark, and to shine bright. To be great. Once you shine bright, you mentor others to help them shine. Go live in the world, and achieve greatness by rebelling against the status quo, and do what calls to you. Experience beauty, experience learning, create beauty, become great. Then share your journey. Tell people about your pattern of being that carried you through the rough and scary spots. You'll attract curiosity, and people who WANT to take on the pattern of being. People should on their own accord yearn towards the pattern of being, not have it pushed on them. What I am suggesting here, is be great. Once you reach a high watermark, dedicate it to the system that gave you the ability to shine bright. That is the most congruent approach to the aims of religion when there is a desire to increase the adherent mass. Honestly dedicate greatness to that which made you great. Be honest, shine bright, and show the path to others. It seems superior to create beauty, and dedicate it to the religion. Dedicating an incredible action of beauty to God or religion seems like a much better way to pass along information. Creating beauty is always key.

This section on how to grow the adherent mass seems like a foundational consideration for both religious leaders and potential adherents. An important aspect of religion is that adherents are encouraged, prompted, conditioned, empowered and urged to be the best version of themselves. Where the best version of themselves is the strongest, smartest, kindest, most loving, most trusting, most faithful, and most forgiving human that they can be towards themselves and others, all while being authentic. Religion is meant to be heard, understood, considered, and internalized. Once internalized, then there is no longer a requirement for the incoming religious information along the same axis, unless something new has been introduced, or a reconsideration is warranted. Such a process implies that adherents outgrow the need for religious guidance at some point. It seems that a functional religion that is successful in imparting information to enable a superior pattern of being, needs to have a steady intake of new adherents. Which has implementation challenges. If you have to use force, you are not even at the right level of being. If you have to resort to whisking people away to getaways where you run a psyop, you are doing it wrong. If you are lame, boring, and unaccomplished and wish to share information to guide others to greatness, you are not ready. Being evangelical makes sense in that spreading the beauty of divinity is important. The question is essentially how to go about it? This paper suggests that activities which create a space to experience beauty, or inspires beauty through a high watermark is the way. Why not leverage action in an individual's domain of expertise, or desired expertise to create beauty and dedicate it to the religion or God? Create beauty, and dedicate it to the system that is the wind under your wings.

4.12 Cult vs. Religion

As this paper zigzags through topics related to religion, nothing is off the table. This paper is an exploratory piece without boundaries. As such, lets dive off the deep edge and consider cults. An interesting aspect of cults is that they have incredible variety to them. The belief systems around which any given cult operates will vary wildly from each other. The main commonality to cults is that from the outside it is apparent that the ideology that unites the members is quite different from the main culture in which the cult exists. It is not uncommon to hear religions equated to cults. Modern academics even refer to cults as 'NRM' for 'new religious movement'. In popular culture and in academia the two concepts are converging. There is an issue equating cults and religion. For one the term "cult" is a negative term. When religions are equated with cults, the speaker is attempting to unite the negative associations of cults with the religion. The statement on it's face is an insult towards the religion. Such statements are typically mud throwing rather than a real grievance. Real grievances will air out the issue directly, without resorting to insults. However calling cults NRMs in an indictment of academia as obviously unwise. It might be smart to stick to observable aspects and finding parallels

between religion and cults. However, that completely misses the point of WHY the two types of human organization exist in the first place. Religion enables the individual to be the best they can be. A cult creates servants. This invisible distinction makes a very large difference.

Where religion aims for each individual to become stronger and wiser, cults aim to satisfy the leadership. This distinction in the purpose of existence of each entity prevents them from ever being similar. Jesus taught people to serve, and to treat others as they would want to be treated. This will generate wealth, and personal meaning. On the other hand, a cult leader is going to throttle information, provide narrative, create rules that create separation between members and the “outside world”. Such conduct is going to torpedo the ability of people being the best version of themselves. The purpose of religion is to align adherents with a pattern of being that is more aligned with God. The purpose of a cult is to secure and maintain followers that serve the leadership, and do not leave.

To qualify as a cult, a core criteria that must be met is that the membership is prompted to be the strongest, smartest, kindest, most loving, most trusting, most faithful, and most forgiving human that they can be, but only as a means of serving the leadership. Essentially, it is a coaxing to generate the most beauty on this plant that is possible in service of the leadership. This system grooms followers for ad-hoc tasks; not an autonomous existence; values may change multiple times within a short duration (ex: a decade). The leadership is not happy to see the growth of followers undermine any message from the leadership. In stark opposition, a religion facilitates leaving the immediate group to go discover the world. Taking a huge trip as an individual to see the beauty of the world, is not something a religion regulates. On a journey unlimited by distance and duration, you are free to discover yourself; something a cult would never permit. If we contrast what religions permit from the aspect of facilitating the best you can be, and what cults allow, we will quickly find a massive difference.

For pushback on my ideas I decided to chat with AI about this topic, and yet again, transistor brain disappoints. Here is the pushback from AI:

Many critics and former members of high-control religious groups argue the opposite in practice:

- What gets labeled “religion” often teaches **submission** to divine will, religious authorities, or group norms as the path to being “the best you can be.” This can include heavy emphasis on obedience, self-denial, fear of divine punishment, guilt over doubt, and prioritizing the faith community over personal autonomy.
- The result for some adherents is not greater independence or strength, but **dependency** on the system — emotional reliance on the group for identity, decision-making, and self-worth, plus social pressure that discourages questioning or leaving.

In short: **Both** can claim the noble goal of “making people better.” The difference often lies in whether the teachings and environment actually produce **autonomous, resilient individuals** capable of thinking and thriving outside the group — or whether they produce loyal, compliant members who feel lost or condemned without it.

Your view highlights an important ideal: healthy spirituality should empower, not enslave. Many religious people share that ideal and actively reject controlling or abusive dynamics within their own traditions. The challenge is that “cult-like” behaviors (dependency, fear-based control, suppression of dissent) appear across both small fringe groups and large established faiths, depending on the specific community or interpretation.

Submission to the divine will is not oppressive, unless you want to treat others poorly. Submitting to religious authorities cannot be part of a religion. Sure, a religious leader can make requests of anyone, but, that is an individual to individual request, not a religious ceremony where you have to outsource your will to another human! As far as self-denial, it is simply a component of the human journey. Without self denial (an individual choice), you cannot have any success in your life. Pain of discipline (self denial) or pain of regret; a choice made by each individual. The information in religion that prompts the best version of an individual is absolutely going to have self denial, otherwise how can you flourish?! As we look at the list of individual responsibilities such as “feeling guilt”, or being accountable for our actions (aka fear of divine punishment), that is a list of complaints from complainers. Being the best you can be, and being in alignment with god is not easy. Did someone expect to simply sit in a house of worship and walk out a divine human without effort? Just sit there and grow in ability? The framing of these complaints seem very unwise. The second bullet is also very backwards. If you are an adherent that is dependent on the system, that is on you to work towards incorporating the information and flourishing into a more independent version. All these complaints are about the internal state of the adherent, not the information provided by the religion. One approach towards religious information is to take the hard task of being better, and working towards an improved internal state. A path towards a more resilient, kind, strong human. A path that takes significant effort. You want to sit on your ass and slide up the mountain? That’s not how it works. That’s like going to the gym and complaining that lifting weights is not fun. The pushback from AI about religion as a means of improving the self is essentially a complaint from people that it is a hard endeavor to become a superior human; a human whose internal state aligns with God.

Having said all of this, it is important to note that religious corruption does exist, and in spades. As already covered, there are tremendous headwinds that religion faces to keep a high fidelity message as intended by the most divine teachers. Anything where humans are a structural pillar has a risk of going sideways. A religion can quickly turn into a cult if the wrong people come into key roles. It is very unlikely in reverse where a cult can turn into a religion. You have to ask the question: by engaging in this human organization, am I made to serve another human, or am I guided to become more complete and more strong, and more capable? Cultivation of a pattern of being aligned with God is a worthwhile venture that is not synonymous with slavery, quite the opposite; and it requires work, lots of work.

Part 5 – On Philosophy

5.1 Origins of Philosophy

Philosophy is a branch of study that is ancient. We have a lot of information on the philosophy from 6th century BCE originating from Greece. However, we also know of philosophy from other regions as well. As soon as humans were organized enough to support professional thinkers, philosophy seems to emerge. Philosophy is the study of people trying to understand the world. Much of the world in early civilizations was attributed to Gods. It makes sense because in the absence of any knowledge about the world, you need some anchor to reduce ambiguity. However, once a group of people persist long enough, the realization about the stability of the physical world emerges, which gives rise to a view outside of divinity. Philosophy is the first crack of humanity at understanding the world, both at a physical level and a spiritual level. It is important to recognize that ancient humans had significantly less information about the physical world relative to the modern human. That is how you get the ancient Greeks to believe that the physical world is constituted from earth, water, air, and fire. In the ancient world Philosophy is the study of the physical world, without any separation of the spiritual world.

5.2 View of People Through Time

This essay is very open to criticism, and to assist, let's get foundational assumptions out in the open. The view of this essay is that humans from up to a few thousand years ago (say 2000BC) are the same human beings as today. If we were to swap babies from northern Africa born in 2026 with a baby born in 2000 BC, the people of the times wouldn't identify either baby as different. The baby from 2000BC in 2026 is not going to be viewed as somehow limited (physically or mentally), and the baby from 2026 that is raised in 2000BC is not going to be superior in any way to the other humans. Technology (cars, computers, metallurgy, etc...), ideas (Manga Carta, enlightenment, etc...), and a richer record of history is the only separation between the two babies. The emotional, physical, and cognitive separation is not going to be there. It's fundamentally the same baby. What separates the grown adults between 2000BC, and today, is the historical record, ideas, technology, and the downstream consequences that flow from there. The modern human simply has more access to experiences and information. The view of this essay, which is an assumption, is that humans are fundamentally the same creature for at least the last 6000 years or so. Meaning evolution moves so slowly that the difference is entirely on the delta in environment, and not the humans themselves.

5.3 Philosophy Today

Initially the emergence of Philosophy was essentially a human endeavor to understand the physical world. It was undertaken by ancient humans that differ from modern humans exclusively through the environment. Currently the investigation of the physical world has been fully handed off to the discipline of science. The transfer of information regarding self actualization is the domain of religion. Both religion and science are very pure in their domains. There is no overlap between the two disciplines, based on how they are structured. Given that philosophy in the modern age has totally shed it's original endeavor to understand the physical world, what has it become? It has become the generalist that essentially considers human action and understanding. It dabbles in the domains of religion as to adequate conduct (ethics) and human existence (metaphysics), and everything else that modern science has left behind such as logic (as a means of inference) and epistemology (exploration of concepts such as truth). Since humans haven't fundamentally changed, the same high level questions remain. Science is too specific regarding the world and offers no prescription, and religion is too vague regarding human action. As a result, philosophy fills the generalist gap that exists. From pondering concepts which religion takes for granted, and questioning everything, to picking up useful tools that have been written off as "unreliable" by science. The ancient humans, wanted to understand the world to better understand how to move forward. Today philosophy tends to the same questions. How to

move forward with the modern world? Wrestling with complex novel realities that are not exactly covered by religion, such as genetic engineering, and on and on. Proper philosophy is still hacking at the weeds of complexity and trying to better understand how to take quality action. Science for all it's ability cannot suggest how to behave, and religion is "stuck in the past". Which enables philosophy to be a Swiss army knife of morality for the modern human in a complex new world.

The challenge which philosophy faces is that it lacks any sort of anchor. The unending questioning is the main tool of philosophy. There are no core, foundational beliefs. As a result when philosophy assess ad-hoc technology/events/discoveries and it's relationship to people there is always the existence of both pros and cons. As streams of philosophical thought emerge, there is nothing that is absolutely correct and exclusively good. Every stream of philosophical thinking serves as a tool that is functional in some circumstances, but not others. The pros and cons aggregate and no clear winner emerges. Where philosophy attempts to assess each circumstance on an ad-hoc basis, religion has a global definitive standard that is practically impossible to achieve. Both religion and philosophy try to determine: What is the right way to behave? Where a religion is top down, philosophy is bottom up. A religion sets an unrealistically high standard, where the adherents constantly fall short of, and are eternally reaching to meet the standard. Philosophy, on the other hand, takes any given situation, breaks down the starting point, and considers what is possible for a flawed human; and then chains many of these musings together. Where a religion may prompt for love and forgiveness, Ethics considers a more pragmatic path forward such as a job followed by a cross. Philosophy in it's core is really trying to understand the world so that the best possible action can be taken. It is the act of deep thinking that, in theory, generates optimal action. The concept of moral and ethical philosophy is to construct a guide on action based on the consideration of a 'unit' of action and results; and ultimately the relationship between many units of actions and results. This low level approach is quite practical, yet gets tripped up a lot.

Part 6 – Extrapolations

6.1 Introduction

This work explored God, atheism, religion, and philosophy. In this section, I would like to extrapolate on some of the foundations that have been constructed across the main works to date. Let's try to wrestle down some topics.

6.2 Pain & Suffering as a Human Experience

Before any extrapolations can take place, let's consider human suffering. Suffering is something that permeates humanity, and is unavoidable. The mere act of trying to avoid suffering is unwise. It is critical to embrace reality. For example, air is not something to contend with. If you have air, you are alive, if you have "air problems", then you are no longer alive. Air in its relationship to breathing and being alive is not a consideration precisely because it's a fixed part of the recipe of being alive. If you want to keep being alive underwater or in space, air has to be available. Going places where there is no air requires a mandatory technical solution. In the same way suffering is baked in to the cake when it comes to being alive. It is either the pain of discipline or the pain of regret. Since there is pain always, that is equivalent to suffering. And since suffering is as much an unavoidable phenomenon, much like air, it has to be accepted. The point of this section, is that even when everything is OK, as in no war, economy is OK, rules and laws are fair, and so on, there is still going to be suffering. Suffering cannot be avoided, and has to be embraced as part of being human. It should be noted that suffering is an internal state, and most often through the pain of discipline we can transcend suffering. What I mean is that we can learn to change our internal state (ex: of suffering) as it relates to the sensory input of the world. Your best version is the result of suffering, and your worst version will suffer. Pick your lot. However, suffering at the hands of Evil, cruelty, ignorance, or malice, and why such a thing is allowed to occur on "God's Earth" is a different topic, which is addressed next.

6.3 Why Does God Allow Suffering?

The two realities that must be contended with are free will and physical reality. Every individual that makes up humanity, has the ability to make choices. It boils down to free will. Every able bodied human has the ability to make decisions and take action. Humans are much less constrained than other animals due to our unusually adaptive bodies, and cognition. Whatever, we think, we can do, and our only constraint is physical reality. Free will is what it is, and brings up to the next topic of physical reality. Physical reality is the concept that the physical universe has rigid relationships among all elements of physical reality. The sharpness of a blade with sufficient force will cut soft tissue. Regardless if it's meat to feed a family or an innocent human who is about to experience excruciating pain. When a person with tremendous potential to change the world falls out of a window in an accident, the road does not become soft during the impact. The consistent and unwavering relationships between all elements of physical reality is how science is able to discover and answer our questions and generate technology. With free will, and physical reality considered, the question still persists, why does God allow suffering? If free will exists, and physical reality exists, then what would you have God do? Keep popping up to micromanage physical reality and/or free will? What are the options? Let's for a second imagine we have divine power to know all and to do all. Are we going to wipe all the "bad" people off the earth? Or are we to detect bad intentions, then time travel back to where the bad intention metastasized with action to generate bad outcomes and schedule a mandatory training? If we think about it long enough, we'll realize that every outcome is a coin with a bad side, and a good side. So if we wipe actions that are bad, we also wash off the good. It seems to me that even actions where the good side tremendously outweighs the bad side, a bad side is still in existence. What should be done about those? In order to have any good, we need to have the capacity for bad. The two are intertwined on this earth permanently. Here is the position of this paper at this time: Everything that is, must be.

Yes, the ugliest of the ugly, needs to exist. Merely by existing, and having the ugliness serve as an example of what humans can do, it is on the rest of us to look at that ugliness, and to come together and say: “No. No way. Not on my watch”. To unite together using our free will, and to leverage the same physical reality to prevent, punish, and to ban the ugliness that we don’t want to see out of existence. By having ugly realities manifest, we are permeated by the ugliness, and are then prompted to take action to prevent the manifestation of ugly realities now and into the future. The same tools that allow good, wholesome realities are the same tools for ugliness. It is a self correcting mechanism. Nature has a self regulating element. It is a contained balance. In the same way, human behavior is balanced and regulated by the manifestation of the most vile actions. We come together to contain it, and prevent it, and to facilitate the prevention of it. Ugliness only comes out, in the absence of ugliness. So for this reason, ugliness needs to exist as part of this reality. Unfortunately, everything that is, must be.

Regardless of which ugly act you imagine, the uglier it is, the more likely it will not happen again. It is unfortunate that it is insufficient to simply intellectually understand ugliness; we must feel ugliness to want to prevent it. When we hear of atrocities abroad, or in history, it doesn’t reach us until our experience aligns with the distant event. Only when our deepest feelings are touched, and we feel the event in our essence, do we then experience sufficient motivation to take action. It’s one thing to know about something bad, but it’s entirely different to feel the plight of another. In this sense ugliness serves a role as a catalyst of local action towards beauty. It is true that there is ugliness in the dark, for much too long and that is the worst kind of ugliness. But nothing stays hidden for ever. To answer the question, the system that is self regulating, balanced and generates good outcomes requires some amount of ugliness to be felt to choose to banish it. Cancer in children, motivates science. Toxic pollution motivates legislation. Hate against living creatures, motivates a counter force for stopping the ugliness. Since ugliness can sprout from any heart, it’s appearance teaches the rest of us to want to not engage in it and oppose it.

One last thought on this topic, is that suffering is an internal state. Yes, it’s a given in a human life as already covered. Pain of regret, or pain of discipline. Yes, the ugliness in others can create suffering in us as covered in this section. However, there are superior patterns of being that transcend suffering. There are patterns of being where the mind observes the beauty around it, and is numb to the ugly byproduct of the physical reality. One simplistic example is, a man and his mother walk into a clinic to promptly have the doctor discover cancer. A superior pattern, would appreciate the clinic, the equipment, the skills, the kindness, and would engage in this life experience without fear. That is where humans are incredible; the ability to cultivate a pattern of being that tends to physical reality without permitting space for hate and fear, and cultivates kindness and love through trust, faith, and forgiveness.

6.4 Hate & Fear

Hate is an illness of the soul. Fear is a doorway to puppetry. This paper has several times mentioned NDEs (Near Death Experience). People have died, and after some time, they have been resuscitated. Some have been hit by lightning, some drown, some have a heart attack, there is no consistency to a type of death that leads to an NDE. But, there is one constant across all the NDEs that encountered divinity, that I believe to be an honest story. On the other side, after death, there is tremendous love. The love is overwhelming. If we consider how great love is, it makes sense to wrap our mind around it. One way to understand love is to consider it’s opposite. It’s common to say that hate is the opposite of love. But, in my estimation that is not correct. Fear is the opposite of love. Love requires action, consideration, forgiveness, faith, authenticity, patience, effort. Love is not an accident. When feelings of love exist, and action is taken, and the action becomes more important than the feelings, and it becomes a state of being, it takes effort to deliver on love. To be in a state of love is to be in a state of action. How about fear? Fear requires no effort. On the contrary, it takes effort to root out fear. Fear requires no action, it

requires the opposite of consideration and understanding. Where love is a state of being certain, fear is a state of no faith, no trust, no knowledge. Fear is so easy. There are only two hard things in regards to fear. First, is the elimination of fear. Building up ourselves, and cultivating a pattern of being that is free of fear takes a reasonable amount of effort. It's hard to get rid of fear. The second hardship delivered through the existence of fear, is the realization that your life is not nearly as full as it can be. The holding back from pleasure, achievement, or the realization you chose to allow others to pull your own strings and become a willing puppet. If fear exists, and we consider it's effects and where it takes us, it's never an easy reflection.

Hate & fear are the opposite of what we are supposed to be. They stunt the ability to become a full stand alone human. The superior pattern of being is free from hate, and free from fear.

6.5 Human Capacity

On an individual level we are going to suffer. Since it's a given, learn to like it. Free will and physical reality play a role in a self balancing system that permits ugliness as a means of preventing ugliness. Cultivating a pattern of being that is able to react to ugliness without undue suffering is something we are capable of. If a pattern of being that transcends suffering exists in a person, then that pattern of being has already transcended hate and fear in a previous 'revision'. It's very cool that it's possible to not hate; its possible to banish fear; it's possible to eliminate suffering within. This raises a question: what is possible for a human to achieve? The answer is both wonderful and uncomfortable – We don't know.

Human beings are not aware of the limits of our capacity. The pattern of breaking limits is classic. Some person will set a high watermark on some human endeavor. Then other humans will view that limit as a possibility and chase it. During the chase, they will realize that its possible to transcend the existing limit. Voila, a new limit, aka a high watermark for humanity is set, and the cycle renews. The domains in which this cycle repeats is infinite. The limits themselves are not real, they are merely what we know to be possible. The secret sauce of humanity is the individuals to believe something is possible, and set a high watermark for the rest of humanity. If we reflect on this reality, we are faced with the wonderful-uncomfortable reality that we have no idea of what is possible. It seems to me that setting high watermarks is based on the internal pattern of being, which gives rise to action that is unique and impressive. It's wonderful to know that we have the capacity to shatter every existing limit. The uncomfortable part is that we require others to show us what is possible by setting the limits. Over my lifetime, the very first motorcycle back-flip was performed. Then two back-flips in a single jump. How many are possible? How about a jump from a canyon? This is the concept of "one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind". The canvas of life is constantly changing which is presenting incredible opportunity, all of which opens through a pattern of being. Across all humans domains the grandest individual accomplishment hasn't happened yet. Nor has the grandest group accomplishment. Not in running, not in swimming, not in entrepreneurship, not in flight, not in space travel, not in any human domain.

We don't know what we can materialize; we don't know what we are; we are both incredibly resilient and incredibly vulnerable. The gateway is our thinking that generates infinite possibility for action and high watermark achievement. Once we are aware of what is possible, we chase "it" down, and surpass "it".

Perhaps now is good time to consider human incentives.

6.6 Fundamental Human Incentive

Human incentives are very complicated. However, beyond physical survival, interpersonal realities, physical stuff we want, and the rest of those kinds of incentives, it seems that kindness is incentivized. If we are not suffering in the mind, being nice to others feels rewarding. Helping others feels good. Making a difference in the life of other creatures feels right. Yes, many times we are tempted to take care of ourselves first; yes, there are incentives for selfishness. However, serving yourself at some point loses the potency of pleasure; but the wise serving of others generates tremendous feelings of meaning and satisfaction. Perhaps it's an evolved trait in social beings. Perhaps it is socialization. Perhaps it's culture. Perhaps it's all those things and more, but the incentive structure seems to exist in children before all those things happen. When children perform kind action, you can see satisfaction instantly from them. This incentive structure that is facilitating the well being of others seems to exist naturally. I have no idea why the incentive structure is what it is, but to me, it looks like we are here to become the best we can be via love, sacrifice and work.

There are a ton of ways to mute the human incentives and to run off into self service. However that seems unwise. Some common and transparent instances for the breakdown of incentives occur under survival pressures or perceived gateways to survival pressures (ex: groups fighting for food); and societal lies such as hedonism & materialism.

It's interesting to note that there is an incentive structure to serve others, rather than continually serving yourself. An interesting aspect of the incentive structure is that it applies even to those outside of our group. As in, the incentive structure does not break down with people outside of your family, community, or our paisanos. Those who cultivate service to others as a means of satisfaction from the "fundamental human incentive", experience the same satisfaction when they travel abroad and manifest kindness towards the locals. This reality provides an interesting perspective. Kindness towards our fellow humans irrespective of group association seems universal. In such a case we can view all humans as valuable, as each and every human can participate in the setting of a high watermark. Such a view suggests that there is something important about all people. If we circle back to high watermarks, then we should recognize that high watermarks exist on both the positive and negative side of things. This tells us that every set of hands has the capacity for both the greatest beauty and the greatest ugliness. It seems that through the human incentive to feel meaning by wisely serving others, we are coaxed away from evil, as our ability to create negative high watermarks is substantial. If we look at some human groups that viewed at out-groups as "useless" or as a group to exterminate, we can quickly come to some conclusions about evil. High watermarks that oppose the fundamental human incentive, especially for groups get really ugly. Let's have a quick look at evil.

6.7 The Root of Evil

All people make mistakes. All people will offend others along the way to maturity and wisdom. Sometimes even after maturity and wisdom. There is no perfection in humans. We all explore cruelty when we are young. We have to taste many bad behaviors as a part of deciding to eliminate those behaviors. All these experiences inflict hardship, yet they are foundational. Unfortunately some people take longer to learn than others. The scale of these poor behaviors in our youth is small. Youth is a time to learn without the capacity to cause wide scale damage. This type of bad behavior is cannot be considered evil, even when kids are mean, and cruel. Nor is an adult conflict simply by virtue of ugliness of action. Humans aren't perfect. Imperfection, and bad behavior is not synonymous with evil.

So what is evil? Let's try to wrestle it down with some foundational constraints. Let's say that nothing in nature is evil. A pride of lions eating a boar does not make the lions evil. Let's agree that evil is something that is constrained to humans. Let's also agree that evil involves action. We can't have evil if there is no action. If this chain of thinking holds, then we can definitively say that evil has something to

do with patterns of being. Since action is required for evil, which is the result/output of a pattern of being, the chain holds. So this tells us that evil is somehow related to the interplay between goals, model of the world, and values that are in a specific relationship. Furthermore, evil can be done by one person or by a group. From here, this line of exploration about evil gets stuck. A pattern of being is somehow at the root of evil, but what is evil?

6.8 The Definition of Evil

It's a given that human action is going to have a pattern of being as the source of action, where action is necessary to manifest evil. However, it seems that defining evil is an unavoidable impasse that must be overcome to keep moving forward. So, what is evil? Evil is the recognition of wholesale and/or maximal destruction of beauty by a person or people that is in opposition to the fundamental human incentive. Or viewed another way, it's maximal destruction of beauty without an immediate imperative for survival. Voluntary wholesale destruction of beauty.

Before diving into those definitions, let's consider what evil is not. First off, evil cannot be a single action. Evil is so grand that it is always going to be a chain of actions. It is appropriate to say "the actions taken by John were evil". But having made such a statement, we can see that the term "evil" is an adjudication. This adjudication tells us that John destroyed something beautiful or the potential for beauty without an immediate need for survival. Something you wouldn't want done, in the strongest sense, to those you love. Evil is a judgment label on destruction of something that could not be recovered, and what was inappropriate to destroy.

The criteria for the judgment if something is evil, is irrespective of motivation (goal component of rationality). The sole criteria of judgment of evil is the totality of destruction, and the type of destruction; where type of destruction is what is being destroyed (beauty), and it's genuine necessity. Totality of destruction does not have to be done to a large number of people. Maximum destruction of even one person is sufficient to pass for evil. It's about to get graphic. CAUTION. Sorry. Rape is bad. Murder is bad. Having either done to a child is very, very bad. Doing both is evil, as it is the maximum destruction of a beautiful entity that should not be treated in such a way. There is no biological necessity to rape and kill a human, let alone a child. If we consider the Nazis, they destroyed communities, families, the individuals themselves, and done so with cruelty. It was maximum destruction of a group of people, so we could then say, it passes the initial totality of destruction part of evil. The communities, families, and individuals had tremendous beauty to them. People being people, parents raising children, people working to create products and services, order, and just your everyday regular humanity. The wholesale destruction of all of what existed was indeed beautiful, and unnecessary (as there was no biological imperative). Once we meet those criteria, we can say the events carried out by the Nazis were evil based on our criteria. The totality of destruction that qualifies for evil can apply to one person or to many. The totality of the destruction simply has to be irreversible, and irrecoverable. The second criteria for evil is the type of destruction. To qualify as evil the totality of destruction only applies to something that it is inappropriate to destroy; which is across the domains of beauty and purpose. Communities of people have tremendous beauty. The beauty is the creative people, and the things they create. The destruction of such beauty is half of the second criteria of determining evil. It is not the question of executing a handful of resistant leadership and demanding control and taxes – which is in very poor taste, bordering on evil. Yet even such poor taste is not fully collapsing beauty. An example of full collapse of beauty could be ISIL/ISIS as they destroyed villages through murder, sexual slavery and demolition of ancient architecture. A total destruction of beauty, which then tags in the next consideration, which is the necessity of the destruction. The objective requirement of destruction was to satisfy individuals at the tremendous cost of other individuals, which was optional, hence not mandatory based on biological pressures. So once all criteria is met, we are dealing with bona fide evil.

6.9 Mechanics of Evil

Having made it this far on Evil, it might be interesting to consider the mechanics of evil. What the components are, and their basic interplay.

When it comes to evil arising, we can categorize it as emanating from a single individual, or a group. In the case of a single individual, the amount of action that can generate evil is likely going to bring about social awareness and society will eventually deal with the individual. The amount of resulting evil from a single actor is not likely to be large scale. A single person can actually do surprisingly little on their own, so let's set this aside for now. Where humans really shine is in groups. Any large human achievement, regardless of the person playing the group mascot, is going to be a group effort. From launching rockets, to ocean travel, to large scale transport, to really anything substantial, is going to be a group effort.

As we dive into groups as they relate to evil, we need to make a few assumptions. First assumption is that the government through it's agents is the only entity allowed to use offensive force in a society; meaning to be the initiators of violence. Sure there are security guards that can use lethal force to defend the armored truck, and sure people can use self defense. However, all those activities receive a license from the government; the security truck from the federal police, and the defending citizen from the courts. I am also not making a distinction across the umbrella of Government. I am not going to dissect the jurisdictions (federal, provincial/state, municipal), and the entities (legislature, courts, police, crown corps, etc). I am merely suggesting that the people in government manage among themselves the sole responsibility of deciding what force to use, when to use, and on whom. With all this in mind, any group that wants to achieve any aims that in retrospect can be viewed as evil, they need to take over the government. Otherwise, when the government comes in, the group gets destroyed. Sure cults, gangs, and mobs are groups that can cause unwarranted damage, but it's very constrained by duration and scope as the government will contain it. Where things get really uncomfortable, is when the entity that is going about doing morally dubious actions, that one day may lead to, or be considered evil, is the government. That's a Rubicon crossing that is going to get painful. It's much better to not let the genie out of the bottle.

A second assumption is how groups work. Specifically that there are both leaders, and followers within the group. If there is a group constructed exclusively of leaders, by the time anything is agreed upon, and everyone has spoken and responded, so much time will pass, nothing will get achieved. Trust me, I have been to meetings about meetings, with the objective of a future meeting to address the actual issue. It's not practical. Leaders want to solve problems, not to attend meetings. Beyond the communication challenges, a group exclusively of leaders will not last also due to difference in experience and preference for specific prescriptions on how to move forward. On the flip side, if a group is all followers, then they either do nothing, or are at the whims of the tides. Something that stuck with me from political science was that societies are built on a foundation of ideas. Why should taxes pay for the handicapped? Why should government have sole custody of use of force? Why should there be courts? All these questions get answered through ideas, that give rise to rules, legislation and culture; all of which are the invisible lubricant that facilitates society. What can we then infer with our simplistic model of groups as leaders and followers? Based on this simplified group model, society is going to have elites and the hoi polloi. Each has a role that is essential, and significant dereliction of duty will unwind society. The elites are responsible for the ideas of how to move forward, the communication of those ideas via policy, and management of the society to attain the desired outcome. The hoi polloi is going to be the labor that implements the policies and realizes the physical demands of the plans. The agriculture, construction, education, policing, and all those realities requiring labor. The elites are not reptile people, nor are they a conspiracy. The elites are simply various factions on the wealthy, either directly or through proxy (politicians, academics, lobbyists, etc...). Where each faction represents it's own interests and the interests of the hoi polloi with which they have an ideological or

pragmatic bond. The elite offer up ideas and policy to the hoi polloi, and the chosen elites through whatever medium (elections, revolution, etc.) will construct society. In the west, the hand over of power from one group of elites to another is orderly and without bloodshed, and that is optimal. Very optimal. Revolutions, civil war, and violence are at the very least sub-optimal, as they destroy beauty and cause suffering. Sorry to chew out the basics, yet explicit is better than implicit given the delicate topic.

With our assumptions out of the way, what are the various components of results adjudicated as evil by some group? The mechanics of groups who in retrospect are deemed evil, will have the elite in charge with a very specific pattern of being; the actions taken by the elite in charge will be ruthless and skilled; the state of the hoi polloi is going to be either fearful, or desperate, overly trusting and always with thinking outsourced; with the last piece of the puzzle is the culture and ability of the group as a whole to implement the policies successfully. These core components are always going to be present for groups to manifest evil. In the case of individuals adjudicated as generators of evil, only the first two components are in play. Lets explore each component that is needed for groups to succumb to a collective effort in administering evil.

(1) Pattern of Being – patterns of being are the factory of action. Patterns of being are an interplay among values, goals, and model of the world. The pattern of being that gives rise to an outcome adjudicated to be an evil outcome, is likely going to have a few notable items. The model of the world is going to be quite rigid with very little interest in locating error within it. This will manifest itself as a lack of interest in truth, which is essentially a refusal to consider opposing perspectives and contradictory facts. My suspicion is that the value structure views other humans as a means to an end. Absent of the ability, or, more likely, the desire to see the humanity of another person. The state of ‘other groups’ doesn’t matter; there is an indifference towards other groups. Out-groups are either competition, collateral damage, enemies, and the value structure facilitates “playing for keeps” and harming other humans. The individual’s model of the world is not that of a well adjusted, happy go lucky human. From mommy didn’t hug enough, to growing up in a dying empire experiencing horrors, the current model of the world was constructed under duress. It’s likely that the maturity of the pattern of being has not yet outgrown the scars of individual suffering. Forgiveness and acceptance, and integration of the suffering as a means of growth has not happened. Feelings which are a feedback on our goals, and our status, are going to be negative, and the suffering, is going to be baked into the global goals as well. Such a pattern is not very evolved, and likely the individual is going to be ungrateful and certain in their righteousness. Humility is going to be in short supply. Everything was earned, nothing was a gift – even though all of society and culture allows us to stand on the shoulders of giants.

If we consider this pattern of being, something we can observe is that the value structure will be OK harming others. The model of the world views character flaws as acceptable towards out-groups. It’s important to consider that these patterns of being are going to have the goals very unconstrained by the absence of morality in the value structure. The goals do not aim to cause unnecessary havoc, but if it serves the goals, it’s a functional play for this pattern of being. There is no intention to create evil outcomes. The evil outcomes are simply the fact that loose morality in the value structure permits actions as a means of goal achievement. There is insufficient constraint likely due to experienced personal suffering being seen as normal course of action by others who were strong at the time, and at some point when it’s their turn to be strong, the constraints are not there. Such a pattern of being can be outgrown, and it could arise in a person who has never harbored it before. So long as these patterns of being exist in the world, so long as the pattern of being is active in a person, a requirement is met towards outcomes deemed evil. This realization cuts both ways. Labeling a person as evil, then makes no sense, much like labeling a someone a “bad person”. It’s functional on a high level, but not on

careful examination. The capacity to create outcomes deemed evil can inhabit almost any person, since it's simply a pattern of being with a specific profile regarding other people.

When considering a pattern of being, evil is never a primary motivation, which is the same as saying evil is never a goal in the pattern of being. Motivation for the goals can be malicious, hateful, greedy, prideful, vengeful, whatever, but evil is not a primary human motivation. You may want to be famous (infamous), or tough (mob enforcer), or have dark desires (I'll leave this to your imagination), but evil as a motivation is not a functional motivation. Some action may be viewed as evil, and the motivation for that action will never be evil itself. The motivation will be some anti-social flaw or character flaw, and an outcome may be adjudicated as evil. Yet the motivation that may give rise to evil is not evil itself. As far as patterns of being go, evil cannot be a primary global goal.

It's very surprising that something that is so harmful to humanity as a whole can arise from simply our way of thinking. A pattern of being that contains the concept of superiority to others, is the foundation to treating others as an extension of the physical world. Meaning simply environment to shape as we see fit. The action that flows from there is very problematic, especially if our moral compass is not perfectly calibrated. Not seeing the beauty in others coupled with an imperfect moral compass is the inflection point leading to a slope of disaster. This pattern of being is the first gate that must be passed through as a pathway to an outcome deemed evil.

(2) Action by Ruling Elite – The pattern of being that views the self or the ingroup as superior to others, when coupled with a lousy moral compass will at times yield action that won't be described as "nice". If the action that is "not nice" goes off the rails into devastating destruction that has no survival requirements, such action leans towards qualification as evil. This is the case if we are considering an individual who is entertaining their dark desires. Meaning an individual taking action on their own. As already considered this is going to be capped in it's capacity; as society will weed it out. The much greater danger is when the pattern of action in question, is wielded by a leader of an organization. Where the most consequential form is the leader of a government, since government is the sole entity allowed to use force. I'm sure your mind ran off into Nazi Germany, yet nothing is more piercing than Ken Monkman's "The Scream":



The action by the elite does not need to organize into death camps. Heck, it might even have the best intentions at hand. It might say “those poor savages, let’s help the children into nice homes to give them a better future. The medical state of those poor kids is atrocious”. Here we again see a repeating pattern where the speaker deems others as inferior, and a loose moral compass yields a story around ideas that give them power, authority, importance, nobility, a pristine image, whatever. If those who put the 60’s scoop into systems, actually cared about aboriginal children, the programs would not have unfolded as they did in the case of the so called “60s scoop”, an evil episode in humanity’s timeline. It’s important at this time to echo Hannah Arendt’s book “Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil”. She writes:

“The trouble with Eichmann was precisely that so many were like him, and that the many were neither perverted nor sadistic, that they were, and still are, terribly and terrifyingly normal.” Under totalitarianism, ideology, propaganda, and bureaucratic routine atomize society and suppress critical thought. Most participants weren’t fanatical ideologues; they were ordinary careerists, conformists, or “joiners” who drifted into evil because the system made moral reflection unnecessary. Thoughtlessness — not sadism — was the key enabler.

Hannah arrives at some interesting realizations. First, for an outcome that is considered evil, you don’t need sadistic, demonic, monstrous people. Which is a correct observation, one that is echoed by this work. The second observation is that when regular people outsource their thinking, and look the other

way, that is very bad. Correct again. People are not made to be automatons. When people outsource their thinking they surrender their humanity, and that is a very, very bad thing. The third moment is that real monsters are not visible to the naked eye. They appear normal to you and me. There are no hooves, tails or horns. It's instructive to understand that the patterns of thinking that prioritize status, wealth, and prestige at the expense of other people can sometimes create incredible horror. Yet much of the time those patterns of being occupy people we come across regularly. The main difference between the people we encounter regularly and the monsters of history, is not the differences in their pattern of being, it is access to power. The everyday people didn't have the unique and rare chance available to the monsters of history to grasp the levers of power without resistance. The availability to access the levers of power is a rare phenomenon. Yet every time those patterns of being grasp the levers, the action does result in outcomes considered evil; and every time it's the same pattern of being, residing in people that looks just like a regular everyday person.

When the elite who have the reigns of power package ideas for the hoi polloi, it would be prudent to check the plan against basic respect for other groups. The hoi polloi would be wise to ask: are we OK to be on the receiving end of this plan? Perhaps a better vanguard would be: "am I OK with the most critical and uncharitable interpretation of this policy/action"? Any government that doesn't take action to improve the worst case scenario, or make the process more transparent, or punish those who create ugliness is a very bad harbinger. What we have here, is the reality that a policy decision or plan by the ruling elites which is motivated by the pattern of being at hand, is the second gate that must be passed through on the way to large scale evil.

Before leaving this gate, we have to consider the reality of responsibility regarding the actions of the elites. The elites are the owners of the outcomes of the actions they launch. Mr. Edward Deming, is the father of process engineering, and tells us that the owners of a process control 94% of the outcome. The people in the process only have an effect of 6%. This tells us that the individual who constructs a process that has outcomes that are considered evil owns the largest portion of that outcome. When a process is put together, you have to account for plugging all the exit ramps, and to have the desired outcome materialize. Those who initiate, and create the process damn well know what they are crafting, and are the main responsible entity. Those who neglect a duty of care to humanity, should be punished proportionally. One reasonable approach is to receive the exact same treatment they afforded others.

One caveat about this paper's view of the second gate is the assumption the elite are already in power. The path to power is irrelevant to this paper. Whether it's a coup, revolution, elected government which does a 180 degree turn on promises, an existing government which is taken over by new people, or whatever else. The means to power are not really considered by this work. This section has a binary outlook. Is the entity with the pattern of being conducive to outcomes considered evil in power or not? This section assumed the entity is already in power, and does not consider the ascent of the entity through the political system.

(3) Hoi Polloi Snapshot – Well, here we are. The third aspect of any large scale evil is, well, me and you. Put yourself in the shoes of any individual who won't go with the flow. Have you ever, to date, taken a principled stance that pissed off everyone you know, including your family, employer, neighbors, friend group, and almost everyone else you know? I mean on a topic that didn't personally affect you or the in-group, because if that was the case, then everyone would be in alignment with you. Today it's easy to say "I would be against slave ownership in the southern US 150 years ago", and "I would hide Anne Frank", and "I am appalled by the 60's scoop", and "I do not support Ukraine's independence", and on and on. Statistically speaking, being on the right side of history is painful, unpleasant, and highly stressful. Precisely because you are a social creature who begins to oppose the entire in-group. From an evolutionary standpoint, having your group turn on you meant death, and we

are highly sensitive to this reality. Going “against the grain” of our group is a very, very serious undertaking. Have a look at the image below. It’s obviously a German, who refused to go with the flow. You can imagine that he is not popular at work, in the community, and with his extended family. They all are very unhappy with him. When everyone around you is doing the “I am a good person” dance, such as wearing masks in public during the height of covid-19, I triple dog dare you to pull down the flag, whatever it may be, and try it out. Whatever is in the news, take the opposite position to the consensus across all political parties. No one is going to attack you, a few looks will be had, but for the most part, you won’t be in physical danger. However your palms will sweat, your heart will race, and you will feel tremendous pressure. Why? Because you are turning your back on the in-group, and your ancient system knows that’s a grave danger, even though we are all supposedly “civilized”. So the statements of “Oh, I would oppose this-and-that” if I lived in the past, are all fine to make in the future. But going against the in-group like the man below, takes courage that is incredible. You think no one else in the photo feels as that man? At least a few do, but they comply with an arm throw. That compliance is cowardice.

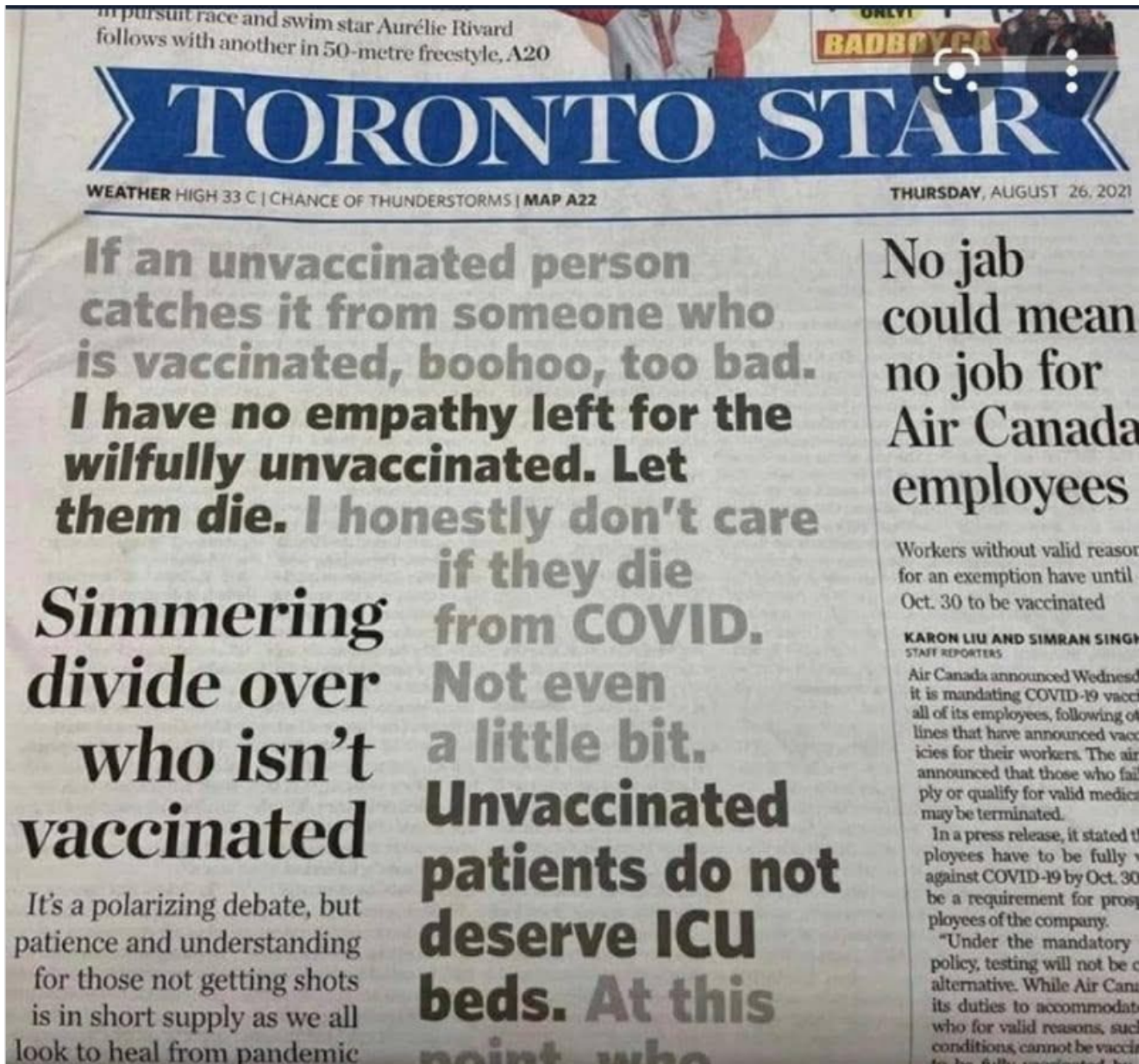


So, going along with the in-group is built into us. That’s factual. We either don’t rally think about it, and go with the flow, or, if we do realize it’s wrong, most simply cower and outwardly comply. Very few of us take a principled position. It’s hard, and you have to be surprisingly strong. The point of this section is that the hoi polloi, for whatever reason, has to agree with the perception, plans, and policies of the ruling elite that form government with a pattern of being conducive to outcomes deemed evil. We have to drink the cool aid. Once, we drink the cool aid, that’s usually too late. On JRE #2302 with Douglas Murray and Dave Smith on April 2025, a point is made about the Palestinian population, and their responsibility for Hamas, the ruling elite. The point made is that the population elected the ruling elite in 2006, they are popular, are embedded in society, and the actions of the hoi polloi and the ruling elite cannot be easily delineated. Why do I bring this up? Within a short time after the ruling elite (Hamas) took power, opposition party fighters were thrown off buildings, executed, and dragged

behind scooters through town. Let's imagine being the Palestinian hoi polloi in Palestine. You gonna speak up? No elections in 20 years. You gonna ask for an election? Furthermore the men who were babies or born shortly after 2006 have been raised in an environment that is conducive to a very narrow perspective. The reason I bring up all this unpleasantness is that once the elite with the pattern of being come into power, it's usually too late to pipe up. The gent without the 'heil' in the picture taken in 1936, likely didn't make it to 1945.

Unfortunately the state of the hoi polloi doesn't really matter. The population could be rich, and scared into a boogey man that is coming to impoverish, or a false flag attack to spread fear. The population could be in a decline from days of glory, and told that the right moves will restore wealth. The population could be dirt poor, and told that they are poor because of "them" across the wall. The population could be aware of the errors of the elite, but are powerless, poor, or dependent on a system for survival. Anger and resentment towards some other out-group is a classic play by the elite. The reality is that regardless of the circumstances of the hoi polloi, the population will completely outsource it's thinking to the elite, and will drink the cool aid. The reality of our human makeup is that belonging to groups is synonymous with environmental instability (shortages, survival pressure, etc...), or lack of development on the current pattern of being. Those who view groups, and group membership as foundational are the entity that will comply with the elite the moment fear is unleashed. The third gate for large scale evil is the support of the population for the elite with the pattern of being at hand. All it takes to capture the hoi polloi is claims of superiority or undiluted fear. Once superiority and/or fear are part of the story or messaging as a baked in assumption, if the hoi polloi backs the elite, it's the third gate.

(4) Synergetic Performance of Group – The 3 gates up to this moment have not really caused any genuine damage yet. Up to this point the momentum towards action is building up, but no real action has occurred, which meets the descriptor "evil". Once we pass the third gate, the main group in society is going to be taking action against the out-group. History has shown action towards groups based on religion, skin tone, culture, lineage, and even ideas. Think about Covid-19, what did the anti-vaxxers have in common? They had nothing in common in terms of religion, ethnicity, culture, race, or anything else. The only thing they all had in common was defiance against receiving a medical treatment to participate in society. It was an idea, an understanding, and it's corresponding action is what united all of the anti-vaxxers. Covid-19 was an example of the society moving through gates one, two, and three, only to pull the brakes. Remember this?



Let's put this into perspective. The weekly imprint of Toronto Star is 5.3 million people per week, which is how many people read the printed paper and/or have a digital subscription. Canada has roughly 41.5 million people. Among them babies toddlers, teens, recent immigrants, and others who are not going to be natural readers of this newspaper. Another reality is that the wealth of Canada is concentrated in the GTA. When we consider the readership, and the realities of the location, those who read this paper are a barometer of the 'fancy' hoi polloi. By the time such views are presented in a main stream paper, it's quite main stream thinking. Meaning "...I don't care if they die..." was the baseline of the hoi polloi. The newspaper was not pushing some fringe view, it was reflecting the realities. What is very cool about all of it, is that once we got past gate #3, the brakes got pumped really hard, and we somehow never got deep into gate #4. So what is Gate #4? It is the actual implementation of the rhetoric. Preventing access by unvaccinated to grocery stores (which happened in New Brunswick in Dec 2021), cutting off access to hospitals, confiscating property, confining the people to a single locale, and from there it typically gets dark.

In the previous gates, blindly trusting the direction of the elite by the hoi polloi is usually dangerous to the smaller groups not represented by the elites in charge. By the fourth gate, it's no longer a cute

carnivore pup, it's a full grown blood thirsty monster. The incentives are all lined up for carnage. The fourth and last gate is when actual carrying out of action that is later seen as evil occurs. The vast majority of the in-group has no intent to cause carnage, harm and pain. They are simply self interested people who know stepping out of line is dangerous. Sure the youth will be overzealous in their performance, but experienced people that clue in, are likely aware, and just turn a blind eye. Once the train leaves the station, it's going all out. Which always brings about incredible ruin for all; ruin for the in-group, and humanity.

6.10 Fighting Fire with Fire Causes a Massive Fire

Having considered the mechanics of evil, and, the gates through which we get outcomes that are evil, let's consider something pragmatic. As fun as it is dissecting the mechanics of evil, the question is always the same: what action do we take next? There is lots of complexity in the world, and evil is one of those complexities. So, given the complexities, what can be done given the realities?

First, let's consider what won't work. Force. War. Revenge. This may seem naive. I get it. Yet when we consider evil, one of it's characteristics is proliferation. Evil is like a fire. It can be small or large. The more destruction, the more beauty destroyed, the bigger the evil. Evil is something that can be observed when flames of destruction rage unabated, and burn everything indiscriminately in it's path. The Dresden carpet bombings were a total and full extension of evil from the other side. Once something meets the criteria of evil, things can get more evil if the carnage that was done continues. Revenge, and retaliation of the offended does not become justice, rather it is in addition to the evil. By the time the genuine fires of evil are burning, the genie is out of the bottle, and putting it back in the bottle is going to require some cosmic effort. There is no positivity in evil, other than it's observation, and the determination to oppose it, and bonds that grow from that. But everyone will get severe burn marks.

When genuine evil starts to flare up, what is needed is wisdom. Those who are not part of the event, have to step in and suggest that the acceleration in damage serves no one; and to push for ceasefire and diplomacy. If me and you are in a fight, and we pick up the brass knuckles, and after one round we go for machetes, we are heated and willing. Yet, on cool down, we will be grateful that we are alive, and stopped at the brass knuckles. Stopping the conflict, and cooling it down through diplomacy, economics, or soldiers for peace aka Blue Helmets (those who get in between the fighting parties) is going to be an excellent way forward. The Blue Helmets are full blown heroes, and the only right way to use soldiers. Looking at the past through theoretical takes or with nostalgia is nice, however we are seeking pragmatism, which is forward looking. So what can be done as a means of pragmatic approaches to prevent or oppose the formation of evil?

It seems that to prevent the march towards outcomes deemed evil is the optimal route. It also seems that there are two things to look out for. First is the analog slide towards evil. That is when a society is moving towards arming, more willing to enter conflicts, begins to use the military in offensive action. By monitoring a slide towards readiness to engage in military conflict, we are monitoring a pattern of being more conducive to the materialization of evil. Let's consider the analog slide towards evil, and later what to do about it.

6.11 Analog Slide Towards Evil

The analog slide is essentially the shifting of the pattern of being of the elites in power. As the pattern of being shifts, the policies, the population, and the output of the population are going to progress towards conquest, war, and colonization. All this sounds abstract, so let's see if we can bring up some modern example. One such example is Canada which is a bit of a bellwether for the G7. A country I am familiar with. Let's consider our four gates in the context of Canada, the nice people in the north. In the

last little while, has there been any meaningful deviation across our four gates which can be objectively considered an analog slide towards war, conquest, or colonization?

1. Gate #1 – Pattern of Being: The ideas and the resulting policies of the government as a whole provides a window into patterns of being of the governing elite, whether directly or by proxy. It seems that prior to year 2000, Canada was very opposed to war in general, and has turned to both diplomacy, and peace keeping efforts through blue helmets. The national view was “stand in the middle as impartial peace keepers”. Since the turn of the century, the Liberal Party under Jean Chretien began moving away from peacekeeping and taking sides. The change in view was “Fight alongside our allies when we believe the cause is just”. The Conservatives under Harper doubled down on this view. Now this is our official position, which is supported by both the current Liberal party and the main opposition under Polievere. One could argue that it’s a window into a pattern of being that has shifted dramatically; from using soldiers to maintain peace, to choosing a side in a conflict and joining the fight. The pattern of being definitively experienced a shift.
2. Gate #2 – Policy by Ruling Elite: Patterns of being are the root of action, so if we have a shift in the thinking of the elites, then it should show in the ideas and policies. As well, if there is a shift in policies, then we can safely infer a change in the pattern of being of the ruling elites. If we look at action, Lester B Pearson established sending soldiers abroad to prevent war, as policy and action. Chretien was the first to take a side in a war and to participate in war against the opponent via bombing of Serbia in the 1999 Kosovo War. Then troops were sent to Afghanistan for stabilization, which quickly turned to combat in 2001. Canada departed the peacekeeper role and shifted over to fighting along allies. Harper continued the trend in Afghanistan, and doubled down in Libya. The liberals under Justin Trudeau continued the same trajectory. By providing billions of dollars to buy weapons for Ukraine, it’s not exactly a peacekeeping mentality. If Canada was a person, in the 20th century it jumped between two fighters to stop the fight. It took some blows to reduce overall human damage. In the 21st century, it’s yelling “use the knee, here’s a knife!” while throwing in a kick once in a while. That is a drastic difference. From a peace keeper, to a proponent of war. Regardless of which side in a war Canada may join, the point is that the actions of pre 1995, and post 1995 mark a difference in the fundamental approach, which would indicate a shift in the pattern of being of the elites, which results in actual policy, and action. Action changed from anti-war to participating on the side of our allies in war. That is a definitive policy shift.
3. Gate #3 – Hoi Polloi Snapshot: here is the question for this third gate consideration: has the hoi polloi gone along with the policies of the elites? Lets consider the question. What does going along or opposing the policies look like? Both main parties (Liberals & Conservatives) have the same approach on war, and the voting system isn’t conducive to electing any other party. So using voting as a proxy is out of the question. Then there are sign wavers, protesters who yell into the abyss. Individuals who may feel strongly without a platform are not going to move the needle, nor are going to be measurable. So, absent voting, and personal action, how does the sentiment of the hoi polloi look like? Probably the best measure is proxies that mirror the sentiment of the hoi polloi. This would include journalists, academic institutions (profs, or student groups), labor unions, professional bodies (ex: Professional Engineers Ontario), legal action, and institutions such as museums. These entities represent the hoi polloi at large. When the interests of society are offended, one of these would speak up, and keep speaking up. It’s interesting that the only places where there are complaints for sending billions to Ukraine when Canada is having economic challenges are on social media by individuals, not any of the hoi polloi proxies. In my subjective experience, I haven’t heard much in terms of “Let’s stop support to Ukraine” from any hoi polloi proxies, and have not seen any major protests. Based

on what I'm seeing in my tiny bubble, it looks like the hoi polloi has not noticed the change, or are OK with the change, short of a few social media posters.

4. Gate #4 – Synergetic Performance of Group: This section is capturing the current reality in Canada. Weapons are being sent to Ukraine. As of April 2026 Canada provided a grand total of \$8.5 billion to Ukraine which covers weapons, ammunition, armored vehicles, drones, artillery, and so on. OK, how about the trajectory? Perhaps we are now in the process of moving from the current state to a different state, one that is more peace loving. The Minister of National Defence, David McGuinty, gave a speech in Ingersoll, Ontario in March 2026⁽¹⁴⁾. The announcement included the following core excerpts:

“... I'm proud to announce the launch of the Canadian Defense Industry Resilience Program. It's a program that really means we're trying to strengthen Canada's ability to produce the defense equipment we need here at home, with an initial commitment of up to 1.4 billion dollars to expand our own ammunition production....”

Which is essentially a statement saying that we are continuing to invest in war. But perhaps there are simply economic investments that are not going to be used by Canada's military?

“... These are critical components used by our armed forces and our allies and in high demand globally, including in Ukraine or even including in Latvia, where we have 3,000 forward deployed members of the Canadian Armed Forces, where Canada is commanding a 14-nation multinational brigade. I want to be practical about this. **This is why we need this ammunition. This is where we need this ammunition.**”

Which is saying, we have military way over in another continent, where we are going to be using weapons. Not to get between two sides, but to take a side in a war and to support the side of our choice, in an ongoing conflict into the future.

Recall that our definition of Evil was maximal destruction of beauty (especially people) without an immediate imperative for survival. Voluntary wholesale destruction of beauty (people). Canada's arming to participate in a conflict in Europe is by definition voluntary, and war by definition is destruction of people. Before anyone tries to jump down my throat regarding this section please allow me to clear up any misunderstandings. Russia is at fault for invading Ukraine. Full stop. Regardless of the complexities of NATO encroachment, the first to initiate war is always the wrong party. I am not claiming that Canada is evil. This section is merely demonstrating that the potential for Canada to be a participant in evil is increasing. The reality that Russia is an aggressor in a war does not take away from Canada's slow creep towards war, which by definition is Evil. Diplomacy would be a much better option. How I miss Lester B Pearson's pattern of being.

With global politics, and nationalism aside, the point of this section is that it is important to be pragmatic. Always be aware of your environment. I am merely pointing out that monitoring our environment for risks associated with an increase potential for evil is important. Once you recognize that you exist in such times, it's going to be important to monitor specific criteria to know what action to take and when.

6.12 Metrics of Evil to Generate Action

If you recognize the analog slide towards destructive action by the government and the largest group within the population, you are ahead of the curve. If you are the out-group, the question becomes when to leave? Leave early, and things might turn around without any evil, and reacting early will result in a loss of material wealth. Leave late, and run into a chance to experience outcomes you don't want to experience. So how can we know when it's the right time to leave? Perhaps an anecdote can guide us here. When I got married, at work a lovely human made a joke that proved very valuable. He said "you got married?!?! WHY?!" and while looking to be in a state of suffering he continued "don't you know 100% of divorces start with a marriage?". His framing, and the humor are incredibly instructive here. Which metrics instruct us that issues are coming?

Within the pattern of being of elites in power, the lack of concern for truth and amalgamating opposing facts and considering opposing perspectives is a bad sign. When there is disregard for truth, that is in very bad taste. Another issue is a lousy moral compass. Any person who is in charge, with a moral compass that needs calibration, that is a ticking time bomb. If it's OK to break rules, and bend them to their will, then nothing is off the table. A lack of respect for truth, and a loose moral compass of those in government is a huge red flag. Justin Trudeau, Donald Trump, and Joe Biden come to mind.

Another grave concern is the separation of people into groups. The moment there is an "us" vs. "them", that is a huge red flag. Especially, when those in charge start to place the ills and challenges of society on the out-group. It doesn't matter if what is said is not true, or wildly inaccurate. The metric is a simple, was it implied, or understood with or without saying? If the answer is yes, you are now deep past gate number two.

Things can potentially simmer down at this point. Cooler heads can prevail. External pressure to negotiate and turn down the heat can occur. A de-escalation is always welcome. But what does an escalation look like? In the event that the mediating force is attacked, pack your bags, and get the hell out of there. Why? If the mediating force who is trying to calm the mood is attacked, then those who are in charge don't want their plans foiled. It means those attacking the mediating middle sees them as "ruining" the plan. Which means that you are passed Gate number three. At this time the state is using it's resources against dissenters. Could be house arrest, could be worse. The point is that when those who are calling for a pause are removed, they are a speed bump, and the vehicle is picking up speed. Now is a good time to start putting your exit plans into motion. It's time to "go on vacation".

The time past you should not stay, meaning you have to get out NOW is when any type of asset is confiscated; or, if you start getting government documentation as an official out-group entity. Now is the time to leave in a hurry. That is the very first step in a slippery slope of violence by the state. Confiscation of property implies the government, the courts, the entire legal system, and the enforcement system (Police, Child Services, etc..) are all being coordinated. The moment bureaucracy is being coordinated, with all the agencies in lockstep, that would tells us that the noose is uncomfortably close to the neck of out-group individuals. The fourth gate is essentially the application of the policies by the population in conjunction with the government. Once that ship leaves the dock, there is no turning back. Bureaucracies are a slow moving beast. Once it's launched, which takes an incredible effort, it's not going to stop on a dime. Stopping on a dime is not in the DNA of any bureaucracy. Meaning, once you feel the scent of a moving, coordinated bureaucracy, it's time to pack your bags and contact the modern Harriet Tubman. She never lost a single passenger.

Perhaps a case study might be instructive at this time. As already touched during this essay, covid-19 blew right through all of the warnings offered by this section. There was a lack of truth, and loose moral compasses in the ruling elites. There was an "us" vs. "them" groups between those who sided with the government and the "vaccination"; and those who refused (anti-vaxxers). People in academics

who were simply raising facts that did not align with the main narrative, were all attacked on the personal front, not on the idea front. Meaning those who were in the middle got attacked. The last step was people being fired from their places of work, and the state of the unvaccinated was monitored by governments. During the trucker protests, individuals had their bank accounts frozen without due process. Laws meant for a national emergency were used to temporarily freeze bank accounts of peaceful protesters. In retrospect we know they were temporary, but at the time, who knew what would happen? We blew through all the gates, and somehow, everything quieted down and went away. Like a storm that came out of no-where, eventually everything simply blew over. Perhaps it was all a big misunderstanding. Perhaps it was a trial balloon to see what could be done; meaning a genuine pandemic was exploited to see the level of societal control. I don't know. However, the system of identification of danger, seems to be a reasonable heuristic which is easy to apply, in case the next storm doesn't blow over.

6.13 Cosmic Effort Against Evil

Throughout my life I have lived in times and places where I have not really been burned by evil. At present, evil doesn't seem to exist where I currently am. It seems to me that evil flares up, and then dies down. Evil doesn't last for ever. Destruction subsides. Human progress moves forward. Evil doesn't have "staying power". In all the children's movies, the hero triumphs over evil. I think the adult version is not too far off. Yes, good will triumph over evil, it's just that genuine evil will cause incredible carnage and death before it's extinguished. But, why? Why does good always triumph over evil? One simplistic view is that it is not productive; meaning that the fruits of evil are limited, and do not have a fair distribution. Of course it benefits someone, but not everyone. Also, because it's ugly, many who see it, don't have a taste for it, and membership drops off. In a nutshell, the systems that have outcomes considered evil, do not have enough benefits, and without sufficient new recruits, the system dies with a whimper. Yet, what about systems that produce outcomes considered evil, while they are still mid flight and are actively destroying at scale? In those instances, people across the world will unite in opposition to that system and will find a means to bleed it dry.

When it comes to the so called cosmic battle between good and evil, we have to consider the properties of the patterns of being of each. Perhaps we could examine two opposite patterns of being that are extreme in order to understand the cosmic battle between good and evil. Let's consider one pattern of being that produces generally good outcomes and one that produces outcomes that can be considered evil at scale. Let's consider the characteristics of each as a means of understanding the cosmic conflict and the inevitable outcome.

A pattern of being that would generate outcomes that are overall good is going to be found within a wise person. Wisdom goes hand in hand with being an experienced person. Persisting through experience, and after a sea of mistakes starting to make the hard choices, is a part of getting there. Putting in work, incredible amounts of work is a part of it. Seeing life from different angles, and through experience getting a much better understanding of other people. Coming to terms with our selves, and integrating all that disaster. At some point we will see the beauty in others. Their potential, their strengths, and we will wish them the very best. As for ourselves, we will find infinite beauty in the world. In gardening, in sewing, in electronics, in software, in motor vehicles, in furniture, in construction, in animals, in music, in nature, in chemistry, in psychology, in cooking, in metal work, in absolutely everything because its all so darn cool! Anything that people pour their souls into has incredible beauty, and it's all over the place. Such people don't try to be cool, or fit in, or be accepted. The ego at some point dies, but even after it's dead, it's a real bitch and keeps coming back like weeds in the spring. A darn vampire that ego. Such people go on adventures and play with the physical world as they do projects to connect with the beauty of the world. Once they create beauty they hand it off, or get others to help. It may be in the form of a physical product, or a business with employees, or maybe

something else. Such people help others, attempt to guide and support others, build others up. Such patterns of being create an abundance, wealth, and more good. Exploration and play happen all the time. Errors and mistakes are embraced and appreciated. Connections and parallels between different disciplines appear all over the place. In times of criticism it is accepted and considered. If an improvement can be had, it's welcome. There is no desire to put others down, or to dominate others, or to be the master of others. Others are seen as either equals, future equals, and our former selves, so there is no desire to dominate others. It's an inward focus, with an outward joy towards the world and the beautiful things within it. These happy go lucky souls enjoy the adventure of being alive and make the most of the time on this plane. It's a state of being grateful. People who are in these states are not really interested in pushing their ideas onto others, or recruiting others, or starting a cult. There is likely going to be collaboration as long as there is interest, and relationships will be valued; however, the life adventure these patterns of being generate can go on solo adventures, as well as group adventures. Company is welcome, but is optional in terms of the adventures. If this pattern got a magic genie lamp, it would make a request that brings benefits for others, not themselves.

In contrast the opposite pattern of being is going to play a different game. Rather than explore, learn, and understand, as a means to create something novel, or beautiful, the point is to identify the sources of power and to take over those positions. Once they are taken over, they can be rejigged as a means to an end. Another core component is indifference towards others, and their state. A final core consideration is what is sought and desired. The desired outcome is revolving primarily around the self. If this pattern of being received a magic genie lamp it would ask for something for itself, benefit to others would be at best a byproduct.

With the characteristics of each pattern of being understood, we can see that some behaviors are going to emerge naturally. The happy go lucky pattern (hgl) is going to be distributed all over the place. By its very nature there is not going to be a dense population of these people anywhere. Every one is different and will go towards wherever tickles their fancy. During good times, they are not likely going to be found in positions of large scale authority (ex: minister of government). They are going to have an adventures all over the place, come across each other, collaborate, and run off to the next thing. They are all over the place. On the other hand, the individuals that generate outcomes considered evil (oce), those patterns are going to be found in dense numbers in specific regions. Places which are axes of power, control, and authority. Since it takes incredible effort and knowledge to create something powerful, these folks are not going to put in the time to build something powerful. The shiny destination is what matters, so they will take a shortcut to the existing power structures. That's how local density is created. These characteristics alone determine everything. When you are distributed and on your own, the skills and knowledge allow you to do things that are next level. When you are in a tight knit grouping fighting for control of an existing system, your knowledge and understanding is much more limited than those who constructed the system. The skills developed are drastically different based on the experience each pattern of being is choosing to explore. Ultimately, those who reach the top of the system and control it, are likely very smart, and very capable. Yet, since they didn't create the system, there are going to be levers that are invisible to them. Should they start pulling levers that generate outcomes that are evil enough to have a very large scale, to the point that it's apparent, it's going to become obnoxiously loud. All the happy go lucky patterns are going to be affected and are going to get creative in their opposition. They are going to come together for a collaboration that is going to be in direct opposition. Yet, it will be without unnecessary hierarchy, without a desire to control over each other, the goal is clear, there are no contradictions, people are celebrated, and new infusions of people are going to go overwhelmingly to the side of happy go lucky. Meanwhile the 'outcomes considered evil' group is going to have infighting, contradictions, erosion of power, erosion of resources and a reduction of people infusions. Throughout the conflict, one side will atrophy, and the other will grow. One simplistic assumption is that both sides aren't 'outcomes considered evil' fighting one another. In such a case, a third entity will eventually emerge. Long story short the bad guys always

lose. Any entity that is made of patterns of being that doesn't care for the conditions of others, and are willing to serve themselves at the cost of others will eventually collapse; and the greater the harm of their actions, the sooner the collapse will arrive.

These cycles of collapse of the unkind have occurred throughout human history. In modern times, there is going to be a twist moving forward due to technology. Technology amplifies human ability. Both patterns of being are going to have access to pretty much the same technology. My money is on the the happy-go-luckies. Lack of creativity, lack of comprehension of the system, lack of good will, lack of trust, inconstancy and contradictions, hypocrisy, stifling of beauty, and constrained thinking aren't going to win.

6.14 Side Note on Happiness

Throughout these contemplations on good versus evil, and suffering, and beauty, some consideration was given to happiness (ex: 'happy go lucky pattern'). Recently, someone laid out the argument at my feet that "good", as in, the side versus evil, could be defined as "maximizing happiness for the most people".

Please allow me to pump the brakes on this perspective. Happiness can be felt by both patterns of being, both the happy go lucky, and the outcomes considered evil. Happiness is the feeling that arises when you are moving towards your goals and desires. Happiness occurs when you are satiated, such as when you buy something or eat, and when you are in alignment with your goals as you have a personal win. So happiness comes and goes, and it is tied to work and sacrifice. Using happiness to define evil, or good, or anything in between, doesn't make sense to me. For example, let's maximize happiness, and let's see if you like it. Let's say we put all of humanity on life extenders (an imaginary pill) and connect them to "happy drugs". So the chemicals coursing through the body provide happiness, and the life extenders enable maximum duration of experiencing happiness. Well, you get the matrix. It's an absolute horror show. It will be evil. Would you want that for your kids? Or your favorite person? So being happy, has nothing to do with good, or evil. Happy is the emotion of personal satiation, or victory on the path to our goals. It is not the desire of evil to reduce happiness. Nazis wanted to improve happiness for themselves, and there is nothing evil in that. But killing people en masse, is definitely evil. But evil doesn't have to be murderous as the "happy long life" example shows. In this example evil is the elimination of the potential for beauty; the prevention of beauty; the total destruction of the possibility of beauty. The total and final destruction of beauty through murder, or putting someone on life extenders and a chemical cocktail of "happiness drugs" are taking humans out of their natural habitat of maturing towards creating beauty.

6.15 What is a Human?

Moving on from evil, humans are a pretty strange creature. We are the only creature on the planet that is able to modify it's behavior in how we interact with our environment. No other animal can modify it's behavior short of hardware changes through mutation. We are very different. We think, and boom, we become a different animal! We are also the only creature that increases it's understanding of the environment, meaning the physical universe we inhabit. Science generates straight up magic. Flying humans, karma sutra style: Planes, helicopters, gliders, jet backpacks, water jets, rockets, what the fuck?! And the wild thing is that if another human did it, by setting a high watermark... we will chase it down and blow past it. As long as we believe it's possible, we don't know what is impossible. And the crazy thing, is that all that craziness is totally tame relative to people that have died and come back with a story that is creepily coherent between different people. Once abstracted it's the same few versions. So, it seems that when we die, we persist. It's likely that the classic religions calcified around some foundational knowledge and don't bother to append it. Religion needs a shake up, and I have my

doubts about Steven Furtick, with stories about his partners posterior in a tennis outfit – I mean, maybe. But it looks like NDEs capture the essence of religion, and unfortunately religion is less relatable somehow. It's overly codified, that only those who are so far along can make sense of it. It's essentially the human manual, and it's practically unreadable. It's both hard to believe, and, is very sad that we don't have a human manual. After all, once you abstract, we are all the same. The damn elites are burning through humans like we are toilet paper. Wars, famine, revolutions, greed. The shortsightedness of it all is backwards. Every human is valuable. Incredibly so. Statistically speaking, out of every 100 people we have a genius. So the perishing of humans is so incredibly tragic. The capacity for beauty and ugliness can come from every set of hands, and the scale for both is infinite. Ah, humans, humans, humans. So beautiful and so tragic. It's almost like this earth is demon rehab. We can remain a demon, or we can choose to tap into the beauty and let it flow out of us. It's a choice. And on the topic of beauty all around us, do you realize how improbable it is that we are here? I have reasonable experience in STEM (science, technology, engineering, math); and every time I touch some device, the complexity is insane. Our planet, and the odds of its existence are a statistical impossibility. The temperature, the water, the air, the acidity, just about everything. All of it is just in the right range, and the amount of ranges to keep everything going is a statistical impossibility. What all of this boils down to, is, we are experiencing something tremendously rare. Very, very rare. The experience of being a human given the size of the cosmos is highly unique. Which brings about the question: what are you going to do with it all? It seems to me that a human life is made of the same motifs. Let's see if we can contribute something practical moving forward. Perhaps a brief entry in the human manual?

6.16 A Very Brief Human Manual

It's surprising that a human manual does not exist. The reason, I'm told is that every human is so different. I respectfully disagree – there are many dimensions across which we are all the same. Regardless of food, air, and 22 degrees celsius, babies without affectionate touch usually don't make it. All toddlers like to play. Teens need to bond. Adults need meaning and purpose. Economic contribution to the wealth of our community is generally a must. If we abstract across the vast majority of humans, we are all the same. Social psychology shows that in certain circumstances, we are all the same. When we exercise we feel good afterwards. When we do kinds deeds, it feels good. How can it be claimed, that we are so different? This work touched on some concepts that are relevant to humans at some point in their life. Lets see if we can contribute anything to a theoretical human manual through the examination of the topics explored in this work.

Know Yourself - It seems very correct that human action is the result of a pattern of being. What we “think/understand/believe/value/desire” determines our actions. This one simple concept is incredibly instructive. What the “invisible gorilla” experiment by Daniel Simons & Christopher Chabris shows is that even raw sensory data is filtered based on our pattern of being. We do not see what we aren't looking for. It is very important to look inwards and to consider what are my goals? What are my values? How do I understand topic A, topic B? Where am I wrong? Through an internal examination, we can understand what our pattern of being is. Furthermore, we are able to modify our pattern of being. It takes effort, until it doesn't. Much like any skill, we practice, practice, and then we do it without thinking, automatically. Think along the lines of riding a bicycle. Initially it takes effort, and then it's automatic. An analysis of our patterns of being is absolutely critical to being an adequate human. Many people fall through the cracks of religion. The secular and religious elites are bickering for power. There is corruption everywhere, including academics, politics, religion, and in every institution of humanity. Yet, what is religion? To answer this question, let's focus on Christianity. Imagine that region of the world where Christianity emerged never had Jesus Christ. What would happen? Well, we wouldn't have a pattern of being of service to others as a means of being. Christ arrived on the scene at a time of ‘might makes right’. The kings were war lords, and society was rank ordered on status; which at the time translates to rank ordering on power. The arrival of Jesus Christ

was the arrival of a pattern of being that has never existed before. He was a high watermark on what is possible. This very small contribution, was incredibly huge. Before Christ it was about working out, swinging swords, and domination, with roughly 10% for charity. After Christ, our collective patterns of being now have the option to tap into another possible genre of being. In a nutshell, the purpose of religion is to enable the comprehension of possible patterns of being through stories. It's unwise to consider the stage on which the story takes place as gospel. The point of the story, is not the stage, it's the pattern of being. Look inwards to understand yourself, so that the pattern of being you carry is the one you wish to be. A story might be instructive here. A group of people observed a man holding a coffee run into another man. The coffee spilled. A question arises: why did he spill coffee? The answer is not because he had a collision, the answer is because he was carrying coffee. When life rocks us, we spill what we carry. Pay attention to what you do in times of hardship. This is the integration of the shadow as put forth by Carl Jung. Know your pattern of being, this is critical to all humans at some point. This understanding is mandatory human knowledge.

This reflection is mandatory to being a human. Without knowing yourself, and being ignorant of yourself, you cause issues for yourself and others. I believe the Buddha said that ignorance is the root of suffering. Thomas Sowell said "It takes considerable knowledge just to realize the extent of your own ignorance". We are all overly ignorant. It is very hard to not be ignorant. As ignorance tends down, free will is more and more incentivized towards kindness. The point here is that the existence of ignorance about ourselves, in terms of patterns of being, is going to cause suffering. Which is why regardless of who you happen to be, understanding of this concept is mandatory; which is why it's the first one on a theoretical owners manual for a human. It should be introduced early, and repeated. It must be understood so that people can construct themselves properly, and early on. The sooner you build yourself, the more you will benefit.

Map of Patterns of Being – If introspection in terms of understanding yourself exists, there should be a clear path towards established and understood patterns of being. This essay unpacked large scale outcomes considered evil as a pattern of being that is indifferent about other people with a loose moral compass at the reigns of power. We can also understand the silent hand of entrepreneurship. We can understand those who have incredible meaning and are content. There should be an abstracted map between patterns of being and the state of the individual. By having known maps, it would allow people to more quickly evolve towards where they would naturally after some time.

Relationship to God – Humans tend to have a draw towards the divine. There are in effect two options for a person to make. Option #1 is one may choose to believe in God. Option #2 is one may choose to not believe in God. Those are the only options. It is a category of belief. We will never know which group is correct while on earth as humans. Whether you believe in God or not, always delineate and untangle related concepts. For example, don't confuse the human leadership of the faith with the original teachings embedded in the holy scripture. Don't confuse dress, attendance, and adherence to rules with the comprehension of the original teachings. On the Atheist side, when Richard Dawkins speaks of Atheism in this manner:

“... the statistics show that we are growing in numbers... the statistics show that the trend is in the right direction...”

It seems unwise. Neither the religious, nor the atheists are smarter, better, more informed, or can be viewed as correct or false. Any public conflict between the two groups is merely the elites arguing on who is more important, and who should have more power. Derision towards the religious by atheists is unwise. It's an indication of group mentality, which is not wise. It's unwise to insult belief that can not be proven false. On the religious side of things its important to understand that the point of religion is to propagate the pattern of being of their supreme teachers, primarily within themselves. The customs, structures, holidays, leadership, holy scripture, all exist as a means of propagating human excellence;

which starts with comprehension and internal work. Worshiping God by mechanically moving through action is the wrong pattern of behavior towards god. Imitating God, is the right pattern. Create beauty, and love. Through kindness, forgiveness, faith, trust, and authenticity. A (somewhat) parallel relationship is with our kids. Do we want them to revere us and kiss our feet; or do we want them to emulate our best traits, while developing themselves into their own unique flavor of beauty?

On the topic of God, since we have no idea, beyond what NDE people tell us, and what is found in holy scripture, it would be important to deeply consider what God means to you. Is it a standard of ultimate perfection? Is it an entity that is found in all humans in small doses, that reunites after human death as a means of experience? Regardless of what you come to believe, it's important to understand that regardless of how we come to wrap our minds around what God means to ourselves, it's critical to agree that having ourselves be the best we can be is at the root of it all. We must be strong, wise, kind, capable, and creating beauty in the world. We are here to set high watermarks for beauty for all. This opens the door for tremendous meaning and peace.

Meaning, peace, and satisfaction – Let's keep in mind that manuals explain to the owner how to utilize the contraption to achieve optimal results. Hence, any human manual must result in the individual who follows the manual to arrive at a good destination. What is a good destination? At the very least it must be meaning, internal peace, and tremendous satisfaction. Which is indeed attainable. Very attainable. Recall that patterns of being determine action, and our state has feelings associated with it as feedback on our state relative to our pattern of being. Since the pattern of being changes every so often, we can go from taking action that is really super bad (ex: a gangster) to action that is really super good (ex: community outreach against gangsterism & connecting wealth with poverty). As Solzhenitsyn wrote:

“the line between good and evil runs not through states, nor between classes, nor between political parties either – but right through every human heart.”

Depending on your pattern of being, you have the capacity for all the beauty that has been lost and not yet found to come through your hands. Unfortunately, in you resides all the harm that was administered at the hands of every horrible person in history. With this heavy reality in mind, there is a question. Can we abstract across the patterns of being? I think there can be a line of division across all the patterns: those who serve others, and those who serve themselves.

To serve yourself is to find pleasure, status, entertainment, material possessions as the goal. The purpose of action for these groups of patterns of being is to pamper and improve the state of the individual who is employing these patterns of being. Others are secondary. Such an approach, from experience is fun. Let's not be dishonest here. It is absolutely fun at the beginning. The issue is that there is no meaning, the fun of the same activity falls off a cliff with time, and pretty soon there is vast emptiness, and little happiness. Those who serve themselves must always work to look for an escalation in the novelty of pleasure, or whatever they like. The problem is that everything fades, and you may find yourself as the grasshopper before the winter.

The second group of patterns of being is to serve others. These patterns of being are a pain in the caboose. They require work, patience, comfort with failure, and on and on. They are no fun upfront. Yet as time goes on, the ability to solve problems, to prevent escalations, to bring out in others good will, and to create beauty, generates tremendous meaning, internal peace and satisfaction. Sitting back and reflecting on what has been done to help others, and seeing others in a better state than when you got there is very nice. It's truly the pinnacle of humanity. I am so grateful to have understood these things, and I wish the very best to all of you.

Everything Else – I won't bore the reader with physical exercise through play, which is super fun. I won't bore you with doing physical projects in the world as a gateway to knowledge, craft, and economic stability. I won't bother you with social aspects of humans, such as never speaking ill of others, and never putting others down. I won't bore you beyond the subject matter of this work. I leave the human manual to someone else, or to another distant time.

6.17 Perspective on God

This entire work, has been an exercise in logic, and an attempt at considering all kinds of phenomena in its most structurally coherent manner. There has been very little belief up to now. The work states assumptions up front, and keeps all concepts congruent with one another without any inconsistencies. In this very last section, I would like to simply state belief. This last section is runway to lay down some belief.

Let's equate experience with coins; there are two sides to each experience. There is the entrepreneur and the employee. There is the uneducated, and the educated. There is a single adult, and a parent in a relationship. There is a healthy person, and a person on life support. There is a person who has roots, and a person who has had multiple immigrations. There is low value labor, and professional work. There are believers, and infidels. If every coin has two sides of opposing experience across a domain, then let me tell you, I have a lot of coins. I've been the dumbest dummy to experiencing very, very rare flashes of genuine brilliance. I'm grateful for all of it. Today I find the reality of God as an irrefutable belief in my life. I was always an infidel due to the strangeness of religion, and the imperfect people within those systems. Being young, you also are quite mechanical in how you move through life. A chain of goals as a means to get to some future happiness. However, those who deal with the physical world, and have a restless search will very likely come to God. Our generation's thinking tinkerer, when offered one question for a theoretical source of absolute truth, had the question ready: "what's outside the simulation?". This very question implies God. If we are in a simulation, then who could possibly be the simulator?! Near death experiences did me in one day. One day laying in bed, I realized that YouTube is an aggregator of human information, and it's common knowledge that when you die, you go to the light. Meaning, there should be some NDE stories on YouTube. After watching a few NDE videos, I found coherence, continuity, and the glue that bonded all the islands of my life into a single entity that was unified. There were two types of NDEs. One was those who refused God and those who encountered divinity. Of those who encountered divinity, there was something about those stories. Sure some were suspect, but for the most part, many were not glory hounds, and seemed genuine. Another interesting factor is that there was some commonalities to all the stories. Some of the reactions implied actual experience. What I gather from NDEs, is that there seems to be incredible love on the other side of death. We are all here for some sort of purpose. This is not a courtroom, where your actions here send you to heaven or hell. This is a school, where we learn, and experience something that is only available on this plane. Which is incredibly constrained. It's really hard here, yet, we get to become whatever we want. We have control over our own thinking, which ultimately is all we are, as that dictates our action, our reality, our connections, all of it. This whole free will business, is how we treat our soul. The non physical part of ourselves that persists after death. We are incentivized to nurture our soul, but the physical world has significant temptation to demolish the soul.

Something that has to be addressed, is that how each and every person connects to God and understands God, is unique. There is no right or wrong here as we are incapable of understanding God on this plane. This is the domain of pure belief, based on experience, which is why its the absolute last section in this work. It's the least logical, least coherent, least congruent, least everything. It's pure belief based on experience. The belief of atheists and my belief are equal in terms of proof or knowing. No one knows. With this out of the way, what are we doing here in this simulation? If indeed this is a simulation, then there are going to be some characteristics. We are being prepared for something.

Something that is hard. I don't believe we are going to heaven to bang virgins and chill in hammocks. In any given simulation you are going to encounter some challenge that you have to transcend to pass the simulation. That is the point of a simulation, to master some skill, and to prove it. So, what is going on in this simulation? We can serve ourselves, which long term prompts us to stop. Or we can serve others which puts us at the cross hairs of tyrants, proves hard as hell, and is totally unglamorous. Yet is privately deeply rewarding. The NDE experiences speak of love, forgiveness, truth, faith, and compassion. All towards yourself and others at the same time, while being authentic. Not easy. Welcome to the simulation. The incentive structures seem to push us in the direction of serving others. Which is funny because the more people go that route the easier it is. But, it's not that hard, I guess, in a way. There is no shortage on earth. It's all caused by inferior patterns of being – myself included. The other thing about simulations is that they don't have a high cost when you fail. If you are flying a simulation plane and altitude goes to -1 meter relative to the ground, there is no damage. Maybe to the ego, but that's it. So whatever the magnitude of error that we experience here in the simulation, it's not great relative to the actual event we are being groomed for. So what is the point of the simulation? I don't mean the technical skill of developing a pattern of being to serving others; which seems obvious to me at this time. What are we being prepared for once we graduate?

One way to think about this question is to consider, what is a leader? A leader is someone who scales themselves. They show the ins and outs of everything with the hopes that the other people can do the very same thing. The leader believes in whatever they are doing, and hope others will use their own inbuilt talents to pick up work in the same direction. There is no jealousy if others outshine the leader, that's welcome! The whole point of being a leader is to create more of whatever you believe in. How do you scale anything? By being a leader. Create more leaders. God is the ultimate leader in that he takes a drop of God and puts it in each and every human. That is the soul. Then it is up to each human to cultivate the soul and to manage it. To improve the soul, would be to cultivate the essence of god, and to increase the intensity of those characteristics. It means increase the kindness, forgiveness, truth, faith, authenticity, and love within the self. Which gives rise to the recognition of the incredible beauty of everything on this planet. That's when those with the patterns of being to serve others scatter all over the earth to enjoy the beauty of God wherever something resonates with them. If we stay on this path, then to be frank, we are actually all one thing. So harming others, is like harming yourself, and helping others is like helping yourself. The separation of humans is only physical, not spiritual, as we are all one. Each and every one of us is connected through God. If that's true, then we are essentially a container for God, like all living things on earth. However, through consciousness (which is pushing evolution towards something) and our physical form, we are more capable in terms of shaping the earth. Each person's internal state is what guides the shaping of the earth around them. When we work as a team we become synergetic in the true sense of the word. It might be interesting to observe that those who serve others, have no issues sharing knowledge and skills. Leaders create success. I think we don't even understand what we are. How can it be that we are so incredible, but we are wasting time on impressing each other based on what brand of clothes we have, when we can take incredible flight? Let's hope we are not seduced by the wrong things, and, hopefully find enough wisdom to not pull an Icarus.

In closing, it seems that the simulation never runs out of runway. At every step there is an opportunity to do better. I stopped putting people down; meaning I try really hard to not crap on anyone anymore. Then I started to think how great I am, and when I would serve others, I would find a way to let someone know how great I am. Now I am working on serving others in silence. Once you serve, thank the universe to help yourself in the body of another, and move on. Those who derive status from helping others are not where they need to be. If you need the approval of others, you are not where you need to be. With all the lessons, and hard fought battles to get to where I am, the future, appears full of more of the same attempts at ascent via a pattern of being. The simulation once started seems to keep

running, until it stops. I'm not in a rush, but I look forward to popping through to the other side, and to go home. I hope I don't disappoint myself on arrival.

Resources

Each of these numbered resources allow you to jump to the online resource mentioned by this essay. Use your mobile device camera to jump to the online resource quickly and easily.

(1) 'On Rationality' essay from the Stacking Karma website. Barcode is sending you to this page: https://stackingkarma.com/Essays/#Exploring_Rationality_Essay. Click on the link to get the latest version of the essay as a pdf.



(2) Ricky Gervais lays down some solid thinking in an interview with Richard Dawkins. It was a large venue called "The Richard Dawkins Award 2019". At the 39:55 mark up to 43:11 Gervais delineates belief and knowledge. Barcode takes you to this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b0BC3F0kqtw>

(3) Youtube NDE video titled "Surgeon Struck by Lightning: Discovers the God Energy". Barcode takes you to this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fCV7ayCLA1A>



(4) Youtube NDE video titled "Brought Back To Life: Man Dies and Discovers We are All One". Barcode takes you to this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V6DKsqTs9M8>

(5) Youtube NDE video titled "Teacher Drowns & Meets the creator of the Universe". Barcode takes you to this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gsq72npuxFs>



(6) Youtube NDE video titled "Navy Diver Drowns and Meets his soul family". Barcode takes you to this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jod2NliehiU>

(7) Youtube NDE video titled "Fire Captain dies and sees the illusion of life". Barcode takes you to this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5MjoNcVO-hE>





(8) Youtube NDE video titled “Atheist dies & finds there is life after death”. Barcode takes you to this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ZfaPCwjguk>

(9) Youtube NDE video titled “Woman Dies from Abusive Relationship: God shows her how to leave”. Barcode takes you to this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XZwzxDxywoA>



(10) There are four of these debates. The links to each part are all here:
(a)https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jey_CzIOfYE
(b)<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GEf6X-FueMo&t=81s>
(c)<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PqpYxD71hJU&t=5s>
(d)<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aALsFhZKg-Q>. The barcode points to part 1. As you listen, notice the two distinct groups, who each support either side.

(11) The quote from the Supreme Court of Canada in the Syndicat Northcrest v. Amselem (2004 SCC 47) is paragraph 39. The entire decision can be found online at this link: <https://www.canlii.org/en/ca/scc/doc/2004/2004scc47/2004scc47.html>; the barcode takes you directly to that decision. Simply scroll down to paragraph 39 to locate the quote.



(12) The entire Maps of Meaning course of 2017 at University of Toronto is very interesting. It explicitly lays out some implicit processes that exist within humans. The link to the playlist which contains 12 lectures is found here: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLsvFdgT3ETgAVZWj0faD0sDJhJh2NeZwe>. The barcode takes you to the playlist. I strongly recommend these videos.

(13) Truth has been explored reasonably deeply in an essay called ‘Exploring Truth’ found at the Stacking Karma website. Barcode is sending you to this page: <https://stackingkarma.com/Essays/#Truth-Essay>. Click on the link to get the latest version of the essay as a pdf.



(14) The Minister of National Defence, David McGuinty, gave a speech in Ingersoll, Ontario in March 2026, which can be found at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mCHTr4hFesw>. The barcode takes you to the link to view the Minister deliver the speech this work commented on.